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As India's virus cases rise, so do questions over death toll



Story on
Pages
31 to 33

Also

The glorious uncertainty of the 13th IPL

Page No. 14

Read

LAC: India lays out its case

Page No. 15

The Delhi Police is making a mistake

Page No. 20

The Children of 9/11 Are About to Vote

Page No. 36



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See Full Page Advt. on page 21

\$9,000 Fine For Singapore Manager For Confining 3 Indians For 40 Days

The workers were first confined from May 12 to 15, and then over a five-week stretch, from May 19 to June 26, The Straits Times reported.

(SAI Bureau) A company manager in Singapore was fined Singapore dollars 9,000 on Thursday for wrongfully confining three Indian nationals working for him in a room for around 40 days amid the COVID-19 outbreak. The workers were first confined from May 12 to 15, and then over a five-week stretch, from May 19 to June 26, The Straits Times reported.

Shaun Pang Tong Heng had earlier pleaded guilty to three counts of wrongful confinement. The Indian workers are Ganesan Pandi, Pandiyan Jakakanthan

and Muthuraj Thangaraj. Three other similar charges involving the same men were considered during the sentencing, the report said.

Lawyer Md Noor E Adenaan, who represented the 41-year-old Singaporean, told District Judge Prem Raj that his client is remorseful.

Shaun Pang Tong Heng saw the men as "troublemakers".

The lawyer said that during the outbreak, Ganesan Pandi and Pandiyan Jakakanthan had left their place of residence in Tuas to buy alcohol despite being

housed near a COVID-19 cluster. Pandiyan Jakakanthan also drove a company lorry without a licence. As for Thangaraj, the lawyer said, he was previously caught for drink driving.

The court heard that the room the trio were confined in had clean beds, a bathroom, as well as Wi-Fi connection. They were also given meals and ample water.

But Deputy Public Prosecutor Eric Hu said it was no excuse for the manager to take matters into his own hands.

Before handing out the sentence, the judge said the manager



should have notified the police about the workers. For each count of wrongful confinement, an offender can be jailed for up to three years and fined.

Indian-Origin Man Gets Life For Killing Estranged Wife In UK



(SAI Bureau) A 23-year-old Indian-origin man who stopped a police officer in the street and made comments implicating himself in an attack on his estranged partner has been sentenced to life imprisonment for her brutal murder by a UK court.

Jigukumar Sorthi was sentenced to serve a minimum of 28 years behind bars before being considered for parole after he was found guilty of the murder of 21-year-old Bhavini Pravin, who was found stabbed at her home in the city of Leicester in March. "This was a horrific, brutal and merciless killing. You took the life of a beautiful, talented young woman, just 21 years of age," Justice Timothy Spencer told Jigukumar Sorthi at the sentencing hearing at Leicester Crown Court on Wednesday. During a murder trial earlier this month, the jury heard how he had felt jilted by Bhavini Pravin after she broke off plans for their wedding ceremony.

At around 12.30 pm on March 2, Jigukumar Sorthi went to her home and once inside they talked for a few minutes before

Jigukumar Sorthi stabbed her multiple times and left the property. Leicestershire Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service personnel were called to the address where the victim was pronounced dead.

Less than two hours after the incident, Jigukumar Sorthi approached an officer outside Spinney Hill Police Station in Leicester and made admissions implicating himself in the stabbing of Bhavini Pravin. A post-mortem examination was carried out and concluded Bhavini Pravin died as a result of multiple stab wounds.

"Bhavini was a young woman who had the rest of her life to look forward to. She was a gentle caring soul and came from a close and very private family. It is fair to say she was the apple of her parents' eyes," said Detective Inspector Kenny Henry, the senior investigating officer from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit Major Crime team.

"Losing Bhavini so early in life and in such tragic circumstances continues to take its toll on her parents and brothers - their lives have been changed forever. To have lost their beloved daughter to someone who they trusted to take care of her is something they will never recover from," he said, adding that the sentence would hopefully be of some comfort to her family.

"Being present during the trial was understandably difficult for the family and I must commend their bravery, courage, and

dignity throughout. Nothing will bring Bhavini back but I can only hope that today's outcome will, in due course, be of some comfort knowing that the man who ended their daughter's life has been brought to justice," he added. According to local

'Leicester Mercury' reports, Jigukumar Sorthi had a civil ceremony with Bhavini Pravin in India in 2017 and followed her to England on a spousal visa in August 2018. However, the couple lived at separate addresses and the match did not seem to work out.

Bhavini Pravin was to marry Jigukumar Sorthi in a religious Hindu wedding ceremony, but her family called it off a day before the murder. Bhavini Pravin's life was cut short in a brutal, callous attack in her own home. The defendant took a knife to her house and

yet tried to claim he was not in control of his actions," said Lucie Boulter from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). "We prepared compelling evidence that showed the court that this was clearly planned and premeditated," she said. When he gave himself

up to the police, Jigukumar Sorthi alleged that Bhavini Pravin had ruined his life. His lawyer told the court that his client had struggled to cope with life in the UK during the court proceedings which were translated into Gujarati for his benefit.



1 in 7 children faces hunger.

There's more than enough food in America for every child who struggles with hunger. Help get kids the food they need by supporting Feeding America, the nationwide network of food banks. Together, we can solve hunger™. Join us at [FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.FeedingAmerica.org)

Chirag Sachdeva Pleads in \$600,000 Telemarketing Scam In US

(SAI Bureau) Chirag Sachdeva, 30, has been held since he was arrested by FBI agents on February 16 as he got off a plane in Boston after a flight from India. An Indian national has pleaded guilty to the charges of participating in an India-based telemarketing scheme to try to embezzle about USD 600,000 from seven elderly people in America.

Chirag Sachdeva, 30, has been held since he was arrested by FBI agents on February 16 as he got off a plane in Boston after a flight from India.

He admitted to US District Court Chief Judge John J McConnell Jr. that he tried to misappropriate funds from

bank accounts of victims, each of them older than 65 years, across the US, using personal and banking information obtained from them in the course of an India-based telemarketing scheme, US Department of Justice said in a statement on Tuesday. While executing the scheme, call center operators in India obtained personal and banking information from victims' computers through remote access applications and from the victims directly. Sachdeva admitted that he later attempted to use the personal and banking information to misappropriate funds from the victims' bank accounts, it said.

Sachdeva admitted that he

contacted an acquaintance in Rhode Island and enlisted him to assist in accessing and stealing funds from the victims' bank accounts.

According to court documents, an FBI investigation determined that Sachdeva provided his acquaintance with personal and banking information sufficient to enable online access into the accounts of at least seven individuals, each over the age of 65.

The investigation determined that the intended loss to these victims totalled USD 600,000, the statement said.

Sachdeva did not know it, but his acquaintance in Rhode Island was assisting the FBI in an investigation into the



fraud scheme. Appearing on Monday, Sachdeva pleaded guilty to seven counts of wire fraud, said United States Attorney Aaron L Weisman and Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division Joseph R. Bonavolonta.

Sachdeva, who has been detained since his arrest, is scheduled to be sentenced on December 8. Wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison, 3 years' supervised release, and a fine of USD 250,000.

300,000 Pounds Suspect Cash Seized From Indian-Origin Couple's UK Home



(SAI Bureau) Crime prevention officials and police in the UK have recovered over 300,000 pounds in cash suspected of being the proceeds of crime from an Indian-origin couple. Searches of a house belonging to husband-wife Sailesh and Harkit Singara in Edgware, north west London,

revealed a total of more than 200,000 pounds, with around half of the money neatly stacked on a bed. Another 100,000 pounds was discovered in a suitcase on the floor, the National Crime Agency (NCA) said. "Some Money Service Businesses (MSBs) continue to pose a risk to the UK by

facilitating the movement of illicit cash. The NECC and its partners have developed an increased understanding of this threat, which is enabling more effective action against suspicious MSBs while supporting legitimate businesses," said Rachael Herbert, Head of Threat Response at the NCA.

Nearby, officers found a further 100,000 pounds in a bag which was in the possession of Sailesh Mandalia, a business associate of Singara. Believing the money to be the proceeds of crime, Metropolitan Police Organised Crime Partnership (OCP) investigators applied for a forfeiture order - a civil process in the UK intended to recover

illicit cash where there has been no proven criminal offence.

In October 2019, the order was granted at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, along with instructions that the three respondents pay costs of a combined 1,895 pounds. However, Mandalia and the Singaras had appealed against the forfeiture.

All the accused, who collectively own two money service businesses, asserted that the cash was intended for legitimate business accounts, and that poor accounting over several years was responsible for any confusion. But on September 10, a judge at Southwark Crown Court dismissed their appeal, ensuring the full sum can be

recovered by the NCA. Detective Chief Inspector Tony O'Sullivan, Head of the Met Police OCP, said: "While the three individuals are not accused, and have not been convicted, of any crime in relation to these events, the 300,000 pounds recovered will now go into the public purse where it can positively impact on communities. "Money is at the heart of organised crime, and it is vital that those in possession of huge sums of cash can account for it legitimately. We at the OCP continue to tackle the criminality that generates illicit cash in London and beyond," he said. The court additionally instructed the three respondents to pay costs of a combined 4,350 pounds.

Rajendra Kankariya of New Jersey Guilty In USD 17-Million Bank Fraud



Image credit: linkedin.com/Rajendra Kankariya

(SAI Bureau) An Indian-American president of a now-defunct New Jersey-based

marble and granite wholesaler has admitted his role in scheming to defraud a bank in connection with

a USD 17 million secured line of credit, a US Attorney has said. Rajendra Kankariya, 61, pleaded guilty by video conference before US District Judge Susan D. Wigenton to committing wire fraud affecting a financial institution. He faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a fine of USD 1 million. Kankariya is scheduled to be sentenced on January 18.

According to court documents, from March 2016 through March 2018,

Kankariya, the president and part owner of Lotus Exim International Inc, conspired with other LEI employees to obtain from the bank a USD 17 million line of credit by fraudulent means. The bank extended the line of credit believing it to have been secured in part by LEI's accounts receivable. In reality, Kankariya and his conspirators fabricated or inflated many of the accounts receivable, ultimately leading to LEI defaulting

on the line of credit, prosecutors alleged. To conceal the lack of sufficient collateral, LEI employees, with the knowledge and approval of Kankariya, created fake email addresses on behalf of LEI's customers so they could pose as them and answer the bank's and outside auditor's inquiries about the accounts receivable. The scheme involved numerous fraudulent accounts receivable where the outstanding balances were either inflated or entirely fabricated.

Indian-Origin London Mayor Candidate Dropped Over Anti-Semitism Remarks



Image posted on Facebook by geeta.sidhurobb

(SAI Bureau) An Indian-origin entrepreneur-activist was on Monday dropped as a prospective London mayoral candidate to contest against Sadiq Khan next year after her past antisemitic comments came to light. Geeta Sidhu Robb, the founder of organic food and juice products firm Nosh Detox, had been shortlisted as the Liberal Democrat candidate to take on Labour's Khan but was instead suspended from the party after a 1997 General Election footage revealed her making anti-Jewish remarks. "I apologise profusely for my actions in the 1997 General Election

campaign. My behaviour caused offence and hurt and I am deeply sorry," said Sidhu Robb. "There is no room for any form of racism or antisemitism in society and as such I very much regret my conduct at that time. It is in no way an excuse, but the context was that I was on the receiving end of a consistent racist campaign and, wrongly, retaliated as I did," she said. As a Conservative Party General Election candidate in Blackburn 23 years ago when she was contesting against incumbent Labour MP Jack Straw, Sidhu Robb was filmed saying: "Don't vote for a Jew, Jack Straw is a Jew." The London-based health food promoter, who came second behind Straw in that election, said she was "deeply ashamed"

of the language she had used, which she is seen admitting in the footage was done in anger. "As shown in the footage, I instantly regretted my appalling behaviour, which I continue to do. And I am actively reaching out to the Jewish community to listen and learn," she said. "Two wrongs never make a right. I made a mistake and I take responsibility for my abhorrent actions 23 years ago, they were never repeated. I urge you to judge me on who I am today, a campaigner committed to eradicating inequality and discrimination in all its forms," she added, in a lengthy Twitter statement. The London mayoral election was due to be held in May this year but has been postponed to May 2021 due to

the coronavirus lockdown disruption. So far, incumbent Sadiq Khan is being challenged by Conservative Party candidate Shaun Bailey in the race. The Lib Dem choice has proved difficult as the party's previous choice, Siobhan Benita, withdrew from the race saying she could not commit to an extra year of unpaid campaigning. The party is now back to seeking a prospective candidate after Sidhu Robb's suspension. "Geeta Sidhu Robb has been suspended from the Liberal Democrats and will not be on the ballot paper to be the Liberal Democrat candidate for mayor of London. There is an investigation under way in accordance with due process," a Lib Dem spokesperson said.

Accused Arms Dealer Sanjay Bhandari's UK Extradition Hearing In June 2021



(SAI Bureau) A UK court accused arms dealer wanted in India on money laundering case of Sanjay Bhandari, an charges, has set June 7, 2021 as the date for the start of proceedings. Bhandari, who was arrested on

Sanjay Bhandari, who was arrested on an extradition warrant back in July, was due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on Thursday

an extradition warrant back in July, was due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on Thursday for a case management hearing.

But District Judge DJ Goldsmith said Friday's hearing had been vacated as all outstanding matters had been dealt with between the parties, with directions given via email.

"Mr Bhandari's bail conditions have been extended until February 5, 2021," said Judge Goldspring, indicating the next date for a bail hearing in the case. The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), representing the Indian government in extradition proceedings, said Bhandari is sought by the Indian authorities for prosecution for money laundering contrary to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002.

He faces cases against him in India filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The Indian government's

extradition request for Bhandari had been certified by UK Home Secretary Priti Patel on June 16 and he was arrested a month later on July 15. He was granted bail on a 120,000-pound security and the surrender of his passport, with other restrictions including a daily curfew at his home in central London and regular visits to a police station.

Meanwhile, the latest set of hearings in the extradition case of another alleged economic offender, diamond merchant Nirav Modi's, concluded in the same court building on Thursday.

The 49-year-old jeweller, wanted in the USD 2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud and money laundering case, has been lodged at Wandsworth Prison in London since his arrest in March last year. His case will now return to Westminster Magistrates' Court for further hearings on November 3 and then in early December before a judgment expected at the end of the year or early next year.

Indian In UAE Returns Bag Containing \$14,000, Gold; Honoured: Report

Retesh James Gupta, who lives in Dubai, was praised by the Dubai Police for his honesty and gave him a certificate of appreciation for being a responsible resident, Gulf News reported.

(SAI Bureau) An Indian in the UAE was honoured (USD 54,452), it said.

by the police for returning a bag containing USD 14,000 and gold, a media report said on Saturday.

Retesh James Gupta, who lives in Dubai, was praised by the Dubai Police for his honesty and gave him a certificate of appreciation for being a responsible resident, Gulf News reported.

The bag he returned to the police contained USD 14,000 cash and gold worth 200,000 dirhams



Brigadier Yousef Abdullah Salim Al Adidi, Director of Al Qusais Police Station, awarded Gupta at the police station and emphasised the importance of collaboration between the community and police. It was not immediately known who

was the owner of the bag.

Mr Gupta thanked the Dubai Police for awarding him, saying the gesture gave him pride and joy.

The Consulate General of India, New York celebrated Hindi Diwas on September 14, 2020.



FBI Announces \$15,000 For Info On Indian Man's Killing In US In 2012

(SAI Bureau) Pareshkumar Patel the US in 2012. Pareshkumar was kidnapped from Raceway Gas Station he operated in Raceway Gas Station he Chesterfield, Virginia on September 16, 2012 and four days later his body with gunshots was found at the Ancarrow Boat Landing in the City of Richmond, Virginia.

The FBI has announced a reward of \$15,000 to anyone giving information leading to those responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Indian national Pareshkumar Patel in initiative to assist the City of

Richmond Police Department with unsolved homicide investigations. According to the FBI, on September 16, a witness reported to the Chesterfield County Police Department observing Pareshkumar Patel arrived at his store at approximately 6 am, exited his vehicle and was immediately approached by two individuals. These two people of interest, dressed in hoodies, shoved Pareshkumar Patel into a van and sped off. His body was found days later.



Vaccine by next year, but will take time to reach all: Harsh Vardhan

Wearing masks and practising distancing is the best social vaccine, he said in Rajya Sabha

(News Agencies)- Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said Thursday that while a vaccine could become available by the beginning of next year, it would still take time to reach everyone. Following distancing norms was the most important social vaccine against Covid-19 at the moment, he added. Vardhan was speaking at the Rajya Sabha wherein members raised various issues, including the availability and affordability of a vaccine for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19). Defending the government's handling of Covid-19, Vardhan said that even before they found the first case in India, they had initiated steps to counter the pandemic.

On January 8, the matter was discussed with expert groups and on January 17, efforts were initiated towards detailed health preparedness and advisories were issued, he said. The first

case was reported on January 20-a medical student who came from China. For that first case, 162 contacts were traced, he said. Vardhan also said the country had come a long way from the point when people on TV channels said there was a shortage of PPE kits, testing kits and masks; there were hundreds of labs across the country now, and no discrimination against any state. He added that when the pandemic broke out, even "advanced countries like United States of America were trying to learn about it". Migrant labour faced difficulties, but the government tried to provide all facilities-64 lakh migrant labour were provided train and buses, he said. Vardhan said clinical trials were being held for the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine and there were vaccine candidates that had reached phases I, II and III. "We hope that by the beginning of the next year

we will get a vaccine. We are also coordinating with World Health Organization (WHO) and other bodies. We are among the few countries that have managed to isolate the virus. There are around 40,000 samples that are being studied," he said.

He, however, added that even after the vaccine is ready, it will not be immediately available to everyone. "We have to break the chain of transmission. The mask is our greatest protector. After the lockdown was eased, people felt the virus had been controlled. But we need to follow hygiene protocols, continue distancing and wear masks. The transmission is taking place because of our carelessness. We should consider wearing a mask and maintaining a two-yard distance from other people as the best social vaccine," Vardhan said. Vardhan also said that compared to India, the number of cases as well as deaths in US

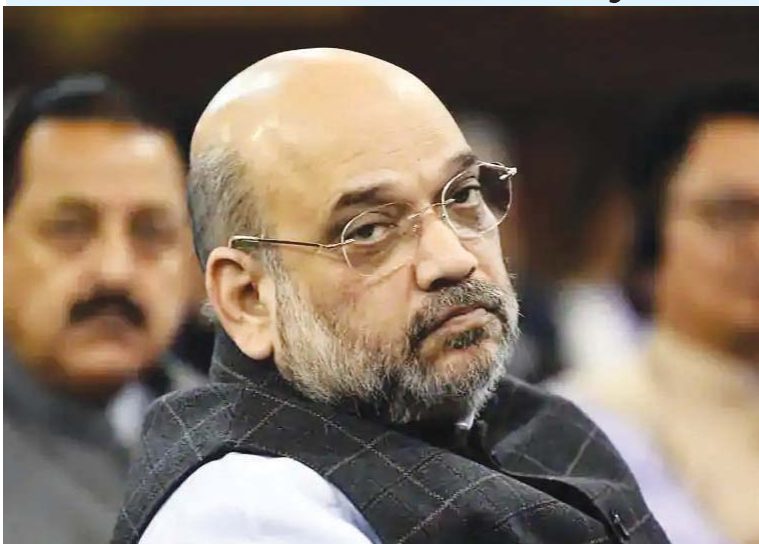


and Brazil was much higher. He said even India's recovery rate had risen. Only America carried out more tests than us, he said. He said the mortality rate at 1.64% is the lowest in the world and the government is targeting bringing it down to less than 1%. He said though the number of cases may have crossed 50 million, the number of active cases was less than 20%. Earlier, several opposition party leaders had raised questions on the government's handling of the situation. Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad said the government had wasted "golden months in the fight to stop the spread of Covid-19". He said the

Congress party and its leaders were the among the first to apprise everyone about the tough challenge that was coming, he said. Azad, a former Union health minister, gave several suggestions, including setting up dedicated infectious disease hospitals rather than Covid-19 hospitals to avoid stigma. "We should start using the term physical distancing instead of social distancing," he said. He also said that vaccines should be made available at affordable prices.

"We must be ready for last-mile delivery. Advanced preparations should be made, unlike the lockdown," he said.

Union home minister Amit Shah discharged from AIIMS in Delhi after five days



(News Agencies)-Union home minister Amit Shah, who was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi late Monday night for a complete medical check up, was discharged from the hospital on Thursday, according to people familiar with the development. Amit Shah was earlier admitted to Medanta hospital after testing positive for Covid-19 on August 2. After the home minister made a full recovery, he was discharged from the hospital on August 14. However, the minister was

rushed back to AIIMS on August 17 for 'post-Covid care' and was released on August 30. Later, Shah was again admitted to AIIMS on September 12 for a complete medical check up as advised by the doctors and was discharged today. "Union home minister Amit Shah was discharged from AIIMS after post-Covid care on August 30. As per advice given at discharge, he has now been admitted for a complete medical checkup before the parliament session for 1-2 days," the hospital had said in a statement.

No one can stop Army from patrolling: Rajnath to Rajya Sabha on China row

(News Agencies)- No power in the world can stop Indian forces from patrolling areas where they have traditionally done so, defence minister Rajnath Singh asserted in Rajya Sabha on Thursday, adding that China has amassed troops on the border for which the Army had made appropriate counter-deployments. In a detailed statement on the situation in the Upper House, Singh said the recent action of the Chinese forces of amassing a large number of troops reflects a disregard for bilateral pacts, adding that the Indian forces were capable of dealing with any challenge. He, however, underlined that the differences can best be dealt with peacefully. Responding to concerns expressed by members on the Chinese side obstructing Indian patrols, Singh said no change in the patrolling pattern would be allowed. "On patrolling pattern, I want to make clear that that is the reason behind the face-off. The patrolling pattern is traditional and well defined. No power in the world can stop our jawans from patrolling. If our



soldiers have made sacrifices, this is the very reason for doing so. And there will be no changes in the patrolling pattern," Singh said. Earlier, several members, including former defence minister A K Antony, had expressed concerns about Indian patrol not being allowed up to traditional points. Many members also said there should be restoration of status quo ante.

In a detailed statement in the House, Singh underlined that while India was committed to peace, it was also firm on protecting its boundaries. The defence minister said it had been conveyed to the Chinese side that the situation at the boundary will also have an implication on other

areas. Singh told the Upper House that the India-China boundary issue is unresolved. China believes the boundary issue is still unsettled, he said adding that it also does not recognize the customary line. Both countries discussed this in the 50s and the 60s but there was no solution. China has occupied 38,000 sq km of Indian land, Singh said.

He said during discussions, China has also accepted that a peaceful solution is needed. But till now, there is no commonly delineated Line of actual control on India-China border areas, he added. "India believes bilateral relations and boundary question can be discussed.

'Desist from regulating electronic media': Centre urges Supreme Court

In an affidavit filed before the apex court on Thursday, the centre said that no further guidelines are required but in the event the court embarks upon the process, then it should first be undertaken with regard to digital media.

(News Agencies)-The central government on Thursday urged the Supreme Court to refrain from undertaking the exercise of laying down guidelines to regulate electronic media like television channels, stating that the field is already governed by laws made by Parliament and judgments delivered by the top court in the past. In an affidavit filed before the apex court on Thursday, the centre said that no further guidelines are required but in the event the court embarks upon the process, then it should first be undertaken with regard to digital media like web portals, YouTube channels, et. cetera., which the centre claimed has a faster reach and wider range of viewership in comparison to mainstream

media. "This court may not undertake the exercise of laying down any further guidelines... it is desirable that if this court decides to undertake the exercise, it should first be undertaken with regard to digital media as there already exists sufficient framework and judicial pronouncements with regard to electronic media and print media," it was submitted. The affidavit was filed in the case against television (TV) channel Sudarshan News which was thrust into the limelight after it telecast a show called "Bindas Bol" relating to the entry of Muslims in civil services. On September 15, the top court had barred further telecast of the controversial programme after it

took strong exception to the contents of the show observing that the first four episodes of the show gave an impression that it was being aired with the insidious objective of vilifying the Muslim community and to bring it into disrepute. The bench, which also comprised Justices KM Joseph and Indu Malhotra, had also expressed inclination to hold a detailed hearing to decide on the regulation of TV news channels and suggested the appointment of a committee of five distinguished citizens to frame standards for regulation of the electronic media. In its affidavit, the Centre submitted that no such exercise needs to be undertaken merely based on few episodes telecast by one channel, Sudarshan News. "Even if this court considers it appropriate to



undertake the said exercise, there is no justification to confine this exercise only to mainstream electronic media. Digital media has faster reach from a wider range of viewership/readership and has the potential to become viral because of several electronic applications like Whatsapp, Twitter (and) Facebook," the affidavit stated. The case will be taken up for hearing on Friday. Meanwhile, Sudarshan News also filed its response in the matter on Wednesday defending the

programme and the use of the term "UPSC Jihad" in the programme. The Noida based channel maintained that it has no ill-will against any particular community or individual and does not oppose the selection of any meritorious candidate. The programme, it claimed, is intended to highlight the allegedly dubious sources of foreign funding received by an organization, Zakat Foundation, which supports and provides coaching to civil service aspirants.

RJD MLA Arun Yadav's 'not a Rajput' remark on actor Sushant Singh sparks political row



The comment has triggered a nationwide criticism with many asking Yadav to apologise for his remark against the late actor.

nationwide criticism with many asking Yadav to apologise for his remark against the late actor.

#WATCH: He was not a Rajput, as descendant of Maharana Pratap cannot die by suicide... We are sad, he should not have died by suicide. He was a Rajput, he should have fought back: Bihar RJD MLA Arun Yadav#SushantSinghRajput (16.09.2020) pic.twitter.com/nRkciaG4Cn

Bihar is currently prepping for the assembly election and with the late actor originally belonging from Bihar, his death has turned into a political issue.

Slamming Yadav's comment as 'bizarre and shameful', JD(U) spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan Prasad asked the MLA to apologise to Bihar and Sushant's fans.

"There cannot be a more bizarre and shameful statement than the one made by the RJD MLA on the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, which has moved the entire nation. The MLA should seek an apology from the people of the state and Sushant's fans," JD(U) spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan Prasad was quoted by PTI as saying.

Bharatiya Janata Party

spokesperson Nikhil Anand condemned RJD MLA Arun Yadav's comment and said its "rubbish and covered in casteism mentality". He also slammed Rashtriya Janata Dal party by terming their leaders and workers as "habitual offenders".

Actor Sushant Singh Rajput died on June 14 at his Mumbai residence. Mumbai Police had declared it a case of death by suicide. However, Sushant Singh Rajput's father, KK Singh registered an FIR in Patna under sections related to abetment to suicide and later demanded a CBI investigation.

(News Agencies)- Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MLA Arun Yadav's recent comment on late actor Sushant Singh has triggered a controversy with several slamming the legislator. The RJD MLA had said that actor Sushant is not a Rajput as those belonging

to Maharana Pratap's dynasty do not die by suicide. Yadav's remark came on Wednesday during an inauguration of a newly-built road in Saharsa district in Bihar, the RJD MLA's assembly constituency. The comment has triggered a

Delhi riots: Court takes cognisance of Delhi Police charge sheet, Natasha Narwal gets bail

(News Agencies)-The Karkardooma Court on Thursday took cognisance of the charge sheet Delhi Police filed accusing 15 people, including former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, of inciting violence in Northeast Delhi in February this year.

Out of the 21 persons arrested so far, police charge-sheeted 15 accused, based on scientific, documentary and testimonial evidence gathered during investigation. The remaining 6 persons are expected to be charge sheeted in due course after collecting sufficient evidence and

completing statutory and procedural requirements, police said in a statement on Wednesday. All 15 have been accused under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, IPC and Arms Act.

The 17,000-page charge sheet named Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, Asif Iqbal Tanha, Ishrat Jahan, Meeran Haider, Safoora Zargar and Khalif Saifi.

Meanwhile, Pinjra Tod member Natasha Narwal, who was arrested for Jaffrabad metro station protest, got bail.



'Woman hit with iron rod, gagged using polythene bag by 2 minor sons': Cops

(News Agencies)-A 40-year-old woman in Bhubaneswar was allegedly hit with an iron rod and then suffocated to death using a polythene bag by her two minor sons late on Wednesday night. The police said the sons, who have been arrested, were reportedly being tortured by her. The woman, said police, who stayed with her two sons in an apartment in Sundarpada area of Bhubaneswar returned home in intoxicated condition which led to a shouting match among them.

"The two sons then gagged her with a polythene and hit her with an iron rod resulting in the heavy bleeding and subsequent death

of the woman. The two boys then bolted the home and fled. They were arrested on Thursday morning," said Bhubaneswar deputy commissioner of police Dr Umashankar Dash.

After the murder, the boys had kept the body in the toilet and fled with their pet dog, said police. They later called the building security guard, the police added, and informed that some outsiders had barged into their flat and beaten their mother to death.

Following this, the guard along with some others went to enquire and found the flat locked from outside. The police were subsequently informed and the

body of the woman was found inside the bathroom.

Police said the two boys admitted to their crime and have been arrested. They would be sent to a correctional home. Police officials said the two boys who were staying in the apartment with their mother for the last 3 months, were being physically tortured by their mother. She used to come home intoxicated and hit them, police said. The woman's husband works in Rourkela. The family had moved to the apartment from the Old Town area of Bhubaneswar recently.

The body has been sent for post-mortem.



Putin wishes PM Modi on his 70th birthday, lauds his contribution to strengthen Indo-Russia ties



Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday extended greetings to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday and lauded his personal contribution to the strengthening of strategic partnership between India and Russia. Prime Minister Modi, born on September 17 in 1950, turned 70 on Thursday. In a letter to Modi, Putin said, "Kindly accept my heartfelt congratulations on your 70th birth anniversary." Praising Modi, Putin said his activity

as India's head of the government has earned him the well-deserved respect of compatriots and high international prestige.

"Under your leadership India is successfully moving along the path of socio-economic, scientific and technical development," he said.

"It is hard to overestimate your personal contribution to the strengthening of the special and privileged strategic partnership between our countries," Putin noted in the

letter uploaded on the website of the Russian Embassy in New Delhi. The president said he values the kind, friendly relations that have developed between him and Modi.

"I look forward to continue constructive dialogue with you and work closely together on topical issues of the bilateral and international agenda. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you good health, happiness, well-being and every success," he said.

11,616 Indians abroad infected with coronavirus: MEA

(News Agencies)-Over 11,600 Indians abroad have been infected with coronavirus as per details available with the country's missions, the government informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

In a written reply to a question in the Upper House, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said Indian Missions arranged for the welfare of Indian nationals, where required, including through the Indian community associations. In some cases, arrangements were also made for screening and testing of stranded Indian nationals to enable them to return to India, as also for movement of patients via air ambulances for their treatment in India, he said.

"As on September 10, 2020, as per the details available with Indian missions, the total number of Indian citizens abroad infected

with coronavirus stood at 11,616," he said.

Out of the 11,616 Indians infected with COVID-19 abroad, 4,618 were in Singapore, 2,639 in Bahrain, 1,769 in Kuwait, 907 in Oman, 420 in Qatar, 308 in Iran, 238 in the UAE and 192 in Italy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India has supported 150 countries with medicines and medical equipment, including around 80 countries under grants-in-aid, he said.

In response to another question on the Vande Bharat Mission, Muraleedharan said the mission was launched on May 7, 2020 and more than 14,12,835 Indian nationals have returned to India via air, land and sea.

To another question on the number of Indians abroad at present who have registered with the Vande Bharat Mission to return to India but have still not returned, Muraleedharan said

according to the information available with the ministry, 4,80,738 Indians who have registered on MEA's online 'REPAT' portal have not yet returned.

"The actual number of people wishing to return may differ. As per information provided by the missions, many people who have registered may no longer wish to return. Moreover, as per latest guidelines of Government of India, passengers are no longer required to register for Air Bubble flights," he said.

"Most people with compelling reasons have safely returned to their homes by air, land and sea. The exercise to bring back stranded Indians is ongoing under the Vande Bharat Mission," he said.

"Our Missions have assisted more than 62,000 Indian nationals in distress involving an expenditure of nearly Rs 22.5

crores from the Indian Community Welfare Fund," he said.

Responding to a separate question on the number of students and workers brought back under the Vande Bharat Mission, Muraleedharan said 56,630 students and 3,08,099 workers had been brought back. Asked about the details of the facilities being given to the workers brought back to the country, the minister said, "With the aim of making the best of our skilled workforce returning to the country due to the ongoing pandemic, the Government of India launched an initiative SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) to conduct a skill mapping exercise of the returning citizens under the Vande Bharat Mission." SWADES, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and

Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of External Affairs, is aimed to create a database of qualified citizens based on their skill sets and experience to tap into and fulfil demand of Indian and foreign companies.

This was done to facilitate reintegration of migrant workers into the labour market and promote effective employment opportunities, he said.

"For facilitating employment opportunities, details of SWADES registrations have been integrated with Skill India's ASEEM (Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping) portal which was launched on July 10, 2020," he said. All data regarding Indians returning under Vande Bharat Mission was also shared with relevant state governments, on a real time basis, he said.

When India and China talked

While its implementation on the ground will be a key test, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi deserve felicitations for agreeing on September 11 that our troops "should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions". Meeting in Moscow in the midst of tension, and with our experience in Ladakh being agonisingly fresh, their agreement is an accomplishment of not just bilateral diplomatic reflexes but of practical intelligence.

It is, in fact, the most tangible, ground-level Sino-Indian development since the signing of the India-China agreement in Qingdao on June 9, 2018, on the sharing of hydrological data on the Yarlung-Tsangpo or Brahmaputra. Given our boundary dispute, China's position on Aksai Chin, Arunachal Pradesh and post-Doklam, that agreement reached by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi with President Xi Jinping was historic. I thought then and believe now even more, that it was, in fact, civilisational. In the Qingdao Agreement, India succeeded in persuading the upper-riparian "parent" to view the river downstream non-hegemonically. This was a gain for gravitational and ecological intelligence for both nations, faced with what Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs in Beijing, in a 2017 interview, described as "the harsh reality that ...it is not easy to find clean rivers and lakes anymore" and "the quality of groundwater aquifers is still deteriorating". A water crisis looms over our two nations, dependent as both are on rain-fed rivers, with global warming reducing sources for snow-fed rivers. Civilisations have, in history, been about river-based and river-nourished habitation.

Seeing the reports from Moscow, I recalled the presentation of credentials in June 1998 by the new Chinese ambassador to New Delhi to then President KR Narayanan. Both the ambassador and the president knew that the occasion was not just ceremonial. Nothing between China and India can be "just ceremonial". President Narayanan had, early in his career as an officer in the ministry of external affairs, been on the China desk. And being the scholar that he was, he used the opportunity to study Sino-Indian relations in-depth and prepared a paper on the subject. It dealt with both the strategic and civilisational dimensions of our ties. Shortly before the ceremony, he asked for a copy of that closely-typed paper from the ministry and re-read it. Those like me privileged to be serving on his staff knew he took no event for granted, and studied not just official briefs but old and new books as well. He used

that learning, without ostentation, in the conversations that ensued around the occasion. The Chinese ambassador-designate knew, too, that the president he was presenting his credentials to, was not "just someone who happened to be president". After the 1962 war, the two neighbours had withdrawn their ambassadors. When the positions were resumed, in 1976, Narayanan was chosen as the ambassador of India to the People's Republic of China.

So it was as one who knew China that President Narayanan received the new Chinese ambassador to New Delhi. He had worked on the draft welcoming speech given to him, enriching it with his own special touches, like in these words: "As a sister civilisation in the East, India has had extensive contacts and exchanges with China which have been not only mutually rewarding but enriching for the Asian and world civilisation". And in a way typical of the philosopher-President, he added: "We must promote exchanges at the level of the peoples of India and China".

Two years later, as President Narayanan was leaving on a State visit to China, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee told him that he hoped the visit "will open a new chapter in our relations". I cannot say if it did that but the visit, in which he was accompanied by a political rainbow comprising Members of Parliament (MPs) Sushma Swaraj, Somnath Chatterjee, Sushil Shinde, S Ramachandran Pillai and a non-MP, Mohammed Afzal Meem, certainly made an impression there. "You were born in 1920", President Jiang Zemin told him, "I was born in 1926. We belong to the same generation... We must make efforts that would be beneficial to both our peoples." When President Narayanan called on the then Premier Zhu Rongji, he pointed to the wide spectrum of Indian politics represented in the Indian delegation and said all parties in India were united in wanting improved relations with China. And Zhu, thoughtfully, said something I can never forget. "There is a touch", Zhu said, "of Indian civilisation in Chinese culture."

President Narayanan, on more than one occasion during that visit, stressed on the fact that the time during which discord has marked our ties is much shorter than the time in which we have had concord. There is no telling how our relations will fare. But it is important that we do not let go of our sense of the two nations' past in peace and give the maximum possible scope to what the Jaishankar-Wang text has described as "continuing dialogue". And going beyond the immediate concerns of that dialogue, we must strive to keep the Qingdao Agreement on track for it is about the waters of life.

Biden, Trump and politics in 2020 - it's all about lawn-sign virtue signaling these days

This week, America's West Coast found itself on fire. Millions of acres have burned across California, Oregon and Washington. The smoke clouds have been so immense that they have blotted out the sun in certain areas; air quality has been so poor that hundreds of thousands of people have been forced indoors. There are several key reasons for the extent of these wildfires. Federal and state policies have been geared around stifling wildfires for decades, rather than allowing controlled burns to prevent accretion of flammable vegetation. As ProPublica reports, California alone saw the burning of 4.4 million to 11 million acres per year prehistorically; between 1999 and 2017, that number dropped to only 13,000 acres per year; in February 2020, Nature Sustainability concluded that California would need to burn some 20 million acres to restabilize in terms of fire. Meanwhile, even those who pursue controlled burns must jump through extraordinarily regulatory hoops to do so: The Clean Air Act treats smoke from controlled burns as a pollutant, for example. Even California Gov. Gavin Newsom admitted to President Donald Trump that the state had botched its fire policy: "We have not done justice for our forest management." But that admission was the mere precursor to a more important point for Newsom: that climate change is truly to blame for the wildfires. "The science is in ... that climate change is real," Newsom lectured Trump. In reality, climate change may have had some effect on the California wildfires, but that

effect is entirely secondary in scope to the effect of bad policy. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the temperature in Southern California has increased approximately 3 degrees F over the past century. Since 1980, the temperature in California has increased less than 2 degrees F. Does climate change exacerbate dryness and heat? Of course. But fire policy was the chief failure here. What's more, no matter what Trump believes on climate change, the science is clear: Nothing Trump could have done would have made a measurable impact on the climate between 2017 and 2020. In fact, if the entire United States were to cease carbon emissions today, the climate would be just 0.17 degrees C less hot by 2100. Yet the media and Democrats suggested that the true story of the wildfires was indeed climate change.

This theme was trumpeted by Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden first and foremost: Biden emerged from his basement long enough to stand before a field of waving grass and explain that Trump's unwillingness to signal proper concern about climate change would kill Americans. "We have four more years of Trump's climate denial," Biden gravely intoned. "How many suburbs will be burned in wildfires?"

The answer: exactly as many as would be burned with four years of Biden governance. But the point here isn't shaping public policy; it's shaping perception. Politics has become about the art of the lawn sign.



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A White paper on Covid-19

It will help both current policymaking and serve as a historical record

Parliament has finally held a debate on the most pressing issue of contemporary times - the public health and economic challenge posed by Covid-19. Health minister Harsh Vardhan first offered a statement, where he outlined the government's efforts to tackle the pandemic, the improvement in the health infrastructure, the gains because of the lockdown, the low death rate in India, the medical efforts underway, and the need for constant caution. In response, many Opposition leaders questioned the government's assessment and critiqued the lack of initial preparation, the management of the lockdown, the economic contraction and the distress caused to migrant

workers, and the rising case count in the country.

While the pandemic is still ravaging lives and livelihoods, the debate itself is a good first step in evaluating how India has fared so far. Three points emerge from it. On the lockdown, the Centre continues to believe it did the right thing - the Opposition believes that even if the lockdown was necessary, the four-hour notice was inadequate and caused panic, and the government did not take into account the distress it would cause. On the economy, while the government argues it has taken major steps to tackle distress through a stimulus and welfare measures, the Opposition believes that these steps have been inadequate. As Dravida Munnetra

Kazhagam Member of Parliament, Tiruchi Sivá, said, India had the most stringent lockdown, the weakest stimulus, and has the hardest-hit GDP. On Centre-state coordination, while the former claims that there was regular consultation and decisions were taken based on inputs from states, the Opposition believes that the Centre has taken credit for the good, while putting the blame on states, especially those ruled by non-Bharatiya Janata Party forces, when the going is tough. This divergence is not just a matter of theoretical debate - it has had, and continues to have real policy implications (and human and economic costs) on the



management of the pandemic. Given that it has been close to six months since the lockdown, it is perhaps a good time for the government to come up with a White Paper on India's Covid-19 record. This should highlight the unprecedented nature of the challenge and the steps that the

government has taken. But it should also look at the gaps - in terms of India's public health systems, weak social security safety net, and the persistent challenge in protecting both lives and livelihoods. This will help both current policymaking and serve as a historical record.

What the Israel-UAE-Bahrain accord means for India and the world

The challenges we are facing today know no borders, and it is essential that we combine our capabilities for the benefit of all of our citizens. We call on all those following this historic moment to voice their support for the agreement

The peace agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain is a historic moment that brings together the most advanced states in West Asia for the good of humanity. Combining forces and finding common ground has never been more urgent than now, in the midst of a pandemic, and the Abraham Accord is set to generate immediate results. This historic agreement also brings opportunities for India, which enjoys strong bilateral relations with these developed and thriving economies. India will benefit greatly by expanding its cooperation in many areas including health care, energy, agriculture, cyber security, regional security, technology, water and more.

The leaders of Israel, the United States (US) and the UAE hailed the agreement as a "historic diplomatic breakthrough that will advance peace in the Middle East", "chart a new path", and "unlock the great potential in the region". India's ministry of external affairs praised the agreement between Israel and the UAE, defining both as "key strategic partners of India". The scope for successful collaboration among the three countries is huge. For example,

the health ministers of both Israel and the UAE have already agreed to cooperate on health issues, particularly on the coronavirus. Meanwhile, Israel and India have also been cooperating on joint research and development for rapid testing of Covid-19, as well as new technologies to combat the pandemic.

Developing together, and subsequently utilising the significant relative advantage of India in manufacturing, can bring promising results for the sake of humanity and the whole world, as well as harmonising with the great vision of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi of "Making in India, for India, and for the world".

While business delegations and a student exchange programme are being planned, the UAE and Israel have also committed to working together on medical research and pharmaceuticals, collaborating particularly in the development of treatments and vaccine trials for Covid-19. Apex National Investment has signed a memorandum of understanding with Israel's Sheba Medical Center, establishing Israel as a major destination for medical tourism from the UAE. Both countries



have suffered under the ongoing coronavirus crisis, and it's, therefore, fitting that the first field of cooperation is in health care.

Like India, Israel and the UAE are young countries that have managed to develop dynamic, thriving economies in a few decades. Both the UAE and Israel will gain from the expansion of trade and commercial ties. The Israeli ministry of economy and industry has estimated that Israeli exports to the UAE

could jump to \$500 million a year, and that Emirati investments in Israel could reach \$350 million a year. The cyber-security, medical, financial, and communications industries are expected to benefit in particular from the newfound expansion of trade and investment between the two countries. Given that both countries are strategic partners of India, we can imagine the promising potential that is embedded in this exciting peace agreement. These initiatives and collaborations represent a bit of

what is to come in the normalisation of relations between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain. The citizens of all three countries will quickly see their lives enriched as a result of this agreement, paving the way for increasingly more countries in the region to realise the vast potential that exists in making peace with Israel. As economic opportunities in the region arise, they will also expand beyond the immediate region to benefit our friends in India.

Can the United States Renege on the Payment Due to the WHO?

POTUS has accused WHO's Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus ("Dr. Tedros") of being ethically compromised, or worse, and "China-centric" in his performance - such that the early alarm system that the WHO is responsible to trigger to warn member states' leaders of a public health crisis was not "rung" timely, but delayed to help China cover-up its misconduct - and promised, as a punishment, to withhold Dues-payment to the WHO. The United States is the single largest member state-contributor to WHO's budget, be it assessed or voluntary "dues." Even, as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the largest private donor.

The short answer is "yes." The long answer is "yes; but, it will cause consternation."

In violation of Truth in Labeling laws and WHO's unethical behavior, China has successfully mislabeled the "Wuhan Virus" aka the "China Virus" into a neutered "Coronavirus" or "Covid-19" - unlike a century ago, when it was the Spanish Influenza, so-named as it originated in Spain. Today, China admits - a point of sharp dispute - that it came from the Wuhan Wet Market on or about December 30, 2019, even as nobody doubts that "Wuhan" is in China. Many believe it escaped due to poor protocols from the Virology Lab in Wuhan prior to December 2019, as Patient Zero was admitted on December 1, 2019 in Wuhan hospital. The protein make-up of the virus taken from Patient Zero is different than the ones identified by China as coming out of the Wet Market and given to WHO and others in mid-January 2020. For greater detail, see my Open Letter to POTUS, dated April 14, 2020. China has to-date not turned over Patient Zero's genome, which is different than the one they did turn over in late January 2020.

President Trump was infuriated with WHO for having failed to sound the alarm on or about December 1, 2019 and thereby caused so many Americans to get sick or die - when they didn't have to but for the WHO's complicity in covering up China's mis-deeds. The early and timely alarm is the primary reason for WHO's existence, and had it performed properly, all nations' leaders would have timely shut down their borders and blocked Chinese visitors in December 2019 to limit the infection. Trump acted



rightfully, as every homeowner would, in refusing to pay the Home Alarm company after a group of intruders came into the house illegally and no alarm went off causing great loss to life, limb and property.

So, let us look at WHO: it has a governing body - World Health Assembly ("WHA") - which meets annually in Geneva, composed of its 194 member states. It has an Executive Board, that effectuates the mandates of the WHA. The WHA appoints the Director General of the WHO, currently, the embattled Dr. Tedros. A look at the binding Ethical Principles of the WHO underpins President Trump's frustration and desire to punish China, the place of origin of the virus, as well as all aiders and abettors, none more important than Dr. Tedros who refused to sound the alarm timely in December 2019 and who to-date has not secured Patient Zero's genome - even as vaccines are being developed - based upon the genome of the virus that was subsequently released by China as a "cloaking device" - to cloak the virus Patient Zero was infected with. "WHO is firmly committed to the following ethical principles: Integrity: To behave in accordance with ethical principles, and act in good faith, intellectual honesty and fairness.

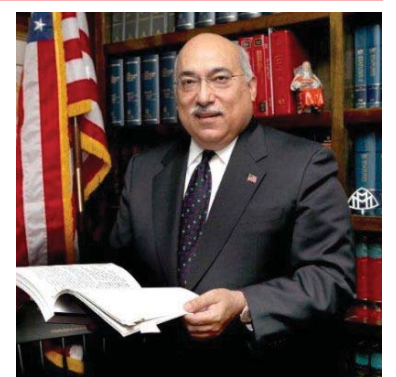
Accountability: To take responsibility for one's actions, decisions and their consequences. Independence and impartiality: To conduct oneself with the interests of WHO only in view and under the sole authority of the Director-General, and to ensure that personal views and convictions do not compromise ethical principles, official duties or the interests of WHO. Respect: To respect the dignity, worth, equality, diversity and privacy of all persons. Professional Commitment: To demonstrate a high level of professionalism and loyalty to the Organization, its

mandate and objectives." Well, a calm reading and the WHO and its DG Dr. Tedros would stand charged for violating these binding ethical codes: for he lacks "integrity," "accountability," "Independence and Impartiality" of a fiduciary, "Respect" of all those who needlessly got sick or died because he wouldn't sound the alarm timely, and "Professional Commitment."

That the world - people and governments - need a world health organization is obvious. This one has failed, and failed shamelessly by embracing Corruption instead of Honor. I have proposed that it be replaced and the UN Charter be amended. A new "UN Security Council" be created in place and stead of the Trusteeship Council, called the "UN Pandemic Council," and it have 12 Permanent Members, and either 9 or 13 Rotating Members. It would have Responsibility to Protect ("R2P") jurisdiction, and it can also have OPCW jurisdiction for chemical warfare, as Wuhan Virus is biowarfare, and each can create a global public health crisis. The P12's Veto power would not be individualized, but require a group of 4-member states. Humanity has embedded its Hope into the United Nations - which celebrates its 75th year for its many achievements, including, the Cuban Missile crisis and no WW III. We need to strengthen multilateralism, so humanity is better served by governments - as Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg told us we must.

That America has suffered so much - even the dastardly attack on Pearl Harbor killed less than 2400 American. And, we responded to Imperial Japan's temerity and warmongering, beat them by dropping two Nukes ("Little Boy" and "Fat Man") - when less than 2400 were killed. How

many Pearl Harbors did China do to us with its Wuhan Virus? Oh, had it been a mistake, China would have apologized and offered to indemnify us for our losses - be it pain and suffering or economic losses. That is what civilized persons and nations do: admit error, and indemnify the other's losses. But, China went "belligerent," not just in the South China Sea sinking and killing Philippines' Fishermen in their national sovereign 12-mile waters, but even sending a mandate to its diplomats to become "Wolf Warriors," so-called, after a Chinese movie of a Chinese Commando who kills Americans in Africa. China is at war with the United States and lots of other countries; they just conveniently forgot to send us that notice in writing, or too many of our leaders like being a "Neville Chamberlain" - and continue to appease China by being calibrated and reasonable - by punishing her less than her minimum sentence: express remorse, indemnify all victims fully, and promise not to misbehave by removing the triggers from each rifle, missile, gun and bomb. Imagine, if POTUS actually responded to China's war upon us nine (9) months ago; the artificial Mischief Reef made from the sand vacuumed up from the ocean's floor would sink back to ocean depths. Chinese Communist Party's China is rejuvenating the Ming Dynasty's Tribute system. Either we remove China's Jaws of War - peacefully or by whatever means necessary - or we all need to learn Chinese. Luckily, since a very tight election for President of these United States is upon us, perhaps Winston Churchill will make a cameo appearance in one of our candidates for POTUS, and do to CCP's global-dominating China, what he did to Hitler's fascist Germany. So, President Trump is right to withhold payment of dues



By Ravi Batra

- until WHA or the Executive Board fires Dr. Tedros "for cause." Of course, if President Barack Obama's Attorney General Loretta Lynch could indict FIFA leadership as a U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, you know that Attorney General Bill Barr can indict Dr. Tedros, and the WHO if he wanted - in his sleep before the Grand Jury, so powerful is the evidence of misconduct. If the world cancelled all the debt China owns in every country, and created a trust fund to pay victims in a like manner as those who suffered in the WTC on 9/11, China's indemnification of losses just to America (federal, state and local) and Americans would exceed \$15 Trillion.

That China is interfering in our elections, after infecting us with almost 100 "Pearl Harbors," is beyond the cavil, and we must rise to defend our Flag and our nation - as ordinary Americans heroically did in 1814 at Fort McHenry under heavy bombardment from the Brits to repeatedly takedown the Flag. Indeed, Francis Scott Key, a hostages-release lawyer-negotiator, seeing such bravery, spontaneously wrote our "Star Spangled Banner."

Everyday hardworking Americans are worthy of American Exceptionalism; may our leaders be also, and actually and fully 'defend and protect' these United States from enemies who commit war upon us. A nine-month old undeclared war by CCP's China has devastated us, unleashed a French Revolution of 1787 lawlessness and criminality upon our streets, and still we wait - wait for POTUS Trump and Secretary of Defense Esper to respond with full force before Election Day. It's much easier to pick between a would-be negotiator-appeaser Chamberlain and a Churchill, who well depicted in the movie, "The Darkest Hour," what is needed now: "we shall never surrender!"

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In times when hate sells, how will News TV regulation work?

"The Supreme Court is right to want to ban hate speech but regulation has been tried and had failed before."

Now that the Supreme Court has echoed the sentiments of many sensible people and talked about its concern with the hatred that is spread every night on some TV channels, we are left with the big question: can anything be done about it? The Supreme Court was careful not to give any quick answers. It talked about appointing a committee of eminent people to go into the issue and to come up with some solutions. This was wise. The line between restricting hate speech and censoring the media is a thin one and we must be careful not to cross it.

But fair regulation is possible. And it has been done within the Indian TV industry before.

Ask me: I saw it done at the Broadcast Content Complaints Council (BCCC) in the five years that I was a member. The BCCC was founded in June 2011 as a way of ending the stranglehold of the I&B Ministry over television content. Before the BCCC was formed, a babu (or more rarely, the minister) could decide to take a channel off the air if the content displeased him. There was a legal basis to this: various restrictive laws governing cable TV and the like give the government enormous power. From 2009 onwards, the TV industry had been trying to persuade the ministry that this amounted to arbitrary censorship. Finally, in 2011, the TV industry and the ministry agreed to set up the BCCC which was composed of government representatives, people from the TV industry and four eminent persons from Civil Society. When the Council was founded, Bhaskar Ghose, Shabana Azmi, Professor Anand Kumar from JNU and I were the civil society representatives.

We invited complaints from the public (the BCCC still runs a little scroll at the bottom of TV screens from time to time) about the content of entertainment channels. If the BCCC secretariat found the complaint to have any merit, we would call the complainant and the channel or sometimes, just the channel to our meeting. Having heard the channel's defence, the whole Council, presided over by a former High Court judge, would decide if the complaint was valid.

We were lucky to have had two outstanding judges as Chairmen in a row: Justice A P Shah and Justice Mukul Mudgal. They were liberal but fair and inherently opposed to needless censorship.

At first I thought that the civil society members would have to act as a buffer between the industry members and the government representatives who would squabble all the time. But by the second meeting, I was surprised to see that we were all on the same side. Decisions were taken by consensus and often industry members were more strident than government appointees when it came to correcting lapses in content creation. The experience brought home a basic reality to me; one that we often forget. If you put a bunch of intelligent men and women together in a room and present them with the facts, the chances are that they will soon lose their biases, begin thinking objectively and usually come to the right conclusions. The Ministry had been obsessed with sex and nudity. We got around that quite easily by setting a watershed time in the evening, after which channels could show adult content. As we pointed out to the ministry, the internet was

already here and the streaming services were soon expected to arrive. Could we really impose strict standards on broadcast TV, a genre which would soon be outflanked by the new technology? Instead we focused on the things that really mattered: incitement to hatred, stereotypical caricatures of women or of communities, caste bias, the sexualisation of young children on talent shows, the invasion of individual privacy (shows that used hidden cameras etc.) respect for women (a surprisingly large number of serials lingered for whole episodes on scenes where women were beaten, humiliated or sexually assaulted), etc.

The system worked so well for the five years that I was on the council that by the end, we were getting more complaints from the ministry's monitors than from anyone else. By and large, genuine viewer concerns had been allayed. To the credit of the government (and I was on the BCCC under both the Congress and the BJP governments), the Council's views were respected and upheld.

At around the same time that the BCCC was founded, a similar body was also created for news television. I was never a part of



this body and we did not worry too much about it because the news universe was very small compared to what we covered (everything else on TV from entertainment to music to sport to lifestyle). I gathered then, purely anecdotally, that the news body was not as active as the BCCC and certainly I don't think I ever heard of a single major decision involving the news regulator. I guess that it is a tribute to how well the BCCC functioned (the council continues to thrive though I am no longer a part of it) that there are now hardly any controversies about the content of entertainment channels all over India. Sadly this is not true of the news sector where, as we have seen, even the Supreme Court has expressed concern about the quality of the content. The obvious conclusion is that self-regulation on the BCCC pattern has failed. This leads us into an area where no

journalist can be comfortable: external regulation. In essence, it is a step back because the whole point of appointing BCCC type bodies was to arms-length the process away from governments and their political interests. My fear is that even external regulation will either fail or will even be designed to fail. Any regulator can only be set up by the government. And the truth is that the government of the day does not seem as concerned about the content of news channels as the Court is.

In fact, many of the channels that draw the most flack for their content are actually pro-government. And all governments know that TV is a weapon of mass distraction: it creates bogus controversies to divert attention whenever there is a serious national crisis. (You might want to turn on your TV set tonight to see what I am talking about.)

By Vir Sanghvi

The glorious uncertainty of the 13th IPL

The T20 game is unpredictable. But the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which begins on September 19, promises to be particularly unpredictable. Consider the unknowns.



The T20 game is unpredictable. But the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which begins on September 19, promises to be particularly unpredictable. Consider the unknowns. All IPL teams were assembled keeping home conditions in

mind; for example, Kolkata Knight Riders is packed with fast bowlers and big-hitting batsmen who like taking on pace and bounce because of the nature of the Eden Gardens pitch. How will they cope with the low and slow pitches of the United Arab

Emirates (UAE)? Data says that T20 scoring rates in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, two of the three venues for this season (the third is Sharjah), have lower scoring rates than any of the Indian venues, except Chennai. Data also suggests that it's much harder to hit

sixes on the UAE pitches than on Indian grounds - will this give someone like Virat Kohli, whose strength lies in anchoring an innings rather than exploding from the first ball, an ideal platform to excel? How will the pitches hold up to the sheer volume of matches? Each venue will host roughly a game every second day for two months.

How will the players cope without crowds? Will it drop the intensity of their game, or help them focus better? And what about the fact that a majority of the players are coming off a very long layoff? What will it do to their fitness and their match endurance? Finally, there is, of course, the inglorious uncertainty of playing while a pandemic rages in the background, threatening to breach the sporting "bio-bubble" at the slightest slip-up.

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

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

Stay home except to get medical care

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



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

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



Call ahead before visiting your doctor

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



Wear a facemask if you are sick

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



Cover your coughs and sneezes

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



Clean your hands often

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



Avoid sharing personal household items

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



New Delhi's salience in the Afghan matrix

The possible return of the Taliban, backed by Pakistan, is a challenge. But don't count India out

After months of delay and wrangling, the intra-Afghan peace talks finally began in Doha, Qatar, last week. These talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban delegation saw envoys and organisations from over 15 countries participating, underscoring the wider regional and global ramifications of these negotiations. Yet, the challenges were clear from the opening remarks of the main interlocutors.

Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, was categorical that while "the legitimate demand of our people and the goal of peace is to end all forms of war and violence through political means," they wanted a constitutional system in the country that would preserve democracy, elections, women's rights, minority rights, rule of law, human and civil rights. In essence, he underlined the need to preserve the achievements of the past two decades. Mullah Baradar, Taliban's deputy leader, tried to strike a conciliatory tone but the group has been clear about its goal: Preserving



religious values and striving for an Islamic system.

The United States (US) has left the choice of the political system to the Afghan government and the Taliban but has not been shy of articulating its preferences. Mike Pompeo, the US secretary of state, suggested "that protecting the rights of all Afghans is indeed the best way for you to break the cycle of violence", even as he warned that the "choices and conduct" during the negotiations will affect both the size and

scope of future US assistance. Earlier this year, in February, the Donald Trump administration decided to reduce its military footprint in Afghanistan; this is likely to go down to 4,500 troops by November. Though Washington is not convinced that the Taliban has weaned itself off completely from Al Qaeda or that it can be a trusted partner in ensuring peace in Afghanistan, there is a wider political consensus in the US on the need to bring troops back home.

For Trump, claiming that he managed to conclude an "endless war" would be a significant policy success to highlight in his beleaguered re-election campaign.

So, in more ways than one, the preference matrix of key players in these negotiations is not in sync, posing fundamental challenges to both the process and the outcome. For the Afghan government, it is essential that violence by the Taliban should cease before any substantive

talks on power-sharing can begin. But for the Taliban, their ability to unleash dramatic violence is a major leverage that they would like to exploit in political negotiations.

But the Taliban also seem to recognise that today's Afghanistan is not the one they controlled from 1996 to 2001. Afghanistan's nascent democracy has thrown up new voices, new actors and new aspirations. Reports of the Taliban engaging with China to build infrastructure after a US withdrawal is an indicator that governance is now one of the priorities which cannot be ignored. And this is where India comes into the picture.

Despite the pessimism in some quarters that India has lost it all in Afghanistan, ground realities are more complex. India's approach is also evolving in line with the changing strategic environment. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks at the start of the intra-Afghan talks in Doha conveyed India's priorities even as they subtly underlined its reservations.

For New Delhi, it is imperative that "the peace process must be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled, respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, promote human rights and democracy, ensure interest of minorities, women and the vulnerable, effectively address violence across the country."

India's primary concern emanates from a perceived Pakistani victory in managing to bring the Taliban back to political power in Kabul, thereby energising Islamist extremists in South Asia to target India. India's regional security environment could be further undermined if the Taliban let Pakistan use Afghan territory for gaining strategic depth vis-à-vis India. Then there is the China factor. Given its close ties with Pakistan, Beijing would like to ensure that the Taliban sever their ties with Uighur extremists in Xinjiang. In exchange, China might emerge as the key economic benefactor of a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan, nudging Pakistan to bring the country into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

LAC: India lays out its case

Rajnath Singh's statement was an excellent summary of the situation on the LAC. Now build a national consensus

In the first official statement in Parliament on the India-China standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, defence minister Rajnath Singh laid out India's case. He provided a quick backdrop of the border conflict, outlined the post-1988 template where the two sides agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity at the border and deepen bilateral relations without necessarily compromising their positions on the dispute itself, chronicled the series of violations of this broad understanding by China over the last five months, and described the current state of negotiations where the onus fundamentally rests on China to disengage.

After months of political ambiguity over the exact situation at the border, Mr Singh's speech came across as a sharp, comprehensive, and



effective intervention from the highest levels in government. Three features of India's position stand out. One, New Delhi is clear that China has amassed troops, it has not adhered to LAC, it has violated border pacts, it has been violent in its conduct, it has attempted transgressions, and it has attempted to change the status quo unilaterally. Two, India considers this

unacceptable, it has conveyed its position to China unambiguously, and New Delhi will pursue dialogue and hope for a peaceful resolution of the issue. Three, while relying on talks, India will continue to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Mr Singh pointedly spoke of counter-deployments, friction points and face-offs, including moves at the end of August when India

successfully resisted Chinese attempts and gained tactical advantage. There were gaps in the speech too, some of it understandable given the sensitive nature of the situation. Mr Singh refrained from asserting that China was currently in Indian territory - which has drawn criticism. But while more details would have been good, this is also a time when the government needs to be given the benefit of doubt because of the complex nature of the crisis. One way to, however, provide more information is to have a closed door briefing for leaders of other parties, which, as a report in this newspaper suggested on Wednesday, is under consideration. The defence minister did well. The government should now build a national consensus to deal with the challenge.

Modi is Also India's Social Reformer-in-Chief

Narendra Damodardas Modi, the 14th Prime Minister of India, will go into the annals of our history as a leader who laid the foundation of a "Sarva Shaktimaan Bharat," an all-powerful India that is respected by all, feared by none, except for the demons. At the crux of this India is the social reforms he has quietly unleashed in the last six years of his reign. These critical reforms have been implemented at a scale and speed that has not been seen in our country for hundreds of years. Be it the triple talaq issue, women's empowerment, girl education, the nationwide cleanliness drive or poverty alleviation, Narendra Bhai, as we fondly call him, is the first Prime Minister in independent India who has carried out such large-scale social reforms. Unlike several of his predecessors whose social reforms were merely driven by slogans like "Garibi Bhagao" or "Roti Kapra and Makan," or simply politicization of reservation to come into power, Modi has done walk the walk. He has let his actions do most of the talking. Not

many prime ministers would have the courage to talk about building toilets from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the very first Independence Day address to the nation. Every step of his prime ministership only shows how much he cares about the common man in this great country and his dedication to their livelihood. The results of opening bank accounts for the people in a matter of months, soon after he was voted to power in 2014 is there for all to see. The poorest of the poor are not only receiving money directly into their bank accounts, they are saving money and using it judiciously to better their and their families' lives for generations to come. The massive corruption in the distribution of subsidies is now a thing of the past. I have had the privilege of knowing "Narendra Bhai" from the days when he was a BJP leader and used to visit the United States. What always struck me the most was his passion for the common man and his care for the poor. He was always curious about Americans' living standards and societal structures, probing for



answers to improve the lives of the last man on the street. He understood the importance of cleanliness- "Swachhata" - on both the inside and outside. Thus, was the genesis of Swachh Bharat Mission. Millions of toilets were built in the first term of his prime ministership. Billions of dollars have been spent on cleanliness and creating awareness among us. Yes, we have a long way to go, but the mission has reached a level that would have been unimaginable before 2014. His singular focus on the common man is evident in every initiative, such as in providing subsidized gas cylinders in rural areas across the country and access to electricity around the

clock across India. Because of him, millions of lives are better every single day. Now he has embarked on another mission of providing housing and clean drinking water to all. These initiatives, along with access to skilled education, ample employment opportunities and fiber optics internet is going to propel India's growth story for decades to come. His health care plan, the largest ever in the world, is a cornerstone of his social reforms. Unless Indians are healthy, we cannot be a healthy nation. And as we all know there is no wealth without health. There is no doubt that Modi has transformed India for the better. For example, a huge swath of women in India were suffering for decades because of triple talaq. But no more. They have now been given the dignity and respect they deserve. This is what Modi has been working toward from day one of his prime ministership. He wants to give dignity and respect to every Indian and ensure his or her health and wealth. At a time when our economy is experiencing a record contraction due to the

coronavirus pandemic, the social reforms being carried out by our popular prime minister would have a multiple impact on our economic growth. I am sure our gross domestic product will reach a new high. Narendra Bhai, who considers the 1.3 billion people of India his family, is the only leader in independent India who has successfully carried out such mammoth socio-economic reforms in just a short span of six years. He is not only a social reformer, but also a protector-in-chief. As someone who is based in New York, the global financial capital and home to the United Nations, I know India is blessed to have finally a decisive leader like Modi. India is safe and secure under his leadership. I believe this decade and century belongs to India. Under his leadership India will emerge as a global power - Vishwa Guru. And in this his socio-economic reforms would play a big role.

**By Jagdish Sewhani, President
The American India Public
Affairs Committee**

On biodiversity, a global failure

The world has failed to achieve even one of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets signed by 170 countries and regions through the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), says the latest Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 (GBO-5) report released on Tuesday. The conservation targets, which aim to protect the world's imperiled flora and fauna, were formulated in Japan in 2010. The convention is currently ironing out its post-2020 framework, which will be

adopted at its next meeting in Kunming, China, in 2021. The new framework will create a new set of targets to remedy the Aichi goals' failures, and turn things around. National governments failed to meet the CBD goals despite an earlier warning from United Nations that one million species could disappear within decades, widening the Holocene extinction: The planet's sixth mass extinction event, driven by human activity. They failed because of two

reasons. One, most countries struggled to balance conservation with the needs of their growing populations and economy (it is the same policy dilemma that is hobbling the fight against the climate crisis). And two, positive conservation steps were upended by perverse incentives which enable destruction - for instance, fossil fuels need mining and overfishing destroys coral reefs, all of which has an impact on preservation.

The GBO-5 comes out at a crucial time when, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is being forced to rethink its development objectives and its relationship with nature. Business-as-usual will only plunge the globe into deeper crises, given the complex interdependence of all elements in nature. A stronger CBD framework must push national governments to act and avoid a natural catastrophe that can endanger human lives.

A reality check on the economy

India's GDP contracted by 23.9% in the quarter ending June 2020. The government has argued that a V-shaped recovery is underway in the economy. But almost all institutional and private forecasts do not support this claim. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) expects the Indian economy to contract by 9% in 2020-21. ADB had projected a 4% contraction in June. On September 14, S&P projected a contraction of 9% for the economy, from its earlier forecast of a 5% contraction. Most experts also warn that even the sequential recovery in the economy cannot be taken for granted. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) reached its highest post-lockdown level in the week ending September 13. However,

the Nomura report raises questions on its sustainability given the continuous rise in Covid-19 infections. In addition, rising inflation poses another challenge to economic recovery. Headline retail inflation clocked a 6.7% growth in August, making it the fifth consecutive month when inflation was above the upper bound of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s comfort level. Food prices and necessary services such as transport and communication are driving up inflation, even as the market for mass consumption goods such as apparel continues to be weak. Consumers are clearly facing a double whammy of squeeze on incomes and job losses along with a rise in price of essential commodities and services. And till this

situation is reversed, the economy, across sectors, and citizens, across age groups, regions and classes, will suffer. Given these disconcerting facts, many - including this newspaper - have suggested a fiscal stimulus to boost economic activity. However, the fact that the supplementary demand for grant moved on the first day of monsoon session asked for a net additional spending of ₹1.67 lakh crore suggests that there are no immediate plans for another stimulus. To be sure, the government has not ruled one out. In July, the chief economic adviser said that the second round of stimulus might be timed when the Covid-19 vaccine becomes available. What needs to be understood,

**Economic data
presents a
challenging
picture. Don't
delay a second
stimulus**

however, is the fact that delaying the stimulus might make things worse. Unless there is a focused intervention in the economy, both business and consumer sentiment will continue to deteriorate, eclipsing prospects of any credible recovery.



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Kangana's Heavy Heart And Bollywood Response

This is what happens during an ugly divorce - a laundry load of dirty linen is hung up for public viewing, and the owner of the laundry runs away. Think of the latest Bollywood controversy that erupted when Samajwadi MP Jaya Bachchan spoke during Zero Hour on the opening day of this session of parliament. Let's call it a dramatic 'First Day, First Show' moment, which is common currency in showbiz. Over to Bollywood vs. Bollywood.

Mrs. B took off and how! Known for her outspokenness and straight talk, inside and outside of parliament, Jaya decided it was about time someone (she!) put things in perspective about the entire 'Charsi Bollywood' debate that has become a news story ever since Sushant Singh Rajput's tragic death. Bollywood has never had it this bad, and as a veteran actor, Jaya obviously felt incensed enough to silence a few loudmouths who she says are giving a terrible name to the entire film industry by painting everybody with the same brush. Starting with Loudmouth No.1. On the face of it, the obvious object of her ire was BJP MP.

Ravi Kishan, who had spoken about the "drug addiction in the film industry". Jaya Bachchan would have none of it! What drug cartel was this chap talking about? She accused her co-parliamentarian of ingratitude, referencing a common Hindi saying involving a food-laden thaali. In short, this insensitive man was biting the hand that has fed him and made him what he is. She was equally upset by the manner in which social media was 'flogging' the film community at large, and, fumed the lady, the government was not doing a damn thing about! Tch! Tch! This is pretty shabby of the sarkar. The movie industry, as Jaya pointed out, provides direct employment to 5 lakh people and indirect employment to 5 million! Some of India's highest taxpayers are movie stars! Plus, the patriotic film community always stands by the government in times of national crisis.

Don't forget, the film industry also brings a great deal of international fame and recognition. Take a bow, Chaitanya Tamhane - Bollywood may now give you the recognition Venice just did! Naturally, Jaya was distressed by the lack of government support. She demanded 'protection' (no, not

the Y-Category wala protection - that's reserved for another outspoken film industry lady). But first, the BJP parliamentarian had to be shown his proper place. For Ravi Kishan had had the temerity to badmouth Bollywood! Imagine his nerve! Jaya Bachchan is seriously bugged - how dare he? This sort of targeting and tarnishing of an industry that has created and nurtured him - and thousands like him - was clearly an act of ingratitude, thundered Mrs. B. And she wants the 'slander' to end. She has found support within the film community - it's always a good move to attempt damage control as a cohesive, united industry, protecting its own interests. Jaya B's got your back, guys!

Ravi Kishan hastily back tracked and swallowed his words (nothing was left behind on the empty thaali) as he weakly explained his position, making it worse for himself. He said things were different in his time, squarely accusing the present generation of stars of being naughty. Let me not go into his bizarre conspiracy theory - the one about Pakistan-China getting together to destroy our great and glorious film industry by drugging it. Wait a minute - why does Pakistan



feature so prominently in Bollywood controversies these days?

Aha, Enter Kangana Ranaut! She got Jaya Bachchan's goat by calling Bollywood a 'gutter'. Gutter, not sewer. Not nullah. There's one hell of a lot of glitz in that gutter, I guess. So, nobody has really cared to notice the grime and garbage underneath. Nobody, that is, except Kangana Ranaut (correct spelling right here, mediawalas, please note). Ms. Ranaut is back in Manali, relieved to have left the gutter behind. Her heart is heavy. Very heavy. But Jaya Bachchan is not interested in Kangana Ranaut's heart. Like everybody else, she is wondering what will emerge

next as her statement. A lot, as it turned out. Ms. Ranaut came straight to the point, got intensely personal and asked bluntly if Mama Bachchan would have said what she did in parliament had her own children been targeted the way she, Kangana Ranaut, has been singled out and attacked. We breathlessly await Mrs. B's response. Maybe she'll point out to Ms. Ranaut that her own, exceptionally well-behaved children (Shweta and Abhishek) have not compared Mumbai to PoK? And does anybody really think the Bachchan bachchas are 'out of control'? No, na? But someone out there clearly is...theek hai?

By Shobhaa De

The Problem With 'Strong' Prime Ministers



On the eve of Indira Gandhi's first visit to Washington as Prime Minister, our Ambassador was asked by the American President, Lyndon Johnson, how he should address her. Should he call her 'Mrs Gandhi', or 'Madame Prime Minister'? The Ambassador referred the query back to New Delhi. The Prime Minister laconically replied that her own Cabinet Ministers usually called her 'Sir'.

I was reminded of this story last week when a rare TV channel organized a rare programme on the disastrous GDP numbers. At one stage in the debate, a spokesman of the Samajwadi Party asked the spokesman of

the Bharatiya Janata Party who the incumbent Agriculture Minister was. This sector employed the most citizens; surely the ruling party's spokesman would know which minister was in charge? The BJP hack did not. The tragic truth is that he was not supposed to know anyway. For all that matters in the presentation of this government is 'Modi! Modi! Modi!', much as all that mattered to Congressmen in the 1970s was 'Indira! Indira! Indira'.

When in the winter of 2013-4, Narendra Modi launched his Prime Ministerial bid, a core part of his appeal was that he would be 'strong' whereas the then incumbent was 'weak'. The latter charge was accurate; especially in his second term, Dr Manmohan Singh was uncertain and indecisive as well as increasingly deferential towards the Congress's First Family. His weakness was amply demonstrated in September

2013, when Dr Singh said in public that Rahul Gandhi was an 'ideal choice' for PM, adding that he would be 'happy' to work under his leadership. The remark demeaned his office. Dr Singh had been Prime Minister for more than nine years at the time, and was a former Finance Minister and Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Whereas Rahul Gandhi's only qualifications for the Prime Minister's post was the fact that he was Sonia Gandhi's son.

Narendra Modi adroitly seized upon Manmohan Singh's perceived as well as publicly proclaimed weakness. He himself had, he boasted, a 'chhappan inch kichhati', a 56-inch chest. Unlike the incumbent, he was independent-minded, always his own man. He would be the strong, very strong, Prime Minister that India needed and deserved.

The contrast between a strong Narendra Modi and a weak Manmohan Singh was played up



by the BJP during the election campaign of 2014. This presentation certainly helped win Modi and his party win a resounding victory. But has this image of strength subsequently helped him in his duties as a Prime Minister? Given the multiple crises facing the country at the moment, it appears not. For these crises are largely attributable to the way in which this government is run as a one-person show, with the cabinet, the bureaucracy, and the nation itself held hostage to the

capricious decisions of a single individual. In the cabinet system of governance, the Prime Minister is supposed to be first among equals. While they work under the overall direction of the Prime Minister, ministers have direct responsibility for matters that come under their designated domain. That is the theory. In practice, all through Narendra Modi's first term as Prime Minister, no cabinet minister enjoyed any sort of autonomy at all.

By Ramachandra Guha



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How to make Saarc useful in the times of Covid-19 pandemic

The association's most important role right now would be to provide a platform for dialogue

Most observers do not have many expectations from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), and, indeed, the progress that the region has seen in bilateral or sub-regional cooperation over the last decade has not involved the association. But times are unprecedented, thanks to Covid-19. Like last year, Nepal, the current chair of Saarc, plans to host a meeting (virtual) of the Saarc council of ministers during the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in the third week of September. Is there anything that these ministers can meaningfully do through Saarc to help reduce economic hardship and, through some quick wins, create hope for greater stability in the region? Despite its limitations, Saarc - if used effectively by Nepal and the council of ministers - may be able to add some value in the current turmoil, and, in the process, enhance its credibility and effectiveness. Perhaps Saarc's most-important role right now would be to provide a platform for dialogue. South Asia is fraught with a trust deficit that runs across many bilateral relationships. Even convening can be treated with suspicion. When India convened a meeting of South Asian trade officials in April, Pakistan did not participate. On the other hand, when SAARC was involved in the convening, as in the leaders' dialogue (proposed by India) in March, all countries took part. They were possibly more at ease than if India had convened. Similarly, when Pakistan took the initiative and organised a Saarc-convened meeting of health ministers, all members participated. So, the first order of business is for member states to use Saarc to convene an inclusive dialogue, because the dialogue is the starting point for any collaboration.

The low share of intra-regional trade and investment in South Asia penalises its workers, consumers, and exporters. This piece suggests four specific areas where Nepal's initiatives through Saarc can address the larger issues at stake. All four can be tabled and pursued simultaneously. And whether or not Saarc can nudge things

along, the issues will remain, and failure to resolve them will reduce the economic opportunities for the people of South Asia.

Direct trade between India and Pakistan has slowed to a trickle since India imposed 200% duties on imports from Pakistan in February 2019 (after the Pulwama attack), and Pakistan banned trade with India in August 2019 (after the passage of the J&K Reorganisation Bill). This has exacted a severe toll on the thousands of families dependent on bilateral trade, as documented by Afaq Husain and Nikita Singla of BRIEF.

Through Saarc, if Nepal can bring all countries to the dialogue table to discuss trade, India and Pakistan might be willing to consider face-saving trade resumption on pre-2019 terms. Such face-saving could take the form of resuming trade subject to an annual certification by both sides to the effect that the other party has not taken actions prejudicial to its neighbour's interest (the exact terminology and content can be decided between

India and Pakistan). This is reminiscent of the United States' annual renewal of "Most Favoured Nation" status (same terms as any other trading partner) to China, throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The resumption of trade between South Asia's two largest economies will not only help the traders, porters, truckers and other stakeholders on the border, it will also impart some much-needed motivation to the rest of South Asia, which often feels weighed down by the acrimony between India and Pakistan.

Afghanistan has long demanded that Pakistan allow it to import Indian goods via the Wagah-Attari border. Its trucks can currently transit across Pakistan and export to India via the Wagah border, as part of the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. But these trucks cannot bring back Indian imports and have to return empty to Afghanistan. In the spirit of a Covid détente, could Pakistan be persuaded to allow these Afghan trucks to take



back Indian goods? To address its domestic constituencies, Pakistan could insist that the import load be no more than the export load, at least to begin with and review the experience after a few months. Still, it will nonetheless earn enormous goodwill from India and, especially, Afghanistan. Nepal could offer to appoint a neutral mediator via Saarc to resolve contentious issues. As in the earlier case, a solution here would have positive ramifications for the countries involved and Saarc's self-confidence, achievements that would go beyond the bilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan trade relationship. E-commerce is a fruitful avenue to explore, given the Covid-19

induced increase in digitisation. A World Bank report (Unleashing E-Commerce for South Asian Integration) suggested ways of building on the informal intra-regional e-commerce that already exists. A practical and incremental approach is best suited to address the multiple hurdles. Issues include the lack of consumer access in some countries to foreign exchange for cross-border payments, and the absence of a predictable tariff regime for small value shipments, say up to a value of \$100. Nepal can suggest that Saarc be used as a forum for countries to thrash out the core issues between themselves; the World Bank report's suggestions can be a starting point.

The Delhi Police is making a mistake

Investigate the riots impartially. Don't engage in political vendetta



The Delhi riots in February 2020 marked one of the darkest chapters in the Capital's political history. It reflected frayed social tensions between Hindus and Muslims. It came in the wake of a deeply polarised political climate - the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). It happened in the backdrop of the Delhi elections, where there was violent rhetoric - especially by functionaries of the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP). It was a deep embarrassment to India internationally with the riots taking place during United States President Donald Trump's visit. And it reflected gross State failure, where for over 48 hours - before there was a de facto reshuffle in Delhi Police and national security adviser Ajit Doval walked the streets of northeast Delhi - the Delhi Police was unable to quell the

violence. The Delhi riots saw violence from both sides, and in that aspect, it was different from the 1984 violence - which systematically targeted the Sikhs. But there is a lesson from 36 years ago. There has never been any meaningful justice in the 1984 violence, with perpetrators, often with political sanction, having got away. That, then, bred a culture of impunity - which enabled subsequent riots

and pogroms. There has to be justice not just because it is the right of victims and for closure, but also to send a message that violence and promoting enmity between communities is unacceptable, and irrespective of political affiliations, there will be punishment.

Instead of conducting an impartial investigation into the riots, the Delhi Police, however, has spun an elaborate theory - it rests on how those who were critics of the government in general and CAA in particular, including respected political leaders, civil society voices, students, instigated the riots. But the police has been unable to show direct evidence connecting their speeches with the subsequent violence. Instead, this theory appears to be the framework being used to intimidate critics of the government, even as the role of those who may be aligned with the ruling party is carefully sidestepped.



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Pakistan plans a change in Gilgit-Baltistan status

The government's plans were outlined by the federal minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur, during an interaction with a group of journalists in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The Pakistan government plans to make Gilgit-Baltistan the country's fifth province, two years after powers of the Islamabad-controlled council for the region were transferred to a local assembly. The government's plans were outlined by the federal minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur, during an interaction with a group of journalists in Islamabad on Wednesday. He said the region will be accorded the status of a full-fledged province with constitutional rights such as representation in both houses of Parliament. Prime Minister Imran Khan is expected to visit the region soon

and make a formal announcement about the change, Gandapur was quoted as saying in reports in the Pakistani media. "After consultation with all stakeholders, the federal government has decided in principle to give constitutional rights to Gilgit-Baltistan," he said. "Our government has decided to deliver on the promise it made to the people there." There was no immediate reaction to the minister's remarks from Indian officials, though New Delhi has consistently opposed changes made in the disputed region by the Pakistan government. India claims Gilgit-Baltistan as part of the erstwhile

state of Jammu and Kashmir. Gandapur also said that subsidies and tax exemptions for the region wouldn't be withdrawn after the grant of constitutional rights. "Until the people there stand on their feet, they will continue to enjoy this facility," he said. People familiar with developments said the Pakistani military establishment had been in touch with political parties regarding the changes. Khan's ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party is backing the changes with an eye on upcoming elections in Gilgit-Baltistan so that it can make political gains and form the next government in the region. Gandapur said the elections



were likely to be held in mid-November. Preparations had been completed and the distribution of tickets by the PTI will begin soon, he added. He contended that the "deprivation" faced by the people of Gilgit-Baltistan for 73 years would end with the change. Besides constitutional rights and a provincial setup, important steps are being taken for developing the region, he said.

This includes work on Moqpondass special economic zone under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and steps to improve health care, tourism, transport and education, he said. In 1999, Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are Pakistani citizens and directed the federal government to start appropriate administrative and legislative measures.

Pakistan's prime minister calls for rapists to be hanged or castrated after mother gang-raped



Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has called for rapists and pedophiles to be publicly hanged or chemically or physically castrated for their crimes after a gang-rape case provoked a nationwide outcry. Last week a woman was raped by two men after she ran out of gas and her car broke down on a highway outside of Lahore. The woman called a helpline and was

waiting for the police to arrive when the men raped her and robbed her with her two children present, officials said. Following the incident, Lahore police chief Umar Sheikh faced an angry backlash and calls for his resignation after suggesting the rape was partially the victim's fault. He said that the victim should have been better prepared for her journey by ensuring her fuel tank was full and travelling along a busier road to her destination. Sheikh has since apologized for his remarks but has garnered more criticism for not appearing in front of the Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights after he was directed to do so.

The case has seen an outpouring of anger across the country and has brought sexual violence against women into the national spotlight. A stunned nation took to the streets in countrywide protests, with those participating holding placards calling for the hanging of rapists. Demonstrators also demanded reforms in law enforcement agencies and the judicial systems handling of such cases. In a television interview on Monday, the prime minister said that he had discussed punishment options with his cabinet for such cases. "I think he (the culprit) should be hanged in a public square. Rapists and child molesters should undergo

public hanging. You do not know the real statistics as well, because it's under-reported. People do not report it as they are scared or ashamed, women are ashamed, no one wants to speak." Khan acknowledged that public hanging may not be internationally acceptable and could affect Pakistan's status in trade relations with the European Union. He suggested instead that sex offenders "undergo chemical castration, or surgery be performed so they cannot do anything in future." The main culprit in the case has so far evaded arrest however three of his associates have been detained according to police officials.

'Deeply concerned' by onion export ban: Bangladesh to India

In the latest strain in ties between New Delhi and Dhaka, onions have taken centre stage. Bangladesh has officially conveyed its "deep concern" over India's abrupt decision to ban the export of onions. This has been communicated through a note verbale by the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. Bangladesh Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen Thursday said the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is very "repentant" for not informing Bangladesh beforehand while imposing a ban on onion exports. I

heard that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is very repentant. Because they didn't know about the sudden ban," he told reporters at his office, soon after his return from Turkey. Bangladesh expects a positive outcome regarding its request to withdraw the ban on onion export soon, sources said. Momen said that there was an understanding between the two countries that information would be conveyed in advance when it comes to such steps. It would have been better had Bangladesh been informed about the abrupt decision beforehand, he said.

According to estimates, Bangladesh's monthly requirement of onions is about 2 lakh tonnes. The country has a stock of around 5.6 lakh tonnes of the bulb and import of 11,000 tonnes is under process, authorities in Dhaka said. Bangladesh has reached out to Turkey to compensate for the onion shortage that may be caused by India's ban. Earlier, Bangladesh shared its "deep concern" with India at the sudden ban, which comes after discussions in October last year and January this year. The latest abrupt announcement of



the Government of India understanding shared, the "undermines" the discussions that took place in 2019 and 2020 between the two friendly countries on the matter and the

Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote to Indian High Commission in Dhaka on September 15.

Former Model Accuses Trump Of Sexually Assaulting Her In 1997

Amy Dorris told Britain's The Guardian that Trump sexually assaulted her in his VIP suite at the US Open tennis tournament in New York -- claims he denied via his lawyers.

A former model has accused US President Donald Trump of groping and forcibly kissing her in 1997 -- the latest allegation made against the Republican incumbent just weeks before he seeks reelection.

Amy Dorris told Britain's The Guardian that Trump sexually assaulted her in his VIP suite at the US Open tennis tournament in New York -- claims he denied via his lawyers.

"He just shoved his tongue down my throat and I was pushing him off. And then that's when his grip became tighter and his hands were very gropey and all over my butt, my breasts, my back, everything," Ms Dorris said in an interview.

"I was in his grip, and I couldn't get out of it," she added.

Trump has faced more than a dozen allegations of sexual misconduct,



including a claim by prominent American columnist E. Jean Carroll that he raped her in a department store changing room in the mid-1990s.

But he brushed them aside in his run for the White House.

Shortly before the 2016 election, a tape recording emerged from 2005 in which

he was heard boasting about how his fame allowed him to "grab" women by the genitals when he wanted.

Trump dismissed this as "locker room banter" but subsequently apologized.

Dorris was 24 at the time of the alleged incidents. Trump was 51 and married at the time to his second wife, Marla Maples.

The accuser provided The Guardian with several photos showing her in Trump's company, and multiple people corroborated her account, saying she told them at the time.

She says she told Trump to stop but "he didn't care." She added: "I felt violated, obviously."

Asked why she continued to be

around Trump in subsequent days, Dorris responded: "That's what happens when something traumatic happens -- you freeze." But Trump's attorneys told the newspaper that her version of events was unreliable and there would be other witnesses if she had been assaulted.

They suggested in comments to The Guardian that the allegation could be politically motivated, coming weeks before Trump faces Joe Biden in the November 3 election. Dorris, now 48, said she decided to come forward to be a role model for her teenage twin daughters.

She first told The Guardian her story more than a year ago, but asked the newspaper not to publish it.

"I'm sick of him getting away with this," Dorris said.

Prosecutors file additional charges against Rudy Giuliani associates



Federal prosecutors in New York on Thursday brought additional charges against two associates of Rudy Giuliani -- Lev Parnas and David Correia -- alleging they sought to defraud potential investors to their company Fraud Guarantee.

The indictment also added additional charges against Parnas, Correia and two other men -- Igor Fruman and Andrei Kukushkin -- relating to a foreign donor scheme that prosecutors alleged when the four were originally indicted last

October. Though the additional charges filed Thursday don't substantively change the nature of the case, they may increase pressure on the defendants to cooperate with prosecutors. The government said the investigation is continuing. Lawyers for Parnas, Correia and Kukushkin didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. An attorney for Fruman declined to comment. All the defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges in the original indictment and are set to face trial in February.

In the case of Fraud Guarantee, Parnas and Correia allegedly made false and misleading statements to potential investors about how their money would be spent, how much Parnas had contributed to the company and how much the company had raised, according to the indictment. The business was pitched as an insurance policy for companies to protect against frauds, but it isn't clear whether they had any clients, CNN has reported, and "the company never became operational," according

to the indictment.

Prosecutors allege Parnas and Correia raised more than \$2 million from at least seven investors, and while some of the money was spent on business expenses, the majority was used for personal purposes. According to the indictment, Parnas spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for rent for his personal residence, transferred more than \$40,000 to accounts in the names of himself and his wife and spent more than \$30,000 for luxury car leases. Thousands of dollars were also withdrawn as cash or transferred to other accounts, including those in the name of Correia's wife.

Neither Parnas' nor Correia's wives have been charged or accused of wrongdoing.

Prosecutors at the Manhattan US Attorney's Office weighed bringing charges related to Fraud Guarantee for many months, with FBI agents and prosecutors interviewing investors who were pitched on the Florida-based company, CNN has reported, and subpoenaing text messages and other documents related to the effort. In 2018, the company paid

Giuliani -- President Donald Trump's personal attorney -- \$500,000.

An attorney for a wealthy Republican donor, Charles Gucciardo, has told CNN that Gucciardo paid Giuliani's firm on behalf of Fraud Guarantee.

Though Gucciardo has said Giuliani was paid to promote the company, Giuliani's lawyer has said he performed legal work. In the indictment filed Thursday, prosecutors didn't refer to Giuliani or address any payment to him from the company. But in referring to "Victim-7," they describe an individual who invested \$500,000 in Fraud Guarantee between September and October 2018 by transmitting the funds to an account held by a consulting firm that Parnas and Correia had retained on the company's behalf. Prosecutors also added new charges relating to the alleged foreign donor schemes, now charging the men with soliciting a foreign national donation to US elections and aiding and abetting and making donations by a foreign national into federal and state elections.

California expands family leave protections to millions of small business workers



Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday extended job protections to millions of workers at small businesses in California if they need time off to care for themselves, a child or another relative.

Newsom signed CA SB1383 (19R) by Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara), to expand the California Family Rights Act, which extends unpaid protections to workers who take family leave.

A father of four, Newsom has championed family leave

expansion as a priority for his administration. The protection comes in the midst of the pandemic, which has given workers additional need to take time off if they or their families have suffered health effects from the coronavirus.

"Californians deserve to be able to take time off to care for themselves or a sick family member without fearing they'll lose their job," Newsom said in a statement. "The COVID-19 pandemic has only further revealed the need for a family

leave policy that truly serves families and workers, especially those who keep our economy running."

SB 1383 in January will extend job-protected leave to a larger swath of California's workforce - those at businesses with five or more employees - and will allow workers to take time off work to care for a broader set of relatives who are ill, including siblings, grandparents and grandchildren. The bill also extends protections to workers who need time off when their relatives are called to active military duty.

The bill does not require employers to pay workers while they are on leave, but rather to hold their jobs until they return, for up to 12 weeks. Jackson argues that many workers pay into the social safety net but don't avail themselves of the state's paid leave benefits because they fear losing their jobs.

The expansion was a victory for workers' advocates that for years have pushed for such a change. "SB 1383 is a crucial building

block toward creating a stronger, more resilient, and more just society, a society that recognizes and supports workers' obligations to our families," said Diana Lee, a physician resident at Los Angeles County + University of Southern California Medical Center, in a news release Thursday.

The California Chamber of Commerce and other business groups fought the proposal, saying it will put undue stress on smaller businesses that are exempt from such requirements. They also emphasized how small businesses in particular - from restaurants to mom-and-pop retail - are struggling to survive during the pandemic due to widespread closures and restrictions.

SB 1383 was enacted despite appearing on the Chamber's feared "Job Killer" list. The Chamber, in its response to Newsom's signing, said it was "disappointed" but pivoted to emphasizing that small business owners should become familiar

with the provisions to avoid any legal problems next year.

The bill narrowly passed the state Senate in June and won final approval in the Assembly on Aug. 31, just before the time ran out on the Legislative session - without a vote to spare.

On that night, Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland) supplied one of those crucial votes with her newborn daughter, Elly, in tow. Wicks made international news for legislating with her swaddled baby on the floor of the Assembly, where she had to appear because she was not granted permission to vote through a proxy system. She became a symbol of the demands on working mothers during the pandemic.

While the record shows that SB 1383 received 46 votes in the Assembly, five Democrats only added their support after the bare minimum 41 colleagues approved it - and were seemingly poised to let the bill die had Wicks and others not supplied their votes.

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Hundreds pose nude wearing only masks for London art installation



perhaps more so now than ever," Tunick said in a statement.

Tunick, who has transformed locations all around the world into a sea of naked bodies, has worked to pose and capture the human form, even in the face of coronavirus restrictions.

This year, the artist has been using video conferencing technology to take images of mask-wearing participants -- capturing his nude installations via collage style screenshots during lockdown. American-born Tunick has staged about 100 large-scale nude photos in public spaces around the world, from Munich to Mexico City, where he photographed a reported 18,000 naked participants.

While his naked art has previously been used as a form of protest, according to organizers Tunick's London installation was designed to celebrate "participation and freedom."

Hundreds of volunteers have stripped and posed naked in a north London park -- all in the name of art.

Wearing nothing but a white face mask, some 220 volunteers gathered at Alexandra Palace to take part in the Everyone Together art installation organized by Spencer Tunick. Tunick, who is known for bringing hundreds -- and sometimes thousands -- of people together to pose for striking mass nude photographs, positioned volunteers at least one meter apart according to social

distancing guidelines.

Volunteers were screened and temperature-checked before the installation began in the early hours of Saturday morning, organizers said.

The installation, which was the first major participatory work of art since the United Kingdom went into lockdown in March, organizers said, was supported by Sky Arts. "The reality of masses of people close together -- shoulder to shoulder, skin touching skin -- may be something of the past for now, but still the desire is there for that natural connectivity,

This Pacific Island province is so frustrated with China's presence that it's pushing for independence

It was pitched as a rare repatriation flight to bring people stranded in China back to their Pacific Island home which has yet to report a single coronavirus case. But of the 104 people on board the chartered Solomon Airlines flight from the southern Chinese city Guangzhou on September 3, only 21 were from the Solomon Islands. The rest were Chinese nationals, according to a report by Radio New Zealand which cited the passenger list. In the days before the flight landed in the country's humid capital, Honiara, local politicians and non-governmental bodies urged the Solomon Islands' Prime Minister to call it off. Despite China reporting just a handful of new coronavirus cases each day for the past few months, to some, the risk was too great. The Solomon Islands' borders have been almost entirely sealed for months. This flight, they worried, could bring the first reported case of Covid-19

into the country of almost 700,000, and wreak devastation on its poor health system. But the government didn't listen. For Daniel Suidani, the premier of the country's most populous province, Malaita, the nation's leaders were putting their new relationship with Beijing before their own people. The Solomon Islands swapped allegiances with the democratic self-governed island of Taiwan for communist Beijing last year. Beijing considers Taiwan part of China, and refuses to have diplomatic relations with any nation that doesn't recognize its "One China Policy." Two days before the Honiara flight was due to land, Suidani announced an independence referendum for Malaita. "Our conviction is that the ... administration has become so obliged and indebted to China that it can no longer provide essential services to protect its citizens' public health," he said in a statement emailed to CNN.

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Judge blocks 'politically motivated' changes to U.S. Postal Service ahead of election

A federal judge on Thursday blocked controversial changes to the United States postal service, saying they were "a politically motivated attack" that had slowed the nation's mail and likely would slow the delivery of ballots in the upcoming presidential election. U.S. District Judge Stanley Bastian in Yakima, Washington, said he was issuing a nationwide injunction sought by 14 states in a case against U.S. President Donald Trump, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, and the U.S. Postal Service over July changes to the service.

The 14 states, led by Washington, had filed a motion for a preliminary injunction asking the court to immediately halt a "leave mail behind" policy that required postal trucks to leave at certain times, regardless of whether mail was loaded. The states also asked for all election mail to be treated as first-class mail, for the replacement of necessary sorting machines that had been removed, and for the postal service to abide by DeJoy's commitment to suspend the changes

until after the Nov. 3 election.

DeJoy, a Trump supporter, said in August that he would halt many of the cost-cutting changes he put in place until after the presidential election after Democrats accused him of trying to put his thumb on the scales to help Trump, which he has denied. A surge in mail-in ballots is expected because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The states have demonstrated that the defendants are involved in a politically motivated attack on the efficiency of the postal service," the judge said after about 2 1/2 hours of arguments that Reuters heard by phone.

"They have also demonstrated that this attack on the postal service is likely to irreparably harm the states' ability to administer the 2020 general election."

The judge said the preliminary injunction would essentially be issued as the

states requested and he would file a written order with details, likely later on Thursday.

U.S. Postal Service spokesman Dave Partenheimer said while the agency was exploring its legal options, it was "ready and committed to handle whatever volume of election mail it receives."

"Our number one priority is to deliver election mail on-time," Partenheimer said.

Lee Moak, election mail committee chair of the postal service's board of governors, called any suggestion of a politically motivated attack on efficiency "completely and utterly without merit."

At the hearing, Kristin Beneski, a lawyer for the Washington Attorney General, told the judge critical mail already had been delayed for weeks at a time, including ballots. She also noted reports that postal trucks had left for cross-

country trips empty.

Attorney Joseph Borson, who represented the defendants, said the postal service was prepared to timely deliver election mail and that the problems have largely been resolved.

He also said that the states were required to bring the matter to the Postal Regulatory Commission, not the courts.

"The postal service has and will continue to do extraordinary efforts to ensure all ballots are delivered," Borson said, but added there are "physical limits to what it's able to do."

Besides Washington, states joining the lawsuit include Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin. Similar lawsuits by states are pending in Pennsylvania and New York. "Today's victory protects a critical institution for our country," Washington state attorney general Bob Ferguson said after the ruling. "Americans can now confidently vote by mail and have their voices heard."



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Cash-strapped Trump campaign awaits a bailout from big donors

campaign and affiliated committees outraised Trump by \$154 million.

"If the Democrat message drowns out all the Republican message on TV that could make a huge difference," said Club for Growth President David McIntosh, whose group has been running TV ads bolstering Trump. "You have to stay in the game at least."

Preserve America's new commercials focus on national security and brand Biden as "too weak" to be president. One ad features the parents of Kayla Mueller, an overseas humanitarian aid worker who was taken prisoner and killed by ISIS in 2013. Mueller's parents, who spoke at the Republican National Convention, say that "Kayla was America" to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "and he was raping her."

They then accuse the former vice president of being passive in the crisis and slam him for opposing the raids that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. "If he had been decisive, look at

all the lives that would have been saved. We don't want this to happen to anyone else nor would Kayla," Mueller's mother says. The super PAC is steered by Chris LaCivita, a Republican strategist who orchestrated the 2004 Swift Boat Veterans for Truth attack ad campaign against John Kerry. Like the Swift Boat commercials, the Preserve America spots feature scorching attacks delivered in the form of direct-to-camera testimonials. Rather than propping up Trump, they are focused squarely on tearing down Biden.

The ads will run on TV and online in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina. They will also appear in Iowa, where Trump is off the airwaves this week, and in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, where the president is being outspent more than 2-to-1.

Trump is also getting support from the America First Action super PAC, which recently announced plans to invest \$40 million on advertising, an amount that officials say will increase as the election draws closer.

Nathan Klein, a top America First Action official who is overseeing the spending, said the organization was looking to invest in states where the Trump campaign was absent, thereby allowing the reelection effort to focus elsewhere. He pointed to Pennsylvania, where Trump was off the air in August but where the super PAC invested millions of dollars.

While campaigns and outside groups are not allowed to coordinate, strategists are able to monitor advertising placements and make decisions based on what other organizations are doing.

"Yes, every campaign in the history of time would like to have more money than they actually have," Klein said. "But that's the whole point of our approach to this - we are giving them the flexibility to be as nimble with the money they have in the bank as they choose to be."

The scenario bears some similarities to 2016, when big GOP donors mobilized behind Trump during the final weeks of the election. They included

Adelson and his wife, Miriam, who gave \$20 million to a pro-Trump outfit, while Marcus forked over \$2 million that fall.

The Adelsons have given more than \$1 million this year to a joint account split between the Trump reelection effort and the Republican National Committee. Marcus has donated more than \$360,000 to the same committee.

America First Action's benefactors include transportation company executive Timothy Mellon, who has given \$10 million, and Los Angeles real estate developer Geoffrey Palmer, who has contributed \$6 million.

"If there is a time you never want to be outspent, it is with less than 50 days to go until Election Day, but the nature of the campaign finance laws allow for outside groups to fill the void and that's exactly what they are doing," said Ken Spain, a former top National Republican Congressional Committee official. "Ultimately it doesn't matter who is spending the money as long as it's spent and done so in an

effective manner."

Still, Trump aides have at times been frustrated with the two groups. Concerns were privately raised after Preserve America went dark for several days this week, soon after launching its big-money campaign. And the president's advisers have long criticized America First Action, the principal pro-Trump super PAC, for not raising enough money or being aggressive enough.

As the summer months wore on, Trump aides were eager for an alternative outfit to emerge. But it didn't happen until late August, when Preserve America finally launched.

While the president's team has greeted the outside spending with a measure of relief, they also acknowledge the super PACs have a major shortcoming in that they must pay more to advertise than campaigns. As a result, their dollars don't go as far.

But they are important for Trump, whose campaign manager, Bill Stepien, has reined in spending since assuming the top job on the campaign.

On China, India is making a mistake

Today, with China's multi-thrust aggression, history is repeating itself, underscored by a common Indian refrain that Beijing has betrayed India's friendship. China's latest "stab in the back" raises key questions, not about Beijing (which consistently employs deception, concealment and surprise in peacetime), but about India. What explains India's "hug, then repent" proclivity over the decades? Why has India repeatedly cried betrayal, not by friends, but by adversaries in whom it reposed trust? Why has Indian diplomacy rushed to believe what it wanted to believe? What makes India keep repeating the cycle of bending over backward to court a foe and then failing to see aggression coming (as in Kargil, Pathankot or Doklam)? Why does India stay at the receiving end of its foes' machinations? Why has it never repaid China with its own "salami slicing"?

One reason history repeats itself is that virtually every prime minister, although unschooled in national security at the time of assuming office, has sought

to reinvent the foreign-policy wheel, rather than learn from past blunders. Another reason is that intellectuals and journalists shrink from closely scrutinising foreign policy moves. Overselling outcomes of summit meetings with China from 1988 to 2019 for leadership glorification has led to India's worst China crisis after the 1962 war. For example, five separate border-management agreements were signed at summits between 1993 and 2013, with each accord hailed in India (but not China) as a major or historic "breakthrough".

Now, India admits China has trashed all those agreements with its aggression. Yet India still plays into China's hands by clinging to the accords, and by agreeing recently in Moscow to build on them through new confidence-building measures (CBMs).

China is showing it is a master in protracting negotiations to buy time to consolidate its territorial gains, while exploring the limits of its adversary's flexibility and testing its patience. For Beijing, any

agreement is designed to bind not China but the other side to its terms. It is seeking fresh CBMs to make India respect the new, Chinese-created territorial status quo and to restrict India from upgrading its border infrastructure. China's foreign minister claims the "consensus" reached at Moscow is to "meet each other halfway". Meeting China halfway will validate its "10 miles forward, 5 miles back" strategy, with China gaining half but India losing half. This illustrates Beijing's definition of "give and take" - the other side gives and China takes.

Yet, India has placed its faith in diplomacy ever since it discovered China's intrusions in early May. It reined in its armed forces from taking counter-actions until recently. Had it permitted proactive counter-measures earlier, once sufficient acclimatised troops and weapons capability were in place, China's territorial gains would have been more limited. China used the talks to make additional encroachments, especially on the critical Depsang Y-Junction, which

controls access to several areas. Of all the land grabs China has made, the largest is in Depsang, the sector of utmost importance to Indian defences. Yet, this has received little attention.

In fact, some Indians are drawing a false equivalence between the Chinese and Indian military actions. While China has seized several areas that traditionally were under Indian patrolling jurisdiction, India has occupied its own unmanned mountain heights in one area in order to pre-empt another Chinese land grab. The defence minister's statement in Parliament, however, shows the government remains loath to admit that China has encroached on Indian areas. Shielding the government's image, alas, comes first. This explains why India hasn't labelled China the aggressor, leaving the field open for China to repeatedly call India the aggressor.

Having redrawn the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in several Ladakh sectors, China is now seeking to replace the term LAC with the looser expression

"border areas". It had its way in the Moscow agreement, which repeatedly mentions "border areas," not LAC. All the boundary-related bilateral accords and protocols are LAC-centred. But China is treating LAC as a line to actually control by changing facts on the ground. The Moscow agreement's use of the vague term "border areas" helps obscure China's encroachments and creates space for more Chinese salami-slicing.

Diplomacy is unlikely to deliver the status quo ante India seeks. In fact, China seems intent on continuing, below the threshold of armed conflict, coercive military pressure along the entire frontier until India acquiesces to its demands, including reconciling to the new status quo.

Will China's win-without-fighting warfare campaign help create a new India steeped in realism and determined to break the cycle of history repeating itself? At a minimum, it promises to shake up India's business-as-usual approach to national security.

Charge Ex-Minister Arun Shourie Over Rajasthan Palace Hotel Sale: Court

The entire committee looked at it. Due process was followed and then the property was sold," Mr Shourie told NDTV.

The Laxmi Vilas Palace, a spectacular five-star hotel on the banks of the lake Fateh Sagar, is a massive draw for tourists and one of the most popular destinations in India.

The CBI had filed a closure report in late 2019 saying there was "no evidence" in the 2002 case. "It is concluded that evidence worth

launching prosecution was not found in the entire process of disinvestment of M/s Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel, Udaipur," the agency said.

But the special court in Jodhpur rejected the report and ordered further investigation.

"The judge gave no ground for not accepting the CBI closure report. Non-bailable warrants have been issued like we are terrorists, murderers and rapists," Mr Shourie said.

According to the CBI's closure report, accessed by NDTV, the disinvestment of the government-run luxury hotel "resulted in wrongful loss of about Rs 143.48 crore to the government and corresponding wrongful gain to the accused persons individually/jointly".

But the agency pinned the blame on the valuation by a private firm, Kanti Karamsey. The CBI said the property was undervalued at Rs 7.85 crore and based on this

valuation, the reserve price was fixed at Rs 6.12 crore.

"During the course of the investigation, we had reevaluated the property through the Income Tax Department and it was valued at Rs 193.28 crore. Undervaluation of the property by Kanti Karamsey and company led to the loss to the exchequer," sources in the agency told NDTV. The CBI registered a case on August 13, 2014 on the basis of a preliminary inquiry that

alleged that Pradeep Baijal had abused his position as Secretary, Disinvestment, in the hotel sale. But last year, it filed a closure report. Laxmi Vilas palace belonged to the former kings of Udaipur. During the accession of princely states, the massive property was handed over to the government. After independence, the government ran it as a hotel. In 2002 it was disinvested and bought by the Lalit Suri group of hotels.

India's Covid crisis sees rise in child marriage and trafficking

India's coronavirus lockdown has had an adverse impact on children, pushing up incidents of child marriage and child labour, reports the BBC's Divya Arya.

Thirteen-year-old Rani has just won her first battle in life. Her parents tried to force her to marry this summer, but Rani reached out for help and managed to stop the wedding.

Rani (not her real name) was in the eighth grade when India's federal government suddenly imposed a lockdown in March, shuttering everything from schools to businesses to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Within a month, Rani's father, who was battling tuberculosis, found her a match.

Rani was not happy. "I don't understand why everyone is in a rush to marry girls," she said. "They don't understand that it is important to go to school, start earning and be independent."

It is illegal for girls under the age of 18 to marry in India. But the country is home to the largest number of child brides in the world, accounting for a third of the global total, according to UNICEF. The charity estimates that at least 1.5 million girls under 18 get married here each year.

This year might be worse. Childline, a children's helpline, has reported a 17% increase in distress calls related to early marriage of girls in June and July this year compared to 2019.

Millions lost their jobs during the prolonged lockdown from the end of March to early June. Many of them included India's informal and unprotected workers, who, have been pushed deeper into poverty. According to the government, more than 10 million of these works, many of them young men, returned to their hometowns and villages during the lockdown

because of loss of work. So parents of young girls - worried for their safety and anxious about their future prospects - are marrying their daughters off to ensure their wellbeing.

Another reason is that parents are expected to pay for big weddings, but covid restrictions have limited the size of weddings.

So parents who have received offers of marriage this year have been quick to take them up, according to Manisha Biraris, the assistant commissioner for Women and Child Welfare in Maharashtra state.

"It was easier, cheaper and they could get away with inviting very few people."

Although the country began reopening in June, many jobs have not returned and the economy is still struggling. Schools are still shut, leaving vulnerable adolescents at home.

Schools have been agents of change in India, especially in poor communities like the eastern state of Odisha, where Rani lives. They are a space where girls can reach out to teachers and friends for help when facing pressure to marry from their family.

But with schools closed, a crucial safety net is gone.

"In extremely poor communities, girls are already not encouraged to study. Once they leave school it's hard to convince families to get them back in," said Smita Khanjow from Action Aid, which has been working on UNICEF's special program on child marriage in the five most-affected states.

Rani's close school friend was

married off early this year, she said. But Rani said she was able to stop her wedding after she called the emergency national helpline for children, Childline. Along with the help of a local NGO and the police,



staff at Childline were able to stop the ceremony.

But Rani's troubles didn't end there. Her father passed away soon after.

"I want to go back to school when it reopens, and now I need to work harder as my father is no more," she said. "It is my responsibility to help my mother run the household."

The situation has been dire for boys too. According to Ms Khanjow, from Action Aid. She and her colleagues are increasingly coming across cases of teenage boys being pushed into working in factories to support their families

In India, it is a criminal offense to employ a child for work. But according to the last census, in 2011, 10 million of India's 260 million children were found to be child labourers.

It's not an easy decision for families. Four months into the lockdown, Pankaj Lal gave in to a trafficker's offer for his 13-year-old son. He had five

children to feed but almost no earnings from pulling his rickshaw. Mr Lal agreed to send his son more than a 1,000km (690 miles) from his native Bihar state to Rajasthan to work in a bangle manufacturing factory for 5,000 rupees (\$68; £52) per month. That is a substantial sum for a family struggling to survive.

Mr Lal broke down as he described his decision to send his son so far away. "My children had not eaten for two days," he said. "I volunteered myself to the trafficker, but he said nimble fingers were needed for this work and I was of no use to him. I had almost no choice but to send my son away."

Despite restrictions on transport and movement, traffickers were able to tap into their powerful nexus to move children across state lines using new routes and luxury buses.

Suresh Kumar, who runs NGO Centre Direct, says a crisis is waiting to happen. He has been rescuing child labourers from traffickers for more than 25 years. "The number of children we have rescued has more than doubled from last year. Villages have emptied out and the past months have seen the traffickers grow

stronger and make use of the lockdown which has stretched authorities and the police," he said.

Childline, however, reported a drop in distress calls related to child labour. Activists say this could be because children give in to their parents cry for help.

The government has taken steps to stop trafficking, including passing a more stringent law, and asking states to strengthen and expand anti-human trafficking in the wake of the lockdown.

States have also been asked to spread awareness about trafficking, and keep shelters for women and children accessible even during the pandemic.

But, activists say, most traffickers get away with paying fines because they are connected to powerful people. Mr Kumar said families rarely report trafficking, and those that do register police complaints are threatened.

Mr Lal's family got lucky - the bus carrying his son was stopped while on its way and the children inside were rescued. His son is now quarantining in a child care centre in Rajasthan and will return home soon.

CBI case against 6 companies for allegedly installing pop-ups to personal computers

solution to the fake problems.

The central agency so far has conducted raids in six cities. Searches are being carried out on Thursday at 10 locations including Jaipur, Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad and Mainpuri (UP) at the premises of said companies and the residential premises of other persons. The employees of these six companies based in New Delhi, Noida, Gurugram and Jaipur, allegedly advise the victims to install a certain anti-virus or anti-malwares that are originally PUPs (Potentially Unwanted Programs).

The CBI is currently investigating the matter.



India's Covid problem could be bigger than we think

more than a million samples are being tested daily. But the country still has one of the lowest testing rates in the world.

So epidemiologists suggest that India's real infection rates are far higher.

The government's own antibody tests on a random sample of people nationwide estimate 6.4 million infections in early May, as compared to the recorded case count of 52,000 around that time.

Bhramar Mukherjee, a professor of biostatistics and epidemiology at the University of Michigan who has been closely tracking the pandemic, says her models point to about 100 million infections in India now.

"I think India has taken a path of cruising towards herd immunity. I am not sure whether everyone is following preventive measures like wearing masks and keeping social distancing seriously," she told me. Herd immunity is achieved when enough people become immune to a virus to stop its spread.

"This could be due to habituation, desensitisation [to the disease],

fatigue, denial, fatalism or a combination of both. It feels like a thousand deaths a day have become normal."

As long as infections spiral, a full recovery of the economy is delayed, and hospitals and care centres may continue to get overwhelmed by surging caseloads.

K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India, a Delhi-based think tank, describes the present surge of infections as a "first tide rather than a first wave".

"The waves are moving outward from the initial points of origin, with different timings of spread and levels of rise. Together, they constitute a high tide which is still to show signs of ebbing."

Why are rates still soaring?

"With increased mobility and reduced adherence to social distancing, mask wearing and personal hygiene, the virus will soar again," says Dr Mukherjee.

A doctor in a large hospital in Jodhpur in Rajasthan told me they were seeing a surge in severely sick elderly patients who lived in joint families.

Way back in March, Dr T Jacob

John, a prominent virologist, had warned that an "avalanche of a pandemic" awaited India.

In many ways, a high number of cases in a vast country with a creaky public health system was "inevitable", he says now. But, such a high number of infections could still have been avoided, he adds, blaming a badly-timed lockdown.

Most experts agree that a partial and well-managed lockdown in the few cities where infection had broken out would have been better.

"It failed because it did exactly what a lockdown should not do," says Kaushik Basu, former chief economist of the World Bank. "It caused a mass movement of people walking all over the nation, trying to reach home, because they had no choice. As a result, India's economy got damaged and the virus continued to spread."

But public health experts like Dr Reddy say lives were saved.

"It is not easy to judge the timing of a lockdown in retrospect, as even the criticism in UK is that the lockdown was delayed and an earlier lockdown could have saved more lives."

India is approaching the ninth month of the coronavirus pandemic with more than five million confirmed cases - the second-highest in the world after the US - and more than 80,000 reported deaths.

Infection is surging through the country in a "step-ladder spiral", a government scientist told me. The only "consolation" is a death rate - currently 1.63% - that's lower than many countries with a high caseload.

The increase in reported cases has partly to do with increased testing - but the speed at which the virus is spreading is worrying experts.

Here's why. It took 170 days for India to reach the first million cases. The last million cases took only 11 days. Average daily cases have shot up from 62 in April to more than 87,000 in September.

In the past week, India has recorded

more than 90,000 cases and 1,000 deaths every day. Seven states are worst affected - accounting for about 48% of India's population.

But even as infections soar, India is opening up - workplaces, public transport, eateries, gyms - to try to repair a battered economy suffering its worst slump in decades.

The world's most draconian lockdown forced people to stay at home, shut businesses and triggered an exodus of millions of informal workers who lost their jobs in the cities and returned home on foot, buses and trains.

But the resumption of economic activity even as cases spiral suggests "lockdown fatigue", the Nomura India Business Resumption Index says.

Infection numbers may be much higher

More than 50 million Indians have been tested so far for the virus, and

As India's virus cases rise, so do questions over death toll

When Narayan Mitra died on July 16, a day after being admitted to the hospital for fever and breathing difficulties, his name never appeared on any of the official lists put out daily of those killed by the coronavirus.

Test results later revealed that Mitra had indeed been infected with Covid-19, as had his son, Abhijit, and four other family members in Silchar, Assam. But Narayan Mitra still isn't counted as a coronavirus victim. The virus was deemed an "incidental" factor, and a panel of doctors decided his death was due to a previously diagnosed neurological disorder that causes muscle weakness. "He died because of the virus, and there is no point lying about it," Abhijit Mitra said of the finding, which came despite national guidelines that ask states to not attribute deaths to underlying conditions in cases where Covid-19 has been confirmed by tests.

Such exclusions could explain why India, which has recorded more than 5.1 million infections - second only to the United States - has a death toll of about 83,000 in a country of 1.3 billion people.

The Union health ministry has cited this as evidence of its success in fighting the pandemic and a basis for relaxing restrictions and reopening the economy after Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a strict lockdown of the entire population earlier this year.

But experts say the numbers are misleading and that India is not counting many deaths. "We are undercounting deaths by an unknown factor," said Dr T Jacob John, a retired virologist.

The health ministry has bristled at past allegations of an undercount in fatalities, but it refused to comment this week on whether states were reporting all suspected and confirmed virus deaths.

Determining exact numbers during the pandemic is difficult: Countries count cases and deaths differently, and testing for the virus is uneven, making direct comparisons misleading.

In India, recording mortality data was poor even before the pandemic struck. Of the 10 million estimated deaths each year, fewer than a quarter are fully documented, and only one-fifth of these are medically certified, according to national figures.

Most Indians die at home, not in a hospital, and doctors usually aren't present to record the cause of death. This is more prevalent in rural areas, where the virus is now spreading.

Dr Prabhat Jha, an epidemiologist at the University of Toronto who has studied deaths in India, said countries should err on the side of overestimating deaths if they want to make progress in fighting the virus.

"It is better to have no estimate than an underestimate," Jha said. The health ministry guidelines echo this concern, asking states to record all suspected virus deaths, including "presumptive deaths" - those who likely died of Covid-19 but weren't tested for it. But those guidelines are advisory, and many states don't comply. In Maharashtra, India's worst affected state with more than 1 million cases, suspected deaths aren't recorded in the tally, said Dr Archana Patil, the state's health director.

Other states, like Assam, have created

panels of doctors who differentiate between "real virus deaths" and those from underlying illnesses. In some cities like New Delhi or Mumbai, these panels occasionally have added missed deaths to the tally.

But Dr Anup Kumar Barman, who heads the panel in Assam, said the state is not including many fatalities where the virus was "incidental" and not the cause of death. In Narayan Mitra's case, he had more symptoms of his underlying neurological disorder, Barman said. Assam state was following the federal guidelines and was citing the virus only in those deaths due to respiratory failure, pneumonia or blood clots, Barman added. But the guidelines list these factors as instances of how the virus can kill and are not a restrictive checklist. Barman refused to answer any follow-up questions from The Associated Press.

Assam state has recorded over 147,000 infections but fewer than 500 deaths as of Wednesday. In West Bengal state, a similar panel was shelved in May and the state said it would subsequently follow federal guidelines. Of the 105 deaths of those testing positive for Covid-19 in April, the panel found that 72, or nearly 70 per cent, weren't caused by the virus. PV Ramesh, who until July 8 headed Covid-19 management for Andhra Pradesh state in southern India, said coronavirus deaths "at home, in transit or while arriving at hospitals don't get counted." The gaps in data also mean that India's ability to identify spikes in deaths from natural causes from previous years is spotty. Problems in death counts have raised concerns in countries like South Africa. Meanwhile, the courts have criticised

some states, like Telangana, over transparency in sharing data about fatalities.

In addition, Union health ministry guidelines in May advised hospitals against conducting autopsies in suspected Covid-19 cases to prevent exposure to the virus. Although the guidelines say the certification can be done by doctors, experts said this also was leading to undercounting deaths.

The government's emphasis on the low death toll despite the rising number of reported infections has resulted in people thinking the virus wasn't necessarily fatal, leading to a "false sense of protection," said Dr Anant Bhan, who researches public health and ethics in the city of Bhopal. That has led to people letting their guard down by not taking precautions such as wearing masks or maintaining social distance, Bhan said. Regional officials also felt pressure to play down deaths to show the health crisis was under control, said Dr SP Kalantri, director of a hospital in Maharashtra's rural Wardha district. Initially, there were "subtle hints" from district officials to "play down the numbers" by listing some deaths as being caused by underlying diseases, he said.

Maharashtra state health director Archana Patil said this had been a problem in some districts at first, but officials since have been advised to report all deaths.

Workers at crematoriums, meanwhile, have reported an increase in receiving bodies - whether from the virus or not.

At a crematorium in Lucknow, the capital of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, worker Bhupesh Soni said 30 people were being cremated every day, compared with five or six before the pandemic.

How a raging pandemic is widening India's wealth gap

Ever since India gained Independence, the country has traversed a wave of ups and downs to finally become a global powerhouse over the last five years. India's growth story - from being a struggling economy in the 1950s to a \$2 trillion-plus economy in 2020 - has been impressive, but not enough to support its constantly expanding population.

This is why India has one of the highest wealth gaps among all major economies in the world. Even after all these years, there has been no change in this trend as the rich tend to get richer and the poor, poorer.

The Covid-19 crisis has only made matters worse for India's middle and low-income groups. **TWO SIDES OF THE PANDEMIC**

The popular belief that coronavirus pandemic has made everyone poorer is not entirely true.

While most economic activities are suffering due to restrictions imposed during the lockdown, some of the world's top billionaires have seen their wealth rise. At the same time,



the world's poor have seen their wealth deplete.

In India, the wealth gap has been rising sharply during the ongoing pandemic as previous levels of income inequality were already high in the country.

A January 2020 study by rights group Oxfam India suggests that India's richest 1 per cent hold more than four-times the wealth held by 953 million people who make up for the bottom 70 per cent of the country's population. The study added that India's top 10 per cent of the population holds over 74% of the total national wealth.

Commenting on the study, Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar

had said: "The gap between rich and poor can't be resolved without deliberate inequality-busting policies, and too few governments are committed to these."

"Our broken economies are lining the pockets of billionaires and big business at the expense of ordinary men and women. No wonder people are starting to question whether billionaires should even exist."

Since the study was from January 2020, it does not capture the economic devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report, which predicts that 40 crore

Indians could be pushed into poverty, offers a better picture of the widening wealth gap in India. **JOB & INCOME CRISIS**

Ever since India went under a strict lockdown on March 25, millions of the country's poorest workers were immediately rendered jobless and left without any income. An unresolved migrant crisis is the biggest example of the plight India's poor are facing at the moment.

Even the country's vast middle class population encountered a sharp loss of income during the pandemic due to a wave of job losses and pay cuts. Once considered a key driver of India's economic growth, crores of salaried middle-income employees are now jobless.

A recent report by the Centre For Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) indicates that 2.1 crore salaried jobs were lost in the first five months of the pandemic, indicating that income levels among middle class households have fallen sharply. Mahesh

Vyas, CMIE CEO and MD, recently wrote that the biggest loss of jobs among salaried employees was of white collar professional employees including software engineers, physicians, teachers, accountants, analysts and professional contractual employees.

"This was the biggest year-on-year loss among all salaried employees," Vyas wrote. This was followed directly by industrial workers. There has been a 26 per cent fall in industrial workers over a year, CMIE noted. Vyas went on to add that a majority of the decline in employment of industrial workers is likely to be in smaller industrial units, reflecting the distress in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Even as the government continues to unlock the economy, there has been no respite for a majority of lower and middle income groups. Noted economists have already warned that the sharp increase in job losses and pay cuts will worsen India's wealth gap.

Further increase in the possibility of the disease spreading.

On March 24, at 8 pm, India imposed one of the severest lockdowns in the world due to the corona pandemic. On that day, there were 574 Covid-19 cases and one death in India. Consequently, as the economist Kaushik Basu stated, "you froze the economy totally and allowed a whole lot of people to be scattered all over, so the germs were spreading" The cost-benefit of the extent of the lockdown has been debated endlessly, but mainly in the realm of conjecture. It was a difficult choice between lives versus livelihood and getting the breathing space to build the medical infrastructure to cope with the impending pandemic. That apart, the government had not anticipated or planned for urban migrant workers returning to their villages in hundreds of thousands, the consequences of which we are facing now. On September 7, India crossed Brazil's record for the world's second-highest number of Covid-19 cases. The country's 75,062 Covid deaths as on September 10 represent the third-highest toll in the current pandemic. By September 10, total

cases in India stood at 4.5 million. Our infectivity rate has also doubled to 8.6 per cent from 4 per cent three months ago. We have added an average of 89,000 cases daily over the past week. The silver lining, albeit a thin one, is our case fatality rate, which measures the severity of a disease, of just 1.7 per cent. Our recovery rate of 77.7 per cent as on September 9 is among the best in the world.

When the lockdown began, Covid was confined to the big cities. Until recently, Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Pune and Kolkata accounted for half of all reported cases. More worrying for us, however, is a new and alarming trend-the upward arc of Covid cases in our rural hinterland. If between March 1 and July 17, 40 per cent of the Covid cases were from rural and semi-rural districts, the figure has now gone up to 67 per cent. As inter-district travel opens up, states are reporting a spike in rural Covid-19 cases. For example, Odisha currently has 59 per cent rural cases, Jharkhand 41 per cent, Chhattisgarh 37 per cent and Bihar 40 per cent. In Maharashtra, state health

department statistics show that five districts, Nagpur, Osmanabad, Beed, Sangli and Kolhapur, recorded an average rise of 400 per cent in cases in August, compared to 28 per cent in Mumbai. These are frightening figures because the gaps in India's creaky health infrastructure are the widest in rural areas. Over 65 per cent of India lives in its villages, but rural India has only 37 per cent of the country's doctors. Primary health centres or PHCs, the first point of contact between a patient and the public health system in rural India, are understaffed. Close to 2,000 PHCs have no doctors. Villages have just 3.2 beds per 10,000 people as opposed to the WHO basic norm of 1 for every 300 people. Pune district's Rajewadi village, one of the several rural case studies we tracked across the country, went from zero to 91 cases in just three weeks, and has an infection rate of 25 per cent, three times the national average. The nearest Covid hospital is in Pune, 50 km away. The district is predicted to have a shortage of around 2,000 oxygen beds and 350 ventilators

this month, given the current doubling rate. West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district has just one referral address for its 10 million people and 33,800 Covid patients, the second-highest tally in the state.

Even as our rural areas witness sharp spikes in cases, policy-makers have to take on two other battlegrounds: several states that had low affliction rates now show a worrying rise, and those that believed the disease had waned are facing a resurgence. The states that have made their way to the top this August for the total number of cases are Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam. In states that thought they had flattened the curve, like Delhi, Kerala, Goa, Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh, Covid infections have returned. Given the resumption of intra-district movement and the easing of lockdowns in urban centres, experts warn that it is only a matter of time before the infection sweeps through the hinterland if steps aren't taken right away. Also, as economic activity begins

to recover, there is now a reverse migration to urban areas, further increasing the possibility of the disease spreading. A rural pandemic will be very different and far more challenging than an urban one, health experts tell us. Our cover story, 'The New Battlefields', written by Associate Editor Sonali Acharjee with inputs from our bureaus across the country, tracks this alarming trend. Strangely, the surge in Covid cases is still not causing widespread consternation. As states cannot ramp up rural health infrastructure fast enough, they have opted instead for containment measures. Covid-19 has now become a fact of life to which everyone has to adapt. India cannot afford to shut down its economy again, especially since there are some signs of revival. What is needed is an increase in testing and more public awareness programmes to curb the spread of the virus. Prevention is far better than a cure, especially when the cure is not on the horizon yet.

By Aroon Purie, Editor-in-Chief India Today

The rural surge

In its villages, where cases are on a sharp upswing, India's battle against the pandemic is on a wing and a prayer, given the desperately inadequate public health infrastructure in the hinterland.

The arrival of the postman is a much-anticipated event in Chinnambavi village in Telangana. Senior citizens and widows wait for him to bring them their pension, and news from the outside world. On August 16, however, he seems to have brought along the coronavirus too. Ten days after the postman's visit to this village of 25,000 people, 110 inhabitants, many of them elderly, tested positive for Covid. Many had to be treated at the district headquarters of Wanaparthy. The district, which has 21 containment zones, has just one Covid hospital with 100 beds, and they are filling up fast. The situation in Pune district in Maharashtra is as grim. Till three weeks ago, all the 360 residents of the Rajewadi village in the district were free of Covid. Then, on August 17, an elderly resident died of the disease, which he is thought to have contracted while visiting a temple in a neighbouring village. Today, the village has 91 cases and a worryingly high infection rate of 25 per cent compared to the

national average of 8.6 per cent. The nearest Covid hospital is in Pune city, 50 km away. But Covid hospitals there are packed with patients. Given the present doubling rate, the district will likely see another 27,000 cases over the next week, which will leave it short of about 2,000 oxygen beds, 150 ICU beds and some 350 ventilators.

"Covid is spreading to smaller towns and villages, and this is truly worrying," says Dr K. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). If, between March 1 and July 17, 15 per cent of total cases were from rural districts and 25 per cent from semi-rural ones, the share has now gone up to 24 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively. In several states, the proportion of rural cases has gone up in just the past one month. So, Odisha, for example, has 59 per cent rural cases, Jharkhand 41 per cent, Chhattisgarh 37 per cent and Bihar 40 per cent. In Maharashtra, state health department statistics show that

the number of cases in rural areas went up from 20.9 per cent on August 1 to almost 30 per cent by month-end, and deaths from 16.4 per cent to 23.6 per cent. Five districts, Nagpur, Osmanabad, Beed, Sangli and Kolhapur, recorded a rise of 400 per cent in August, compared to 28 per cent in Mumbai.

Covid's changing trajectory As the number of Covid cases in India races towards the 5 million mark, three big shifts in Covid battlegrounds in the past month have alarmed policymakers and health officials. The rural threat is the biggest among them all, with an increase in the number of semi-rural and rural districts among the top 30 districts in terms of active Covid cases (see The Rural Skew). Twenty-two districts with a high number of rural villages and small towns, mostly in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, have seen Covid numbers rise dramatically since the end of July. In Andhra's Guntur district, for example, the number of cases has gone up by 36,378 between July 12 and



August 31, compared to an increase of just 3,000 cases in the preceding four months.

The second battleground is just as worrying for policymakers. Several new states have made their way into the top 10 this August, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam in terms of total cases; and Karnataka, UP, Odisha, Assam and Kerala in terms of active cases. Some experts attribute these changes to a significant increase in testing. In UP, for example, testing went up from a total of 500,000 in mid-June to 5.3 million by August (see States of Worry). The third big challenge comes from states that had flattened the curve or had very few infections a month ago but are now showing an upward spiral. Kerala, for example, had 20,000 total cases on July 31, but has added 75,000 more since

then. Delhi, which had brought down its Covid numbers from 25,000 active cases in July to 10,000 in August, may suffer a resurgence, with 23,773 cases as on September 8 (see Resurging States).

Why covid has spread in rural India

The Covid surge in rural India is the most worrying of these three challenges. With 65 per cent of the country's 1.3 billion people living in the countryside according to 2019 World Bank data, a rural pandemic would be disastrous. The reasons for the rapid spread vary from state to state. "The spike in rural Maharashtra, for instance, is because of migrant workers returning from Mumbai," Rajesh Tope, the state's health minister, said in his hometown Jalna on August 15.

Modi at 70: Hit by Covid & China storms, but not losing political ground

Araging pandemic which claims over 83,000 lives, an economic slowdown with a minus 23.9 per cent deep fall in GDP, millions without a job, over 8 crore migrant workers with no home, a lockdown that eventually cripples an economy and the Chinese army transgressing the LAC and exhaling hostile flames of war-like intent. Now imagine if these happenings took place all at the same time -- prior to 2014!

Each one of this crisis has the potential to crumple the image of even the best of India's prime ministers.

Currently, the government is failing to create a net to catch the slide or shape a recovery to end this perfect catastrophic storm. It's denying the charge that Chinese intrusions have made India suffer its first loss of territory to a neighbouring nation in the 21st century.

The public battling job losses, struggling to pay back loans, pay

wages and even make ends meet is keeping its capability to unrest quarantined. The chorus 'Modi hai to mumkin hai' (if there is Modi, it's possible) may have dimmed. Janata, however, is not shouting 'Modi hai, magar ab na mumkin hai' (it's impossible now even though there is Modi).

There, however, is a change -- though not so subtle or visible. For instance, at the dawn of his 70th birthday hashtag #modibirthday was trending on micro blogging site Twitter and so was a call for unity to mark national unemployment day on September 17.

THE RISING TIDE

No one can overrule that the brand Modi stands a bit scratched and less shiny in September 2020. But it survives without any serious damage. Strongman Modi at 70, after the most tumultuous six months, continues to stand many inches taller in the eyes of the majority of voters.

And maybe not the masses, but India's religious majority still finds the nation and its destiny closely intertwined with that of its leader.

DELIVERED ON PROMISES

Between his last two birthdays, PM Narendra Modi delivered on what every RSS or BJP leader in the past had promised. On August 5, 2019 he rendered Article 370 toothless. On August 5, 2020 he performed a puja at the foundation point of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya within an auspicious window dictated by stars and constellations lasting a few seconds.

By the 70th birthday, PM Modi has risen above all in the BJP and RSS' pantheon of all time greats like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani.

QUIRKY

STATEMENTS

The birthday boy's unique headgears for different occasions, Movado watches, Bvlgari sunglasses, redesigned

sleeved kurta and modified jacket style now named after him have crafted an image like Nehru by his jackets and Indira Gandhi by her sarees.

Narendra Modi achieved this within a period of barely seven years. Rewind to the period prior to 2013. Modi was a regional brand with national ambitions, with little traction outside Gujarat. In India's history, no player from regional politics has managed to reach the top and build on it like Modi has. Former prime ministers Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Vajpayee emerged as national leaders. V P Singh, PV Narasimha Rao and HD Deve Gowda rose in states to later climb the ladder but couldn't join the long lasting and deep impacting league.

FROM CHAIWALA to FAQIR: THE TRANSITION

From 2013, Modi has transitioned seamlessly from being a chaiwala, vikas purush, chowkidar and faqir as

challenges changed. His 'brandologues' have built campaigns by weaving together how he gave up his parent's home, a married life and joined the RSS to serve the nation.

His messaging has been uncluttered with high retention. This is highlighted best by cleverly coined 'NaMo' for Narendra Modi. For every Hindu, NaMo is the Hindi adaptation of Sanskrit word Namah used in ritual chanting, which means salutations to the God.

He has tried a formula for barrierless engagement with the public. By building a personal connect with the populace and spinning his policies, he has managed to make people feel more visible, apart from being more visible himself. If real awareness and visibility are the mainstay of marketing a brand for a high recall value, brand Modi has never been out of sight in six years.

Why is Sikh soldier a bogeyman for Chinese army at Ladakh

China's PLA has installed loudspeakers at the friction points that spew its propaganda on the standoff, accuse New Delhi of escalating tensions to divert from domestic issues and even belt out Punjabi pop numbers

Not far from the Rezang La-Rechin La ridgeline that has emerged as a key friction point between Indian and Chinese troops, the Chushul brigade headquarters mess still houses artefacts including a gold statue of the Laughing Buddha seized by the Sikh regiments more than a century ago.

The soldiers were part of an eight-nation mission to neutralise China's Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the last century, an uprising led by young farmers and workers against foreign influence. The British Army had brought in Sikh and Punjab regiments among others.

The alliance troops moved into Beijing after the Boxer fighters threatened foreigners and kept 400 foreigners holed up in Beijing's Foreign Legation Quarter. The siege lasted 55 days before 20,000 alliance troops reached Beijing and fought their way in. Nearly 8,000 of them belonged to the British Army from India, many of them Sikh and Punjab regiments. After the victory, according to an account by



one Indian sepoy, the British army indulged in looting: French and Russian troops killed civilians and raped women.

The statue of the Laughing Buddha at the army mess in Chushul was one of the items brought back by the soldiers. A gilded bronze bell dating back to the 1368-1644 Ming dynasty - one of the missing 16 - looted by a British general, was

eventually returned by the Indian Army to Beijing's Temple of Heaven in 1995.

In his seminal book, India's China War, Australian journalist Neville Maxwell said the Chinese leadership used the humiliation suffered after the revolution to build a movement to restore the country. Maxwell also believed there was a link between this mindset and the 1962 war.

An Indian army commander said this historical context

could be a reason why the China's People's Liberation Army psy-ops focuses so much on the Punjabi, or Sikh soldiers. China's PLA has installed loudspeakers at the friction points that spew its propaganda on the standoff, accuse New Delhi of escalating tensions to divert from domestic issues and even belt out Punjabi pop numbers aimed at the Indian soldiers deployed to counter PLA.

India and China have held several rounds of talks at the military and diplomatic level. The last one was at the level of external affairs minister S Jaishankar who had a two-hour-long meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow that helped ease tensions between the two countries. But there is no evidence yet that a resolution is round the corner.

New Delhi is not impressed by the Chinese political rhetoric that India needs to disengage first, that the genesis of the present stand-off lies in August 5, 2019 nullification of article 370 and the redrawn Indian map or that, as the Chinese envoy Sun Weidong puts it, both sides need to meet halfway to restore peace at the border.

India believes that China should restore status quo ante as prevailing on April 20 this year when the PLA parked itself closer to the Line of Actual Control, setting off a series of face-offs with Indian army patrol parties at several locations along the LAC in Ladakh and elsewhere.

'It may be a long winter': Singapore envoy amid India-China tension at LAC

Asked about the implications of the India-China standoff, Wong said there is a "stalemate and a stare-down situation".

It is imperative for India and China to find an amicable solution to their border standoff as any flare-up of tensions could have far-reaching implications for post-Covid-19 recovery efforts across the region, Singapore's new high commissioner Simon Wong Wie Kuen said on Thursday.

Expressing concern at the situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in his first interview to the Indian media after presenting his credentials last week, Wong acknowledged the two sides could be in for a "long winter" and that efforts to find a solution may not be easy, though there is no alternative to dialogue. The envoy also spoke on Singapore's priorities in its economic relations with India, participation in New Delhi's plans to forge resilient supply and value chains, and collaboration in the Indo-Pacific.

Asked about the implications of the India-China standoff, Wong said there is a "stalemate and a stare-down situation". He said, "It may be a long winter, it will not have an easy solution but I think the messages coming out from both sides are very calm and the operating principle is still trying to figure out something of a resolution through diplomatic means."

He added, "We are good friends of both India and China. The last thing we want is to have skirmishes grow bigger and bigger because now both sides are in a stare-down position and the troop levels of both sides are very high. We don't want any untoward incidents happening because from the Covid-19 recovery point of view, if we have two big economic engines suffer as a result, the whole Asian economy will suffer for a prolonged period of time.

"We don't want to see that happen, we have been urging both sides to stay calm and find an amicable solution to it...But we are concerned about what's happening in Ladakh in particular, in Pangong Tso. We hope calmer heads prevail."

Responding to a question on whether resolving the border issue will be a protracted process even if current tensions dissipate, the envoy said it is "always problematic [in] relations between...two humongous neighbours to resolve [things]". He suggested "harsh negotiations" would be better than an exacerbation of tensions.

"If you were to have harsh negotiations and you cross with words, I think it's easier because it's common practice, even in FTA negotiations - harsh, tough negotiation postures, but thereafter, when the deal is done,



you shake hands and that's it," he said.

"But the memory of 1962 is very, very strong because it was a military conflict...My humble advice is that both sides should think very carefully how they want to move forward and to be sure, both sides understand this very clearly...in the operating principle, both sides should sit down and talk and resolve this diplomatically," he added.

Amid the Covid-19 crisis, the world being at an "inflection

point" and a very "acrimonious US-China relationship", Singapore's priorities for the relationship with India include enhanced trade and investments and collaboration in areas such as healthcare for developing vaccines, Wong said.

Even during the Covid-19 crisis, Singapore committed around \$2 billion of new investments into India, and it is also keen to work with India on moves to forge new supply and value chains, he said.

This Is What Trump's Suburbia Really Looks Like

The very wealthy and very white communities around Milwaukee show little sign of the defections plaguing the president's campaign in more diverse suburbs.

I'll bet you're sick of hearing about the suburbs. And who could blame you? Flip on cable news, open the local paper, check the president's Twitter feed—there's no escaping the churn of commentary focused on a place that knows no boundaries and a group of people that defies any real definition. To live in suburbia was once understood to mean something specific: the single-family home, the commute into the big city, the Saturdays spent manicuring a lawn. Today, our collective interpretation of a suburbanite has expanded to include anyone who does not hail taxis to work or take dirt roads home. According to exit polls in November 2016, 49 percent of all U.S. voters identified as living in a "suburban area." That means roughly 67 million Americans who voted in the last presidential election consider themselves suburbanites.

Who is it, specifically, that these campaigns are obsessing over?

If Joe Biden has remained broad with his outreach, consistent with a strategy that aims to alienate the fewest people possible, Trump has been easy to read. In more than a dozen recent tweets, the president has predicted that if Biden wins suburbanites will be overrun by an invasion of poor vagrants and violent marauders—the scariest of them, implicitly, Black and brown folks—who will destroy what Trump called the "Suburban Lifestyle Dream." A

stampede of journalists has argued that Trump doesn't grasp how the modern suburbs are culturally and economically diverse. What those journalists fail to appreciate is that Trump isn't targeting the suburbs that are culturally and economically diverse. Trump is targeting the suburbs of rich white people.

Which brings me to Wisconsin. There's a reason the 2018 midterm wave, which saw Democrats flip some three dozen suburban-based House districts nationwide, resulted in only marginal gains for Democrats here. Wisconsin is home to America's most racially polarized metropolitan area. Milwaukee, a majority-minority city, is surrounded by three counties—Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington, the "WOW" counties—that are each north of 90 percent white. These counties tend to be far more religious (with a particular deference to the Roman Catholic church) than your typical big city suburb. They are also fabulously wealthy, with education rates and median household incomes that soar above the national average. All three counties have voted Republican in every presidential election since 1968, and by double-digit margins.

If there is a "Suburban Lifestyle Dream"—if there is a throwback Leave it to Beaver existence still offered in modern America—it is found in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, an idyllic hamlet nestled in the wooded splendor of Ozaukee County. Cedarburg is impossibly comfortable and categorically

safe, its rates of crime and unemployment impossibly low, the sort of place where people leave front doors unlocked all day long. Downtown is straight out of Norman Rockwell's daydreams, an elm-lined stretch of Americana where locals strut through morning power-walks and sip designer coffee and duck into boutique spice and wine stores. The only trouble in sight is a dog doing its business on an immaculate flowerbed. This is a very different type of Trump Country from the one most commonly mythologized—just swap out the camouflage for cardigans, the flannels for Patagonia fleeces. In 2016, the president carried the WOW counties by yawning margins. Washington was decided by 40 points, Waukesha by 27. Ozaukee was the tightest of the three: 19 points, prompting whispers of a slow political realignment due north of Milwaukee.

While it's true that Ozaukee is as Republican as any county in America—no Democratic presidential hopeful has cracked 40 percent of the vote in more than half a century—it's also true that Trump has some unique problems here. The president won 56 percent of the vote in Ozaukee County but ran nearly 10 points behind GOP Senator Ron Johnson on the same ticket. It was a vivid display of the misgivings many Republicans had about Trump. Some split their ticket. Others voted for the Libertarian nominee. More than a few simply left the top of the ballot blank.

There is an opportunity here for Biden to break that 40 percent threshold, to take advantage of soft Republican support for the president. The bigger opportunity, however, belongs to Trump.

The 2020 election is shaping up as a clash of tribes—the ultimate binary choice on everything from politics to lifestyle to shared identity. With the electorate even more polarized now than it was

in 2016, it's difficult to imagine 7.2 percent of Ozaukee voters siding with a third-party candidate, as they did last time. If I've heard one thing from Americans over the past four years, in conversations from coast to coast, it's that they feel forced to pick a team. Trump's most essential task is to remind Republicans—especially in Wisconsin, without whose 10 electoral votes the president will struggle to win reelection—which side they're really on.

This urgency for Trump echoes far beyond Ozaukee County. Although the suburbs in other swing states are more diverse—the communities around Detroit and Philadelphia bear little resemblance to those around Milwaukee—there are pockets of voters everywhere like those in Ozaukee. Identifying these people and persuading them to remain true to their Republican roots is Trump's only chance to hold down his margins of defeat in metropolitan areas—which, in turn, may be his only chance of securing a second term. You'll know whether he's successful by watching a place like Cedarburg. It voted in 2016 as a perfect representation of Ozaukee: 88 percent turnout (87 in the county), 55 percent for Trump (56 in the county), 37 percent for Clinton (37 in the county). Four years later, on a September afternoon in downtown, I talked

with residents about the changes they see locally—the proliferation of partisan yard signs, the generational shift in attitudes toward racial justice, the one issue they prioritize above all others—and whether Cedarburg could symbolize Trump's last stand. "Unfortunately, we only have two real parties in this country, so our options are pretty limited," said QUIANA VERBETEN, a 31-year-old mother of three. "I voted for Trump last time, but I cried. Literally—I cried while voting. I did not want to vote for him. But I decided I had to. And I actually feel better about him now."

Why?

"Honestly, I'm pretty close to a one-issue voter. Abortion is the thing I care about most," she said. "Trump is the only president to ever speak at the March for Life. That meant a lot to me."

PETER VERBETEN, who works in software, let out a chuckle. "It's funny, we actually disagree. I feel much worse about him now," he mused. "But I'll probably vote for him again, and for the same reason. The abortion issue, the conservative judges he'll put in place—those things are going to last much longer than his presidency. I'm voting for those things. I'm not voting for Donald Trump."



The Children of 9/11 Are About to Vote

What the youngest cohort of American voters thinks about politics, fear and the potential of the country they've grown up in.

Twins Arie and Aidan Hiester were born in Indianapolis right around 9 a.m. ET, on September 11, 2001, in between the first crash at the World Trade Center and the moment that a second airliner roared onto TV screens across the country and hit the South Tower. "I'm the second twin, and I was born the same time that the second Twin Tower got hit," Aidan recalls. In her first minutes 19 years ago, Aidan struggled to breathe, and she was taken by nurses quickly into the neonatal intensive care unit. Her parents-oblivious to the world beyond-

anxiously waited for word on their daughter. Finally, a doctor and nurse explained that there was nothing wrong with Aidan, but there was something wrong in the United States: "There's big stuff going on in the world," they said.

Across the country, Heather Richardson Bestoso was in labor at the hospital in Newport, Rhode Island, watching the muted "Today Show" with her husband when she noticed the TV was showing black smoke roaring out of the Twin Towers. Their daughter, Lilly, was born around noon, just as United Airlines confirmed that two of its aircraft had crashed. Dylan Herrada arrived about 1:40 p.m., amid the chaos of an Arlington, Virginia,

hospital receiving wounded from the attack on the Pentagon. Moments earlier, TV news had aired President George W. Bush's remarks from Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. "I said, 'Look, the TV has got to go off. You guys have to focus on me,'" Susannah Herrada later told an oral history project done by the Arlington library. "It was a hard time to have a baby. You're supposed to be so happy and you're not. Every mother has to struggle with that but then the thought: What world is this? We weren't sure what was going to happen next." I featured Susannah's story in a book I wrote last year, *The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11*, and the emotional drama

of Dylan's birth stuck with me-the disconnect of celebrating such joy amid such tragedy-so this year I decided to track him down, to find out an answer to his mom's question: What happened next? Across the country, the 13,238 Americans born on September 11, 2001, represented the few rays of hope and happiness on the country's darkest day. Now, 19 years later, many graduated from high school this spring and are beginning their adult lives-either jobs, if they can find them, or college-in the midst of a world-altering pandemic. This group's worldview has been shaped by the 21st century's most momentous events. And now they are becoming more than bystanders. For the first time, they will get to vote in a presidential election. The children of 9/11 are among the youngest cohort of Americans who will go

to the polls this fall-Gen Z voters who came of age in a country that had long since been transformed by the terror attacks. The signature news events of their lives have often been other tragedies-the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, when they were 11, and at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, when they were 16. They barely remember the financial crisis of 2008 and many have only the foggiest memories of Barack Obama's historic presidential victory. Many weren't even paying that much attention to politics at 15 when Donald Trump's surprise victory over Hillary Clinton upended American politics. Now, for the first time, they will be players in the democratic process, capable of influencing the nation's history and not just witnessing it.

What Happens If China Gets the Covid-19 Vaccine First?



David Fidler has a nightmare scenario: In three months, China announces one of its Covid-19 vaccines has successfully completed Phase III trials. The World Health Organization is enthusiastic. Beijing doles out doses to countries in Latin America and Africa and those with claims to the South China Sea. The United States is nowhere to be found. "If China wins the race, exploits that advantage and we don't have anything equivalent yet, what do we do?" he asks. "That to me is what concerns me the most." Fidler, an

expert on global health and national security who has consulted for the WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, isn't the only one pondering what could go wrong in the next few months, as great powers race to be first to get their hands on the Covid-19 vaccine. After half a year of social distancing, soaring unemployment and unrelenting death, it's easy to cling to rhetoric about America's "historic" efforts to find a vaccine to stem the pandemic, to drink in news about "promising" results from early

stage clinical trials or predictions of the "high likelihood" a vaccine will be ready for Americans by the end of the year. But health and vaccine experts caution that it is too early to know whether any of the eight vaccines currently in Phase III trials will prove safe and effective at fighting the coronavirus. Of those eight candidates, four are Chinese, three are funded by the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed and one comes from Australia. Some experts already worry some of the most publicized candidates are overhyped. Which means Fidler's fear isn't so far-fetched. It's very possible a Chinese vaccine could be the first to succeed in Phase III trials. If Warp Speed contenders fail, the U.S. could be perhaps six to eight months behind in developing one. What happens then? Health and national security experts envision, in that case, the future unfolding like a kind of "choose your own nightmare" narrative, each

potential pathway leading to geopolitical quagmires and thorny scientific traps. What if China refuses to give a safe vaccine to the United States, instead using it as a bargaining chip to combat U.S. power? What if the Trump administration, or a Biden administration, refuses to accept it? What if a Chinese "victory" pressures the U.S. or Europe to cut corners in their vaccine development or approval process-a worry only increased by President Donald Trump's recent comments drawing the Food and Drug Administration into his political fights? A vaccine that works will be "the most important human resource in modern history," says Larry Gostin, professor of Global Health Law at Georgetown University. Countries are going to use it strategically. After inoculating its own population, "it's very possible that China's not going to sell [a vaccine] to the highest bidder," he says. "They'll use it for political influence or political payback or

part of the trade negotiations with the United States. ... It's very possible the United States could be at the end of the line." Even if a Chinese vaccine were to come with no strings attached, Fidler doesn't see it ending up in the U.S. "If you have a situation where the FDA says, 'Yeah, looks good,' then you have to buy it," he explains. "Congress has to appropriate money to buy the vaccine from China when we won't let people in the United States use TikTok? I say that kind of tongue in cheek, but this is how bad this is." The worries illustrate just how much geopolitics is shaping the world's response to the worst health crisis in a century. In February, as the deadly pathogen swept around the world, many hoped that the spirit of global cooperation would have the world's most powerful leaders convening in the marble halls of Zoom to share resources, cooperate on vaccine development and decide how best to allocate the doses.

The Musk Method: Learn from partners then go it alone

Elon Musk is hailed as an innovator and disruptor who went from knowing next to nothing about building cars to running the world's most valuable automaker in the space of 16 years.

But his record shows he is more of a fast learner who forged alliances with firms that had technology Tesla lacked, hired some of their most talented people, and then powered through the boundaries that limited more risk-averse partners.

Now, Musk and his team are preparing to outline new steps in Tesla's drive to become a more self-sufficient company less reliant on suppliers at its "Battery Day" event on Sept. 22.

Musk has been dropping hints for months that significant advances

in technology will be announced as Tesla strives to produce the low-cost, long-lasting batteries that could put its electric cars on a more equal footing with cheaper gasoline vehicles.

New battery cell designs, chemistries and manufacturing processes are just some of the developments that would allow Tesla to reduce its reliance on its long-time battery partner, Japan's Panasonic, people familiar with the situation said.

"Elon doesn't want any part of his business to be dependent on someone else," said one former senior executive at Tesla who declined to be named.

"And for better or worse - sometimes better, sometimes worse - he thinks he can do it

better, faster and cheaper." Tesla has battery production partnerships with Panasonic, South Korea's LG Chem and China's Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd (CATL) that are expected to continue. But at the same time, Tesla is moving to control production of cells - the basic component of electric vehicle battery packs - at highly automated factories, including one being built near Berlin, Germany and another in Fremont, California where Tesla is hiring dozens of experts in battery cell engineering and manufacturing.

"There has been no change in our relationship with Tesla," Panasonic said in a statement



provided by a company spokeswoman.

"Our relationship, both past and present has been sound. Panasonic is not a supplier to Tesla; we are partners. There's

no doubt our partnership will continue to innovate and contribute to the betterment of society." Tesla did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

SoftBank exits cellphone distributor Brightstar in telecoms sell-down



SoftBank Group Corp 9984.T said on Friday it would sell U.S. cellphone distributor Brightstar for an undisclosed price, marking the latest sale of telecoms assets as the Japanese conglomerate builds a cash pile. SoftBank will sell the money-losing firm to a newly formed subsidiary of private equity firm

Brightstar Capital Partners for cash plus a 25% stake in the subsidiary, it said in a statement. Brightstar Capital, founded by a former chief operating officer (COO) at the handset distributor, has \$2.1 billion in assets under management and is not affiliated with Brightstar, SoftBank said. The sale marks SoftBank's latest move away from the telecoms industry, as it slashes holdings in wireless carrier SoftBank Corp 9434.T to 40% and following the merger of Sprint with T-Mobile US TMUS.O.

SoftBank explored a Brightstar sale to shed lower-growth businesses in 2018, people familiar with the matter told

Reuters at the time. Brightstar could be valued at more than \$1 billion, the people said.

Brightstar's founder, Bolivian-born billionaire Marcelo Claure, has risen since SoftBank's 2014 acquisition to become group COO and is seen as a candidate to succeed founder Masayoshi Son as chief executive.

SoftBank's founder has a reputation for buying and not selling, but in recent months has sold assets in excess of a plan announced in March to stabilise the group's balance sheet and fund buybacks.

This week, SoftBank said it would sell chip designer Arm to Nvidia Corp NVDA.O for as much as \$40

billion, in an early exit from an asset lionised by Son.

The group's mounting cash pile and bets on the share market and derivatives are seen as deepening uncertainty over its strategic direction. Its shares closed down 1%.

Son frequently bemoans the gap between the value of the group's portfolio and its share price. Executives have held early stage talks about taking the group private, a source has told Reuters.

The Brightstar transaction, subject to regulatory approvals and other customary conditions, is expected to close by March 31, 2021, SoftBank said.

Apple to launch first online store in India next week



Apple Inc will launch its first online store in India on Sept. 23, the iPhone maker said on Friday, coinciding with the country's holiday season that brings some of the biggest sales for retailers every year. Apple sells its products in India through third-

party vendors and e-commerce operators such as Amazon.com Inc's Indian unit and Walmart Inc-owned Flipkart.

The Cupertino, California-based tech giant's iPhones are coveted by tens of millions of Indians but their price keeps them out of the reach of many.

Chinese companies led by Xiaomi Corp dominate in the world's second-biggest smartphone market, with Apple accounting for just 1% of shipments.

Through its online retail platform, Apple plans to offer assistance to customers in English and Hindi, while allowing users to personalise some devices, including iPads, with engravings,

it said. The website will also allow Mac customers to configure their laptops according to their needs.

The opening of Apple's online store presents another challenge for bricks-and-mortar retailers whose business has suffered due to discounts by e-tailers, said Subhash Chandra L, managing director of Sangeetha Mobiles. "At least some of Apple's die-hard customers are likely to shift to buying from its online store," said Chandra whose chain operates more than 650 stores across southern and western India. "But we've learned to compete with online retailers." China's Xiaomi, Realme and OnePlus also sell smartphones

from their websites, besides Amazon and Flipkart. Apple is building its first company-run retail store in India, in the financial capital of Mumbai, with plans to launch in 2021.

India offers huge growth prospects for device makers and competitive labour costs for electronics manufacturing.

Apple assembles some of its smartphone models, including the iPhone 11, at Taiwanese contract manufacturers Foxconn and Wistron's plants in south India.

Foxconn plans to invest up to \$1 billion to expand a south India factory where it assembles iPhones, Reuters reported previously.

Diabetics, take note! You can nosh on sweet potatoes to control your blood sugar



Most of us have been guilty of mindlessly gorging on fried potato chips or french fries, aren't we? After all, potatoes are loved all over the world, and it's not easy to keep yourself away from it! But regardless of how appetising potatoes are, when overeaten, the starch they have can make your blood sugar levels go haywire-especially for those who suffer from type-2 diabetes.

That doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to your potato cravings. How about swapping it with a healthier alternative? That's where sweet potato comes in. This superfood is known for its host of benefits, including regulation of glucose or blood sugar. What's more, it also boasts certain antioxidants to keep chronic diseases at bay, amongst other things.

Why are sweet potatoes safe for diabetics?

The biggest reason why sweet potatoes work well for diabetics is because of its low glycemic index (GI) rating. Foods that have a high GI spike blood sugar levels, and are a big no-no for those who suffer from type-2 diabetes.

Moreover, sweet potatoes contain a carotenoid called beta-carotene, which is a rich source of vitamin A. It also gives the veggie a rich orange colour!

That's not all: This veggie also contains high amounts of vitamin C, which is known to strengthen the immune system. Moreover, sweet potatoes are also rich in iron, and that helps red blood cells produce oxygen and transport nutrients throughout the body.

This superfood also offers plant-based protein, which helps to keep you satiated for long and accelerates weight loss. And that's great news if you want to increase your insulin sensitivity.

Lastly, sweet potatoes are a rich

source of fibre, which spells amazing news for your digestive system! Sweet potatoes have everything and more in them, that makes them a superfood. Since they are rich in fibre, they help with better glucose control. They contain high quantities of vitamins A and C that help to fight inflammation. But remember to control portion size, that's extremely important," shares Dr Lovneet Batra, a top clinical nutritionist working with Fortis La Femme Delhi.

How much sweet potato can someone with diabetes consume?

Although sweet potatoes are a good choice for diabetics, it's important to remember that they still contain carbs! That's exactly why it is important to exercise portion control. Dr Lovneet suggests half a cup of sweet potatoes is good enough, since it is the equivalent of 15 grams of carbohydrates.

It's best to check with your doctor, since the best portion size might differ from person to person!

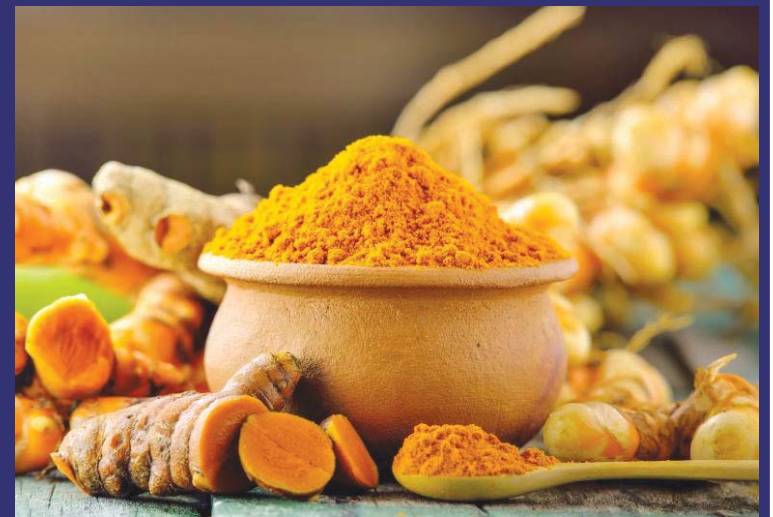
And what's the best way to consume sweet potatoes?

That's another thing to remember: the way you eat

sweet potato is what influences the veggie's nutritional benefits. As per a study published in the Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism in October 2011, certain cooking methods like baking and roasting can kill the nutritional benefits of this wonder vegetable, while increasing its GI.

At the same time, boiled sweet potatoes had the lowest GI value, according to the study. This is because boiling water softens the starch, and makes it easier to digest. That's why eating them in the boiled form is the best option for diabetics!

Research proves turmeric can ease knee pain in arthritis. Here's everything you need to know



Are you struggling with knee pain? What if we tell you that the cure lies in your kitchen rack? Yes! One of the most common spices found in your kitchen, turmeric aka haldi properties that can help ease joint pain, even if it's a part and parcel of arthritis. Turmeric has long been used in Ayurvedic medicine to treat arthritis. Featuring an active ingredient called curcumin, it has well-documented anti-inflammatory properties that

can decrease swelling and prove beneficial in treating conditions that involve inflammation such as arthritis and osteoporosis.

Medical science backs this claim too!

Researchers from the University of Tasmania in Australia studied over 70 participants with arthritis for weeks to understand if turmeric can indeed help them manage their symptoms.

Half the participants were given turmeric capsules whereas the other half were given a placebo.

The study published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine found that participants who took turmeric experienced less knee pain.

Another study published in the Journal of Medicinal Food shows that curcumin has promising effects in treating osteoarthritis.

Here's how you can incorporate turmeric into your diet

1. As a supplement
Curcumin supplements are widely available in the market

and capsules can be the most efficient way to incorporate curcumin into your diet. However, consult your doctor before adding any supplements in your diet.

2. As a spice
Adding turmeric as a spice in your curries and vegetables may not be enough. So, along with turmeric add black pepper as well to boost the absorption of the curcumin component. 3. With your milk
Haldi ka doodh has many healing

benefits, and if you want to consume haldi for all its amazing benefits on a daily basis, nothing can be better than this.

4. As a tea
If you cannot withstand the taste of turmeric milk, then try turmeric tea. You can easily make this by adding a little bit of raw haldi in boiling water. You can also add spices like black pepper for extra flavour.

Tips to attract 'good' Energy for your home



In the science of Feng Shui, it is said that chi is influenced by everything concrete in our lives. Our possessions and where they are located can all affect chi energy. Even the layout of our homes and offices affects Chi energy. By adding and taking away objects, changing the positioning of furniture, plants, wall art and more, we can increase our good luck.

Feng Shui has two parts, the visible and the invisible. The visible factors are walls, doors, streets. The invisible factor is chi. This life force energy and predecessor influences are energies of people who previously lived in your house, ghosts, energies in the land. Every person, place and thing is alive with the universal energy

adapting it in the design of homes calls for precision combined with tasteful aesthetics. When we look at a building the first impression we derive determines the kind of energy existing within it and you get a feel about the lifestyle of the occupants too. Comfort and convenience are key factors when planning a home or even a room placement, storage, furniture arrangements and layout.

If you live in a house with bad history, or you've had many negative experiences in the house, you need to cleanse the space with saline water, incense sticks and lights. If you have two or more doors in direct alignment, especially if it is the front door and back door, suspend wind chime or crystal or a moving object to slow down the chi flow.

An attractive, well-kept door will attract good chi, whereas a run-down door will cause bad chi to enter your home.

Clear pathways and keep hallways, driveways,



In Feng Shui, the exterior surroundings are the most important aspects affecting the chi flowing into your home. Hence, looking at the exterior, environment and the interior of a home will help in ascertaining the flaws and the positive trends

the building inherits. Creating balance and harmony through proper arrangement of the interior layout and inviting exterior will ensure that the Feng Shui of the space is beneficial to the occupants in turn giving rise to

prosperity and happiness. It's a fact that home is where we spend most of our time with the family and all those who are dear and close in our lives. Hence, focusing on the quality of energy, keeping the flow clean and smooth is essential.

called 'Chi'. Everything is connected by this vital energy that is always changing. When we integrate the Feng Shui principles into our lives, we see and interact with the world in a new powerful way.

Understanding the science of Feng Shui and

open and clear free for energy to flow. De clutter attics, lofts, garage and basement and keep them clean. Pay particular attention to clogged drains and leaky pipes. As conduits for energy, they should be kept clear at all times.

Clean home, better health



Here are seven reasons why keeping your home spic and span is good for your overall wellbeing:

1. Looks better and fresh. Isn't it obvious that any place which is clean, tidy and organised makes you feel better?
2. It makes you more productive. Studies say that people who live and work in clean surroundings tend to be more focused and productive at work.
3. Keeps allergies at bay. Regular cleaning helps keep dust and allergies at bay.



4. Good for your mental well being. Cleaning your home with other tasks can help prevent depression.
5. Reduce the risk of injury. From messed up electrical wires to dirty laundry, a cluttered home includes lots of things for you to trip over and fall.

6. Gets your creative juices flowing. When everything is sorted at your place, your mind is free to focus on rediscovering your hidden creative side.
7. It is exercise. Cleaning helps you burn calories. Even a little amount of cleaning and dusting can up your fitness.

How to take care of Wooden flooring

- Use carpets and door mats or rugs wherever required to keep the wooden flooring clean.
- Easy to clean, hygienic and dust free, wooden floorboards also offer high impact resistance and better acoustics.

Floors help to anchor the look of a home. Of the multitude of options available to homeowners, wooden floors offer timeless elegance like no other. The richness of grain and the healthy sheen of a wooden floor are not the only attributes that appeal to most people; the strength, durability, resilience and the exclusivity it offers are equally tempting. A wooden floor can make a room look bigger and lighter and adds value to your house. They also blend well with any kind of decor. The timeless beauty of wood helps in recapturing minds of the people. Easy to clean, hygienic and dust free, wooden floorboards also offer high impact resistance and better acoustics. Timber flooring does not trap dust, pollen and other allergens. With all the joy's and excitement of the festive season, the last thing you would be worried about is

the potential damage to your wooden floors, that would be endured with the increase of activity and people scampering on it. Festive season would mean increase of traffic in your home, which would lead your wooden flooring to more scratches, abrasions and possibility of wear and tear.

To ensure that your wooden flooring doesn't have to bear the brunt of the festive season here are some of tips to maintain and protect your hardwood flooring during the festive season to make it look fantastic:

- Vacuum the floor to remove dirt and debris. Don't wear slippers when you clean the wooden flooring, as the dirt underneath your slipper may leave permanent scratches on your floor.
- Use carpets and door mats or rugs wherever required to keep the wooden flooring clean
- Use rugs or mats which are specialized for hardwood floors. Normal rugs and mats can
- Never use water to clean wooden flooring. Water spoils the wood and damages it.
- Sticky stains can be removed with a wet sponge or a damp towel or cloth piece. It is best
- Never use oily soap solution or ammonia cleaners to clean the wooden floor.
- For wiping out the spills from the floor, use a damp cloth.



5 Must dos while Shifting home

Anyone who has shifted homes will be able to tell you it is no easy task. The entire business is emotionally and physically taxing.

From hiring the best movers to telling goodbyes to friends, every step should be closely planned. Here are five simple steps which will help you move to your new home comfortably.

The A to Z list:

Take time and prepare a checklist. Write down everything which needs to be done, from paying your newspaper boy to the list of people you need to say goodbye. It is easy to let something important slip away while you are having so much in your mind. A list will give you the confidence that you will not miss out on anything.

Plan your move in advance:

The more time you have the easier the shift is. A gradual change is better than a last-minute huff-puff. It not only gives you enough buffer time in case everything does not go according to plan but also helps you and your family to emotionally adjust to the fact that you are moving to a new home.

Talk to your children:

Dealing with kids while shifting is one helluva task. Most of them will find leaving their friends and surrounding traumatic. Sit with them and tell them what will change and what will remain the same. Ask them to collect phone numbers and mail ids of their friends so that they can stay in touch. Talk to them about their new school and type of people they will come across. Involve them while packing up their bags and goodies so that they feel responsible and not left out.

Pack with care:

Today packing is well taken care by professional movers. But that does not mean you should not be involved. Who would like to see their favourite vase broken during the moving process. Make sure everything is properly bundled and fragile items are well packed before loading. Consider taking your favourite items along with you in the car.

Be positive:

Yes, shifting residence will sap your energy. Do not let the grief of leaving your home and anxieties

about the new surroundings overwhelm you. Learn to take one day at a time. Focus on the shift and hope for a good home and happiness. The positive energy will help you move forward without trouble.



Best kept silver cleaning secrets

Experts from Episode Silver give you some damage control tips to maintain your silverware this monsoon...

Tarnish

Silver tarnishes when in contact with atmospheric sulphur. Therefore use your silver regularly as usage breaks the sulphur sulphide film that causes tarnish.

For food products, be sure to wipe dry after washing. Use of soft cloth.

For decorative products, wipe daily during the daily house dusting process. This delays tarnishing.

Cleaning Silver

Heavily tarnished pieces can be cleaned with :- Foam, Sprays or liquid paste silver polishes.

Both Indian and imported polishes are

It is easy to fall in love with sparkling silverware, well-polished and winking in delight at its own splendour. But maintaining the pristine glow is a herculean task, especially in Mumbai where humidity levels are usually high.

easily available in the market. Use a soft chamois cloth.

Silver dips are also very effective. Use a weak solution of washing soda and water to clean heavily stained Tea or Coffee pots. Pierced work should not be cleaned with a cloth as it may get stuck on the edges. Use a soft brush.

Silver can be washed in dishwashers, but avoid contact with stainless steel as a reaction can occur.



6 Simple tips to host a potluck party



The one thing that makes potluck parties a fun event is that it gives everyone an opportunity to involve in hosting the party. However, it requires some planning for sure.

We give you 6 simple tips to hosting a successful potluck party

Make a guest list

To begin with, slot a day and time as per the convenience of everyone. A potluck party should have atleast 6 to 7 people or couples for it to be fun and memorable. The more the

better.

Let each one pick a dish

Once you figure out the guest list, you can ask each member what they would like to prepare instead of you deciding the dish for everyone.

Every individual has a speciality dish that he/she can cook well. Co-ordination is a must to ensure there are a perfect number of appetizers, main course and desserts.

Do not miss out on the essentials

If you are of the view that a potluck party host just needs to provide the venue, you are wrong.

The basic items such as plates and utensils, tissue papers, water and other drinks is solely your responsibility. So ensure that everything is well stocked.

Pay attention to the food

Apart from the essentials, you also have to take care of the food and the temperature at which it is

served. If a dish needs to be warmed in the oven before serving or if some dessert has to be refrigerated, do it.

Opt for use-and-throw wares

If there are too many guests coming over, choose dishes or plates made of thermocol,

paper or plastic. This way you would not need to wash all the utensils once the party is over and in turn save up all your time and energy. Moreover, keep a huge bin near the kitchen so that the guests can dispose the plates in

the bin after use.

Appreciate and thank everyone

After the successful potluck party, do not forget to thank each and every guest individually for attending the party and also for taking all the necessary effort in making it a memorable one.





A new island of hope rising from the Indian Ocean

The modern island of Hulhumale is taking shape 8km off the north-east coast of Malé island in the Maldives in direct response to the threat posed by inexorably rising sea levels.

Scattered across the Arabian Sea, south-west of Sri Lanka and India, the Maldives present the face of a dreamy, tropical idyll to travellers from all over the world, who fly in to savour picture-perfect coral atolls fringed with white sand, luxurious resorts and world-class water sport.

But perhaps no other nation faces an environmental threat quite like the Maldives. Its luxury beach resorts may be world-famous, but with more than 80% of its scattered 1,200 islands less than 1m above sea level, rising oceans threaten its very existence.

"We are one of the most vulnerable countries on Earth and therefore need to adapt," said the country's vice president Mohammed Waheed Hassan in a 2010 World Bank report that warned how, at current predicted rates of sea level rise, all of the Maldives' around 200 natural inhabited islands could be submerged by 2100.

But Maldivians are determined to fight back to preserve their existence. Back in 2008, then-president Mohamed Nasheed made global headlines by announcing a plan to buy land

elsewhere so his citizens could relocate should islands become submerged. That plan gave way to considering whether it might be best to work with the sea rather than against it, by building floating urban developments – as has been done in cities like Amsterdam.

Instead, the Maldives turned to a different form of geo-engineering: creating a 21st-Century city, dubbed the "City of Hope", on a new, artificial island christened Hulhumalé.

Pre-Covid, curious tourists could visit the new island city as it takes shape around 8km from the capital city of Malé by hopping on a 20-minute bus from the airport over the bridge. Yet, few who come to the Maldives on short luxurious breaks will think about the pragmatic social issues Hulhumalé aims to solve. With more than 500,000 inhabitants scattered across the archipelago, delivery of services is one resource-draining logistical nightmare. Lack of job opportunities is another, driving youth unemployment to more

than 15%, according to a 2020 report by the World Bank.

As well as the long-term threat of submersion, increasing coastal erosion also threatens the 70% of infrastructure – homes, other buildings and utilities – located within 100m of present shorelines. There's also worries over encroaching salty seas tainting precious fresh water sources, plus risks posed by unpredictable natural disasters, like the 2004 tsunami that killed more than 100 people in the Maldives.

After the 2004 tsunami, a programme for enhancing resiliency through safer islands was introduced," explained Areen Ahmed, director of business development at the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) that oversees the City of Hope. "Hulhumalé is being developed through careful considerations of climate change in its architecture and communities."

Ongoing land reclamation using millions of cubic metres of sand pumped from the seabed has raised the new island more than 2m above sea level, while the

island's growing City of Hope is seen as a vital new settlement to relieve the over-crowding that currently blights Malé, where more than 130,000 people cram into 1 square mile (just more than 2.5 sq km).

"Malé is one of the most densely populated cities on Earth," said Kate Philpot, who worked as a science officer in the Maldives, researching reef fish for the Korallion Lab marine station, before becoming senior ecologist at UK-based consultancy Ecology By Design.

Phase one of Hulhumalé's land reclamation, consisting of 188 hectares, began in 1997 and was completed in 2002. Two years later, the island celebrated the arrival of its first 1,000 residents. Further reclamation of 244 hectares of land was completed in 2015, and by late 2019, more than 50,000 people were living on Hulhumalé.

But ambitions for Hulhumalé are far greater, eventually envisioned as hosting up to 240,000 people in well-designed style by the mid-2020s. This vision includes a diverse mix of quality housing, new employment opportunities plus open recreational space three times larger per person than Malé.

According to Ahmed, in contrast to the unplanned and over-crowded nature of Malé, Hulhumalé was designed with many green urban planning initiatives. "Buildings are oriented north-south to reduce heat gain and improve thermal comfort. Streets are designed to optimise wind penetration, reducing reliance on air conditioning. And schools, mosques and neighbourhood parks are within 100-200m walking distance of

residential developments, reducing car use." Electric buses and bicycle lanes are also part of the new city landscape.

Varied housing needs are also being catered for. "Hulhumalé comprises diverse housing projects: mid-range, luxury and social housing," said Ahmed. "Sixty percent of mid-range housing units have to be sold under the pricing ceiling set by HDC." Affordable social housing is available for specific groups, including single women and those affected by displacement and disasters. There has been detailed consultation to ensure housing and the wider built environment is accessible to those with disabilities.

Enviably digital infrastructure proposals complement green initiatives and social planning, said Ahmed, who describes Hulhumalé as "Asia's first 100% gigabit-enabled smart city", with fast digital access for residents based on widespread optical fibre technology known as GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Networks).

The ultimate benefit of building a Smart City from scratch is that Hulhumalé will be seen as a city of resilience – built by the people of Maldives for the people of the Maldives," said Professor Hassan Ugail, a Maldivian computer scientist who is helping to make Hulhumalé a smart city, alongside his work as director of the Centre for Visual Computing at the UK's University of Bradford. Hulhumalé aims to tick boxes with regard to sustainable urban development too, including drawing around a third of its energy from solar power and harvesting rainwater to boost water security.



The Devil All the Time movie review:

Robert Pattinson is godlike in Netflix's star-studded but unsettlingly bleak film

The Devil All the Time movie review: Netflix's unsettlingly bleak film is given a boost by a spectacular cast that includes Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Sebastian Stan, Bill Skarsgård and others.

The Devil All the Time
Director - Antonio Campos
Cast - Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Bill Skarsgård, Riley Keough, Jason Clarke, Sebastian Stan, Harry Melling, Mia Wasikowska
Impeccably acted and directed with unwavering confidence by Antonio Campos, Netflix's The Devil All the Time is a hellish ride from start to finish, but in the best way possible. It isn't merely content with criticising religion in a matter-of-fact manner, it's gunning for obliteration. It wants to take a rusty World War 2 Luger and shoot it between the eyes.
Campos performs an autopsy on the allure of organised religion, and those who succumb to it. Neither the idea of God, nor the people who believe in it, the movie says, are sane. It is no coincidence that the most

overzealous characters in the film all appear to be in need of an immediate exorcism. There is a delirium in their eyes as they perform sermons before a sedated crowd.
The Devil All the Time tries to attribute this insanity to the fact that in post-war Knockemstiff, Ohio - a town of 400 in the middle of middle of nowhere - everyone is 'connected by blood by one calamity or another.' But in reality, Knockemstiff is just like the rest of America - stunned into a stupor by the promise of salvation.
Borrowing liberally - both in terms of tone and tempo - from Paul Thomas Anderson's masterpiece, There Will be Blood, Campos attempts to investigate the reasons behind America's moral corruption. The rot, he discovers, set in decades ago.
Our story begins immediately after the war, when a PTSD-ridden

soldier named Willard Russell, played by Bill Skarsgård, returns home to his hamlet, and finds that he has nothing better to do than to impregnate the local waitress and perform beatdowns on common criminals. His idle mind, having personally invited the devil to work in it, becomes obsessed with the idea of regaining his lost faith. And so he builds a little church for himself in his backyard. He will sacrifice not only his sanity, but also his life in this pursuit.
Years later, Willard's young adult son, having assumed the mantle of protagonist, is haunted by the sins of his father. Played by Tom Holland, Arvin lives with his devotee grandparents and a step-sister, Lenora. He adores her, but when she falls prey to a perverted new preacher in town, played by Robert Pattinson, Arvin is forced to seek retribution.
He has no choice, he says. An eye



for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, that is what he believes in. Arvin is the least religious character in the film, and despite his murderous mission, also its moral centre. The movie is quite ham-fisted that way.

The godman problem isn't unique to India, just as blind faith isn't unique to America. Look closely, and you'll observe psychological patterns between Pattinson's Reverend Preston Teagardin and the baba next-door. But while the notorious Ram Rahim Singh Insaan appeared to be

channelling Daler Mehndi, Reverend Teagardin seems to have been possessed by the spirit of Daniel Plainview.

This Pattinson performance is something else. It might be the last time we see him swing for the fences before we lose him to blockbusters for a few years. The sheer courage of playing an irredeemable predator aside - Pattinson is, you must remember, one of the most desirable men in the world - it's almost as if he deliberately wants to destroy the image that he has built over the years.

Alive movie review:

Watching Netflix's zombie thriller is like reliving the horror of the lockdown



Alive movie review: The new Korean zombie thriller, out on Netflix, works as a scary metaphor for the coronavirus pandemic.

#Alive
Director - Cho Il-hyung
Cast - Yoo Ah-in, Park Shin-hye
For a film that seems to exist only because someone thought slapping a zombie mod onto Home Alone would be a good idea, #Alive is a fairly inventive apocalyptic thriller that is given added heft because of the raging pandemic.
Joon-woo (Yoo Ah-in) wakes up one morning to find that his parents have already gone to work, leaving behind instructions for him - a sloppy teen gamer - on how to take care of himself while they're

out. Considering the nature of some of the instructions - "buy groceries" - Joon-woo seems like the sort of guy who'd barely be able to last a day without his mom making a meal for him. But little does he know that in a matter of minutes, his life is going to be only about learning to take care of himself.
He turns on the TV and is met with some concerning news. The people of Seoul seem to have been consumed by rage. Their eyes are bleeding, and they're attacking people. Some of them, the newsreader whispers, appear to have developed cannibalistic

urges. As mass hysteria erupts outside his apartment, Joon-woo's brain connects the dots: zombies. What unfolds is a film that'll make you relive horror of the nightmarish coronavirus lockdown. As Joon-woo fortifies his apartment, convinced that staying at home is the safest bet, the virus consumes the populace at a frightening rate outside. Soon, the internet services shut down and the food runs out. Joon-woo leaves no stone unturned in his efforts to survive - he flies a drone around his apartment complex to survey the area, sends out SOS messages on Twitter, and even tries rationing - but just when he's about to give up, help comes to him.
It's a neighbour, Yoo-bin (Park Shin-hye), who's been isolating in her own home across the yard, and like Jimmy Stewart in Rear Window, has been spying on Joon-woo for days, it seems.

There's an instant connection. Do you remember that sweet story of how a couple of New Yorkers formed a virtual connection while quarantining at their homes at the peak of the pandemic? The guy sent the girl his number via drone, and before they knew it, they were having a romantic dinner on their respective rooftops, connected by FaceTime. That's sort of what happens between Joon-woo and Yoo-bin in #Alive. As it turns out, the human meat that the zombies feast on isn't the only tender thing in the movie.
But while he patiently develops the love story, director Cho Il-hyung doesn't skimp on the zombie action. The prosthetics are consistently well-done, the set-pieces are well executed,

and even though George A Romero would disapprove of the zombies' lightning reflexes, Max Brooks would be proud of the protagonists' ingenuity.
#Alive, in its third act, even has time for moments of unexpected gravitas. While you were absorbed by Joon-woo and Yoo-bin's drama, the movie suggests, equally moving stories were unfolding inside other apartments. It's like that brief moment of realisation in Cloverfield - a film shot in the found footage format - where the protagonist's camera captures another person documenting the monster attack just like him.
Director Matt Reeves wondered if a sequel could be made from that person's perspective. A similar opportunity is available to Il-hyung here. The pandemic isn't going anywhere, nor is the audience's appetite for solid zombie cinema.

After Rhea Chakraborty Rakul Preet Singh Seeks Ban on Media Trial

The Delhi High Court on Thursday expressed hope that the media will exercise restraint as the bench asked the Centre, National Broadcasters Association among others to respond to a petition filed by Bollywood actor Rakul Preet Singh.

Rakul Preet has highlighted media reports against her after Sushant Singh Rajput's death case accused Rhea Chakraborty named the former in a drug related case before the NCB.

While passing these directions, the single judge bench said: "There has to be some restraint. Media gets to know info even before the officers themselves. Reputations are getting tarnished."

Justice Navin Chawla issued notice to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Prasar Bharti and the Press Council of India seeking their response over the petition filed by the Bollywood actor through advocates Aman Hingorani, Himanshu Yadav and Shweta Hingorani.

It also asked the central government, Prasar Bharti and the Press Council to treat the said petition as a representation and take decision expeditiously.

The next hearing on the matter will be on October 15.

"It is hoped that media houses and TV channels would show restraint and abide by the Program Code and other guidelines while making any report in connection with Rakul Preet Singh," the bench added in its observation.

The plea filed by the actor claimed that she was shooting for a film in Telangana when she was stunned to see private TV channels, including some members of the News Broadcasters Association running "breaking news" from the evening of 11.9.2020 to the effect that the Petitioner, along with Actress Sara Ali Khan and Designer Simone Khambatta, have been named as the individuals who take drugs by Actress Rhea Chakraborty in the ongoing investigation by the Narcotics Control Bureau in Mumbai into the drug angle in the June 14 death of Sushant.

"The Petitioner categorically states that she does not take drugs at all, and has, to the best of her recollection, has only met Sara Ali Khan twice (once at IIFA Awards and once while working out in a gym) and has not met Simone Khambatta at all," the petition said.

Rakul Preet further stated that despite the fact that Rhea had already retracted her statement on 9.9.2020 as aforesaid, the private TV channels have continued since 11.9.2020 till date to run a slander campaign against her.

The petition has sought the court's direction in order to ask the media not to telecast, publish or circulate on the TV channels, cable, print or social media, as the case may be, any content in context of Actress Rhea Chakraborty's narcotic drugs case that maligns or slanders the Petitioner or which contains anything defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths in respect of the Petitioner, or to use sensational headlines, photographs, video-footage or social media links which invade the privacy of the Petitioner.

Kriti Sanon Shares Glimpse from Her 'Much-needed' Family Getaway

Kriti and Nupur Sanon shared glimpses from their family getaway amid coronavirus scare. Take a look.



Kriti Sanon has jetted off to an undisclosed location with her family for a vacation. The actress took to Instagram stories and shared a short clip in which she showed us an infinity pool. Kriti wrote that the vacation was a much-needed one. She also wrote alongside the clip of swimming pool, "My calm corner for a few days."

Kriti's sister Nupur Sanon also posted a similar video on social media and wrote over it, "Home for the next few days."

Kriti has been facing an emotionally turbulent time after the death of her friend and co-star Sushant Singh Rajput on June 14. The actress also attended Sushant's last rites in Mumbai. Kriti has been sharing her thoughts on social media for a while now. Recently, people treated one of her posts as "cryptic" and linked it with late actor Sushant, who was found dead at his Bandra residence.

The actress had been supporting for a CBI probe into the Sushant's death case. On the work front, Kriti will next be seen in Mimi, which is remake of a Marathi film. In it, she plays a surrogate mother and even gained weight for various portions. She is also cast opposite Akshay Kumar in Bachchan Pandey.

Vettaikaaran Director Babu Sivan Passes Away in Chennai



Tamil filmmaker Babu Sivan breathed his last on September 16. The director passed away in Chennai. He was 54. Liver and kidney issues were factors that led to his sad demise.

As per report by The News Minute, the late director was found in an unconscious state by his family at their residence. Sivan's daughters, who were appearing for the NEET, went for the exam along with their mother. On reaching back, they discovered Babu Sivan lying unconscious.

He was immediately rushed to the nearest private hospital and was later shifted to a government hospital due to financial restraints. Since his family could afford the treatment cost, he was treated in Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital in Chennai.

The doctors at the hospital suggested dialysis considering the poor functioning of his kidney. But unfortunately, conducting the dialysis did not help his recovery and he eventually succumbed. It has also been indicated in media reports that the director suffered from liver failure. He had been feeling a few symptoms lately, but kept passing it off as regular discomfort and avoided going to a hospital.

Babu Sivan is best known for helming 2009 film Vettaikaaran which did exceptionally well at the box office. The Tamil film starred Thalapaty Vijay and Anushka Shetty in main roles. It was one of the highest grossing Tamil films of that year. Vijay and Anushka bagged the Vijay Awards for Favourite Hero and Favourite Heroine, respectively. Before that, he worked as an assistant director with Dharani. Babu Sivan wrote dialogues for the Vijay and Trisha starrer Tamil movie Kuruvu, which released in 2008. He later started venturing into television. In 2019, he started directing a Tamil serial for Sun TV titled Raasathi but could only complete work on a few episodes.

The series stars Debjani Modak, Devayani, Baladitya and Vichitra. Babu Sivan is survived by his wife and two daughters. Before that, he worked as an assistant director with Dharani. Babu Sivan wrote dialogues for the Vijay and Trisha starrer Tamil movie Kuruvu, which released in 2008. He later started venturing into television. In 2019, he started directing a Tamil serial for Sun TV titled Raasathi but could only complete work on a few episodes. The series stars Debjani Modak, Devayani, Baladitya and Vichitra. Babu Sivan is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Rajeshwari Sachdev

Actress Home Quarantined After Being Tested Positive for COVID-19



TV actress Rajeshwari Sachdev, currently seen in TV show Shaadi Mubarak, tested positive for coronavirus recently. From what is known till now, she has been having mild symptoms for the last two days. She also confirmed the same on Instagram.

She wrote: "Hello Everyone! Ho gaya ji humko bhi...I've tested positive for Covid-19. Got myself tested when I started showing a few symptoms and have isolated plus quarantined myself at home. I am under the Doctor's Supervision and all seems in control. I request all who might have come in contact with me in the last few days to get themselves tested and be safe. For now sab Dua karein ki jaldi se theek ho jaaon."

I pray that all stay safe and covid free (sic)." Meanwhile, a source close to the actress informed The Times of India, "Though Rajeshwari was not coming for the shoot for the past few days as she didn't have scenes to shoot for, she developed mild symptoms like low grade fever along with weakness. After waiting for two days, Rajeshwari got herself tested on Tuesday for COVID-19. The reports unfortunately came positive on Wednesday evening." However, Rajeshwari's family Varun Badola and their son have not been tested as yet. The adds that Varun and their son will be tested for COVID-19 on Thursday. Fortunately, none of them have any symptoms right now. "In all probabilities, Varun too will not be going for the shoot of his serial Mere Dad Ki Dulhan for some time till the reports of his test comes," the report added.

Quite a few TV actors including Rajesh Kumar, Himani Shivpuri, Karam Rajpal, Sachin Tyagi and Parth Samthaa also tested positive for the virus in last few days. Dance reality TV show India's Best Dancer judge Malaika Arora too tested positive for the COVID-19. Taking to Instagram she revealed about testing positive for the virus. While she is asymptomatic and feeling fine, the model decided to take a break from the shoot and stay in isolation.



Thinking of Buying/Selling

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See Full page
advt on P : 10



Charge Ex-Minister Arun Shourie Over Rajasthan Palace Hotel Sale: Court

Hotel Laxmi Vilas was valued at over Rs 252 crore but was sold for Rs 7.5 crore, said the court, on Arun Shourie's watch as Disinvestment Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

(News Agencies)- One of the grandest palace-hotels in Rajasthan was grossly undervalued and sold at a huge loss to the taxpayer in 2002 and former Union Minister Arun Shourie should be charged for it, a special CBI court has said. In a corruption case involving the sale of Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel in



CBI judge.

Hotel Laxmi Vilas was valued at over Rs 252 crore but was sold for Rs 7.5 crore to hotelier Lalit Suri, said the special CBI court. Jyotsna Suri took charge of the Lalit group of hotels after her husband Lalit Suri's death. Arun Shourie, a veteran journalist who was Disinvestment Minister at

Udaipur, the court has asked for criminal cases against Arun Shourie, former bureaucrat Pradeep Baijal and hotelier Jyotsna Suri. The court wants the hotel sale case to be reopened. "Unknown officers and private persons indulged in this conspiracy from 1999 to 2002 to cause loss of money to the government. The land was valued at Rs 45 per square yard. Even a spoon in the hotel would be costlier than that," said a special

the time, said he would file a revision petition in the Rajasthan High Court against the order.

"When you dispose of a property the evaluation is based on various factors - the land rate, possibility of growth, business potential, assets and liabilities. All these are studied and were studied by not one man but by a firm appointed by the government.

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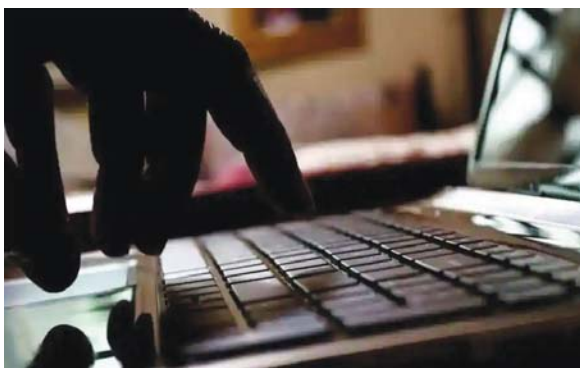
On China, India is making a mistake



(News Agencies)- Successive governments have put more faith in diplomacy than the armed forces in achieving security objectives. Diplomacy can accomplish little in the absence of strategic vision and resolve or adequate leverage. The diplomatic blunders of 1948 (Kashmir dispute's internationalisation), 1954 (Panchsheel Agreement's acceptance of the "Tibet region of China"), 1960 (Indus Waters Treaty), 1966 (Taskhent) and 1972 (Simla) have imposed enduring costs. Worse still, India has learnt little from its past.

(Contd on page 29)

CBI case against 6 companies for allegedly installing pop-ups to personal computers



(News Agencies)- The Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday said that it has filed a case against six private companies for allegedly transmitting pop-ups with bogus warnings to personal computers of certain individuals. In a complaint filed with central agency, it has been alleged that these companies transmitted pop-ups to the victims' personal computers by sending out warnings/bogus messages that said "serious technical problems" including malware infection in their Microsoft Windows systems, CBI said.

Later, when the victims called on the helpline number to seek a solution to the pop-up issue arising on their computer, they were allegedly asked to pay a fee by clicking on a link on the interface for providing

(Contd on page 30)

Cash-strapped Trump campaign awaits a bailout from big donors

(News Agencies)-Republican Party megadonors are racing to bail out President Donald Trump's cash-strapped reelection campaign, with a newly formed super PAC pouring a further \$25 million into battleground states.

Preserve America is set to begin running a trio of TV commercials savaging Democrat Joe Biden as Republicans express growing alarm over the president's absence from the airwaves. Trump - who went dark for part of August and has since cancelled advertising in key states - is being outspent more than 2-to-1 by Biden this week, according to the media tracking firm Advertising Analytics.



The outside group, which is expected to draw funding from prolific GOP givers including Las Vegas casino mogul Sheldon Adelson and Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus, is rushing to fill the void. Starting late

this week, the super PAC will begin airing ads in seven states, including some where Trump is being badly outspent. With Trump's once-formidable cash advantage over Biden erased, the president's advisers remain deeply concerned about the air war. While Preserve America has dished out \$55 million this month alone - already making it one of the highest-spending outside groups this election year - the sum pales in comparison to the \$100 million, pro-Biden assault that billionaire former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is prepping in just Florida alone. And in August, the Biden

(Contd on page 29)

