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US and India are taking on China with a 'Middle Eastern Quad'



(Story on page 33)

Global energy drought could herald a future of excess



(SAI Bureau)-Our energy system is built upon a mountain of waste. Believe it or not, that's a good thing. Look at the journey that power takes to your plug socket from its original source, and you'll find excess and overcapacity every step of the way. All electricity grids are designed with a reserve margin - some 10% or so in excess of expected peak demand, that can be called on in exceptional circumstances to prevent blackouts.

(Contd on page 32)

How Corporations Keep Their Own Workers in Debt



(SAI Bureau)- How much should someone be paid for cleaning a 1,700 square-foot bank? A janitor in Washington State was paid an average of \$6.59 per job doing this work - not \$6.59 per hour, but \$6.59 for the entire

cleaning job.

According to a lawsuit filed earlier this year by the state's attorney general, the janitor and other immigrant workers with limited English skills were lured into this grueling, grossly underpaid work through a scheme common in the industry: A janitorial company sold the workers franchises that were pretty much bound to fail. In these situations, the price is steep, the cleaning jobs are inherently unprofitable and the franchise purchases are financed through loans (Contd on page 33)

Squid Game shows how Netflix has mastered the art of keeping its subscribers



(SAI Bureau)-Television fans have been willing to give just about every new streaming-TV service a shot. But "Squid Game" shows how Netflix Inc. has uniquely mastered the art of keeping its subscribers. Netflix surpassed expectations Tuesday when it reported 4.38 million net new members for the (Contd on page 32)

New York Governor Hochul Celebrates New York Diwali Extravaganza



(Story on page 4)



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Indian American, Sharanjit Singh Thind (Sonny), nominated as a Vice Chairman of Nassau Republican Committee

(By Susmita Ghosh) New York - Sharanjit Singh Thind (Sonny) has been nominated as a Vice Chairman of Nassau County Republican Party of New York recently by Joseph Cairo, the Chairman of the party.

Sharanjit Singh Thind, becomes the first and the only Sikh American to hold this position in Nassau County. After the nomination, an elated Sharanjit expressed, "I am thankful to Chairman Joe Cairo for bestowing such honour, proving his conviction and confidence in me. I ensure every assistance to help him in strengthening the Republican Party in Nassau County, serve my community and Nassau residents. I am also obliged to my political mentor, Zahid Syed, Chairman of SAPAC (South Asian Political

Action Committee) for introducing me to Chairman Cairo." Of late, Sharanjit has served as a Commissioner, Nassau County Human Rights Commission. Born in a Sikh family from Kapurthala, Punjab, India, Sharanjit possesses an MBA degree and a Masters' Program in Journalism.

Settled in New York since 2000, Sharanjit is an established businessman, nature and fitness enthusiast. He is the founder and CEO of Media Partners Capital Inc., a digital media investment company, which owns popular South Asian media brands. Resident of Nassau County for long, he lives in Wantagh with his wife, two kids and parents. He serves few religious, non-profit and community action organizations on board.



(Seen in picture) Joe Cairo, Nassau County GOP Chairman with Sharanjit Singh Thind



(By Prakash Waghmare)

There is historic new dawn at "Ekal Abhiyan" ('Ekal Mission'), an umbrella organization for all the ancillary 'Ekal branchlets', as 'Diwali' festivities approach. After the departure of former CEO of "Ekal Abhiyan", Bajrang Bagra, to tackle another assignment of national importance, Ramesh Shah, the former President and Chairman of 'Ekal-USA' has been unanimously appointed as the new CEO of "Ekal Abhiyan". What makes this a historic moment is the fact that, he is the first Indian American who rose from a foot-soldier level to this distinctive honor, whose sole focus and establishment is not United States (U.S.) but rural India. Rameshbhai, as he is popularly known, has been a founder member of 'Ekal-USA' and credited with building a modest 'one-teacher-school' project, 32 years back into a national brand in U.S. for 'selfless social work', with over 60 widespread chapters in U.S., Canada and beyond. While endorsing his successor, Bagraji

Historic New Dawn At "Ekal Abhiyan"

- a highly admired visionary possessing leadership acumen - expressed nothing but confidence and admiration for the new CEO. In a statement he said, "Rameshbhai will improve upon working of Ekal in fields of operational efficiency and organizational growth. He was my guide and supporter for all matters related to foreign chapters. Moreover, his we unmatched passion and long experience in serving the community in multiple sectors, including VHP & Ekal, has always been a great asset". Dr Mahesh Mehta, former Chairman of 'VHP of America' commenting on Ekal's trailblazing success across the continent, communicated that, "I am excited and proud that Rameshbhai fulfilled the task he was entrusted

with in such a monumental way." Coming from a very humble rural background, Rameshbhai with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a brief stint as an engineer in an Indian industrial corporation, arrived in U.S. in 1970, with a dream to excel like all immigrants. He subsequently obtained degrees in MBA-Finance and MA in Economics. When the national emergency was declared in India 1975, he actively participated in 'Indians for Democracy' and 'Friends of India Society International' that demanded the restoration of the Indian constitution. He has been a lifelong 'Swayamsevak' (volunteer) of H.S.S. While at 'V.H.P. of America', he took the responsibility of floating 'Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation' in 1988

and worked tirelessly and diligently to make it a great success. In the initial days of 'Ekal' he used to carry box-load of self-prepared information-publicity material to various community events in the hope of getting an opportunity to talk about rural illiteracy. With amicable nature and deep convictions assisting his hard-work, he soon found access wherever he went. Over the years, Rameshbhai, with his dedication and tenacity has brought in numerous donors, volunteers and thinkers to Ekal fold and motivated diverse groups to join hands with Ekal. Besides Ekal, he is responsible for establishing 'Gujarati Samaj of Houston' and spearheading countless projects related to 'eyecare' in India. During this entire community-centric

journey, he was assisted by his soulmate, wife-Kokilaben. They both have been felicitated number of times by the Indian diaspora in U.S.

The high points of Rameshbhai's community involvement came in 2014 and 2019 when he successfully planned and coordinated public reception for the newly elected Indian PM Modi at huge arena-filled gatherings in New York City and Houston. This was unprecedented in U.S. for any foreign dignitary. For this herculean task, to everyone's amazement, he ensured that every thread of Indian community was part of it. In January 2017, Rameshbhai was bestowed with the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA)' by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee - the highest honor conferred on overseas Indians by the Government of India in recognition of achievements, both in India and abroad. Therefore, it is no wonder that Bagraji called him 'the most suited candidate to be the CEO of Ekal Abhiyan'.

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New York Governor Hochul Celebrates New York Diwali Extravaganza in Queens



(By Taranbir Kaur) New York: — New York Governor Hochul recently attended, delivered remarks and presented a Proclamation to Mrs. Uma Sen Gupta & other organizers of Diwali Celebrations. Event marked celebration of the Hindu festival of Diwali with the South Asians of New York at the World's Fair Marina Restaurant in Corona, Queens. In India, one of the most significant festivals is Diwali, or the Festival of Lights. It's a five-day celebration that includes good food, fireworks, colored sand, and special candles and lamps. Hindus interpret the Diwali story based upon where they live.

Noted Community & Business Leaders like Sharanjit Singh Thind, Jagdish Sewhani, Dilip Chauhan, Naveen Shah, Shudh Jasuja, Gobind Munjal, Nishi Bahl and many others participated in the event. Few noted personalities from business and other backgrounds were honored for their success and achievements, Ashish Kumar CEO of Nlight Hospitality Inc among them.

(Photo courtesy Kevin P. Coughlin / Office of the Governor)



Three Indian Americans Appointed In White House Fellowship Programme



(Insider Bureau)-The White House on Monday named 19 young emerging leaders as its fellows for 2021-22, three of whom are Indian Americans. The prestigious White House Fellowship programme embeds professionals from diverse backgrounds for a year of working as a full-time, paid fellow for White House staff, cabinet secretaries and other senior government officials. Indian Americans who made it to the list are Joy Basu and Sunny Patel from California, and Aakash Shah from New Jersey. The President's Commission on

White House Fellows described it as the most diverse class in the history of the programme, which was created in 1964 by the then President Lyndon B Johnson. Joy Basu from San Francisco has been placed at the White House Gender Policy Council. Earlier, she served as a senior adviser to innovative businesses seeking authentic and impact-integrated growth. She was the first chief of staff at TPG Growth, where she worked as a key architect and builder of The Rise Fund, a ground-breaking impact investment platform.

Former federal Prosecutory Ray Tierney Challenges Tim Sini for Office of Suffolk County District Attorney

(Press Release) : Former Federal Prosecutor Ray Tierney is running for the Office of Suffolk County District Attorney against District Attorney Tim Sini. Tierney announced his candidacy in March and is running as an independent on the Republican and Conservative lines. Tierney brings 14 years of experience as an Assistant District Attorney in Suffolk County to his candidacy, on top of experience investigating and prosecuting hundreds of cases involving organized crime, street gangs, murders, and other violent crimes. A graduate of Brown University and St. John's University Law School, Tierney has investigated political corruption, domestic violence, child abuse, and child pornography. In 2008, Tierney joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, where he oversaw complex criminal investigations and prosecuted violations of federal criminal law and international white-collar cases. Tierney also coordinated with the Department of Justice on long-term international



criminal prosecutions and briefed the Attorney General and President on the nationwide status of MS-13 prosecutions, which he has years-long substantive experience dealing with. In the last couple of months of the campaign, Tierney's team launched a press conference series focused on examples of current District Attorney Tim Sini's gross incompetence and failure in his role as District Attorney. Since early September, Tierney has been revealing shocking new information regarding: the East End drug overdose case and how Sini's inaction immediately led to these deaths; gun violence in Suffolk County and how Sini's incompetence led to skyrocketing crime rates; a brutal strangulation case that has never been covered before by the media (we have an exclusive photo we can release to you) and how Sini's failure as District Attorney led to murder; Sini's failure to indict over 100 gun crimes (we have the legal evidence to back this up); and Sini's zero gang murder convictions of MS-13 members. The point of these press conferences is to show how Sini's incompetence has directly led to a devastating increase in violence in Suffolk County. The primary focus of Tierney's campaign is the politicization of criminal justice issues, such as the "Defund the Police" movement, disastrous bail reform laws, and overly burdensome discovery rules.



Punjab polls

Angry Captain, angrier farmers may end up helping Arvind Kejriwal, here's how

With former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh announcing the formation of a new party and the central government clashing with protesting farmers' unions, Arvind Kejriwal may benefit in the upcoming Punjab elections. Former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has refuelled the election vehicle in the state. He has announced floating a new party to contest the upcoming assembly polls with or without allying with other like-minded parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Captain Amarinder is angry with the ruling Congress and looking to settle a score with the party and its top leadership for the "humiliation" that he suffered at their hands before resigning as the Punjab chief minister in September. The Congress leadership preferred cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, a four-year-old in the party, over a veteran soldier-turned-politician, two-time chief minister and a friend of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has refuelled the election vehicle in the state. He has announced floating a new party to contest the upcoming assembly polls with or without allying with other like-minded parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Captain Amarinder is angry with the ruling Congress and looking to settle a score with the party and its top leadership for the "humiliation" that he suffered at their hands before resigning as the Punjab chief minister in September. The Congress leadership preferred cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, a four-year-old in the party, over a veteran soldier-turned-politician, two-time chief minister and a friend of former Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

TO BJP, CONDITIONS APPLY

When Amarinder Singh decided to quit the Congress in September, there was speculation about his possible entry into the BJP. He dismissed the suggestion, leaving the scope for a tie-up with the BJP that lost its oldest ally - the SAD - from Punjab. Three weeks later, Amarinder Singh has set a condition for an alliance with the BJP.

"[I am] hopeful of a seat arrangement with BJP in 2022 Punjab polls if farmers' protest is resolved in farmers' interest," Amarinder Singh was quoted as saying by Thukral.

He also said, "[I am] also looking at an alliance with like-minded parties - Akali groups, particularly [Parminder Singh] Dhindsa and Brahmpura."

Parminder Singh Dhindsa is an MLA in Punjab and the son of rebel SAD leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, who earlier this year announced to merge his Shiromani Akali Dal (Democratic) with another SAD breakaway faction, Shiromani Akali Dal (Taksali) of Ranjit Singh Brahmpura.

Responding to Amarinder Singh's proposal for an alliance in the Punjab Assembly election, Brahmpura did not look very enthusiastic. Amarinder Singh is still a Congress member and his offer has too many ifs and buts, Brahmpura told a TV news channel.

WILL FARMERS MOVE?

This leaves Amarinder Singh's alliance with the BJP subject to the resolution of the farmers' issue. The BJP-led central government and the protesting farmers' unions have been in a deadlock for several months on the issue of the three farm laws passed by Parliament in 2020. The laws stand stayed and protesting farmers stayed put at the Delhi borders.

A breakthrough looks unlikely unless Amarinder Singh plays the icebreaker. He is said to have considerable influence over Jat farmers, having been the president of All India Jat Maha Sabha in the past. Amarinder Singh did not hint whether he would play that role of mediator. All mediation attempts have failed till now.

If farmers' protest remains unresolved and Amarinder Singh contests the Punjab Assembly election without an alliance with the BJP, it would make the state polls a multi-cornered contest.

CONGRESS VERSUS ALL + CAPTAIN

The ruling Congress - with factions led by Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and Punjab Congress chief Sidhu - will have to fight its electoral battle with the SAD, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the BJP and Captain's outfit. Of all these parties, the AAP of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has made huge progress in Punjab. In the 2017 Punjab election, the AAP emerged as the second-largest party, pushing the SAD-BJP combine to the third position.

HOW AMARINDER MAY HELP KEJRIWAL- The BJP's performance in the Punjab polls has not been impressive. Its vote share has declined from 8.21 per cent in 2007 to 7.13 per cent in 2012 and finally to 5.4 per cent in 2017. The BJP won just three of 23 seats it contested in 2017. This makes Amarinder Singh an influential player in the upcoming Punjab Assembly polls. Amarinder Singh's outfit is likely to eat into the votes of both the Congress and the SAD. With the BJP not having a solid organisational base in Punjab, the more votes that Amarinder Singh pulls away, the greater benefit would come to Arvind Kejriwal's AAP in the Punjab polls. Angry farmers may just add on to the voting mass of the AAP.

Attack on TDP offices result of citizens' ire against party: Andhra CM YS Jagan



Reacting to the allegations of attacking opposition TDP offices and its leaders, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday said that the yellow party leaders had used derogatory remarks against him. On Tuesday, the TDP central office at Mangalagiri, Guntur, and several other party premises across the state were attacked, allegedly by ruling party supporters.

ENRAGED CITIZENS ATTACKED TDP PREMISES

Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), however, claimed that citizens were hurt by "abusive comments" made by TDP National spokesperson Pattabhi Ram against YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. It said the attacks were "retaliation by the citizens 'who admire and love the CM for his spotless governance'". YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, during the launch of a welfare initiative, 'Jagananna Thodu', too, said the attacks were a consequence of the TDP spokesperson making highly abusive remarks against him. "The public who were infuriated by such derogatory statements reacted in such a manner. The intent of the people speaking this way and creating unrest in the state for their political gains is completely unacceptable," the Andhra CM said. He alleged that the TDP's only agenda was to stop government welfare schemes. On the other hand, terming the attacks 'state-sponsored terrorism', TDP President N Chandrababu Naidu called for a state-wide shutdown on Wednesday. The shutdown call received a mixed response. TDP LEADERS ARRESTED Leaders of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) were arrested across the state on Wednesday. Several top leaders of the party, including state unit chief Atchannaidu, were put under house arrest by the police to prevent them from joining the protests.

Over 1,300 rescued from flood-affected areas in Uttarakhand, more teams deployed: NDRF

(News Agencies)-The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has rescued more than 1,300 people from flood-affected areas of Uttarakhand and has enhanced its rescue teams from 15 to 17, the federal force said on Wednesday.

At least 46 people have died in rain-related incidents in the state so far.

The Kumaon region of the hill state has been severely hit by heavy rains, leading to razing of houses, washing away of some bridges and leaving many trapped in the debris.

"So far, NDRF rescuers have evacuated more than 1,300 stranded people from Udham Singh Nagar and Nainital. They are also distributing relief material in flood affected areas of Uttarakhand," an NDRF spokesperson said.

He said six teams are deployed in Udham Singh Nagar, two teams each are stationed in Uttarkashi, Chamoli and one team each in Dehradun,

The NDRF said on Wednesday that it has managed to rescue as many as 1,300 people from flood-affected areas in Uttarakhand.



Champawat Pithoragarh and Haridwar.

"Two teams and a sub-team have been deployed in Nainital while one sub-team is placed at

Almora," the spokesperson said.

#UttarakhandRains Update 20/10/21

Hvy rains in Uttarakhand

Flooding/Landslides

15 tms of @NDRFHQ depld Ops ON

TOURISTS/citizens evacuated Chara,Nainital area@HMOIndia

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pic.twitter.com/bAmD9DzZKu
The force has also deployed nine teams in West Bengal that has been similarly battered by heavy rains.

"Rescuers have evacuated about 70 persons from low lying areas of Jalpaiguri district," the spokesperson said.

Similarly, seven NDRF teams have been deployed in various districts of Uttar Pradesh like Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Varanasi, Gorakhpur and Bahraich in view of "flood threat due to discharge of water from Uttarakhand and Nepal".

Twelve NDRF teams are also deployed in Kerala to undertake relief and rescue operations in rains and flood affected areas.



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ED questions Jacqueline Fernandez for 7 hours in connection with ₹200 crore extortion case



Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez was questioned for seven hours by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the ₹200 crore extortion case involving conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar and his wife, actor Leena Maria Paul. After skipping questioning four times, Jacqueline appeared at the ED's office in New Delhi around 3 pm on Wednesday and left around 10 pm. Sources say the actor's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

India Today has learnt that the investigators came across certain suspected transactions involving Sukesh Chandrasekhar, after which they decided to question Jacqueline Fernandez.

Sources say the ED is also going through financial records, including the bank statements of Jacqueline Fernandez.

Questions ED asked Jacqueline Fernandez

According to sources, Jacqueline Fernandez was asked the following questions by ED:

" When was the first time she met either Sukesh Chandrasekar or his wife Leena Maria Paul?

" Did she speak to Sukesh over the phone? If yes, how many times and did she know the person on the other side was Sukesh?

Bollywood celebs and their trysts with prison

Aryan Khan is not the only name from Bollywood to spend time in jail. From Salman Khan to Rhea Chakraborty, here is a look at famous Bollywood celebs who have been to jail.

(News Agencies)-From hit-and-run to drugs case -- Bollywood has often been in the spotlight for wrong reasons.

The arrest of Shah Rukh Khan's son, Aryan Khan, is the latest in several high-profile cases from the glamour industry.

On Wednesday, a Mumbai special court again rejected Aryan Khan's bail in the cruise ship drugs bust case. Aryan, who has already spent 18 days in jail, will continue to be in Arthur Road prison.

However, Aryan is not the only name from Bollywood to spend time in jail. From Sanjay Dutt to

Rhea Chakraborty, here is a look at famous Bollywood celebs who have been to jail.

BOLLYWOOD CELEBS WHO HAVE BEEN TO JAIL

Salman Khan: Salman Khan was sentenced to five years in jail for killing two blackbucks in 1998 during the shooting of his film 'Hum Sath Sath Hain'. From October 1998 till August 2007, the actor spent 18 days in jail in connection with the blackbuck killing case. Khan was also sentenced to two years in jail in the 2002 hit-and-run case.

Sanjay Dutt: Found guilty in the

1993 Mumbai bombings, Sanjay Dutt was sentenced to six years in jail but his sentence was reduced to five years by the Supreme Court in 2013. Sanjay Dutt was released in February 2016, eight months early, on account of his good conduct.

Rhea Chakraborty: The actress and rumoured girlfriend of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, Rhea Chakraborty was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on September 8, 2020, for allegedly procuring drugs. She was behind bars for nearly a month and was released from

Byculla jail on October 7 after the Bombay High Court granted her bail.

Fardeen Khan: Fardeen Khan was held by the Mumbai Police in 2001 for possession of drugs. He was released in 3 days and was granted immunity from prosecution by a Mumbai sessions court in 2012.

Shiney Ahuja: Actor Shiney Ahuja was sentenced to seven years in jail by a special fast-track court for raping his domestic help. Following the 2009 sentence, the actor was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in 2011.

Uproar over custodial death of man accused of theft in Agra police station

(News Agencies)-Aman reportedly employed as sweeper at an Agra police station has died while in custody leading to an uproar in the city. The man identified as Arun was accused in a theft case, in which ₹25 lakh were stolen from Malkhana of an Agra police station. He had been detained by the police in connection with the case.

His death in police custody evoked an angry response from the Valmiki community members leading to registration of a fresh

case under Section 302 (relating to murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by the Agra police. Unknown persons were made accused in the death case. The police assured the Valmiki community members of an impartial inquiry into the death. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav called Arun's custodial death a pre-planned murder by the police. He demanded strict action against the guilty policemen.

Arun had been missing since the

theft, reported on Saturday, at the Jagdishpura police station. He was taken into custody on Tuesday. Arun used to come to the police station to clean and had allegedly fled after the theft drawing police's suspicion.

The police searched for the accused and apprehended him on Tuesday. The police reportedly recovered about ₹10 lakh of the stolen cash from his house. The police claimed that Arun had been hiding in the Tajganj area. He had shaved his



head to escape the police. Talking to India Today, Agra SSP Muniraj G said that the sweeper Arun had admitted to having committed theft. The police said they were questioning him to locate rest of the stolen money when his condition suddenly

deteriorated on Tuesday night. The police took him to the hospital, where he was declared brought dead. The news of his death created a stir among the Valmiki community members. Police suspect bigger mobilisation by the Valmiki community.



Foreign dignitaries hail Kushinagar International Airport inauguration, say it will boost tourism

Several foreign dignitaries, including Sri Lankan minister Namal Rajapaksa, have hailed the Kushinagar International Airport inauguration, saying that it will boost tourism in India.

(News Agencies)- Several foreign dignitaries, including Sri Lankan minister Namal Rajapaksa, on Wednesday hailed the inauguration of the Kushinagar International Airport, and said it will boost the number of Buddhist tourists visiting India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated the new international airport at Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, and said his government has taken a number of steps to instil new energy in the aviation sector. "Tourism between India and Sri Lanka has always been very robust. We have a lot of Indians coming to Sri Lanka and also Sri Lankan pilgrims coming to different states (in India), especially Varanasi, Prime Minister's constituency," Rajapaksa told reporters at the inauguration event. "So now we believe that opening up Kushinagar will increase the number of pilgrims (coming to India) from Sri Lanka and also Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world," the Sri Lankan Cabinet minister said. Ambassador of Thailand to India Pattarat Hongtong said the Kushinagar airport will improve tourism between the two countries and facilitate Buddhist travellers. Ambassador of Vietnam to India Pham Sanh Chau also said that the Kushinagar Airport will give a boost to the numbers of Buddhist tourists visiting India. The Kushinagar airport has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 260 crore and will facilitate domestic and international pilgrims to visit the 'mahaparinirvana' site of Lord Buddha and is an endeavour to connect the Buddhist pilgrimage holy sites around the world, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

Odisha: Opposition demands resignation of MoS Home over alleged murder of school teacher

Odisha's Minister of State for Home Captain Dibya Shankar Mishra has come under fire for his alleged association with the accused in the murder case of a school teacher in Kalahandi.

(News Agencies)-Opposition parties, the BJP and Congress, have demanded the resignation of Odisha's Minister of State for Home Captain Dibya Shankar Mishra over the alleged murder of a school teacher in Kalahandi. The Opposition alleged that Mishra was closely associated with the accused in the murder case. The body of 24-year-old Mamita Meher, a teacher in the Kalahandi district, was found at an under-construction stadium in Mahaling on Tuesday. The police have arrested Gobinda Sahu, the president of the school management committee, in the case. A video went viral on social media showing Dibya Shankar Mishra praising Gobinda Sahu at a recently held function at the school. The Opposition has alleged that the video indicated Sahu's proximity to the minister. The BJP called a 12-hour bandh in Kalahandi on Wednesday, demanding the resignation of Dibya Shankar Mishra for his alleged involvement in the case. Congress workers also held a sit-



pic.twitter.com/6qRSYEXDV2
What is the case about?
Mamita Meher, a 24-year-old from Balangir, worked as a teacher at Sunshine English Medium School in Kalahandi's Mahaling area. Mamita went missing on October 8. Her family alleged the involvement of Gobinda Sahu, the president of the school management committee, behind

her disappearance and lodged a complaint with the police against him. On the fateful day, Sahu called Mamita to come to school for official work. She was asked to come to Chandotara, where she would get a lift in the accused's car. Mamita reportedly reached Chandotara by bus but went missing thereafter. Her mobile phone went off.



Heavy rainfall triggers landslides in Sikkim, Darjeeling; tourists stranded

Heavy rain continued to batter Darjeeling and Sikkim, triggering landslides at multiple places on Wednesday.

(News Agencies)-Normal life was thrown out of gear in Sikkim on Wednesday as torrential rain caused landslides at several places, blocking National Highway-10 and snapping the arterial road link with neighbouring West Bengal. Parts of Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri were badly affected due to continuous rains. Several important roads leading to Sikkim and Darjeeling are closed due to landslides.

Supporting pillars of a steel bridge at Rangpo, the gateway to Sikkim, got damaged due to heavy flow of water in the Teesta river which has been in a spate over the past few days.

The authorities have started restricting the movement of vehicles on the bridge. The downpour also damaged crops and properties at several places. As the rain continues to batter the state, a large number of people have been rescued to safe places and relief materials have been sent to the affected areas. A landslide occurred on National Highway-55 at Mahanadi. As a result, the road is blocked till Sukna. However, Rohini road is open for traffic. A house situated in ward number

3 of Kurseong municipality was badly damaged due to the incessant rains and landslides. Following heavy rain, one of the landslides hit the highway at 29th Mile area in West Bengal, around 60 km from the Himalayan state's Rangpo border. Another landslide occurred at Pani House in Gangtok on Wednesday morning, disrupting vehicular movement, the officials said, adding that the efforts were underway to remove the debris from the road. Jalpaiguri in Bengal is also affected due to continuous rains and several areas are submerged. Tourists are facing acute problems in North Bengal as roads are closed and flight operations from Bagdogra airport were affected. The trains are full and local vehicles are not running at their full capacity. Special bus services have been started for tourists stuck in the hills. On Tuesday, five flights were diverted to Kolkata Airport from Bagdogra due to bad weather. Of these, four flights were from Delhi while one was from Bangalore. One flight from Kolkata had to return from Bagdogra as it was unable to land at the airport due to extreme weather conditions.



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Amarinder Singh destroying himself: Congress leaders on ex-CM's move to side with BJP

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and state Congress in-charge Harish Rawat have criticised veteran party leader Capt Amarinder Singh's decision to float a new political party.

(News Agencies)- Punjab Deputy CM Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and state Congress in-charge Harish Rawat have criticised veteran party leader Capt Amarinder Singh's decision to float a new political party months ahead of the Punjab assembly elections. Randhawa has said, "Captain Amarinder Singh has destroyed himself by announcing a seat arrangement with BJP, whom he had always abused. BJP should hold an enquiry on Amarinder Singh over his whereabouts after the resignation in 1984 and his

relations with Pakistan."

"There must be some pressure on him. Many cases have been filed against him and his children. We have no fear of Amarinder's decision," said the Deputy Chief Minister.

On the other hand, Harish Rawat has said, "If he wants to eat crow and go with the BJP, he can. Who can stop him if he can't stay with his old commitment to secularism? He was considered a symbol of 'Sarvdharm Sambhav' and was connected to Congress's traditions for long. If he wants to go, he should."

Former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh on Tuesday said he would soon announce a new political party and is hopeful of a seat arrangement with the BJP if the farmers' issue is resolved in their interest. After months of verbal duels and a bitter turf war with Navjot Singh Sidhu, Amarinder Singh resigned as chief minister of Punjab last month. The party replaced him with Charanjit Singh Channi, a Sidhu loyalist. However, Sidhu announced his sudden exit as the Punjab Congress chief soon after, throwing the party into jeopardy

again. Announcing his future plans, Amarinder Singh said, "The battle for Punjab's future is on. Will soon announce the launch of my own political party to serve the interests of Punjab and its people, including our farmers who've been fighting for their survival for over a year." The two-time chief minister also said that he will not rest until he secures the future of "my people and my state".

"Punjab needs political stability and protection from internal and external threats. I promise my people I will do what it takes to

ensure its peace and security, which is today at stake," he was quoted as saying by his media adviser in a tweet.

"Hopeful of a seat arrangement with BJP in 2022 Punjab Assembly polls if farmers' protest is resolved in farmers' interest. Also looking at alliance with like-minded parties such as breakaway Akali groups, particularly Dhindsa and Brahmputra factions," Singh, who had faced an unceremonious exit from the state government last month, said.

Family of woman found murdered in Jaipur stages protest, refuses to hand over body

(News Agencies)- Family members of a 55-year-old woman who was found murdered in Jamwa Ramgarh refused to hand over her body to the police on Wednesday and sat on a dharna along with local people, officials said. The body of the woman with deep wounds to the head and neck was found in Khatepura village on Tuesday. Her legs were chopped off and her silver anklets taken away. The severed limbs were found

near the body. The family members of the woman staged the dharna on the very spot where the body was found, Circle Officer Lakhan Meena said. "Their demands include immediate arrest of the killers, compensation and a government job to one of her family members," he said, adding that several teams have been formed to identify and look for the assailants. Efforts were underway to pacify the villagers and the

woman's family members, the officer said.

Targeting the state government over the gruesome murder, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Kirodi Lal Meena said Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should also take note of crimes occurring in Rajasthan.

"Priyanka Gandhi, who is giving the slogan 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' (I'm a girl who can fight)' in Uttar Pradesh, should come to Jamwaramgarh of Jaipur and see



what kind of incident has happened here. She should take up the fight for the rights of women in Rajasthan," he said.

Thousands of people are sitting on a dharna with the dead body in Jamwaramgarh, the MP added.

Poonch encounter: Army's longest operation against terrorists since 2009



In 2009, Poonch was the theatre of a nine-day operation and encounter with terrorists - January 1-9. Four soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer (JCO), lost their lives. Four terrorists were said to have been killed in the encounter. However, their bodies were not recovered from the encounter site. Search and combing operations were stopped after nine days. Nearly 13 years since then, another operation entered its tenth day on Wednesday in the same Poonch district. The operation began on October 11, when the encounter began at Dera Ki Gali area of Surankot tehsil in the Poonch district. The operation was launched on the basis of intelligence inputs about a big troupe of terrorists present in the area. A search

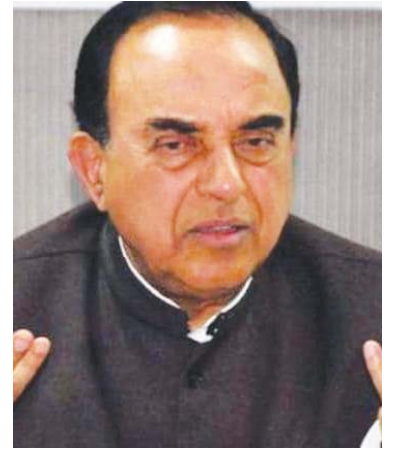
operation led to an encounter with the terrorists. In the first encounter, five soldiers, including one JCO, lost their lives on October 11. On October 14, another round of intense exchange of fire took place. Two soldiers lost their lives. Later, the bodies of a JCO and another jawan were found at the encounter site. Nine soldiers, including two JCOs, have lost their lives since the operation began. The Indian Army has deployed a specially trained unit of para-commandos for the combing operation. Drones and modern weapons are being used to track down terrorists operating in the forests. Information about the ground situation is not clearly known. The Indian Army has only issued written statements

till now.

Media personnel are not allowed within 11 km of the forests where the encounter is taking place. Indian Army chief General MM Naravane reviewed the situation this week, ending his two-day visit on Tuesday evening, after which the forces were reportedly preparing for the final assault. The villagers were asked, in an announcement made from loudspeakers atop mosques, to return home from agricultural fields and stay indoors to avoid collateral damage. The security forces also detained some people on suspicion of providing logistical support to the terrorists. It is a densely forested area and reports quoting experts say that the scale of the encounter indicates the presence of a huge group of terrorists. Some of the

experts suspect the presence of Pakistan Army officers providing operational leadership to terrorists engaged on the ground. It is being speculated that the over-a-year-long involvement of the Indian forces in the eastern Ladakh sector due to a military standoff with China might have "weakened" the counter-infiltration grid on the western sector along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. The terrorists might have been in the forests for about two months, reports quoting sources in the security forces said. Some believe that the group of terrorists could be involved in a series of attacks and encounters that have taken place since August in the Poonch-Rajouri region.

Are we afraid of
Bangladesh:
Subramanian Swamy
questions BJP's silence
on attacks on Hindus



Rajya Sabha MP and former Union Minister Subramanian Swamy questioned the ruling BJP on its silence over the recent spate of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh, asking if "we are afraid" of the neighbouring country. "Why is the BJP govt not protesting on the issue of the developing genocide of Hindus in Bangladesh? Are we afraid of BD? After the fear of Chinese aggression in Ladakh, we are cowed by Taliban take over of Afghanistan and want to talk with them. Will we be next afraid of Maldives?" Subramanian Swamy tweeted on Wednesday. India has so far been guarded in its response to the violent incidents, with the MEA saying the Indian mission was in close contact with the Bangladeshi authorities over the matter. Why is BJP govt not protesting on the issue of the developing genocide of Hindus in Bangladesh? Are we afraid of BD? After the fear of Chinese aggression in Ladakh, we are cowed by Taliban take over of Afghanistan and want to talk with them. Will we be next afraid of Maldives?

KCR's Rs 1,800 crore dream temple project at Yadadri nears completion

(News Agencies)-With spiritual guru Chinna Jeeyar Swamy finalising the mahurat of the reopening of the renovated Yadadri temple, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao inspected the work progress at the temple on Tuesday. During the reopening of the temple, 'Maha Sudarshan Yagya' would be performed at the temple by 1,000 priests. Earlier, KCR, who is known for his spiritual belief and vastu fascination, had revealed that the yagya will be

performed at Yagna Vatika, spread over 100 acres, with 1,048 yagna kundals. The 1,000 priests and another 3,000 assistants will perform the rituals. The yagya will also see the presence of the top priests of Badrinath, Srirangam and Jagannath, Tirupathi temples. KCR plans to invite the central government heads, chief ministers, governors, ministers, gurus of Hindu sects for the temple reopening. Arrangements will be made for over lakhs of

devotees who will participate in the Yagnan Keshtram. The Yadadri temple complex The Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Yadadri is approximately 60 km away from Hyderabad. The sprawling 14.5-acre temple complex project was started in April 2016 with a budget of approximately Rs 1,600 crore. The entire temple township project is spread over 2,500 acres. The temple has been reconstructed with 2.5 lakh tonnes of granite, especially brought in from



Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh. While the pillar has been carved out of a single stone, no cement was used for the temple construction. Indian architecture

and mythology were kept in mind for the planning of the temple, which has been designed by famous film set designer Anand Sai.

Biden's national emergency at border US needs real leadership to tackle crisis

It is time for President Biden to face the reality of what he has created: a national emergency

(By Sen. Tom Cotton | Fox News)

Joe Biden has created the worst border crisis in American history. In the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic, soaring inflation, and skyrocketing street crime, the border isn't just open, it's the most open it has ever been. It is time for President Biden to face the reality of what he has created: a national emergency.

The Border Patrol has encountered an all-time record of more than 1.7 million illegal aliens this year. That's more than triple the number from last year and represents the largest single-year increase on record. The number of unaccompanied minors illegally crossing the border quadrupled and 400,000 illegal aliens evaded Border Patrol custody. This unprecedented surge in illegal immigration has overwhelmed our capacity to control the southern border.

Earlier this year, Border Patrol facilities built to hold hundreds of illegal aliens were instead holding thousands, hundreds of illegal aliens were avoiding arrest every day, and the Border Patrol was forced to release tens of thousands of illegal aliens into the interior of the country without court dates. Just weeks ago, thousands of Haitian migrants camped beneath a Texas bridge without proper facilities or resources to care for them.

America's 20,000 border agents are capable and courageous, but they can hardly be expected to stem an onslaught of this magnitude, especially when they are hamstrung by their feckless political leaders. Contrary to what the administration claims, the majority of people coming to our border are not refugees or legitimate asylum seekers. More than 80% are found not to be eligible under the law—and they know it. But that doesn't much matter when they know the Biden administration will let them stay anyway. It's no surprise that these migrants are crossing multiple borders and sometimes traversing much of a continent in order to get here.

In many cases, these migrants claim that the crime and gang violence in their countries justifies asylum or refugee status. However, Baltimore has a higher murder rate than virtually any Central American country. Does this mean Baltimore residents should have automatic right of entry into Canada? Of course not. The simple truth is that these illegal aliens are overwhelmingly economic migrants seeking to make more money and build a better life for themselves and their families. We should not begrudge their desire to come to the greatest country on Earth, but that desire is shared by millions of others.

According to Gallup, 42 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean want to migrate to the United

States. If we follow the Democratic Party's logic that desire and opportunity alone qualifies a person to enter the United States, how many more aliens must we allow to sneak into our nation? What other lawbreaking ought we simply excuse, so long as the perpetrator was doing it in pursuit of a better life?

President Biden caused this border crisis and is now planning to make it even worse.

The Democrats' open-borders policy is also unfair to the many foreigners who have abided by our laws and are seeking legal entry. It is unjust to allow millions of migrants to cut the line in which millions of others have waited, often for years. It also depresses wages and limits opportunity for millions of working-class Americans who are struggling in an unpredictable economy that is wracked with inflation, disrupted by pandemic-related government intervention, and sagging under the weight of increased federal regulation.

To make matters worse, these economic migrants are joined by some of the most vicious criminals, human traffickers and drug dealers in the world. The majority of heroin, meth, cocaine and fentanyl sold on American street corners are smuggled across the southern border. This year alone, the Border Patrol has seized over 8,000 pounds of heroin, meth, and cocaine and enough fentanyl to kill nearly 98 million Americans. Border Patrol agents have also arrested hundreds of gang members, including over 100 members of MS-13. America is already suffering through the largest murder surge ever, the most drug overdose deaths in history, and a 55% increase in gang killings. The last things we need are more drug dealers and gang members peddling poison and spreading death in our streets. President Biden caused this border crisis and is now planning to make it even worse. Since taking office, the president has illegally ripped up the Trump administration's Remain in Mexico policy, halted construction of the border wall, revived and expanded catch-and-release, abolished many coronavirus-related security measures, and openly advocated for amnesty. Now Biden's secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, has announced that DHS will no longer arrest and remove illegal aliens for crossing the border illegally. While Biden demands vaccine mandates for Americans, he's also allowing hundreds of thousands of unvaccinated, unvetted and untested migrants to enter our communities. Companies can now fire American workers for not being vaccinated and replace them with unvaccinated illegal aliens who they pay under the table. This madness must end.

Supply Chain chaos: Time to widen global supply chain

By Susmita Ghosh

Did you find empty shelves in stores while shopping recently? Faced delayed delivery on your ordered product? What's the reason for all these you feel? Is it all due to China, as the country is often regarded as World's Factory in manufacturing goods? Honestly not! China alone can't be blamed for this. This is known as SUPPLY CHAIN CHAOS. Not a deceit theory though! Lack of substitutes, lack of predictions and preparations are the accompanying reasons for this existing crisis. With economical labor and low taxes, China produces 28.7% of the world's goods and exports \$2.6 trillion worth products every year. So companies reliably outsource manufacturing to China. When Coronavirus spread throughout China in 2020, the factories were bound to shut down, stopped providing goods, hence fell short of supply. Soon after the virus spread from one country to another. Sick factory workers had to quarantine, all production became standstill, which resulted in 'A Global Supply Chain Crisis.' The entire supply chain collapses when there is a crisis in several points of it! This is exactly what happened in mid-2020, going on to 2021 – high demands but the supplies stopped pouring in. As 90 percent of the global trade takes place through sea, this spike in demand first hit the shipping industry. The rise in demand led to the rise in the cost of shipping. The shipping price

rose 85.5% year on year. Presently it faced more inconveniences with the higher raw material costs, long delays at ports. There is a huge shortage of shipping containers, as well, which broke the whole supply chain. This quasi-regulated price policy is one of the main reasons behind all the distresses. Unless it is taken care of immediately, there are darker days ahead for the Chinese as well as the global economy. In 2020 when world was in need of masks and PPE kits, the Chinese factories were closed due to coronavirus pandemic. Now, when the world needs other supplies, Chinese factories are closing again. This time due to electricity shortage. A growing power supply outage in China is affecting the global supply chain to a great extent recently. The local administrative decisions for power-cut to curb missing targets on energy emission are impacting the global economy on a large scale. Estimated 44 % of China's industrial activities are being affected by power cuts. The world's factory has stopped working for the 2nd time in two years. As presently India prepares for Diwali, many parents are unable to provide toys to their children of their choice. America won't have enough Christmas tree this December. The UK stores have already notified customers about their limited stocks with bare minimum discounts. The supply chain is collapsing. Over reliance on any

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China's COVID coverup and its terrible costs demand accountability. US must step up

The Biden administration's mounting Afghanistan, immigration, and spending woes threaten to obscure its failure to hold Beijing accountable for the deceptions that sped the spread of SARS-CoV-2 into an unsuspecting world. Yet, as widely acknowledged, we ignore at our peril the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) staggering wrongs. Prudence requires America and its allies adopt a more responsible and comprehensive course. The CCP's cover-up continues as do the mounting costs to Americans this past week surpassing 700,000 deaths. The loss of American credibility following the Afghanistan debacle heightens the urgency for an American response to foreign bad actors, and Americans should demand one.

We don't need to reinvent international law. Just and well-established principles of international law require China fully compensate states it has wronged.

For over 40 years, the U.N.'s International Law Commission studied international cases on just these principles.

In 2001, the Commission captured its holdings in its "Articles on State Responsibility for Internationally Wrongful Acts." The U.N. General Assembly, with China's support, promptly commended this effort. American and foreign courts have approvingly cited these standards and the Articles hundreds of times.

These established international principles hold a state liable, for example, even if local officials perpetrated the wrongs.

Beijing's failure to fulfill its agreed international obligations to report promptly and honestly on Covid-19's

dangers alone justifies holding it responsible, as noted by Harvard Law School Visiting Professor James Kraska. CCP responsibility only increases for its continuing efforts to deceive the world. If, as we believe, it recklessly engineered the virus and allowed its escape, International law provides an enforceable remedy for their evil. The need to hold Beijing accountable for its misdeeds has been building for years; the CCP's defiance of its SARS-CoV-2 responsibilities magnifies the stakes and immediacy. As the CCP's economic and military might gains on the US, Beijing grows more brazen. In recent months, a CCP-guided publication threatened Japan with nuclear annihilation and dismemberment. In violation of international obligations, Beijing accelerates efforts to extinguish Hong Kong's freedom, militarize illegal South China Sea bases, and weaponize unfair practices to dominate trade and supply chains. The pandemic has fueled Beijing's drive for a world suiting autocratic repression by distracting America and increasing China's relative economic rise. Beijing now openly prioritizes gaining the capability to cripple other states' economies while remaining invulnerable itself. Extensive PRC investments - for example, in its dual circulation model, Belt and Road Initiative, and sanction-proof digital Yuan - further that worrisome aim. CCP General Secretary Xi has defiantly proclaimed that a wall of steel faces those in Beijing's way.

So far the democracies have not imposed costs for CCP wrongs greater than the benefits Beijing derives. Such forbearance has not

slowed and may have paved Xi's aggressive ways.

Recognizing the PRC as an ill-intentioned state, the democracies should not be tolerant of wrongs that fuel its rising aggressions. The PRC claws for such advantages. The CCP's SARS-CoV-2 malfeasance cannot be airily -- and foolishly -- dismissed as affecting only far-off people, isolated rocks in a distant sea, or multi-national corporations that should protect themselves. The virus stalks our streets and cripples our economy. To this day, the CCP defies without consequence even international inquiries into Wuhan's practices. We do not wish to see another virus wing its way from Wuhan. Diplomatic and lawful measures jointly taken with our allies hold the best prospects for achieving a measure of justice and for tempering Xi's aggressive path. Under the Articles and accepted international principles noted above, injured states are allowed to impose countermeasures and selectively suspend obligations to the wrongdoer until fully compensated. Such efforts should hold Beijing and, as appropriate, its state-controlled entities liable for Covid-19 wrongs and other widely recognized misdeeds, including IP theft. Many support the U.S. and allies sanctioning CCP officials directly involved, or higher officials more generally, and curtailing visas, scientific exchanges and grants. These are worthwhile measures, rightly pursued. Sadly, these measures alone are not proportionate to the harm the CCP has caused and do not compensate victims. Broader diplomatic demands, international countermeasures, and legal actions are needed, as well.

Let's talk about US government debt - and how to fix this mess



As a single mom, when my kids come home from school and tell me, "Oops, we overspent our allowance again," I do not reward them by signing them up for a credit card with no spending limit. This is exactly what recently happened in Washington last week.

The "adults" in the room have once again overspent their allowance - an allowance given to them by American taxpayers - at historically high levels no less. When consumers "default" they can lose their homes or other valuable assets and creditors come after them. When the federal government does it, D.C. just raises its limit to limitless. No credit card company would ever do that for the average person, yet the federal government has done it 98 times since World War II. Washington is never held accountable and there is no incentive to spend responsibly. Washington worked overtime to raise the debt ceiling this month. The powers in Washington have given the American people a false choice, claiming that raising the debt ceiling is the only option to avoid defaulting on our debt. This is a myth. If your credit card company suddenly didn't raise your limit and you had to stop borrowing, does this mean you can't make your payment? No. It means you have to spend less. Maybe a lot less. Here's the dirty little secret: if we cut spending and limit borrowing, then we will not default. But don't tell Washington. In the past, Congress has raised the debt ceiling because of massive spending on both sides of the aisle. For decades, Republicans wanted greater defense spending; in return, Democrats received more money to expand the federal government. This month, raising the debt ceiling gave way to levels of spending never before seen. It will give way to massive government growth and overreach into our personal lives, even into our bank accounts, and into how parents are allowed, or not, to educate their kids. It is difficult to comprehend the amount of money Washington wants to spend. Take the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, which includes \$40 billion for roads and bridges - that's 3% of an infrastructure bill for roads and bridges. They want to spend an additional \$3.5 trillion on a budget written by self-avowed socialists Bernie Sanders and AOC for spending they couldn't jam into the wasteful infrastructure bill. They told you this budget is paid for (it isn't). To pay for all of this spending, the American taxpayer will foot the bill with one of the largest tax hikes in American history. Raising taxes on job creators will lead to even more job losses and lower wages, and all this just as we start to climb out of government-imposed restrictions and lockdowns on businesses.



A 'Boom' Is Coming Soon, But Only For The Top 1% Of Indians

There's an economic 'boom' coming to India very soon. Why the scare quotes, you ask? It's because, like the previous boom of 2002-11, this one too, will only be for a minuscule minority of households, right at the top of India's income scale. If the previous boom was about finance, media, telecom, housing and infrastructure, this one will be driven by tech, tech and tech. Of course, finance will always be there, as both the monarch and under-maiden.

If you are sceptical, you probably don't appreciate how little it takes to make India's economy look good. All you need is for the top 5 million households, in terms of income, to feel things are looking up. That is less than 2 percent of the total number of households in the country.

The reason there was a sense of despondency amongst these 'affluent' families in India is a steady drop in their incomes over the past few years.

A bit of number crunching on official Income Tax data for 2017-18 shows that there were roughly 5 million households in India who earned more than Rs 10 lakh in that year. This number dropped, first because of the economic slowdown and then because of Covid.

Mahesh Vyas of CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) has written that there were only 3 million households who earned more than Rs 10 lakh in 2020-21, significantly lower than the 4 million before the pandemic hit us. Combining these two sources, one can see a rough trend of how at least one million households dropped out of the top bracket between 2018 and 2020, and then another one million slipped during Covid. These are the buying classes. They are the most vocal of India's citizens. They live in the better localities and condominiums

in India's big cities, read English newspapers, send their children to 'good' private schools, and occupy all decision-making posts, whether in government or the private sector. They determine the contours of dominant discourse, which then gets reproduced and disseminated through mass media of all sorts. The media perfectly mirrors their mood. If they are anxious, the media focuses on corruption, global-warming, terrorism, urban naxals and anti-nationals. If they 'feel good', the media focuses on food, fun and frolic.

If two million households have slipped below the Rs 10 lakh threshold over the past few years, it is most likely because the key earning member either took a pay cut, or lost their job and got rehired at a lower salary. Some of these families might also have small businesses, or are medium-sized traders. The economic slowdown since mid-2018 has affected their margins and pushed some of them below the top earnings bracket.

What does it take for them to sense that things are improving? There were about 18.1 million white collar jobs in India in April 2020, which dropped sharply to just 13.8 million one year later. If one assumes that about 15% of these were top-tier jobs, fetching more than Rs 8-10 lakh a year, then roughly 2.7 million people with white collar jobs earned enough for their household income to be more than Rs 10 lakh. Since there are an average of 1.25 earning members per household, that works out to roughly 2 million households with well-paid white collar jobs. Since there were about 4 million such households (earning over Rs 10 lakh) in 2020, we can assume that the remaining affluent households were either self-employed or owned businesses. Using the same assumptions for April 2020, we can

say that roughly 1.6 million households with white collar jobs earned over Rs 10 lakh in April 2021, and about 1.4 million business households were in the same bracket.

It is clear from these numbers how little one needs for a 'feel-good factor' to develop at the top of the economy.

For starters, approximately 400,000 households holding 500,000 white collar jobs need to feel optimistic about their future earnings. That is all. And for that to happen, all one needs is just 25% of them to get better job offers. This will immediately unleash a competition amongst employers to retain talent and push up all salaries, across the board, even for those who are unlikely to get new jobs. That's because despite variable pay and performance bonuses, most corporates operate with a basic pay scale system. When some people are paid more, the entire pay-scale structure moves upwards.

Ads by

The big salary boosts are already happening in any job that is related to tech. A report by staffing firm XPheno estimates that there were 285,000 open positions for white collar jobs in September, which is 60% more than last year. Much of this is coming from the IT/ITES sector, including ecommerce, fintech, BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) and EdTech. The stock market boom has also improved job prospects for those who work in the financial sector. Even non-tech firms are hiring tech people to keep pace with changing work-environments. More and more young tech professionals are switching jobs as they get better offers. XPheno estimates that the attrition in the IT sector is about 16-20%, which means one in every five to six employees are moving to more attractive jobs.

Why Facebook's plan to rebrand itself could be a huge risk



Facebook Inc. may be preparing a fresh coat of paint for itself. A report in technology news site the Verge, citing a source with direct knowledge, says that the company is planning to change its name next week to reflect its new focus on building the metaverse - a new digital network for connecting to others through augmented reality and virtual reality, whose future success is by no means a given. Facebook has not commented on the story, but if it's true, it would be the kind of pivot that public-relations managers dream about, deflecting attention away from a series of damning exposes about human harm caused on the social media network. Rebranding after a series of missteps or bad press can be a Hail Mary attempt to change public perceptions.

You do this as a last resort. Cigarette maker Philip Morris Companies Inc. rebranded as Altria Group in 2003, and private military company Blackwater USA renamed itself as Xe Services, then Academi Training Center Inc. Both firms engaged in unhealthy things, and both attempted to use anodyne names to shift attention from their darker pasts.

Another classic example is BP Plc. After damaging safety reports in 2001, the company took on the name Beyond Petroleum and a new logo resembling the open petals of a flower - a world away from the dangerous and polluting business of oil extraction. British American Tobacco Plc, meanwhile, created a new tagline, "A better tomorrow," which looks like a subtle rebrand of its abbreviated name. A rebranding could work in Facebook's favor if it involves some kind of structural change and isn't like the brandwashing attempted by Philip Morris and Blackwater.



The Lakhimpur Lesson - Hate Speech Finally A Liability For BJP?

It could be easy to forget, amid the political white noise around the Lakhimpur violence, that the initial trigger was a hateful speech by a Union minister. The farmers crushed to death that fateful Sunday afternoon were amongst those who had gathered to protest comments made by Ajay Mishra, Minister of State for Home, in which he warned that he would "sort (them) out in 2 minutes" the agitators opposing the farm laws, now nearly a year old.

While Mr Mishra's inciteful language is hardly new to Indian politics, the fact that it was made by a minister in charge of internal security, no less, and that he still remains in office indicates a dramatic shift under the present BJP dispensation when it comes to hate speech. And as the spiraling fallout from Lakhimpur demonstrates, that shift may no longer always play to the ruling party's advantage.

Until not long ago, hate speech, though politically profitable, had to be deployed judiciously, especially by parties which had ascended to power. Not only is it bad form for lawmakers to make hateful comments that violate the law, the potential unrest it can trigger can make the ruling regime appear incompetent. This precarious tightrope was sought to be managed by dialing down the hate by those appointed to high office, and largely outsourcing divisive comment-making to fringe characters or outfits. Ruling parties in the past tried to maintain the slow drip of hateful rhetoric at the right dilution, enough to meet the desired outcome (deflecting public



attention from misgovernance, firing up the base and so on), but without tipping the scales of hate so far that it could undermine their claims of providing stable governance.

Under the present BJP, however, that precarious balance has been breached. Hate is no longer confined to the fringe. The slow drip is now a tidal wave. The galaxy of haters making anti-Muslim comments or threatening violence (or sometimes both) now routinely includes Union ministers, Chief Ministers, state ministers, MPs, MLAs, Governors and party bosses - the very men and women meant to ensure the observance of law. According to estimates by an NDTV project tracking hateful commentary by high-ranking political figures, 'VIP Hate' has witnessed an explosive jump of 790% in the first five years of the Modi government compared to the preceding five years of the UPA.

And in Modi 2.0, it has gotten worse: the average monthly hate speech by

high ranking figures has risen by 80% compared to Modi 1.0. Of the total of 315 hateful comments counted by us during the past seven years, 264 or 84% of all comments have come from top BJP functionaries versus 16% from high-ranking members of other political parties.

Because of the BJP's other break from convention - its 'strongman' approach where mistakes are rarely conceded publicly - virtually none of the saffron party's 'VIP Haters' have faced legal or other consequences, even as their words have led to disastrous repercussions for others, Lakhimpur being the latest instance.

This volcano of high-level, unpunished bigotry so far has done little to hurt the BJP's political prospects; in fact, it could be argued that the party's ever-ascending electoral graph parallels its outsize contribution to India's hate wave (despite the obvious contradiction of members of a government claiming to be tough on law and order routinely breaking the law themselves).

The most egregious example of this was the Delhi state election of 2020, in which Home Minister Amit Shah, in charge of India's internal security, and also the reporting authority for Delhi's police force, directed - and participated in - one of the most communally-charged campaigns by the BJP in recent memory. Leader after leader - reportedly at Mr Shah's behest - drew aim at the multiple sit-in protests against the CAA/NRC that had sprung up across the city. A leader who now serves as Union Minister chanted

"Desh ke Gadaron ko Goli Maro Saalon Ko (shoot the traitors)" from the stage. A BJP MP warned that the protestors of Shaheen Bagh would rape and kill the sisters of Delhi's citizens. Mr Shah himself asked voters to press the button for the BJP with such anger that it "should send a current to Shaheen Bagh", dislodging the protestors who had gathered there.

While this hateful campaign did not result in electoral success - Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party won the capital resoundingly - the BJP ended up with a higher-than-expected 39% voteshare, which several analysts ascribed to a 'hate bump'.

The Delhi campaign and result however also provided a glimmer of how unchecked, unpunished hate speech can backfire for the ruling regime. When the capital city, unsurprisingly, erupted into communal violence two weeks after the virulent campaign ended, the Home Minister was nowhere to be seen. Instead, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, tasked with overseeing India's wider strategic-security concerns, had to play a sort of mohalla peacemaker, walking through the riot-hit lanes of North East Delhi to calm tempers between Hindus and Muslims.

It speaks to the BJP's stranglehold over the public conversation that the backlash from Mr Shah's temporary vanishing act in the middle of the worst rioting the national capital has seen in decades did not last long, nor significantly dent his 'Mr Law and Order' image.

The New Social Media Revolution: Around the Corner



heart of the new metaverse concept everyone will be working on, it's a video game. It may have applications attached to it & social media utility available in the front. But all-in-all the core concept of the metaverse is a video game, with thousands of 3rd-party, seamless integrations. So, that means we have an edge over our competitors, being in our home territory. Is it much of an edge? No, not really, considering

movies with them every day. Now, you won't have to meet them in-person, unless you want to.

In a Long-Distance Relationship & hate how you can't go on dates together? Great, now you can walk anywhere together, while holding hands & simultaneously skydiving off every building in sight. Welcome to video games.



Hello! Thank you for taking the time to read my article, it means a lot to me. For those that don't know me, my name is Max Thind. I'm a proud co-founder of Greystone Games, a music hobbyist & an apparent "visionary" (Not my words, The Wall Street Journal's). A year ago, I was telling my team about an idea I've been considering in my head for quite some time. Only planning for it because this idea was so large in proportions that there didn't seem to be an end in scope

for the project. I started working on my own prototype & graphics that I could put together to sell this idea to a VC that would be willing to take the leap with us. I'm still in the middle of all of this structuring, & then I watched an interview of the Winklevoss twins mentioning a "metaverse", then I heard about Facebook making one, then Nvidia. Needless to say, I was furious. But after getting over my initial emotions, I had to ask myself, "Why did you think of this concept in the first place?". The answer is

simple, I was looking for the next big thing we could work on & be the best at. It was a simple idea to have & most tech giants would have the same idea in mind if they asked themselves the same question I had asked myself, which they did. So, I wasn't the first to have this idea, big whoop, story of humanity at large. But I know that if we keep working on our version of this. We will have a unique, fun world for our players to enjoy & explore. As someone in the game industry, I know at the

the vast differences in manpower we have versus our nearest metaverse competitors Facebook & NVIDIA. We may not beat them to market, but being the underdogs, we have to give it our all so we can beat them to customer's hearts & minds. The applications of this new world will, almost literally, be infinite. The world as we know it today is so interconnected that many of us have donned online personas, or created entire online friend groups. People we have never met, but we play games & watch

Want to go dive-bar hopping with your online friends? Great, you can bar-hop around the world, or, other worlds, take your friends across the universe simply to get your virtual avatars hammered, while also fighting space-dragons. I really could go on forever about the limitless applications this new world of worlds will have for the interconnected community. But I'll leave it at those two silly examples. But anyways, we're Greystone Games & we're building the omniverse, get ready.

(By Max Thind)

"Will We See A Final World War?"

(By Max Thind)

We've got two blockbuster performances from some of the world's heavyweight champions from the past. Are we about to see the third and final installation in this thrilling series? It's hardly thrilling, & I may make it sound like a movie series, but we all know deep down the horrible experiences that arise from the atrocities of war. It's hardly known to many of us, but we live in a beautiful time where the truly impactful conversations we have can be transmitted globally within seconds. Why not use this enormous power to defuse & deescalate rising tensions? Of course we could drone on and on about the industrial complex that surrounds modern militaries, but that won't do us any good, they're here to stay.

They say that true power is the ability to sway millions of

people to your cause. But if we, as conscientious, thought-driven



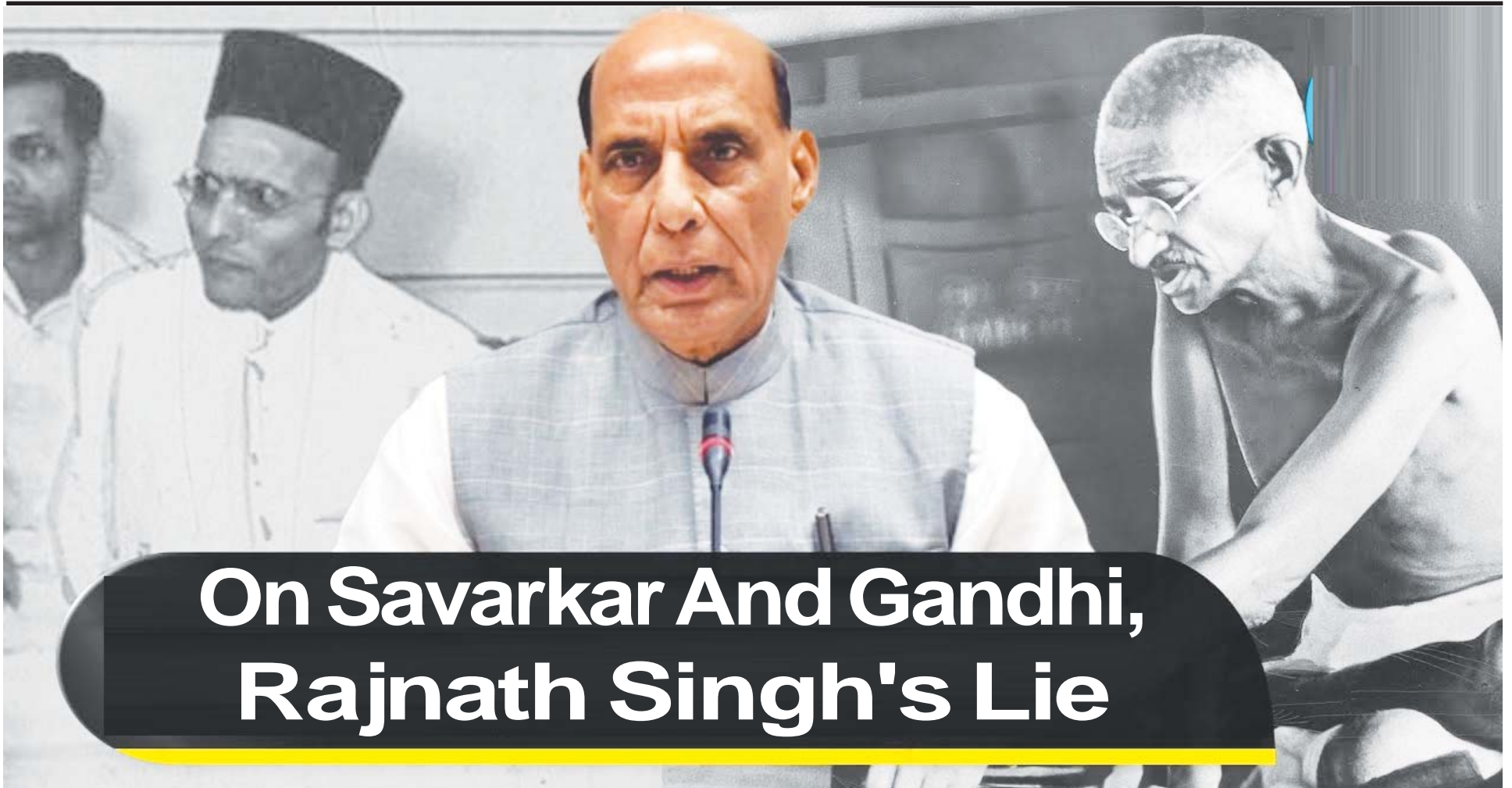
humans decide as a collective to ignore the current powers at play, to shun the idea of war entirely, we may have a shot at global peace. Where will the political powers conscript mass populations if those groups ignored the call-to-arms

entirely? Will a group of soldiers attempt to arrest someone for

draft-dodging if they're faced with hundreds of local opponents? There's a lot of problems with this argument, the biggest one being rogue states. A dictator may not be moved by the cries of millions of their suppressed populations, but we've always had covert ways

of dealing with dictators.

So the extra questions start popping up, how do we destabilize rogue states to usher in the new era of peace? How can we make the whole world happy & peaceful? We can't & wouldn't. A lot of industries & expensive groups decide a majority of the world's puppetry, usually through people's misery & pursuit of self-fulfillment. We all know that & we can't really do much about it. But what we can do, is make the world a better place to live in for everyone, one step at a time. Be kind to strangers, be open to new experiences, be vocal about the things that matter to you. There aren't a lot of proven ways to overcome tyranny, but we do have a tried & true method. It's called revolution, & there are a handful of countries that would greatly benefit from this, China & North Korea being the strongest candidates.



On Savarkar And Gandhi, Rajnath Singh's Lie

Shri Rajnath Singh, on the occasion of the release of a book on VD Savarkar said, "Lies are spread about Savarkar repeatedly. It was spread that he filed many mercy petitions seeking his release from jails. It was Mahatma Gandhi who asked him to file the mercy petitions...." So here we have, perhaps for the first time, a senior leader of the BJP admitting that their icon Savarkar, had in fact written mercy petitions to the British. To whitewash the contrast of their icon who cravenly begged for mercy compared to the heroes of the freedom struggle who braved the torture and inhuman conditions of the jail in the Andamans in their courageous defiance of British rule, the BJP now wants to invoke the name of Gandhi. Gandhi-ji himself was arrested eleven times by the British. Did he make a single apology to the British to be let off?

Let's go by the pithy saying: never argue about matters of facts - or another - search for truth from facts. Those wanting to know facts may like to study the highly informative, educative, meticulously-researched writings of AG Noorani on the subject of Savarkar. As Noorani points out in his book Savarkar and Hindutva, and also in his essay Savarkar's Mercy Petition, which he successfully unearthed from the National Archives of India, Savarkar wrote not one but several petitions of mercy to the British.

He was arrested by the British on separate charges of murder and abetment to murder of British officers. He was incarcerated in the Andamans jail in June 1911. Savarkar's first petition for mercy was sent within a few months of his arrest. Although the text of that 1911 petition is not available, he referred to it in his second petition to the British authorities on November 14, 1913. He wrote "I

prove that Rajnath Singh's claim is utterly false.

In 1914, Savarkar again asked for mercy, this time promising he would serve the British in any capacity they chose. He also asked for clemency for all political prisoners. He believed a general amnesty would help his own release and that of his brother. He reiterated this demand in 1917. Thus there

the case bringing out in clear relief the fact that the offence committed by your brother was purely political." What Savarkar wrote to the British was not at all what Gandhi advised. On the contrary, it was (once again) cringe-worthy, promising the British utmost loyalty and a pledge to work for the British. He wrote that his release would "render me personally attached

and politically useful". It is an insult to Gandhi's memory to distort the note written by Gandhi to claim that Savarkar's actions were on Gandhi's advice. They had nothing in common. Moreover, the point to be noted is that these mercy petitions were no ordinary ones. It was not unusual for prisoners to plead for

clemency on health or humanitarian grounds. This would enable them to get out of jail. Many prisoners were in fact released by the British on such grounds. But Savarkar's mercy petitions pledged allegiance to the Crown and indeed promised to work for the British. And on his release in 1924, this is exactly what he did.

From his first mercy petition in 1911, describing himself as a "son" of the British Government, to his promise in 1920 to be politically useful to a colonial power, Savarkar's distance from the values of India's freedom struggle cannot be bridged by

manufacturing history or in distorting it as was sought to be done by Rajnath Singh. It seems that he spoke on the basis of a biased RSS briefing. The RSS, as we know, is like a Union Minister in a Ministry of Defence of Untruths to obfuscate truth and facts.

Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, was also present on the occasion. He made the claim that Savarkar was never anti-Muslim, the evidence of which was his writing ghazals in Urdu! The highly-divisive Hindutva concept and ideology propagated by Savarkar is thus sought to be whitewashed. Hindutva is a political concept which has nothing to do with religious beliefs. As is well-known, it was Savarkar who, in his Presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1935, first described Muslims and Hindus as two separate nations. This suited the British policy of divide and rule. The core of the ideology links religion with nationalism on the theory that only those for whom the fatherland or pitrbhumi is also the holy land or punyabhumi can be accepted as children of mother India, thus effectively excluding Muslims and Christians from being citizens of what he considered India to be the Hindu nation or rashtra. Gandhi-ji was killed by those who were inspired by this ideology. Today that ideology is being glorified by those in power. How many more times will he be killed?

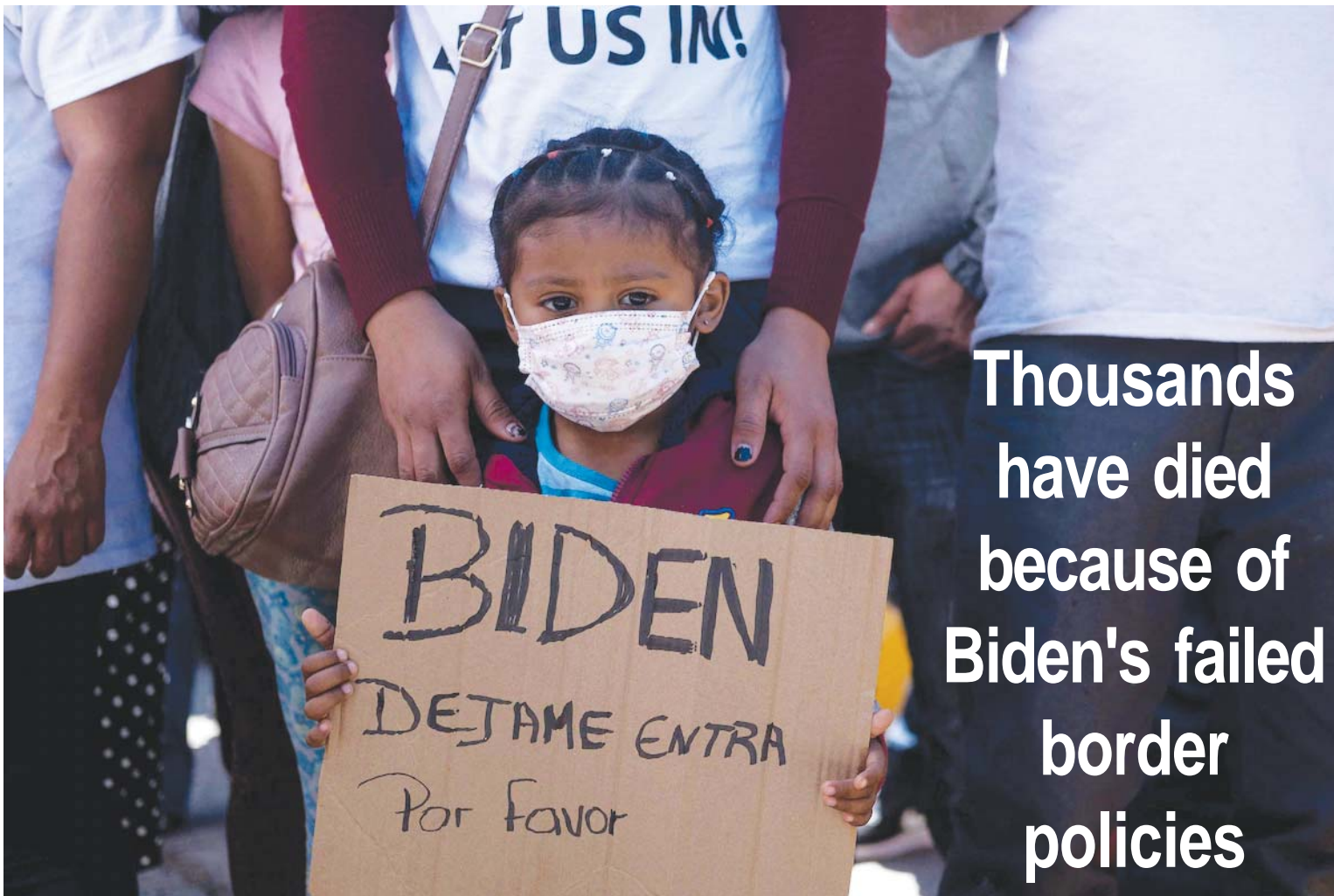


remind your Honour to be so good as to go through the petition for clemency I had sent in 1911..." and further, "I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like...the mighty alone can be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government..."

These petitions actually pledged the offender to serving the British. Between 1911 and 1913, when these two mercy petitions had been written by Savarkar, Gandhi-ji was in South Africa. He returned to India only in 1915. How then could he have advised Savarkar to plead for mercy? These facts

were at least four mercy petitions, three of them assuring full support to the British, signed by Savarkar before any contact had been made with Gandhi regarding their case.

According to material published in the Collected Works of Gandhi, it was only in January 1920 that Gandhi received a letter from the third Savarkar brother pleading for advice on what should be done to get his two brothers released. Gandhi's reply was clear enough. He wrote "I have your letter. It is difficult to advise you. I suggest, however, your framing a brief petition setting forth the facts of



Thousands have died because of Biden's failed border policies

Sinaloa is a province in northwest Mexico. It's directly across from the bottom of Baja California. It's not that far for the United States, and that's a bad thing because Sinaloa, Mexico may now be the single largest producer and distributor of the synthetic opioid fentanyl. Cartels are making fentanyl in mass quantities in Sinaloa now, but they're not making it for domestic consumption within Mexico. They're making it to export here. And you can see why. In the capital of Sinaloa, 11 pounds of fentanyl typically sells for around \$15,000. In the United States, that same amount of fentanyl sells for more than \$100,000. So you can see the incentive.

How much fentanyl is that? Well, just two milligrams of the drug can be lethal to a human being. That means 11 pounds contains nearly two and a half million fatal doses of fentanyl. Again, there's a major financial incentive for the drug cartels, which run huge parts of Mexico, to produce this drug and ship it north. And they are. If cocaine was the drug of the 1980s, we are now living in the fentanyl era, and the numbers show it.

Not so long ago, between October 2012 and October 2013, Customs and Border Protection seized just two pounds of fentanyl total at our southern border. Compare that to what we're seeing now. In the first eight months of this year -

first eight months - the U.S. government seized more than 7,200 pounds of fentanyl, the highest amount seized by far. And keep in mind, that's likely just a small percentage of the fentanyl that came over the border since it is odorless and difficult to detect.

According to a recent report by the U.S. Sentencing

fentanyl has become an epidemic.

REPORTER: The pill on the left is Xanax. The one on the right is counterfeit. Not knowing the difference can be deadly. ... The Drug

Enforcement Administration warns of a dramatic increase in fake prescription pills flooding the market from criminal drug networks in Mexico. The drugs made to look like Oxy or Adderall are laced with fentanyl or meth - often in deadly doses. The DEA has seized more than 9.5 million counterfeit pills this year. And the head of



Commission, "Since fiscal year 2015, the number of fentanyl offenders reported to the commission more than doubled each fiscal year, resulting in a 3,592% increase."

Meanwhile, federal authorities recently announced that they have seized nearly 10 million counterfeit pills, and many of them were laced with fentanyl. That was all in a single year. News reports from Chicago say, as they do in so many cities,

the Chicago Division says they've seized more than 600 pounds of fentanyl.

So why are we telling you all this about fentanyl? Because the rise in the consumption of fentanyl mirrors the rise in the availability of fentanyl, which is causing the massive rise in deaths by fentanyl ODs. And all of that is a result of the Biden administration's immigration policy. When you open the borders, it's not just people who

come in, it's massive amounts of fentanyl and other illegal drugs.

So the Biden administration tells you that their border policy is, "humane," but it's just the opposite. That policy has resulted in this country becoming flooded with fentanyl, and it's resulted in the deaths of many thousands, many thousands, of Americans.

The latest data from the CDC shows that drug overdose deaths in the United States hit a new high, almost 100,000 deaths of American citizens during the 12-month period that ended in March of this year. How much more is that from last year? It's a 30% increase in one year.

So there are a lot of reasons this is happening, but one of the main reasons is government policy, which has made the population sedentary and depressed. Our government spent the last year, in case you haven't noticed, locking everyone inside their homes. And the result of that is that drugs are everywhere and major American cities are now unrecognizable. Take a look at this report from San Francisco's local news station. Watch.

REPORTER: The rate of accidental drug overdoses, hospitalizations and deaths is outpacing teams of crisis intervention specialists. ... Fentanyl, a highly addictive synthetic opioid, much cheaper

than heroin, entered the SF drug market a few years ago.

SF HEALTH OFFICIAL: Fentanyl has been the large driver for this increase in accidental overdose deaths

REPORTER: The powerful narcotic was responsible for more than 500 deaths last year. It's become the drug of choice for many users in San Francisco. KTVU has been documenting the epidemic for months. Many experts believe social isolation from the coronavirus may be contributing to the death toll.

So what we refer to habitually as our homeless crisis, which is bigger than it's ever been in American history, is not primarily about homes, it's not even primarily about mental illness, strictly speaking. It's mostly about drugs and drug addiction. None of this should really surprise us. Our leaders have spent the last year dividing Americans from each other. The result is loneliness. They closed the churches, they closed the gyms. They forced people to stay apart from their family, friends and the people they're closest to. At the very same moment, the Biden administration has opened the border, allowing a massive wave of this highly addictive, deadly synthetic opioid to enter this country.

So what do you think happened? Well, an awful lot of people died, and this was a result of bad policy. But the Biden administration isn't simply ignoring the problem. They're not apologizing for it, of course. They're doing something even more destructive. They're making it worse. They're making it less possible for the U.S. government to control what comes across our border. You remember, they blamed the Border Patrol for daring to patrol the border on horseback.

Now they've nominated a genuine radical, an extremist call Chris Magnus, to lead Customs and Border Protection. How extreme is Chris Magnus? Well, during his confirmation hearings in Congress yesterday, Magnus was asked repeatedly whether what is happening at the border is a crisis. And repeatedly, he refused to say that it was. Tens of thousands of Americans are dying because of this border policy. And yet here's the man who the Biden administration would like to run the border responded.

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Tech crackdown isn't new for US, Russia, China. We need new accord between Internet and govt

Biden family corruption is an elephant the media works to 'disappear'



This week marked an anniversary of one of the greatest political tricks in history: the disappearance of Hunter Biden scandals.

One year after the New York Post broke the story, new emails were recently released that added new details to what was a raw influence-peddling operation which netted millions of dollars from foreign sources. A new tranche of emails connecting President Joe Biden to key accounts prove just how this political sleight of hand was worthy of Harry Houdini.

After all, Houdini only made an elephant disappear. The Bidens made what amounts to an entire circus disappear in front of an audience of millions. For both Houdini and the Bidens, the sheer size and audacity of the act contributed to the trick. The fact is: the 10,000 pound Jennie never left the stage. Neither did the Biden scandal.

The Bidens made a full-sized scandal disappear, with the help of media members who did not want the public to see it. Twitter banned links to reports about the laptop until after Biden was elected president. The media dismissed the story as a "conspiracy theory" with some mocking to boot.

Committee Chairman Adam Schiff assured that public that "this whole smear on Joe Biden comes from the Kremlin." Some 50 former intelligence officials, including Obama's CIA directors John Brennan and Leon Panetta, also insisted the laptop story was likely the work of Russian intelligence.

The laptop is, of course, now recognized as genuine-even by some of the early deniers. Hunter remains under criminal investigation for possible tax and money laundering violations.

It rose from the deep, at first small, and fumbling for a way to sustain itself. The world didn't really know what to make of it at first-it was a shapeless virtual thing piggybacking on the Internet.

A mere 30 years ago, people weren't too interested in the Internet or anything that existed on it. In fact, a 1998 quote from American economist and a 2008 Nobel prize winner Paul Krugman resurfaced by tech analyst Ben Thompson, dreadfully underestimates the Internet, "By 2005 or so, it will become clear that the Internet's impact on the economy has been no greater than [that of] the fax machine's." And so, the world largely left the sector to its own devices to grow unfettered, because no one really thought that, in two decades, the formless internet will grow into a full-fledged giant consequential enough to rule our minds and predict our behaviour.

The legend of the Leviathan adapted for the 21st century might as well be a five-headed giant known as Big Tech (Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft) with other smaller personal-data guzzling platforms operating as its arms, legs, eyes, and ears to form an ever-evolving nimble giant zipping around the world on the internet as if it was a magic carpet to keep gaining more and more access and control over our lives. After using your credit card to order pizza online, don't be surprised if you start seeing pizza ads on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, tempting you to order more because now Big Tech 'knows' you can afford it. When

you write a Facebook post about being sad, don't be surprised if you start seeing ads for mental health on Google Search.

On a larger scale, Russians were targetting American social media and PayPal users with propaganda during the 2016 US elections few thought Trump would win. In 2018, two men were killed in Assam because of rumours spread on WhatsApp. Sri Lanka shut down Facebook services and Viber messaging app in 2018 to stem the spread of inflammatory content following an altercation between Muslims and Sinhalese.

Russians were targetting American social media and PayPal users with propaganda during the 2016 US elections few thought Trump would win.

No country is left untouched by the undesired ripples of the Leviathan's impact and no government can afford to stand by and watch its citizens get hurt or democratic processes get tampered with. As US President Joe Biden said of social media platforms, "They're killing people".

After years of very little action to regulate tech companies, governments are showing their might. India swiftly banned over 59 Chinese apps including the mega-successful TikTok to show it will not compromise national security even if it angers China, an important trade partner. Then, after at least two years of mulling revisions to the intermediary guidelines, the newly gazetted rules were published in 2021 only a few hours after a government statement firmly said, "Social media platforms welcome to do business in India but they need to follow the Constitution and laws of

India".

Australia laid down a new law so that Google and Facebook will have to pay news publishers because its core products like Google Search, and Facebook News Feed used content from news media to grow but never paid the news organisations for that privilege.

In the US, after its initial case was dismissed in June 2021, the US Federal Trade Commission again in August 2021 filed an antitrust case against Facebook accusing it of illegal practices to maintain its monopolistic position. China too is cracking its whip against tech companies with a strict data protection law.

Not going down without a fight Governments turning on the pressure doesn't mean the digital Leviathan will quietly submit. Each of the big tech companies is as powerful and affluent as a sovereign nation with market caps in the trillions. If anyone can take on governments, it's Leviathan.

Washington Post shows that in 2020, tech companies including Amazon, Facebook, and Google spent over the US \$65 million on lobbying for their own agendas as US officials intensified the heat on tech.

Each of the big tech companies is as powerful and affluent as a sovereign nation with market caps in the trillions. If anyone can take on governments, it's Leviathan. These are companies that can also afford the most talented and well-networked people to work on their public policy and government relations in key markets. These are

individuals who can influence government officials in power to nudge decisions in their favour by promising investments and job creation in key constituencies.

A new tech accord among tech companies, the government, and the people

At the end of the day, what needs to happen is not for the Leviathan to be punished for succeeding beyond anyone's wildest imagination, but to prevent harm to people stemming from a tech platform.

No tech company envisioned their product could become harmful but only saw ways technology can be used to create more services and increase its bottom line. That might make them thoughtless but certainly not evil monsters.

Going forward, for any meaningful change to happen in the tech sector, governments must first commit to understanding the technicalities of how IT platforms operate so that lawmakers better understand how to regulate the sector without killing innovation.

Tech companies need to stop being so insular in their approach (is that wishful thinking?) and come clean about how their platforms work, without resorting to jargon nobody understands. That way, users and lawmakers know more about each tech platform and understand better how to navigate them. Tech platforms also need to stop manipulating user behaviour. Setting the algorithm so a user spends more time looking at provocative content might be good for the platform, but is not good for the user's health, and collectively for society.



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Mohan Bhagwat is right, China is the big threat. But his prescription to counter it is flawed

Politically, Sharad Pawar often gives mixed signals. He has clarity when he goes beyond domestic power games. For example, when he said that China was trying to encircle India.

The only problem with this, however, is that it isn't the full truth. Because China isn't trying to encircle India. At this point, China is succeeding in encircling India. The choke-hold is getting tighter.

As we end this festive week, the Chinese propaganda machine is churning out a series of videos from the Galwan clash of June 2020. These display Indian soldiers they had taken captive for three days, and other provocative images and threats.

This is topped by war-like commentary on Global Times or other Chinese weapons of psychological mass destruction. The reaction from Beijing to Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu's visit to Arunachal Pradesh wasn't an unfamiliar one. Just that the intensity, and the words used, were.

All this is manoeuvring, but not yet encirclement. That's happening elsewhere. With Pakistan obviously, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and now Afghanistan. There is an intensifying Chinese relationship with Iran, Turkey and some Central Asian republics.

The latest, in fact as we write this column, is the breathless releases from Chinese state media claiming a border agreement with Bhutan. It doesn't say so in as many words, but suggests that this has happened or is happening in spite of India. For effect, it also counsels Bhutan how it let its interests suffer by letting India

insert itself in its dealings with China over Doklam.

Within the region and beyond, the Chinese are trying to tell every country who's the boss in this neighbourhood, or the dada of the mohalla. In Eastern Ladakh, the Chinese came prepared with much hardened positions for the 13th Corps Commander-level talks, and issued offensive 'take-it-or-you-won't-even-have-it' statements.

As psychological warfare goes, they are being quite transparent. Why, and what is it that they want to achieve, is the question. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat was right in his Vijaydashami speech, talking about a China-Pakistan-Taliban-Turkey nexus. It is just that while his diagnosis was right, the treatment he suggested wasn't. We will conclude with why.

Given India's complex relationship and continued military dependence on Russia, at least for another decade, New Delhi tends not to talk very much about the concerns emerging from there. But Vladimir Putin is now talking far too often like a Xi Jinping/China fanboy. Note his statement earlier this week that China doesn't even need to use force to take Taiwan; its peaceful absorption is an inevitability given how strong China is. All of this makes the strategic picture dire for India and the Modi government in its eighth year. The big opening gambit in 2014, to make a grand deal of some sort with Xi Jinping, has failed entirely. Simply because China never accepted India as an equal. It is now acting as if to remind India that the power gap has only increased. On the surface, the strategic balance sheet looks heavily loaded in favour of China. It may or may not have taken some territory in Ladakh, but it

is most certainly denying India access to sizeable areas its patrols visited.

It has brought the other dormant border regions, the Barahoti plains in the central sector and Tawang in the east, to life. In Ladakh, China's deployments have grown, and begun to look permanent.

Despite all this, the Chinese continue to earn even more from trade with India by way of surpluses. As a report by Pia Krishnankutty in ThePrint showed, they've already run up a surplus of about \$47 billion, not only topping the entire 2020-21 surplus in just nine months of 2021, but seeming poised to break the record of \$63.05 billion. At which point we should also take a closer look at the other column, costs and losses. First of all, whatever the Chinese may have achieved in eastern Ladakh, their ability to repeat the first-mover advantage in any other place is grossly limited now. As that PLA patrol in the Tawang region found out. It costs money and much stress to Indian armed forces, but they are ready. Every rude nudge from the Chinese pushes India closer to the US, and gradually, away from Russia. It's the Chinese who finally gave the Modi government the impetus to sign the LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement) and other strategic sharing agreements with the US, which had been in deep freeze for almost 15 years. Within the Indian strategic establishment, political universe and the commentariat, China's behaviour is achieving what we might have seen as an impossibility: Scraping away the anti-Americanism ossified in our collective heads over seven decades.

Why the Chinese build-up at LAC will set stage for a permanent solution



13th round of the Corps Commander-level talks held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on 10 October, to discuss disengagement from Patrolling Point 15, reached an impasse. Both sides issued strongly worded statements blaming each other. The stage seems to be set for the confrontation along the Line of Actual Control to continue through the second consecutive winter. The talks had resumed after a gap of over two months, following the meeting of the two foreign ministers held on 16 September, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit at Dushanbe, Tajikistan. However, a lot seems to have happened before and after this meeting for the military talks to break down. I analyse the reasons for the breakdown of talks and the emerging strategic situation along the LAC. Reasons for the impasse

In Eastern Ladakh, China[3] had a clear strategic aim - impose its hegemony over India and in doing so, secure the 1959 Claim Line (CL) to prevent development of border infrastructure in areas from where a threat, howsoever distant, could develop to Aksai Chin and other areas usurped by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) before or during the 1962 War. Achieving strategic surprise, China accomplished this aim with relative ease through a preemptive manoeuvre in end April-May 2020. China secured 600-800 square kilometres of southern half of Depsang Plains, denying us access to Patrolling Points (PP) - 10, 11, 12 and 13. In Changchenmo Sector, the PLA intruded across the 1959 CL to deny India access to PP 15, 16, 17 and 17A. The intrusion, in terms of distance, was only 3 km in Changlung Nala and 4 km in the area of PP 15 and PP 16. However, due to the terrain configuration, the access to the 30-35 km long and 4-5 km wide Kugrang River Valley was denied to us. Also, by amassing troops opposite Hot Springs (incorrectly marked as Gogra on Google Maps), it denied us access to Kongka La, PP 18. North of Pangong Tso, China intruded up to Finger 3 and also secured the higher features to the north, thus securing 40-60 km of our territory. In Galwan River, the intrusion was a minor one - up to PP 14 - but the situation precipitated during disengagement, leading to the "unarmed battle" on 15/16 June 2020. South of Demchok, China has denied us access to Charding-Ninglung Nala. However, this is one area where the Chinese have not secured the 1959 CL, which is 30 km to the west.

Pak Army chief Qamar Bajwa visits ISI headquarters amid tiff over appointment of spy chief.



(News Agencies)-Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Monday visited the Headquarters of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) amidst the ongoing tiff with the civilian government over the appointment of the spy chief.

The powerful Army on October 6 had announced through a statement that in a high-level

reshuffle in the military, ISI Director General Lt Gen Faiz Hamid was replaced by Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmed Anjum.

However, the office of Prime Minister Imran Khan refused to issue a notification of the appointment of the new ISI chief.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry for the first time on October 12 acknowledged the

presence of differences over the key appointment.

The matter has not been settled until now despite statements by ministers that it has been resolved and the appointment of the new ISI chief would be made soon.

The Army said Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Bajwa visited the ISI Headquarters and was

received by Lt Gen Hamid.

The "COAS was briefed on the Internal Security and ongoing situation in Afghanistan" and he expressed his satisfaction over the preparedness of the organisation, according to an official statement. A picture was also shared by the Army's media wing showing General Bajwa chairing a meeting along

with Lt Gen Hamid.

The visit took place when Lt Gen Muhammad Aamer assumed command as the new Gujranwala Corps Commander. He replaced Lt Gen Syed Asim Munir who was appointed as the Quartermaster General.

Lt Gen Aamer's posting as the Gujranwala Corps Commander was among the six appointments announced by the military in a reshuffle on October 6, which included that of the ISI chief.

It showed that the process to implement the decision of October 6 had already started. However, it was not clear when Lt Gen Hamid would take command as Peshawar Corps Commander as he was appointed to the post after transfer from the post of ISI chief. Meanwhile, terrorists fired on a security forces post in Spinwam, North Waziristan district and the troops initiated a prompt response, effectively engaging the terrorists' location. During an intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Saifullah was killed, according to the Army. It added that an area clearance process was going on to eliminate any terrorists' hideout in the area.

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(News Agencies)-The Chinese military on Sunday condemned the United States and Canada for each sending a warship through the Taiwan Strait last week, saying they were threatening peace and stability in the region. China claims democratically-ruled Taiwan as its own territory, and has mounted repeated air force missions into Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) over the past year, provoking anger in Taipei. China sent around 150 aircraft into the zone over a four-day period beginning on Oct. 1 in a further heightening of tension between Beijing and Taipei that has sparked concern internationally. The U.S. military said the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Dewey sailed through the narrow waterway that separates Taiwan from its giant neighbour China along with the Canadian frigate HMCS Winnipeg on Thursday and Friday. "Dewey's and Winnipeg's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the commitment of the United States and our allies and partners to a free and open Indo-Pacific," it added. China's People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre



Chinese military condemns US, Canada for sending warship through Taiwan Strait and threatening 'peace'

Command said its forces monitored the ships and "stood guard" throughout their passage. "The United States and Canada colluded to provoke and stir up trouble... seriously jeopardising peace and stability of the Taiwan

Strait," it said. "Taiwan is part of Chinese territory. Theatre forces always maintain a high level of alert and resolutely counter all threats and provocations." U.S. Navy ships have been transiting the strait roughly

monthly, to the anger of Beijing, which has accused Washington of stoking regional tensions. U.S. allies occasionally also send ships through the strait, including Britain last month. While tensions across

the Taiwan Strait have risen, there has been no shooting and Chinese aircraft have not entered Taiwanese air space, concentrating their activity in the southwestern part of the ADIZ.

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नवें साल में के अमरीकी डॉन ने बॉस का टवीट करन लਈ मंगी मुआफ़ी

संजट कुमार नुं सिपायों को बचा-बचा के रोकेंगे जेल प्लासम

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Zalmay Khalilzad steps down as US envoy to Afghanistan, replaced by Thomas West



(News Agencies)- Afghanistan, he said. Zalmay Khalilzad, the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation who brokered the peace deal between the United States and the Taliban, has stepped down and replaced by veteran American diplomat Thomas West, Secretary of State Tony Blinken said. "As Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad steps down from his role. I extend my gratitude for his decades of service to the American people," Blinken said. Thomas West, who previously served as the Deputy Special Representative, will be the Special Representative for

West, who earlier served on the Vice President's national security team and the National Security Council staff, will lead diplomatic efforts, advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and coordinate closely with the US. In his resignation letter, according to Politico, Khalilzad said, "The political arrangement between the Afghan government and the Taliban did not go forward as envisaged. The reasons for this are too complex and I will share my thoughts in the coming days and weeks."

Communal harmony will be protected; violence aimed at creating trouble before 2023 polls: Bangladesh HM

(News Agencies)-As reports of attack on minority Hindus continue to emerge from Bangladesh, its home minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, on Monday gave assurance that communal harmony will be protected in his country at any cost.

He claimed that the violence is aimed at fomenting trouble in his nation with an eye on the next general election.

The neighbouring country is likely to hold its elections in the end of 2023.

Speaking to PTI over phone, Khan Kamal said that an investigation is underway to nab the culprits involved in "inciting violence" in his country.

He also did not rule out "the involvement on the BNP-Jamaat elements" behind the attacks.

"We have taken stern actions to tackle the situation. An investigation is underway; none of the culprits would be spared. I want to assure you that the communal harmony of our country will be protected at any cost. Both the minority and majority communities are citizens of this country and would be protected," Khan Kamal



said. The minister asserted that Bangladesh would not let the trouble-makers succeed in their mission.

"These incidents are aimed at tarnishing the image of our nation and creating tension with an eye on the general election. But we won't allow these forces to succeed," he said. Violence had erupted in pockets of Bangladesh over an alleged blasphemy incident at a Durga Puja pavilion in Cumilla, around 100 km from Dhaka, following which paramilitary forces were deployed in many affected areas. Sporadic clashes, however, broke out between the police and the bigots as media reported about vandalisation of Hindu temples and Durga puja venues.



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Taliban laud suicide bombers as 'martyrs', promise land, cash reward to kin

Calling them "heroes of Islam and the country", the Taliban have promised plots of land and cash rewards to the families of suicide bombers who attacked US and Afghan soldiers.

(News Agencies)-The Taliban have promised plots of land to relatives of suicide bombers who attacked US and Afghan soldiers, in a provocative gesture that seems to run counter to their efforts to court international support. The Taliban's acting interior minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, offered the reward to dozens of family members of bombers gathered at a Kabul hotel, Interior Ministry spokesman Saeed Khosty tweeted on Tuesday. Addressing the gathering Monday evening, Haqqani praised the sacrifices of "martyrs and fedayeen," referring to fighters killed in

suicide attacks, Khosty tweeted. Haqqani called them "heroes of Islam and the country," according to the spokesman. At the end of the meeting, he distributed 10,000 afghanis (USD 112) per family and promised each a plot of land. Khosty posted photos of Haqqani, his face blurred, embracing the relatives in a packed auditorium. The event comes as the Taliban attempt to open diplomatic channels with an international community largely reluctant to formally recognise their rule in Afghanistan. High-profile Taliban meetings with foreign officials have focused on obtaining aid to

impovertised Afghans as the U.N. predicts virtually the entire population will slide into poverty because of a severe economic crisis. The promise of rewards for suicide bombings signals conflicting approaches within the Taliban leadership. They are trying to position themselves as responsible rulers, who promise security for all and have condemned suicide attacks by their rivals, the militant Islamic State group. On the other hand, they praise such tactics when it comes to their followers. The Taliban cannot afford to alienate the US, which froze billions of dollars in Afghan assets in US accounts in line with

international sanctions protocols. International monetary organizations paused disbursements, equivalent to 75% of the previous government's expenditure. At the same time, the Taliban cannot afford to lose their hard-line base, especially in the wake of a growing IS threat. Suicide bombings and roadside explosives were tactics used by the Taliban to wear down Afghan and US forces throughout their 20-year insurgency. The international community has greeted the Taliban's request for recognition with conditions, especially with respect to the treatment of women and girls.

Hard-earned victories lost in a flash: Bangladesh cricketer Mashrafe Mortaza condemns attacks on Hindu community



(News Agencies)-Former Bangladesh cricket captain Mashrafe Mortaza has condemned the recent attacks against the minority Hindu community in the country. In a Facebook post written in Bangla, Mashrafe Mortaza said that Bangladesh suffered two losses -- one at the hands of Scotland in qualifiers of T20 World Cup, and the other one at home, referring to Sunday's communal violence in Rangpur district in which 20 homes of Hindus were torched by a mob. "Witnessed two losses yesterday. One was Bangladesh cricket team's, which was painful. The other being that of Bangladesh - one that has shattered my heart. This is not the red and green (colour of the national flag) we wanted to see. So many dreams, so many hard-earned victories lost in a flash. Allah give us hidayat," he said in the Facebook post. Incidents of violence have been reported against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh and their places of worship in the last two weeks. On Sunday, a group of assailants vandalised at least 66 homes and torched 20 homes of Hindus in Bangladesh's Rangpur over an alleged blasphemous social media post. Last week, three people were killed in an attack on a Durga Puja pandal near Nanuar Dighi lake in Bangladesh's Cumilla.

India-China standoff: Beijing deploys 100 rocket launchers at high altitude areas

The move has come after the Indian Army enhanced its deployment of M777 ultra-light howitzers at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). China has deployed 100 advanced and long-range rocket launchers at its high-altitude borders amid a standoff with India. A source told Hong Kong-based

South China Post that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has deployed over 100 PCL-181 light and truck mounted-howitzers to ramp up its defence for the winter season. The move has come after the Indian Army enhanced its deployment of M777 ultra-light howitzers at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). India had recently

added Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) Heron I and ALH Dhruv choppers to its aviation brigade to counter China. It is a twin-engine, multi-role, multi-mission new generation helicopter in the 5.5 ton weight class and is being used for quick mobilisation of troops. As the Chinese People's Liberation Army aggression at

the Line of Actual Control, the force has increased frequency of surveillance at the border area to keep a tap on their activities. Meanwhile, Rudra is the first Army Aviation aircraft to add 'teeth to the fleet of Army Aviation with its Mistral air-to-air missiles, 70 mm rockets, 20 mm guns and ATGMs. The ALH (WSI) is a force multiplier

for the field force commander with its potent weapons on board. This helicopter will be able to storm the enemy forces and hunt them down when required. From Sikkim to Arunachal Pradesh, India shares a total of 1,346-km-long LAC with China. India and China have been engaged in border standoff for the past 18 months.

Taliban agree to restart door-to-door polio vaccination programme across Afghanistan, says WHO

The Taliban have agreed to the resumption of a house-to-house polio vaccination programme across Afghanistan, the WHO has said.

UN agencies are gearing up to vaccinate all of Afghanistan's children under 5 against polio for the first time since 2018, after the Taliban agreed to the campaign, the World Health Organization says.

For the past three years, the Taliban barred UN-organized vaccination teams from doing door-to-door campaigns in parts of Afghanistan under their control, apparently out of suspicion they could be spies for the government or the West. Because of the ban and ongoing fighting, some 3.3 million children over the past three years have not been vaccinated.

The Taliban's reported agreement now, after becoming the rulers of Afghanistan, appeared aimed at showing they are willing to cooperate with international agencies. The longtime militant insurgent force has been trying to win the world's recognition of its new government and re-open the door for international aid to rescue the crumbling economy. The Taliban leadership did not confirm its agreement, and Taliban officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment. But WHO and the UN children's agency UNICEF said in a statement Monday that they welcomed the decision by the Taliban leadership supporting the resumption of house-to-house polio vaccinations across



the country. Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic. The disease can cause partial paralysis in children. Since 2010, the country has been carrying out regular inoculation campaigns in which workers go door to door, giving the vaccine to children. Most of the workers are women, since they can get better access to mothers and children.

But large sections of the country have been out of their reach in recent years. In parts of the south, particularly, the ban by the Taliban was in effect. In other areas, door-to-door campaigns were impossible because of fighting between the government and the insurgents, or because of fears of kidnappings or roadside bombs. In some places, hard-line clerics spoke out against vaccinations, calling them un-Islamic or a Western plot.

WHO said a new nationwide vaccination campaign will begin

on Nov. 8, followed by another synchronized with Pakistan's polio vaccination campaign in December.

The estimated target population is Afghanistan's 10 million children under 5, including the more than 3.3 million who could not be reached since 2018, Dr. Hamid Jafari, WHO's director of polio eradication for the Eastern Mediterranean region, told The Associated Press. "Restarting polio vaccination in all areas of Afghanistan now will prevent a major resurgence of polio outbreaks within the country and ensure there is no international spread," Jafari said.

"This is an extremely important step in the right direction," said Dapeng Luo, WHO Representative in Afghanistan. He said it was a good sign that multiple campaigns are planned. "Sustained access to all children is essential to end polio for good." On March 30, three women were gunned down in two separate attacks as they

carried out door-to-door vaccinations in the eastern city of Jalalabad. It was the first time vaccination workers have been killed in a decade of door-to-door inoculations against the disease in Afghanistan.

Such attacks have been more common in Pakistan, where at least 70 vaccinators and security personnel connected to vaccination campaigns have been killed since 2011.

Jafari said the Taliban's previous ban in its areas was "mainly for security reasons," not out of opposition to vaccinations themselves. The Taliban, he said, have committed to "the absolute protection and security of all health workers and all frontline workers" in the campaign.

In Pakistan, officials have struggled to overcome deep public suspicion over vaccines particularly since the U.S. used a fake vaccination campaign to unearth the hideout of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. Hard-

line clerics and militants have stoked the fears by depicting polio vaccinations as a Western plot to sterilize Muslim children.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have seen an increase in cases. In Afghanistan, 56 new polio cases were reported in 2020, the highest number since 2011, when 80 cases were registered. Only one case of the wild virus has been reported in 2021 in Afghanistan.

"This decision will allow us to make a giant stride in the efforts to eradicate polio," said Hervé Ludovic De Lys, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan. "To eliminate polio completely, every child in every household across Afghanistan must be vaccinated, and with our partners, this is what we are setting out to do," he said.

A supplementary dose of vitamin A will also be provided to children aged 6 to 59 months during the upcoming campaign.

Jafari said the Taliban government had agreed on three key aspects - security for health workers and vaccinators, mobilization of health authorities and the new leadership for the campaign, and communications through religious, tribal and community leaders and media to build trust in the campaign. He urged families not to be suspicious of the vaccinators going house to house, saying the only intention is to protect children. "They should trust the program. They should trust the vaccine."

Pakistan claims to have 'detected' Indian naval submarine in its territorial waters on Oct 16

The Pakistan Navy claims to have "detected" an Indian naval submarine in its territorial waters on October 16. This claim was made in a statement issued by Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Tuesday.

A video, reportedly showing an Indian naval submarine at periscope depth, also surfaced on social media after it was released by Pakistan's ISPR.

The video is likely to have been recorded by a drone.

However, the authenticity of the video is yet to be verified.

Pakistan Navy stops #Indian submarine entering into Its waters. #Pakistan #India #War #Peace pic.twitter.com/HpRIYM6OYF

- Azaz Syed (@AzazSyed) October 19, 2021

It is important to note that an Indian naval submarine would

not venture into hostile maritime waters at periscope depth.

The Indian Navy is also yet to issue a statement in response to the claims made by Pakistan over the events that transpired in international waters on October 16.

The statement by Pakistan's military media wing goes on to claim that this is the "third incident" when an Indian submarine was "prematurely

detected and tracked by Pakistan Navy's Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft".

"During the prevailing security milieu, a strict monitoring watch has been kept by the Pakistan Navy to safeguard the maritime frontiers of Pakistan," the statement adds.

However, the coordinates in the video released by the Pakistan Navy hint that the submarine in question could be about 250 km

from Karachi and closer to the Gujarat coast.

If the coordinates in the video are accurate, there is a possibility that the video merely shows a submerged Indian naval submarine rising to periscope depth during a routine drill.

A naval submarine rises to periscope depth either to show itself to the adversary or due to an engine failure.

Second Quad:



India, US, Israel and UAE foreign ministers to meet virtually today

(News Agencies)-The foreign ministers of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the US will hold a virtual meeting on Monday (10:15pm IST) to boost cooperation and coordination.

External Affairs Minister of India Dr S Jaishankar is on a visit to Israel where he held bilateral meeting with his counterpart Yair Lapid and also called on Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

On Monday, Jaishankar and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will hold a meeting from West Jerusalem with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who will join them virtually.

After the signing of the Abraham Accord of 2020, this meeting comes as a crucial part of the Israeli government's efforts to build strong international relations that should strengthen its position in the region and in the world and contribute in offering a strong and smart push for the peace process between Tel Aviv and its neighbours, the office of Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said in a statement. The accord had led to normalisation of relations between Israel and the UAE

The foreign ministers of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the US will hold a virtual meeting on Monday to boost cooperation and coordination.

which subsequently also included Bahrain. The Abraham Accords refer collectively to agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (the IsraelUnited Arab Emirates normalisation agreement) and Bahrain, respectively (the BahrainIsrael normalisation agreement). With the meeting of these four countries, the stress will be on now these close allies and partner can work together on various fronts - security, Iran, technology, trade, climate change. Ahead of this Quad meeting, there was a UAE-Israel-US trilateral meeting held in Washington last week where the foreign ministers focused on the issue of "peaceful coexistence".

"The outcomes of the meeting of HH

Sheikh @ABZayed with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the #US and #Israel, were remarkable and important, including the announcement of the two working groups "Peaceful Coexistence" and "Water and Energy" between the three countries," Ambassador Mohamed Al Khaja, UAE's envoy to the US wrote in a tweet.

Israel's foreign minister wrote, "At the center of my visit here is the concern about Iran's race to a nuclear capability. Iran is becoming a nuclear threshold country. Every day that passes, every delay in the negotiations, brings Iran closer to a nuclear bomb." He went on to add, "I don't want to conclude with fear, but with hope. We are writing a new chapter in our history. There is an alliance of moderates. Focused on life, focused on hope, focused on optimism, focused on looking forward."

India has been working very closely with UAE, Israel on solar technology. The three countries signed a pact initiated by the International Federation of Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce (IFFIICC) to work of producing robotic solar cleaning technology.

US election 2024: Poll shows 80% Republicans want Donald Trump to run



(News Agencies)-Nearly 80 per cent of Republicans want former President Donald Trump to run in the US election 2024 as per a new poll.

The survey conducted by Quinnipiac University shows that Trump enjoys robust backing by the Republican Party or the GOP.

However, 94 per cent of Democrats believe running again in 2024 will be a waste of time for Trump. This opinion was also supported by 58 independents in the opinion poll.

Meanwhile, GOP Senator Bill Cassidy said in an interview that he will not vote for Trump if decides to run again in the next election.

Earlier, a UK-based betting exchange company called Smarkets has predicted that Trump, for the first time, has edged ahead of his predecessor Joe Biden.

It had also been predicted that Trump has the highest chances of winning the 2024 election and returning to the White House.

Biden who is the second place with 19 per cent votes as per a poll conducted by the website, is followed by Vice-President Kamala Harris with 13 per cent votes.

Poking fun at Biden, Trump's spokesperson, Liz Harrington had asked on Twitter, "How's Biden doing? Do you miss me yet?"

Trump has hinted at a possible presidential run in 2024, attacking Biden and repeating his fraudulent claims he won the 2020 election.

Trump's flirtation with another run could freeze the Republican field for 2024 as other potential candidates try to decide whether they will have to compete against him.

Meanwhile, a US congressional committee probing the deadly January 6 assault on the Capitol voted unanimously in favour of contempt-of-Congress charges against Steve Bannon, a longtime aide to Trump.

The seven Democratic and two Republican members of the House of Representatives Select Committee approved a report recommending the criminal charge by a unanimous 9-0 vote, calling it "shocking" that Bannon refused to comply with subpoenas seeking documents and testimony.

Return Crimea to Ukraine, stop cyber attacks on America: US tells Russia

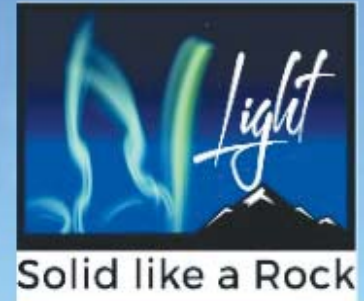
(News Agencies)-Despite Russia's assault within the country, the United States has recognised Ukraine's sovereignty. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday that the United States and its allies support Ukraine's authority in the future of their foreign policy. As Russia's annexation of Crimea threatens Ukraine's territorial integrity,

Zelenskyy has stated that the United States is the country's "primary partner in security and defence."

"US support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is unwavering," Austin said. "So we again call on Russia to end its occupation of Crimea, to stop perpetuating the war in eastern Ukraine, to end its destabilizing activities in the Black Sea and along Ukraine's borders, and to halt its persistent cyberattacks

and other malign activities against the United States and our allies and partners," Austin said during a press conference in Kyiv alongside Zelenskyy. Relations between Russia and the United States have reached a post-Cold War low. In an effort to demonstrate unity in military reforms, the United States has continued to step up and collaborate with Russia's neighbours such as Ukraine.

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China in talks with US exporters to secure long-term LNG supply amid concerns over fuel security



At least five Chinese energy companies are in advanced talks with US exporters to secure long-term LNG supplies amid concerns about the country's fuel security.

(News Agencies)-Major Chinese energy companies are in advanced talks with US exporters to secure long-term liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies, as soaring gas prices and domestic power shortages heighten concerns about the country's fuel security, several sources said. At least five Chinese firms, including state major Sinopec Corp and China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) and local government-backed energy distributors like Zhejiang Energy, are in discussions with US exporters, mainly Cheniere Energy and Venture Global, the sources told Reuters. The discussions could lead to deals worth tens of billions of dollars that would mark a surge in China's LNG imports from the United States in coming years. At the height of a Sino-US trade war in 2019, gas trade briefly came to a standstill. LNG export facilities can take years to build, and there are several projects in North America in the works that are not expected to start exporting until the middle of the decade. Talks with US suppliers began early this year but speeded up in recent months amid one of the biggest power-generating, heating fuel crunch in decades. Natural gas prices in Asia have jumped more than fivefold this year, sparking fears of power shortages in the winter. "Companies faced a supply gap (for winter) and surging prices. Talks really picked

up since August when spot prices touched \$15/mmbtu", said a Beijing-based senior industry source briefed on the talks. Another Beijing-based source said: "After experiencing the recent massive market volatility, some buyers were regretting that they didn't sign enough long-term supplies." Sources expected fresh deals to be announced over the coming few months, after privately controlled ENN Natural Gas Co, headed by the ex-LNG chief of China's largest buyer, CNOOC, announced a 13-year deal with Cheniere on Monday. It was the first major US-China LNG deal since 2018. The new purchases will also cement China's position as the world's top LNG buyer, taking over from Japan this year. As state-owned enterprises, companies are all under pressure to keep security of supply and the recent price trend has deeply changed the image of long-term supplies in the mind of leadership," said the first Beijing-based trader. "People may have taken the spot (market) as the key in the past, but are now realizing that long-term cargoes are the backbone." CHEAPER US GAS The sources declined to be identified as the negotiations are private. Sinopec declined comment. CNOOC and Zhejiang Energy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Venture Global and Cheniere both

declined comment.

"We expect more deals to be signed before year-end. It's primarily driven by the global energy crunch and prices we're seeing now... US supplies now stand out as attractive," said a third Beijing source briefed on the talks.

US cargoes used to be expensive versus oil-linked supplies from Qatar and Australia for example, but are cheaper now.

A deal at \$2.50 + 115% of Henry Hub futures, similar to ENN's deal according to traders, would be roughly about \$9-\$10 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) on a delivered basis into Northeast Asia. This includes an average shipping cost of \$2 per mmBtu for the US-China route.

Jason Feer, global head of business intelligence with consultancy Poten & Partners said Chinese companies are heavily exposed to Brent-related pricing for LNG and the US purchases give some diversity to the pricing. Asian spot gas prices are currently trading at above \$37 per mmBtu after reaching a record high of over \$56 earlier this month. Traders expect prices to go higher in winter when demand typically surges.

Chinese buyers are scouting for both near-term shipments to cover demand this winter and long-term imports as demand for gas, seen by Beijing as a key bridge fuel before reaching its 2060 carbon-neutral goal, is set for

steady growth through 2035.

It's hard to estimate a total volume of the deals being discussed, sources said, but Sinopec alone could be eyeing 4 million tonnes annually as the company is most exposed to the spot market versus domestic rivals PetroChina and CNOOC, said a third source. Traders said Sinopec is in final talks with 3 to 4 companies to buy 1 million tonnes a year for 10 years, starting from 2023, and is looking for US volumes as part of the requirement.

Delays in LNG export projects in Canada, in which PetroChina owns a stake, and Mozambique, where both PetroChina and CNOOC have invested, also made US supplies attractive, sources added.

North American LNG exporters have been adding to capacity because of demand in major Asian economies.

Cheniere, the largest exporter out of the United States, said in late September it expects to announce "a number of other transactions" that will support their going forward with the Corpus Stage 3 expansion next year. Venture Global is building or developing over 50 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of LNG production capacity in Louisiana, including the 10-MTPA Calcasieu, which is expected to cost around \$4.5 billion and start producing LNG in test mode in late 2021. However, some buyers remained cautious.

Venezuelan govt suspends talks with opposition over extradition of Alex Saab to US



Venezuela on Saturday said it would suspend negotiations with the opposition that were set to resume this weekend, after Cape Verde extradited Colombian businessman Alex Saab, a Venezuelan envoy, to the United States on money laundering charges.

The announcement was made by Socialist party legislator Jorge Rodriguez, who heads the government's negotiating team. Rodriguez said the Venezuelan government would not attend the talks set to begin on Sunday.

The Venezuelan government in September named Saab - who was arrested in June 2020 when his plane stopped in Cape Verde to refuel - as a member of its negotiating team in talks with the opposition in Mexico, where the two sides are looking to solve their political crisis.

Rodriguez, reading from a statement, called the decision to suspend negotiations "an expression of our deepest protest against the brutal aggression against the person and the investiture of our delegate Alex Saab Moran."

The leadership of Venezuela's opposition did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Venezuela, in a Twitter post by the Ministry of Communications, denounced the extradition as a "kidnapping."

Hours after Saab's extradition, Venezuela revoked the house arrest of six former executives of refiner Citgo, a U.S. subsidiary of state oil company PDVSA, two sources with knowledge of the situation and a family member told Reuters.

The U.S. Justice Department charged Saab in 2019 in connection with a bribery scheme to take advantage of Venezuela's state-controlled exchange rate.

Why global energy drought could herald a future of excess

Before that, the coal- and gas-fired generators are also oversized, functioning barely half the time at present and only 70% or 80% of capacity when they weren't competing so hard with renewables. The fuel that powers them also derives from operations that run with a lot of slack, with U.S. oilfields traditionally running at between 90% and 95% of capacity and coal mines at 81% or so.

All that oversupply provides a useful function. When power demand runs ahead of forecasts, the surfeit of capacity can be readily called upon to provide additional electricity at short notice. That's precisely what we're seeing right now: The surging costs of Chinese coal, European gas and global crude are the symptoms of an energy system using high prices to incentivize additional supply when and where it's most needed.

For all that zero-carbon power is likely to win the long-term race to meet the world's energy needs, this gives fuel-based energy a substantial advantage.



A new wind or solar farm (let alone nuclear plant) simply can't be built in a timeframe comparable to what you need to produce an extra gigawatt-hour from hydrocarbon fuel - not to mention the matter of days it takes to ship that fuel from an oversupplied storage tank in Europe to an undersupplied one in Asia, or vice versa.

Switch to zero-carbon power

The current problems facing the world energy system are, as the International Energy Agency said this week, fundamentally about the widespread dislocations you'd expect as we awaken from a once-in-a-century pandemic. As such, they won't hold back the

switch to zero-carbon power. Still, they're a timely reminder that an energy system based upon a fungible, global fuel trade is a huge asset in trying to balance out fluctuations in demand between regions and seasons. That's a characteristic that future grids will need to reproduce to reach net zero.

There are several possible ways of addressing this, and none are ideal. One option is to make use of national and international electricity transmission lines to shift power from one region to another. That's the promise of proposals to link India's grid with ones in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, or to power

Singapore with renewable electricity from the Australian outback. Running such links over large distances through deep oceans pushes the limits of our engineering abilities, however. On top of that, you face challenging geopolitics wherever, say, an Indian power line needs to pass through Pakistani territory.

Alternatively, the existing fuel market might be recreated in a low-carbon form. We could use renewable power to produce hydrogen and ship it around the world, either in elemental form or as ammonia - but either process would result in huge efficiency losses from converting the gas into and out of a transportable form. Alternatively, if carbon capture and storage can be made to work, you might continue to use existing fuels and remove the greenhouse gases from smokestack emissions - but that, like green hydrogen, is a costly and untested technology, and more low-carbon than zero-carbon. Such systems will almost certainly be needed as a

backup. The most important element, though, may be to recreate the inefficiencies of the current fossil-fuel energy system in the new zero-carbon one. Among renewable developers, "curtailment" - the situation where so much energy is being produced from wind or solar that the grid can't accommodate it, and the electricity is wasted - has traditionally been a dirty word.

Still, some energy modelers have started arguing that massive overbuilding of wind and solar power - constructing so many plants that even a collapse in supply or surge in demand isn't sufficient to tighten the market too much - may prove the cheapest way to build a zero-carbon grid.

If so, the future that we're looking at isn't the one of constrained energy supplies that the current record prices for coal and gas is suggesting, but instead one where power is so abundant that we barely know what to do with it. If you want to recreate the virtues of our current inefficient power system, building in a little deliberate inefficiency into our future may be the best way to do it.

Squid Game shows how Netflix has mastered the art of keeping its subscribers

third quarter, with a big boost coming from the Asia-Pacific region as the U.S. and Canada returned to growth. But even those results don't fully reflect the "Squid Game" phenomenon of the last few weeks, which demonstrates perfectly how Netflix has turned serendipity into a dependable business strategy. It contrasts with the industry's risk-averse fixation on familiar franchises and old reliables.

In mid-September, just before the quarter ended, Netflix released a Korean-language series featuring no globally recognizable actors and a violently dystopian storyline that was turned down by studios for years because it seemed too grotesque. And yet the enticement of a bizarre plot, mysterious title and hefty degree of FOMO has fueled "Squid Game" curiosity around the world, making it Netflix's biggest series ever.

By early October, Netflix mobile downloads exploded. Apptopia estimates the app was downloaded 777,000 times on



Oct. 4, the most so far this year. "Squid Game" has since been parodied on NBC's "Saturday Night Live." Imitation mobile games have topped the iPhone charts. And creepy series-themed costumes are expected to be everywhere this Halloween. "Squid Game" even showed up James Bond on his opening weekend in theaters. Because of the show's success and a recovery from last year's other Covid-19 production delays, Netflix projects app signups will accelerate to 8.5 million in the fourth quarter.

According to closely guarded internal documents that were unearthed by Bloomberg News

this week, Netflix also estimates "Squid Game" has generated \$891 million of "impact value." What that means isn't entirely clear: Netflix calculates something called an adjusted view share (AVS) based on viewership and the estimated value of those viewers; the lifetime AVS of a program becomes its impact value, Bloomberg reported.

That formula for deriving value in the absence of box-office ticket sales, advertising revenue or any other traditional measure of performance hints at how the industry may determine financial success in the future. It also shows how a series that

might be seen externally as just a flash in the pan can instead be an important profit driver. For subscription services, the highest-returning investments are the productions that motivate a bored customer to get interested again rather than cancel.

In an attempt to translate Netflix's metrics into a language investors can understand, Matthew Harrigan, an analyst for Benchmark & Co., estimated that the company acquired about 7 million members from "Squid Game." Those users, should they never cancel, translate to \$4 billion of value for Netflix, he wrote in a report earlier Tuesday. That's equivalent to 1% of Netflix's market capitalization.

Netflix has been criticized for not having enough enduring franchises like Marvel and Star Wars. Having those would certainly aid its efforts to expand into merchandise licensing, which is one of Walt Disney Co.'s highest-margin businesses. Still, while those franchises may have helped

Disney+ get a lot subscribers out of the gate, its narrow focus could also limit the ultimate size of its subscriber base. Even for viewers who favor a specific genre, the overwhelming majority of their viewing time is spent on services with broad menus, according to a recent Parks Associates survey.

Netflix still expects free cash flow to break even this year. Even one of the stock's biggest bears, Michael Pachter of Wedbush Securities Inc., estimates Netflix will generate an additional \$1 billion of free cash flow each year to reach \$9.4 billion by 2030. Disney's business has thrown off about \$6 billion a year on average for the past decade, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Streaming is an expensive business, and it will be difficult for Hollywood to replicate the favorable conditions that earned its riches in the era of cable TV and movie theaters. Now it's all about keeping that one dangling subscriber from dropping off. Keep millions from doing so and companies like Netflix might reap billions.

How Corporations Keep Their Own Workers in Debt

from the company, to be paid off with deductions from pay. In the end, workers toil for next to nothing, lack the autonomy of a true independent business and face what is essentially a crippling payday loan keeping them indentured to their employer.

This exploitation reflects the troubling emergence of a new threat to Americans already struggling to make ends meet: debt imposed by companies on their own workers or taken on by workers as a condition of doing the job.

Gig economy drivers often finance their cars through costly sub-prime auto loans or through "buy here pay here" car dealers that offer high interest rates, sometimes charge prices higher than the car's value, and may even place a device on the car to disable it if a payment is missed. Amazon workers can

use "Anytime Pay" to access their wages a few days early, and other companies offer similar programs; these can turn out to be, functionally, short-term loans with unexpected fees. Meanwhile, immigrant nurses remain trapped in their jobs by the threat of owing their employer thousands of dollars if they quit too soon.

We typically think of debt that ordinary people and families owe to corporations as a consumer problem, but in today's marketplace, it causes distinct harm to workers as workers. Very often, employer-driven debt holds workers hostage in their jobs and undermines their bargaining power to get a better deal.

President Joe Biden has vowed to be the most pro-worker leader this country has seen in years, and fortunately, he can use the authority of the federal

government to address these abuses even without action from a gridlocked Congress.

One simple, yet powerful solution is to direct certain key agencies, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Department of Transportation, to create dedicated offices for worker protection. Such a move would ensure that abusive worker-consumer situations are systematically and routinely addressed - not just through one-off cases - and would serve as a major acknowledgment that worker protection must look different in today's economy.

Action at the Transportation Department would be particularly useful because these problems are endemic in the trucking industry. Some long-haul trucking companies provide exorbitantly priced yet insufficient training to drivers



and require them to sign "training repayment agreements," so that if drivers leave the company before a set time, they are thousands of dollars in debt to the company. In one court case, the debt owed to trucking behemoth CRST was \$6,500, far more than the training's actual cost. Seth Frotman, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection

Center, has described such predatory training loans as "shadow student debt." Like other private student loans, this is debt incurred by people seeking training to learn and advance their careers, with the added problem of placing workers in debt to their employers and keeping them trapped in their jobs.

US and India are taking on China with a 'Middle Eastern Quad'



(SAI Bureau)-It's a crowded foreign policy week this week, with Indian officials participating in the Moscow-led round of talks with the Taliban on 20 October and External Affairs minister S. Jaishankar in Israel to update the relationship with the new Naftali Benett-Yair Lapid government. (Contd on page 33)

And then there was, Monday late evening, the part-virtual, part-in person summit between the foreign ministers of India, Israel, UAE, and the US, a startling idea of an informal Quad on this side of the globe.

So, who was the elephant in the Zoom room this time? No prizes for guessing again. China.

As China reorganises the world in her own image, from South Asia to Canada and Europe - via Israel and Gulf kingdoms like the UAE - it seems as if the US is gaining fuller clarity about its role as a big power, after having divested itself from its millstone called Afghanistan.

To protect its own position from

China snapping at its heels, seeking to become world number one, the US is clearly exploring new arrangements, alliances and coalitions. At the end of the day, give or take a military nuance or two, it all amounts to the same principle: Who is your Enemy Number One? That's the principle on which the Quad - whose members are the US, Australia, Japan and India - is built. That is also the principle on which Quad 2, or the "Middle Eastern Quad" - US, Israel, UAE, and India - is being nurtured. What is truly surprising is the supersonic speed with which the US is moving. Less than a week ago, on 13 October, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met his counterparts from the UAE, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and from Israel, Yair Lapid, in Washington DC. They agreed to set up two working groups - on religious coexistence, said to be the UAE's idea, and on water management and energy issues, said to be Israel's idea.

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A Ukrainian Oligarch Bought a Midwestern Factory and Let it Rot. What Was Really Going On?

Places that offer all the financial secrecy these elites need, but that few would associate with lives of luxury. As a result, shadowy and sometimes ill-gotten wealth has started pouring not just into yachts and vacation homes, but also into blue-collar towns in the U.S. whose economic struggles make them eager to accept the cash.

One of these small towns appears to have been Harvard, Ill., a depressed factory community that allegedly became part of a sprawling network used by Ukrainian banking tycoon Ihor Kolomoisky to launder hundreds of millions of dollars earned from a Ponzi scheme. Kolomoisky, who was recently hit with U.S. sanctions for "significant corruption" in Ukraine, is separately accused by the Justice Department and Ukrainian investigators of using a constellation of shell companies and offshore bank accounts to move millions in misappropriated funds out of Ukraine and into a series of real-estate investments in the American Midwest. (Kolomoisky denies wrongdoing, claiming he made the investments with his own money.)

The story of Harvard suggests that lax U.S. laws around shell companies and real-estate purchases, in addition to a broader lack of regulatory oversight, may be putting America's heartland in the crosshairs of elites like Kolomoisky. It's a reality of global corruption that U.S. lawmakers are only just starting to grapple with: As money-launderers and illicit financiers hide their money in the American Midwest, they've become part of the story of the decline of small-town, blue-collar America. With a population of just under 10,000, Harvard, Ill., is a speck of a town equidistant between Chicago and Milwaukee. Like the other towns in the region, you've likely never heard of it - and like other towns in the region, Harvard's best days are decades behind it. But in the late 1990s, the massive telecom company Motorola announced it would be putting a new manufacturing plant in Harvard. Construction began on what would become the largest

building not just in Harvard but the entire region: a 1.5-million-square-foot facility, sprawling over 320 acres, part office and part plant, shaped like a giant wishbone. "It's a huge, huge building," one local, Ed Soliz, said at the time. "It looks like a small university." With a \$100 million price tag, Motorola said it would require a staggering



five thousand employees to operate the facility - to help craft the next generation of Motorola phones and lead the global telecom market into the 21st century. But within a few years of finishing construction, the bottom had fallen out of Motorola's business model. Suddenly, the building in Harvard had no purpose. Rather than a testament to Harvard's future, it was a testament to corporate blinders. And for years it sat there, like a beached whale, waiting. Then, in 2008 - as the country began tipping fully into the Great Recession - an investor in his early 20s from Miami named Chaim Schochet showed up. Working on behalf of a firm called Optima International, Schochet offered \$16.75 million for the empty building. A far cry from the Motorola investment, but more than locals could have hoped for. They happily accepted. Glimmers of potential sprang once more. "Hope burns eternal," Roger Lehmann, a member of the Harvard Economic Development Corporation, said after the purchase. At the time, there was no reason to think Schochet and his colleagues were anything but savvy businesspeople, snapping up properties across the Midwest. Optima International was a parent company to a constellation of related firms (including one called "Optima Harvard Facility LLC"). Prosecutors would later dub this

the "Optima Family," with its American operations overseen by two Americans named Mordechai Korf (Schochet's brother-in-law) and Uri Laber. As the Justice Department alleged in a series of civil forfeiture cases, this "Optima Family" plowed hundreds of millions of dollars into investments in state after state:

commercial real estate in Cleveland and Dallas and Louisville, steel factories in West Virginia and Kentucky and Ohio, production plants in Michigan and New York and Indiana. Time and again, these investors swooped in, pledging jobs, revitalization and a lifeline for towns watching their economic lifelines dry up.

In just a few years, the "Optima Family" collected over a dozen mills, plants and other facilities across the American heartland. All of them had fallen victim to America's yearslong manufacturing slump, part of the broader deindustrialization that began in the 1970s. All of them were eager for any injection of financing they could get, and for any promise of a brighter future. And, according to prosecutors, these purchases were all directly connected to a powerful steel and banking tycoon in Ukraine who was buying American properties to hide stolen money.

Shortly after Ukraine's 2014 revolution, investigators in the country alleged that Ihor Kolomoisky was secretly overseeing one of the greatest Ponzi schemes the world had ever seen, totaling at least \$5.5 billion. Legal filings from American prosecutors last year detailed how Kolomoisky allegedly used his control of Ukraine's largest retail bank, PrivatBank, to loot staggering sums from Ukrainian depositors,

and then used a series of shell companies and offshore accounts to whisk the money out of the country and into the U.S.

The idea seems to have been to purchase troubled assets that American sellers were eager to offload. Even if the buyers ultimately took a loss, the assets were still outside the grasp of Ukrainian investigators and could still act as vehicles through which to funnel money. Perhaps most importantly, the properties could be bought without much inquiry into the source of the monies: For two decades, American real-estate professionals have benefited from a "temporary" exemption to anti-money laundering laws, allowing them to avoid performing due diligence on the customer making the purchase. In subsequent efforts to seize the operation's assets, American prosecutors laid out a theory that much of Kolomoisky's operation was overseen by Laber and Korf, who "created a web of entities, usually under some variation of the name 'Optima,' to further launder the misappropriated funds and invest them" across multiple states. According to the DOJ, the funds lifted from PrivatBank bounced through a number of shell companies and offshore accounts, before being injected into the Optima network, and from there into assets around the American Midwest. And all of this took place while Kolomoisky - now sanctioned by the U.S. for what the State Department calls "significant corruption" and "ongoing efforts to undermine Ukraine's democratic processes" - grew his power and wealth within Ukraine itself, creating a gargantuan private militia and reportedly manipulating elected officials along the

way. The details gathered by U.S. and Ukrainian investigators and laid out in DOJ filings and court cases around the world, from Delaware to the UK to Israel, comprise what one analyst said might be "the biggest case of money laundering in history." Kolomoisky says he bought the American properties with his own money, denying the Justice Department's allegations about laundering ill-gotten funds. Neither he nor his American associates (who also deny wrongdoing) have been named in any criminal complaints. Reached for comment prior to publication of this article, an attorney for Korf and Laber responded, "Mr. Korf and Mr. Laber have never engaged in money laundering of any kind, and they have no knowledge of anyone else doing so. Any allegations against Mr. Korf and Mr. Laber arise from Ukrainian political disputes they have nothing to do with." Kolomoisky and Schochet, the Miami investor, did not respond to a request for comment. Schochet has not been targeted by name in the government filings, and the government has not suggested he is personally a target of their investigations. But the DOJ complaint notes that the Harvard plant purchase was part of the sprawling Optima laundering scheme (including fraudulent loans used to purchase the plant in the first place). The investigators describe how, using investments in steel mills, skyscrapers and industrial plants across the Midwest and Rust Belt, Kolomoisky could take full advantage of America's permissive climate for money laundering - all, apparently, to help clean the proceeds of his massive Ukrainian Ponzi scheme.

Supply Chain chaos: Time to widen global supply chain

country is not a good idea. This supply issue is a wakeup call for each country to be more independent. Standing at the juncture when the post-pandemic global economy is on

its way to recovery - it's time for us to rethink, re-evaluate global partnerships, to remake strategies. It's time to broaden global supply chain horizons.

By Susmita Ghosh

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China's Hypersonic Missile Tests Leave U.S. Officials 'Stunned'



(SAI Bureau)- Two hypersonic missile tests conducted by the Chinese military over the summer have left U.S. officials both perplex and perturbed about Beijing's development of "a new generation of arms," the Financial Times reported on Wednesday.

In separate reports this week, the paper documented what its government sources suggested were unexpected technological advancements in a novel delivery system of China's nuclear weapons. The Biden administration has declined to comment in an official capacity due to the sensitive nature of the intelligence, the FT said.

According to its latest report, both tests-the first on July 27 and another on August 13-were conducted using a fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS), a concept developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It involves propelling weapons into low-Earth orbit, guiding them along an unpredictable trajectory, before striking their intended targets. NEWSWEEK NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP >

The Chinese military launched a pair of nuclear-capable hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) above the atmosphere on the back of unspecified models of its

own Long March rocket, said the newspaper. They are the very same system China uses to send its satellites and astronauts into space.

The FT's first report on Saturday said the HGV circled the globe before striking the ground, missing its target by a few dozen miles. Unnamed sources told the paper that it was China's first such test.

The second trial two weeks later "stunned" the Defense Department and the U.S. intelligence officials, the FT's Demetri Sevastopulo wrote on Wednesday, "because China managed to demonstrate a brand new weapons capability."

"One person said government scientists were struggling to understand the capability, which the U.S. does not currently possess, adding that China's achievement appeared 'to defy the laws of physics,'" he added. NEWSWEEK SUBSCRIPTION OFFERS >

The Chinese government on Thursday denied knowledge of the August test. Its Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters in Beijing that China had conducted a "routine test" of a spacecraft on July 16 in order to verify its technology-the same information offered by Wang's colleague, Zhao Lijian, on

Monday.

Nuclear weapons analyst Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California, urged perspective and caution following the recent developments.

"We should be open to the reality that China is also capable of technological innovation," he was quoted as telling the FT.

"But I would be careful about exaggerated characterizations

that may help excuse a mundane intelligence failure. If we say some innovation is impossible to imagine, then no one is really responsible for missing it," he added.

Lewis was part of a team that discovered 119 intercontinental ballistic missile silos being built in the deserts of western China in July.

Researchers with the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, D.C., subsequently found 110

more nuclear missile silos under construction in nearby Xinjiang.

China insists it is not interested in an arms race with the U.S. and wants to maintain a "minimum nuclear deterrent."

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden's nominee for ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that Beijing was "blasting past that definition" with its nuclear buildup and development of hypersonic technologies.



'National pride is at stake.'

Russia, China, United States race to build hypersonic weapons

High in the sky over northwestern China, a wedge-shaped unmanned vehicle separated from a rocket. Coasting along at up to Mach 6, or six times the speed of sound, the Xingkong-2 "waverider" hypersonic cruise missile (HCM) bobbed and weaved through the stratosphere, surfing on its own shock waves. At least that's how the weapon's developer, the China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics, described the August 2018 test. (China did not release any video footage.) The HCM's speed and maneuverability, crowed the Communist Party's Global Times, would enable the new weapon to "break through any current generation anti-missile defense system."

For decades, the U.S. military—and its adversaries—have coveted missiles that travel at hypersonic speed, generally defined as Mach 5 or greater. Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) meet that definition when they re-enter the atmosphere from space. But because they arc along a predictable ballistic path, like a bullet, they lack the element of surprise. In contrast, hypersonic weapons such as China's waverider

aerodynamically, enabling them to dodge defenses and keep an adversary guessing about the target.

Since the dawn of the Cold War, the Pentagon has periodically thrown its weight behind the development of maneuverable hypersonic weapons, only to shy away when technological hurdles such as propulsion, control, and heat resistance proved daunting. "You see a flurry of activity, a lot of investment, and then we conclude it's a bridge too far," says aerospace engineer Mark Lewis, director of defense research and engineering for modernization at the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). "The community was underfunded and largely forgotten for many years," adds Daniel DeLaurentis, director of Purdue University's Institute for Global Security and Defense Innovation.

Now, DOD is leading a new charge, pouring more than \$1 billion annually into hypersonic research. Competition from ambitious programs in China and Russia is a key motivator. Although hype and secrecy muddy the picture, all three nations appear to have made substantial progress in overcoming key obstacles, such as protecting hypersonic craft

from savage frictional heating. Russia recently unveiled a weapon called the Kinzhal, said to reach Mach 10 under its own power, and another that is boosted by a rocket to an astonishing Mach 27. China showed off a rocket-boosted hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) of its own, the Dongfeng-17, in a recent military parade. The United States, meanwhile, is testing several hypersonic weapons. "It's a race to the Moon sort of thing," says Iain Boyd, an aerospace engineer at the University of Colorado, Boulder. "National pride is at stake."

This new arms race promises to upend strategic calculations. Russian officials have cast nuclear-armed hypersonic craft as a hedge against future U.S. prowess at shooting down ICBMs, which could undermine nuclear deterrence.

China's military, in contrast, sees hypersonic weapons (as well as cyberwarfare and electromagnetic pulse strikes) as an "assassin's mace": a folklore term for a weapon that gives an advantage against a better-armed foe, says Larry Wortzel, a senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council who serves on the U.S.-

China Economic and Security Review Commission. If tensions were to spike over Taiwan or the South China Sea, for instance, China might be tempted to launch preemptive strikes with conventional hypersonic weapons that could cripple U.S. forces in the Pacific Ocean, Wortzel says. China's hypersonic weapons, he warns, "seem deliberately targeted at upending the tenuous strategic stability that has been in place since the end of the Cold War." For now, maneuverability at hypersonic speeds makes the weapons nearly impossible to shoot down—"unstoppable," as a headline in The New York Times put it last summer. But, "Unstoppable today does not mean unstoppable tomorrow," says Shari Feth, a materials engineer at the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA). She's at the vanguard of U.S. efforts to field countermeasures against hypersonic weapons. "There are technologies that could be developed that could be used for a more robust defense," Feth says. "But we have more work to do to get there."

THE UNITED STATES has spent decades trying to get hypersonic flight right. The first vehicle to exceed Mach 5 was a two-stage

rocket, dubbed Project Bumper, launched in 1949. After four failed tests, the V-2 rocket lifted off from a missile range in New Mexico, releasing a second-stage sounding rocket that attained Mach 6.7.

Project Bumper and subsequent efforts laid bare the daunting challenges. "This is a very unforgiving realm," says Lewis, who served as chief scientist of the U.S. Air Force from 2004 to 2008. "You're flying under extraordinary conditions"—extreme velocities, forces, and temperatures. The hypersonic threshold of Mach 5 is arbitrary, but at those speeds, he says, "temperatures start to get high enough to worry about."

The heating depends on factors such as the vehicle's speed and contours. When a space shuttle returning from orbit hit the upper atmosphere at Mach 25, its blunt leading edges heated to 1400°C, which a skin of carbon-carbon composites helped it withstand. Newer hypersonic craft tend to have sharper edges—in part to assist with maneuverability—that can exceed 2000°C. Turbulence can make things worse. At hypersonic speeds, the boundary layer around the vehicle thickens, and a smooth, laminar flow can suddenly break up into

eddies and swirls that cause temperature spikes on the vehicle's skin. "We've devoted a lot of fundamental research to figure out when that occurs," Lewis says. A vehicle's survival, he says, requires resilient superalloys and ultra-high-temperature ceramics. And perhaps novel coolants. For example, a team at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory has devised a liquid sodium system that drains heat from a leading edge through continuous evaporation and condensation. High air speeds also pose challenges for engines on HCMs,

those of an HCM, meaning engineers must use materials that are even more resistant to heat. Still, HGVs are easier to maneuver because they lack a scramjet, with its acute sensitivity to pitch and yaw. "It almost becomes a religious discussion-rockets versus air breathing," Lewis says. "The ultimate answer is we probably want both."

The United States has not yet fielded either. After decades of fits and starts, any advantage that U.S. hypersonic R&D once held has largely eroded away. Its wind tunnels and other testing

billion into military hypersonic research this year and has created a new university consortium to do basic studies. "Our work on hypersonics has really ramped up," says Jonathan Poggie, an aerospace engineer at Purdue. His team models low-frequency shock waves "that pound on a vehicle like a hammer."

The rising military stakes have prompted the Pentagon to consider classifying some basic hypersonic research. DOD "is very concerned about educating our enemies," Poggie says. "They are in the middle of trying

number presented by U.S. researchers.

"You see papers you'd think they wouldn't publish in the open literature," Poggie says. One is a recent analysis from the China Aerodynamics Research and Development Center showing that the plume of ionized gas, or plasma, left by a hypersonic vehicle is more visible on radar than the vehicle itself. That implies radar could give early warning of an incoming weapon. Other nations are chasing the trio of leaders-or teaming up with them. Australia is collaborating with the United States on a Mach

Karako says. The full Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor network could be up and running by 2030, he adds. (The satellites would also be used to help guide U.S. hypersonic weapons.)

Once you have such sensors, "we can find a way to build the interceptors," Karako says. Current missile defense interceptors aim to destroy ICBMs near their apex in the upper atmosphere, much higher than a hypersonic weapon flies, and they aren't maneuverable enough to hit a swerving target. "You'll need interceptors with more divert capability than we have," Karako says.

MDA is exploring various approaches that would enable interceptors to "overmatch" incoming weapons, Feth says. One possibility, she says, is to fly faster-a tall order that would demand new lightweight, heat-resistant composites and alloys. Interceptors could destroy a hypersonic vehicle either by colliding with it or by detonating a warhead nearby. But MDA is also exploring using directed energy: lasers, neutral particle beams, and microwaves or radio waves. Directed-energy countermeasures were floated in the 1980s as elements of the United States's "Star Wars" missile defense shield-then



which unlike HGVs have their own power plants. HCMs use a supersonic combustion ramjet, or "scramjet," to accelerate. "It's the simplest type of jet engine you could ever imagine ... just an open tube" in which air mixes with fuel, Lewis says. "It's also perhaps the most complicated type you can imagine because of the extreme conditions under which it operates."

At hypersonic speeds, air molecules spend milliseconds in the engine tube-scant time for fuel and air to mix properly. And when a vehicle pitches and yaws, airflow into the engine changes, which can result in uneven combustion and thrust. Tweaks to get a better burn have ramifications for, say, how the aircraft withstands shock waves. "Everything is incredibly coupled. You are designing a fully integrated vehicle," Lewis says. It took the United States 46 years to realize its first working scramjet: NASA's \$230 million X-43a, an uncrewed vehicle that flew in 2004.

HGVs pose other challenges. The rocket that carries the glider reaches speeds far greater than

infrastructure are aging. And challenges such as tweaking designs to ensure engine walls don't melt have slowed progress on scramjets, Lewis says. "Today we are further away from routine scramjet flight than we were 10 years ago."

FROM A BASE in the Ural Mountains on 26 December 2018, Russia's armed forces launched a ballistic missile carrying an HGV called Avangard. After separating from its carrier in the stratosphere, the HGV zigzagged 6000 kilometers across Siberia at a searing Mach 27, Russian officials claimed, then smashed into a target on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Afterward, a beaming Russian President Vladimir Putin called Avangard "the perfect New Year's gift for the country." Russia's defense ministry announced last month that it has put the nuclear-armed HGV into combat duty-allowing Putin to claim that Russia is the first country armed with hypersonic weapons.

Russian boasts along with Chinese advances have sounded the alarm in the United States. Congress will pour more than \$1

to draw these red lines," Boyd adds. But, "If we overclassify," he warns, "there are a number of domino effects. You'd be stifling innovation. Inevitably, that means fewer new ideas."

A veil of secrecy is also descending in Russia, which has produced "a rich body of hypersonic literature," Lewis says. Security officials there recently charged two scientists with treason for sharing findings with European collaborators; the data had been approved for release but then declared secret 5 years later (see sidebar).

China, in contrast, has been surprisingly open about its research. "The Chinese are trying to establish prestige in the field," Lewis says. The nation has invested heavily in facilities, including sophisticated wind tunnels and shock tubes that use blast waves to study hypersonic flows. "Ten years ago, they were duplicating what others had done," Boyd says. "Now, they're publishing innovative ideas." At a 2017 hypersonic conference in Xiamen, China, Chinese scientists presented more than 250 papers-about 10 times the

8 HGV, and India with Russia on a Mach 7 HCM. France intends to field an HCM by 2022, and Japan is aiming for an HGV in 2026, the U.S. Congressional Research Service noted in a July 2019 report.

THE UNITED STATES is largely defenseless against such weapons, at least for now, in part because it can't track them. U.S. military satellites are vigilant for flashes that reveal launches of ICBMs and cruise missiles. But they would probably lose track of even a rocket-boosted hypersonic weapon soon after it detaches from its booster, analysts say. To avoid "shooting blindly ... you need to continue to track it when it starts doing these maneuvers in the atmosphere," says Thomas Karako, director of the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic & International Studies. To remedy that shortcoming, the Pentagon plans to launch hundreds of small satellites with sensors capable of tracking heat sources an order of magnitude cooler than rocket boosters. "By proliferating them, you make it impossible to take them all out,"

abandoned. Four decades later, "They are more plausible," Karako says. Still, MDA recently scrapped plans to test a prototype 500-kilowatt airborne laser by 2025 and to develop a space-based neutral particle beam. Even as defense scientists search for ways to thwart a hypersonic attack, diplomats and nonproliferation experts are discussing how to limit-or even outlaw-the disruptive technology. "Hypersonic weapons are primed for arms control," argues Ankit Panda, senior fellow on the Defense Posture Project at the Federation of American Scientists, a think tank. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs weighed in last year with a report exploring arms control scenarios, blasting what it called a "blinkered pursuit of a novel technology with as-yet-unproven military utility." Arms control treaties, however, are hardly in vogue these days. And with China, Russia, and the United States egging each other on with one high-profile test after another, the hypersonic arms race seems likely to accelerate.

Lindsey Graham warns of possible nuclear arms race with China if hypersonic launch is true: report



Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., sounded the alarm over reports that China successfully launched a hypersonic missile and said-if true-the advancement would be something the U.S. could not ignore, according to a report. The New York Post reported that it obtained a letter from Graham to Senate leaders that called for an urgent classified meeting with Defense Department and intelligence officials to determine the accuracy of these reports. The Financial Times, citing unnamed sources, reported that Beijing launched two of these missiles during the summer months. The report said U.S. officials are still trying to learn details about these tests, but one source said Beijing seemed to "defy the laws of physics." The concern is that hypersonic missiles would be able to evade

defense systems.

The report pointed out that the U.S. has not confirmed the launch. The Department of Defense did not immediately respond to an after-hours email from Fox News.

Graham wrote in the letter that he does not "welcome this event" because-if true-"it would set in motion a nuclear arms race between the United States and China." China denied the reports.

"We can attempt to convince China to stand down to avoid a nuclear arms race, which is unlikely, or we can decide to make the required investments needed to neutralize the advantage a hypersonic nuclear capable missile would provide to China," Graham wrote, according to the Post.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price would not comment this week on intelligence about the August

test but noted the U.S. remained concerned about China's expansion of its nuclear capabilities, including delivery systems for nuclear devices. Reuters pointed out that these missiles can travel at about 3,853 miles per hour. The launch in question reportedly circled the globe and missed its target. The report said U.S. companies Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technology are working to develop the capability.

Behind murky claim of a new hypersonic missile test, there lies a very real arms race



It began with what appeared to be a missing rocket. In July, the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology announced the 77th launch of one of its Long March 2C rockets; in late August it announced the 79th. What happened to launch No. 78?

According to an article in the Financial Times this past weekend, it was a secret test of a powerful new kind of hypersonic missile.

"The simplest way to imagine this new weapon system is to imagine the space shuttle, put a nuclear weapon in the cargo bay and then don't bother with the landing gear," says Jeffrey Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. This hypersonic weapon launches briefly into orbit, "and it glides back to Earth just like the space shuttle, except for when it gets where it's going, it goes boom."

The new weapon would be significant because it could attack the U.S. from an unexpected direction, such as the South Pole. The United States' missile defenses and early-warning radars are pointed toward the North Pole, the standard route for intercontinental ballistic

missiles, so the country would be vulnerable to a strike from the opposite direction.

The Defense Department would not comment on the report, and a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said it was an experimental spacecraft, not a weapon.



"I could believe either version of this story," says James Acton, co-director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "I could believe this was a weapons test, or I could believe it was a test of a reusable space vehicle."

China's threat perceptions But regardless of whether the weapon is real, China has been investing heavily in shorter-range hypersonic missiles. These skim through the upper

atmosphere at more than five times the speed of sound and can also change direction during flight. Those properties give China an important advantage against missile defenses, says Tong Zhao, a senior fellow with the Carnegie Endowment in Beijing. "Given the capability for

hypersonic missiles to maneuver during flight and given their rather fast speed, they can better penetrate missile defense systems," he says.

Zhao says that China sees U.S. missile defenses as a major threat. It has been building up its stockpile of shorter-range hypersonic weapons, which can be armed with either a nuclear or a conventional warhead. This new longer-distance weapon, if it was in fact tested, fits into that pattern.

Zhao says that in the big picture, Chinese leadership wants to protect itself from what it sees as growing U.S. aggression: "China feels it needs a greater overall military power, including a stronger nuclear power, to basically ensure that the U.S. wouldn't be able to interfere with Chinese internal matters."

An emerging arms race But not everyone agrees that China's buildup of hypersonic weapons is defensive. Michael Griffin, a former undersecretary of defense for research and engineering who is now co-president of Logiq Inc., says China's hypersonic arsenal allows it to expand its influence in the region. "One can target airfields and aircraft carriers, within 15 or 20 minutes of flight time, literally thousands of kilometers away from the Chinese mainland," he says. Griffin adds that the new intercontinental hypersonic missile could take that capability a step further. With or without a nuclear warhead, such weapons could potentially strike U.S. ships anywhere on Earth. "That is a really big deal," he says. Even the existing shorter-range weapons put the U.S., which is trying to expand its military presence in the western Pacific, and its allies at risk, he argues.

Griffin says that the U.S. needs to develop and stockpile hypersonic missiles of its own to counter the Chinese threat. "I'm not one to mince words - it is an arms race," Griffin says. "And critically, we didn't start it." But Acton questions whether the current race for hypersonic weapons makes sense. China already has a sizable medium-range ballistic missile force that is very capable, he notes. China's intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) are already more than capable of overwhelming U.S. defenses, and its ICBM force is growing. "I don't think this is carefully driven by rational strategic factors," says Acton. "I think a lot of this is driven by keeping up with the neighbors." Lewis says any race is supposed to have a finish line. This arms race is more like the two sides are on treadmills. "The only victory is to be first off the treadmill," he says. "So what we need to do is to find a way to exit the arms race, rather than accelerate it." One way to do that, he believes, is for the U.S. to be more open to limits on missile defenses, which are driving the hypersonic craze. "Over the long term, I think we have to think about what kind of arms control we want with Russia and China," he says.

China denies report of hypersonic missile test

Beijing dismisses the report in the Financial Times as inaccurate, saying it tested a space vehicle instead.



China has denied a report that it tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile earlier this year, claiming instead that it was carrying out a spacecraft check focused on reusable technology.

Citing multiple sources familiar with the matter, the Financial Times (FT) reported on Saturday that China had carried out the projectile test in August. The trial allegedly saw the nuclear-capable hypersonic missile circle around the globe

at low orbit before cruising down towards its target, which it missed by about 38km (24 miles).

But on Monday, China's foreign ministry rebutted the report. "It was not a missile, it was a space vehicle," ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular press briefing in Beijing when asked about the newspaper's report, adding it had been a "routine test" for the purpose of testing technology to reuse the vehicle.

Zhao added that the trial, which the foreign ministry said took place in July, not August, was of "great significance for reducing the use-cost of spacecraft and could provide a convenient and affordable way to make a round trip for mankind's peaceful use of space."

He claimed that many countries had carried out similar tests in the past.

The developments come amid mounting tensions between China and the United States, where intelligence agencies were reportedly "caught by surprise" over the alleged missile test.

Two of the sources cited by the newspaper said the trial showed that Beijing had made "astounding progress on hypersonic weapons and was far more advanced than US officials realised".

Washington is closely watching Beijing's ongoing military modernisation programme to

assess the possible risks posed to it by its increasingly assertive strategic competitor. China's space programme is run by its military and is closely tied to its agenda of building hypersonic missiles and other technologies that could alter the balance of power with the US. US disarmament ambassador Robert Wood said he was "very concerned" by the reports. "If you're a country that's the target of that, you're going to want to figure out a way to defend yourself," Wood, who next week steps down from his post in Geneva after seven years, said.

The US diplomat added that Washington would "start looking at other applications and defensive applications," further accelerating the arms race. Hypersonic missiles travel at more than five times the speed of sound in the upper atmosphere - or about 6,200km/h (3,850 mph).

Though they are slower than

traditional ballistic missiles, which fly into outer space before returning on steep trajectories at higher speeds, hypersonic missiles are manoeuvrable, making them harder to track and defend against.

Along with China and the US, several other countries are also working on hypersonic technology.

Russia and North Korea both claim to have successfully test-launched hypersonic missiles. India, Japan, Australia, France and Germany are meanwhile in the process of developing such weapons, according to a report published in August by the US Congressional Research Service (CRS).

The CRS report said a number of other states - including Iran, Israel, and South Korea - have also "conducted foundational research on hypersonic airflows and propulsion systems, but may not be pursuing a hypersonic weapons capability at this time"

China tested hypersonic weapons twice, 'stunned' US: Report

US President Biden concerned about the report but one expert says technology is not new as he warns of another 'pointless' arms race.

China conducted not one, but two tests of new hypersonic weapons in July and August, the Financial Times (FT) newspaper has reported, raising more concerns in the United States about the growing military capabilities of its geopolitical rival.

The London-based Financial Times reported on Thursday that Beijing launched a rocket that employed a "fractional orbital bombardment" system to propel a nuclear-capable "hypersonic glide vehicle" around the Earth for the first time on July 27, according to four people familiar with US intelligence assessments.

More than two weeks later on August 13, China conducted a second hypersonic test, the report said citing two people familiar with the matter.

The newspaper initially reported, in a story published over the

weekend that the first test was done in August, instead of the end of July.

The latest report said that the missile test "stunned" American military and intelligence officials about the Chinese military advance.

It further said that US scientists "were struggling to understand" the hypersonic weapon's capability, "which the US does not currently possess".

In response to the FT's initial report, China's Foreign Ministry said that it had only launched a space plane and the test took place on July 16.

"It's understood that this was a routine test of a space vehicle to verify technology of spacecraft's reusability," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Monday.

Zhao was quoted by state-owned broadcaster CGTN as

saying that the test was "essential" for reducing the cost of spacecraft use, and providing a convenient and inexpensive way for humans to use space for "peaceful purposes".

US 'very concerned'

In a statement earlier this week, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that the administration of President Joe Biden was very concerned about the latest development in China's nuclear arms capability and "novel delivery systems".

Reporters travelling with Biden on Wednesday also asked him if he was concerned by the report, and he replied, "Yes". According to estimates and analysis, hypersonic weapons travel in the upper atmosphere at speeds of up to 6,200 kilometres per hour (3,853 miles per hour) - more than five times the speed of sound,



which travels at about 1,235 km/h (767 mph) and evade even the most advanced radar systems. On Monday, US Senator Angus King described the new weapon as a "strategic game-changers with the dangerous potential to fundamentally undermine strategic stability as we know it". "The implications of these weapons under development by China or Russia could be catastrophic," the senator from Maine was quoted by reports as saying.

The US is also said to be racing to develop its own hypersonic weapon technology.

According to reports, US

military contractors such as Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technologies are involved in the missiles' development.

Writing for the Foreign Policy magazine, Jeffrey Lewis, a non-proliferation expert at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, said that China's test was "unwelcome news", but he added that the technology was "not new", pointing out that the Soviet Union deployed the same system during the Cold War.

Lewis, however, warned that the latest development "is yet another step in a pointless, costly, and dangerous arms race".



North Korea says it tested hypersonic missile

Pyongyang has been developing its arsenal with denuclearisation talks stalled since 2019.

The weapon North Korea fired off its east coast on Tuesday morning was a newly-developed hypersonic missile, state media said, in the latest advance in weaponry for the nuclear-armed nation. The development of the weapon system increases North Korea's defence capabilities, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Wednesday, describing the missile as a "strategic weapon".

The official Rodong Sinmun newspaper carried a picture of the weapon - with a set of guidance fins at the base of its nose cone - ascending into the morning sky.

North Korea has been steadily developing its military arsenal amid an impasse over talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear and ballistic missile arsenals in return for relief on sanctions that have crippled its economy.

North Korean leader Kim Jong

Un did not attend the launch, which was watched by top official Pak Jong Chon, KCNA said.

"In the first test-launch, national defence scientists confirmed the navigational control and stability of the missile," it said. It said the missile, called Hwasong-8, performed to its technical targets "including the guiding manoeuvrability and the gliding flight characteristics of the detached hypersonic gliding warhead".

The Hwasong series missiles use liquid propellant engines, according to Ankit Panda, a senior fellow at the US-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"This is the first test of a liquid propellant missile in North Korea since November 2017," he said in a post on Twitter.

Leonid Petrov, an expert on North Korea and senior lecturer at the International College of Management Sydney, told Al Jazeera that the technology was "cutting edge" and such a weapon could travel five to seven times faster than the speed of sound.

"Certainly it's a very powerful weapon and North Koreans are very proud to have delivered their first successful test," he said.

Kim signalled Pyongyang's

intention to upgrade its military capabilities during a party congress in January, when he included a hypersonic missile system on a wishlist of five weapons systems. The test was the third by North Korea this month, with South Korea also developing increasingly sophisticated weaponry. On September 15, both countries tested ballistic missiles only hours apart. On Tuesday, Seoul held a ceremony to launch its third submarine-capable of carrying submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

"Because of their speed and varied trajectories, hypersonic missiles are hard to detect, track and defend against," Leif-Eric Easley, associate professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, said in an email.

"Advancements in fueling are intended to allow Pyongyang to fire the missiles quickly, making them more difficult for other countries to preemptively target and destroy before launch. It is unlikely that North Korea has reliably developed all the technologies its propaganda claims. However, if Pyongyang manages to fit a nuclear warhead on even a

rudimentary hypersonic, it would be a dangerous weapon because it wouldn't have to be extremely accurate to threaten the nearby metropolis of Seoul."

'Predictable'

South Korea has been trying to entice the North back to engagement; however, talks on denuclearisation have stalled since 2019 after the collapse of a summit between Kim and former US President Donald Trump.

North Korea said last week it was willing to consider another summit with South Korea if mutual respect between the neighbours could be assured, following South Korean President Moon Jae-in's call for a declaration to formally end the 1950-1953 Korean War. South Korea's military announced the launch shortly after it happened on Tuesday but did not reveal the missile's maximum altitude and flight distance, information that it usually makes available within about an hour. South Korean media reports cited unidentified sources as saying the projectile had "different flight features" from previous launches and President Moon Jae-in called for a "comprehensive analysis" of

the launch. Japan said it was a ballistic missile.

North Korea, which invaded South Korea in 1950, is under multiple sets of international sanctions over its banned nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes. It has already tested a long-range cruise missile and a train-launched ballistic missile this month. The United States has repeatedly said it is willing to meet North Korean officials anywhere, at any time, without preconditions, in its efforts to resume negotiations on denuclearisation.

It condemned Tuesday's launch as a sanctions violation and a threat to the international community. Lim Eul-chul, a professor at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University, said that North Korea was looking to use its weapons development "as a means to make room for diplomatic manoeuvring as well as enhancing military posture". Lim said he expected more launches in the future.

"In a way, the North's recent behaviour is very predictable," he told the AFP news agency. "They had signalled military actions and are now executing them step by step."

Marriage Rates Are Plummeting.

Why Are Reality Dating Series So Popular?

Why the dating-and-marriage storyline still appeals so much to audiences who are increasingly opting out of the tradition.

Follow conservative punditry over the past few years, and you might think America is becoming a nation of unrepentant singles. Last July, Ohio Senate candidate J.D. Vance warned a conservative think tank about a "civilizational crisis," marked by declining marriage and birth rates, and promoted by the "childless left." Census data that shows low marriage rates among millennials and Gen Z-ers - only 29 percent of 18-to-34-year-olds were married in 2018, compared to 59 percent in 1978 - begets headlines bemoaning a "marriage crisis" or predicting "the end of marriage in America."

But if the dream of marriage is dead, you wouldn't know it from the trailer for the upcoming season of ABC's "The Bachelorette." The three-minute video, released last week, features a single schoolteacher named Michelle Young, a herd of healthy male suitors vying for her hand and a shimmering word cloud of courtship clichés: "I'm looking for my soulmate." "You give me goosebumps." "When I'm with him, I feel fireworks." Young declares that "I'm ready to fall in love," and she wants more than just romance. "Miss Young," one of her students says, "is looking for a husband."

Young's season, which premieres on October 19, will be the 18th installment of "The Bachelorette," which launched in 2003. The show's male-lead version, "The Bachelor," premiered in 2002. In the early days of the franchise, TV matchmaking seemed shocking and subversive - a radical game imposed on a tried-

and-true process of finding a mate. Since then, dating shows have evolved in ever more lurid permutations, including the UK's "Love Island," where contestants who fail to couple up with another are booted in each round; Netflix's "Too Hot to Handle," where attractive singles win money for not having sex with one another; and even HBO Max's "FBOY Island," which pits earnest suitors against "F-boys" - men who pride themselves on casual flings - in a cheeky battle for the island's



women. All of this might seem terrifying to the conservatives worried that Tinder and liberals are destroying American marriage. Actually, collectively, they might be the most conservative shows on television. As a group, all the way to F-Boy island, they re-enact and reaffirm a dating process that has less to do with 21st century swipe-right apps than 19th-century courtship rituals. And for many years, viewers have lapped it up. One study from the data-tracking company PeerLogix found that dating show viewership spiked during the pandemic, even drawing viewers away from other

genres. The popularity of these matchmaking shows, which are watched at once ironically and aspirationally, suggests a different spin on the delayed-marriage stats. The census data, after all, doesn't address the question of whether singlehood is driven by a "childless left" culture or harsh economic reality, or whether young people intend to put off marriage for awhile or opt out of it entirely. A few years ago, a spate of liberal books and articles marveled at a growing

cohort of single women - who tend to behave differently from married women in the ballot box - and speculated about the political power they might hold if their numbers continue to grow. But in a 2020 survey commissioned by the wedding platform "The Knot," 80 percent of the Gen Z-ers and millennials reported that they had spent some time imagining their wedding day, and most of them expected to be married within two to five years. That mood matches a 2018 Pew report that found that, while they aren't marrying young, nearly two thirds of millennials still hope to marry someday, and

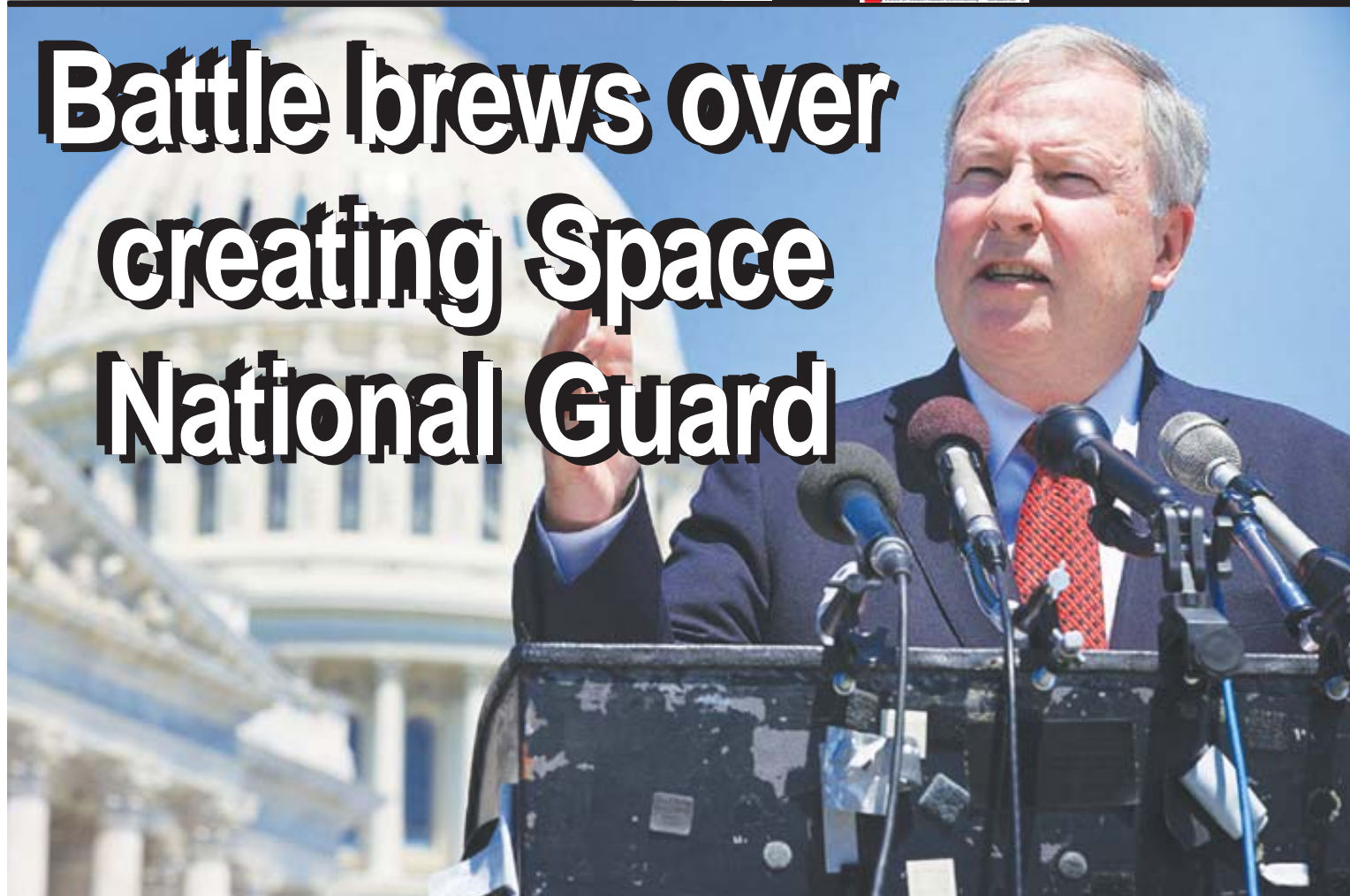
a quarter say they just haven't found a person with the qualities they're looking for.

The fact that more people marry later in life has changed the institution, and by extension, the stakes around courtship, says Stephanie Coontz, a professor emeritus at The Evergreen State College and the author of "Marriage, a History. Older singles are likelier to already be financially independent and to prefer a union with an equal - which means they often have higher standards for a potential spouse. For singles surveying the landscape, "that gets very anxiety-producing," Coontz says. Reality TV showcases those modern anxieties in a place where the old-fashioned rules still apply. It's a porthole to a universe where every woman harbors dreams of a floor-length white dress, every man earnestly asks for his girlfriend's father's blessing, and - notwithstanding a handful of shows like Logo's gay-themed "Fire Island" - heteronormative, cis-gendered pairings are the only ones that exist. If reality TV reflects actual desires, then these shows are a telling statement about the culture wars - a suggestion that the dream of traditional marriage, the kind that leads to starter homes, little league games, joint IRA accounts and the attendant political priorities, is still very much alive, no matter your political persuasion. In reality TV land, singlehood isn't a newly desirable state, but rather a purgatory that people will exit as soon as their finances allow, or they meet the right partner, or an army of TV producers steps in to intervene. And these shows aren't an anachronism as much as a cry for a roadmap - a shortcut to getting married once and for all. A few dating shows do celebrate the

disposable aspects of Tinder culture; Netflix's recent "Sexy Beast" took shallow, attractive people, slathered them in grotesque makeup, and proved they would still be game for one-night stands. But many more shows promote the old-school aspiration of leaving casual sex and multiple partners behind and starting a new life with Ms. or Mr. Right. The courtship practices they feature, Coontz notes, originated in England and America back in the 1700s, when love had newly become a justification for marriage. (One upcoming show on Peacock, "Pride and Prejudice: An Experiment in Romance," will sequester its contestants on a country manor and send them on romantic carriage rides.)

Audiences are hardly unaware of the contradictions within these shows, or the artifice behind them. Books have been written, and scripted series produced, about the unforgiving editing behind the scenes on "The Bachelor" and the inventive ways producers find to make contestants cry on camera. In that franchise, producers' commitment to keeping politics out of the story can make the show feel disconnected from real life. A glaring shortage of contestants of color eventually gave way to a diversified cast, but race-related scandals have lately roiled the show, leading to the ouster of the longtime host. Even the declarations of love on "The Bachelor" can feel absurd - somehow, it takes a nanosecond for a contestant to determine that the Bachelor or Bachelorette in question is "the one." Still, throughout it all, "The Bachelor" has managed to maintain a veneer of authenticity, in the sense that nearly every participant seems committed to finding love.

Battle brews over creating Space National Guard



India adds punch to its firepower against China and a mix of defensive-offensive strategy



India has deployed the newly upgraded L-70 air defence guns into the Eastern Sector, while also inducting several units of the 155 mm Bofors and the M-777 lightweight howitzers, as part of its strategy to ramp up its defensive and offensive capabilities against China.

India has also set up a series of Integrated Defended Locations (IDLAs) along the LAC, which sees a multi-tiered defensive system in which the infantry, artillery, aviation, air defence, mechanised and armoured columns of the Army work as one unit backed by the Indian Air Force assets.

Besides this, the focus has also been on offensive capabilities with the Army focusing on faster movement of equipment and troops from one location to another by air, high altitude heliborne operations and also deploying new versions of various kinds of missiles.

Numerous new fortified underground bunkers have been created and the basic firearm of the infantry soldier has also got an upgrade. All the infantry troops posted in the forward areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have been fully equipped with Sig Sauer 716 rifles.

While the large share of new inductions, including the light machine guns, have largely been directed towards the Ladakh sector, where the Indian and Chinese troops are in face off, the Eastern Command has seen its share of new deployments, making the LAC here one of the most heavily guarded.

In the Eastern Sector, which has seen the raising of a new aviation brigade besides transferring all surveillance drones from the artillery to the aviation wing of the army, India has focused on both defensive and offensive capabilities.

The Space Force is here to stay. But the debate over whether the military's newest branch should have its own weekend warriors has turned into the latest space-based political brawl.

Lawmakers from Colorado, Florida, Hawaii and other states that are home to space operations are pushing for a dedicated Space National Guard that can provide a talent pool for the technical space branch - while also benefiting from some of the additional spending that would go with it. The House recently passed bipartisan defense policy legislation mandating that a Space Guard be established within 18 months.

But the White House "strongly opposes" the move, arguing it "would not deliver new capabilities" and only "create new government bureaucracy." The Pentagon is also not eager to create a new organization. Some active-duty leaders are reluctant to have to contend with another powerful lobby in Washington pushing parochial interests and projects, according to current and former military officials and experts.

The new Space Guard would likely draw from the roughly 2,000 troops that now carry out space missions in the Army and Air National Guard in eight states.

"The Space Guard issue is being forced by governors and elected officials," said Mir Sadat, who oversaw space policy on the National Security Council during

the Trump administration and is now a researcher at the Atlantic Council. He called the debate "highly politicized."

'Modern relevance'

The Space Guard proposal is being spearheaded by Democrat Jason Crow and Republican Doug Lamborn of Colorado, who maintain that for the Space Force to carry out its mission it needs a dedicated cadre like other branches to support it in wartime, including troops with high-tech skills from their private-sector jobs.

The pair, who both sit on the House Armed Services Committee, won adoption of the proposal as an amendment to annual defense policy legislation last month. The Space Force needs a dedicated Guard component to be "a full-blown equal branch of the military," Lamborn argued in an interview. "It's important for the Space Force to have parity with the other military branches and essential in remaining competitive with China's space advances," Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.), who co-sponsored the House provision, said in a statement.

Guard leaders at the state and national level have also been vocal proponents. The chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. Daniel Hokanson, told lawmakers this spring that establishing a standalone Space National Guard is "among my most pressing concerns." Others have said leaving space troops in the Army and Air National Guard risks

separating them from the service they are supposed to support.

"The delay in creating a National Guard Space Force could have disastrous impacts - potentially orphaning our existing space units from their logical parent service and negatively impacting readiness, retention and morale," Maj. Gen. James Eifert, Florida's adjutant general, wrote last summer.

A Space National Guard, advocates also say, will also bring in citizen guardians with private-sector experience.

"We do have people that are doing space work that are perfect fits to be in the National Guard and doing it on that kind of basis as well as balancing their other job," Lamborn said.

Sadat referred to it as "having guardians converge their civilian and reserve military careers at about the same time and rise through the ranks of both institutions."

"In this line of thinking, the Space Force needs a National Guard component to be the equal of the Army and Air Force and to ensure the militia's modern relevance," explained Brent Ziarnick, associate professor of spacepower at the Air Force's Air Command and Staff College.

'Humoring the notion'

But opposition has been building, particularly from the White House, which calls the proposal a waste of money.

In a message to Congress last month, the Biden administration stressed that when the Space

Force was created, Congress "emphasized the need to minimize administrative expenses and prioritize the development of space capabilities."

"This Administration remains committed to that approach," it added.

The White House cited an estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office last year that it would cost upwards of \$500 million per year if the Space National Guard was about one-third the size of the Space Force, or on par with the other branches' Guard forces.

The CBO said a smaller version, more in line with a plan that the Air Force put together in 2020 for 1,500 personnel drawn from existing National Guard units, would cost an extra \$100 million per year, along with a one-time cost of about \$20 million to build new facilities.

But the administration wants to keep part-time space personnel in the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve, asserting they "have effectively performed their roles with no adverse effect on DOD's space mission since the establishment of the Space Force." The Senate Armed Services Committee, meanwhile, is backing a more limited plan in its version of the defense bill, which would simply rename the Air National Guard the Air and Space National Guard. It requires the Pentagon to report back to Congress with a plan for carrying out any necessary organizational changes.



Nihang tradition is rich.

Don't just view them through Singhu killing lens

Nihangs have a long history of staying away from any opposition against the ruling dispensation. It remains an enigma why they were at the farmers' protests.

The recent execution of a 35-year-old Dalit Sikh, Lakhbir Singh, at the Singhu border by the members of Nihang sect has drawn strong reactions across the world. The execution was cruel and looked like a warning to others against the sacrilege of their sacred book, the Sarab Loh Granth. However, there seems to be an attempt to turn the opinion of the people against the Sikh community as if the entire Sikh tradition symbolises cruelty and violence.

One of the mainstream media houses characterised the killing as "lynching", thereby implying that a large crowd of Sikhs carried out this ghastly act. It also shows how fickle our memories are in the face of one episode, whereas during the high tide of the second wave of Covid-19, the tradition of 'sewa' was highlighted as central to the Sikh tradition.

There is, however, a rising interest in knowing who these Nihangs are, particularly when certain individuals from the sect came forward and owned up to this execution with the claim that they killed the man because he committed the sacrilege by being disrespectful to their sacred book. I propose to succinctly describe the Nihangs in terms of their position within the Sikh religion,

their traditions, and religious practices. Digging a less-known history

The word 'Nihang' conjures up an image of a Sikh armed with traditional weapons and attired in a loose blue top almost touching the knees, long (generally white) breeches, and a turban of more than normal length. Their sheer appearance arouses curiosity, and at times they are understood as orthodox Sikhs with medieval clothing and weaponry. The prevalence of numerous traditions and practices in the Indian religious landscape makes it possible for the Nihangs to pass for just another group with a distinct identity.

Of the various meanings of the word Nihang given by scholars, the one offered by Kahn Singh Nabha in Mahan Kosh is "alligator, sword, fearless, impartial and enlightened". It is believed that Nihangs are "akalis", the ones who have conquered death, and are always prepared to sacrifice their lives. They are entirely self-sufficient because they always keep necessary things with them. In his book *The Punjab: Being A Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, written in 1846, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Steinbach, an officer in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,

described the Nihangs as "Akalees" with a degree of dislike and said they were part of the Lahore government's irregular cavalry and numbered about 3,000. He characterised them as "religious fanatics", lawless and prone to committing robbery, and also said that they attempted to assassinate the Maharaja more than once.

The origin of the Nihangs is not clear, but various writings on Sikh history agree that they originated during and after the Guru period. However, it is wrong to assume that all Sikh warriors were Nihangs.

Four names are popularly used with different emphases for the Nihangs' headquarters. First, there is a gurdwara and it looks identical to the Sikh gurdwara, but there is a difference. In a Nihang gurdwara, the Dasam Granth, in addition to the Guru Granth Sahib, is placed at its rightful location. There is also a distinct space in the gurdwara where 'sukha', a drink made of cannabis, is prepared. The second name is 'Dera', which subsumes the existence of a gurdwara, but also houses a number of Nihangs living and practising martial arts.

The third is 'Shauni', which literally means cantonment - a place where soldiers are located.

Nihangs regard themselves as "Guru ki fauj" (the army of the Guru) and tend to be always ready to proceed to the 'war front'.

Shauni is a place where they keep horses and look after them. The fourth name is 'akhada'. Traditionally, the word 'akhada' is used to denote a place where training in wrestling and martial arts takes place, and it is linked with the Naga Sadhu tradition of India. In the case of the Nihangs, an akhada is a place commonly located within the Nihang gurdwara/dera, where arms training takes place.

There are four factions among the Nihangs: Buddha Dal, Taruna Dal, Ranghreta Dal, and Bidhi Chand Taruna Dal. The last two are less prominent. Not much is talked about the Ranghreta Dal, and it consists of Nihangs exclusively belonging to the Mazhabi caste, whereas the Nihangs identified with Bidhi Chand, a devout follower of the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, are confined to village Sur Singh in Punjab's Tarn Taran district to which he belonged.

The prominent Nihang groups are the Taruna Dal and the Buddha Dal. As their names indicate, there is a general impression that the Taruna Dal has something to do with youth, whereas the Buddha Dal is a group of elder

Nihangs. In reality, it is not the case, for both the factions have young and old Nihangs in their ranks.

There are about 14 major groups of Nihangs of which three are Buddha Dals and 11 are Taruna Dals. Each Dal is headed by a 'Jathedar', who presides over a large number of gurdwaras. It is claimed that the Buddha Dal headquarters is located at the Talwandi Ber Sahib gurdwara, whereas the Taruna Dal headquarters is at Baba Bakala. The most important aspect is the number of gurdwaras each Dal controls and has constructed over the years. There are also stories of Nihangs forcibly occupying and taking control of gurdwaras.

Nihangs and their place in Sikh tradition and history

It is important to clarify the contribution of the Nihangs to Sikh history. Most of the books on the Nihangs do not distinguish the Khalsa (fighting Sikhs) and the Nihangs. All are treated as synonymous in the historical narratives of the Nihangs. As such, there is no history of the Nihangs except for the occasions when they either confronted or collaborated with the state. Instead, there are narratives of actual feats of bravery in some real sense.

Why Colin Powell's death from Covid complications argues for vaccines, not against it



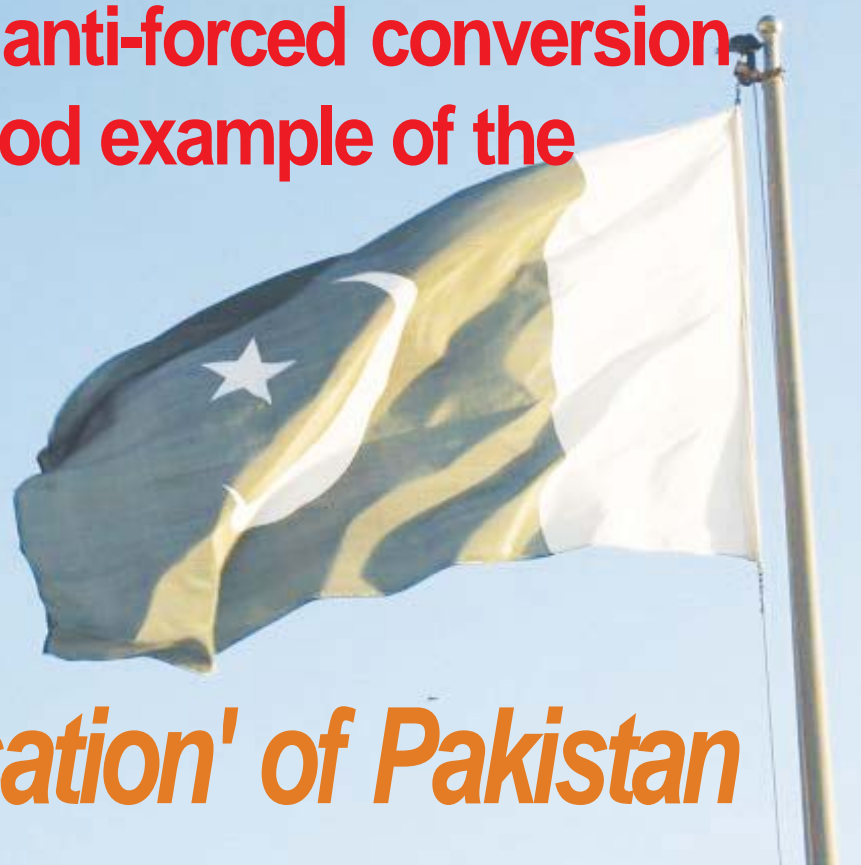
Vaccine opponents are seizing on the death of former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was fully vaccinated yet died of Covid-19 complications, to cast doubt on the vaccination effort against the virus. As usual, these people are dangerously wrong. The death of someone like Powell, who was 84 and fighting multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that significantly hampers the immune system, is a potent argument to vaccinate as broadly as possible. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention makes it abundantly clear that while fully vaccinated people can contract Covid, it's far less common. In fact, it was six times less common than in the unvaccinated in August across all age groups.

The further you break down the data, the more clear it becomes that most are at a far lower risk than Powell was even when healthy. A majority of concerning breakthrough infections occur in older people because they generate a weaker immune response to vaccines and diseases even when healthy and more frequently have other conditions that can worsen the impact of Covid. The risk of dying from Covid while fully vaccinated is most pronounced in those older than 80 - though the death rate is still below what unvaccinated people in the 50-64 age group face - and drops precipitously from there. Older people were also vaccinated earlier than others and may see vaccine efficacy fade more over time. For this reason, they have been prioritized for booster shots that can increase protection. Those older than 65 who received Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE's vaccine became eligible for boosters in late September, with authorization for those vaccinated with Moderna Inc. and Johnson & Johnson shots expected soon.

Because Powell had been treated for multiple myeloma, he may have been eligible for a third shot starting in August. While the CDC data doesn't break out people with these sorts of extra vulnerabilities, it's clear they make up an outsize portion of those who become extremely ill. One study conducted from March to May of this year found that 44.7% of breakthrough cases requiring hospitalization were in those with weakened immune systems.

A spokesperson told the New York Times that Powell planned to receive a booster shot last week before falling ill, but even that might not have eliminated his risk. People with blood cancer can have a weak response to Covid vaccines, and some don't generate any measurable protection. Sometimes they don't even respond to a third shot. That isn't the vaccines' fault; it's a consequence of a disease that specifically interferes with the body's ability to protect itself and the aggressive treatments needed to hold it back.

Rejection of anti-forced conversion bill a good example of the



'Talibanisation' of Pakistan

Some 1,000 girls, primarily Hindus, are forced to convert each year. These conversions can involve abduction, rape, violence, human trafficking and extortion.

Pakistan's social and moral trajectory is alarming. The rejection of a bill aimed at stemming forced religious conversions by a parliamentary committee convened to address the issue is the latest in a line of dismayingly developments highlighting Pakistan's deepening schisms and intolerance.

There are mumbles about why the bill was rejected: the proposed age limit on conversions; and the call for a 90-day cool-off period to consider the decision before proceeding. But the real reason is that the current social, religious and political environment in the country has become so oppressive that a meaningful act of inclusion is deemed inconceivable. The religious affairs minister reportedly said that the 'environment is unfavourable' for such a law, and implied it would generate resentment that would make minorities more vulnerable. The law minister also cautioned that the legislation would be 'dangerous', implying violent retaliation. This is a good example of the 'Talibanisation' of Pakistan of which we were forewarned over the past decade. The fact that government representatives are resigned to a status quo in which minority rights are not worthy of upholding should be problematic for everyone.

A key problem is that the term 'forced conversion' glosses over what's really at stake. Reportedly, some 1,000 girls from religious minorities, primarily Hindus, are forced to convert each year. These conversions can involve abduction, rape, violence,

human trafficking and extortion. They also enrich clerics who receive payments for solemnising such marriages, corrupt police officials who take bribes instead of investigating, and magistrates who look the other way. By rejecting the bill, our lawmakers are condoning these other activities. How does this serve Islam? There is already a law prohibiting forced marriage, and making the marriage of minors and non-Muslim women punishable with imprisonment. But it remains unenforced, which is why a bespoke bill on forced conversions was proposed.

Sadly, religious minorities' desperation to protect their own is not being heeded. Many religious and political stakeholders deny that forced marriages occur. Or they wave off the issue as a quirk of three districts in Sindh, and not worth of being addressed through national legislation. Similar bills have been rejected in 2016 and 2019. Disdain for minorities has also been entrenched in the current process. The religious affairs ministry apparently did not consult minority representatives while reviewing the bill, while the Council of Islamic Ideology invited the cleric accused of enacting forced conversions in Sindh for a briefing.

Most readers from the religious mainstream will gloss over these words, thinking they have little direct relevance. But the way a state treats its minorities is ultimately reflective of how it will treat all its citizens. All Pakistanis should be concerned by

the callousness.

Minority rights ensure respect for distinct identities, whether along religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender or any other lines. The goal is to ensure that difference is tolerated and protected. Where minority protections work well, groups can engage and collaborate with each other no matter what distinguishes them. Managing religious pluralism, or any other minority identity, creates the right social and judicial environment, governance and frameworks to ensure that all differences can be negotiated, leading to more social resilience.

Minority inclusion also ensures that marginalised groups do not react to majority pressure by ramping up efforts to preserve and protect their identity in a way that breeds passionate defence and potentially fuels armed conflict. In Pakistan, this trend has been apparent among non-dominant Muslim sects but is even more relevant in the context of ethnolinguistic identity. The state's weak response to inclusion since its inception has set the stage for constant hostile confrontation.

The failure to pass this bill also undermines the writ of the state and highlights its inability to guarantee citizens' protection and freedom. Non-Muslim religious minorities are vulnerable enough that their maltreatment does not produce destabilising results. But their predicament shapes how other minorities view the state and their expectations of lawmakers, with more serious consequences.

Bitcoin inches closer to fresh record high, Ether rises over 1%



Cryptocurrency investors can expect another good day as prices of popular virtual coins continue their strong rally. The rally is being led by the world's largest cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, which was inching closer to hitting a fresh all-time high on Wednesday.

Bitcoin's strong rally comes a day after the first US Bitcoin futures-based exchange-traded fund (ETF) began trading. It is a development that market participants say is likely to drive investment into the popular digital asset.

Bitcoin was trading at nearly \$64,000, nearly 2.5 per cent higher than its value 24 hours ago at 11:00 am. Bitcoin's market capitalisation stood at \$1.20 trillion and the 24-hour trading volume declined marginally to \$1.78 billion.

It may be noted that Bitcoin touched its previous high in April, when it hit \$64,895.22. It had reached \$64,499 on Tuesday but cooled off marginally thereafter.

Ether, the largest altcoin, was also trading nearly 1 per cent higher than its value 24 hours ago at \$3,854.31. Its market capitalisation stood at \$452 billion and the trading volume was \$869 million.

Other altcoins were mixed with some gaining and others losing momentum due to profit booking by investors.

While Bitcoin looks set to hit an all-time high, experts are not sure whether the rally will continue as many investors may look to cash in during the positive rally.

Here are the latest prices and trends of popular cryptocurrencies:

Cryptocurrency	Price (US Dollar)	24-hour change
Market cap	Volume (24 Hours)	
Bitcoin	63,646.84	1.87% \$1.20 trillion \$1.76 billion
Ether	3,842.60	0.36% \$451.19 billion \$ 8 6 9 . 9 1 million
Dogecoin	0.244211	-2.45% \$32.14 billion \$1.35 billion
Litecoin	186.65	-1.64% \$12.84 billion \$61.70 million
XRP	1.10	0.29% \$109.77 billion \$3.63 billion
Cardano	2.10	-1.32% \$68.10 billion \$151.55 million



Gatishakti: Digitising the power of speed

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Rs 100 crore Gatishakti program literally means the power of speed. It is essentially a grand orchestration of building infrastructure in the country on an unprecedented scale. India desperately needs an integrated plan for speeding up cargo movement in the country.

This has been one of the bottlenecks holding back the economy. Gatishakti provides that program. As part of the Gatishakti master plan, the government will strive to have deep coordination between sixteen ministries, which include railways, roads and highways, petroleum and gas, telecom, power, shipping, and aviation, among others.

What is to be noted is that telecom is also a part of the Gatishakti initiative. However, we have not yet heard the details of the telecom infrastructure push with Gatishakti and how deeply it will be integrated with the other proposed infrastructure.

The Gatishakti masterplan

includes the development of 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. It also includes the creation of a whopping 220 new airports, helicopters and water aerodromes and 17,000 km of new gas pipeline network.

In addition, it aims to provide 4G network coverage in all Indian villages and to expand the national highway network to 2 lakh kilometres. So, there is an intent on developing the 4G telecom infrastructure, along with the physical infrastructure. But not much beyond that is known as of now.

Needless to say, infrastructure leads to growth due to massive consumption of cement, steel and other construction materials. It also helps sustain growth as it provides the infrastructure on which the logistics of the rest of the industries can be supported, without which, industries cannot grow. Also, like all programs, the implementation and its speed will be key, especially when the

economy appears to be poised for explosive growth. However, what would be even more beneficial would be to have an explicit digital plan embedded into Gatishakti, with not just digital infrastructure, but also to use digital to speed up the implementation and to maintain the infrastructure.

For a long time, I have been bringing up the need to have fibre optics across all linear assets such as roads, railway lines, gas pipelines and powerlines. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways also has a stated policy as of 2003, on granting Right of Way (ROW) to lay fibre optics along the national highways. However, the process is complex, to say the least. It still requires approval from multiple government entities at state and national levels. And it is not applicable to any other infrastructure except national highways. There are no clearly stated policies on granting ROW to other telecom players along the gas pipelines, powerlines etc.

Precious metals record hike on MCX| Check latest rates here

Both gold and silver are retailing at Rs 64,420 per kg. registered a hike on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) for the third day in a row, on Wednesday. The rate of gold futures, maturing on December 3, 2021, stands at Rs 47,355 per 10 grams with a hike of 0.23 per cent or Rs 108. Recording a slight jump of 0.09 per cent or Rs 55, silver futures, maturing on December 3, 2021, Gold and silver prices in

international market On the international front, gold prices edged lower on Wednesday as the metal's appeal was dented by surging U.S. bond yields, reported news agency Reuters. Spot gold fell 0.1 per cent to \$1,767.71 per ounce and U.S. gold futures ticked downwards and dropped 0.1 per cent to \$1,768.40.

Meanwhile, the metal went up as much as 1.2 per cent on Tuesday and U.S. benchmark 10-year Treasury yields also surged to their highest since May 20, as per the reports. A majority of economists in a Reuters poll opined that the Federal Reserve will wait until 2023 before increasing interest rates even though persistent inflation poses a greater risk for

the U.S. economy in the coming year. Fed policymakers may have to adopt a 'more aggressive policy response' if inflation keeps rising at its current pace in the near future. Spot silver went down 0.1 per cent to \$23.62 an ounce and platinum fell 0.4 per cent to \$1,035.96 on the global front. Gold and Silver prices in Indian cities



Europe's Apollo-13 moment

When a 19-year-long space mission escaped death

An anomaly triggered the European spacecraft to lose control and begin spinning on its axis.

Europe recently had its Apollo-13 moment when its Integral mission that tracks violent events across the Universe lost control and began spinning uncontrollably. The probe went into emergency safe mode in September after 19 years of service, as its three active 'reaction wheels' turned off, forcing the satellite to rotate on its axis.

As the reaction wheels turned off and stopped spinning, it caused a ripple effect and the satellite itself began to rotate giving a bare minimum time to engineers on Earth to find a fix. The European Space Agency (ESA) said that as a result of the sudden event data were only reaching ground control patchily and the batteries were quickly discharging with just a few hours of power backup left.

WHAT CAUSED THE MISSION-THREATENING INCIDENT?

One of the biggest threats to spacecraft comes from the very source that powers it - the Sun. While energy from the sun helps power spacecraft and satellites, at times solar flares, violent eruptions

from the star also leads to electrical dysfunctions and issues in the circuitry. The anomaly that the spacecraft encountered could have been a Single Event Upset (SEU), which occurs when a charged particle strikes a sensitive part of electrical equipment, causing a one-off change of state that disrupts its functioning. These ionised particles often come from the Sun when it spews out matter and energy during solar flares or coronal mass ejections.

However, engineers established that the anomaly encountered by the spacecraft was not from our star, instead, it was triggered by charged particles trapped in the radiation belts around Earth. These charged particles vary according to solar activity and they are a hazard to satellites and humans in space that pass through them.

AN UNCONTROLLED SPIN

The reaction wheels on a spacecraft control the direction it points in without the need for thrusters, when one of these wheels stopped due to the anomaly, according to the law of conservation of energy it forced the

entire satellite to begin spinning, triggering an Emergency Safe Attitude Mode. While the reaction wheel was reactivated by engineers on the ground, the spacecraft kept spinning at 17 degrees per minute, wobbling unpredictably about its axes.

"The data coming down from Integral was choppy, coming in for short periods due to it spinning. This made analysis even harder. The batteries were discharging, as there were only short charging periods when the panels briefly faced the Sun," Richard Southworth, Operations Manager for the mission said in a statement.

The team increased its power by turning off its instruments from three hours to six hours giving them more time to find a fix. Engineers came up with a series of commands to change their speed and break the spinning satellite. While they managed to stabilise the satellite, it started spinning again in a few hours after which the process was repeated and since then the satellite has been in control.

Russia's Nornickel urges scientists to find new ways to use palladium



Russia's Nornickel (GMKN.MM), the world's largest palladium producer, said on Monday it had begun a contest for scientists to find new ways to use the metal that has been hit by a chip shortage in the auto industry, its top consumer sector.

Global demand for palladium has weakened recently as automakers, which use the metal in pollution-reducing catalytic converters, have cut production due to the dearth of chips.

"We believe that palladium has huge potential beyond autocatalysts. We see high palladium demand in other global industries, including the green economy and decarbonisation," Anton Berlin, Nornickel's head of sales, said in a statement.

The contest, known as the Palladium Challenge, will grant \$350,000 in total to scientists or entrepreneurs able to come up with a sustainable way to boost demand for palladium, Nornickel said.

The award will be split between the top three projects in New York on Sept. 16, 2022, the Russian miner said, adding that it had partnered with the International Precious Metals Institute for the contest. Proposals will be accepted by the end of May.

Nornickel, which supplies 44% of global palladium needs, currently expects a deficit in the metal of 0.2 million-0.3 million ounces in 2021 and 0.3 million ounces in 2022 amid the production cuts by automakers, it said last week.

Scientists attach pig's kidney to human body in breakthrough transplant

Scientists temporarily attached a pig's kidney to a human body and watched it begin to work, a small step in the decades-long quest to one day use animal organs for life-saving transplants.

Pigs have been the most recent research focus to address the organ shortage, but among the hurdles: A sugar in pig cells, foreign to the human body, causes immediate organ rejection. The kidney for this experiment came from a gene-edited animal, engineered to eliminate that sugar and avoid an



immune system attack.

Surgeons attached the pig kidney to a pair of large blood vessels outside the body of a deceased

recipient so they could observe it for two days. The kidney did what it was supposed to do - filter waste and produce urine - and didn't

trigger rejection.

"It had absolutely normal function," said Dr. Robert Montgomery, who led the surgical team last month at NYU Langone Health. "It didn't have this immediate rejection that we have worried about."

This research is "a significant step," said Dr. Andrew Adams of the University of Minnesota Medical School, who was not part of the work. It will reassure patients, researchers and regulators "that we're moving in the right direction."

The dream of animal-to-human transplants - or xenotransplantation - goes back to the 17th century with stumbling attempts to use animal blood for transfusions. By the 20th century, surgeons were attempting transplants of organs from baboons into humans, notably Baby Fae, a dying infant, who lived 21 days with a baboon heart. With no lasting success and much public uproar, scientists turned from primates to pigs, tinkering with their genes to bridge the species gap.

Unvaccinated people can get infected by coronavirus every 16 months: Experts



Coronavirus cases are once again increasing in the UK, and several patients have reported getting infected for the second or third time. This has led experts to believe that people are bound to get re-infected every 16 months if they are not fully vaccinated.

A new analysis has suggested that people who have chosen not to get vaccinated against the deadly coronavirus can keep getting re-infected with the disease every 16 months.

Last year, it was observed that people were getting infected by the virus for second time. However, till then vaccinations had not started at such a large scale. Now, that vaccination programmes have started around the world, scientists have been able to study the comparative data.

As per the data, experts have been able to see that people who have not been fully vaccinated against coronavirus are the ones who are getting re-infected.

However, experts believe that it is not just once or twice that the re-infection can happen. Unvaccinated people are expected to get re-infected after every 16 years, on an average.

This is especially relevant for people who work in areas where they spend majority time in interacting with other people. People working in hospitals, schools etc are more exposed to the virus.

"If you've got high-level prevalence, and frequent exposure to the virus, as you have in schools, you are going to see more and more people getting reinfected despite having been double vaccinated," said Stephen Griffin, associate professor of virology at the University of Leeds told the Guardian.

This has become more common and dangerous since the Delta variant started surfacing in countries all around the world. The Delta variant is one of the deadliest and most transmissible variants of coronavirus till now. The reinfection rate has also increased around the world since the cases of Delta variant surged.

Study suggests that Tuberculosis, like Covid, spreads through aerosols

In a study conducted by researchers in South Africa, it was found that tuberculosis (TB) is also spread by inhaling virus-laden aerosols more than coughing, as was previously believed.

A team from the University of Cape Town presented the study at the 52nd Union World Conference on Lung Health, which is being held online from October 19-22.

As per a New York Times report, researchers found that about 90 per cent of TB bacteria are carried in tiny droplets known as aerosols, which are expelled by an infected person as they exhale deeply.

The study confirms recent findings that SARS-CoV-2, the virus cause of COVID-19, as well as MERS-CoV, influenza, measles, and the rhinoviruses that cause the common

cold all spread via aerosols that linger in indoor air.

Ryan Dinkele, a graduate student at the University of Cape Town who presented the findings, was quoted by the NYT as saying that their model suggests that aerosol generation and TB can happen independently of symptoms.

Despite this, the new study does not change the fact that TB is in fact transmitted through droplets; and that a single cough is capable of expelling more bacteria than a single breath.

"But if an infected person breathes 22,000 times per day while coughing up to 500 times, then coughing accounts for as little as 7 per cent of the total bacteria emitted by an infected patient," Dinkele said.

These findings explain why cramped indoor spaces, like prisons, are

breeding grounds for diseases like TB and Covid.

Furthermore, the study also suggests that measures such as masks, open windows and open doors, which are important to curb Covid transmission, can also contribute to limiting TB.

The bacterium responsible for TB, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, typically attacks the lungs. The World Health Organization's 2021 Global TB report published last week shows that it is the world's deadliest infectious disease after Covid-19, claiming over 1.5 million lives in 2020. As the pandemic disrupted healthcare and supply chains around the world, COVID-19 has also halted progress made on TB. More than 5.8 million people were diagnosed with TB in 2020, but according to the WHO, about 10 million people could have been infected.

Alzheimer's: Scientists find early biomarkers that may predict onset

By 2050, 13.5 million people in the United States will live with Alzheimer's disease unless early diagnosis and treatment can delay the onset of the disease. Current treatment centers around slowing the progression of the disease.

In the journal *EMBO Molecular Medicine*, scientists revealed this week that circulating microscopic nucleotides - assembled amino acids that bind directly to messenger ribonucleic acids (mRNAs) - can identify cellular imbalance in the brain. These nucleotides, called microRNAs, are easily measured blood proteins that may identify the early risk of Alzheimer's disease.

The role of these microRNAs in directing mRNAs to protect the brain from inflammation means that targeting them for therapy could inhibit cellular damage in the brain and delay the onset of dementia.

Verna R. Porter, M.D., commented on the pivotal aspects of this research for Medical News Today. Dr. Porter is a



neurologist and the director of programs for dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and neurocognitive disorders at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, CA.

Before and after

The molecular brain changes linked to Alzheimer's disease often occur many years before those affected manifest clinical symptoms. Therefore, these researchers designed a model to compare biomarker results in healthy adults with those in people with

cognitive decline.

In a multifaceted study, based on the similarities between human and murine neurophysiology, research scientists scored young people aged below 30 years for cognitive function. Then, they identified microRNAs present in the blood that matched their cognitive function. Finally, the scientists linked these microRNAs to larger mRNAs associated with cognitive decline. Once the researchers had made this connection, they studied microRNAs as possible biomarkers for early cognitive decline.

'Of mice and men'

Aging mice can develop cognitive decline, similar to humans. Therefore, the researchers designed a follow-up experiment measuring these same biomarkers in healthy and aging mice. The scientists could now study the "before and after" of these microRNA biomarkers, looking for their presence in the blood of both mice that were healthy and those that had cognitive decline.

Diana Penty: It was very stressful, trying to control the uncontrollable pandemic

Diana Penty is very selective about the films she picks, and this is something that gets pointed out to her often. But it has worked out well for the actor so far. Having done just seven films in the nine years of her film career, Penty says her "simple funda" is to enjoy what she does. "I want to be excited with the projects I take up, wake up every morning looking forward to telling a story. As an actor, this is most important. And I think it's a fair and honest way to work, for everyone involved," shares Penty. Her primary criteria for choosing a project, therefore, is the story. The Cocktail (2012) actor elaborates, "The story is the foundation of any film. I rely on my instincts a lot

while reading a script. I usually know instantly if it is something I like." The 35-year-old has been working through different phases of the pandemic, and she admits it was "very stressful" in the beginning, trying to "control the uncontrollable". "But the more you do it, the more accustomed you get to it. The toughest part, in my opinion, was having to quarantine in a separate part of the house after a shoot. It was annoying and inconvenient. But now that most people are double vaccinated, things are easing up a bit. It's still important to follow Covid-19 protocol on set, but the overall energy on sets now is much happier and less stressful," says the actor, who was recently seen in Shiddat, which released directly on an OTT platform, since theatres were closed then.

Actor Diana Penty talks about working amid the pandemic and the reason for taking up less films in her career so far.

Priyanka Chopra is missing as Nick Jonas poses with staff member at a restaurant from their date night

A new picture of Nick Jonas has been shared online and it appears to be from his date night with his wife Priyanka Chopra. Nick and Priyanka are currently in Spain, where the actor is shooting her upcoming series Citadel. In the picture, shared by Restaurante El Ocho y Medio on Instagram, Nick was seen wearing a brown shirt and matching shorts along with a mask. He stood close to a staff member from the restaurant. However, Priyanka wasn't seen in the frame. The Instagram handle shared the picture and thanked Nick and Priyanka for visiting



the restaurant. A fan account translated the caption, "Nick the other night in El Ocho y Medio Valencia. The 'that kinda night' restaurant. Thank you very much for visiting us! @nickjonas @priyankachopra it was a plea-

sure." Nick reached Spain earlier this week. Priyanka had shared a picture of a dinner table with a rose placed on it and tagged Nick in it. The singer was then spotted posing with a few fans in Spain as well. Priyanka reached Spain earlier this month to wrap a schedule of Citadel. Besides filming, Priyanka has also been spending time exploring and relaxing with her mother, Dr Madhu Chopra, and friends from Citadel. She shared pictures from their time on a yacht, scuba diving, exploring the streets of Valencia at night and more.

Shanaya Kapoor reveals how she deals with 'inevitable' judgments that come with being a star kid

Actor Sanjay Kapoor's daughter Shanaya Kapoor, who is all set to make her big-screen debut with filmmaker Karan Johar's yet-to-be-titled production, believes that being a star kid has its pros and cons. In a conversation with ANI, Shanaya opened up about how she deals with judgements that come along with the "star kid" tag. "Judgments are an inevitable part of the work I am pursuing, but I stay positive and focus on the people who are always cheering me on, whether it be followers on Instagram or the press/media, I focus on their love and support, then the rest just fades out for me! Focusing on the positives is the way to be," she

said. Shanaya worked as an assistant director on Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, starring her cousin Janhvi Kapoor. Sharing how that particular experience helped her understand the industry, she said, "Being a part of Gunjan Saxena was extremely special, and a very important journey for me to undergo before I started my career. I wanted to learn how a film is made, what the process is like, what are the aligned jobs for everyone on set, how actors prep for their roles, how background action works, there was so much I got to understand. It was a wonderful, fulfilling and enriching experience to see the entire team work towards one goal, it's so wholesome mak-

ing a film." According to her, working as the assistant director made her learn many important things. "It made me fall in love with what I want to do even more! The biggest takeaway for me was learning how the process before reaching set is the defining foundation of creating the story! I understood a lot that I wasn't aware of before," Shanaya shared.



Kareena Kapoor and Jeh Ali Khan make their way to Amrita Arora's son's ninth birthday party

AmrKareena Kapoor and her younger son Jehangir Ali Khan, also known as Jeh, made their way to Amrita Arora's house to attend her son's birthday party. Amrita's son Rayaana celebrated his ninth birthday on Wednesday. The paparazzi clicked Kareena and Jeh making their way to the party. Kareena opted for a beige sleeveless top and a pair of dark blue jeans. She was photographed in her car, busy on a call. However, she gave the paparazzi a quick wave before she headed to the party. Meanwhile, Jeh, who was seen with his nanny, was dressed in a green-blue-yellow T-shirt with a bib around his neck. The party took place at Amrita's Mumbai home.

Jeh Ali Khan with his nanny. (Varinder Chawla)

Earlier in the day, Kareena took to Instagram Stories and wished Rayaana. In the picture, Rayaana and his father Shakeel Ladak were in a swimming pool. "Happy birthday Rayu (heart and balloon emojis). Shine bright," she captioned the post.

Amrita, too, shared a few pictures of Rayaana and wished him. In the pictures, the nine-year-old sat on a couch and showed

no interest in being photographed. "And he's 9! My Ray man is a little big boy. Shine on my baby boo. Love like no other," she captioned the post.



Her sister Malaika Arora took to the comments section and wished him. "My ray of sunshine n naughtiness. Mimi loves you," she said. Kareena's sister-in-law Saba Ali Khan also wished him a happy birthday. **Share**

Khan wrote, "Happiest happy birthday Amu lots of love to handsome Ray." Neelam Kothari wished, "Happy birthday to your handsome boy!!" Maheep Kapoor also wrote, "Happy birthday Rayuuuu cutie." Athiya Shetty wrote, "Happy happy birthday, Ray!"

Dybbuk trailer: Emraan Hashmi and Nikita Dutta are newlyweds haunted by evil spirit



The trailer for Amazon Prime Video's new original film, Dybbuk, dropped online on Wednesday. Emraan Hashmi and Nikita Dutta play a newly-married couple, dealing with a miscarriage, who move into a new home. Nikita's character Mahi buys a centuries-old Dutch-made box and opens it to find a vial of what appears to be blood and human hair. Soon after, she and Emraan's character Sam start having paranormal experiences.

Mahi and Sam are told that the box is a 'dybbuk', used to trap dissatisfied spirits, and must not be opened at any cost. They then seek the help of a rabbi to perform an exorcism.

The official synopsis of Dybbuk reads: "Mahi, a newly married woman, brings an antique Jewish box into her home. When Mahi and her husband Sam begin to have paranormal experiences, they soon learn that the box is a dybbuk

containing an evil spirit. The couple then seeks the help of a rabbi to unravel its mystery. Will they survive this ordeal before their child is born?" Fans expressed their excitement about Dybbuk in the comments section of the trailer on YouTube. "EMRAAN x HORROR-THRILLER combo (heart emoji). Looking forward to it," one wrote. "After a long time, something good is coming. It looks quite interesting," another wrote. "This is going to thrill. Wait for Emraan's performance," a third wrote. Written and directed by Jay K, Dybbuk is the official remake of the 2017 Malayalam blockbuster Ezra, which starred Prithviraj Sukumaran, Priya Anand and Tovino Thomas among others. Dybbuk, which also features Manav Kaul, is jointly produced by Panorama Studios and T-Series. The film is set to release on October 29.



Bunty aur Babli 2 teaser



The teaser of Bunty aur Babli 2 is out and sets the mood for the film's release on November 19 this year. The video clip shows the original Babli (played by Rani Mukerji) uniting with her Hum Tum co-star Saif Ali Khan for the sequel. However, they soon get into a dispute with Siddhant Chaturvedi

and Sharvari Wagh who claim to be the new Bunty and Babli. The video begins with Rani Mukerji and Saif Ali Khan all decked up to shoot for the film's promotional video. Rani asks Saif, "Saifu, after how long we are working together" and he replies it's been 12 years.



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'Stunned'

- China's Hypersonic Missile Tests Leave U.S. Officials 'Stunned'
- Nuclear arms race with China possible if hypersonic launch is true, says a US Senator
- One expert says technology is not new as he warns of another 'pointless' arms race.



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