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Joe Biden is Almost as Unpopular as Trump



(SAI Bureau)- The Joe Biden presidency has, so far, conformed to the iron law of presidential approval polling: A newly inaugurated president starts out strong in the polls but inevitably drifts lower in his first term. The only unique thing about Biden's decline is how quickly he burned through his post-inaugural popularity. In February, he hit an impressive 57 percent in the Gallup approval ratings, but recently he's dipped to 42 percent. That places Biden just a notch above Donald Trump's Gallup average of 41.1 percent, which is enshrined in the polling hall of fame as the worst approval rating of any president since Gallup started taking the measure of presidents in 1945. The press has gathered to sing in full chorus about the Biden presidency hitting a new low, slumping, collapsing in free fall, just plain falling and plummeting. Why has his popularity tumbled into the sub-basement? What, if anything, can he do to improve his ratings? And should his popularity in polls really matter to him or to us? The Joe Biden presidency has, so far, conformed to the iron law of presidential approval polling: A newly inaugurated president starts out strong in the polls but inevitably drifts lower in his first

(Contd on page 38)

Mark Zuckerberg changes Facebook's name to Meta

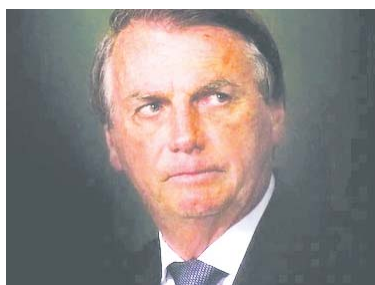


(SAI Bureau) - Facebook is now called Meta, the company said on Thursday, in a rebrand that focuses on building the "metaverse," a shared virtual environment that it bets will be the successor to the mobile internet.

The name change comes as the world's largest social media company battles criticisms from lawmakers and regulators over its market power, algorithmic decisions and the policing of abuses on its services.

(Contd on page 35)

Jair Bolsonaro and his crimes against humanity



(SAI Bureau)-When the pandemic broke and the WHO sounded the alarm, nations across the world began taking heed, scurrying to put in place protocols that would save their citizens from the worst ravages of the viral attack. But some countries and leaders either lived in wilful denial or willingly chose

(Contd on page 37)

Aryan Khan Gets Bail After 3 Weeks

(SAI Bureau)-Aryan Khan, the son of superstar Shah Rukh Khan, has been granted bail three weeks after his arrest in the drugs-on-cruise case. He will spend at least two more nights in prison as his team can apply for his release only after the Bombay High Court's formal order today. Aryan Khan, 23, was taken into custody on October 3, hours after drug raids on a cruise ship party by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). The star son has been in Mumbai's Arthur Road jail since October 8 and had been denied bail twice. Aryan Khan's friend Arbaaz Merchant



and model Munmun Dhamecha have also been granted bail.

Aryan Khan's lawyer Mukul Rohatgi, former Attorney General of India, had argued in court that no drugs were

(Contd on page 38)

BJP to Congress, Shiv Sena and RJD Super Saturday awaits parties in assembly bypolls



(SAI Bureau)-It's not often that bypolls to fill vacant seats in Parliament or assemblies hold so much significance for so many political heavyweights, and can change political dynamics in several states. That's the beauty of the 30 October bypolls to three parliamentary and 29 assembly

(Contd on page 36)



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"Hindu Women's Network" Launched

An Initiative of World Hindu Council of America VHPA.



(By our staff reporter) : A group of 40 highly accomplished Hindu women met at the Gaylord India Restaurant and announced the formation of the Chicagoland Chapter of "Hindu Women's Network" an initiative of World Hindu Council of America VHPA. There was invited panel of three women from the Hindu Community who have achieved success in fields of Medicine, Media and Politics. Dr. Panna Barai MD from Munster Indiana was the Keynote speaker

as she has been associated with VHPA since past 40+ years, and gave her blessing and message of Nari Shakti to take charge as Hindus in America are now in 3rd and 4th Generation, and there are many areas where women need support at home and in professional lives and keeping it balanced.

Mrs. Vandana Jhingan TV Asia correspondent/Journalist and US Media bureau chief for "Hindi Khabar" gave a very passionate speech on topic of Hindu Women

and Media portrayal, Vandana ji talked about influence of media on young Hindu females and what we should be aware of. She talked about journalistic ethics and importance of reporting events not creating news and sharing opinions. Vandana ji also shared a video of an independent movie made by US Producer which is held by Indian Censor board, freedom of sharing a point of view is blocked and why the topic of the movie most related to the young Hindu girls.

Mrs. Meghna Bansal Trustee of the Wheatland Township and a owner manager of a Technology company talked about importance of involvement in the local politics. Her point was simple "you might not be interested in politics, but politics is making decisions which impact all of you". Her journey from India and moving to USA over 25 years back and how she got involved with local homeowners association and progression from there to Local

Township Trustee position.

Event was organized Vishwa Hindu Parishad Chicago chapter's women's group. Mrs. Anisha S Shah, Ms. Neela Patel, Mrs. Hetal N Pate, Mrs. Nimisha K Patel, Mrs. Yashswaini Desai, and Mrs. Preet Mittal.

Hindu Women's Network invites women from all walks of life to join this movement and help with community building projects for more information please send email to : hwnchicago@vhpachicago.org

"Will Hold China Accountable For...": Biden's Religious Rights Post Pick

(Insider Bureau)-An Indian American, nominated by the Biden administration for position of the international religious freedom envoy, on Tuesday pledged to hold China accountable over the repression of ethnic and religious minorities and also work with Muslim-majority countries to protect the rights of religious minorities there. Rashad Hussain, Ambassador-at-Large nominee for International Religious

Freedom made the remarks while speaking to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his confirmation hearing. "I will leverage my existing relationships within Muslim-majority countries to protect the rights of religious minorities there. I will redouble efforts to broaden the coalition to hold China accountable for its horrific crimes against the Uyghurs and its repression of other ethnic and religious minorities," he said.



Ray Tierney is running as District Attorney for Suffolk County

In an exclusive interview with The South Asian Insider, Tierney shared his vision and action plan to make Suffolk a better place to live and work. On his website he says, "When it comes to enforcing the law, there is no room for politics or the influence of self-serving special interests. The residents of Suffolk County demand no less from this most sacred elected office."

Watch full interview on Josh India WebTV, our official YouTube Channel



Meet Andrea Ogle, Judicial candidate for Queens County Court

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Queens, New York- Andrea Ogle has lived in the borough of Queens for most of her life. A Judicial candidate for Queens County Court, Andrea moved from Guyana to Cambria Heights Queens, with her family when she was a teen., and is now on the ballot for Queens County Civil Court judge.

In a city where Democrats outnumber Republicans nearly seven to one, Ogle, who is vying for one of two open seats on the Civil Court as a Democrat, is very likely to get elected. If she does, she will be part of what is likely the most diverse slate of judicial candidates Queens has ever seen. She recently told a media outlet, "I saw how diverse Queens was becoming and I also realized that the bench did not reflect the community that it served," Ogle told the Eagle.

"I started getting encouragement from the community and from judges in

the courts to consider pursuing a career on the bench because they felt that based on the work that I was doing, and the passion that I had for what I was doing and the experience that I had over the years, that all of those things would be beneficial for the community as a judge."

Ogle went to Queens College for her undergrad and studied law at Seton Hall Law School. After law school, she opened her private practice in Queens, also called Worlds borough, for its diversity.

She is a member of multiple local bar associations including the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean Bar Association, the Queens County Bar Association and the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association and has spent a significant portion of her career working in Family Court. Andrea aims to take her diverse background into judicial candidacy.



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CANDIDATE PROFILE

LONG ISLAND ELECTION: NOV 2ND

Bruce Blakeman for Nassau County Executive is running as a Republican for Nassau county



executive. His opponent is incumbent Laura Curran, a Democrat. Bruce is a Town of Hempstead Councilman.

As reported in LI Herald, Bruce says, Laura Curran's reassessment is crushing families and seniors with higher property taxes. As county executive, I will end Curran's reassessment and cut taxes. Government should never collect more than it needs to operate. My plan cuts property taxes by over \$128 million – that's \$58 million more than Laura Curran is willing to give back – and I'll pay for that tax cut by returning Nassau County's entire budget surplus to residents.

I will continue to return budget surpluses each year while restricting new spending and reducing debt. It's time to put the government on a serious diet, and it's time to really cut taxes.

Anne Donnelly for Nassau County district attorney

Nassau County voters will choose between Anne T. Donnelly, 57, a Garden City Republican who spent her entire career in the office she is seeking to run, and State Sen. Todd D. Kaminsky, 43, a Long Beach Democrat. Donnelly was deputy chief of the Rackets and Enterprise Crime Bureau,



with an emphasis on cyber crime, before leaving to run for the top job. Clearly,

she is not a striver but someone who understands how the office works, how new lawyers must be trained, how the office must listen to all sections of its community about crime and policing, the importance of meeting the challenges of the opioid scourge, and the necessity of protecting the community's most vulnerable members.

She says Nassau is a safe place but wants a greater effort toward

stopping gun violence. Donnelly says some but not all changes to the bail law — which mandates release of a suspect in most misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies, the majority of criminal cases — were a mistake. She wants the law amended to give judges and prosecutors more discretion pretrial and judges more time to determine whether a person needs medical or mental health treatment.

Elaine Phillips For Nassau County Comptroller

For the Nassau County Comptroller's race, Republican Elaine Phillips faces Democrat Ryan Cronin. Incumbent Jack Schnirman declined a



reelection bid. Elaine told Patch, "My primary motivation is to give the people of Nassau County a

watchdog with an established track record of independence, fairness, responsiveness to constituents, and problem-solving. From the mishandled re-assessments to the deterioration of service at the Department of Consumer Affairs, there is a common thread of mismanagement. As comptroller, I intend to be a force which helps to get county agencies back on track by diagnosing problems and advocating for solutions – whether they be the enhancement of existing processes or the addressing of antiquated technology'.

Don Clavin is running for reelection as Hempstead supervisor

As reported by Newsday, In the two years since Republican Donald X. Clavin Jr. became Hempstead Town supervisor, things have been a lot



quieter around town hall than they were over the previous four. Clavin, 52, from Garden

City, exudes a trademark geniality. That's great when it means services are being provided efficiently, and they often are in Hempstead.

Clavin is doing a good job managing a tough town. To do a great job

making it a better town, he must upend the political coziness and be willing to make unpopular choices. Taking a strong role in protecting the 110,000 town residents paying outrageous fees to New York American Water, via municipalization, is crucial.

Maureen O'Connell is running for Nassau County Clerk

Maureen told The Island Now, "Experience matters in the county clerk's office," Nassau County Clerk Maureen O'Connell said of her bid for re-election. "Without the legal experience and the technological



knowledge of the operation, I think that whoever came into this office without that knowledge would be severely handcuffed." As Nassau County and the rest of the world try to regain normalcy after the coronavirus pandemic, O'Connell stressed the importance of having an experienced candidate leading the clerk's office.

Kate Murray is running for reelection as Hempstead Town Clerk

As reported by Newsday, Murray of Levittown, was elected Hempstead Town Clerk in 2019. Murray served in the 19th state assembly district from 1998 to 2001. She was the first woman to serve as Hempstead Town supervisor, from 2003 to 2015. Murray is running as a republican, and also



running on the Conservative and Tax Revolt party lines. Murray, a lifetime resident of Levittown, graduated in 1980 from the former Levittown Memorial High School. She graduated from Boston College and has a law degree from Suffolk University Law School in Boston.

Murray said she has implemented a "much more aggressive" program that assists working families in applying for U.S. passports at the town clerk's office one weekend day a month, instead of one day a year as was previously the case. Murray said that during the COVID-19 pandemic she has increased the town clerk office's services offered in local

neighborhoods.

Joe Saladino for Oyster Bay supervisor

Saladino, 60, of Massapequa, is gregarious, hardworking and responsive to resident needs, as long as the residents don't criticize him. He has been passionate about working on the Grumman plume. Now, he must bring change next term to Hicksville. For too long, he has blamed others for the lack of action,



while his own thinking about what's possible there and elsewhere has been limited. Then, Saladino must put the same effort into revitalizing downtown Oyster Bay.

Republican Richard LaMarca is running reelection as the Town of Oyster Bay Clerk

LaMarca was first elected Town Clerk in 2019, and is running for his second term.

Prior to that, he worked for 20 years in the private sector and as a vice president of a Fortune 500 company, and also worked as the Director of Labor-Management Relations for the town.



Ragini Srivastava for North Hempstead Town Clerk

North Hempstead has the opportunity to show that "diversity" is not just a nonsense word used by the opposition party to advance their own one-party political agenda. Ragini Srivastava of Manhasset, the Republican, is a successful businesswoman, who immigrated as a young woman from India. She and her husband Ashish have lived the promise of all those who have immigrated to



America and worked hard to raise their families. Ragini's plans to modernize and make the Town Clerk's office more accessible and user-friendly to its residents would be a huge improvement. Last year, Ragini nearly won a race for NYS Assembly. She is endorsed by South Asian and immigrant groups from across Long Island.

(Compiled by
TSA Insider Bureau)

My soulmate, not lover:



Former Pak journalist Aroosa Alam on Amarinder Singh

Former Pakistan journalist and an old friend of Amarinder Singh, Aroosa Alam, has denied allegations of links with the ISI and that of influencing Singh when he was the Punjab Chief Minister.

Aroosa Alam, Captain Amarinder Singh's long-time friend and a former journalist from Pakistan, has been pulled into the political slanging match in Punjab. On Wednesday, in an exclusive conversation with India Today from Islamabad, she rubbished all the allegations of links with the ISI and of influencing Amarinder Singh when he was the Punjab Chief Minister. **SOULMATES, NOT LOVERS** Responding to the allegations of an affair with Amarinder Singh, Aroosa Alam said they were soulmates, not lovers.

"We have been companions. When I first met him, I was 56 and he was around 66. At such an age, you are not looking for lovers. We were friends, companions and soulmates," she said.

She said, "We met at a juncture in life where love affairs and romance don't matter. We have been soulmates and good family friends. I have met his mother, his family, sisters."

In a fresh jibe, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa invoked religion to say that "love affairs" were not allowed in the Sikh religion. "Even in Gurbani, living with another woman is considered wrong. Captain and I fought in America as well regarding the

issue of Aroosa Alam," he had said on Tuesday.

Last week, Randhawa had said that a probe would be conducted on Alam's alleged ISI links. Captain Amarinder Singh responded with a string of tweets put out by his media advisor Raveen Thukral. He accused the deputy chief minister of "resorting to personal attacks".

He added, "You were a minister in my cabinet. Never heard you complain about Aroosa Alam. And she'd been coming for 16 years with due GoI [Government of India] clearances. Or are you alleging that both the NDA and Congress-led UPA governments in this period connived with Pakistan's ISI?"

ALLOWED ENTRY INTO INDIA FOR 16 YEARS

Aroosa Alam rubbished the allegations by saying that the politicians are questioning the Indian security agencies when they say an ISI agent was allowed entry into India for the past 16 years.

"When Pakistanis get visas, it is a very painful and long process with lots of security and background checks. There are a few agencies involved. I have been travelling to India for the past 16 years and each time I have cleared security. How can I have ISI links which were not known to

the agencies for so many years? If I were an ISI agent then it points fingers at your security agencies who might be traitors for allowing me entry for so many years," she said.

BUNCH OF HYENAS

Calling the former Chief Minister's detractors a bunch of hyenas, she said, "They are a bunch of hyenas. They are opportunists,

disloyal. Punjab politics has hit a new low. All this is lust for power. Everyone wants to become the chief minister.

These are over-ambitious people who wanted to get their share," she said.

Former MLA Navjot Kaur Sidhu had alleged that not a single posting in the police department in Punjab happened without a "gift

or payment" to Alam.

"Not a single posting happened without paying off Aroosa or without giving her a gift. She has taken all the money with her to Pakistan, and Captain should also go there and enjoy his time there with her. We were never heeded because I never let my husband (Navjot Singh Sidhu) get close to Aroosa," Navjot said in a scathing attack.

Alam's response was a bitter personal attack on the Sidhu couple. She asked them to first look within before raising questions about the integrity of someone else.

"I have been with Captain sahab for 13 years when he was in opposition. When he was not in power for so many years, then how could I know the SP, SSPs or DSPs? How can I manage postings and transfers? I don't even know which minister had which portfolio," she said. She added, "He hated me discussing politics with him when he became the chief minister. He always said have fun, socialise, meet your friends. Stay away from politics."

"As for the personal attacks, Aroosa Alam said, "Anybody can level allegations. I could do the same. She has not been living with Navjot Singh Sidhu for years. Her husband used to be in Mumbai and she used to run the ministry. I overheard complaints about his inefficiency and that no work was being done without money." She also said that her children and family were quite affected by the controversy in India. "They have so many questions and I have no answers. My children are affected. They used to warn me and today I have paid a heavy price," she said.



S. Kushaldeep Singh Dhillon assumed charge of Markfed Chairman in the presence of Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Cabinet Ministers Amarinder Singh Raja Warring and Gurkirat Singh Kotli & Deputy Chief Manager Sanjeev Manaktala at Markfed Office, Chandigarh.

(News Agencies)-The Supreme Court, which appointed an expert committee to inquire into Pegasus snooping row, Wednesday said its effort is to uphold the Constitutional aspirations and rule of law without being consumed in the "political rhetoric" even as it observed that the petitions filed in the matter raised Orwellian concern.

Quoting English novelist George Orwell, a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana said, "If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."

Petitions seeking independent probe into alleged snooping row raise an Orwellian concern, about the alleged possibility of utilising modern technology to hear what you hear, see what you see and to know what you do, the apex court said.

"Orwellian" refers to a dystopian, totalitarian state which is destructive to the welfare of a free and open society.

"In this context, this Court is called upon to examine an allegation of the use of such a technology, its utility, need and alleged abuse. We make it clear that our effort is to uphold the constitutional aspirations and



SC refers to 'Orwellian concern'; says every citizen must be protected against privacy violation

rule of law, without allowing ourselves to be consumed in the political rhetoric.

"This Court has always been conscious of not entering the political thicket. However, at the same time, it has never covered from protecting all from the abuses of fundamental rights," said the bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli.

The further said: "We live in the era of information revolution, where the entire lives of individuals are stored in the cloud or in a digital dossier. We must recognize that while technology is a useful tool for improving the lives of the people, at the same time, it can also be used to breach that sacred private space of an individual.

"Members of a civilised

democratic society have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Privacy is not the singular concern of journalists or social activists. Every citizen of India ought to be protected against violations of privacy. It is this expectation which enables us to exercise our choices, liberties, and freedom".

The top court said historically, privacy rights have been

'property centric' rather than people centric and this approach was seen in both USA as well as England.

"In 1604, in the historical Semayne's case, it was famously held that 'every man's house is his castle'. This marked the beginning of the development of the law protecting people against unlawful warrants and searches," the bench said.

Quoting British statesman William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, the bench said: "The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail - its roof may shake - the wind may blow through it - the storm may enter, the rain may enter - but the King of England cannot enter! - all his force dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!"

Referring to 'The Right to Privacy' article written by Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis in 1890, the bench said: "Recent inventions and business methods call attention to the next step which must be taken for the protection of the person, and for securing to the individual what Judge Cooley calls the right "to be left alone."



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Sameer Wankhede's father threatens to file defamation suit against Nawab Malik

(News Agencies)-After Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik claimed that NCB chief Sameer Wankhede has obtained a caste certificate by fraudulent means to get an IRS job, Sameer Wankhede's father Dnyandev Wankhede said the minister was trying to harass his family and they may file a defamation suit against him.

Earlier, Nawab Malik had claimed that Sameer Wankhede was a Muslim by birth and his real name was "Sameer Dawood Wankhede". The minister had released what he claimed was the birth certificate of Sameer Wankhede and alleged that the latter had forged documents. He also shared a copy of the "nikah nama" of Sameer Wankhede's first marriage with Dr Shabana Qureshi.

Addressing a press conference earlier in the day, Nawab Malik had said, "I want to

make it clear that the issue I am exposing of Sameer Dawood Wankhede is not about his religion. I want to bring to light the fraudulent means by which he has obtained a caste certificate to get an IRS job and has deprived a deserving Scheduled caste person of his future." Hitting back at Nawab Malik, Dnyandev Wankhede told news agency ANI, "He is getting into our personal life, which doesn't suit him. We belong to a Hindu community. He is harassing my family and we may file a defamation suit against him"

He further added, "He is a big man with 10 heads and can do anything, but we don't need any security."

Talking about Sameer Wankhede's first marriage, "Both were adults and aware about their religion. He was marrying a Muslim, therefore, he completed the formality of a Nikahnama. But after 15 days,

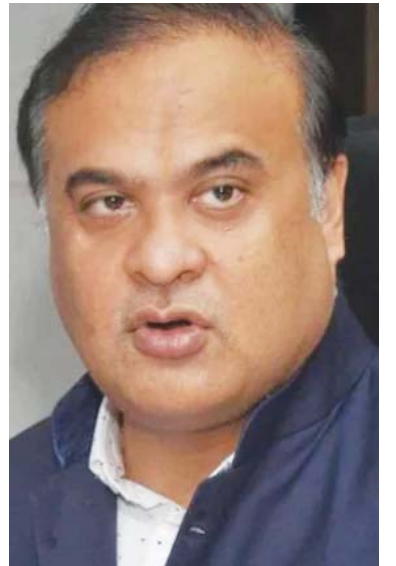
he registered his first marriage under Special Marriage Act also."

The development comes a day after Sameer Wankhede's second wife Kranti Redkar, a Marathi actress, denied that the NCB officer was a Muslim and used a fake caste certificate to enter the civil services.

Earlier this month, a team led by Sameer Wankhede had raided a cruise ship off the coast of Mumbai and claimed to have recovered drugs. The team arrested Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan in the case along with others.

The Mumbai Police on Tuesday said they have received four applications so far alleging extortion by Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede and other officials, and have launched an enquiry to verify these claims.

EC lets off Assam CM Himanta Sarma with warning for violating model code of conduct



(News Agencies)-The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday let off Assam Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma with a warning for violating the model code of conduct during campaigning for the October 30 assembly bypolls.

In its order, the ECI said, "The Commission issues a warning to him (Sarma) and cautions him to be more careful and exercise restraint in future and strictly follow the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, while making public utterances."

The EC also took note of Sarma's submission seeking unconditional apology from the commission in case of any inadvertent commission/omission of any provision of the model code of conduct.

The ECI in its order said that it is of the view that Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, star campaigner of Bharatiya Janata Party, has acted in contravention to the spirit of the advisory/instruction issued by the Commission vide its letter dated 07-01-2007 concerning the Model Code of Conduct.

The ECI on Monday had issued a notice to Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma seeking an explanation for alleged violation of the model code of conduct during the election campaigns of the by-elections.

The ECI issued the notice following the complaints lodged by Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Bhupen Kumar Borah and Congress Legislative Party leader Debabrata Saikia. The ECI asked the Assam Chief Minister to explain his position in this regard on or before 5 pm on October 26.

Bengal govt bans sale and use of fire crackers on Diwali

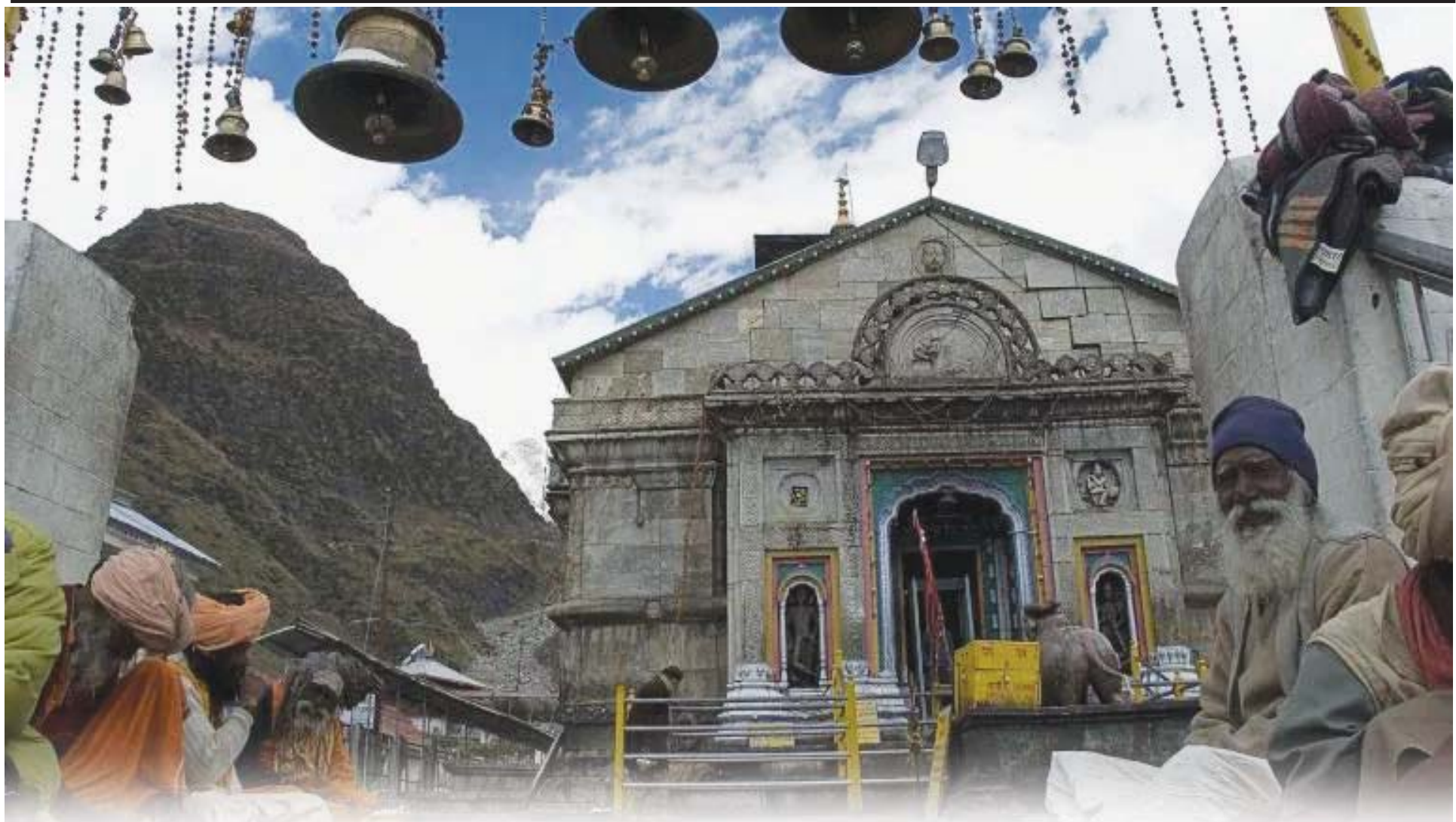
(News Agencies)-The West Bengal government imposed a ban on the sale and bursting of fire crackers during upcoming festivals, keeping in mind the health conditions of Covid-19 patients in home isolation and air pollution across the state. However, only green crackers would be allowed to be used.

These crackers can only be used for a 2-hour window. On Diwali, crackers can be burst from 8pm to 10pm, on Chatt Puja from 6am to 8am, 35 minutes on Christmas and New



Year's eve from 11:55pm to 12:30am.

According to an order issued by the West Bengal Pollution Control Board, the ban has been imposed in compliance with the Supreme Court's judgment in 2018. The decision has been taken considering the fact that the "bursting of fire crackers releases harmful chemicals, having severe impact on the respiratory health of vulnerable groups" and may aggravate the health conditions of Covid-19 patients staying in home isolation.



Preparations ramped up in Kedarnath ahead of PM Modi visit

The Chardham Devasthanam Board stepped up its preparations ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kedarnath on November 5. Work on the beautification of the temple and other minor arrangements are underway.

(News Agencies)-The Chardham Devasthanam Board stepped up its preparations on Wednesday in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kedarnath on November 5. Roads and a helipad en route to the Himalayan shrine have already been cleared of snow while work on the beautification

of the temple and other minor arrangements are underway, the Devasthanam board's media incharge Harish Gaud said. Board CEO Ravinath Raman has assigned the responsibility of streamlining all arrangements to additional CEO BD Singh. The government machinery is also working in full swing with

District Magistrate Manuj Goyal having held several rounds of meetings with various departments and sector magistrates to review the preparations and issue necessary instructions, SDM Jitendra Verma said. The temperature at Kedarnath has dropped with peaks around

the temple laden with snow, but the weather is bright and sunny, Gaud said. Pilgrims are arriving at the four sites -- Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri temples -- in large numbers following Covid protocol, he said. PM Modi is scheduled to visit Kedarnath on November 5, a day

ahead of its closure for winters, to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of reconstruction projects worth at least Rs 400 crore. It will be PM Modi's second visit to the state within a month. He had visited AIIMS, Rishikesh, on October 7 to inaugurate an oxygen plant.

Andhra woman dies awaiting land document correction, family puts body on Tehsildar's table in protest

A shocking incident laid bare the red tape at a government office in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh this week when an elderly woman's body was placed on the Tehsildar's table. The woman reportedly ran from pillar to post for seven years to get the family's ancestral farmland transferred to her name after her husband's death, before passing away herself earlier this week.

The elderly woman, Laxmi Devi, and her late husband, Prdanan,

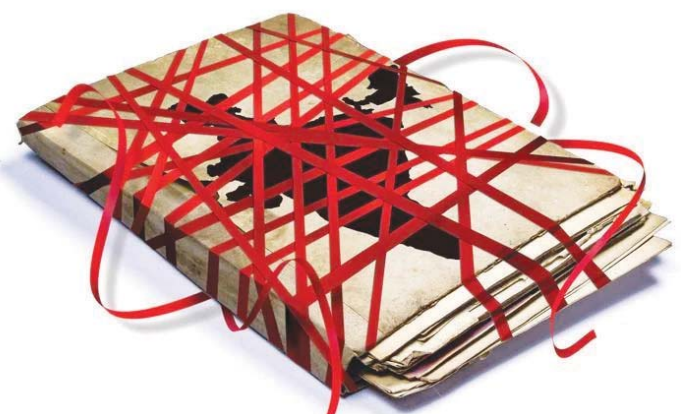
were residents of Jalalpuram village, Battalapalli division of the district. Prdanan died of an illness seven years ago. Since then, Laxmi Devi had been running from one table to another, requesting the officials at the Tehsildar's office to change the name on the property documents. However, all her efforts were in vain and Laxmi Devi passed away earlier this week, still waiting for the change. Her grieving family alleged that Laxmi Devi died due to the apathy of the officials and

placed her body on the table of the Battalapalli Tehsildar in protest.

The act created a ruckus in the office and police help was sought. A police team reached the MRO office and pacified the victim's family, convincing them to remove the body.

There have been several reports of incidents in Telugu states wherein people committed suicide at the tehsildar's office to protest the harassment by the authorities. On a few occasions, even the Tehsildar faced attacks.

The elderly woman, Laxmi Devi, reportedly ran from pillar to post for seven years to get the family's ancestral farmland transferred to her name after her husband passed away, before passing away herself earlier this week.



Singhu border lynching

Haryana govt gives 50% compensation amount to Dalit man's kin

The Haryana government has released half of the compensation amount to the next of kin of a Dalit man, who was lynched at a farmers' protest site at the Singhu border.

(News Agencies)- National Commission for Scheduled Castes Chairman Vijay Sampla on Tuesday said the Haryana government has released half of the compensation amount to the next of kin of a Dalit man, who was lynched at a farmers' protest site at the Singhu border.

On October 12, Lakhbir Singh was lynched, his hand chopped off and his body tied to a metal barricade at the protest venue

at Kundli near the Delhi-Haryana border, a gruesome incident being blamed on a group of Nihangs.

In a statement, Sampla said through the Prevention of Atrocities Act, Singh's family will get Rs 8.25 lakh compensation. "Besides this, the young daughters of Lakhbir Singh will get free education and money for living and the victim's mother will get a monthly pension. The commission had requested the Haryana government to ensure

immediate release of financial aid so that the family, who had lost their breadwinner, can meet their daily requirements," Sampla said.

On Tuesday, the Haryana government released the first instalment of the compensation amount and Rs 4.15 lakh has been transferred to Singh's wife's bank account, he added. Sampla said those organisations and individuals, who have given a call of boycotting the victim's family

and those who are actually boycotting it, will also be punished under the Prevention of Atrocities Act.

In a video clip of the October 12 incident that has gone viral on social media, some Nihangs are seen standing as Singh lies on the ground in a pool of blood with his chopped off left hand lying next to him.

The Nihangs are heard in the clip saying the man has been punished for desecrating a holy book of the Sikhs.

Bhima Koregaon case: Varavara Rao needn't surrender till November 18, says Bombay HC



(News Agencies)-The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said poet Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case who is on interim bail, need not surrender before the Taloja prison authorities until November 18 and adjourned the hearing on a plea filed by him to next month.

Rao, 82, had been granted interim bail for six months on medical grounds by the HC on February 22 this year. He was scheduled to surrender and return to judicial custody on September 5.

However, Rao filed an application last month through his lawyer R Sathyanarayanan and senior counsel Anand Grover, seeking extension of the bail period. He also sought HC permission to stay in his hometown of Hyderabad while out on bail.

However, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the probe agency in the case, opposed Rao's plea for extension of medical bail and shifting to Hyderabad, saying the octogenarian poet-activist's medical reports do not indicate that he suffers from any serious ailment.

In its affidavit filed before the HC last month, the NIA had said that the medical reports filed by Rao did not disclose any major ailment, which necessitated him to take treatment at Hyderabad, neither did it form a ground for further extension of bail. On Tuesday, a bench of Justices Nitin Jamdar and SV Kotwal adjourned the hearing on Rao's plea due to paucity of time. The bench also asked Rao to file a separate plea seeking permission to shift to his hometown while out on medical bail.

Nine convicted for 2013 blasts at Narendra Modi rally in Patna

(News Agencies)-A special court convicted nine of the 10 accused in the 2013 Patna serial blasts case on Wednesday. One accused, named Fakruddin, was acquitted. The quantum of sentence for the accused will be announced on November 1. The accused who were convicted are Hyder Ali alias 'Black Beauty', Naman Ansari, Mujibullah Ansari, Imtiaz Alam, Ahmed Hussain, Firoz Aslam, Imtiaz Ansari, Iftikar Alam and Azharuddin Quresi.

The blasts had occurred at Patna's Gandhi Maidan during the "Hunkar" rally of then prime

ministerial candidate Narendra Modi. The blasts killed six people and left over 90 injured. The public prosecutor said the



NIA would demand capital punishment for the accused. "It was an inter-state conspiracy. The blasts were hatched in Raipur while the materials to

make the explosives were procured from Jharkhand. The blasts took place in Patna," lawyer Lallan Prasad Sinha,

who represented the NIA in the case, told India Today TV.

WHAT IS THE GANDHI MAIDAN BLASTS CASE?

Seven bombs went off in a short span of time. The first blast happened at Patna railway station's platform 10, and the

rest in and around Gandhi Maidan, where Narendra Modi was scheduled to speak shortly afterward. Modi, however, went ahead with the rally.

The NIA took up the case in November 2013. The NIA had arrested alleged mastermind Hyder Ali in connection with the case in 2014.

Nine Indian Mujahideen (IM) suspects and a Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) suspect were made accused in the case. A total of 250 prosecution witnesses deposed before the trial court for cross-examination.



After Sudhaa Chandran airport issue, govt issues draft guidelines for flyers with disabilities

The centre issues draft accessibility standards and provision of facilities with an aim to facilitate ease of air travel for persons with disabilities.

The Centre on Monday issued draft accessibility standards and provisions of facilities for persons with disabilities in the civil aviation sector. The guidelines aim to facilitate ease of air travel for persons with disabilities. Recently, in a viral video on social media, actor and dancer Sudhaa Chandran appealed to the Prime Minister for better treatment of flyers with disabilities at airports.

She said: "This is a very personal note to our dear Prime Minister. I am Suddhaa Chandran, an actress and dancer by profession, who has danced with an artificial limb and made history.. and made my country

feel very proud of me. But every time I go on my professional visits, each time I'm stopped at the airport and when I request them at the security .. to the CISF officers that please do an ETD (explosive trace detection) test for my artificial limb, they still want me to remove my artificial limb and show it to them. Is it humanly possible, Modiiji?"

In the current draft guidelines now issued, it says when screening passengers with prosthetics, the security personnel may use X-ray, ETD or visual screening depending on circumstances. It is noted that "dignity and privacy of passengers should be borne in

mind during the entire process of security screening."

The rules say the passenger will receive additional pat-down after being taken to a private screening area, accompanied by an airline representative, preferably of the same gender. If necessary, screening through ETD (explosive trace detection) will be adopted.

The draft rules add, "A prosthetic appliance, which does not have any foam padding cover under which any weapon/explosive can be concealed and in which the steel rod of the appliance is clearly visible, may be screened by visual inspection and ETD checks only, without removing it. However, in rare cases, where

there is sufficient justification including profiling of the passenger, X-Ray screening may be resorted to. The justification for subjecting a prosthetic limb to X-ray screening shall be recorded by the screener in a register. During visual inspection, care should be taken that sensitive parts are not exposed."The draft rules for airport operators, airlines, ground handling agencies etc cover the entire gamut of accessibility for disabled persons as well as guidelines for evacuation protocols to be followed in the case of those with visual, hearing and mobile impairments. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has given three weeks'

time for comments and suggestions to be sent on the draft rules, after which they will be notified for implementation.

After actor Suddha Chandran had narrated her ordeal, she claimed Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had immediately reached out to her and the CISF, too, issued a statement apologising. The latter said: "We will examine why the women personnel concerned requested Sudhaa Chandran to remove the prosthetics. We assure Sudhaa Chandran that all our personnel will be sensitised again on the protocols so that no inconvenience is caused to travelling passengers."

Odisha govt bans fishing around olive ridley turtles' nesting sites for 7 months

The Odisha government will ban fishing for seven months from November around the sites where the endangered olive ridley turtles congregate for mass nesting.

The Odisha government will ban fishing for seven months from November around the sites where the endangered olive ridley turtles congregate for mass nesting.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra directed various departments to ensure concerted efforts at the ground level in conservation and nurturing of the olive ridleys, according to an official release on Tuesday.

During a virtual meeting of a high-level committee on the conservation of olive ridley on

Monday, Mohapatra stressed on the need to actively involve all stakeholders, NGOs and local community in such measures.

Olive ridley turtles -- one of the species of the sea turtle under the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature -- turn up in millions for mass nesting along the Odisha coast every year.

The reptiles lay eggs at the Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara district, the Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district and the Devi

river mouth in Puri district.

Fishing by motorised vessels or trawlers and mechanised techniques will be banned from November 1 till May 31 within 20 km from the coast where the congregation area is located and the buffer zones in the river mouths of Dhamra, Devi and Rushikulya. The Coast Guard was requested to share real-time intelligence with the departments about any illegal fishing, the release stated.

Fisheries Secretary R Raghu Prasad said a mobile app has been developed to help the



fisherfolk in knowing the no-fishing zone and get an alert when they enter such an area. The chief secretary directed all officers engaged in the conservation operation to download the app for asserting the location of the fishing boats. The Defence Research and Development Organisation, and

the ports of Dhamra, Gopalpur and Paradip were requested to follow the black-out practices and light-deeming to save turtles from possible delusion. The port authorities were asked to provide necessary support for joint patrolling in the sea and berthing of the vessels.

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3 convicted Islamist terrorists in Britain could go free in the next few months

Three men imprisoned in the United Kingdom for a range of terrorist plots may soon walk free as their cases go before a parole board.

Parviz Khan, Jawad Akbar and Zakariya Ashiq will go before a parole board over the next few months, with Akbar's case expected to go ahead before Christmas this year.

Khan, 50, was convicted in a plot to kidnap and behead a British soldier in 2008 after a six-month sting operation by British police. A judge sentenced the Birmingham resident to 13 years in prison, including time awaiting trial.

Akbar, 36, planned to bomb a shopping mall with 600 kilograms of fertilizer, hidden in a storage facility. A judge sentenced him to prison in life, but he will go before a board as part of the standard process for parole hearings. Ashiq, 26, attempted to join the Islamic



State by flying to Syria in 2015, but failed to enter the country and had to return home. Police arrested him at Heathrow Airport upon his return and went to prison for six years.

The three men have also been

identified as the disciples of a "hate" preacher, Anjem Choudary, who has inspired dozens of convicted terrorists and over a dozen plots over the past two decades, according to a report by The Daily Mail.

Choudary has recently come under fire again for attempting to orchestrate online campaigns in support of extremist activities.

Choudary operated on Twitter and Telegram, sending

encrypted messages and organizing "Twitter storms" to promote activities by his followers, The Independent reported. The Community Security Trust found that Choudary's efforts resulted in around 43,000 mentions on Twitter. CST director Dave Rich told the Independent that "Choudary has spent decades finding loopholes in our legislation that still haven't been closed." The increase in Choudary's activity occurred after a ban preventing him from public speaking expired three months ago after he completed a five-year jail sentence for inviting support for ISIS. Chris Phillips, the U.K.'s former counterterrorism chief, warned that "Choudary remains a very dangerous individual." Choudary instead claimed that lawmakers have not done enough to protect him from extensive online abuse and threats.

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It's time for social networks to take a close look in the mirror

Senators grilled executives from Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube on Tuesday about how their platforms impact young users. Asked how their platforms affect the mental health of teens and even promote eating disorders, the representatives all said they don't allow such content and instead point users to expert information. YouTube executive Leslie Miller said, "We ...prohibit the type of content that glorifies or promotes these issues such as eating disorders." But outside data suggests they're not fully successful in blocking such posts. The New York Times recently reported that some hashtags about eating disorders have received over 70 million views on social media.

The testimony was the first time representatives of TikTok and Snap, the parent company of Snapchat, have been called before the Senate. But it's unlikely to be the last, as the tech industry - and in particular, Facebook and Instagram - face escalating scrutiny over their effects on young users. And for good reason. They need to do much more to protect teens' mental health.

Last month, the Wall Street Journal highlighted internal research by Instagram's parent company, Facebook, showing that "thirty-two percent of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse." Then, in testimony before the Senate earlier this month, former Facebook staffer Frances Haugen -- who leaked the documents -- argued that Facebook was concealing evidence that its products make teens feel worse about themselves. On Monday, redacted versions of the documents leaked by Haugen were made available to 17 US news outlets, including CNN.

In an earnings call on Monday, Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg called the disclosures misleading. "Good faith criticism helps us get better, but my view is that we are seeing a coordinated effort to selectively use leaked documents to paint a false picture of our company," he said. "The reality is that we have an open culture that encourages discussion and research on our work so we can make progress on many complex issues that are not specific just to us."

Zuckerberg is right that the research on how social media affects teens is complicated. But the way Facebook and Instagram have handled the mental health challenges of teens is very wrong. It's true that we can't definitively blame social media for causing teens to have negative body images. Experts have pointed out that Facebook's survey that

found a third of girls say Instagram makes them feel worse about their bodies had a small sample size and relied on self-reporting, which is often unreliable. And, in other research, some teens say social media helps them feel better when they're stressed or anxious. But senators have good cause to be asking these questions. Research shows that teens who have more social media accounts are more likely to have disordered eating behaviors, even though that still can't prove that the problems were caused by using social media.

Here's what is clear. First, we've got to understand what social media does to teens. A 2019 report by Common Sense Media found that the average tween spends almost five hours per day on screens for entertainment -- not including time spent on screens for homework -- while the average teen spends over seven. And that was before the pandemic drove even more of their lives online! What's more, 50% of teen girls (as well as 39% of teen boys) say they're online almost constantly, according to Pew.

It's crucial to understand what's happening to their brains during all this time. Congress should allocate funding for rigorous research to answer the question.

Second, teens today are not OK. During the pandemic, when teens spent more time online, there was a 40% spike in calls to the National Eating Disorders Association helpline, and 35% of callers were aged 13-17. Between 2007-2017, rates of teen depression increased by 60%, according to Pew. (That's, of course, about the same time that platforms like Instagram and Snapchat really took off.)

Since teens spend so much of their time online, social networks have a social responsibility to help.

There are two big things they can do. First, they've got to de-rank harmful content -- like so-called "thinspiration" or "thinspo" posts that seem practically designed to harm girls' body images. Instead, they should amplify content that encourages body positivity. This is complicated stuff, and algorithms can't parse healthy from harmful content based on keywords alone. Instead, Facebook should hire more content moderators who are experts in this area -- like child psychologists -- who can identify and prioritize positive content. In September, we learned that Facebook plans to amplify content that makes itself look good. There's no excuse not to do the same with material that could make a difference to the mental health of vulnerable young people.

Hindu persecution in Bangladesh: A tale of slow genocide

By Susmita Ghosh

The minority population in Bangladesh is facing hard time recently. The Hindu populace is getting the short end of the stick for quite a while now. An attack on the Hindu population recently during their festive months of October showed the true face of the violence to the whole world. Bangladesh has a history of turmoil and turbulence. Initially East Pakistan in 1947, the country was divided from India based on religious majority-influenced voting. Later on, they fought for freedom against the crackdown of the Pakistani army, when there was an attack on their linguistic expression. With the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, they won their freedom. However, an 'Islamic way of life' was programmed in their constitution amendment in June 1988, which restarted the minority oppression, moving away from the base concept of secularism. Even though the Awami League is in power now instead of the religiously inclined centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the condition is yet to improve on a larger scale. Presently, the Hindu population has gone down from 29% since 1947 to less than 8%. Even though Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians also facing attacks on various occasions in the country, yet the Hindu community is the most threatened with regular plights. The attack on Durga Puja pandals, which is the major yearly celebration of the Hindus is a common

occurrence every year. Beheading the idols, burning the pandals happen across the nation. However, this year, it took a more violent turn in nationwide chaos where there were high Hindu casualties, with more than 70 houses being torched. Both the UN and Amnesty International condemned the heinous act of aggression.

There are still rays of hope as it indicates that the country is yet to be on an irreversible path. The people from the local community came together to guard the Durga Puja Pandals. The student wing of various organizations, along with the ruling party, the Bangladesh Awami League, took to the streets, to show solidarity with the Hindu population. There are also demands across the nation to restore the original constitution since 1972, which can bring religious harmony. After all, the idea of the nation was deep-rooted in the unity and pride of the common language - the pride of the nation - the mother tongue, Bengali. The current trend in terror does not go with the core idea of the country. The Bangladesh government was quick to take action against the attack on the Hindu minorities. They deployed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in more than twenty districts. The initial investigation points the finger at the Pakistan-supported Jamaat behind the attack on the Durga Puja pandals.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh

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Modi's Domination - What We Often Overlook

Narendra Modi turned 71 last month. It is tempting to compare his situation to that of India's first Prime Minister on his own 71st birthday. Like Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960, Modi has become synonymous not merely with his own administration, but with the Republic as a whole. His command over his party is total; he faces a weak and fragmented opposition.

The inequality in status between the PM and his ministers is so great as to make nonsense of the idea of a cabinet government. Every achievement or new scheme is branded with the Prime Minister's name and face, but no failure seems to taint him. In the early 1960s, many commentators believed that Indian democracy would not survive Nehru's death. Now, in a country of 1.4 billion, Modi has successfully persuaded voters that there is no alternative to him. Of course the parallel is inexact. But this much is undeniable. All our republican institutions - separation of powers, federalism, Parliament, the Cabinet, independent regulatory and investigative agencies - are weakened by the identification of the state with a single individual. This can be true even when the individual in question is sincerely committed to those institutions. The complete Modification of the

Republic is sometimes attributed to the Prime Minister's own gifts, sometimes to the inadequacies of the present set of Nehru-Gandhis, sometimes to sociopolitical climate change that across continents has proved salubrious to populist-nationalist strongmen. All these factors have played their part. But a fourth factor is overlooked. Narendra Modi is, quite literally, a survivor. He dominates the scene because a generation of Indian politicians - his generation - died before their time.

Consider the following list of BJP leaders. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, Pramod Mahajan, Gopinath Munde, Ananth Kumar, Manohar Parrikar, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley. All born between 1949 and 1959. All dead before the age of 70. The last four served under Modi, but every name on this list was senior to him in politics - they had served as a chief minister or Union minister before Modi's entry into electoral politics in 2001.

In one sense, the most significant name by far in this list is Pramod Mahajan. Mahajan was the closest thing in the BJP to an official successor to Vajpayee and Advani. Vajpayee famously named him Lakshman to Advani's Ram when passing the baton of party leadership at

the end of 2005. Four months later, Mahajan was dead, fatally shot by his younger brother.

A living Pramod Mahajan would have constituted the primary obstacle to Modi's national ascent. It is difficult to imagine Mahajan giving way to Modi in the way that Sushma Swaraj and Rajnath Singh did in 2013. Of course, Modi may well have made it to the top anyway - but Mahajan would have represented a genuine alternative/rival of the kind that simply does not exist in today's BJP. In collective terms, the BJP has suffered an immense loss of competence. The price has been paid not by the party, but by the country. Every name on this list would, if alive, be a senior cabinet minister or Chief Minister today. They would elevate the Cabinet in terms of experience, credibility, and administrative dexterity. Instead, we have a cabinet dominated by political lightweights and retired bureaucrats. The BJP's "talent deficit" is not structural. It is the consequence of losing a generation. Without this generation, the BJP is dominated by politicians from Gujarat and the Hindi belt who lack an understanding of India's social and cultural pluralism. And it is has lost its link to the party's two previous periods in

government - the Janata and Vajpayee eras. The "Emergency spirit" of working across non-Congress party lines died with them.

Take Ananth Kumar, an old-school dealmaker who got along with all parties, and helped out his state even when it was run by the Opposition. The contrast with the present generation of Karnataka BJP leaders - such as his namesake, the MP for Uttara Kannada - could not be sharper. Narendra Modi and Amit Shah have no experience of managing a coalition. Neither do the vast majority of their colleagues. The manner in which they passed the farm laws, and their response to the protests that followed, have exposed the lost skills of compromise, negotiation, and trust-building-skills possessed by the likes of Jaitley, Swaraj and Mahajan. The Congress has been every bit as transformed by a series of premature deaths. And, unlike the BJP, it has paid a direct political price. One of the most striking facts of recent political history is the Gandhi family's ability to retain control of their party over a decade of the worst electoral performances in the Congress' history. It seems to violate the most basic laws of party politics. Parties exist, after all, to win political power.

Between 2000 and 2009, the

Congress lost Rajesh Pilot, Madhavrao Scindia, and YS Rajasekhara Reddy to transport accidents (road, plane, and helicopter respectively). Were they alive today, they would be the party's three most powerful leaders outside the Gandhi family. Pilot and Scindia were precisely the kind of Hindi-speaking mass leaders the Congress no longer has. As for YSR - no single event in the history of the decline of the Congress may have been as pivotal as his death. Of the so-called G-23 leaders, only two, Shashi Tharoor and Bhupinder Singh Hooda, have a mass following, and Tharoor's is spread across India rather than rooted in his state. There is not one leader left in the Congress (with the provisional exception of Bhupesh Baghel) who is in true command of their own state unit. The Gandhis retain their hold on the party because every credible challenger is either prematurely dead (the three aforementioned) or has left the Congress (Mamata Banerjee, YS Jaganmohan Reddy).

Under YSR, Andhra Pradesh was as central to the Congress' national fortunes as Uttar Pradesh is to Modi's BJP. His death, and Sonia Gandhi's subsequent treatment of his widow and son, turned Andhra Pradesh from the bedrock of the Congress into one state where the Congress is absent and another where it is peripheral. Had YSR lived, the Congress may still have lost in 2014, but with many more than 44 seats. And he would have refused to countenance the drift that followed. There is an older history of Indian history turning on premature deaths. Nehru had the stage to himself because Subhash Chandra Bose was dead. If Lal Bahadur Shastri lived another five years, the Congress may have never turned dynastic - and India may have avoided both Indira Gandhi's socialist turn and the Emergency. And, of course, Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi's very political careers would never have existed but for Sanjay Gandhi losing control of his Pitts S-2A biplane on June 23, 1980. If he were alive today, he would be 74 - younger than three current Chief Ministers and younger by five days than the current Congress President, his sister-in-law. But those were individual deaths. Between 2000 and 2019, India lost a whole generation - and we are still counting the costs.



SRK, Aryan Khan Rouse India's Buried Insaniyat

Shah Rukh Khan is not just "every star". Still, Pratap Bhanu Mehta's poetic sigh at the unmistakable targeting of one of India's most loved individuals is sharp political analysis as well. "Every star," Mehta wrote, "must now be dimmed by an ideological shadow."

How true. Simultaneously, however, other utterances have jumped out of the media to remind me of a more positive, but equally rhythmical, thought that I'd come across in my youth, which was that even "the hour that darkest seemeth" would prove our universe's "changeless goodness".

Thus I was pleasantly surprised when I actually heard Amit Shah address Kashmir Valley's residents as his "sisters and brothers". Whatever else he may have said or done in Kashmir, or not said or done, Shah did once say to the Valley's Muslims, "Sisters and brothers!"

Soon after, following a cricket match in Dubai, Yuzvendra Chahal tweeted this message to fellow brilliant bowler Mohammed Shami, who had been shamelessly and viciously trolled: "We are so proud of you @MdShami11 bhaiya." Meanwhile we had all seen Pakistani cricketers and Virat Kohli join one another in hugs.

Not that there's the slightest danger of bhaichaara clearing South Asia's barbed-wire borders without scrapes or injuries. Still, the happy sights you and I saw, and the cheery sounds we heard, were real. They actually happened.

There was more. Ifan Pathan reminded us of the "spirit of cricket", adding, "Spirit of human beings. #remember don't let people fool you." In different parts of the world,

Indians and Pakistanis seemed pleased as they exchanged videos from Dubai of friendship in a context of contest.

Just as impactful, if not more so, were the torrents of messages of empathy for Shah Rukh Khan, his son Aryan, and the others subjected to the Narcotics Control Bureau's invasive and seemingly unessential probes. It was as if millions, literally, of Indians, most of them Hindus, were saying "Enough!" to what appeared to them to be a bid to besmirch the reputation of a beloved actor for no real reason other than the fact that he is a Muslim.

For the moment at least, the Indian mind felt that a line had been crossed in what till now seemed to be a widely tolerated march, an unrelenting and unconstitutional procession, apparently condoned by the state, to keep India's Muslims in an inferior place. From any "justice" angle, India's ecosystem has seemed seriously flawed. Neither growing joblessness, nor the rising price of fuel, nor even the shortage of oxygen at critical moments, has been seen to exact a political price. It appeared, too, that the state could keep dissenters, students, and protesters behind bars and out of sight year after year, without provoking questions from the average Indian.

However, the outcry over Shah Rukh and Aryan has shown that while insaniyat can remain buried and silent for a period, it does not die. No, madam and sir, not in India. The sights and sounds I have picked out are proof of insaniyat's immortality, of the changeless goodness of the spirit of India, even if much that is harsh and cruel scars India's life every day.

Cricket and Bollywood do not attract me the

way they did during my boyhood and youth. The pyramids of money with which both cricket and movies seem connected at the highest levels of these two worlds do little to win my admiration. Yet I know that only astonishing degrees of talent, discipline, training, and will power bring success in sport and Bollywood. More importantly, we can all recognize that India's buried insaniyat has been resurrected, at least for now, by these two worlds.

Individuals like Shah Rukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan, as also our superstars of bat and ball, not only symbolize India; they are a part of our lives. Our spirits rise or fall with them. When they are victorious, or gallant, we feel good. When they are in misfortune or poor form, we feel sad or even angry. But if they are slandered or ill-treated, we are enraged. In such times, we become Shah Rukh Khan, we are Aryan Khan. Our insaniyat, and our Indian-ness, merges with theirs. Two other thoughts may merit attention. Insaniyat is an Urdu word. It's a beautiful word. No Hindi or English alternative conveys what insaniyat conveys. It is also, of course, a very Indian word, just as Urdu is, above everything else, an Indian treasure of measureless value. The other thought is about the place where the current great sporting contest is taking place. A Muslim chief runs the principedom of Dubai. Muslims probably constitute its great majority. It is surrounded by Islamic nations or emirates. And yet some of us use the arithmetic emanating from Dubai to slight Muslims, including our own. It's an irony every bit as odd as the fact that the kingdom of cricket over which India now reigns is, or at least was, an imperialist realm.

Why Invesco versus Zee could be another shareholder activist challenge to falter in Asia



Aggressive, no-holds-barred shareholder activism has met with plenty of cultural resistance in Asia, most notably in Japan and South Korea. Now, it's India's turn to curb American investors' enthusiasm. Or so it would seem from the latest twist in the fight over Zee Entertainment Ltd., the country's largest publicly traded television network. "Sometimes, it happens that a company must be saved from its own shareholders, however well-intentioned," said Justice G.S. Patel of the Bombay High Court, temporarily restraining Atlanta-based Invesco Developing Markets Fund from calling investors meeting to oust the board. The injunction is unlikely to be the end of the corporate battle, though it does boost founder Subhash Chandra's chances of hanging on to his crown jewel with only a 4% stake, versus Invesco's 18%. Earlier this year, Invesco tried to facilitate talks between Reliance Industries Ltd. and the media mogul's elder son, Punit Goenka, the chief executive officer. Those discussions, which Goenka disclosed only recently, failed because they would most certainly have seen the asset pass into Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani's orbit. In six years, Ambani, Asia's richest man, has created the largest digital business in India from scratch. Zee's streaming service, whose 80 million active users spend more than three hours a month on the platform on average, plans to cater to non-Hindi-speaking audiences. It would have been a snug fit for the cheap Android phone that Alphabet Inc. has custom-built for Ambani. JioPhone Next, which will go on sale soon, is all about breaking down communication barriers in a country with 22 official languages and a bewildering array of dialects.



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Has crop insurance helped Indian farmers?

Many don't get payments on time

The cropped area under insurance was 26 per cent in 2018-19. Despite strong government push and unseasonal heavy rains, farmers have reason to be hesitant.

Every business involves taking risks, but farming is inherently riskier given India's low irrigation coverage that makes it very sensitive to variability to weather conditions, especially rainfall that causes droughts or floods. Only 49 per cent of farming land was under irrigation in 2015-16, with a wide variation across the crops. The loss of production due to crop diseases as well as volatility in agriculture output prices remains high, resulting in variability in farm incomes. One way to cope with the risk in farming is to take crop insurance.

Unseasonal heavy rains have been causing death and destruction in some parts of India recently. Overall, however, we have been lucky as a nation for the past three years with monsoons. It is a rare occurrence for the South-West monsoon (during June-September) to be normal for three years consecutively. The rainfall has been normal this season or above normal in the preceding two years. With the non-farm economy suffering badly due to the Covid pandemic, the agriculture sector with 3.6 per cent growth saved the Indian economy from plunging even more.

The last time we had a below-normal South-West monsoon was in 2018 when it was 9 per cent below the long-period

average. Data recently released shows that from July to December 2018, more than 40 per cent of farmers faced losses in several crops. In a vast majority of the cases, the primary reason was deficient rainfall or drought, followed by a crop disease (Figure 1).

Figure 1

But the adoption of crop insurance remains low in India despite the high risk and multiple efforts by government agencies. The cropped area under insurance was 26 per cent in 2018-19 compared to the government of India's target to bring 50 per cent of the area cropped under insurance. This is despite an overhaul of crop insurance schemes by the Narendra Modi government in 2016 when it introduced the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) as well as revisions to the existing schemes such as Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) and another revamping last year of both the schemes. Are insurance claims settled?

There are several reasons for the low adoption of crop insurance with the primary reasons being 'not aware of crop insurance' and 'not interested' (Figure 2). This is even when more than half of the agricultural households that insured beyond the mandatory requirement at the time,

experienced crop loss in jowar, maize, ragi, arhar, moong, groundnut, soyabean and even coconut from June to December 2018.

The key question is this - even if we make farmers aware of crop insurance and convince them that there is a need for insurance, does it make sense for them to buy crop insurance or would they still remain uninterested?

Buying any insurance - crop, health, accident - is rational on the part of the purchaser if an insurance claim is processed and settled on time. There is little incentive to take out insurance cover if many claims get rejected. What does the data show in terms of claim settlement for crop insurance? Until last year, for all farmers who took loans on their Kisan Credit Cards, the insurance premium amount was deducted mandatorily from their loan amounts. Some farmers insure their crops separately and not as a part of taking agricultural credit. Among such farmers who insured additionally, during the second half of 2018, depending on the crop, between 70 and 100 per cent of farmers who made an insurance claim for crop losses did not receive the compensation (Figure 3). The best-case scenario was of Bajra farmers, 42 per cent of whom

received the insurance they claimed.

If farmers suffer the loss and do not receive insurance compensation, it is a waste of premium payment. During good farming years, there isn't a need for a claim and during a bad year, the claim is not settled. Even under mandatory PMFBY, while the percentage of claim settlement is higher, the delays in payment have been significant. Recognising the delays in settling the claims and non-payment, the government of India made PMFBY voluntary from 2020 even for farmers who take crop loans from formal institutions.

Endless delays, no payment What are the reasons for such dismally low insurance claim settlement? The crop insurance claims are not rejected because they fall outside the coverage of the scheme or documents are lost by farmers. Almost all claims are rejected because of 'other' reasons. The other reasons relate to how the crop insurance schemes are structured, funded and implemented.

In recent years under PMFBY, there have been delays on the part of the state governments to pay their share of the premium subsidy. Under the scheme, the central and state governments provide subsidies on insurance

premiums, which the governments pay to the insurance company. It was then decided that the states that delayed the release of premium subsidies to concerned insurance companies beyond a prescribed time limit, would not be allowed to implement the scheme in subsequent seasons. In fact, states such as Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar left the scheme, citing the high cost of the premium subsidy, defeating the objective of raising the farm insurance cover.

Another reason is the delay of payments in the settlement of claims by insurance companies. To curb that, the government of India instituted a penalty interest of 12 per cent on insurance companies if they delayed settlement of claims beyond ten 10 days of the prescribed cut-off date. Among other reasons for rejections/delays in claim settlement include the delays in assessing the yield and disputes between the insurance companies and state governments over the yield data. Irrespective of the reason, unless a higher percentage of claims is settled and payment is made on time, a rational decision on part of farmers is not to waste the premium money.



China passes border law to formalise its actions at LAC. And Jack Ma is back



In this week's Chinascope, we look at China's new land border law, controversy over Beijing's upcoming property tax, Caixin's removal from an approved list of news sources, and the detention of famous Chinese pianist Li Yundi.

China over the week- In a move that can be interpreted as an attempt to legally formalise China's recent actions along the border areas of India, the country, on Saturday, passed a law called 'Land Border Law of the People's Republic of China' which will come into effect on 1 January 2022.

The law is directly targeted at countries that share a border with China and has direct implications for India's ongoing tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). "The state and its land neighbors shall, in accordance with delimitation treaties, delineate land borders on the spot and conclude demarcation treaties. Boundary demarcation treaties shall be approved by the State Council in accordance with legal provisions," says the text of the law. "If the personnel illegally crossing the border are members of the armed forces, they shall be dealt with by the relevant military agencies," the law adds. The border affairs traditionally have been the responsibility of the Central Military Commission and various branches of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The move to assign the border affairs to State Council is largely symbolic because the council follows the will of the Communist Party, and the formal separation between the party and the state is merely emblematic.

'World's being mean to Aryan Khan'.

What Mumbai's elite SoBo crowd is saying

My guess is Aryan Khan will walk out a stronger man. King Khan will also retain his crown - and endorsements. There will be diyas illuminating Mannat this Diwali.

Mumbai is such a Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander kind of khatarnak city. We have been playing Squid Game in this manic metropolis for decades! Since Mumbai has zero time for losers and has been worshipping winners forever, it is hardly surprising that at the moment, Sameer Wankhede (no relation to the stadium), the high-profile NCB Mumbai Zonal Director, is being looked at with undisguised derision for being short-sighted enough to think he'd win the war he has waged against the indomitable King Khan. What was he even thinking? Bhai... aapki auquaat hi kya hai? Please socho. Back to the 'Jo Jeeta...' theory. On Monday night, I was at a trendy new Japanese bistro. It's a daring venture that hopes to dethrone a goliath in the restaurant space - Morimoto's iconic 'Wasabi', located in the even more iconic Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, less than a couple of kilometres away. The brash new eatery has managed to lure one of the young Wasabi chefs and is jauntily starting 'Wakai'

with an uncomfortably similar menu - but with more gooey mayo on the signature dishes. I enjoyed the food, the buzz and the décor. The vibe was hip and uber-cool, what with a Manga-inspired interior, and real wasabi root being grated into the Japanese soy sauce? Nicccce, na?

Will 'Wasabi' get hilaoed by 'Wakai'? Can anybody hilao King Khan? Aryan in Mumbai chatter...

Aryan's father has hired the services of the best (and priciest) lawyer in the land - the mighty Mukul Rohatgi, who will no doubt, go to court all guns firing. On Tuesday, the psychological advantage was with Team Aryan as Sameer Wankhede faced his bosses in Delhi, possibly to answer a few key questions about the bribery charges brought against him. As we know, a psychological advantage often wins important matches. Baba... I'm not saying anything ... read what cricket experts are writing about India's zabardast loss to Pakistan in Dubai. You can blame the dew... but, boley toh,

our boys kind of blew it and underperformed - hota hai!

As always, I was happily overhearing the lively chatter around me at 'Wakai'. Interestingly, the Japanese word 'Wakai' translates to 'immature' or 'young'. In keeping with the jawani-diwaani image of the place, other tables were dotted with smashing looking SoBo bachchaa log with kaafi paisa, going by what they were ordering. Some of the girls were clad in alarmingly short and tight dresses, which exposed innerwear. I was caught staring, and my children were deeply embarrassed. Showing my age - yes! I was told the whole idea is to display inner wear and not cross the legs when seated. Oooops. I felt deeply apologetic for taking up the average age in the bistro by fifty years and bringing disgrace to the 'cool' quotient. In a desperate attempt to salvage what remained of my tattered self-worth, I timorously asked the DJ if what he had played earlier was the haunting theme from one of my favourite

movies, Merry Xmas, Mr Lawrence, a 1983 war drama starring David Bowie. Indeed it was, I was told by a pretty lady with masses of Taapsee Pannu curls framing her face. She mustn't have been born at the time! I left the restaurant with a bit of my dignity restored. ...and the sympathy for superstar's son

Scraps of the conversations I had shamelessly eavesdropped, came back to me in the car heading home: "Why is everybody being so meeeeee to Aryan, ya? Come on... as if he's the only dude doing stuff." Everyone at the table was in agreement that "Aryan was being victimised and it just wasn't fair! As if it's all his fault for being SRK's son, ya..." After a thoughtful pause, an Ananya Pandey lookalike added, "Imagine... I hear he was starved in that dirty jail and managed to survive on just biscuits. How could he eat daal chawal like other prisoners? Soooooo sad, ya." Suddenly, the truffle lobster I was about to bite into, lost some of its allure and taste.

Xi's China cracking down on economy reporting. Caixin lost status, investors like Alibaba

China also asked top social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Douyin and Kuaishou to control the 'illegal release of financial news'.



The decision to remove Caixin from the approved list of news sources is the latest attempt by Beijing to reign in China's remaining independent press.

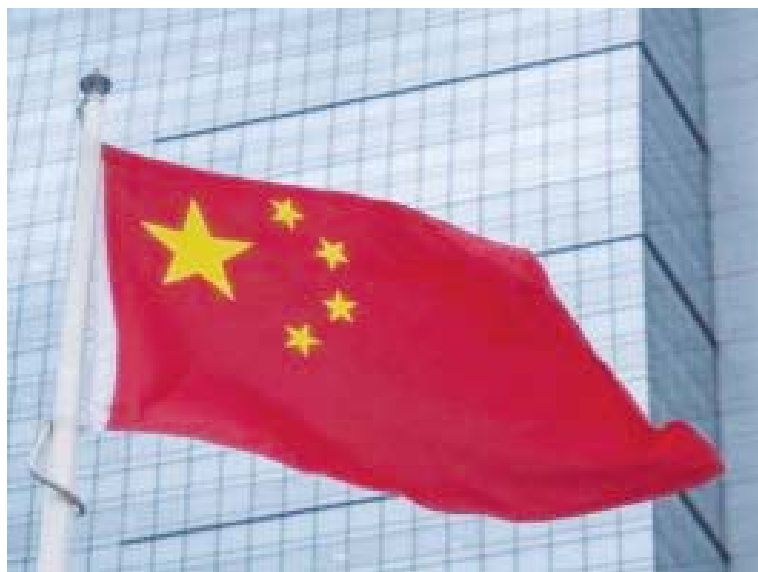
Xi Jinping's plan to reshape China's economy and the Evergrande debt crisis started intense debates. Unlike political and social issues, reporting on economy has received minimal censorship in recent years. But that's changing.

Cyberspace Administration Affairs of China (CAC) published a new list of approved news sources on 20 October. The list was posted on the WeChat and Weibo accounts of CAC. It was the first time since 2016 that the list of trusted news sources was updated, and included 1,300 news platforms and social media accounts.

The other publications removed from the approved list are Economic Observer, Caijing Magazine and the 21st Century Business Herald. All the publications removed from the list devote a significant share of their reporting to economic issues. Economic Observer was established in April 2001 and modelled on the Financial Times. Like Caixin, the publication has an English language website.

The removal from the approved sources means that Caixin's news stories now can't be distributed on various Chinese news media and social media platforms. Crackdown on Caixin

Though the Communist Party controls the ownership of news media outlets, there are a few independent ventures like Caixin. The independent news outlet self-censor their stories to align with the agenda of the



party.

Until recently, publications like Caixin could report on China's economic issues without oversight by China's propaganda machinery. The crackdown on Caixin marks a pattern to control the reporting and data on economy-related news. China has tried to control personal commentary about the economy on social media.

The campaign against Caixin isn't entirely new. In 2016, the media outlet reported on the deleting of its articles by the CAC and tried to expose the practice by the government. It also reported rigorously on the Evergrande debt crisis, which

may partly explain the latest crackdown on it.

"Evergrande contagion may trigger wave of defaults for developers," said one of the headlines of a story by Caixin on 9 October. "Evergrande Real

Estate's sales continue to fall, and price has reached the lowest value in recent years," said another headline of an article on 15 September.

A vast majority of Caixin's content, both in Chinese and English, is behind a paywall. Its stories were circulated widely by republishing the content on other Chinese platforms. The crackdown appears to be targeted at who can forward information and via which medium. "It doesn't say to me that they've been told not to write those stories. It just says they don't want those stories broadly distributed," said Ross Settles, an adjunct professor at

the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre.

The founder of Caixin, Hu Shuli had posted an image about how to cook a pig's head, before Caixin was removed from the list. Some have speculated the message was for Xi Jinping. The post and the image were later deleted.

New rules, goodbye investors
In a similar action, CAC recently asked top social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Douyin and Kuaishou to control the "illegal release of financial news" by "self-media". Beijing is finding it difficult to control the sharing of financial data and speculation about the financial markets.

On 8 October, a draft document by National Development and Reform Commission reiterated that private businesses couldn't invest in the news media business. Some commentators have claimed there is nothing new in the restrictions. But others disagree. "While many of the items banned in 2020 remain banned in 2021, there have been many important additions on the 2021 list, including banning non-public capital from engaging in news reporting & editing, public account, importing foreign news, holding news summits or prize awards," said Henry Gao, a law professor specialising in Chinese trade and economy.

The announcement suggests that Beijing may completely force private investors to divest

from media-related businesses in the coming months.

Earlier in March, the Chinese government had asked Jack Ma's Alibaba Group to dispose of its media assets. Jack Ma's businesses seem to have started complying.

On 23 September, Chinese state media reported that Jack Ma's Ant Group had disappeared from the list of Caixin investors. Chinese State media later reported that Ant Group had sold its shares of Caixin.

Tencent had also invested in Caixin, and the company's investment doesn't appear on the list of investments any more.

Alibaba still has a share in the news outlet Quzhou News - another independent outlet. Alibaba and Ant Group are planning to divest shares of some other platforms they own, but the ownership of South China Morning Post remains with the group. Beijing's strategy may be to slowly starve publications like Caixin of private investment and reduce their capacity to report on critical topics.

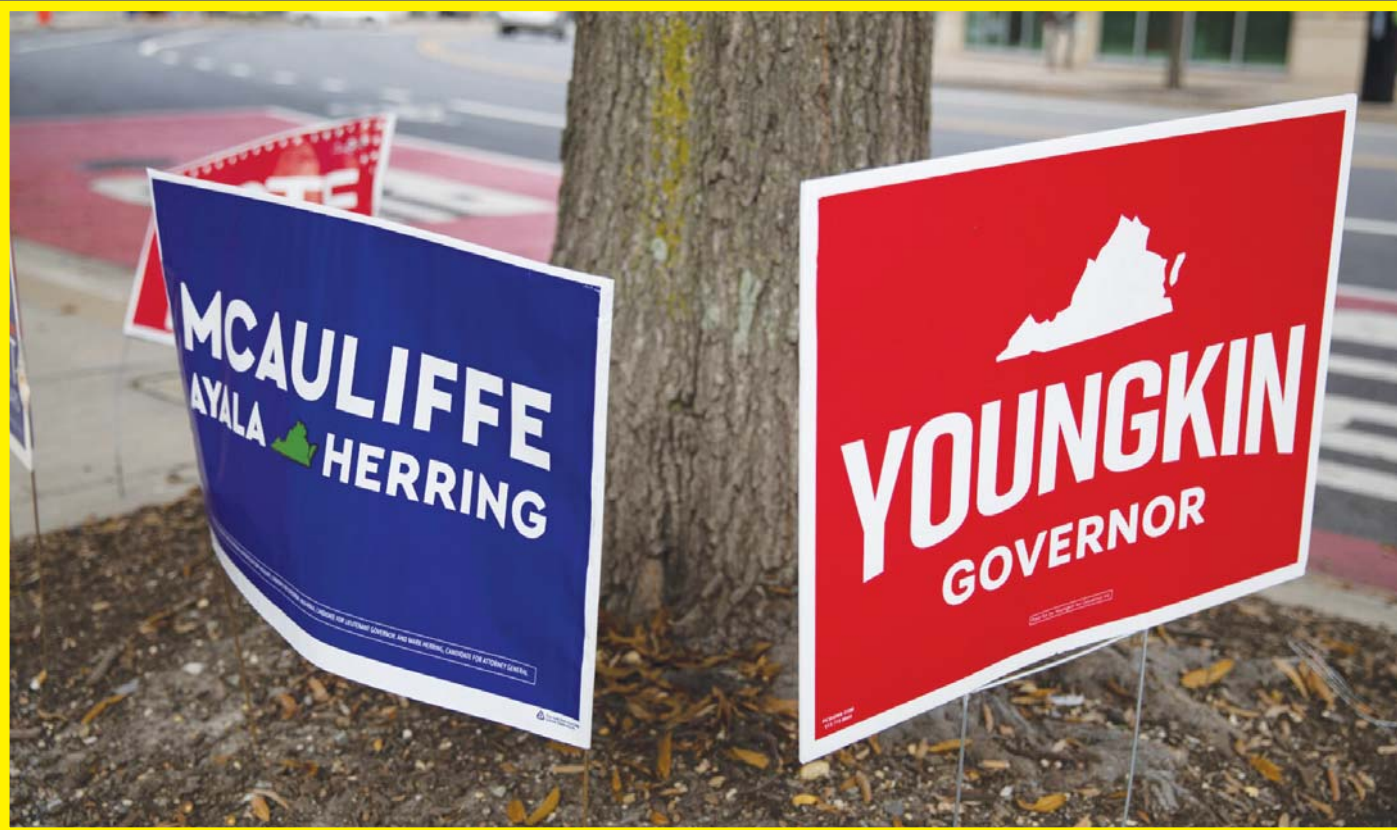
"The goal is to ensure that the growing universe of digital media products is politically disciplined when it comes to sourcing news and discussion of current affairs," said Chinese media expert David Bandurski.

For now, Caixin is safe since the company relies on subscription revenue for a significant portion of its operations.

Xi writes an essay

Within China, there are deep-rooted questions about the direction of the country's economy. Xi's common prosperity campaign and upcoming property tax have unnerved many. Even Xi himself had to write an essay to explain the common prosperity campaign. That should have been the job of Chinese State media and other pliant media outlets. The Wall Street Journal reported high-level opposition to Xi's proposed property tax. The tax is said to be unpopular among the elite residents of cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. SCMP reported that the tax would be rolled out under a pilot project first. The distribution ban is unlikely to stop Caixin from publishing on these matters, but the removal is a message to stop critical reporting on economic issues. Beijing may want to ensure that it has tight control over public opinion ahead of the national party congress next year.

VIRGINIA WILL GO RED ON NOV 3, 2021...!!



(By Dave Makkar)

Unlike other state governors, Virginia governors are not allowed to serve consecutive terms. They have been barred from immediate re-election since the adoption of Virginia's second constitution, in 1830. However, a former governor is permitted to run for a second term in a future election.

Since 1830, only Mills Godwin, was elected to additional term. Godwin also became the first ever governor in American history to be elected by both major parties when the former Democrat Governor (1966-70) was re-elected in 1973 as a Republican.

Virginia has another tradition, for nearly 50 years, with two exceptions; in 1973 when Governor House & White House was with Republicans and in 2013 McAuliffe (D) got elected when Obama (D) was in White House. Virginians have elected governors from the opposite party of the one that controlled the White House. They seem to favor a balance between state and national politics.

The state population has boomed, it is up by 38 percent since 1990. One in 10 people eligible to vote in the state were born outside the United States, up from 01 in 28 in 1990.

For years, Virginia has shifted more Democratic and since after the election of (D) Gov. Ralph Northam in 2018, it has become a solid blue state. According to Amy Walter, national editor of The Cook Political Report, which provides analysis of elections and races; in 2018 Democrats succeeded in places where they didn't in 2006, but also they did well in places that 10 years ago we never would have considered competitive." It has not voted Republican in a presidential election since 2004 and it has not elected a Republican to any statewide office since 2009.

Large swaths of Virginia are still very



conservative and Trump is popular in those places. In 2016, he won 93 of Virginia's 133 counties, but it wasn't enough to take the state & lost to Clinton by 5.4%. In 2020 election, Biden won Virginia with 54.11% of the vote, and by a margin of 10.11%, the best performance for a Democratic presidential candidate since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944.

This year the contest for Governorship is between a political newcomer and a businessman Glenn Allen Youngkin on the Republican side and former Democrat Gov. Terrence Richard McAuliffe.

Terry McAuliffe is a life long carrier American politician and better known as consigliere to the Clinton family, few people epitomize establishment socialism better than Terry McAuliffe. He was the 72nd Gov. of VA from 2014 to 2018, chairman of Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign and Chair of DNC from 2001 to 2005. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic nomination in the 2009 VA Gov. elections. If he wins the 2021 election, he would become the first VA Gov. since Mills Godwin in 1973 to serve two non-consecutive terms.

McAuliffe had his bachelor's degree from the Catholic University of America. After graduating worked for President Jimmy Carter's re-election campaign, becoming the national finance director at age 22.

Following the campaign, he attended Georgetown University Law Center, where he obtained his Juris Doctor degree. He is married to his wife, Dorothy (American attorney), for 33 years and the couple has five children. Glenn Youngkin is an American businessman, prior to entering politics, he has spent 25 years at the private-equity firm The Carlyle Group, rising to become its Co-CEO. He is an alumni of Rice University, Harvard University & Harvard Business School. He is married to his wife, Suzanne, for 27 years and the couple has four children. Suzanne, is the founder of Normandy Farm's and the President of the Phos Foundation. She is a member of the Meadowlark Retreat Center's Board of Directors and the Shakespeare Theatre Company. She is also a member of the Equine Medical Center's Advisory Council at Virginia Tech. She not only support her husband's policies, also handles issues in the campaign.

Youngkin, who retired from Carlyle in September 2020, described leaving because he felt "called into public service." His friends say Youngkin's rise up the professional ladder hasn't changed him and he remains down to earth, hardworking and humble.

Right from the beginning McAllife has made tying Youngkin to Trump the central attack of his campaign, hoping to link the Republican to a former President who lost VA in both 2016 and 2020. He was banking on that voters' distaste for Trump will be enough to weigh Youngkin down. Other than that McAuliffe has focused on his record from his previous term, but he never offered much of an argument as to why he deserves a second term. He attacks Trump with a passion, but avoids talking about his friend for 4 decades President Biden, whom he helped carry Virginia

by 10 points just a year ago.

In his effort to tie Youngkin with Trump, he was supported by President Biden on July 28, 2021. Biden said in the rally that, "Terry and I share a lot in common. I ran against Donald Trump and so is Terry. And I whipped Donald Trump in Virginia and so will Terry," McAuliffe said in Arlington. "I tell you what, the guy Terry is running against is an acolyte of Donald Trump -- for real." McAuliffe, also calls Youngkin a "Trump wannabe."

By August, McAuliffe had a 12 points (46-38) lead over Republican Youngkin in VA Gov. race, according to a Roanoke College poll. On SEP 17, 2021 during the first election debate, McAuliffe made it clear that Virginia has rejected Donald Trump and his right-wing agenda and will reject Glenn Youngkin this November.

On the other hand, Youngkin's campaign had a sluggish start but later on moved into high gear. With no experience as a candidate, and few insider connections or public political views. Youngkin started proving to be a natural campaigner, both connecting with voters and deftly seizing on dissatisfaction with Richmond and Washington. Even GOP lawmaker who were not too supportive, started coming around on Youngkin, after seeing his ability to connect with people as his best attribute. Eventually he got the support of 94% of Republicans in the state.

He started targeting concerns among moderate and swing voters in Northern Virginia about crime, taxes and spending. His support for the police, pledge to protect police officers against individual lawsuits, and effort to paint Democrats as anti-law enforcement were among the issues that forced the voters to take him as a serious challenger.

The voters started responding to his pitch, that I'll be honest, I'm not a politician. I am a businessman who's spent the last 30 years raising my family in Virginia, I firmly believe Virginia should be the best and I'm ready to join together with hard working Virginians to make it happen. He wants to divide parents from their kids' classrooms

He wants to remove law enforcement from our communities - He wants to divide Virginia - I refuse to let it happen, that's why I'm reaching out to Virginians. I firmly believe conservative policies can bring us together and create a country that will thrive for generations to come. Youngkin spokesperson Matt Wolking responded to McAuliffe's ad against Youngkin, by saying the former governor "opposes requiring a photo ID to vote, which undermines the integrity of our elections and makes it easier to cheat."

"Glenn Youngkin will restore Virginia's photo ID law and make sure it is easy for every eligible person to vote and harder to cheat," Wolking said.

What's Kyrsten Sinema Up To? It's Pretty Obvious.



Both allies and enemies say her time in the Arizona state Legislature showcased a commitment to personal ambition over party loyalty.

Walk the streets of Kyrsten Sinema's old stomping grounds, Phoenix's artsy Roosevelt Row, on a busy Friday night and you might see a dozen or so Kyrsten Sinemas, none of them flattering. A local dance crew calling itself the Moderate Pixie Dream Girls, whose members dress in pink tutus and purple party wigs, perform on local street corners to protest the Arizona senator's opposition to increasing the minimum wage or her resistance to immigration reform.

Stickers at the hipster coffee shop anchoring the neighborhood feature her face on a milk carton reading "Missing: Last seen defending the Jim Crow filibuster." At the national level, though, Sinema's brand isn't so much progressive betrayal as raw confusion. When Saturday Night Live parodied Sinema as one of two Democrats opposing President Joe Biden's domestic agenda, the writers knew how to have fun with her biographical details - "as a wine-drinking bisexual triathlete, I know what the average American wants" - and her fashion sense ("all the Scooby Doo characters at the same time"). But when it came to what motivates her, they drew a blank, settling simply on "chaos." Chaos isn't a bad way to describe her impact in Washington right now; she's not only holding up her

own party's biggest national priority, but she's famously unclear about her reasons why. Joe Manchin (W.Va.), the other most-intransigent Democrat, can't stop talking about his motives. Sinema isn't even calling her friends. She's rocketed into the national zeitgeist as an enigma, one of the least understood politicians in Washington.

Back home, some of her oldest allies - as well as critics - have an insight for the Democrats who are trying to corral her, and it's not necessarily a comfortable one: Get used to it. Politically, Sinema's career looks like she experienced a personal revolution; she began as a left-wing agitator and ended up as a Republican-friendly moderate. But in Arizona, many people see those positions as almost beside the point: For them, Sinema is better understood in terms of pure ambition, and the constant triangulation needed to hold office in a purple state that fancies itself charting an independent course, whatever that requires in the moment. Sinema declined to comment for this report.

"She's usually the smartest person in the room and she wants to be treated that way," says Phil Lopes, a former Democratic colleague in the state House of Representatives, who was once a Sinema ally, but no longer. What exactly Sinema stands for appears to be less important. She voted against Donald Trump's massive tax cuts but now refuses to raise tax rates on the wealthy and corporations; she says tackling climate change is a top

priority but reportedly suggested slashing billions of climate dollars in Democrats' sweeping social spending package (something her office denies).

Progressive activists are furious, with local groups already threatening to fund a primary challenge against her in 2024. Some of her old comrades say Sinema would be better off dropping the 'D' next to her name altogether and returning to her roots as an independent.

But for those still perplexed about Sinema, her rise offers an object lesson in how to get ahead by flagrantly eschewing loyalty to one's own party.

The broad outline of Sinema's metamorphosis is well-known: A former Green Party activist who protested the Iraq War in a pink tutu, she shifted toward the center as she set her sights on Congress. But the details of Sinema's transformation lay in her time in the state legislature, where she learned to distance herself from progressives and made alliances with Republicans that she still leans on today.

Back in 2002, the Arizona Democratic Party deemed Sinema "too extreme" for the Arizona Legislature in her bid as a lefty independent candidate. But two years later, after adopting the label of Democrat and getting the nod from her new party, she won a seat in the Arizona House of Representatives.

For the next six years, she served in the state House representing the same Downtown Phoenix district as David Lujan, an era that culminated with him as House minority leader and her as assistant leader. But the first time they met in 2004, she was hesitant to team up with him because he had once been registered as a Republican. She interviewed him first to ensure he was sufficiently progressive - an irony that's not lost on him now.

"We were very much a progressive team," he says. "If you look at our campaign materials during those years, we ran on a progressive platform and the bills we introduced are pretty progressive. So that's definitely different than the approach she takes today."

As Sinema climbed the ranks into state Democratic leadership, she also learned the art of compromise so well that it began to concern some of her progressive allies and former liberal champions. She also stood out immediately for her ability to make friends with the most conservative Republicans, including now-Rep. Andy Biggs, leader of the hard-line House Freedom Caucus, and Russell Pearce, sponsor of Arizona's SB1070, a controversial 2010 law designed to crack down on illegal immigration. Many of those relationships were strategic, notes Kirk Adams, the former GOP speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives.

Biden's last chance to rescue America's world standing



As Joe Biden heads to Europe, he is taking with him a significant chance to reclaim American leadership on what is perhaps the world's biggest priority -- climate change. It is also an area where the world doubts that America is prepared to step up and do the right thing, rather than talk about it. This is Biden's big chance. And at the outset, he seems to be failing. Spectacularly.

Climate change is an issue watched more intensively abroad than it is in the United States. Six years ago, I spent 10 days at Le Bourget Field outside Paris, where Charles Lindbergh landed in 1927 after completing the first solo flight across the Atlantic. There, in 2015, representatives of 196 nations set forth the milestones vital to curbing global warming by the end of this decade.

This week, the United Nations asserted in a dramatic, chilling report that the world, especially its major economies, is failing in almost every respect to meet the climate challenge. "We're just so far off track, it's really discouraging," Drew Shindell, a Duke University earth science professor and co-author of Tuesday's report, told the Washington Post.

The failure of American leadership is one critical element, though a host of nations, most egregiously China, must share the blame. And, as early as last summer, John Kerry, the US special envoy for climate, told Biden that there's not much chance of cooperating with China on climate change as long as relations with the United State remain as frosty as they are on a whole host of barely related issues -- from human rights to Taiwan to Hong Kong. China emits more carbon than any other nation and has plans to build 43 new coal-fired power plants and 18 new blast furnaces. The United States has failed to persuade Xi Jinping to change China's behavior in the near term, though China has set goals for reducing carbon emissions, projecting that they will peak in 2030.



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Shah Rukh Khan was India. And then India changed

The world that Shah Rukh Khan built, and New India broke.

There are three things intrinsic to the legend of Shah Rukh Khan, one of India's best-known cultural exports. It's the house the actor built for himself by the sea of the city he swore he would own one day. It's the happy, shiny, gleaming family that he worked hard for, having lost his father at 15 and his mother at 26. And it's his reputation for integrity, created over a three-decade-long career in the public eye, which has caused him to clash at various times with various figures of authority, starting perhaps with Jamia Millia Islamia that didn't allow him to take his final examination because of shortage of attendance.

Over the last fortnight, all these elements have been sought to be systematically dismantled.

Officers of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) have visited Mannat to complete paperwork, an action the media reported as a 'raid'. It is a house Shah Rukh is justifiably proud of. Built on heritage property, every bit of it has been a result of his movies, his endorsements, his dancing at weddings and his singing at concerts, years of backbreaking work for a man who spent his childhood and youth in rented homes.

His family, his three children, the light of his eyes, and his wife, once gleaming paragons of family values, were celebrated in shows such as *The Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives* (Netflix). Now the once-gilded couple has been nationally shamed for their parenting style, their comments pulled out of context, whether it is Shah Rukh telling Simi Garewal that his son, then two years old, could do whatever he wanted including drugs, or his wife Gauri Khan telling David Letterman that they were concerned, but not

hysterical parents.

Above all else, his reputation, of a clean family man, stands frayed. I am an employee of the Shah Rukh Khan myth, he has often said. That myth today has taken a battering.

No Duplicate

In a world where the tall poppy syndrome is a default setting, it is natural to want everyone to be at the same level. And Shah Rukh has set himself up to be a very tall poppy indeed, magnifying his stardom in his increasingly self-reverential movies and in his interviews with global celebrities from anchors like Letterman to billionaires such as Amazon's Jeff Bezos. Add to that, his stardom, which is all inclusive, just like that famous pose with outstretched arms. It includes Muslims, women, and the LGBTQ community. If Bollywood, on the Bharatiya Janata Party's radar since it gave it industry status in 1998, has to sell the idea of a new Bharat to the world, the old icons have to be brought down to earth, and new stars and stories created.

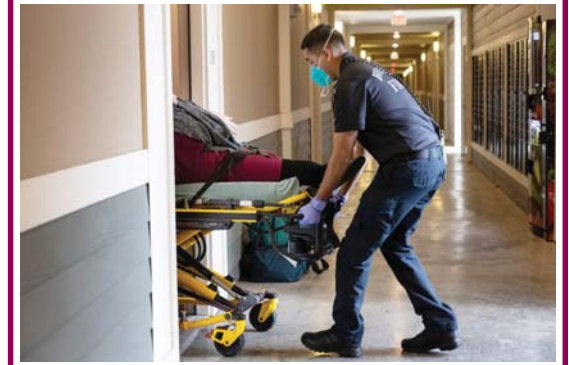
It has been a taxing time for the star, who has remained silent through it all, choosing to fight the battle legally, not seeking sympathy or scurrying for support or grovelling for a pardon. But he is in the public eye, his sorrow and that of his wife's, on display for all to consume, discuss, debate and digest. And there is an undeniable quality in all of us—we are quick to judge, especially celebrities we adore. We love to celebrate Shah Rukh's films in theatres or avidly check out Gauri's latest home design in a lifestyle glossy. It ticks all the boxes of how we expect the super-rich to behave, and while we aspire to that way of living, we also envy it. When you watch *The Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives*, it's hard not to cringe

when the "girls" talk about Gauri Khan. As Maheep Kapoor, her long-time friend, says: "She's the OG. She's the woman who's married a man, a mega, mega superstar, and not been overshadowed by him."

Respect is poisoned with resentment and that becomes the fabric of our relationship with even our most beloved stars. Some of them, like Amitabh Bachchan, will come out to give darshan, quietly, or tweet irrelevantly, and retreat, literally and metaphorically into their gated bubbles. But Shah Rukh has immortalised that fandom in Billu (2009); he has captured that darshan on cinema, in Fan (2016), and he has even mocked it as in this year's Disney+Hotstar ad, making us wonder again at the playfulness of the actor. Shah Rukh Khan was India

Shah Rukh has never been an accidental star. It is a stardom that has been well-thought-out and brilliantly executed. He has done that by always measuring himself against modern Bollywood's most incandescent star, Bachchan. He has done iconic remakes, whether it is Bachchan's Don or Dilip Kumar's Devdas, to remind people of his self-declared cinematic legacy. He has, of all of his contemporaries, had the most books written about him, whether it is books that analyse his cinema, him or his appeal to women across the globe. In the movie *Chak De! India* (2007), his colleague tells Shah Rukh's character in the movie, "ek galti toh sabko maaf hoti hai (everyone is allowed to make one mistake)". Shah Rukh smiles scornfully and says: "Sabko? (everyone?)" In the film, the implication is that a Muslim in public life in India has to be extra cautious.

How Covid Is Killing People Who Don't Even Have the Virus



In Cullman, Ala., Ray DeMonia was having a cardiac emergency and sought treatment at his local hospital, but he was not admitted because there was no ICU bed available. The local hospital contacted 43 other hospitals in three states, and all were filled beyond capacity. He was eventually transferred to a hospital in Mississippi about 200 miles away, but it was too late to save his life.

In Bellville, Texas, Daniel Wilkinson was diagnosed in his local emergency room with gallstone pancreatitis. He needed immediate surgery, but the hospital was not equipped to perform the procedure. His emergency room physician tried for seven hours to locate another hospital where the surgery could be performed. Finally, a bed became available at the VA hospital in Houston, but by the time he was airlifted to the hospital, it was too late to perform the surgery and he died.

Paramedics are seen transporting a woman with breathing difficulties to a hospital in Texas in September 2021. The pandemic has killed over 700,000 Americans, but it has indirectly killed many more - all the people with treatable health emergencies who were unable to obtain care at hospitals overwhelmed with Covid patients.

Mark A. Rothstein is Herbert F. Boehl Chair of Law and Medicine and Director of the Institute for Bioethics, Health Policy and Law at the University of Louisville School of Medicine.

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Myanmar skips Asean summit after its military ruler shut out

Myanmar skipped the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in protest after the regional bloc shut out its top general from its meetings.

(News Agencies)- Southeast Asian leaders on Tuesday began their annual summit without Myanmar, amid a diplomatic standoff over the military-ruled nation's exclusion from the group's meetings.

Myanmar skipped the summit in protest after the regional bloc - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, known as Asean - shut out its top general from its meetings.

The group's refusal to allow Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing to represent Myanmar at the summit was its harshest rebuke yet of the country's military rulers since the generals ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February.

Brunei, who is this year's chair of the 10-member bloc, invited Myanmar's highest-ranking veteran diplomat, Chan Aye, as a "non-political" representative but she didn't attend the meeting,

two diplomats said. The diplomats requested anonymity as they are not authorized to speak to the media.

Myanmar's Foreign Ministry vowed late Monday to challenge Asean's unprecedented move to downgrade its participation in the three-day virtual summit, which is being held by video due to coronavirus concerns. The ministry said it will only accept representation by the country's top general, who heads its government and ruling military council, or a ministerial-level representative.

The talks will be joined by other world leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden and the leaders of China and Russia, and are expected to spotlight Myanmar's worsening crisis, as well as regional security and economic issues.

Biden's participation will be the first time since 2017 that a U.S.

leader has attended the Asean summit.

The military takeover in Myanmar triggered widespread protests and led to a violent crackdown by authorities. Almost 1,200 civilians are estimated to have been killed by security forces, though the government has claimed a lower death toll.

Asean's sanctioning of Myanmar marked a shift from the bloc's bedrock principles of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs and decision by consensus. Myanmar cited the violation of those principles - enshrined in the group's charter - when it rejected Asean's ban on its military leader from the summit.

Myanmar's absence at the summit followed the refusal of its military leaders to allow the bloc's envoy, Brunei Second Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof, to meet with Suu Kyi and other civilian



leaders detained since the military takeover.

Asean leaders called for an immediate end to violence in Myanmar in an emergency meeting in April and outlined a plan for dialogue between both civilian and military figures to be mediated by the bloc's envoy. Myanmar's Min Aung Hlaing attended the meeting.

Asean leaders are due to hold talks with their counterparts from China, South Korea and the U.S. later Tuesday.

Ahead of the talks, a senior U.S. official held a virtual meeting with two representatives of Myanmar's political opposition National Unity Government, which views itself as a shadow government and had earlier sought to attend the Asean summit.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan "underscored U.S. continued support for the pro-democracy movement" in Myanmar during Monday's meeting.

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Islamic State in Afghanistan could be able to attack US in 6 months: Pentagon official

The US intelligence community has assessed that Islamic State in Afghanistan could have the capability to attack the United States in as little as six months, and has the intention to do so, a senior Pentagon official told Congress.

(News Agencies)-The US intelligence community has assessed that Islamic State in Afghanistan could have the capability to attack the United States in as little as six months, and has the intention to do so, a senior Pentagon official told Congress on Tuesday.

The remarks by Colin Kahl, under secretary of defence for policy, are the latest reminder that Afghanistan could still pose serious national security concerns for the United States even after it ended its two-decade-old war in defeat in August.

The Taliban, which won the war, are enemies of Islamic State and have seen its attempts to impose law and order after the US pullout thwarted by suicide bombings and other attacks claimed by Islamic State.

They include bombings targeting

the minority Shi'ite sect and even an Islamic State beheading of a member of a Taliban militia force in the eastern city of Jalalabad. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Kahl said it was still unclear whether the Taliban has the ability to fight Islamic State effectively following the US withdrawal in August. The United States fought the Taliban as well as striking groups like Islamic State and al Qaeda.

"It is our assessment that the Taliban and ISIS-K are mortal enemies. So the Taliban is highly motivated to go after ISIS-K. Their ability to do so, I think, is to be determined," Kahl said, using an acronym for Islamic State in Afghanistan. Kahl estimated Islamic State had a "cadre of a few thousand" fighters.

Acting Foreign Minister Amir

Khan Muttaqi of the new Taliban government has said the threat from Islamic State militants will be addressed. He also said Afghanistan would not become a base for attacks on other countries.

Kahl suggested al Qaeda in Afghanistan posed a more complex problem, given its ties to the Taliban. It was those ties that triggered the US military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 following al Qaeda's Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington. The Taliban had harboured al Qaeda leaders.

Kahl said it could take al Qaeda "a year or two" to regenerate the capability to carry out attacks outside of Afghanistan against the United States.

Democratic President Joe Biden, whose supervision of the chaotic end to the war last summer has damaged his approval ratings,



has said the United States will continue to be vigilant against threats emanating from Afghanistan by carrying out intelligence-gathering operations in the country that would identify threats from groups like al Qaeda and Islamic State.

Kahl said the goal was to disrupt those groups so that Islamic State and al Qaeda don't become capable of striking the United States.

"We need to be vigilant in

disrupting that," he said.

Still, US officials privately warn that identifying and disrupting groups like al Qaeda and Islamic State is extremely difficult without any troops in the country. Drones capable of striking Islamic State and al Qaeda targets are being flown in from the Gulf.

Kahl said the United States did not yet have any agreement with countries neighbouring Afghanistan to host troops for counterterrorism efforts.



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China puts Lanzhou city in strict lockdown as Covid cases surge due to Delta variant

China has put Lanzhou, a city of four million people, under a strict lockdown amid the latest surge in Covid-19 cases in the country.

China has put Lanzhou, a city of four million people, under a strict lockdown amid the latest surge in Covid-19 cases in the country. China has asked residents of Lanzhou to not leave their residences unless it's an emergency. According to news agency AFP, China has recorded 29 new cases of Covid-19 with 6 of them being reported from Lanzhou. The lockdown restrictions in Lanzhou were announced on Tuesday, a day after the fresh cases. On Monday, China put thousands of people in northern China under strict restrictions

at a time when Covid-19 cases are rising again in the country over the latest Delta variant outbreak. Officials in Beijing have also restricted access to tourist sites and advised residents not to leave the city unless necessary, although regular transport services continued as normal, reported AFP.

China reported 39 new cases on Monday, bringing the tally from the latest Delta variant-linked outbreak to more than 100 cases over the past week. The numbers are extremely low compared with most places in the world, but China has

pursued a zero-case strategy throughout the pandemic and authorities are determined to subdue the latest outbreak with the Winter Olympics just over 100 days away. Several housing blocks in Beijing have been locked down, and organisers on Sunday indefinitely postponed a marathon at which 30,000 runners were expected.

Some 23,000 residents in one housing compound in Changping district have been ordered to stay indoors after nine cases were found there in recent days, local outlet Beijing News reported.

Photos showed officials in hazmat suits standing watch outside the entrances to each apartment block, and the perimeter of the compound blocked by metal barricades. Entry will be restricted for people who have been to places with local Covid-19 infections in the last 14 days, Beijing's vice publicity minister said Monday.

In the central city of Wuhan -- where the coronavirus was first identified in late 2019 -- organisers abruptly cancelled another marathon Sunday that was expected to draw 26,000 participants.

China cracks down on skyscraper 'vanity' projects, limits construction in smaller cities



The government of China is cracking down on wasteful vanity projects by limiting the construction of extremely tall skyscrapers by local governments in smaller cities.

These measures go beyond an existing ban on buildings of more than 500 metres.

Now, as per the Chinese Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development announcement cities will need special approvals to build skyscrapers taller than the prescribed limits.

In cities with less than 3 million people, skyscrapers cannot be taller than 150 metres (492.13 ft), and in cities with populations larger than that, skyscrapers cannot be higher than 250 metres.

According to the ministry, officials who approve such projects in violation of the new rule "will be held accountable for life", which means they will be liable for any follow-up punishment laid down in relation to the breach of rules.

While China acknowledges that high-rise buildings encourage more efficient use of land resources, the country is increasingly concerned that local officials are blindly pursuing construction with little regard for safety and practicality.

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

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. Incidents of vandalism were also reported from temples in Chandpur's Hajiganj, Chattogram's Banshkhali, Cox's Bazar's Pekua,

and Noakhali's ISKCON temple. The Ministry of External Affairs has raised the issue before the Bangladeshi government and said that the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has promptly reacted to ensure that the situation was under control. Meanwhile, the United States has condemned the attacks on the Hindu community in Bangladesh, saying that "Freedom of religion or belief is a human right".



Hunger forces Afghans to sell young daughters into marriage

More than 22 million Afghans will suffer food insecurity this winter as a drought driven by climate change adds to the disruption caused by the chaotic Taliban takeover of the country, said UN agencies.

(News Agencies)- Afghanistan is on the brink of one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, UN agencies warned Monday, with more than half the country facing "acute" food shortages. More than 22 million Afghans will suffer food insecurity this winter, they said, as a drought driven by climate change adds to the disruption caused by the chaotic Taliban takeover of the country. "This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and starvation unless we can step up our life-saving assistance," said David Beasley, executive director of the World Food Programme. The crisis is already bigger in scale than the shortages facing war-torn Yemen or Syria, and worse than any food insecurity emergency apart from the Democratic Republic of Congo, officials told AFP. "Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises - if not the worst - and food security has all but collapsed," Beasley said in a

statement. "We are on a countdown to catastrophe and if we don't act now, we will have a total disaster on our hands." According to the statement issued by the World Food Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, one in two Afghans faces Phase 3 "crisis" or Phase 4 "emergency" food shortages. Phase 4 is one step below a famine, and officials told AFP that Afghanistan - already struggling to emerge from a 20-year civil war - is facing its worst winter in a decade. FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said: "It is urgent that we act efficiently and effectively to speed up and scale up our delivery in Afghanistan before winter cuts off a large part of the country, with millions of people - including farmers, women, young children and the elderly - going hungry in the freezing winter." In August, the hardline Islamist Taliban overthrew the US-backed regime and declared an interim government, vowing to restore stability.

But the Taliban still face a range of international sanctions and a campaign of bloody attacks by rival hardliners the Islamic State -- while climate change has made Afghanistan's droughts more frequent and intense. Hopes for 'wet winter' In the west of the country, thousands of poor families have already sold their flocks and fled, seeking shelter and assistance in packed temporary camps near major cities. A visit by AFP journalists to the provinces of Herat and Badghis found families forced to sell their daughters into early marriage to cover debts and secure enough food to survive. On Sunday, the Taliban announced a plan to pay 40,000 labourers in grain in the Kabul region, employing them to dig holes to trap the winter snow and provide moisture for barren hills. Asked about the humanitarian crisis, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP on Sunday: "We are trying to get our people out of the current situation and help them. Global humanitarian aid has also arrived."

"We are trying to arrange and distribute, including food and clothing. All worries will be resolved," he added. "Regarding the drought, we hope to have a wet winter. But if the drought continues we will take appropriate measures in the spring." The UN agencies warned that their humanitarian response plan is only a third funded as it stands. The FAO is seeking \$11.4 million in urgent funding and a further \$200 million for the agricultural season into 2022. Fearing new refugee outflows from Afghanistan, international donors have pledged hundreds of millions of dollars for the country but they do not want to work with the Taliban directly. "Hunger is rising and children are dying. We can't feed people on promises - funding commitments must turn into hard cash," Beasley said. "The international community must come together to address this crisis, which is fast spinning out of control."

Indonesian ex-President Sukarno's daughter Sukmawati embraces Hinduism in conversion from Islam



The daughter of Indonesia's former President Sukarno, Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, has embraced Hinduism in conversion from Islam in a ritual ceremony on Tuesday.

This move is being held up by human rights and political observers as evidence of religious pluralism in the country.

Sukmawati's conversion ceremony took place in the house of her grandmother, who herself was a Balinese Hindu. It is located on the Hindu-majority resort island of Bali.

Arya Wedakarna, a close friend of Sukmawati and the head of Sukarno Center in Bali, which is a museum dedicated to the founding president, said relatives had given their blessings for her conversion.

Arya said, "She said she received (mystical) guidance from her ancestors, including her grandmother."

Sukmawati's ceremony was witnessed by her son, Muhammad Putra Al Hadad. It was heavily guarded by pecalang, or Balinese security forces.

While informing the press about her decision, her lawyer had said that she has extensive knowledge of Hinduism. She is also aware of all doctrines and rituals of Hindu theology.

Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, who is 70-year-old, is the third daughter of Sukarno and the younger sister of former President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

She is also the founder of the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia-PNI). She was married to Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya Mangkunegara IX, but got divorced in 1984.



US condemns Sudan coup, suspends \$700 million financial aid

The Biden administration on Monday suspended \$700 million in financial assistance to Sudan following a coup in the African nation that US officials roundly condemned.

The State Department said the full amount of the aid package had been put on "pause" pending a review of the developments in Khartoum that saw the military oust a civilian-led transitional authority and detain many of its members. Spokesman Ned Price called for the immediate release of those arrested, including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, and the restoration of the civilian authority.

"The civilian-led transitional government should be immediately restored. It represents the will of the Sudanese people, as evidenced by the significant, peaceful demonstrations of support," Price said. "We recognize the legitimate grievances about the pace of the transition, but (the) dismissal of government officials and dissolution of government institutions, both violate Sudan's constitutional declaration and abandon the democratic aspirations of the Sudanese people."

"Military officials should immediately release and

ensure the safety of all detained political actors, fully restore the civilian led transitional government and refrain from any violence against protesters, including the use of live ammunition," Price said. "Any change to the transitional government by force risks assistance and our bilateral relationship more broadly."

The suspended aid was direct financial support intended to help the country transition to a fully civilian government. Price said additional U.S. aid to the country could also be at risk, along with the broader relationship. Ties between Washington and Khartoum had been warming since Sudan agreed to pay compensation to the victims of the 1998 embassy bombings in neighboring Kenya and nearby Tanzania that were planned on Sudanese soil by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. Sudan had been removed from the U.S. list of "state sponsors of terrorism" late last year.

It was not immediately clear how much aid the U.S. is providing Sudan in addition to the \$700 million that was suspended. Many forms of U.S. assistance, including military aid, are still barred due to a decades-old

determination that a coup had brought Sudan's now-deposed authoritarian leader Omar al-Bashir to power in 1989.

That determination had not been rescinded despite the recent thaw in relations.

Price said the administration was watching developments "very closely" and "will not hesitate" to hold those responsible for the coup to account, including through the restoration of sanctions that had been lifted or eased after Sudan's removal from the terrorism sponsor list.

The coup unfolded just hours after the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, left Khartoum where he had met senior Sudanese military and civilian officials to try to urge a calming of tensions and reconciliation to keep the transition on track.

Price said Feltman warned military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan and others that any unconstitutional changes in the government would have consequences. U.S. officials said Feltman had departed about three hours before the arrests began without any knowledge of what was about to happen.

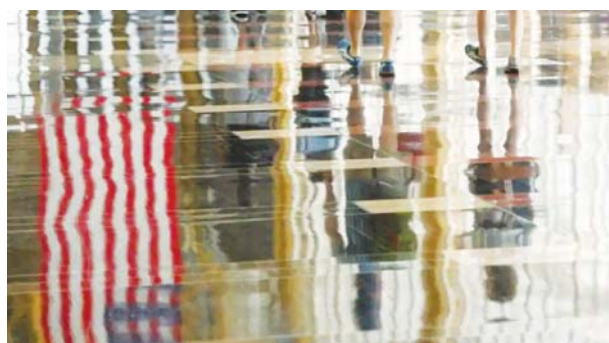
US to outline November 8 international travel reopening, vaccination rules

The Biden administration plans to unveil on Monday its detailed rules requiring nearly all foreign air visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19 starting November 8, sources told Reuters.

The White House first disclosed on September 20 it would remove restrictions in early November for fully vaccinated air travelers from 33 countries.

The extraordinary US travel restrictions were first imposed in early 2020 to address the spread of COVID-19. The rules bar most non-US citizens who within the last 14 days have been in the United Kingdom, the 26 Schengen countries in Europe without border controls, Ireland, China, India, South Africa, Iran and Brazil.

The White House plans to outline the legal framework



requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for most foreign air travelers replacing the current restrictions, as well as rules for exemptions from the requirements.

The Biden administration will also detail requirements

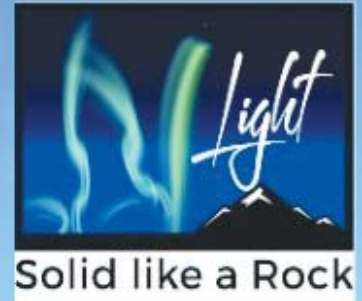
airlines must follow to confirm foreign travelers have been vaccinated before boarding US-bound flights.

The White House announced on October 15 that the new vaccine rules would take effect on November 8.

One concern among US officials and airlines is making sure foreign travelers are aware of the new vaccine rules that will take effect in just two weeks.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plans to issue new contact tracing rules requiring airlines to collect information from international air passengers. The White House said earlier airlines will provide the information "upon request to follow up with travelers who have been exposed to COVID-19 variants or other pathogens."

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Changemakers Summit 2021 for Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth

First Lady Jill Biden, Teen Vogue's Versha Sharma, Activists Amanda Nguyen and Helen Zia Headline

(By our Staff Reporter) WASHINGTON-Last Saturday, Act To Change, Hate Is A Virus, and Stop AAPI Hate joined together to co-host their first ever Changemakers Summit, designed to educate and inspire the next generation of youth leaders from Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.

The event was sponsored by several corporate donors who donated more than \$250,000 to help these organizations combat racism and bullying directed toward AAPI citizens. The donations came from companies including, JPMorgan Chase, McDonald's, PayPal, Sephora, Nickelodeon, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, Anime Expo, Glow Recipe, Electronic Arts and more.

The Summit was designed as a virtual nationwide gathering of middle school, high school, and college students as well as AAPI activists and entrepreneurs. Its goal was to support, connect, and inspire the next generation of AAPI youth leaders and activists. The Summit's program featured breakout sessions designed and led by community-based organizers and featured youth leaders as young as middle-school aged students.



Selected by the Youth Equity Council, sessions were organized around four pillars: Inform, Educate, Empower, and Celebrate.

" Inform: Understanding, unpacking, and healing from current events

" Educate: Constructing a dynamic AAPI-centered awareness of shared histories

" Empower: Providing tools and resources, and directly to youth

" Celebrate: Celebrating AAPI communities and cultures, and what we have contributed to America

In addition to the pillars above, the Summit also featured a list

of guest speakers from the AAPI community that ranged from actors and authors to filmmakers and activists. Together, the speakers represent a growing cohort of outspoken Asian American and Pacific Islander activists who are using their celebrity and influence to speak up on the issues that matter most in our communities. This list included:

" Dr. Jill Biden, First Lady of the United States

" Helen Zia, author and activist

" Maulik Pancholy, actor, author and co-founder of Act To Change

" Amanda Nguyen, activist, founder of Rise



" Versha Sharma, Editor-in-Chief of Teen Vogue

" May Lee, journalist, author, professor

" Ashlyn So, fashion designer, youth activist

" Kapulei Flores, photographer, activist

" Ryan Alexander Holmes, actor, content creator & activist

" Rachel Leyco, filmmaker, actress, and activist

The Summit was even attended by First Lady Jill Biden, who joined the event to rally against anti-AAPI bullying and racism and reaffirm attendees of the White House's commitment to fighting anti-AAPI hate crimes

and discrimination.

"Our President often says, 'We must not be silent. We have to speak out. We have to act.'," said Dr. Jill Biden. "We will act. We are committed to fighting hate crimes and bullying in all its forms. We stand united against racism. We stand united for justice and equality. And we stand united in the belief that every child deserves to grow up proud of who they are. And that's why today's summit is so important as you educate, empower, and celebrate all the young people who will be true changemakers for generations to come."

Overall, the Summit provided a space for young AAPIs to come together, learn more about themselves and their shared histories, inspire, and develop them to be leaders in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities at-large.

The Summit and the support of corporate and celebrity activists come after a year of increased anti-Asian hate crimes and discrimination, fueled by COVID-19 misinformation and scapegoating. By participating in the Summit, our partners are investing their social influence behind the fight to end racism, bullying, and discrimination against AAPI communities.

US appointed Indian-American religious envoy pledges to hold China accountable over minorities' repression

A US appointed Indian-American for the position of international religious freedom envoy pledged to hold China accountable over the repression of ethnic and religious minorities.

(News Agencies)-An Indian American, nominated by the Biden administration for the position of the international religious freedom envoy, on Tuesday pledged to hold China accountable over the repression of ethnic and religious minorities and also work with Muslim-majority countries to protect the rights of religious minorities there. Rashad Hussain, Ambassador-at-Large nominee for International Religious Freedom made the remarks while

speaking to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his confirmation hearing.

"I will leverage my existing relationships within Muslim-majority countries to protect the rights of religious minorities there. I will redouble efforts to broaden the coalition to hold China accountable for its horrific crimes against the Uyghurs and its repression of other ethnic and religious minorities," he said. If confirmed, Hussain would be the first ever Indian American and

a Muslim to hold this position. His family came to the United States from India where his father was raised in a village with no electricity, Hussain said. He said that far too many people around the world continue to face arrest, torture, discrimination and even death on account of their beliefs. Anti-semitism, Christian persecution, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance are on the rise, Hussain said. "A staggering eighty per cent of people worldwide live in



environments with high or severe restrictions on religious freedom," he said.

Hussain said these are not just statistics and bad laws, but individuals taken from their families and he highlighted the plight of the patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church

unable to leave his home to tend to his flock, the Saudi government whipping and jailing blogger Raif Badawi for encouraging debate online and the Nigerian government letting atheist Mubarak Bala sit in prison without charge for months.



Covid cases falling, but trouble signs arise as winter looms in US

(News Agencies)-Tumbling Covid-19 case counts have some schools around the US considering relaxing their mask rules, but deaths nationally have been ticking up over the past few weeks, some rural hospitals are showing signs of strain, and cold weather is setting in.

The number of new cases nationally has been plummeting since the delta surge peaked in mid-September. The US is averaging about 73,000 new cases per day, dramatically lower than the 173,000 recorded on September 13. And the number of Americans in the hospital with Covid-19 has plummeted by about half to around 47,000 since early September.

In Florida, Miami-Dade County's mask mandate could be loosened by the end of October if the encouraging numbers continue, and nearby Broward County will discuss relaxing its requirement on Tuesday. The superintendent in metro Atlanta said he will consider waiving

Tumbling Covid-19 case counts have some schools around the US considering relaxing their mask rules, but deaths nationally have been ticking up.

mask requirements at individual schools.

A high school outside Boston became the first in Massachusetts to make masks optional after it hit a state vaccination threshold. With about 95% of eligible people at Hopkinton High inoculated, school leaders voted to allow vaccinated students and staff to go maskless for a three-week trial period starting November 1. Still, there are some troubling indicators, including the onset of cold weather, which sends people indoors, where the virus can more easily spread.

With required mask use reduced in much of the US, the University of Washington's influential Covid-19 forecasting model is predicting increasing infections and hospitalizations in November. Also, Covid-19 deaths per day

have begun to creep back up again after a decline that started in late September. Deaths are running at about 1,700 per day, up from close to 1,500 two weeks ago.

The virus is still striking unvaccinated communities, many of them rural areas in states including North Dakota, Wyoming, Alaska and Minnesota. More than 67% of the nation's eligible population is fully vaccinated, and the Biden administration is getting closer to enacting a workplace vaccine mandate for every business in the country with more than 100 employees.

In Alaska, which has ranked at or near the top in per-capita case rates over the last month, hospitals remain strained, but health care workers are not speaking out the way they had,

said Jared Kosin, president and CEO of the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association. A recent debate over masks in Alaska's largest city, Anchorage, grew heated, and hospital and public health officials last month reported hostilities toward health care workers related to Covid-19. It's not yet clear, he said, if the state has peaked in terms of cases in this latest surge.

"It's not letting up and I think that's the hardest part with this. It's not like you can see hope on the horizon, you know we're going to see a rapid decline and get through it. It just seems to come and go and when it comes it hits really hard."

In sparsely populated Wyoming, which has one of the nation's lowest vaccination rates, hospitals are coping with more patients than at any other point in the pandemic. The vast majority of hospitalized patients in Wyoming haven't gotten the vaccine, the state's vaccination rate is only about 43%. Only West Virginia ranks lower.

US' former diplomat Haley and Congressman Waltz call for an alliance with India



(News Agencies)-America's former envoy to the UN Nikki Haley and a powerful Republican lawmaker, Mike Waltz, have called for an alliance between India and the US that would allow both countries to maintain and expand their global strength amidst China's aggressive postures in the region.

Waltz is a member on the powerful House Armed Services Committee, and Republican vice chair of the India Caucus.

"As a nuclear power with more than 1 million troops, a growing navy, a top-tier space programme, and a proven history of economic and military cooperation with the United States, India would make a strong ally," Haley and Congressman Waltz wrote in the latest issue of the prestigious Foreign Policy magazine.

"An alliance with India would allow both countries to maintain and expand their global strength. And together with Japan and Australia, it would enable the United States to form a real deterrent to potential terrorist threats in Afghanistan as well as counter China," they said.

Arguing that post-withdrawal, it is only India which can effectively keep a watchful eye on Afghanistan, Haley and Waltz wrote that only New Delhi can keep track of China's southern flank. "India operates Farkhor Air Base in Tajikistan, the only air base with the proximity to conduct counterterrorism strikes in Afghanistan. With an alliance, India could allow us access to strategic bases to protect US interests in Afghanistan and the broader region," they wrote.

"A US-India alliance would also give us an edge over China. Like the United States, India recognises that China is a rapidly growing threat.

US revokes top Chinese telecom firm's licence over 'national security' concerns

(News Agencies)-Citing "national security" concerns, the United States has revoked the license of one of China's biggest telecoms companies, reported BBC.

The Chinese telecom company will have to stop providing services in the US in 60 days. The Chinese government's control of the company gave it the opportunity "to access, store, disrupt, and/or misroute US communications", said

officials.

It in turn allows it "to engage in espionage and other harmful



activities against the US", they said.

China Telecom, which has been providing telecom services in the US for nearly 20 years, called the decision "disappointing".

In a statement, it said, "We plan to pursue all available options while continuing to serve our customers."

The company, China Telecom, is one of three firms that dominate China's market. It has hundreds of millions

of customers in 110 countries. It provides services ranging from broadband internet to mobile and landline telephone networks. The decision came hours after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen spoke to China's Vice Premier Liu He about the state of the global economy. It is the latest Chinese telecom firm to be targeted by US officials over national security concerns.

Mark Zuckerberg changes Facebook's name to Meta, announces Metaverse plan to create new virtual world

CEO Mark Zuckerberg, speaking at the company's live-streamed virtual and augmented reality conference, said the new name reflected its work investing in the metaverse, rather than its namesake social media service, which will continue to be called Facebook.

The metaverse is a term coined in the dystopian novel "Snow Crash" three decades ago and now attracting buzz in Silicon Valley. It refers broadly to the idea of a shared virtual realm which can be accessed by people using different devices. "Right now, our brand is so tightly linked to one product that it can't possibly represent everything that we're doing today, let alone in the future," said Zuckerberg.

The company, which has invested heavily in augmented and virtual reality, said the change would bring together its different apps and technologies under one new brand. It said it would not change its corporate structure.

The tech giant, which reports about 2.9 billion monthly users, has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years from global lawmakers and regulators. In the latest controversy, whistleblower and former Facebook employee Frances Haugen leaked documents which she said showed the company chose profit over user safety. Haugen has in recent weeks testified before a U.S. Senate subcommittee and lawmakers in the UK's Parliament. Zuckerberg earlier this week said the documents were being used to paint a "false picture."

The company said in a blog post that it intends to start trading under the new stock ticker it has reserved, MVRN, on Dec. 1. On Thursday, it unveiled a new sign at its headquarters in Menlo Park, California, replacing its thumbs-up "Like" logo with a blue infinity shape.

Facebook shares closed 1.5% higher at \$316.92 on Thursday. Tarnished Reputation

Facebook said this week that its hardware division Facebook Reality Labs, which is responsible for AR and VR efforts, would become a separate reporting unit and that

its investment in it would reduce this year's total operating profit by about \$10 billion.

This year, the company created a product team in this unit focused on the metaverse and it recently announced plans to hire 10,000 employees in Europe over the next five years to work on the effort.

In an interview with tech publication the Information, Zuckerberg said he has not considered stepping down as CEO, and has not thought "very seriously yet" about spinning off this unit.

The division will now be called Reality Labs, its head Andrew "Boz" Bosworth said on Thursday. The company will also stop using the Oculus branding for its VR headsets, instead calling them "Meta" products.

The name change, the plan for which was first reported by the Verge, is a significant rebrand for Facebook, but not its first. In 2019 it launched a new logo to create a distinction between the company and its social app.

The company's reputation has taken multiple hits in recent years, including over its handling of user data and its policing of abuses such as health misinformation, violent rhetoric and hate speech. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission has also filed an antitrust lawsuit alleging anticompetitive practices.

"While it'll help alleviate confusion by distinguishing Facebook's parent company from its founding app, a name change doesn't suddenly erase the systemic issues plaguing the company," said Mike Proulx, research director at market research firm Forrester.

The plans to phase out the Facebook name even from products like video calling device Portal show the company is eager to prevent the unprecedented scrutiny from hurting the rest of its apps, said Prashant Malaviya, a marketing professor at Georgetown University McDonough School of Business.

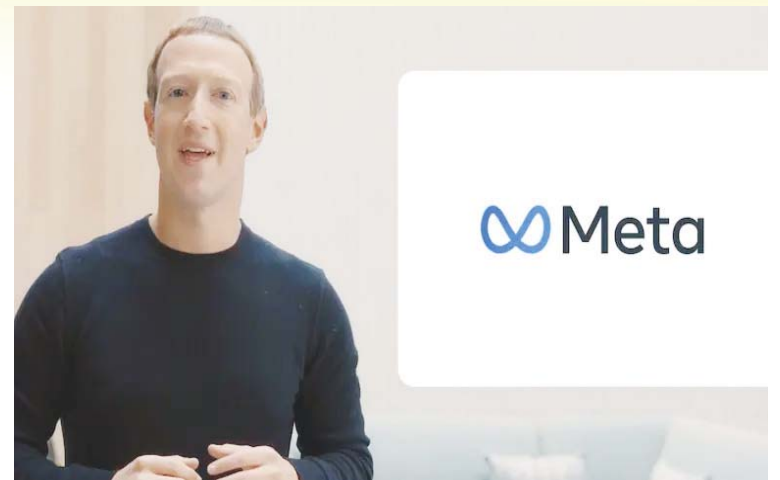
"Without a doubt, (the Facebook name) is definitely damaged and toxic," he said. Zuckerberg said the new name, coming from the Greek word for "beyond," symbolized there was

always more to build. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey on Thursday tweeted out a different definition "referring to itself or to the conventions of its genre; self-referential."

Zuckerberg said the new name also reflects that over time, users will not need to use Facebook to use the company's other services.

In 2015, Google reorganized to create a new holding company called Alphabet, as the popular search engine broke into new fields such as self-driving cars, high-speed broadband and expanded its cloud business. Snapchat also rebranded to Snap in 2016, the same year it launched its first pair of smart glasses.

Facebook, which this year launched its own pair of smart



glasses with Ray-Ban, "Horizon Home." Zuckerberg also showed video demos of what the metaverse could look like, with people connecting as avatars and being transported to digital versions of various places and time periods. He said that the metaverse would need to be built with safety and privacy in mind.

Let's go to explore a magical place

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BJP to Congress, Shiv Sena and RJD - super Saturday awaits parties in assembly bypolls

seats across 11 states and a union territory, excluding Shamtor-Chessore seat in opposition-free Nagaland, where the candidate was declared elected unopposed. You can almost feel the tension running from Brahmaputra valley to the western Himalayas and down to the south of Vindhyas.

Stakes for MVA in Maharashtra
In Maharashtra, only one constituency - Deglur in Nanded district - is going to the polls, but it's keeping top politicians on their toes. The Congress has fielded Jitesh Antapurkar, son of Raosaheb Antapurkar, whose death necessitated the polls. Former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan has put aside his personal grouse to ensure the ghar-wapsi of former Nanded MP Bhaskar Patil Khatgaonkar, who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 after falling out with Chavan. Former Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis also visited Nanded to persuade former Shiv Sena MLA Subas Sabane to join the BJP and contest the bypoll. Sabane had lost to a Congress candidate in 2019. This upset CM Uddhav Thackeray, who took a swipe at the BJP, saying the world's largest political party had to 'import' candidates for a bypoll. So, what is it in Deglur that has got top Maharashtra politicians so occupied?

Well, it's a test of the electoral efficacy of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the three-party ruling coalition in Maharashtra comprising the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and the Congress. The BJP had sprung a surprise last May, defeating the MVA in the bypoll to Pandharpur assembly seat earlier held by the NCP. If the MVA loses Deglur, another seat held by it, it would expose the coalition's fragility and cast doubts on the electoral formidability of the three-party alliance. There are already inherent contradictions in the alliance. If it proves to be electorally ineffective in the second consecutive assembly bypoll, it would have a serious bearing on the alliance, starting with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls early

next year.

By the way, the Shiv Sena and the Congress are already contesting against each other in the Dadra and Nagar Haveli parliamentary bypolls on Saturday.

Haryana's three-way battle

Haryana's Ellenabad assembly bypoll is crucial to Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) chief Om Prakash Chautala in terms of his political relevance after his release from jail after 10 years. His son, Abhay Chautala, had resigned from the



Ellenabad seat in protest against the Narendra Modi government farm laws and is seeking re-election. The father-son duo wants to retrieve their political turf, occupied by Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP). A defeat in Ellenabad would deliver a big blow to the INLD's revival efforts. The BJP has fielded controversial MLA Gopal Kanda's brother, Govind Kanda, three days after he joined the party and presented his credentials as a nationalist and gau-rakshak (cow-protector) to the BJP high command.

If Govind Kanda could pull it off for the BJP, it would give a big boost to the saffron party that has been on a sticky wicket in Haryana due to farmers' anger over the farm laws.

BJP and Congress legislators to be tested in Assam

In Assam, it's the first test of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his new avatar as a fiery Hindutva proponent. Five assembly seats - Tamulpur, Gossaigaon, Thowra, Bhabanipur and Mariani - will go to bypolls on Saturday. The first two fell vacant due to the death of their MLAs, while the last three vacancies arose due to the defection of two Congress and one All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)

legislators. The BJP has fielded all the defectors in the bypolls, leaving the other two seats to its allies. The BJP has 59 seats in the 126-member assembly and if it were to win all three, it would be just two short of the majority mark.

Besides, there will be another bypoll soon for the Majuli seat that was vacated by former CM Sarbanand Sonowal following his election to the Rajya Sabha. The BJP must be looking forward to ending its dependence on allies -

Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL).

The Congress, which has severed ties with Badruddin Ajmal's AIUDF, has fielded candidates for all five seats after the breakdown of talks with Akhil Gogoi's Rajgor Dal. The AIUDF, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), and the Communist Party of India (CPI) - three erstwhile members of the 10-party 'Mahajot' - have also fielded candidates. Other members of the erstwhile Mahajot are split in their loyalty. The CPI(M) is supporting the Congress on four seats and the CPI on one seat. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) is supporting the Congress, the AIUDF and the CPI in different seats. After the party's defeat in Assam earlier this year, many Congress leaders questioned the party's decision to ally with Ajmal's AIUDF.

These assembly bypolls would show if the Congress is better off alone.

Karnataka is all about Yediyurappa

In Karnataka, bypolls to Sindagi and Hangal assembly seats are the first electoral test of chief minister Basavaraj Bommai who replaced B.S. Yediyurappa in July. The latter has little to gain though. If the BJP wins the two seats that

have a significant Lingayat presence, the credit will go to Bommai for steering the party successfully into the post-Yediyurappa era.

If the BJP loses, especially in Hangal, then the CM may be embarrassed but it would be a bigger blow to Yediyurappa. The former CM had forced the party to make his son, B.Y. Vijayendra, one of the in-charges of Hangal. Yediyurappa must prove his hold over Lingayat voters to stay relevant.

BJP's test in Telangana

The outcome of the Huzurabad assembly bypoll in Telangana would be another indicator of the BJP's strength in the southern state. It delivered a shocker to the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), wresting Dubbaka seat in a bypoll last November.

In December 2020, in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation polls, the BJP put up a brilliant show, winning 48 of 150 wards, up from four in 2016.

Huzurabad bypoll will show whether and how much the saffron party has cemented its position as the TRS' principal rival. It's also a grudge match for chief minister K. Chandrasekar Rao as his former party colleague, Eetala Rajender, is the BJP candidate. Futures on the line in Himachal, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar

In Himachal Pradesh, bypolls to the Mandi parliamentary seat and

three assembly seats - Arki, Jubbal-Kotkhai, and Fatehpur - are crucial to CM Jairam Thakur. He must shudder to think how the high command may react if these bypolls show anti-incumbency building up against the BJP a year before the assembly election. The party replaced the entire Gujarat Cabinet last month to beat anti-incumbency. In Mandi, Pratibha Singh is fighting a battle to retain her husband and ex-CM Virbhadr Singh's political legacy, especially inside the Congress.

Jairam Thakur's counterpart in Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, may also be feeling the pressure ahead of bypolls to one Lok Sabha and three assembly seats. With many of his colleagues eyeing his chair and the BJP high command eager to promote a new crop of leaders, Chouhan can't afford to drop the ball. Bypolls to two assembly seats in Bihar are important for the Nitish Kumar government's stability. The death of two Janata Dal (United) MLAs has reduced the NDA's tally to 126 in the 243-member assembly, just four more than the majority mark. That gives smaller allies Jitan Ram Majhi of Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Mukesh Sahni of Vikassheel Insaan Part (VIP) - with four MLAs each - undue leverage. Either of these two bolting out would bring the government on the precipice.

Hindu persecution in Bangladesh: A tale of slow genocide

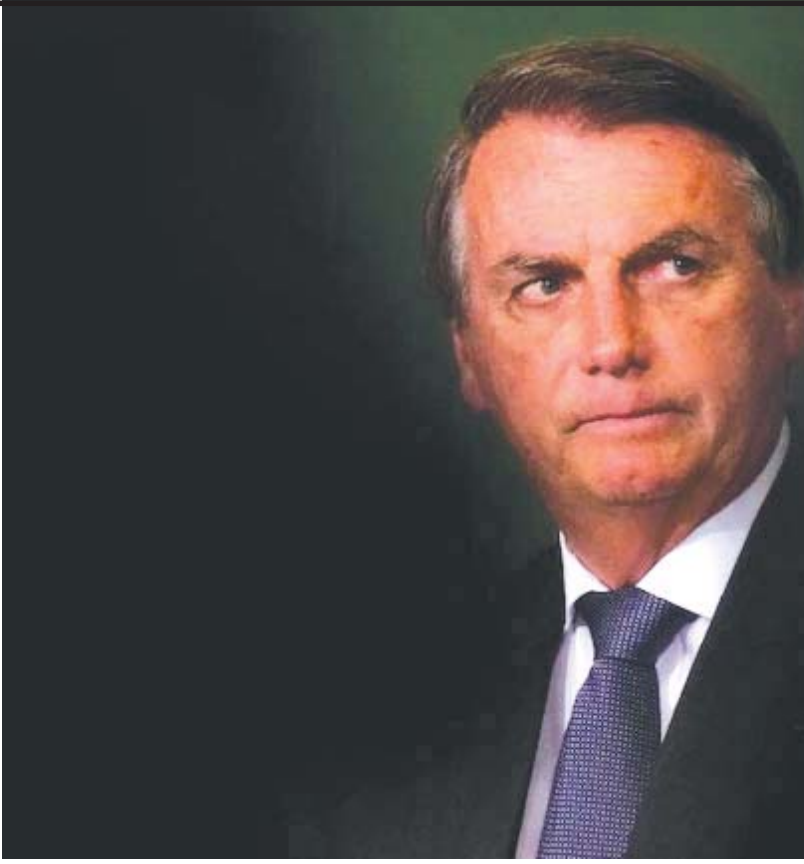
Hasina promised strong action against the offenders. In a few days, the Bangladesh Police arrested Iqbal Hossain, a Muslim citizen, who put the Holy Quran at the feet of Lord Hanuman, instigating the lethal riot. Over 600 people have been arrested so far for their direct involvement with the mass murder of the minority.

Bangladesh is standing at the crossroad of the century for now, with the country's future hanging in the balance. The recent economic growth rate, which was steady even during the Covid years, indicate that the country has the potential for all-round growth, economically and socio-

politically. On the other, these kinds of religious persecution along with the systemic minority oppression is harmful for the country itself. If the trend continues, it may lead to ongoing instability and chaos, like in Afghanistan or Syria.

As is the case of any democratic country, the power of change lies within the grasp of the people. Will the country plunge into the depths of the darkness in intolerance and religious prejudice or will it reveal in the glory days that resulted in the free nation of Bangladesh - only time can say!

By Susmita Ghosh



Jair Bolsonaro and his crimes against humanity

Pegasus Spyware "Can Only Be Sold To Governments", Says Israel's Envoy To India



Companies like NSO can't sell their products to non-governmental actors, newly-appointed Israeli Ambassador to India Naor Gilon said on Thursday, while terming as an "internal thing" for New Delhi the row over spyware Pegasus.

His comments at a press conference came following questions over allegations of unauthorised surveillance using Israeli NSO Group's spyware Pegasus and whether the Indian government contacted Israel over the issue. The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered an investigation into the matter.

The Israeli envoy said what is happening in India over Pegasus is an internal matter of the country. "I will not go into more details... NSO is a private Israeli company. Every export of NSO or such companies need an export licence of the Israeli government. We grant this export licence only for exporting to governments," he said. "This is the only main requirement that they cannot... under the requirements, they cannot sell it to non-governmental actors. What's happening here in India is an internal thing for India," he said. An international investigative consortium had claimed that many Indian ministers, politicians, activists, businessmen and journalists were potentially targeted by the NSO Group's phone hacking software. The Supreme Court has set up a three-member independent expert panel to probe the alleged use of Pegasus for targeted surveillance in India, observing the state cannot get a "free pass" every time the spectre of national security is raised and that its mere invocation cannot render the judiciary a "mute spectator" and be the bugbear it shies away from.

to ignore the threat. There were so-called strong, nationalistic and swashbuckling leaders who phoo phooed at the perils of the fast-spreading contagion.

In retrospect, some leaders, like Boris Johnson of the UK, course-corrected; some countries with deep democratic principles voted their leader, who had wilfully bungled the response, out of power, like Donald Trump of the USA; and then there is Brazil that has decided to launch criminal proceedings against their President.

Brazil is one of the worst impacted by the virus, where the leadership of Jair Bolsonaro is accused of having directly contributed to the devastation. More than 600,000 people died of Covid-19 in Brazil, second only to the USA in death figures.

The senators of Brazil on October 26 formally accepted an indictment report of President Bolsonaro's actions during the pandemic. The 11-member Senate panel voted 7 to 4 to recommend prosecution based on the report, which concludes that President Bolsonaro should be held personally responsible for 300,000 avoidable deaths. According to the report, he delayed the purchase of vaccines; he told Brazilians to 'stop whining' even when people were dropping dead like flies; he stopped local and regional governments from implementing restrictions saying the economy cannot be made to suffer; he

called the infections a 'little flu' and made fun of those who wore masks and practised social distancing; he told the people to go in for scientifically untested and quack solutions.

For 6 months, a committee had been going over with a toothcomb every action and inaction of Bolsonaro and his government's handling of the pandemic. The Committee presented its nearly 1200-page report calling for prosecutors to try Bolsonaro on

that might be a long shot since the Speaker of the Lower House is said to be sitting on more than a hundred other previous impeachment requests. But what the report is expected to do is put the truth of Jair Bolsonaro, who faces re-election in 2022, in front of the people of Brazil. A copy of the report will possibly get sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague because one of the charges against Bolsonaro

past few years. He fights hard for, and loves, the people of Brazil - just like I do for the people of the United States," He went on to add that "Brazil is lucky to have a man such as Jair Bolsonaro working for them. He is a great President and will never let the people of his great country down!" The support from the former US President did not come as a surprise because theirs is a mutual admiration society with Bolsonaro projecting himself as the Trump of the Tropics. He was also one of the last leaders to recognise Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump.

Brazil, on October 26th, became that rare country to have put on record that their leader failed to protect the nation and willingly harmed it, showing that whatever other problems Brazil may have, its democratic fundamentals are holding strong. The country's Federal Senate, representing the various

provinces and regions of Brazil, recommending prosecution of a sitting President gives the message that the will of federation remains stronger than the wilful machinations of one individual. Brazil has sent out a strong message to other democracies tottering on the brink of totalitarianism that it is possible to put on record the misdemeanours of those who misuse the mandate that the people entrust in them, forever tainting their legacy with criminal intent over the glory of adulation that brought them to power.



charges ranging from charlatanry, inciting crime, misuse of public funds and crimes against humanity. Of the 13 charges, there is one of genocide against indigenous communities for actions that left them vulnerable to the virus. The report is not just against Bolsonaro but against 78 people in total that include the President's 3 sons, government officials and other politicians. The report includes 2 counts of what is called 'crime of responsibility,' something that provides the grounds for impeachment but

is crimes against humanity. Meanwhile, President Jair Bolsonaro has denied all charges. The decision to file the charges would now be decided by the Prosecutor General of Brazil Augusto Aros, who being a Bolsonaro appointee, might not prosecute his President. Minutes after the report had been accepted by the Senate, Bolsonaro's idol from up north gave out a statement in his support. Former US President Donald Trump said "President Jair Bolsonaro and I have become great friends over the

Aryan Khan Gets Bail After 3 Weeks, May Be In Jail Till Saturday

found on him and that the grounds for his arrest were flimsy.

The NCB, however, claimed he was part of a conspiracy and that his WhatsApp chats revealed his involvement in illicit drug dealings. The case ignited a debate over whether Aryan Khan's incarceration was justified, given that no drugs were found on him and there were no signs of use. Social media has been flooded with messages of support, with many calling the arrest a witch-hunt.

Aryan Khan's father Shah Rukh Khan, 55, is one of India's biggest and most-loved movie stars.

The Khans' Mumbai home, "Mannat", usually features legions of fans waiting for a glimpse of SRK, especially on his birthday November 2. In the past few weeks, scores of people showed up in solidarity, holding up posters and messages for their idol. Within the film industry, besides Salman Khan, Farah Khan and Hrithik Roshan, few others have openly showed their support.

After two bail rejections, top lawyer Mukul Rohatgi argued Aryan Khan's case before the



Bombay High Court.

Mr Rohatgi said the arrest was wrong and infringed on his constitutional guarantees. He also told the court that the case against Aryan was built entirely on two-year-old WhatsApp chats that were "irrelevant" and had nothing to do with the cruise.

"These are young boys. They can be sent to rehab and they need not undergo trial," Mr Rohatgi said.

The special anti-drugs court that

denied him bail last week had said he knew about charas hidden in his friend Arbaaz Merchant's shoe, and this amounted to "conscious possession".

Mr Rohatgi called this view far-fetched. "I have no control over what is found in Arbaaz's shoe. There is no question of conscious possession. Arbaaz is not my servant, he is not in my control," he said.

Yesterday, the anti-drugs agency asserted that Aryan Khan was a

regular consumer of drugs and that his WhatsApp chats point at the procuring of "hard drugs" in commercial quantity.

"Accused number 1 (Aryan Khan) is not a first-time consumer," said the NCB's lawyer Anil Singh, the Additional Solicitor General.

"He is a regular consumer since last few years and he has been procuring drugs. There is a reference of procuring drugs in commercial quantity and the

drugs are hard drugs. He has been in contact with peddlers," said Mr Singh.

When the judge asked on what basis the agency had found him dealing in a "commercial quantity", the NCB referred to his WhatsApp chats.

"WhatsApp chat I am relying on will show he had made an attempt to deal with commercial quantity. Not only that, when they were apprehended on the ship, multiple drugs were found with all eight. It cannot be a coincidence. If you see the quantity and nature of drug it cannot be coincidence," Mr Singh said.

Mr Rohatgi countered that there were 1,300 people on the cruise.

"There are 500 rooms in the Taj. If two people are consuming in two rooms will you hold the entire hotel? There is absolutely no material for purposes of conspiracy," he said.

The officer leading the drugs-on-cruise investigation, Sameer Wankhede, is facing an internal probe within the narcotics bureau and another by Mumbai Police over allegations of bribery and extortion related to the case.

Joe Biden Is Almost as Unpopular as Trump. Unlike Trump, He Has a Way Out.

term. The only unique thing about Biden's decline is how quickly he burned through his post-inaugural popularity. In February, he hit an impressive 57 percent in the Gallup approval ratings, but recently he's dipped to 42 percent. That places Biden just a notch above Donald Trump's Gallup average of 41.1 percent, which is enshrined in the polling hall of fame as the worst approval rating of any president since Gallup started taking the measure of presidents in 1945.

The press has gathered to sing in full chorus about the Biden presidency hitting a new low, slumping, collapsing in free fall, just plain falling and plummeting. Why has his popularity tumbled into the sub-basement? What, if anything, can he do to improve his ratings? And should his popularity in polls really matter to him or to us?

Presidents since Harry S. Truman have obsessed over their

approval polls. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson sighed, "What I did for the Negro and seeing it through in Vietnam for all of Asia" had cost him 15 points and 20 points respectively in the polls. Trump bragged about his polls when they were high and dismissed them as fake when they dipped. The press, too, has slobbered over approval polls like a favorite chew toy, filling endless column inches with he's-up-he's-down-he's-nosediving-he's-soaring stories.

Presidents start out with high approval ratings because they're winners, but as John E. Mueller, the leading academic on the subject, wrote in 1970, after some opening moments of bliss and accord with the public, all presidents tend toward a natural decline. In Mueller's view, the decline is built in. Presidents win the White House by making extravagant appeals and promises to multiple interest groups. These voters become



smitten and develop unreasonable expectations about what the president can accomplish. And they are routinely let down.

In Biden's case, much of the current disappointment in him is the necessary price he must pay for promising a grand expansion of social programs - free community college, dental care for seniors, a path to citizenship for immigrants, for example - but failing so far to deliver. As these proposals have been downscaled or vaporized, some of the

constituents who originally swooned for Biden have become disillusioned. Constituents are like that: Promise them \$3.5 trillion in benefits and some of them will hate you if you only deliver \$2 trillion worth. Biden also vowed to vanquish Covid-19, which he hasn't (but is making progress on). Biden's optimism, which has failed in the political marketplace, has made his agenda a punching bag for the press, and their critical coverage has contributed to his flaccid numbers. (It's worth noting that Trump's approval ratings didn't vary much during his presidency, perhaps because he conformed to the expectations he created for both approving citizens and disapproving ones.)

Outside of feeding expectations, the variables that move a president's approval numbers reside mostly outside his control. If he's lucky enough to hold the rudder when the country plows into a crisis, he can expect to

bolster his approval ratings even if he deserves no credit for the response. For instance, Jimmy Carter's went up when the hostages were taken in Tehran. Later, of course, when the incident reduced him to a pitiful, helpless giant, his ratings folded. Both Bushes saw their numbers surge when after 9/11 and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Neither could sustain those numbers after they went to war. The highest poll point of John Kennedy's presidency came after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, a Dwight D. Eisenhower plan that Kennedy okayed. Ronald Reagan's numbers went up after he was shot. If the economy goes sideways on an administration, the president's ratings invariably suffer, Mueller writes. But oddly, if the economy improves, the supervising president generally reaps no reward. If a president is victorious in war - or just ends one as Eisenhower did in Korea - he can expect a bump.

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Policybazaar IPO to open on November 1: Check issue size, key dates and price band

The initial public offering of PB Fintech, the parent company of Policybazaar and Paisabazaar, will open for subscription on November 1. Here is all you need to know.

The initial public offering (IPO) of PB Fintech Ltd, the parent company of online insurance aggregator and fintech platform Policybazaar, will open for subscription on November 1.

Individuals will be able to subscribe to the public issue till November 3. The company had received a green signal from market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) earlier this month for its IPO. The company plans to raise just over Rs 5700 crore from the IPO, which will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 3,750 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 1,933.50 crore by existing promoters and shareholders of the company.

CHECK PRICE BAND, KEY DATES & OTHER KEY DETAILS

PB Fintech, which also runs fintech platform Paisabazaar, has set a price band of Rs 940-Rs 980 per equity share of face value Rs 2. As mentioned earlier, the IPO will open for subscription on November 1 and close on November 3. Investors can buy a minimum of 15 shares under a lot for an amount of Rs 14,700 and a maximum of 13 lots (195 shares) for Rs 1,91,100. The tentative listing date for the IPO is November 15. Of the total issue, 75 per cent will be reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIB), 15 per cent for non-institutional investors and the remaining 10 per cent for retail investors. Kotak Securities, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup Global Markets, ICICI Securities and Jeffries are set to be the book running lead managers of the issue. Link Intime is the

registrar of the IPO. The company plans to utilise Rs 1,500 crore of the raised amount for enhancing visibility and awareness of company brands including Policybazaar and Paisabazaar. It plans to use Rs 375 crore towards new growth initiatives to increase customer base including offline presence. Meanwhile, Rs 600 crore will be utilised for funding strategic investments and acquisitions. An additional Rs 375 crore will be dedicated towards expanding its presence outside the country.

Policybazaar was launched by PB Fintech in June 2008 and it is a leading online platform for insurance and lending products. The company is backed by investors such as SoftBank, Info Edge, Tencent, Claymore Investment, Tiger Global, Falcon Edge, Alpha Wave and others.

Fino Payments Bank IPO: Check price band, key dates and other details



The initial public offering (IPO) of Fino Payments Bank will open for subscription later this week on October 29. The public issue of the lender will open for subscription just a day after Nykaa IPO and individuals will be able to bid for the IPO till November 2.

CHECK KEY DATES, PRICE BAND & OTHER KEY DETAILS The digital-backed lender plans to raise Rs 1,200 crore from the IPO, which includes a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 15,602,999 equity shares by promoter Fino Paytech.

It may be noted that 75 per cent of the total issue has been reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), 15 per cent for non-institutional investors (NIIs) and the remaining 10 per cent for retail investors.

Read | 2 IPOs to open for subscription this week: All you need to know

The tentative date of share allotment is November 9 and the expected listing date is November 12.

Investors will be able to bid for a minimum of 25 equity shares and in multiples of 25 thereafter. The registrar of the IPO is KFin Technologies Private Limited and will manage the allotment process.

The book running lead managers to the issue are Axis Capital, CLSA India, ICICI Securities and Nomura Financial Advisory Services.

The proceeds from the fresh issue will be used by the lender to boost the bank's tier-1 capital base and meet future capital requirements.

It is worth mentioning that Fino Payments Bank is a scheduled commercial bank that offers digital-based financial services. It has a pan-India presence with over 7.2 lakh merchants, but mostly caters to tier-2 and tier-3 towns.

Sensex, Nifty end lower as metal stocks fall; Axis Bank slumps 6%

Indian shares closed lower on Wednesday as easing supply concerns weighed on metal stocks, while private banks slipped after Axis Bank reported disappointing loan growth.

The blue-chip NSE Nifty 50 index ended down 0.31% at 18,210.95 and the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex fell 0.34% to 61,143.33.

Copper and aluminum prices hit multi-week lows on easing supply concerns, pulling down the Nifty metals index 1.5%.

Private-sector lender Axis Bank fell 6.5% and was the top loser on the Nifty 50 index after posting weaker loan and margin growth than its peers. The



broad bank index fell 0.9%. The Nifty public sector bank index, however, rose 2.1%, making it the top gainer among the main sectors. The information technology index climbed 0.97%.

Analysts said market

participants were worried about the impact of commodity inflation on corporate profit margins and higher valuations.

"We see earnings recovery in Q2 as the economy opens up but with valuations stretched, we expect a tactical correction to

markets," BofA analysts said in a note.

Several companies including TTK Prestige, Arvind Ltd, IIFL Finance, Indian Overseas Bank, United Spirits, Welspun India reported a surge in profit on Wednesday, compared to a year ago. However, India's top car maker Maruti Suzuki reported a lower quarterly profit and said shortage of semiconductors, other components and higher commodity prices have upset targets and expectations. Larsen & Toubro, cigarette maker ITC, Bajaj Auto, Titan Company and Adani Enterprises will report their earnings later on Wednesday.



Rise in human bird flu cases in China shows risk of fast-changing variants: Report

A jump in the number of people in China infected with bird flu this year is raising concern among experts, who say a previously circulating strain appears to have changed and may be more infectious to people.

China has reported 21 human infections with the H5N6 subtype of avian influenza in 2021 to the World Health Organization (WHO), compared with only five last year, it said. Though the numbers are much lower than the hundreds infected with H7N9 in 2017, the infections are serious, leaving many critically ill, and at least six dead.

"The increase in human cases in China this year is of concern. It's a virus that causes high mortality," said Thijs Kuiken, professor of comparative pathology at Erasmus University Medical Centre in Rotterdam.

Most of the cases had come into contact with poultry, and

there are no confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission, said the WHO, which highlighted the rise in cases in a statement on Oct. 4.

It said further investigation was "urgently" required to understand the risk and the increase in spill over to people. Since then, a 60-year-old woman in Hunan province was admitted to hospital in a critical condition with H5N6 influenza on Oct. 13, according to a Hong Kong government statement. While human H5N6 cases have been reported, no outbreaks of H5N6 have been reported in poultry in China since February 2020.

China is the world's biggest poultry producer and top producer of ducks, which act as a reservoir for flu viruses.

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) could not be reached for comment on the rise in H5N6 human cases. However, a study published on its website last

month said the "increasing genetic diversity and geographical distribution of H5N6 pose a serious threat to the poultry industry and human health".

Avian influenza viruses constantly circulate in domestic and wild birds, but rarely infect people. However, the evolution of the viruses, which have increased as poultry populations grow, is a major concern because they could change into a virus that spreads easily between people and cause a pandemic.

The largest number of H5N6 infections have been in southwestern Sichuan province, though cases have also been reported in neighbouring Chongqing and Guangxi, as well as Guangdong, Anhui and Hunan provinces.

At least 10 were caused by viruses genetically very similar to the H5N8 virus that ravaged poultry farms across Europe last winter and also killed wild

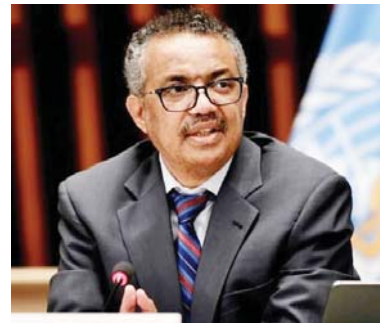
birds in China. That suggests the latest H5N6 infections in China may be a new variant.

"It could be that this variant is a little more infectious (to people)...or there could be more of this virus in poultry at the moment and that's why more people are getting infected," said Kuiken.

Four of the Sichuan cases raised poultry at home and had been in contact with dead birds, said a September report by China's CDC. Another had bought a duck from a live poultry market a week before developing symptoms.

China vaccinates poultry against avian influenza but the vaccine used last year may only partially protect against emerging viruses, preventing large outbreaks but allowing the virus to keep circulating, said Filip Claes, Regional Laboratory Coordinator at the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases at the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Tuberculosis kills more than a million people every year: WHO



Despite being a preventable and treatable disease, tuberculosis kills more than a million people every year, World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom said.

"Despite being a preventable and treatable, TB kills more than a million people every year, almost half of them in the WHO South-East-Asia Region. We must intensify effort towards ending TB," Dr Tedros Adhanom said while addressing a high-level meeting on tuberculosis.

The Ministers of Health of countries in WHO South-East Asia Region on Tuesday committed to renew and accelerate efforts to end tuberculosis in view of the pandemic disrupting services and leading to increase in TB cases in the already high-burden region. The meeting was organised by ministries of health of India, Indonesia, and Nepal and WHO South-East Asia Regional Office. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region, said, "Immediate steps are needed to scale-up preventive, diagnostic and treatment services for TB, and significantly bolster social protection measures while specifically addressing undernutrition among the vulnerable populations."

At the day-long meeting held virtually, the ministers signed on a 'Ministerial Statement of Commitment' unanimously committing to actualise and intensify essential interventions. The ministers committed to multi-sectoral and whole of society approach to end TB with national programs led by the highest possible political level, and closely monitored for targets. They agreed to increase budgetary and human resource allocations including upfront investments required to catch-up on lost ground during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid vaccines: FDA panel approves Pfizer jabs for children 5 and up

Paediatric doctors could soon find themselves on the front lines of a US government plan to get some 28 million school-aged children in line for their coronavirus jabs.

Advisory boards to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Tuesday decided that the benefits of jabbing children between five and 11 years old with the Pfizer vaccine outweigh any other health risks.

The decision now awaits further

approval from the full FDA and CDC. Both agencies are expected to follow the vaccine panel's recommendation.

Data from the company's clinical trials found that a paediatric dose of the vaccine - one third of that given to adults and adolescents - was safe and 90% effective. If health officials approve the jab, 15 million doses will go out to paediatric offices, children's hospitals and pharmacies around the country.

When could jabs for kids get final approval?

Following the FDA independent advisory committee's green light on Tuesday, the CDC is expected to follow suit on 2 November, meaning jabs for five-year-olds could begin as soon as a day later.

The Pfizer vaccine is already approved for American adults and adolescents, but it has not yet been fully approved for most school-aged children.

Among those between five and 11 years old, there have been about 1.8 million Covid cases confirmed in the US, according

to the CDC. Fewer than two hundred have died, and most of those had underlying medical conditions.

Some medical experts say that, given the persistence of the Delta variant and the return to in-person schooling, vaccinating children is a crucial next step in fighting the pandemic.

"Parents need to understand the urgency of vaccination because the pandemic is not over," said Dr James Versalovic, pathologist in chief at Texas Children's Hospital (TCH).

New cases of HIV rise in Eastern Europe, decline in the West

Almost 160,000 people were diagnosed in Europe with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office for Europe.

(News Agencies) More than 130,000 people were newly diagnosed with HIV last year in Eastern Europe, the highest rate ever for the region, while the number of new cases in Western Europe declined, global public health experts said on Wednesday. European Union and European Economic Area countries saw a reduction in 2017 rates, mainly driven by a 20% drop since 2015 among men who have sex with men. That left Europe's overall increasing trend less steep than previously.

All told, almost 160,000 people were diagnosed in Europe with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office for Europe. "It's hard to talk about good news in the face of another year of unacceptably high numbers of people infected with HIV," said Zsuzsanna Jakab, director of the WHO regional office. Calling on governments and health officials to recognise the seriousness of the situation, she urged them: "Scale up your response now." The United Nations AIDS agency UNAIDS warned in July that complacency was starting to stall the fight against the global epidemic, with the pace of progress not matching what is needed. Some 37 million people worldwide are infected with HIV.

Stay Healthy And Super Fit With Dried Fruits And These Healthy Bars

Dried fruits contain little to no fat. They also contain significant calories per serving, making them a natural source of energy for athletes. They are also a good supplement for people seeking to gain weight in a healthy way.



(News Agencies) As healthy living has become a catchword these days, people have taken to eating dried fruits and health bars. Experts say these can give natural nutrients. V.V. Mani, Director, Operations, Unibic, and Suhasni Sampath, Co-Founder, Yoga Bars, explain how dry fruits and nuts used in health snack bars help the cause of healthy living:

Dried fruits generally contain more fiber than the same-sized serving of their fresh counterparts. Fiber helps in keeping your digestive system running smoothly.

The various dry fruits are packed naturally with a mix of nutritional elements like potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, carotenoids, antioxidants, vitamins, dietary fiber, flavonoids, selenium and more apart from the good quality fat and protein that these provide. Dried fruits generally contain more fiber than the same-sized serving of their

fresh counterparts.

These help in various ways like increase of good cholesterol, reduction in bad cholesterol, maintaining blood pressure, blood sugar control, thyroid control, improving heart function, bowel

movement, skin health, hair control, cancer fighting properties, improving bone health, improved vision, easing digestion and fighting anaemia to name a few. Many of the dry fruits are low in glycemic index, and so, they help slow release of energy and control blood sugar.

Because most of the water is extracted from fruits, their nutrients are condensed into a small package. Dried fruits like apricots, raisins, prunes and figs contain high amounts of beta carotene, vitamin E, niacin, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium. Dried fruits contain little to no fat. They also contain significant calories per serving, making them a natural source of energy for athletes. They are also a good supplement for people seeking to gain weight in a healthy way. Dried fruits like apricots, raisins, prunes and figs contain high amounts of beta carotene, vitamin E, niacin, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium.



Obese children more likely to develop asthma than kids of a healthy weight, warns study

Parents, please take note. Your child's weight plays an important role in determining his or her asthma risk. Obese or overweight children are at an increased risk of asthma, a new study has found.

(News Agencies) US Researchers say it is possible that weight gain is fuelling the rise in childhood asthma. Researchers discovered that obese youngsters

were more likely to develop the lung condition than children of a healthy weight. The findings suggest that the incidence of an asthma diagnosis among children with obesity was significantly higher than in those in a normal weight range and that 23-27% of new asthma cases were directly attributable to obesity.

"Paediatric asthma is

among the most prevalent childhood conditions and comes at a high cost to patients, families and the greater health system," said co-author Terri Finkel from Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando. "There are few preventable risk factors to reduce the incidence of asthma, but our data show that reducing the onset of childhood obesity could significantly lower the public health burden of asthma," Finkel added. For the study published in the journal Paediatrics, the research team analysed medical records of more than 500,000 children. The researchers

reviewed de-identified data of patients aged two to 17 without a history of asthma, receiving care from six

paediatric academic medical centres between 2009 and 2015. Overweight or obese patients were matched with normal weight patients of the same age, gender, race, ethnicity, insurance type and location of care. The researchers found that obesity

among children with asthma appears to increase disease severity. Being overweight was identified as a modest risk factor for asthma, and the association was diminished when the most stringent definition of asthma was used.



China says fund for poorest 'biggest obstacle' in climate talks



Establishing a fund to help poor countries tackle climate change will be "the biggest obstacle" during U.N. talks to try to curb global warming that begin in Glasgow on Oct. 31, a Chinese environmental official said on Wednesday.

Richer countries agreed in 2009 to establish a \$100 billion per year fund to help transfer technologies and minimise climate risks in the developing world, but progress has been slow.

Alok Sharma, President of the COP26 conference, said this week that he hoped the fund would be made available in 2023, three years later than planned. "Doubt about whether developed countries will support developing countries coping with climate change, or simply pass their emission reduction responsibilities to developing countries, has become the biggest obstacle to the ongoing progress of this multilateral process," Ye Min, Vice-Minister of Ecology and Environment,

said. Speaking at a press briefing in Beijing, Ye said the fund was related to "mutual political trust" as well as the practical ability of poorer nations to take action against climate change, and the COP26 meeting in Glasgow needed to "make arrangements". China, the world's biggest emitter of climate-warming greenhouse gases, is classified as a developing country. It has continued to emphasise the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" enshrined in the Kyoto Protocol.

It says richer nations with bigger historical carbon footprints should shoulder the bulk of emissions cuts. The Paris Agreement commits countries to submit "nationally determined contributions" to combat climate change to the United Nations. China's first NDCs were published in 2016. Climate watchers were hoping that China would include more ambitious targets and measures in an updated NDC list set to be submitted formally to the United Nations before the Glasgow talks begin. [read more](#)

In a climate change "white paper" also published on Wednesday, China said its NDCs would include existing pledges to bring carbon emissions to a peak before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060, both advances on 2016. It will also increase the share of non-fossil fuels to 25% of total energy consumption by 2030, up from the previous commitment of "around 20%", and raise installed capacity of wind and solar to 1,200 gigawatts.

First planet outside Milky Way Galaxy detected: Saturn-like object is orbiting a black hole

Objects hanging in the vacuum of the cosmos orbiting a star have been detected throughout the galaxy, these exoplanets have been a source of enhancing our understanding of the conditions beyond our solar system. Astronomers have now gone a step further and detected the first planet not just beyond the solar system but beyond the entire stretch of the Milky Way Galaxy.

This is the first time that signs of a planet transiting a star beyond the Milky Way galaxy has been detected. The unique discovery was led by Nasa's Chandra X-ray Observatory that has peaked into the spiral galaxy



Messier 51 (M51), also called the Whirlpool Galaxy.

Astronomers have over the years detected over 4,000 such exoplanets, some Earth-like, some hot Jupiters and others decaying due to astronomical

events in their region. Almost all of them are within the realm of the Milky Way, less than about 3,000 light-years from Earth. But the exoplanet in M51 would be about 28 million light-years away, meaning it would be thousands

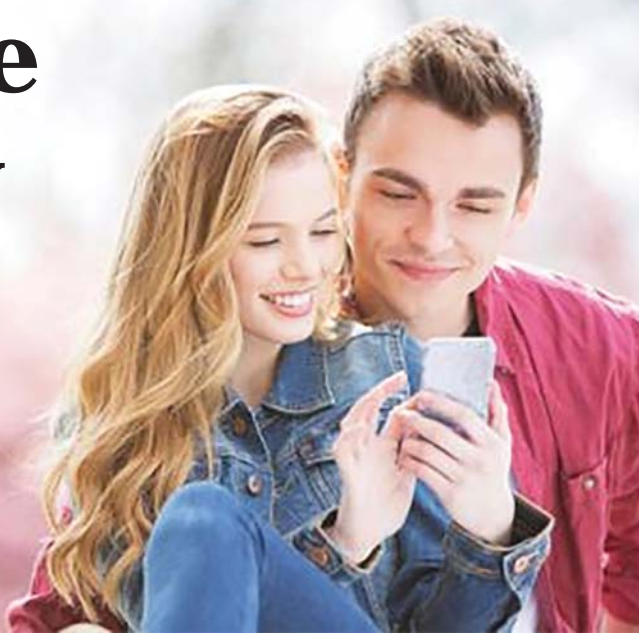
of times farther away than those in the Milky Way.

"We are trying to open up a whole new arena for finding other worlds by searching for planet candidates at X-ray wavelengths, a strategy that makes it possible to discover them in other galaxies," said Rosanne Di Stefano of the Center for Astrophysics, who led the study. The astronomers searched for dips in the brightness of X-rays received from X-ray bright binary systems that typically contain a neutron star or black hole pulling in gas from a closely orbiting companion star.

To locate exoplanets, astronomers study the light

emerging from the star and whenever a planet passes through it, it blocks the light from the star producing a characteristic dip. Astronomers using both ground-based and space-based telescopes have searched for dips in optical light, electromagnetic radiation humans can see, enabling the discovery of thousands of planets. To detect the newest candidate, astronomers studied X-rays. Since the region producing bright X-rays is small, a planet passing in front of it could block most or all of the X-rays, making the transit easier to spot because the X-rays can completely disappear.

Who you're most likely to marry based on your job



(Agencies) Love and work — who knew the two were so intimately connected? Based on new research by Bloomberg Business, it turns out that your job could help you predict who you'll end up marrying. By scanning US Census Bureau data covering 3.5 million households, Bloomberg compiled this cool interactive chart that shows how people are pairing up by profession. Here are the most common matchups for 23 jobs:

Elementary- and middle-school teachers

Female elementary-school teachers are most likely to marry male or female elementary- and middle-school teachers.

Male elementary-school teachers are most likely to marry female elementary- and middle-school teachers or male education administrators.

Flight attendants

Female flight attendants are most likely to marry male managers or female flight attendants.

Male flight attendants are most likely to marry female flight attendants or male elementary- and middle-school teachers.

Physicians and surgeons

Female physicians and surgeons are most likely to marry male or female physicians and surgeons. Male physicians and surgeons are most likely to marry female physicians and surgeons or male registered nurses.

Chefs and head cooks

Female chefs and head cooks are most likely to marry male chefs and head cooks, or female maids and housekeeping cleaners.

Male chefs and head cooks are most likely to marry female waitresses, or male chefs and head cooks.

Construction workers

Female construction workers are most likely to marry female construction workers.

Male construction workers are most likely to marry female maids and housekeeping cleaners or male business-operations specialists.

Secretaries and administrative assistants

Female secretaries and

administrative assistants are most likely to marry male managers or female flight attendants.

Male secretaries and administrative assistants are most likely to marry male office and administrative-support supervisors.

Actors

Female actors are most likely to marry male actors or female designers.

Male actors are most likely to marry female actors or male TV, video, and motion-picture camera operators and editors.

Lawyers and judges

Female lawyers and judges are most likely to marry male lawyers and judges or female computer workers. Male lawyers and judges are most likely to marry

female or male lawyers and judges.

CEOs

Female CEOs are most likely to marry male CEOs or female managers.

Male CEOs are most likely to marry female elementary- and middle-school teachers or male CEOs.

Maids and housekeeping cleaners

Female maids and housekeeping cleaners are most likely to marry male janitors and building cleaners or female chefs and head cooks.

Male maids and housekeeping cleaners are most likely to marry male waiters.

Registered nurses

Female registered nurses are most likely to marry male managers or female registered nurses.

Male registered nurses are most likely to marry female or male registered nurses.

Truck drivers

Female truck drivers are most likely to marry female truck drivers. Male truck drivers are most likely to marry female secretaries and administrative assistants or male managers.

Police officers

Female police officers are most likely to marry male police officers or female

office and administrative-support supervisors.

Male police officers are most likely to marry female or male elementary- and middle-school teachers.

Marketing and sales managers

Female marketing and sales managers are most likely to marry male managers or female insurance claims and policy-processing clerks. Male marketing and sales managers are most likely to marry female elementary- and middle-school teachers or male business-operations specialists.

Customer-service representatives

Female customer-service representatives are most likely to marry male truck drivers or female business-operations specialists.

Male customer-service representatives are most likely to marry female or male customer-service representatives.

Artists

Female artists are most likely to marry male or female artists.

Male artists are most likely to marry female elementary- and middle-school teachers or male counselors.

5 most unused home appliances

(Agencies) We fancy a lot of stuff that we wish to keep at home, demands for making your home fully up to the mark never ends. Fancy bathroom fittings, chimneys, smaller to bigger sections of modular kitchen, stylish furniture and loads and loads of delicate crockery; every one of

all these at home. However, the fact remains that most of these stuff that we spend money on usually sits unused with a new layer of dust on it everyday.

Many of us like to stock our homes with the latest technology; indeed electronics are the most bought things by people.

Here are some of the most unused appliances at

home.

Pop-up toaster: The sight of breads popping out of it after been toasted look s quite fancy, and since most movies have them as a quick way to make breakfast, many of us chose to purchase them. Although, they are quite useful, none of us actually have the time for a nice leisurely breakfast at home, as most of us either pick up breakfast while on our way to work or eat at our respective office canteens. Most of us leave home just with a cup of coffee or a glass of juice. Hence a pop up toaster stand used for months on the kitchen platform.

Hair dryer: Most women are used to buying hair

dryers, as they help set your hair quite well. However, most women are aware of the fact that using hair dryers on a regular basis spoils the texture of the hair and gives rise to split ends. Moreover, most women naturally dry their hair, as there's hardly any time for them to leisurely style their hair every morning, be it working women or homemakers. It is only used during parties or special occasions.

Vacuum cleaner: Although pitted as one of the most useful home appliances, vacuum cleaners are rendered useless in most households. It makes cleaning curtains, sofas, and remote corners of the

house easier, however, the vacuum cleaner is heavy and not user friendly for many. It takes more effort to clean the vacuum cleaner after use. Moreover, every household in the city has a maid who does the cleaning, hence a vacuum cleaner is seldom, it is just a luxurious appliance in the house.

Electronic shaving machine: Thanks to a lot of brands, a lot of men grooming products are available in the market. Most men end up buying these products quite ambitiously in order to sue it every day and style their hair and stubble in a different manner every time they go for a meeting or a party. However, most men

end up clean shaving for most formal occasions, and even for parties, they feel it extremely boring to deck up and style their beards. They would just wear a pair of shorts and chappals for a party, than deck up.

Hand blender: One of the most easy-to-use home appliances, a hand blender simply lies unused in most kitchens. Thanks to regular domestic helps that most household have, none of the women end up being creative with food. In fact, women prefer beating eggs with a spoon rather than using a hand blender since its easy, it is probably sued only once or twice a year to mix a cake dough.



us wishes to have

Kim Kardashian screams in terror

as she braves Universal Studios' haunted house on The Ellen DeGeneres Show: 'I'm sweating!'



decorations this year, \$60million home that she built Kanye West. Kim always including going wild with with estranged husband does up her house well to skeletons, webs, corpses and Kanye West.massive plastic entertain her four children: pumpkins. She also placed a spiders she placed outside her North, eight, Saint, five, massive plastic spiders \$60million home that she built Chicago, three, and Psalm, outside and on top of her with estranged husband two.

Kim Kardashian faced her fears during The Ellen DeGeneres Show's final Halloween episode in a terrifying haunted house with Andy Lassner. While fearlessly braving Halloween Horror Nights with the daytime talk show's executive producer, the 40-year-old reality star got spooked within minutes as a masked person unexpectedly wrap their arms around her. Despite screaming in terror before even stepping foot in the attraction, she didn't bat an eye when Lassner bluntly warned her that it wasn't 'unusual' for past guests to get startled or 'pee a little.'

I'm really into these,' she said of some of the ghoulish decorations while letting out as many laughs as screams. The video comes a week after Page Six first revealed she teamed up with Ellen's scaredy-cat producer for the segment. 'People outside heard lots of screaming,' a source told the outlet. 'Kim was really excited to do it.'

To ensure nothing leaked in advanced, Kardashian reportedly 'came with almost nobody, no big entourage at all.'

The mother-of-four went all out with her own Halloween

Saif, Kareena go holidaying in Jaisalmer with sons



Bollywood power couple Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor are in Jaisalmer spending their holidays with their two sons. On Thursday, Kareena shared a picture of her son in a playful mood standing in a mountain pose. "Downward Dog Y'CEY'CEYoga runs in the family you

seeYYY,#8 months Pike position #Mera Beta ai," she wrote on Instagram. Kareena Kapoor on Wednesday also shared her picture on Twitter in sportswear. The picture shows her in her regular workout sessions. She captioned it "Desert Run".

TADAP



Ahan Shetty and Tara Sutaria light up the screen in the upcoming movie event TADAP which releases in theaters across North America on December 3. The new trailer has just premiered for this Sajid Nadiadwala production which also features new music from Pritam.

The film is based in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand where Ishana (Male protagonist) meets foreign returned Ramisa (Female protagonist). As their passionate romance brews, Ishana falls madly in love with her, but things turn out differently. What seemed to be a straightforward relationship gets hit by the most unexpected storm. Nothing seems to be going right for the star crossed lovers. When things seem almost overwhelming in their finality, Ishana has one more draconian hurdle thrown his way. How he copes with it forms the soul of this incredible love story.

INDIA SWEETS AND SPICES

TRAILER

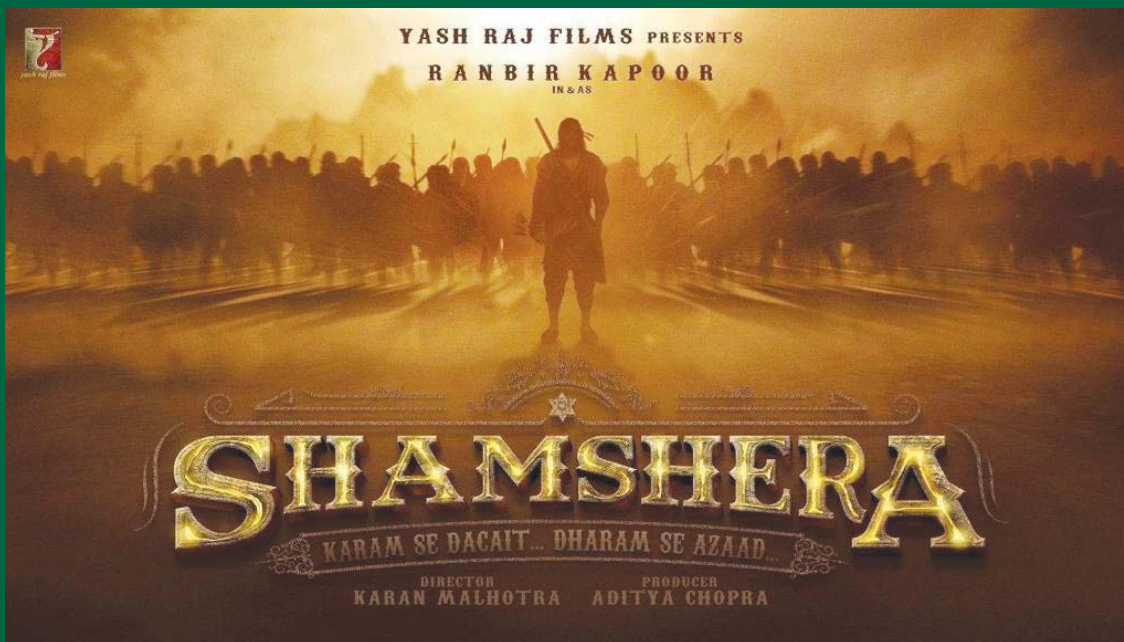
After debuting at the Tribeca Film Festival, Geeta Malik's acclaimed new film INDIA SWEETS AND SPICES will release in cinemas this November 19th. The new theatrical trailer has just premiered for this film which stars Sophia Ali, Manisha Koirala, Adil Hussain, Rish Shah, Deepti Gupta, Ved Sapru, and Anita Kalathara.

Alia Kapur (Sophia Ali) returns to her family's posh suburban New Jersey home after a year away at college and upends their well-ordered life with her brash independence. After befriending Varun (Rish Shah), the handsome son of the new owners of the local Indian grocery, she invites his family to a dinner party where family secrets are revealed. Alia's

surprise turns to rebellion when she uncovers secrets about both her parents that push her toward a daring and ultimately hilarious confrontation. INDIA SWEETS AND SPICES celebrates a young woman's coming of age set against a lovingly framed glimpse of the life of an Indian American family.

Prime Video to be the Exclusive Streaming Destination for 4 Highly Anticipated Big Ticket Movies from Yash Raj Films

- ◆ In a strengthening of a historically strong collaboration with the celebrated studio, Prime Video becomes the exclusive worldwide streaming destination for Yash Raj Films' next four massive theatrical releases-Buntty Aur Babli 2, Prithviraj, Jayeshbhai Jordaar, and Shamshera.
- ◆ The titles will premiere on Prime Video just four weeks after their theatrical launch, in more than 240 countries and territories worldwide.
- ◆ Prime Video offers incredible value with unlimited streaming of the latest and exclusive movies, TV shows, stand-up comedy, Amazon Originals, ad-free music listening through Amazon Prime Music, free fast delivery on India's largest selection of products, early access to top deals, unlimited reading with Prime Reading, and mobile gaming content with Prime Gaming, all available with the Prime membership. Customers can also watch Amazon's large catalogue of quality content by subscribing to Prime Video Mobile Edition. Prime Video Mobile Edition is a single-user, mobile-only plan currently available for Airtel Prepaid customers.



MUMBAI-28 October, 2021-Prime Video India today announced an exclusive licensing deal with India's biggest production house Yash Raj Films (YRF) that will make the steaming service the home to the studio's four massively mounted upcoming theatrical releases. As part of this deal, Prime Video will have exclusive global streaming rights to these four most anticipated titles under the Yash Raj Films banner. Doubling down on its commitment to offer seamless access to the best movies to viewers from the safety and convenience of their homes, Prime Video will stream these

titles just four weeks after their theatrical release.

The high-octane content slate includes films across genres-including much-awaited heist comedy Buntty Aur Babli 2 starring Saif Ali Khan, Rani Mukerji, Siddhant Chaturvedi, and the gorgeous debutant Sharvari; Ranbir Kapoor, Vaani Kapoor and Sanjay Dutt's mega-action entertainer Shamshera; historical action spectacle Prithviraj based on the life of fearless King Prithviraj Chauhan starring Akshay Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, Manushi Chhillar and Sonu Sood; Ranveer Singh's big ticket family entertainer with a powerful social message Jayeshbhai Jordaar.

"At Prime Video, we are intently

focused on bringing the biggest & the best entertainment to our customers and this partnership with Yash Raj Films is the perfect demonstration of that commitment," said Gaurav Gandhi, country head, Prime Video India. "Over the last four years, we have been consistently bringing blockbuster movies to entertain audiences from the comfort of their homes and on a screen of their choice. The global digital premieres, four weeks after theatrical release, will not only delight our Prime Members, but will also help significantly increase the reach and viewing base for these highly anticipated films - in India and around the world. Yash Raj Films is known to deliver some of the finest cinematic experiences to audiences, and we are super thrilled to partner with them for these films."

The deal further strengthens the long-standing and ever-growing relationship between Prime Video and Yash Raj Films, with the former already housing some of the YRF classics-including Darr, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Silsila, Chandni, Dil To Pagal Hai, and many more. And recently, the worldwide digital

premieres of titles such as Thugs of Hindostan, War, Mardaani, and more have garnered much appreciation and love from the audiences.

Akshaye Widhani, Senior Vice President, Yash Raj Films, added: "In Prime Video, we have found a partner that not only shares our vision of offering engaging cinematic experiences, but also provides global distribution to the best stories from the Indian entertainment ecosystem. We are excited to ink this exclusive streaming deal with Prime Video, which will enable our upcoming titles to travel beyond geographies and add further value to Prime Video's stellar content library."

Prime Video in India has a large catalogue of Hindi movies for their viewers to enjoy, with content tie-ups with most of the top production houses in Bollywood. The video on-demand service offers its viewers access to unlimited video streaming, with a wide selection of local language movies, U.S. TV shows, and more, as it continues to add new and exclusive content, including original Indian TV shows.

These big YRF titles will join the thousands of TV shows and

movies from Hollywood and Bollywood in the Prime Video catalogue. These include Indian-produced Amazon Original series One Mic Stand, Mirzapur Season 1 & 2, The Family Man, Mumbai Diaries 26/11, Breathe: Into The Shadows, Bandish Bandits, Paatal Lok, The Forgotten Army - Azaadi Ke Liye, Sons of the Soil: Jaipur Pink Panthers, Four More Shots Please, Indian films such as Sardar Udham, Sherni, Toofaan, Gulabo Sitabo, Durgamati, Chhalaang, Shakuntala Devi, Ponmagal Vandhal, French Biryani, Law, Sufiyum Sujatayum, Penguin, Nishabdham, Maara, V, CU Soon, Soorai Pottru, Bheema Sena Nala Maharaja, Drishyam 2, Halal Love Story, Middle Class Melodies, Putham Pudhu Kaalai, Unpaused, among others, and award-winning and critically acclaimed global Amazon Originals like Borat Subsequent Moviefilm, The Tomorrow War, Coming 2 America, Without Remorse, Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan, The Boys, Hunters, Fleabag, and The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel. All this is available at no extra cost for Amazon Prime members.





US warns climate poses 'emerging threat' to financial system



Climate change is an "emerging threat" to the stability of the U.S. financial system, top federal regulators warned in a report Thursday, setting the stage for the Biden administration to take more aggressive regulatory action to prevent climate change from upending global markets and the economy.

The report, produced by the Financial Stability Oversight Council, is the clearest expression of alarm to date about the risks that rising temperatures and seas pose to the economy and could herald sweeping changes to the kinds of investments made by banks and other financial institutions.

It was released as President Joe Biden and senior administration officials prepare to attend the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, where the United States will try to demonstrate to the world that it is serious about addressing the climate threat. Biden's climate agenda has stalled in Congress, leaving financial regulation as one of the few areas he can point to as evidence of his commitment on warming.

The Biden administration also released a series of reports Thursday on the threat that climate change poses to national security, saying it increases the risks of conflict within and between countries and could potentially displace tens of millions of people around the world. The report by the Financial Stability Oversight Council, which is led by the Treasury secretary and includes leaders from the major financial regulatory agencies, portrayed the financial threat of climate change in stark terms. Higher temperatures are leading to more natural disasters, such as hurricanes, wildfires and floods. These, in turn, are resulting in damaged property, lost income and disruptions to business activity that threaten to alter how assets, such as real estate, are valued.

Planet on track for catastrophic 2.7 degrees Celsius rise by 2100: UN report

Days ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP-26) Summit in Glasgow, a new report from the United Nations hints that the current commitments to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions are not enough and put the planet on track for an average 2.7 degrees Celsius temperature rise this century.

"Scientists are clear on the facts and now leaders need to be just as clear on directions. They need to come to Glasgow with bold, time-bound front-loaded plans to reach net-Zero," UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said. The upcoming climate summit in Glasgow could be the last chance to put the world on track to limiting warming to below 2C above pre-industrial levels and ideally to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The UN Climate Change published an update to the synthesis of climate action plans which confirms the overall trends identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released earlier this year. The Synthesis Report was requested by Parties to the Paris Agreement to assist them in assessing the progress of climate action ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference.

16% RISE IN GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS BY 2030

The annual "emissions gap" report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which measures the gap between anticipated emissions and those consistent with limiting the temperature rise this century as agreed in the Paris accord, said updated pledges only reduce forecast 2030 emissions by an additional 7.5 per cent, compared to the previous commitments.

The report indicated a 16 per cent rise in global greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 compared to 2010 if all pledges by 192 countries under the Paris Agreement are taken together. "Comparison to the latest findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows that such an increase unless changed quickly, may lead to a temperature rise of about 2.7°C by the end of the century," the UN body said in a statement. China and India, which are together responsible for around 30 per cent of global emissions, have not yet made enhanced pledges.

A TICKING CLOCK

It is to be noted that as a group, G20 countries, which represent 80 per cent of global emissions, are not on track to achieve their original or new 2030 pledges. "If there is no meaningful reduction of

emissions in the next decade, we will have lost forever the possibility to reach 1.5 degrees," UN secretary-general added.

The UN chief said that leaders need to "decarbonise every sector from power, transport, farming and forestry. Phase-out coal by 2030 in OECD and by 2050 in all others, end-all coal investments, public, private, nation and international, end subsidies for fossil fuel and polluting industries and provide at least 100 billion to the developing world in climate funds." By 2030, to reach the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit, annual greenhouse gas emissions need to fall by an extra 28 Gt, or be halved from current levels of nearly 60 Gt, over and above what is promised in updated pledges and other 2030 commitments, UNEP said.

A SLOW START

The IPCC has estimated that limiting global average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius requires a reduction of CO2 emissions of 45 per cent in 2030 or a 25 per cent reduction by 2030 to limit warming to 2 degrees Celsius. If emissions are not reduced by 2030, they will need to be substantially reduced thereafter to compensate for the slow start on the path to net-zero emissions, but likely at a higher cost.

Those believing in Covid conspiracy more likely to be infected: Study

The Covid pandemic not galore.

only changed our lifestyle, it also made a face a new era of misinformation through social media. In the initial days of the pandemic, there was confusion over many aspects of the disease and before social media platforms and governments took steps to provide channels disseminating accurate information, there were claims

Then came the vaccines, but with them also came unscientific claims by people including prominent world leaders. The anti-vaxxers still oppose vaccination against Covid.

A new study has shown that those believing in Covid conspiracies have a greater chance of getting infected with the deadly virus.

"Even if a conspiracy theory is extremely implausible according to logic or scientific evidence, if it seems real to a perceiver, it has a genuine impact on attitudes, emotions, and behavior," say researchers in a paper published in journal Psychological medicine.

Social psychologist Jan-Willem van Prooijen from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the

Netherlands is first author of the study. For the research, van Prooijen and fellow researchers surveyed 5,745 participants.

These participants were asked early in the pandemic (April 2020), about whether they believe in conspiracy theories like the COVID-19 virus was made by the scientists as a bioweapon and other similar claims.



5 Diwali Desserts You Only Need 3 Ingredients To Make



this coconut ladoo is just for you. This amazing ladoo has the sweetness of dates and roasted sesame seeds to give it an extra kick in the flavour.

4. Haldi Kulfi

Found in almost every restaurant or eatery shop, kulfi is the mouth-melting dessert that always

gives us a comforting taste. To make an easy kulfi at home, all you need is cream milk, turmeric and sugar. Once made, freeze it and enjoy it with your guests!

5. Jowar Ladoo

Looking for something healthy this festive season? Well, this recipe is just for you then! This

jowar ladoo are high in protein and is made using jowar flour, jaggery and ghee. The process to make this is also super simple.

Make these delicious and simple delights this festive season and let us know which one did you like the best!

Diwali 2021: With festivities lined up, this month has undoubtedly been exciting for all of us. And now, as Diwali is coming close, we are sure that your preparations have already begun! From cleaning up your houses and choosing outfits for the puja to making delicious delicacies for the guests, there are many things to do. But, as you complete these things one by one, the last thing that stays are the desserts to make. After all, no Diwali is complete without a plateful of mithai. But cooking elaborate desserts can sometimes also be a hassle. So to make your work easy and quick, today we bring you a list of desserts that you can make using just three ingredients! Yes, you read that right! With just three ingredients, you can easily whip

up these mithais for Diwali and enjoy them with your friends and family.

Diwali 2021: Here Are 5 3-Ingredient Diwali Desserts | Easy Diwali Desserts Recipes

1. Kaju Katli

The first on the list had to be the delicious Kaju katli! This mithai is an all-time favourite of everyone, so to make this easily at your home, all you need is milk, cashews and sugar. A delicious plate of Kaju katli will be ready in no time!

2. Shrikhand

This popular thick and creamy dessert from Gujarat has a fan following of its own. While it comes in many varieties and flavours, here we have a simple recipe consisting of only curd, cardamom and sugar.

3. Coconut Till Ladoo

If you love a refreshing taste, then



Diwali 2021

Biden Govt Officials Celebrate Festival Of Lights With Indian Diaspora In DC



United States' was organised by Indiaspora. administration, according to lawmakers and top officials of During the programme, the ANI. The top Indian Americans the White House celebrated diaspora honoured some of who were honoured included Diwali with members of the the top Indian Americans in Vice Admiral Surgeon General Indian diaspora at Capitol Hill. the US President Joe Biden's Vivek Murthy and Neera

Tanden, Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary to President Biden.

During the celebration, the traditional 'Diya' was lightened and several lawmakers made their remarks. Congressman Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, Congressman Ro Khanna and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi addressed the community members. Speaking to ANI, Ami Bera highlighted that the Diwali celebration is not only about Indian Americans but also the members of the Congress, which includes both Republicans and Democrats. An interfaith prayer service took place during the programme that had members of Congress in attendance. In a tweet, Indiaspora informed that Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney told them about her efforts to get Diwali recognised as a federal holiday in the US, according to ANI. Singer Mary Millben was also part of the celebrations at Capitol Hill. She sang the 'Om Jai Jagdish Hare' aarti rendition

for the community with others hymning too. Millben told ANI that she has a "strong relationship" with the people of India. Furthermore, she mentioned that she loved the culture of India and was "delighted" to be part of the Diwali celebration. Congressman James Clyburn, Steve Chabot, Congresswoman Judy Chu and Carolyn Maloney lauded the efforts of Indian Americans in the development of the US. M R Rangaswami, founder of Indiaspora told ANI that the Indian Americans, African Americans, Chinese Americans, mainstream American Congressman participated in the celebration with Indian Americans. Vice Admiral Surgeon General Vivek Murthy highlighted the importance of Diwali which is about "light overcoming darkness" and he was "grateful" to be part of the celebration. He raised the concern that in the present time, there's an "invisible pandemic" which is the "pandemic of polarisation".

Decision on reopening of DU campus to be taken after Diwali: Vice-Chancellor



Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said that the decision to reopen the campus will be taken after Diwali. After the protests and hunger strikes by the members of the left-affiliated All India Students' Association (AISA) and other student union bodies for their demand for the reopening of the DU campus, Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said that a decision will be made for the reopening of DU campus after Diwali. As per the experts, there is a fear of recurrence of Covid-19 cases. Other points by Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh, Delhi University Other than that, Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said that in a recent meeting of teachers and principals, they suggested increasing the timing of colleges by a couple of hours to accommodate the extra number of students admitted to avoiding overcrowding. Protests by the student union bodies - Members of the Left-affiliated All India Students' Association (AISA) and other student bodies are on a hunger strike to press for their demand to reopen the campus for students. Facilities are given by Delhi University in pandemic times - The Delhi University has resumed laboratory classes for final year undergraduate and postgraduate students from September 16, 2021, but the attendance is not that high.

Sundar Pichai confirms JioPhone Next is on track to launch by Diwali

Sundar Pichai has stated that the JioPhone Next will be launched in India by Diwali. The Google CEO confirmed the launch timeline for the entry-level smartphone during the earnings call of Alphabet on Wednesday. The statement confirms the speculations around the Jio phone's launch date in the country post several delays.

JioPhone Next was first announced by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) chairman Mukesh Ambani during the company's annual

Google has made progress with the "Made for India affordable smartphone" and that the device is "on track to launch in the market by Diwali."

For those unaware, JioPhone Next is a combined effort of Jio and Google in India. While Jio will be taking care of the hardware side of the phone, the device's software will be powered by Google. For this partnership, the two companies have also co-developed Pragati OS, the first of its kind operating system focused for the Indian market.



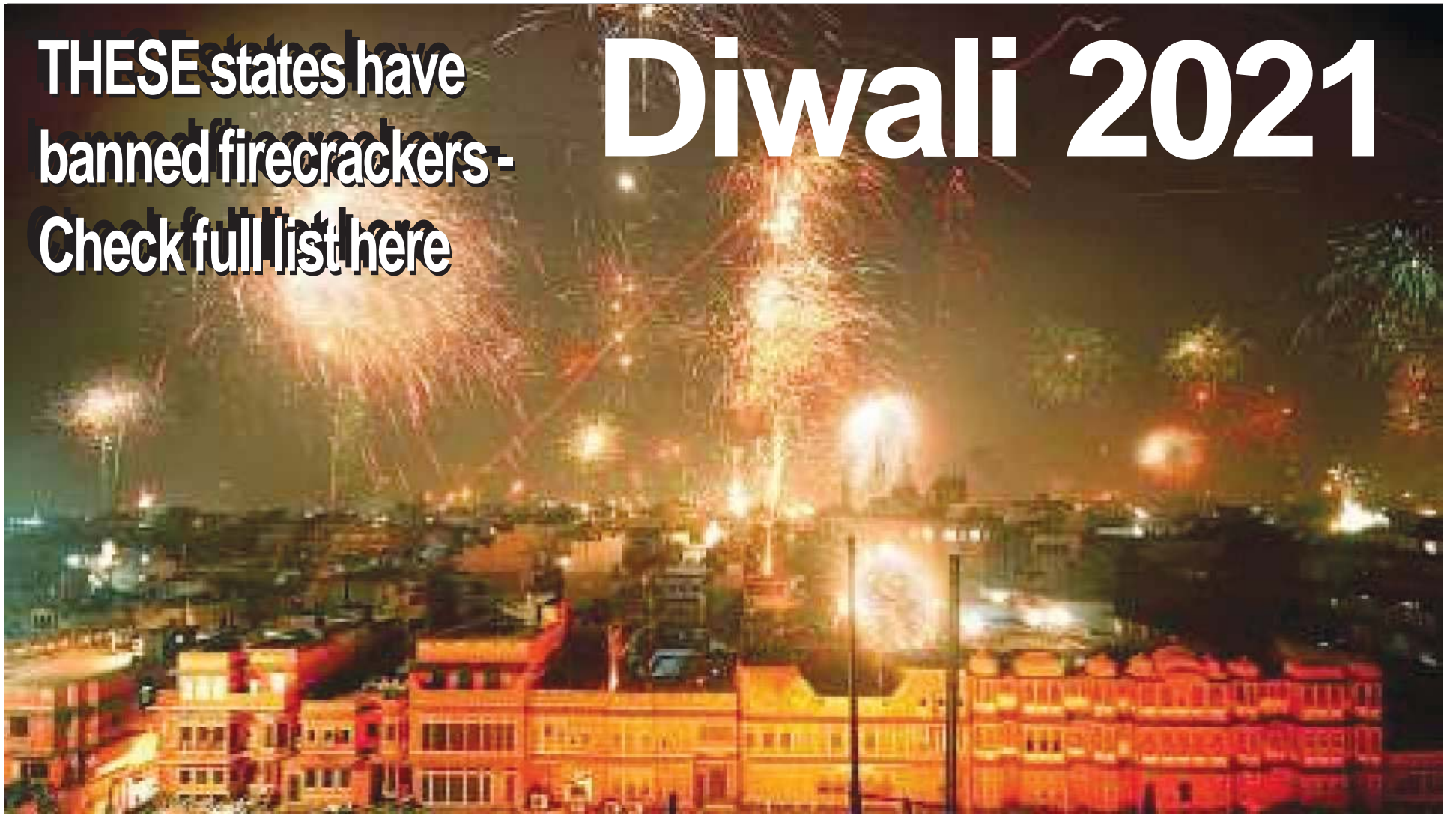
general meeting in June. At the time, Ambani had mentioned a September 10 launch date for the phone, to coincide with the Hindu festival of Ganesh Chaturthi. Since then, the phone has saw several delays due to the ongoing chip shortage around the globe.

Pichai has now confirmed the launch window for the JioPhone Next. During the Alphabet's earnings call, Pichai said that

JioPhone Next will likely launch as the most affordable 4G smartphone in India. As for its features, it is known to come with a Voice Assistant which will let users open an app or even tweak settings using voice commands. Notably, the Voice Assistant will work in multiple languages, mostly specific to India. In addition, there is a Read Aloud feature that will let the phone read content on the screen.

**THESE states have
banned firecrackers -
Check full list here**

Diwali 2021



The bursting and sale of firecrackers have always been a matter of debate whenever the Diwali season approaches. Many feel that the usage of firecrackers during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation is not favourable as it will have further adverse effects on our immunity. Not only this, but places like Delhi and Mumbai already have a deteriorating air quality index during the winter season, and some believe that bursting

crackers can further worsen the air pollution quotient of the metropolitan cities with a larger population.

Keeping these reasons in mind, several states across India have decided to ban the usage of firecrackers in their jurisdiction, imposing fines on those who continue to buy or sell them. Here's a look at the states that have prohibited the usage of firecrackers for Diwali 2021.

Delhi

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee, earlier this year, imposed a ban on the bursting of crackers in the national capital till January 1, 2022. In its official memo, it wrote that keeping in view the need in the public interest to curb high air pollution in Delhi, a "complete ban" has been imposed on firecrackers.

Odisha

The sale and usage of firecrackers have been banned by the Odisha government for this festival season. The official order by the government read, "With a view to protecting the health of general public and to curb the spread of infection, sale, and use of firecrackers shall remain prohibited during this festive month."

Rajasthan

The Rajasthan government has decided to ban the sale and usage of firecrackers from October 1 this year, in view of the harmful effects of the smoke while the threat of COVID-19 third wave still looms. The state government has further allowed the usage and sale of green crackers across the state this Diwali.

Schools in Maharashtra to remain shut for Diwali vacation from today till Nov 10



Maharashtra School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad on Wednesday announced that all state-run schools will stay closed for a two-week Diwali vacation starting Thursday.

The schools would not be allowed to take even online classes from October 28 to November 10. The directive

would apply to all classes - from Kindergarten to Class 12.

Only recently, on October 4, schools in Maharashtra had reopened for physical classes after substantial drop in Covid-19 cases was witnessed in most parts of both rural and urban areas.

A number of schools in Pune had resumed physical classes

only for secondary school students while they continued with the online mode of learning for those in primary classes. However, this may change post the Diwali vacation when regular on-campus schooling is likely to commence for all classes. For all the latest Mumbai News, download Indian Express App.

White House officials, US lawmakers celebrate Diwali with Indian diaspora

White House officials & US lawmakers celebrated Diwali with the Indian diaspora in Capitol Hill. The event was hosted by Indiaspora along

with top Indian Americans in the Biden administration. It included Vice Admiral Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary Neera Tanden. It also present to celebrate Diwali at Capitol Hill. On the occasion, the singer performed the 'Om Jai Jagdish Hare' rendition for the diaspora.

been a lot of darkness in the last 1.5 years. To be able to celebrate and talk about the meaning of Diwali, it's incredibly important," Murthy said. The program included traditional Diwali 'Diya' lighting & remarks from the leaders & lawmakers. The event also witnessed an interfaith prayer service that was attended by members



of Congress. American actor & singer Mary Millben was also present to celebrate Diwali at Capitol Hill. On the occasion, the singer performed the 'Om Jai Jagdish Hare' rendition for the diaspora.



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Diwali
FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



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Wishes Everyone***



Happy Diwali

