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Vol. 20

Issue 18

Friday 3 July to 10 July 2021

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Running Out of Water

Climate Change Fuels A Crisis In The US West



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Indian-Origin Singaporean Jailed For Vandalism Outside Police Post: Report

(News Agencies)-A 31-year-old Indian-origin Singaporean was sentenced on Wednesday to 3.5 years jail and nine strokes of the cane for starting a fire and causing 16 explosions outside a police post here last year to air his grievances against the government, according to a media report. Sivaprakash Mailravanan had earlier pleaded guilty to one count each of vandalism, causing mischief by fire and being in possession of a weapon, The Straits Times reported. No one was injured during the rampage on March 13 last year but a district court heard that his offences caused some 20,000 dollars in damage to the area and a nearby car. Sivaprakash wanted to express his anti-government views, the court was told. Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Marcus Foo said Sivaprakash developed an interest in social affairs



sometime in 2009. "Over years, the accused developed the view that various government policies in Singapore were unfair, favoured the well-to-do, and he perceived the authorities to be overly restrictive. Over time, the panels of the police post, giving a speech when a crowd formed and allowing himself to get arrested so that he could air his grievances in court. He also used an axe to smash glass panels at the police post located on the ground floor of Apartment Block 105 Towner Road and spray-painted "ISIS" - an abbreviation for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria terrorist group - on seven pillars in the vicinity. He was, however, silent during the court proceedings on

Wednesday, according to the news report. The DPP said, "While he did not personally support the said terrorist group, the accused spray-painted "ISIS" on the pillars of the Housing and Development Board (public housing apartment block) void deck knowing that this would create terror and alarm to those who witnessed this." accused developed a deep resentment against the Singapore Government," DPP Foo said. He picked the police post as a target because it was near a Mass Rapid Train (subway) station and he felt his actions could "easily gain" the attention of passers-by. Sivaprakash's plan included smashing police cars if they were present, breaking the glass

panels of the police post, giving a speech when a crowd formed and allowing himself to get arrested so that he could air his grievances in court. He also used an axe to smash glass panels at the police post located on the ground floor of Apartment Block 105 Towner Road and spray-painted "ISIS" - an abbreviation for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria terrorist group - on seven pillars in the vicinity. He was, however, silent during the court proceedings on

Indians In Afghanistan Advised To Avoid Non-Essential Travel Due To Violence

(News Agencies)- The Indian embassy in Afghanistan on Tuesday issued an advisory strongly asking all Indian nationals to avoid all types of non-essential movements in view of escalating violence, including on civilians, in various parts of the country. The embassy said the security situation in Afghanistan remains "dangerous" in several provinces and that terror groups have escalated violent activities and carried out a series of complex attacks including on civilians, adding Indian nationals are no exceptions as they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping. It said travelling outside the main cities should be avoided and that any essential movement may be kept as discrete as possible. "The security situation in Afghanistan remains dangerous in several provinces. Terror groups operating in Afghanistan have escalated violent activities and carried out a series of complex attacks in various parts of

Afghanistan, including targeting Afghan defence and security forces and Afghan government institutions and even civilians," the embassy said. "Indian nationals are not exceptions, and they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping," it said.

Afghanistan witnessed a series of attacks in the last few weeks as the US looked to complete the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan by September 11, ending a nearly two-decade of its military presence in the war-ravaged country. "In recent weeks, targeted attacks are on the rise in various provinces and districts, directed against government establishments and security posts, have seen civilians caught in the middle of the conflict. Incidents of roadside IED (improvised explosive device) blasts and magnetic IEDs used to target vehicles of civilians continue to be reported from many parts of the country," the embassy said.

56,000 Visas Issued To Indian Students In 2020: UK Minister Priti Patel



(News Agencies)-The UK issued 56,000 visas to Indian students in 2020, a 13 per cent increase from the year before, Priti Patel, the Secretary of State for the UK Home Department, said Wednesday.

She was addressing a session on "Global Leadership - Women First: Radical Actions in the Post-Pandemic Era" at the India Global Forum.

"Last year, we issued 56,000 visas to Indian students. That is a 13 per cent increase from the previous year and that is also through the pandemic. A programme for the post study route is also being launched which

is basically a post study work route that will bring the brightest and the best. The UK will be the place for Indian students to come and study, and also work and contribute in the long run," she added.

Speaking at the forum, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Sports, Heritage & Culture Amina Mohamed said the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 -- gender equality -- has been one of the most affected aspects of the SDGs by the pandemic. There needs to be a short, medium and long term plan to ensure gender equality, she added.



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Show Host (Prime Time News)

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India Association of Long Island (IALI), Organized Annual 43rd Gala Event

Community leader Mohinder Singh Taneja among others honored for his community work, dedication, and tireless services towards Indo-American society.



(By Munish Byala & Nitin Khurana) Garden Sinha, New York State Senator Brian Benjamin, New York State Commissioner Janifer Latoro, Nassau County Executive Stuart K. Cameron, Nassau County Human Rights Commissioner Zahid Syed, Nassau County IDP USA president Deepak Rajkumar, Acting Police Commissioner of Suffolk County Mohinder Singh Taneja by Laura Curran, the other prominent attendees in the event were Deputy Bobby K. Kalotee, in New York Shatrughna Chairman & Co-Founder of



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented to

Mohinder Singh Taneja

On the occasion of being recognized as

Honorary Community Mayor

by the

India Association of Long Island

On behalf of the constituents of the Third Congressional District of New York, congratulations on receiving this special recognition. Thank you for your strong leadership, advocacy, dedication, and service to the Indian-American community. Your contributions have made a positive impact on many lives across the world. Best wishes for continued success in your future endeavors.



Thomas R. Suozzi

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress
Third District of New York

June 27, 2021

Congressional Recognition issued to Mohinder Singh Taneja by US Congress.

IALI and other Indo-American organizations for promotion and prosperity of their financial and logistic Indian culture and heritage help towards the Indian by different humanitarian services in the United States of America.

ਆਓ ਕਰੀਏ
ਗੱਲ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ
ਗੱਲ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ
ਗੱਲ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਸਾਰੇਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ
ਆਓ ਕਰੀਏ

ਗੱਲਬਾਤ

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Indian-American Appointed As US Securities And Exchange Commission Director

(News Agencies)-Gurbir S Grewal, a prominent Indian-American and the longest-serving Sikh Attorney-General of the US state of New Jersey, is stepping down to take up a key position with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Gurbir S Grewal, 48, will become SEC's director of the enforcement division, which regulates financial markets, from July 26 after serving since January 2018 as the state's top law enforcement officer, the SEC said in a statement on Tuesday. "I'm honoured and delighted to welcome Attorney General Gurbir S Grewal to the SEC,"



said Gary Gensler, the SEC Chairman. "He has had a distinguished career as New Jersey's chief law enforcement officer and as a prosecutor at both the local and federal levels. He has the ideal combination of experience, values, and leadership ability to helm the Enforcement Division at this critical time. I look forward to working closely with him to protect investors and root out wrongdoing in our markets," Gary Gensler said. Gurbir S Grewal is the second pick for the post since President Joe Biden took office in January.

Navjot Sidhu Meets Rahul Gandhi In Delhi Amid Punjab Congress Infighting

The meeting is happening just a day after the former Congress chief declared that he had no meeting scheduled with the cricketer-turned-politician.

(News Agencies)- Punjab Congress leader Navjot Sidhu, whose longstanding feud with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has contributed hugely to the crisis in the party's state unit, met Rahul Gandhi at his home in Delhi on Wednesday. The meeting took place just a day after the former Congress chief declared that he had no meeting scheduled with the cricketer-turned-politician.

Earlier on Wednesday, Mr Sidhu had met Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for a four-hour discussion. While the details of their talks are not known, Mr Sidhu had tweeted their picture. "Had a long meeting

with @priyankagandhi Ji," read the accompanying post. Ms Gandhi-Vadra was also present during Mr Sidhu's meeting with Rahul Gandhi.

The 57-year-old -- who is known to be backed by Rahul Gandhi and has a following both in the state and the party -- had been pushing for a meeting with the Gandhis to press his demands. Yesterday, Mr Gandhi had said he has no meeting scheduled with Mr Sidhu after the Punjab leader's team claimed that he was going to Delhi on Tuesday to meet the Gandhis. The Congress has made it clear that it would continue to back

Amarinder Singh and will contest the next year's state elections under his leadership. But the Gandhis did not meet the Chief Minister when he was in Delhi last week -- an omission many have interpreted as a snub.

It is unclear whether Wednesday's round of meetings will pacify the Punjab leader, who has not been shy about airing his long list of grievances against Amarinder Singh.

The long meeting with Priyanka Gandhi, though, had raised hopes of a breakthrough. Two years ago, Ms Gandhi-Vadra had managed to broker peace during a similar tumult in Rajasthan,



when Sachin Pilot was at loggerheads with his boss, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, and a split appeared imminent. In May, there were reports that Mr Sidhu -- who joined the Congress from BJP ahead of the 2017 elections -- is about to change camp again. The claim finally came from Amarinder Singh, going on record with a local television channel saying Mr Sidhu is in

talks with AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and can switch sides any moment. Mr Sidhu, furious, demanded that the Chief Minister prove his claims. "Prove one meeting that I have had with another party's leader?! I have never asked anyone for any post till date. All I seek is Punjab's prosperity!! Was invited & offered cabinet berths many times but I did not accept.

Accept Covishield, Covaxin Or Face Mandatory Quarantine, India Tells EU



Covishield and Covaxin must be notified in the European Union's digital Covid certificate, EU has been told, sources said.

arrival in India.

European Union has been told that Covishield and Covaxin must be notified in its digital Covid certificate, sources said.

Under the new "Green Pass" scheme, people vaccinated with Covishield are unlikely to be allowed to travel to the member states of European Union.

The EU countries accept only the vaccines approved by the European Medicines Agency, which are Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Janssen. But Covishield, which is the Indian

version of AstraZeneca, is yet to get their clearance.

Asked about the discrepancy by news agency ANI, Ugo Astuto, the European Union ambassador to India, said, Every approval process of vaccine must be conducted on its own merit".

On Tuesday, Serum Institute sources said has applied for EU's nod for Covishield through its European partner, AstraZeneca. But European Medicines Agency said they have not received a request for the approval of Covishield.

On Tuesday, foreign minister S Jaishankar took up the issue of inclusion of Covishield in the Vaccination Passport with a top EU official. "Discussed vaccine production and access. Took up 'Covishield' authorisation for travel to Europe. Will be following up," Mr Jaishankar tweeted.

So far, only those vaccinated with either of the four vaccines -- Comirnaty of Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Vaxzervria by AstraZeneca-Oxford and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen - do not face travel restrictions.

(News Agencies)-The European Union's reluctance in accepting Indian-made vaccines for its 'vaccination passport' has triggered a face-off with New Delhi. Sources in the foreign ministry said India will begin a reciprocal policy when it comes

to exemption from quarantine. This would mean that unless the European Union accepts Covishield and Covaxin certificates, their certificates will not be accepted in the country and people from EU will face mandatory quarantine upon

8 Camera Drones Found In Car Near Border With Nepal, 3 Being Questioned

(News Agencies)-Eight drones fitted with cameras have been recovered by Indian paramilitary soldiers in Bihar, along the border with Nepal, three days after a drone attack on an air force base in Jammu and Kashmir.

Three smugglers were arrested by the Sashastra Seema Bal for carrying the Chinese-made drones. The car in which they were travelling was stopped by the soldiers in Motihari based on intelligence inputs and searched thoroughly, the police said.

The drones were found hidden in the vehicle, the police said.

East Champaran SSP Naveen Chandra



Jha said the eight drone cameras were being transported in a WagonR when the men were caught.

"Two of the arrested smugglers live in

Sitamarhi and one is from Kundwa Chainpur. We are investigating all aspects of why the cameras were being brought. The entire matter will be clearly known only after investigation," Mr Jha said.

Senior police officer Jitendra Kumar said the men when intercepted did not give relevant information on the use of the drones. "A case of theft has also been filed," Mr Kumar said, according to news agency

ANI.

"The accused are locals and have claimed that they were taking the drones for wedding videography. Only a detailed investigation can reveal the true facts," he said.

There is increased focus on checking the use of drone after the attack on an air force base in Jammu region on Sunday. Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba is likely involved in the drone attack, the Jammu and Kashmir police chief has said. The same group may also be behind the drones spotted near a military facility on Monday, J&K police chief Dilbagh Singh told NDTV.

Trial "Will Take Lot Of Time": Court Grants Bail To 7 Murder Accused In Delhi Riots Case

Delhi riots case: The Delhi court said the seven murder accused "cannot be incarcerated till the conclusion of the trial, which will take a lot of time and particularly considering the pandemic".

(News Agencies)-A court in Delhi today granted bail to seven accused in a murder case related to the north-east Delhi violence, saying they cannot be incarcerated till the conclusion of trial which is likely to be delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The case pertains to alleged murder of one Vinod Kumar in Delhi's Brahmpuri area during the communal riots on February 24 last year. In all, 12 people are accused in the case.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat granted relief to the seven accused saying they "cannot be incarcerated till the conclusion of the trial, which will take a lot of time and particularly considering the pandemic".

Noting that most of them have remained in the judicial custody for more than a year, the judge said, "Considering the facts and circumstances, period of custody, the applications of all the accused persons are allowed and they are admitted to bail."

The court directed Sagir Ahmad, Naved Khan, Javed Khan, Arshad, Gulzar, Mohd Imran, and Chand Babu to furnish personal bonds of ₹ 20,000 each with one local surety of the like amount as a condition for bail.

They have also been directed to not indulge in any kind of criminal activity, not leave Delhi-NCR without the court's permission or tamper with the evidence.

Following the riots, the case was registered in the case for offences such as murder, attempt



to murder, rioting, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion under the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act. Communal clashes had broken out in north-east Delhi on February

24, 2020 after violence between the Citizenship (Amendment) Act supporters and its protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

Sikh Body Seeks Anti-Conversion Law, Inter-Caste Marriage Act In Jammu And Kashmir



This comes amid a row over the allegations of forced conversion of four women from the Sikh community to Islam in the union territory.

(News Agencies)-A Sikh organisation in Srinagar today demanded the implementation of the Inter-Caste Marriage Act and the enactment of an anti-conversion law in Jammu and Kashmir. This comes amid a row

over the allegations of forced conversion of four women from the Sikh community to Islam in the union territory.

"I, on behalf of the Sikh community, would request that the Inter-Caste Marriage Act be

implemented in Jammu and Kashmir. Once this Act is put in practice at this place, the inter-caste marriages will come to an end automatically," All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee Chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina told reporters.

Mr Raina, also a senior office-bearer of the Apni Party, said these laws will safeguard the interests of the people belonging to different faiths and religions. "The elements who want to earn mileage from such marriages

will also face an inevitable defeat," he added. Mr Raina said that over the years, the members of the elite political families of Jammu and Kashmir have entered into inter-caste marriage but nobody pointed fingers at them. "Whenever such an incident happens in a normal (ordinary) family, the issue gets blown out of proportion. This needs to be analysed and people should be vigilant so that the opportunistic politicians don't exploit them," he said.

At the same time, it is also important that Anti-Conversion Law is implemented in Jammu and Kashmir. This would stop the forcible conversion of people belonging to any religion whatsoever. As a result of the same, the friction between the different communities will also come to an end once for all. There would be no tensions between the communities and all the people will live without fear," he said.

Remove Pornographic Content Within A Week: Women's Panel To Twitter

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma also wrote to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi to investigate the matter and take appropriate legal action.

(News Agencies)-The National Commission for Women (NCW) has asked the Managing Director of Twitter India to remove all pornographic and obscene content from the platform within a week.

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma also wrote to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi to investigate the matter and take appropriate legal action.

"The NCW has taken suo motu cognisance of several profiles on Twitter sharing pornographic content. Chairperson Ms Rekha

Sharma has written to Managing Director, Twitter India for immediately removing all such pornographic and obscene content from the platform within a week," the women's panel said in a statement. Upon receiving a similar complaint earlier, the commission had brought the matter to Twitter's notice for immediate action. However, no action was reportedly taken by the platform, the NCW said.

The commission is disturbed with the fact that despite knowing of the availability of such banned

content which not only violates Indian laws but also Twitter's own policy, no action has been taken till date towards removing them. "The commission has shared with Twitter details of a few profiles sharing pornographic content on Twitter and has directed to remove all such content within one week. The platform has also been asked to communicate action taken within 10 days," it said. The move comes a day after the Delhi Police registered a case against Twitter on a complaint by the



National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) for allegedly allowing access to child sexual abuse material on the social media platform.

Gangster-Turned-Politician Mukhtar Ansari's Ambulance Driver Arrested

(News Agencies)-The Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested the driver of the ambulance which was used to ferry gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari from a Punjab jail to a Mohali court recently, officials said on Wednesday. Salim, a resident of Ghazipur, was arrested from Lucknow on Tuesday while another accused involved in the ambulance case, Shoaib Mujahid, who is from Mau district, was arrested from Barabanki on Wednesday, Superintendent of Police Yamuna Prasad said. The Barabanki and Ghazipur Police had declared cash rewards of ₹ 25,000 and ₹ 20,000 respectively on the duo, police said.



On March 31, Mukhtar Ansari was produced before the court in Punjab in an extortion case. The documents of the Uttar Pradesh registration number ambulance used to transport the gangster-turned-politician were found to be fake. During investigation, police found that Alka Rai, the operator of Shyam Sanjeevani Hospital in Mau, and some of her associates had registered the ambulance in the year 2013 on the basis of fake documents and a case was registered at

Nagar Kotwali of Barabanki, in which Mukhtar Ansari was made an accused of conspiracy and forgery. Six accused, including Rai, Sheshnath Rai, Rajnath and Anand Yadav, have been arrested in the case so far, they said. During interrogation, Salim told the STF that he was associated with Mukhtar Ansari's gang for the last several years. He is facing several cases in Ghazipur district and action has been taken against him under the Gangsters Act, police said. Salim also told police that three others -- Surendra, Ramesh and Firoz - would ferry Mukhtar Ansari in the ambulance during his imprisonment in Ropar Jail in Punjab and even before that.

"Maro Jao": Madhya Pradesh Minister's Shocking Comment To Parents' Union

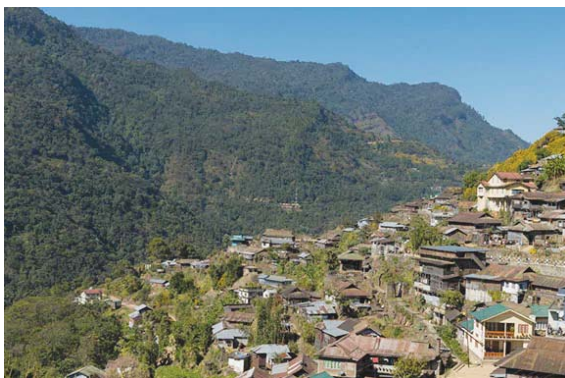
(News Agencies)- Covid pandemic, the schools can only charge tuition fee. Madhya Pradesh School Education minister Inder Singh Parmar's response shocked a parents' union in Bhopal, who had gone to consult him about overcharging by schools. "Maro jao (Go die)" was allegedly the minister's message when asked what should be done if the education department refused to hear their appeal. The parents and the state's opposition Congress have demanded that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan sack Mr Parmar if he doesn't quit on his own. Around 90-100 parents under the banner of Madhya Pradesh Palak Mahasangh had gone to meet the minister at his official residence in Bhopal. The schools, the parents alleged, were charging hefty fees in violation of High Court orders. The Madhya Pradesh High Court has ordered that during the

The parents requested the minister to step in and help bring down the charges, saying they were finding it difficult to meet the costs due to incomes impacted by the pandemic. When they asked what they should do if the school education department refused to accept their plea, the minister flared up. "Go and die, do whatever you wish to," he allegedly said. Palak Mahasangh president Kamal Vishwakarma said the minister should apologise to the parents and resign if he is not willing to listen to their pleas. "The minister is a shameless person," said Congress spokesperson Narendra Saluja. "The parents' union went to meet him for relief, but he showed an irresponsible attitude. He should be sacked immediately," he added.

Centre Declares Nagaland "Disturbed Area" For Another Six Months

(News Agencies)-The centre is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of the state of Nagaland is in "disturbed and dangerous" condition, a notification by the Ministry of Home Affairs said. The centre has further extended the operation of the Armed

Government is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of the State of Nagaland is in such a disturbed and dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary," the notification read. "Now, therefore, in the exercise of the powers conferred by



Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Nagaland for six more months while declaring the state as a "disturbed area". According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the centre is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of the state of Nagaland is in "disturbed and dangerous" condition. "Whereas the Central

Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 the Central Government hereby declares that whole of the state of Nagaland to be 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from 30th June 2021 for the purpose of the said Act," it added. The AFSPA grants special powers to the armed forces in "disturbed areas." According to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976, once declared "disturbed", the area has to maintain the status quo for a minimum of three months.

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America's longest war is ending. A nation is left wondering whether it was all worth it.

America's "forever war" in Afghanistan outlasted the first three commanders in chief of this century. But this week, Joe Biden is set to become the president who imposes closure on the US' role in the bloody, intractable conflict. Twenty years after the 9/11 attacks -- plotted by al-Qaeda from Afghan soil -- plunged the United States into a fractured graveyard of empires, the US pull-out will be complete within days, multiple military sources told CNN. As many as 1,000 troops could remain to guard the American embassy in Kabul, and to protect the airport -- a lifeline for the fragile government and its armed forces who are destined to carry on fight the perpetual war that raged before the US arrived and will continue after it leaves. But the American operation -- launched by President George W. Bush when New York's Twin Towers and the Pentagon lay in ruins -- is functionally over. In a wider strategic sense, the withdrawal underscores how the War on Terror -- which US and allied leaders insisted would be the organizing principle of international relations for decades to come -- has faded as the dominant priority. Years of war abroad sapped US hegemony and contributed to domestic discord that further weakened its global footprint. A new era of great power competition, marked by China's rise and Russia's belligerence

now most concerns Washington. And the Covid-19 pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands more Americans than terrorism ever did. After years of full-scale anti-terror blitzes, bitter land combat, nation-building, US neglect then fresh resolve, counter-insurgency offensives, negotiating with the Taliban and simple grim holding on, the US will leave with many citizens wondering why Americans are still in Afghanistan. Unless things really deteriorate in Kabul, there will be no scenes like the last helicopters lifting off from the US embassy roof in Saigon after the Vietnam War. This conflict, which dragged on so long that some US soldiers who deployed sent offspring off to the same battlefield, is ending largely out of the view of the American public. But just as in that earlier prolonged war, there are no victory parades, only exhaustion, a series of busted US plans and offensives and a strong political imperative to quit. "We did not ask for this mission. But we will fulfill it," Bush said in October 2001. Two decades later, many are left wondering if the US lived up to that promise. That this is such a difficult question to answer explains why it was such a harrowing experience for those who fought and led the war. The muted departure lacks the drama and resolve that drove Bush's lightning offensive against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

India's superficial understanding of China will no longer do

On July 1, the Communist Party of China (CPC) celebrates its centenary. Jude Blanchette and Evan S Medeiros write in their recent essay in The Washington Quarterly, that this is happening at a time when the Party commands more wealth, power and global influence than at any point in its history. The role of one instrument - the People's Liberation Army (PLA) - in establishing, consolidating and expanding the Party's power is widely researched and, therefore, well known. The role of the other, the United Front Work Department (UFWD), is barely understood and, thus, underestimated. In October 1939, when the Communist Party was still a group of rebels, Mao described the UFWD as one of the three jewels (or magic weapons) of the communist movement (the other two being the Party and PLA). While the PLA was involved in fighting its way to power, the UFWD engaged in political influence-type activities that portrayed the CPC as a benign, progressive and democratic force. Its underlying philosophy spelt out by Mao in October 1944 was that the work of the United Front was to first unite with various social groups, and then to convert them and

transform them. In line with Mao's dictum, the UFWD performed the important task of building temporary alliances to overthrow the Chinese government and install the Party in power.

After 1949, the Party turned its attention to the three territories of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. United Front tactics were adopted especially under Deng Xiaoping through, among others, the Office of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, Taiwan Affairs Office and Xinhua News Agency. Elements within the ethnic Chinese populations in these territories who were sympathetic to the CPC were mobilised to harness support for the Party's cause among the local population, especially after Deng opened negotiations with the British and Portuguese for the return of Hong Kong and Macao respectively. The idea was to build pressure from "within" on the colonial powers by creating pro-unification public sentiment in order to erode the legitimacy of foreign rule. The UFWD invited scores of opinion makers to China, gave them privileged meetings with the leadership, helped their businesses and, in return, asked them to act as influencers in the local population.

PM Modi goes north: Impact on Kashmir after all-party meet

By Susmita Ghosh

The Northern-crown states have been a cause of age-old pride and headache both for India. August 5, 2019, was the day when Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) were divided into two separate union territories. They were enjoying the special status of Limited Autonomy since 1954. It was revoked when Prime Minister Narendra Modi nullified Article 370. After almost two years, PM Modi urged all parties to participate in a high-level cabinet meeting with the leaders of the two Union Territories. The goal was to discuss, imposing the delimitation exercise for strengthening the democratic process in Jammu Kashmir. As per his request, the high-profile All-party meeting was attended by 14 prominent leaders along with the honorable home minister, Amit Shah. PM Modi urged the leaders to take part in the delimitation process to be undertaken in the province. He focused on the importance of 'normal assembly elections' in J&K as quickly as possible. PM Modi tweeted on Jun 24, stating the priority to "strengthen grassroots democracy in J&K." He further stated, "Delimitation has to happen at a quick pace so that polls can happen if J&K gets an elected Government that gives strength to their development trajectory" (via Twitter). J&K has undergone a huge change in its democratic genre and was a non-working province after the abolition of Article 370. Forced Lockdown, recurring armed attacks, high alert terrorist attacks and stuff almost detached the province from the rest of the democracy. State Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir can only happen when the Delimitation exercise is fully completed.

History recorded when Lok Sabha constituency Delimitation was done in accordance to Indian Constitution in the year

2002- 2008, the state of J&K then didn't take part. Hence, after the abrogation of Article 370, a pristine Committee has to be formed to fix the current democratic turmoil in the UT's.

Another alarming issue in Jammu and Kashmir is a province that is claimed by both India and her immediate North western neighbor, Pakistan. As per the report, the fresh terrorist attack in the IAF base on June 27 and the Crude Bomb aversion by the Indian Army, only raise the alarm to restore law and order in the provinces. Due to the absence of any strong governing bodies since June 2018, Jammu and Kashmir have always been volatile issues for the two countries.

The criticism against Delimitation is also aimed at religious disbursement. PM Modi hinted at the fact that J&K will regain its 'State'-ship at the right time but without Ladakh for the time being.' He is hopeful for restoring the 'normal' stature promising a win-win for both the teams. With Jammu and Kashmir reorganization Act 2019, the Assembly seats increased in number too. Thus the Centre is ready for Holding Assembly Elections in the UT's.

Political leaders have responded positively to the proposal and the Delimitation process will be a crucial step for the Valley's return to Normal. Conflicts have already been aroused by the center opposition party who focuses on the restoration of Article 370.

However, this decision can pave the way to mend the broken records between the North and the Centre. It can send a positive message to the rest of the world on the whole. However, the most important impact it will have is on the resident of Kashmir. If successful, it can bring a glimmer of peace and normalcy in the daily life of J&K, which has eluded to them for years.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

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A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

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Will Uttar Pradesh be a Laboratory for an Opposition Coalition?



On June 22, when representatives of opposition parties met at the residence of Sharad Pawar under the banner of the Rashtra Manch, a three-year-old outfit set up by Yashwant Sinha, the Uttar Pradesh elections came up for discussion. The subject was not listed on the agenda but halfway down the sitting, the discussions, that centred on the "issues of the day", got less structured. Someone asked if the UP polls had the potential to create a national alternative but the question remained unanswered because nobody proffered a response. Early days, it was said.

At this meeting, UP was represented by Jayant Chaudhary, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) leader, who was anointed the party president this year after the death of his father,

Chaudhary Ajit Singh. Ghanshyam Tiwari, a Samajwadi Party (SP) spokesperson, was also present. In any case, Jayant and Tiwari have been associated with Sinha's outfit for some time. Jayant's presence was significant because the RLD is the BJP's principal challenger in the Jat-dominated parts of west UP. The RLD has cemented an alliance with the SP but there's little else by way of an opposition coalition before UP votes in February-March 2022. So, can the elections serve as a precursor to bringing the non-BJP spectrum together and lay the ground for opposition unity before the 2024 general elections? The prospect presently appears distant. Apart from the SP and the RLD, UP has two other major players: the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Congress. While the BSP chief, Mayawati,

ruled out the possibility of a tie-up with any entity once speculation gained momentum that she was about to do business with Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM, the Congress similarly seems averse to acquiring partners. The Congress's alliance with the SP in the 2017 assembly polls that birthed mega posters of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav together with the slogan, "UP ke do ladke (UP's two boys)", was a washout. The idea of juxtaposing Rahul and Akhilesh was to reach out to the state's burgeoning young voters and carve out a new demographic constituency. By then, UP's youths were sold on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP. Recent history demonstrated that non-BJP alliances do not work the way they did in 1993, when Akhilesh's father and the SP founder, Mulayam Singh Yadav, reached out to the BSP, then helmed by its architect, Kanshi Ram, accepted the terms and conditions laid down by Ram in an extraordinarily hard bargain, fought that year's assembly polls together, and beat the BJP by a whisker against all expectations. In 2019, the SP, BSP and RLD

came together to combat a BJP which was on a high since 2014. The trio was routed in the assembly elections that upended cast-in-stone caste equations and conjoined disparate castes and sub-castes under the rubric of a larger Hindu identity. The SP-BSP-RLD arrangement was tenuous and didn't work on the ground because of traditional antagonisms between a dominant backward caste like the Yadavs and the Dalits or the Jats and Dalits over landholdings and control of economic resources were too deeply embedded to be papered over by a political alliance. The respective party workers were aloof from one another. However, the SP and the RLD sustained the pact in whatever ways they could, so the leaders believe that they can seek out their voters from a position of greater "stability and credibility" than what they held in 2019. Akhilesh and Jayant are working towards drawing up a scenario with three elements: within the alliance, create space for a host of smaller but influential identity-based parties, give a "national" colour and impact to the campaign by bringing in leaders such as Mamata Banerjee and Tejashwi Yadav,

and lastly work towards making the contest a bipolar fight against the BJP. While Jayant is in the throes of establishing his writ over the RLD and probably recasting its organisation, the SP has mobilised its workers through virtual sessions during the pandemic and involved them in providing healthcare and relief. The SP and the RLD have not hit the ground for two reasons. The pandemic and the apprehension that an early display of aggression could provoke a backlash from the Yogi Adityanath government, resulting in repression and long arrests that could demoralise the cadre before the elections. They have demonstrated their dissent and criticisms of the government on social media. This is not to say that the BSP and the Congress will mean nothing, particularly the BSP that has a pocket of captive votes, even in adversity. The Congress's UP engagement is patchy as the Gandhi siblings arrive now and then, cause a buzz, and then disappear. Moreover, the UP Congress president, Ajay Kumar Lallu, has a proven record of staging street fights and courting arrest but has not been accepted by the party's veterans, each of who has a following in different measures.

Trump's followers do take him literally

During the 2016 election campaign a new political phenomenon emerged: journalists seemed to take then-candidate Donald Trump literally, but not seriously, while his supporters did the reverse: They took him seriously but not literally. This curiosity was noted by many, including tech billionaire Peter Thiel. Thiel explained that while Trump may say, for example, that he wants to ban Muslim immigrants or replicate the Great Wall of China on the southern border, his followers heard, "We're going to have a saner, more sensible immigration policy." Thiel's simple observation seemed like a handy way to explain how the press misunderstood Trump and his loyalists. However, it failed to describe what was a more complex dynamic. In truth, Trump was often quite serious about outrageous things he said,

including banning Muslims seeking to come to the US and building a wall to rival the one erected by the ancient Chinese. If things didn't work out well, then he could seek cover in the don't-take-me-literally explanation, but his intent was often obscure. And so many in Trump's base do take him literally that when he told a huge crowd in Washington on January 6 that he would walk to the Capitol to protest against Congress certifying the 2020 election, his aides feared that many expected him to follow through.

"There's no way we are going to the Capitol," said chief of staff Mark Meadows when the Secret Service warned him against it. When Meadows asked Trump about his promise to walk to the Capitol he said, "I didn't mean it literally." This exchange, revealed in Michael Wolff's new book "Landslide," illustrates the

difficulties presented by Trump's weird approach to both his oratory and his responsibilities.

For four years, Trump's followers had shown that they hang on to every word and do take him quite literally, even when he says implausible things about serious matters like the Covid-19 pandemic and the security of the election system. Despite the suffering and division caused by his statements on these issues and more, Trump hadn't altered his behavior to account for the fact that he was president of the United States and his words mattered. Instead, he continued blabbing, assuming he could declare that he didn't really mean it if things went horribly wrong.

As Wolff notes in an excerpt published by New York Magazine, Trump's most ardent supporters are more like obsessed fans of rock-and-roll idols than voters who might put a



candidate's bumper sticker on their cars a week before Election Day. Decades in the public eye and speeches resembling an insult comic's performance had turned Trump into a star. And, as Wolff writes, "Stars like him needed fans, but this did not mean that a fan was not a strange thing to be. The more devoted the fan, the odder the fan." Many in the crowd that heeded Trump's call to gather in Washington were, to put it mildly, from the odder

end of the fan base. Gathered at the Capitol to somehow stop the process that would affirm Joe Biden's election to the presidency, the group included men and women in combat gear, several who brought weapons, and one even dressed like a self-proclaimed shaman. In Trump's speech that day -- or better put, performance -- he wound up the crowd with false claims of election fraud and calls for them to, "Save our democracy."

Walmart, Amazon Join Twitter In This India Problem



The list of what e-commerce platforms aren't allowed to do in India has been growing for some time, but the latest prohibition on flash sales has simply gone too far. If the rules get implemented, the entire business model of Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc. could come unstuck before their investments in a market of 1.4 billion people can grow to a rewarding size.

While a lofty public purpose can always be tacked on as an afterthought to the most draconian of regulations, in this case the fig leaf is thinner than usual. It's hard to see how "significantly reduced prices, high discounts or any other such promotions or attractive offers" for a period of time "limit customer choice, increase prices and prevent a level playing field."

The real driving spirit behind the consumer affairs ministry's new draft guidelines, currently open for public comment, may lie elsewhere. In the garb of checking manipulative behavior by online marketplaces, India is effectively muzzling the two leading U.S. players. It's also tilting the balance in favor of offline commerce, and away from digital startups that are India's best bet for rebuilding the pandemic-ravaged economy.

Amazon and Walmart are dominant, but in a tiny corner. Overall e-commerce is only 4% of India's \$800 billion retail market. Yet they're supposedly exerting such a baleful influence on the natural flow of goods that they must be reined in by, in effect, instructing Amazon not to sell its Made in India Fire TV Sticks - a media streaming device - on its local e-commerce website. Ditto for Walmart. Its

physical wholesale operation in the country may not be able to hawk a shirt on Flipkart, the online marketplace it acquired for \$16 billion in 2018. And this is when the American retailer is trying hard to blend in. It plans to triple exports from India to \$10 billion by 2027, and will float Flipkart in the local equity market.

The Flipkart purchase was Walmart's most expensive, and perhaps the smoothest moment in its long and turbulent quest to

Walmart-Flipkart have denied the charge of abuse of market power in recent court proceedings.) The same reason is being given for the ongoing harassment of Twitter Inc. - it is apparently in breach of rules framed for information technology intermediaries.

Twitter has vowed to continue its "constructive dialogue" with the Indian government, and asked for time to comply. But are the rules fair, or do they exceed the remit of the consumer protection and

branded a tweet by one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party leaders as "manipulated media." The lawyer Twitter nominated as its grievance officer in India - again to meet new government rules - quit in less than two weeks. The motivation behind targeting U.S. e-commerce players is not as obvious, though even that is ultimately a political project. Safeguarding the interest of consumers or mom-and-pop stores is how the curbs are marketed to the public, though

more of the same medicine has passed. To avoid an open confrontation with the Biden administration, it may be more fruitful to twist existing Indian laws out of shape.

For instance, it isn't the remit of India's consumer protection law to check if the many sellers taking online orders for phones during festive-season discount sales are thinly capitalized post boxes. A lot of them came into existence to circumvent a previous policy that e-commerce marketplaces, or their related-party sellers, can't control more than 25% of the inventory on offer. If they're still violating the spirit of that requirement, it's not a problem of consumer protection but an anti-competition issue, and should be probed accordingly. It's not deep-pocketed U.S. e-commerce players that have devastated the neighborhood Indian retailer, but Covid-19. For small shopkeepers to climb out of the debt hole they've slipped into because of lost revenue and bloated medical bills, they need partners who will help them go digital. Arbitrary rule-making gets in the way. A startup earning a small commission on each online sale will struggle to run a marketplace that has to refund 100% of a disgruntled customer's purchase price, especially when no such straitjacket will apply to physical retailers. But then, consumers and small shopkeepers are just convenient excuses. Behind the smokescreen of shielding their interests, India is slowly creating a protectionist economy that will benefit only a small, select group of firms. After sinking billions of dollars into India, Amazon and Walmart are still not on that shortlist. Maybe they never will be.



establish a toehold in the country. Soon after the deal, Mukesh Ambani, India's richest businessman, announced his own ambitious e-commerce plan for linking small independent stores with customers of his then-nascent 4G telecom service. That network now has 420 million-plus subscribers. Ambani is also India's largest operator of physical stores.

Piyush Goyal, the commerce minister, says that arrogant American firms have blatantly flouted Indian laws. (Amazon and

information technology laws framed by parliament? Facebook Inc.'s WhatsApp service has gone to court after being asked to make messages on the platform traceable. The social media firm argues that the requirement will destroy its promise of end-to-end encryption and have a chilling effect on privacy and free speech.

The squeeze on U.S. content firms is guided by political calculations: Twitter's India offices were visited by the police after the microblogging site

in reality they're about eventually putting India behind something resembling China's Great Firewall. Local tycoons would dominate the market, and while foreign players won't be completely shunned, they may only be able to join the party as junior partners, supplying technology and capital. Achieving this objective with a stringent foreign direct investment policy is something the Modi government tried two years ago. Both Walmart and Amazon dodged the blow. The time for



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Economy: Dealing with the D word

The economy is likely to see another wave of pent-up demand in the immediate months to come, but the larger question will remain unanswered till later this year.

The second wave of the coronavirus disease is ebbing, a little less than 30% of the eligible population (everyone over the age of 18 years) has received at least one dose of a Covid-vaccine, and business activities (one measure is the Nomura India Business Resumption Index) are almost back to where they were in April before India was overwhelmed by a rush of infections. The index, for instance, is back in the late 80s; 100 indicates a pre-pandemic level of activity. Meanwhile, the government announced more relief and stimulus measures on Tuesday. Much like the previous ones, these are over-indexed on guaranteed credit schemes. It isn't difficult to see why the government prefers these over direct cash transfers, which will have an



impact on the fiscal deficit. Not everyone who avails credit through the various schemes the government has announced since last May will default; those who have been really affected by the pandemic will, and for them, the scheme will pretty much function like a cash transfer - except that the impact on the fiscal will be delayed, and hopefully come at a time when

the economy is in better shape. Seen thus, the targeted credit schemes, including the one for the tourism sector and tour guides, or that for micro-finance companies, takes on a new meaning. The question is: Will this be enough to spur demand, which was already declining before the pandemic hit? The second wave prevented us from understanding whether the sharp increase in demand seen after the first wave was purely on account of pent-up demand or whether there was the beginning of a fundamental recovery. The economy is likely to see another wave of pent-up demand in the immediate months to come, but the larger question will remain unanswered till later this year.

A victory of democracy

The Kashmir talks have opened the door for a political solution to the post-2019 stalemate. But statehood is key



Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's decision to invite leaders of Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political formations, including four former chief ministers, three of whom were arrested by the central government less than two years ago, is a victory of Indian democracy. The fact that these leaders had an opportunity to articulate their grievances and sense of betrayal at the events of 2019, and the fact

that the Centre was able to present its viewpoint on the path ahead, too reflects the best traditions of democratic dialogue. There can be a legitimate debate on what prompted the government to send the invitation out in the first place, and whether it was from a position of strength or weakness. There can also be a legitimate debate on what prompted the Kashmiri parties to accept the invitation, and

whether it was from a sense of seeking validation and legitimacy or out of desperation. But irrespective of the motive, the outcome was positive. Having said that, this is only the first step in a long and challenging process ahead. The achievement of Thursday's talks is that it is now clear that the restoration of Article 370 is no longer a precondition to political progress, and all parties have found the fact that

the issue is sub-judice a good cover to tell their respective constituencies that they haven't diluted their position on it. But the script then gets complicated. The Centre has made it clear that it wants to restore the democratic process, and has pushed for delimitation, elections and statehood, in that order. But for Kashmir's parties, as well as the Congress which has a presence in Kashmir, this sequence

doesn't work. If they are expected to participate in the democratic process, despite the massive trust deficit of the past few years, it is hard for them to do so in return for elections to a Union Territory. And so, they want statehood and elections, in that order. The Centre has already succeeded in creating a new post-370 reality in Kashmir, fulfilling a key ideological goal. It has, to a large extent, also managed to defuse the international pressure on this specific question. But it needs to send a signal to both the Kashmiri street and Kashmiri politicians that Delhi respects their political aspirations for genuine federalism. As for Kashmir's parties, they have an opportunity to be part of the electoral process and it is likely they can negotiate for some special dispensation for locals much like some other states have. The interests of the two sides, perhaps for the first time in decades, are broadly aligned. Now both need to look at the bigger picture to ensure a divergence in sequencing does not become a deal-breaker.

Indians are largely conservative when it comes to religion. But social barriers aren't insurmountable

The findings of the latest Pew survey on religion in India raise questions that lie at the heart of India's contemporary political debates. The survey shows that while an overwhelming majority of Indians are believers, they also recognise the importance of respecting other religions as a religious virtue. This respect for other religions co-exists with a high support for religious segregation, not just on questions such as marriage but even in choosing neighbours and friends. Defying taboos related to food is among the biggest triggers for being considered an outcaste from one's religion. If these findings are true, it confirms what is anecdotally known: Indians are largely conservative when it comes to religion. But since this is the first such survey, and there is no comparative historical data, it is hard to know whether conservatism has increased or decreased over time. When seen



Living together, separately

with the tectonic shift in Indian polity since 2014, it raises other questions too. Is the BJP's rise a reflection of this conservatism? Or has its rise made Indians, especially Hindus, more conservative, even intolerant, vis-à-vis other religions? Or have these two reinforced each other? The report indicates that Hindus who support the BJP are slightly more conservative than others. For example, 72% Hindus who

favour the BJP think that it is very important to stop Hindu women from marrying into other religions. For Hindus who had an unfavourable view of the BJP, this number is just 57%. But the key factor is that even among the BJP's opponents, segregation is a majority view. Regressive views span religions: 42% of Muslim men, compared to just 32% women, think that the practice of triple talaq should exist. While

it is tempting to conclude that existing social barriers are insurmountable, it is also true that more Indians than at any point in history are defying caste and religion structures in making life choices, including marriage. The trend of voters flipping between the BJP and its opponents in national and state elections also shows political choices are complex, beyond the religious outlook of the party.

The larger political message from the survey is that while the entrenched conservatism among Hindus might give the BJP an edge, it is not the only explanation for the party's political rise. The larger social message is that India has a long way to go in becoming a truly harmonious society, where citizens don't just live together, separately and peacefully, but coexist in all senses of the term.

The dangers of anti-science, anti-vaccine propaganda

Eligible citizens, young and old, must take both jabs and encourage others as well. Unfortunately, scientific reality hasn't deterred some public figures from acting irresponsibly



India has a singular mission over the next year - vaccinating the population against Covid-19. Universal vaccination is the only way to save lives, prevent future waves, revive economic growth, send children to school, resume social interactions and defeat the

pandemic. Eligible citizens, young and old, must take both jabs and encourage others as well. Unfortunately, scientific reality hasn't deterred some public figures from acting irresponsibly. A primary example is lawyer, Prashant Bhushan, who has been consistently advising against vaccines on Twitter. With 2.2 million Twitter followers, his disregard for science can potentially sway fence-sitters who are hesitant to take vaccines to follow suit. Misinformation about the effectiveness of vaccines foment hesitancy at a time when various studies point to this being a significant barrier to the fight against Covid-19. There is little to distinguish Mr Bhushan and Ram Kisan Yadav (Baba Ramdev) who have both

peddled misinformation about vaccines, revealing that the anti-science impulse in India makes strange bedfellows. Vaccination is not legally mandatory. Therefore, an individual can choose not to take the jab. But unless it is on medical advice, this would be self-defeating. Those actively campaigning against vaccination pose a threat to public health. Citizens should also remember that vaccination certificates will be crucial to return to a new normal, from accessing public spaces to travel. Not getting vaccinated would not only risk one's life but also prevent returning to a pre-Covid-19 life. Influencers should take the jab, and if they don't want to do so, at least stop commenting on issues they know little about.

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Second COVID cover-up - China, we know about but was there another one in the US?



The world rightfully wants to find out what really happened in Wuhan and how what should have been a run-of-the-mill virus set off a global pandemic. We probably never will, however, because of the Great Chinese Cover-up. But is there another cover-up, hiding right here in plain sight in Washington? Did America bungle our initial handling of the pandemic because a handful of government scientists and bureaucrats, and their unwitting media enablers, deliberately sent us off in the wrong direction in order to cover up their own complicity in

creating COVID-19?

These scientists insisted that anyone promoting the lab leak theory, including our leading governors and well-respected scientists, was a hysterical, xenophobic, anti-science conspiracy theorist. Did they react with such velocity and venom because they were covering up for their own misguided actions? What did they not want the world to know? That they were funding risky gain-of-function research and genetically engineering fairly harmless viruses to make them more contagious, virulent and lethal in order to study them? That

they were awarding grants to an adversarial nation's research lab, where the Chinese military was also involved?

Did they do these things without the approval, or perhaps even knowledge of their bosses and therefore need to cover their tracks, lest the world demand answers for their role for inadvertently contributing to a global pandemic?

I was President Trump's first deputy national security adviser and knew nothing about these potentially dangerous gain-of-function research projects, nor that the U.S. government was funding Chinese labs.

If President Trump had been briefed, he NEVER would have agreed to it. First, he would have railed against U.S. tax dollars being used to pay for research in China. He was elected to change China policy, not subsidize it. Trump, a notorious germaphobe, would have railed even more loudly against paying mad scientists to create Frankenstein monster viruses.

So, who did give the go-ahead to

resume risky gain-of-function research? Government bureaucrats? The so-called "expert class" who have been proven wrong again and again over the course of the pandemic? Even if they were not specifically funding gain-of-function research at the Wuhan lab, what were we funding there?

If we weren't funding gain-of-function research in China, were we doing so at other labs in other lands? Surely the decision to create killer viruses capable of creating global pandemics if mishandled should have been made at the highest levels of government. But it wasn't.

We now learn that National Institutes of Health scientists, whose gain-of-function research was shut down by the Obama administration, suddenly restarted it in January 2017, just as Donald Trump was taking office. When discussing the possibility of a lab leak in gain-of-function research, Dr. Anthony Fauci wrote "that the benefits of such experiments and the resulting

knowledge outweigh the risks." Tell that to a world still in the throes of a pandemic that has caused almost 4 million deaths. When President Trump entertained the lab leak theory, they blamed him for the death of hundreds of thousands of Americans. These same government experts urged their allies in the media, social media and Silicon Valley to censor and silence anyone who questioned their pronouncements. Evidence is mounting that it likely was a lab leak, and these same scientists thought so all along, but refused to say so.

It is not fearmongering or conspiracy theorizing to ask legitimate questions of our own officials. It is only prudent. We are just emerging from a global pandemic that has caused more damage to our society and economy than a world war. Surely, we need to examine every aspect of the origin and spread of COVID, even if holding up a mirror to our own actions unveils a cover-up in Washington.

The media's many mistakes help them, because they are impossible to track

According to a new survey, the U.S. Media is the least trustworthy in the world - dead last. Think about that -- the wealthiest nation by far - got creamed by places like Finland. Finland, who just started getting the news a few months ago. So will our media learn from this humiliating result? No - they buried it like Stelter's treadmill under six months of dirty laundry. Now, I bash the media a lot. Outside of nude jazzercise, it's my favorite thing to do in front of an open window. See: the media is almost wrong on everything - but like a middle school soccer game - they don't like to keep score. But I do. Of course, there's the Wuhan lab lie. Both the media and big tech buried that -- claiming even mentioning it was more racist than Sarah Silverman, Justin Trudeau and Ralph Northam in black face singing mammy. There's the IG report showing how the media lied about the secret service clearing Lafayette

Park so trump could have a photo op with a bible. CNN ran with that BS. Especially this guy.

Jim Acosta: you're watching this video now of the president walking through Lafayette park// the United States government does not use the military against civilians in this country unless there's a damn good reason and this just wasn't a damn good reason and all we ended up with the president of the united states looking like a wannabe dictator. If that guy was any slimier, he'd be a bowl of okra drooled on by a St. Bernard.

Remember when the New York Times said the first Covid vaccine wouldn't be ready until November 2033. Of course, they said that while Trump was president - so it served a purpose. I haven't seen a prediction that wrong since I expected that cold sore to go away.

There's the media embracing Jussie Smollett, a story with more holes than a golf course full of pool tables. And that's one of

many instances where the media played up hate crimes, only bury them when they turn out to be false.

You also remember all the "final nail in the coffin" stories about Trump? Arrest is imminent, they would cry - and then, like the inside of Joy Reid's head... Nothing. You remember when the media joined together prior to a national election to disappear the Hunter Biden story - to help their side win? And then when it was safe - and Biden had won - the story just magically re-emerged. It's all about timing - as even time magazine brazenly admitted that the media, activists and big tech had joined forces in manipulating narratives and turmoil to sway an election. Crap... Like Joe Biden talking about corn pop, I could go on forever. Collusion. Obstruction. Kavanaugh. Covington. Julie fricken Swetnick. Michael fricken Avenatti. CNN slobbered all over that litigating lollipop. Remember the imminent slaughter of the Kurds? Or Trump golfing, when



he was really in Afghanistan visiting the troops. How about Russians putting bounties on US troops under Trump. Or the nonstop bulls*** about tax returns. How about when the phony bombshell book "anonymous" was falsely claimed to have been penned by a senior Trump official? Then you found out it was a nobody. Remember the media's mockery of rising crime - after calling riots mostly peaceful? Those same people who defended looting, are psyched that a granny was

sentenced for entering the capitol building. And now they claim it's the Republicans not Dems who wanted to defund the police. The media's made so many mistakes, it actually helps them. Cuz like Kat's ex's - it's impossible to keep track of all of them. Now when I slam the media, people say, "but Greg you are the media." Damn right. I've been doing this for 30 years. I've been all over - men's mags, women's mags, political journals, nudism advocacy-that's how I met Dr. Drew. But I was the odd man out.

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The Manhattan DA could complicate Trump's future



As long-time criminal law practitioners, we know that the Monday meeting held between New York prosecutors and former President Donald Trump's attorneys was among the more dramatic that can play out in the behind-the-scenes life of any case. The District Attorney for the County of New York is reportedly preparing to charge the Trump Organization, and perhaps certain of its executives, in connection with allegedly valuable fringe benefits provided to company employees. The defense lawyers were reportedly trying to talk the prosecutors out of it. We urge the DA to follow the evidence wherever it may lead in this initial set of charges, and

the ones that may follow, even if that brings the prosecution to Trump himself. In a new Brookings report, we offer a roadmap for what may lie ahead, including for the ex-president. Any analysis must begin with the likely soon-to-be-filed charges. If the recent news coverage is accurate, they will likely be narrowly focused on the company's provision of fringe benefits to executives without the payment of proper payroll or other taxes on them. Those charges may be filed against not only the Trump Organization for a tax avoidance scheme, but also against any individual executive who knowingly failed to record or report those benefits as taxable

income.

But we believe it is unlikely that the DA will begin and end its prosecution with a focus on fringe benefits alone. Prosecutors often initially bring a narrow set of charges. Then, over time, they may supersede with additional charges as the case develops, broadening their focus and working their way up the corporate ladder.

There are many reasons why the DA might do this here, including, perhaps, to apply pressure on Trump Organization CFO Allen Weisselberg. The DA reportedly has been trying to get him to testify against Trump -- so far without success. Weisselberg could be charged if, for example, he directed a tax avoidance scheme to benefit the company and/or if he himself personally benefited from unreported fringe benefits.

In our experience, the threat of charges against a would-be cooperator can be quite persuasive, but actually filing an indictment plainly raises the stakes. We each have prosecuted or defended individuals in that spot. It is

uncomfortable for the defendant. And any tax fraud case eventually could include other schemes, depending on how the evidence develops. According to reports, prosecutors are looking at allegations that conservation easements may have been improperly taken, that certain income may have been misreported as consulting fees and that now-infamous "hush money" payments may have been illicitly obscured as "legal expenses."

If any or all of those efforts served to reduce the tax liabilities of the company, and perhaps those of its officers or employees, additional charges should be forthcoming. Many of the same operative facts potentially could be charged as the separate offense of falsifying business records. According to the New York Times, other potentially chargeable offenses could also include insurance fraud and a scheme to defraud lenders or others.

That brings us to Trump himself. His penchant for micromanagement is well known. Photographs of him smiling and

signing huge stacks of tax forms related to his family business have been widely distributed. It also has been reported that Trump allegedly signed checks to reimburse the hush money payments and was likewise intimately involved in other operations of his company now under scrutiny. Trump has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

The fact that Trump likely will not be named in the first case or cases to be filed does not mean he can rest easy. We may well see more charging decisions before DA Cyrus Vance, Jr. leaves office at the end of this year. We do not, of course, know whether Trump will be among those charged -- if anyone is. If the evidence does not merit it, he should not be. But given the known facts and the law, we believe Trump is at substantial risk.

Whether the case remains narrow or, as we suspect, it ultimately expands to include broader charges, we want to be clear that this is unlikely to be a slam-dunk case for the prosecution.

Only Texas has the ability to stop Biden's disaster at the southern border

A few weeks ago, a driver for a charter bus company reached out to reporters at Fox-17 in Nashville. She had been told not to speak to the media, but she did it anyway. Why? Because what she was seeing was so unusual in her 20-year career that she felt she had to tell the public about it. Starting in April, the bus driver said, government agents began telling her to pick up busloads of migrant children -- apparently from Guatemala, Mexico and Honduras. The driver wasn't given any information beyond that. She was just told to take those children deep into the United States, away from the border, and do it as quickly as possible. "There have been some drop-offs in Nashville, some in Knoxville, some in Chattanooga, a couple in Atlanta," the driver said. "That's just as far as I go, then the children continue on further." Another source familiar with what's going on told Fox-17 that some children were taken as far

as New York, Chicago and Miami. But there's a problem. If you're trying to change the population of a country without the people who already live there finding out, it's tough to do with busses. Because when you pull a bus packed with illegal migrants from a foreign country, without the proper ID, without the right to be in this country at all, people tend to notice. So the Biden administration came up with a different plan.

"Now, they're flying the kids because the buses were easier to videotape going down the highway." Ask yourself, by the way, if you change the population of a country without the consent of the people who live there, is that democracy? Doesn't that country belong to the people who live there? It's their country, that's what democracy is. But what if a small number of hardened ideologues decided to take it away from those people and give it to foreign nationals? That would not be democracy.

Some footage of buses hauling illegal immigrants was shot by the Center for Immigration Studies back in March.

NARRATOR: What's happening most of the time if that they're boarding buses and heading into America's heartland. A conveyor belt of commercial and charter buses just like this one out of Del Rio, TX. They're carrying tens of thousands sight unseen from TX, AZ and CA borderlands northward and they're dropping Haitian, Venezuelan and Central American family units in FL, NJ, TN, MA, MI, NC, GA, KY and to large cities in TX such as Dallas and Houston.

How is this not the biggest story in the country? You're changing the population of America without the consent of Americans, and doing it secretly, on a huge scale, and no one is noticing?

Six months after Inauguration Day, that tells you everything you need to know about how the Biden administration plans to



address the border crisis. They're not going to stop the flow of illegal migrants across the southern border. No. Instead, they're going to provide those illegal immigrants with free transportation to any city of their choice. And when you notice it, they won't stop. They'll just find a different method of transportation. How is this not an invasion? That's exactly what it is, and it's being abetted by the Biden administration. Here are the numbers: In May of last year, a total of 24,000 individuals were encountered at the

Southwestern land border. In May of this year, that number was over 180,000. That's the equivalent of the entire city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, showing up at the southern border every single month. And we're not cherry-picking data. Last April, 17,000 people showed up at the southern border. This April, the number was over 178,000. It's that kind of increase, dramatic to the point that your eyes pop open, every month of this year since Joe Biden became president.



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Strong China-Pakistan relations have nothing to do with India: Pakistani PM

(News Agencies)-The idea that India is supposed to lean to the Western world to counterbalance China is going to be very detrimental for India, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan told the Global Times during an online press conference on Tuesday. He said that China is too strong. India will benefit from trade with China, which is much more advantageous than acting as a sort of counterbalance, Khan mentioned, adding that if a country will lose out, it is going to be India. Khan noted that relations between China and Pakistan have nothing to do with India. The two countries have a long history of diplomatic ties. "Our bilateral relations are extremely strong," Khan said. Recently, Khan has been under vicious attacks from some Western media outlets because he did not criticize China's policy in Xinjiang during an interview with Axios news website. Some even claimed that the interview showed how China buys silence over Uygurs. Asked about how he would respond to these voices, Khan told the Global Times that the version from China about what is happening in Xinjiang is completely different to what is being portrayed by



Western media and Western governments. "We have a very strong relationship with China based on trust. So we actually accept the Chinese version," he said. He criticized Western media for being "hypocritical" as they turned a blind eye to the serious human rights problems in Kashmir. During Tuesday's press conference, Khan also congratulated China and the Communist Party of China (CPC) for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Party. He highly praised China's anti-corruption fight and the miracle that China and the CPC were able to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. He told media that the CPC is a unique model. While they had been told that the best way for a society to improve itself is to follow the Western system of liberal democracy, the CPC actually beat all Western democracies by nurturing a society that brings things forward. "What the CPC has done is that, without that electoral democracy, it has actually fared much better. What I saw in China when I visit the Communist Party headquarters and when they give us briefings about their system of sifting talent and then grooming it and bringing it up, for me it is probably more remarkable than any electoral democracy."

Pakistani soldiers killed in firing along Afghanistan border

(News Agencies)-Cross-border firing by unidentified gunmen in Afghanistan's Paktika province has killed at least two Pakistani soldiers, the country's military says, as it renews calls for Afghanistan to manage security on its side of the border. Pakistani forces at the military post in North Waziristan region

Pakistan. "The incident repeats a Pakistani allegation of the country's forces coming under attack from fighters of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its allies that are alleged to be based in eastern Afghanistan.

Afghanistan did not immediately respond to the latest allegation, but has denied that its government allows such groups to operate on Afghan soil in the past. Afghanistan has opposed the fencing of the 2,600km (1,615 miles) long border between the two countries, as it disputes its location. Paki-



stan that was targeted returned fire, the Pakistani military said in a statement on Wednesday. "Pakistan has consistently been asking Afghanistan to ensure effective border control on their side," read a brief Pakistani statement. "Pakistan strongly condemns the continuous use of Afghan soil for terrorist activities against

stan began unilaterally building a fence at the border in March 2017 in a bid to control the flow of armed group fighters across it. Construction of the barrier, which is generally constructed out of wire-link fencing topped with barbed wire, continues in parts of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

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



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Vol. 14 Issue 15 Wednesday 02 Jan to 08 Jan 2019 www.PUNJABIJOINTA.COM Published Weekly from New York

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ਭੋਈਸ਼ਾਹਰ: ਸ਼ਹਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਹਰ ਤੋਂ ਖੋਬ ਲਾਭ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਬਰਿਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹਰ ਭੇਜਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਕਰੌੜ 27,000 ਰੁਪਏ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਟਲਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸੀਮਾ ਤੋੜੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੋਟਲਾ ਦੇ ਬਰਿਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲਾਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਕੋਟਲਾ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸ਼ਹਰੀ 25 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਹਰੀ 25 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਹਰੀ 25 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਕੇ ਕੁਝ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੋਟਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਹਰੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਹਰੀ 25 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਹਰੀ 25 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਨਿਊਯੋਰਕ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਯੂ.ਐੱਸ. ਲਈ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਹੈ।

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ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਯੋਗ: ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਬੋਬਾ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੋਬਾ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੋਬਾ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੋਬਾ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ।

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Investigating child sexual abuse in Pakistan's madrasas

(News Agencies)-A recent sexual abuse case involving a madrasa student and a high-profile religious leader in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore rocked the country.

Sabir Shah, a student at the madrasa, told DW that Mufti Aziz ur Rehman sexually abused him for over a year.

Rehman belonged to Jamiat Ulema Islam, an organization of religious scholars that adheres to an extremely conservative interpretation of Islam.

It was not an isolated incident. Shortly after, a video of child sexual abuse involving a Shiite cleric emerged. In May 2017, a nine-year-old boy was raped by a cleric in Pak Pattan; in 2018 a Lahore-based cleric was booked for raping a minor; and in 2019, a 13-year old disabled girl was sexually assaulted by a cleric in Multan.

The cases have given rise to calls for accountability in Pakistan. Many are blaming religious seminaries. But clerics vehemently reject that their educational institutions are at fault.



© Aamir Qureshi/APPI/Getty Images

More than 2.2 million children study in over 36,000 registered and unregistered madrasas in the South Asian country. An overwhelming majority of the students are from impoverished parts of Pakistan's northwestern, western and eastern provinces. 'Pious' clerics pick on vulnerable children

Experts told DW that a number

of factors contribute to sexual assaults in seminaries.

"I have come across a number of cases where young children were sexually assaulted by clerics," Dr. Naila Aziz, a Lahore-based clinical psychologist, told DW.

She said the clerics were generally under mental stress and often sexually frustrated, trying to suppress their sexual desires as a demonstration of their devout faith.

Some clerics then target vulnerable children because they know that children's claims of sexual abuse are much less likely to be believed. This "prompts them [the children] to not report such cases of sexual assaults," she said. "This in turn encourages clerics to go on doing what they do with impunity."

Amid COVID dip, Pakistan to ease some flight restrictions

(News Agencies)-With active cases of the coronavirus continuing to drop in Pakistan, authorities say they have decided to ease incoming flight restrictions from several countries, including all the European countries, Canada, China and Malaysia.

Direct flights from these countries will be allowed to operate at 40 percent of their full schedule of flights, a government document said, with the new regulations coming into effect on July 1.

On Monday, government data showed that Pakistan had registered 914 new cases of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, with a test positivity rate of 2.05 percent.

At least 20 people are confirmed to have died from COVID-19 on Sunday, the data showed.

The numbers represent a drastic drop from the peak of the country's third wave of the virus in late April, when daily case rises were hitting almost 6,000 cases, with a record daily death

toll of 201 registered on April 27, the data shows.

The new incoming flight regulations will also ease restrictions on incoming passengers, allowing those who test negative on rapid antigen tests on arrival at the airport to avoid quarantine.

Those who test positive on arrival will still be subject to quarantine, says the document issued by the country's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), which is overseeing the government's response to the pandemic. On Thursday, Pakistani Planning Minister Asad Umar, who chairs the NCOC, warned citizens that the government's artificial intelligence (AI) models on the spread of the virus suggested a fourth wave could hit as soon as July. "In the absence of strong [standard operating procedure] enforcement and continued strong vaccination program, the fourth wave could emerge in Pakistan in July," he said.

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COVID variant forces new Bangladesh lockdown, US sends vaccine

(News Agencies)-In a state-run hospital near Bangladesh's border with India, Shahinul Islam prays his father does not become one of the facility's more than 300 patients who have died this month from the coronavirus.

Hundreds like his father are struggling to breathe in the COVID-19 treatment unit, while Islam waits in an emergency room packed with people. Relatives rush in and out, desperately trying to find oxygen cylinders for their loved ones.

The crowds of COVID-19 patients and their worried families are new scenes for the 1,200-bed Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, which serves border communities being overrun by the more infectious Delta variant first detected in neighbouring India. More than 450

people with COVID-19 were admitted on Tuesday to the state-run hospital in Rajshahi district's main city.

Islam said his entire family has been shunned by people in his home village closer to the border. "The other villagers are afraid of us. They don't talk to us. When they see us on the road, they take a different path," he said. "We are suffering a lot."

Rising infections and crowded hospitals are being seen across Bangladesh, where a stringent lockdown starts on Thursday.

The government will deploy military soldiers, paramilitary border officers and riot police to enforce the lockdown, set initially for one week. US sends 2.5 million vaccine doses - Meanwhile, the United States on Tuesday began shipping 2.5 million doses of

Moderna's COVID vaccine to the South Asian nation of more than 160 million people, a White House official told AFP news agency.

Bangladesh "has a 55 percent week-over-week increase in cases, driven largely by the Delta variant," the official said, explaining how the country made it onto the urgent list. The delivery is expected to be completed this week. Authorities in Bangladesh warn that the rapid surge in border areas is accelerating the virus's spread further into Bangladesh. Hospitals in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi are overwhelmed. "If people do not maintain health safety rules and if they do not stay at home, this wave of the pandemic in Bangladesh could be catastrophic. It spreads fast and it kills more people," said ASM



Alamgir, a chief scientific officer of the government's Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research in the capital, Dhaka. Many border districts in northern and southwestern Bangladesh were spared from COVID-19 until now, so people lack antibodies against the virus. That, combined with the large

numbers of unvaccinated people, makes the population much more vulnerable. Just over four million people are fully immunised. Another 1.5 million have received one dose, but the shortage of Oxford-AstraZeneca imports, halted by India, have left them uncertain when they will get their second dose.

Bangladesh scraps plans to build 10 coal-fired power plants



(News Agencies)-Bangladesh has cancelled plans to build 10 coal-fired power plants, a government official said on Monday, amid rising costs for the fuel and increasing calls from activists to base more of the nation's power on renewable energy.

About 8% of the country's current electrical power comes from coal, but until last year the nation had plans to significantly increase that percentage by building at least 18 coal-fired plants.

Ten of those plants - which were not yet under construction - have now been cancelled, said Mohammad Hossain, head of Power Cell, a technical arm of the energy ministry. Others remain in construction or planning.

"There is a concern globally about coal and we have to adhere to that," he said. "The government is committed to reduce carbon

emissions."

When Bangladesh in 2010 produced an energy masterplan, "coal was cheap and the best option after gas", Hossain said. But dramatically falling prices for

solar power and somewhat cheaper natural gas have changed the picture, he added. "Considering all this, we thought we needed to be more renewable," he said.

Currently, more than half of Bangladesh's electricity comes from natural gas, though some power plants also run on heavy fuel oil and diesel.

About 3.5% of the country's power comes from renewable energy, a percentage the nation plans to boost to 40% by 2041.

To make some of that shift, the country plans to begin importing hydropower from neighbouring Nepal and Bhutan, Hossain said. The move to scrap the coal plants

won't impact Bangladesh's current or future ability to produce enough energy, he added.

FUNDING CHALLENGE

Climate change activists say building more coal power plants is incompatible with achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit planetary heating - and could put the low-lying nation at increasing risk from serious climate impacts.

Under the 2015 Paris accord, about 200 countries agreed to slash emissions to keep global temperature increases "well below" 2 degrees Celsius.

But the planet has already warmed more than 1.2 degrees Celsius, and is on track for at

least 3.5C of warming as emissions continue to rise around the globe, scientists say.

Bangladesh's emissions are minimal compared to the developed world, but activists say that building new coal plants would prevent the country from meeting climate targets it set under the Paris Agreement.

The nation is often included on lists of the countries most at risk from the impacts of rising global temperatures, from more extreme storms to floods and rising sea levels. Climate activists lauded the move and urged the Bangladeshi government to add mainly renewables to its future energy mix.

Sri Lankan cricketers sent home from UK over Covid bubble breach

(News Agencies)-Sri Lanka is sending three players home from their tour of England after they were caught breaking the strict bio-secure bubble put in place to allow the tour to go ahead in the first place.

The team said on Monday it was sending their players Kushal Mendis, Niroshan Dickwella and Danushka Gunathilaka back home.

The trio were caught on video, which was later posted on social media, outside their designated team hotel.

Sri Lanka and England were due

commence a one-day series on Tuesday, after the home side swept the earlier T20 series 3-0. The visitors are already without opener Avishka Fernando who has been ruled out of the one-dayers with a quadriceps injury sustained during the second T20 match in Cardiff.

The three players will be suspended from all forms of cricket, until the completion of the inquiry," Sri Lanka's national cricket board said in a statement. The team was meant to be in a bio-secure bubble with members not allowed to step out or mingle

with people who are not part of the group.

Coronavirus dramas have affected the series in more ways than one, with one of the match officials who umpired during the T20 series testing positive for the coronavirus.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has said Phil Whitticase has tested positive for COVID-19 and his close contacts include five who were due to officiate on Tuesday.

They will have to self-isolate until July 7.

England thump Sri Lanka, sweep

T20 series

England have powered to a clean sweep in the Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka with a thumping 89-run victory at the Rose Bowl.

Dawid Malan returned to form in the final match on Saturday with a classy 76 from 48 balls after single-figure scores in the back-to-back wins at Cardiff.

With just one fifty in his last seven innings, the world No.1-ranked T20 batsman sparked in a knock containing five fours and four sixes after being promoted to open the batting.

Jason Roy's tight hamstring led to a batting reshuffle and Malan and Jonny Bairstow, who made 51 off 43 deliveries,

put on 105 in 11.4 overs before Dushmanta Chameera's career best 4.17 restricted England to 6.180.

Punjab 'power' play: Will empty coffers permit free electricity dole?

This election season, free power supply has turned out to be the biggest poll promise in Punjab while the state continues to reel under a huge debt of Rs 2.73 lakh crore.

(News Agencies)-With assembly elections slated for next year, political parties in Punjab have now upped their ante to woo voters, and this time, the biggest poll promise that has set the ball rolling is free power supply. Aam Aadmi Party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday announced that if voted to power, his party's government will provide free electricity upto 300 units to the domestic power consumers. He said unpaid power bills will be waived off and an uninterrupted power supply will be maintained. At present, Punjab is selling power at higher rates despite

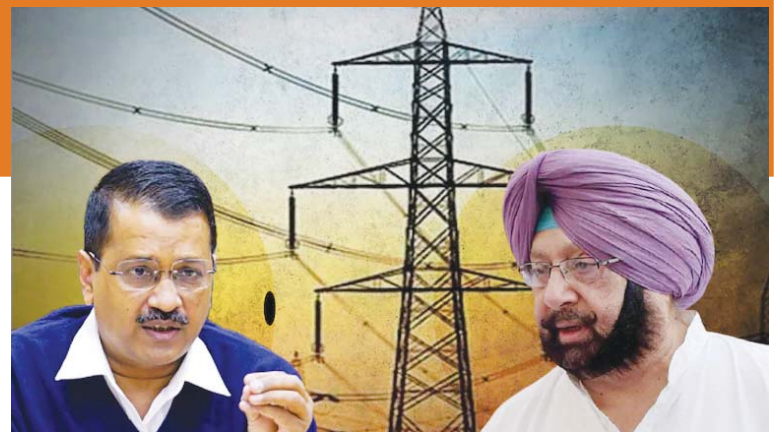
being a power producer state. This is due to a nexus between the state and the private power companies. We will end the nexus to provide cheap power to people. People of Punjab are sick of power outages and fat power bills. Women are worst affected as they manage the budgets. Half of the money goes as a power tariff. AAP will provide upto 300 units of free power in Punjab," Arvind Kejriwal said. Meanwhile, the Congress-ruled Punjab government, after a nudge from the party high command, has stepped up efforts to provide free power upto 200 units to all 69 domestic power consumers.

The Punjab government is already to provide 200 free power units to 17.76 lakh Dalits, families belonging to the backward class and those below the poverty line.

CONSUMERS SEE A BENEFIT IN POWER DOLES

The Congress-ruled government in Punjab has continuously increased power tariffs in the state during the last four years. However, when the issue sparked protests, the government was compelled to bring down the tariffs.

Sensing that the concerns over the power tariff can become a major poll issue, the state



government reduced the prices between 50 paise to Rs 1 per unit from June this year. Currently, power upto 300 units is priced at Rs 5.84 per unit in the state. Sources said the Punjab government may soon announce free power upto 200 units to all domestic consumers to benefit the consumers before elections. If AAP is voted to power, each domestic consumer in Punjab

will save upto Rs 1,752 per month as power tariff upto 300 fee units. Similarly, if the Congress government announces free power to all domestic consumers, people will save Rs 1,168 per month. The ruling Congress and Opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) slammed the AAP for announcing free power in the state and termed its action an attempt to exploit voters.

Pakistan-sponsored terror has hit India multiple times: Learn from history, offense is best defence



Drone strikes mark a paradigm shift in terrorists using technology from a stand-off distance that negates the need of a suicide attack.

(News Agencies)-The twin drone strikes at the IAF base in Jammu followed by repeated sightings of drones close to Kaluchak, Ratnuchak and Sanjuwan military stations has alarm bells ringing. There are many Army cantonment bases

and stations in this belt and several have been targeted by Pakistan state-sponsored terror in the past. But, in each instance there was direct evidence that was traced back to Pakistan, exposing the state-sponsor of terror. Drone strikes mark a

paradigm shift in terrorists using technology from a stand-off distance that not only negates the need for a suicide attack, but empowers the terrorists and their sponsors to carry out repeated attacks. Instead of suicide squads, the terrorists and their backers only need to invest in Kamikaze drones. Rohingya and other illegal settlements in close proximity to military stations add another dimension to the threat. The illegal Rohingya settlement next to the perimeter wall of the Sanjuwan military station was a

cause of grave concern. It was ignored and it is suspected that the terrorists exploited chinks in the armour to penetrate the military station in 2018 and kill soldiers and their families. KALUCHAK ATTACK 2002 One of the worst-ever Pakistan state-sponsored terror strikes on India soon after the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 was the attack on Kaluchak military station. Three Pakistani terrorists, Abu Sohail, Abu Murshid and Abu Javed, dressed in military fatigues are suspected to have infiltrated

from the Samba border. Armed with their AK-47 assault rifles, ammunition and biscuits and chocolates purchased from Zaffarwal in Pakistan (recovered from their backpacks), the terrorists boarded a Jammu-bound Himachal Pradesh Roadways bus at Vijaypur. The bus was on its way from Pathankot to Jammu. Around six in the morning, as the bus reached Kaluchak, the terrorists stopped the bus and fired indiscriminately inside the bus, killing the driver, conductor and several passengers.

The rebellion of Young Turks in Congress

(News Agencies)-As the chopper hovered around the lush green forest, the crowd looked up in amazement. The rotter blades spun rapidly, clouds of dust added to the dramatic scene. The three-winged bird was a rare sight in the village. It was 2012 assembly election in Uttar Pradesh that saw Rahul Gandhi roll up his sleeves, flanked by another Young Turk (a reference for young upright politicians, a phrase inspired by Turkish revolution of early 20th century) Jitin Prasada proceeded to address the gathering in Dhaurahra constituency. Almost three years later in 2015, as

Shiva Bhakt (devotee of Lord Shiva), Rahul Gandhi trekked up the Himalayas to offer prayers at the Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand. Very few but Jitin could keep up with him. At almost ten thousand feet he walked briskly wearing sports shoes just like the Gandhi scion. Rahul Gandhi had especially requested Jitin to give him company in this challenging trek.

As Jitin left in his SUV (sport utility vehicle) to join the BJP on Wednesday in New Delhi, Rahul Gandhi lost a buddy. This time, the BJP carried out the task with precision. The dismantling of 'Team

Rahul' was more for perception than the electoral ripples it could create and the BJP has been mercilessly at it.

TEAM RAHUL FALLING APART

The turn of events in the past two years is indeed a reflection of why Rahul Gandhi's band of Young Turks has fallen apart. His closest comrade Jyotiraditya Scindia has joined rival ranks, RPN Singh has been repeatedly slighted, Milind Deora is unhappy and Sachin Pilot put at an arm's length away after his hobnobbing with the BJP.

It all started with Rahul Gandhi's resignation in 2019 as the Congress

president following the party's rout in the Lok Sabha election. As the Congress Working Committee (CWC) was convened, the voting and the discussions that followed cropped up the names of Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot.

Milind Deora, who had mooted Sachin Pilot's name, had to face flak by Gandhi loyalists in the meeting. It was also evident that the party had an option to look beyond an unwilling Rahul Gandhi towards other young leaders and a challenger could emerge from within Team Rahul.

In attacking Amarinder, is Sidhu eying for a key post or paving way for exit from Congress?

Navjot Singh Sidhu has been attacking Captain Amarinder Singh for some time over his alleged failure to fulfill the Congress party's poll promises. For Congress, this is bad news as it comes ahead of the assembly polls.

(News Agencies)-The infighting between Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh and his former cabinet colleague Navjot Singh Sidhu is becoming murkier every day. For the Congress party, this is bad news months ahead of the assembly polls. The party high command is on its toes as neither of the two leaders are ready to accept the measures suggested by a panel headed by senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge to end the dissidence.

WAR WITHIN PUNJAB CONGRESS

For the past few weeks, Navjot Sidhu has been openly attacking his own government over its

alleged failures to keep its poll promises.

His outbursts against Captain Amarinder Singh has not only given ammunition to the opposition parties, but has also left the Punjab unit of the Congress a divided house.

At present, sources say there are here over a dozen cabinet ministers and MLAs who have joined the chorus to seek a replacement for Captain Amarinder Singh. These developments have put the Congress party in a spot of botheration as they come ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls that are due next year. Sources say the party high command is

moving cautiously as it doesn't want to annoy either of the two leaders. Meanwhile, sources close to Sidhu say he is likely to make a "big announcement" soon in Amritsar.

Political circles in Punjab are abuzz with speculations whether this strategy is part of Sidhu's attempt to get some coveted position in the Congress or Punjab government or if he is trying to pave the way for a face-saving exit from the Congress party ahead of the polls.

THE AAP BUZZ

Recently, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal created a buzz by announcing that AAP's chief ministerial



candidate in Punjab will be from the Sikh community.

"Discussions are going on in the party regarding when time comes, you will be informed. But one thing I can tell you is that the entire Punjab will be proud of him. One thing is certain that AAP's CM face will be from the Sikh community," Kejriwal said on Monday. When asked if there have been any talks with Navjot

Singh Sidhu, Kejriwal said, "Sidhu is a Congress leader, a senior leader. I respect him a lot. So, I think there should be no loose talk regarding any leader." The party is trying to find a suitable candidate and is learnt to have been sending feelers to Navjot Singh Sidhu to join the party for some months now. However, Sidhu has kept his card close to his chest.

Uneasy front: Maharashtra coalition begins to pull different ways



(News Agencies)-As expected in any coalition government, partners in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition in Maharashtra are having issues adjusting to each other's ambitions and want to have more. The Shiv Sena has issues with long-term commitment. The Congress is flexing muscles to assert its

identity. And now, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) boss Sharad Pawar's efforts to eye for a role in the national politics have set different goals for the three partners. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is, meanwhile, watching from the sidelines keeping a close watch on who will blink first in the uneasy ruling front.

UDDHAV'S GAMBLE

In the first year of the MVA, it was Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray who looked very vulnerable. He had taken a plunge into an arena which the Shiv Sena had avoided for 35 years. He took on the Centre and

joined hands with the Congress to fulfil his wish of becoming chief minister -- something that the BJP was not ready to accept. On the other hand, the Congress and the NCP wanted to return to power by any means to keep the BJP out. But it was more of Uddhav Thackeray's compulsion. Things are changing after one-and-a-half year. Uddhav Thackeray is getting feelers from the BJP to return and keep his wish intact. He is, on the other hand, beginning to assert in the MVA, taking on the NCP twice. UDDHAV TESTING PAWAR Uddhav Thackeray has reversed

ministers. The first incident happened just two months back, when Irrigation Minister Jayant Patil was livid to find that the chief minister had asked the chief secretary to review the decision to allot the funds for an irrigation project. Then, Housing Minister Jitendra Awadh was embarrassed to know that his decision of allotting Maharashtra housing department flats to Tata Cancer Hospital for accommodation of cancer patients has been put on hold by the chief minister on the complaint of local Shiv Sena MLA.

PV Narasimha Rao: From packing his bags to India's 'accidental' prime minister

(News Agencies)-Waye nadani! Mata-e-karwaan jata raha, Karwaan ke dil se ehsas-e-zyan jata raha - Allama Iqbal [Mourn the idiocy, that our prized possession is lost, Even the sense of its loss was lost from our hearts] Even in death PV Narasimha Rao kept away from the headquarters of the party he had once headed. The former prime minister's 9, Motilal Nehru Marg residence in Delhi was barely 200 metres away from the Congress's 24, Akbar Road headquarters, but Rao had not once visited the office after being forced to step down as party chief eight years earlier, a few months after the 1996 Lok Sabha electoral rout.

BARRED FROM CONGRESS HQ

On December 23, 2004, his body was not about to do so either. The following

morning, a flower-decked army gun carriage carrying Rao's body was to have been kept briefly at the Congress office so that the party's rank and file could get a last glimpse of the late leader considered to be the architect of India's economic reforms. But the gun carriage could not make it past the main gate, where it was kept for nearly 40 minutes as then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and several ministers paid their last respects and offered wreaths.

According to senior journalist Dr Sanjaya Baru, who was Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's media advisor then, Sonia Gandhi's political secretary Ahmed Patel had asked him to convey to Rao's sons that the funeral should be held in Hyderabad instead of Delhi. Rao's body,

accompanied by his family members, was later flown to Hyderabad on a special flight that evening. Sonia Gandhi deputed All India Congress Committee (AICC) treasurer Motilal Vora and general secretary Ashok Gehlot to accompany the body. Among others on the flight were Union Minister of State Prithviraj Chavan, the designated minister for the state funeral, as well as several Union ministers from the then undivided Andhra Pradesh, including S Jaipal Reddy, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Renuka Chowdhury and Panabaka Lakshmi.

CONGRESSMAN IN BABRI SOUP

Rao remained a staunch Congressman throughout his career that spanned over six decades but died an ill and bitter man, seven months after the Sonia Gandhi-led UPA came to power in 2004.

Already isolated since 1996, when Rao was first removed as leader of Congress party in Parliament and then sacked as the Congress president, he spent the last few years of his life blaming both his party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the single-most controversial event that blotted his reign - the December 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. While he accused some of his party colleagues of making him a scapegoat, he held the BJP responsible for destroying his otherwise impressive political career. In his book, Ayodhya 6 December 1992, published after his death in 2006, Rao has argued on a singular point - the BJP scuppered a possible solution to the temple tangle to keep the pot boiling.

NYC Board of Elections throws mayoral primary into chaos by counting test ballots

But within hours of the new figures coming online, the board backtracked -- following questions from the Adams campaign and others -- and acknowledged a "discrepancy" in its counting process. It subsequently removed the data from its website. Late Tuesday night, the body put out another statement, this time revealing it had mistakenly included 135,000 test vote records in the initial tally. The count will be re-run once the slate is cleared.

"Board staff has removed all test ballot images from the system and will upload election night results, cross-referencing against election night reporting software for verification," the BOE said through its Twitter account. "The cast vote record will be re-generated and the RCV rounds will be re-tabulated."

The mess amounted to a realization of many New Yorkers' well-founded worries over the board's capacity to competently manage the ranked-choice system, which is making its citywide debut. The BOE has a rotten reputation in the city and is widely regarded as a hub for political patronage jobs. Tuesday's count was, in itself, a dry run ahead of the final count, which will not take place for weeks, as absentee ballots are cross-checked and, in some cases, cured if voters respond to notices about minor errors. In flubbing the exercise, the board also risked handing additional fodder to right-wingers in states and municipalities across the country, who might now seek to parlay the error into momentum for suppressive new voting laws.

In a statement late Tuesday, Wiley slammed the BOE and described the erroneous count as a symptom of longstanding institutional issues.

"This error by the Board of Elections is not just failure to count votes properly today, it is the result of generations of failures that have gone unaddressed," Wiley said. "Today, we have once again seen the mismanagement that has resulted in a lack of confidence in results, not because there is a flaw in our election laws, but because those who implement it have failed too many times." Garcia joined the chorus



within the hour, defending the move to ranked-choice voting, which was approved in a 2019 ballot measure, while also calling on the board to reveal more details about Tuesday's fiasco. "The BOE's release of incorrect ranked choice votes is deeply troubling and requires a much more transparent and complete explanation," Garcia said. "Every ranked choice and absentee vote must be counted accurately so that all New Yorkers have faith in our democracy and our government."

Hours before the BOE disclosed the mistake, Adams sent out a pointed statement asking why the total number of votes had gone up so much since last week.

That figure, as of last Tuesday night, was 799,827. One week later, the preliminary results included 941,832 votes. The total includes outstanding early voting and Election Day votes that hadn't been counted yet. Valerie Vazquez-Diaz, a spokesperson for the Board of Elections, told CNN that no absentee ballots had been added into the mix.

Later, Adams was more forgiving in his response to the board's eventual apology.

"Today's mistake by the Board of Elections was unfortunate. It is critical that New Yorkers are confident in their electoral system, especially as we rank votes in a citywide election for the first time," he said in a statement. "We appreciate the Board's transparency and acknowledgment of their error. We look forward to the release

of an accurate, updated simulation, and the timely conclusion of this critical process." The new numbers -- whatever they turn out to be -- do not include more than 120,000 absentee ballots that have yet to be counted, but the tightening at the top offers a glimpse ahead to what could be a remarkably narrow final count. The next round of ballot tabulations won't be announced for another week, and the process is not expected to be finished and certified for at least two more, meaning the leading campaigns are entering a new phase of uncertainty -- and New York City Democrats could be in line for a shocker.

Garcia and Adams both addressed the possibility that the ranked-choice system could derail Adams' early lead in their election night speeches. But Adams in remarks this week has effectively projected himself as the winner. Last Tuesday, he all but declared victory at a party in Brooklyn.

"We know that this is going to be layers, this is the first early voting count -- we know that. We know there's going to be twos and threes and fours -- we know that," Adams said at the time. "But there's something else we know. That New York City said, 'Our first choice is Eric Adams.'" Adams, in the initial count of first choice votes, jumped out ahead of Garcia and Wiley by about 11 and 9 percent points, respectively.

Garcia at her own event last week urged supporters and other

observers to remain patient and hold out hope that she might clean up on second- and third-choice rankings.

In a statement released shortly after the Board of Elections published the new information, Garcia again mixed caution with optimism. "Even with today's ranked choice report we are still waiting for more than 120,000 absentee ballots to be counted and we are confident about a path to victory," she said. "Once all the votes are counted, I know everyone will support the Democratic nominee and that's exactly what I intend to do. We look forward to the final results. Democracy is worth waiting for." Voters in the Big Apple had the option to rank

up to five of the 13 candidates in the race. Since no candidate won a majority of the initial preference votes outright in last week's vote, the New York City Board of Elections is tabulating voters' ranked choices to determine the winner.??

Tuesday's release comprises results of early in-person and Election Day votes only. Absentee ballots were not included in this tabulation set due to state laws. They will be counted in the results released beginning next week.

As of Monday, 124,574 Democratic absentee ballots had been returned citywide -- more than enough to swing the race. Tuesday also marked the deadline for mail ballots postmarked by Election Day to arrive at election officials' offices. In ranked-choice voting tabulations, the candidate with the fewest votes after the initial count is eliminated and all ballots for that candidate are reallocated to the next highest-ranked candidate selected. That process continues with the remaining candidates until two are left, with the winner determined by who has the most votes in that final round. Former presidential candidate Andrew Yang, who ranked fourth in Tuesday's tabulated results, conceded his bid for the mayoral nomination last week, saying, "I am not going to be the mayor of New York City."

Meghalaya Woman Spends 2 Days Locked In Bank As Robbery Attempt Fails: Police

dehydrated when they opened the bank branch on Monday after the weekend break; she had spent two days locked in the branch without proper meals or water.

The ORS and snacks she had brought along helped her, she told police later.

The incident took place in the Bishnupur branch of the bank. The accused Isabella, currently recuperating in a hospital from acute dehydration, is from New Kench's Trace area in Bishnupur. After being rescued, the woman told the police she had come to the bank to deposit the money and got accidentally locked inside. Police investigation,

however, revealed a different story.

Isabella had gone to the bank to deposit ? 2,000, but she didn't come out even after the bank manager left the building at around 3.45 pm on Friday.

We have reasons to believe that she made attempts to rob the bank. The CCTV camera was damaged after it was shut and there are marks of failed attempts to break into the strongroom that matches with the hammer she was carrying," a police source said.

Isabella has been arrested after a case was filed by the bank manager at the Laban police station.

Ambani And Adani - 2 Billionaires, One Green Ambition

But these are still early days for a decisive change in the energy mix of India's largely coal-fueled economy. Ambani's plans could easily turn as aggressive as his 4G telecom venture, initially dismissed by naysayers as a me-too entry into a crowded field of a dozen players. In just five years, Ambani's digital startup has acquired 420 million-plus subscribers, bankrupted several other operators and will soon launch one of the world's cheapest smartphones in partnership with Alphabet Inc.'s Google. If he displays a similar hunger in solar energy, other aspirants might have to rethink their strategies.

Among them may be France's TotalEnergies SE, which has picked up a 20% stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd. and invested directly in some of the projects in the firm's 25 gigawatt solar-energy portfolio, which has grown by 50 times in three years. Gautam Adani, who earlier this year took his spot behind Ambani as Asia's second-richest man, wants to be the world's largest renewable energy producer by 2030. Will Ambani get in his way? Until now, the two billionaires, both hailing from



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat, have largely operated in their separate spheres. Ambani has leaned toward data-driven consumer businesses like retail and telecom, whereas Adani has focused on infrastructure and utilities. Clean energy would see them overlap. Although Ambani's initial plans aren't overly dominant - he wants to meet 100 gigawatts of Modi's green energy target of 450 gigawatts by 2030 - that's probably because he's yet to scope the policy terrain.

After spending \$90 billion over the past decade, Reliance Industries says it has the "capacity to catalyze" another \$200 billion in

investment over the next 10 years. From a renewed focus on gas exploration to e-commerce over WhatsApp, India's largest business enterprise has many irons in the fire beyond clean energy. It also has deep pockets, and influential friends like Google and Facebook Inc. Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the head of Saudi Arabian Oil Co., is joining the Reliance board. The goal, which is running behind schedule, is to have Aramco as a strategic partner in Reliance's cash-spewing refinery on India's west coast and reposition it at the center of a low-carbon oil-to-chemicals empire.

To support those initiatives,

Reliance has \$13 billion of annual earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortization. Its foreign-currency debt is rated BBB by Fitch Ratings, a notch higher than India's government. Meanwhile, the listed entities in the Adani Group have a little more than \$3.5 billion of annual Ebitda and combined net debt in excess of \$19 billion.

After a spectacular surge over the past year, the smaller group's share prices have wobbled recently amid concerns around some opaque foreign funds' outside exposure. That bout of nervousness has underscored the crucial role financing will play for Adani to realize his sprawling ambitions spanning India's ports, airports, coal mining, power generation and transmission, gas supply, warehousing and data centers. It's equally possible that the wealthier tycoon is spreading himself a tad too thin. Reliance is battling Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc. in e-commerce and will soon be challenging Xiaomi Corp. with JioPhone Next, custom-built by Google for the 300 million Indians still on 2G devices. Then there's the foray into the unfamiliar world of

technology services: Not only does Ambani want to be the first off the block with 5G in India, he also aims to sell to other telecom operators globally, competing perhaps with Huawei Technologies Co. Adani is impatient to grow because he wants to diversify cash flows beyond his successful port business, and catch the inevitable resource boom as the average earnings of India's 1.4 billion people go from low-middle-income to high-middle-income. What is Ambani's hurry? To stuff clean energy into a packed catchall shows that the 64-year-old may be getting serious about succession planning. Mukesh Ambani's own past battle with younger brother, Anil, for a division of family assets would be a reminder that he needs to use Reliance's cost-of-capital advantage to nurture self-sustaining conglomerates for each of his three grown children to manage. That's another reason to expect that the four giga factories Ambani announced this week - one each for solar panels, batteries, green hydrogen and fuel cells - is just the beginning. The push could very quickly become a shove.

SC calls for Baba Ramdev's speech on allopathy, plea listed for Monday

by IMA in Patna and Raipur. Ramdev has also sought that these two cases be clubbed. The Patanjali Yogpeeth founder made disparaging remarks held to be unscientific and promoting vaccine hesitancy while questioning allopathy's efficacy vis a vis coronavirus while talking to followers on May 19.

Ramdev stirred controversy claiming he didn't need Covid-19 vaccine since he had dual protection of yoga and Ayurveda. He also claimed that the thousands of fatalities caused by Covid-19 showed that allopathy was not 100% effective. He also alleged that a section of the society was deliberately engaged in discrediting the ancient Indian science of healing. Several experts said Ramdev's comments could be



seen as promoting vaccine hesitancy at a time when it was the only effective way of fighting the global pandemic. Although, he later clarified that he intended no ill-will to doctors. Delhi Medical Association filed a suit against him in the Delhi high

court and IMA lodged FIRs in several other states including Bihar and Chhattisgarh. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who appeared for the yoga guru before the Supreme Court, said that Ramdev had no axe to grind against doctors. "I propounded

that ayurveda is better than allopathy. I am a public figure and I am entitled to have a view. I am not against anybody but everybody has a right to freedom of speech and expression." The bench, also comprising justices AS Bopanna and

Hrishikesh Roy, could not find the original text of Ramdev's speech, leading to Rohatgi seeking an adjournment to bring it on record. Ramdev has pleaded that despite his apology, the IMA went ahead to file cases against him. The FIRs at Patna and Raipur include charges of intentionally causing insult with the intent to provoke breach of peace, punishable with a maximum sentence of two years under Section 504 of Indian Penal Code (IPC). Ramdev has also been charged with other offences under the IPC and the Disaster Management Act. Rohatgi said Ramdev being a public figure seeks protection of the highest court since it was not feasible to approach individual high courts in view of multiple FIRs filed by IMA branches across the country.

Understanding The Brave New World Of Digital Utilities

However, as soon as electronic governance got introduced, the context changed. How did the context change? The context changed as now one could not just query as to who is the owner of a property but could also search for what all properties are owned by a person. How does this search ability change the context? The ability to search for all properties owned by a person allowed criminals of a certain technologically advanced city in India to indulge in crime with a unique modus operandi. They would look for obituaries in the newspapers. They would then curate those obituaries to find if the children of those who had passed away, were living in the USA or any other country, outside of India. Then they would collude with low level data entry operators of the land records system, to find what properties were owned by those who had passed away. Using this information, they transferred the properties to their names by changing the electronic records, making it look like a sale, and even paying the stamp duty. The children of the deceased would find it exceedingly difficult to come to India and fight a protracted civil case, and they would drop the case and lose the property. As if this was not bad enough, now imagine the same happening with living people, where their entire set of properties can be known to bad elements of the society, by a mere touch of a button, endangering such people and their families.

Thus, the societal context changed dramatically by the advent of technology, now requiring the need to amend the 1895 Land Records Maintenance Act, so that the land records are not public information. But if the land records are not public information, how can a potential buyer buy property, as she will never know for sure as to who is the real owner of that property? Hence, technology has led to a catch 22 situation, where one cannot scrap old laws but adhering to them is also detrimental for the society. Thus, technology has ripped apart the fabric of regulations that had evolved over thousands of years. It has ripped apart the way we live, the context of our societal norms and the context of our regulatory frameworks.



And this is the background in which we observe the current fracas over regulations for the Digital Utilities.

Digital Utilities is a term I had coined to define the public services that are being delivered in a pure digital manner and that has a significant population of the country using it, thereby necessitating those who are not using it, to also aspire to use the same. Some examples of Digital Utilities are instant messaging systems such as WhatsApp, or instant opinion broadcasting systems such as Twitter, or instant publication of personal stories and pictures such as Facebook and Instagram. For many, not being on these platforms is a non-option due to social and business reasons. Just like one cannot be without a telephony system or an electricity system or a gas system, similarly, one cannot be without a Digital Utility.

In one of the television shows that I was on recently, my fellow panelist put in the interesting argument that one cannot call these digital solution providers as digital utilities, as utilities work over scarce resources such as radio waves. This argument is fallacious as landlines, electricity, water etc do not need any scarce resource for delivery to end users. One can have multiple water lines or electricity lines coming to a house. However, due to the capital-intensive nature of the industry, as of now, we find only one electricity distribution company in each area, making it look like a natural monopoly. But

even that is set for change, as in many places, one has more than one electricity company, providing electricity.

Thus, these Digital utilities have ripped apart our societal norms and are challenging our regulatory frameworks in an unprecedented manner. Governments across the world are grappling to reign in the Digital Utilities. Be it the issue of how much tax they pay, or who do they pay the taxes, or whose content do they show, or to even classify them as a news agency or an advertising agency and so one and so forth. These are new kinds of entities created, for which we have to go through the torturous process of evolving new regulations that would keep the society away from any harm, while reaping the benefits of these technologies. Just like the land records example that I had taken in the first book on e-governance in this country.

The Digital Utilities operate in countries without having a presence in the country. They descend into a country and make themselves an inalienable part of all narratives, from the national levels to the family levels, but do not have any presence in the country. In the pre-Digital Utilities era, if a Utility service provider was found wanting in their services, or acted against the local regulations, the CEO or MD would be the one prosecuted and sent to prison. However, if there is no CEO or MD of a Digital Utility, living in that country of operation, then who

do you hold responsible? The mecca of capitalism, the USA, has perhaps had the largest number of CEO's being sent to prison, which has ensured that there is a thriving and vibrant rule-based capitalism flourishing in the USA. But if we are not able to bring to book the errant Digital Utilities, how do we ensure that we continue to have a thriving competitive economy?

Therefore, we see countries such as Australia and Nigeria and economic blocs such as the European Union, taking strict actions against the Digital Utilities, ranging from making them pay to actual news content creators, to slapping fines for their monopolistic practices to even outright

banning them. Some may have gone too far, and some like India, are taking tentative steps to gently regulate these Digital Utility behemoths.

We sometimes hear the refrain that if you do not like these Digital utilities, you are free to quit them. This is again a fallacious argument. One cannot drop off a utility service, unless there is another option available. Can one cut-off their electricity because they do not like their electricity provider? Or do we cut-off our water supply because we did not like the water supply provider? Do we stop using our mobile phone because we did not like the mobile service operator? No. We cannot stop using a Digital Utility, as it is a critical part of our lives, which is why I call them a utility. Sometimes, like in the case of telecom, we have the luxury of choice, as there are multiple competitive operators who can provide similar services. Unfortunately, in the Digital Utility case, none of the Digital Utilities have an alternative. They are Digital Monopolies. Thus, the citizens of a free country are left to the mercy of the whims and fancies of these Digital Utilities, who can choose to ban them, mark their comments as manipulative, temporarily ban the IT Minister of a democratic nation, even ban the governor of a state, peddle communally sensitive fake videos and refuse to remove them and so on. This is not acceptable.

On migrant workers, SC issues a stern reminder

The SC's order can have far-reaching impact if appropriately implemented. It is also a reminder to the State that welfare of migrants must not be restricted to pandemic-related benefits; and that the failure to put in place a policy framework exacerbated the crisis of 2020. The directives also expose India's low state capacity in providing effective interventions. For example, NDUW was supposed to be functional in 2018. There has been some progress on ONOR over the past year, but issues of accessibility need to be addressed. It is a smartphone-based app, works in select ration

shops, and uses finger-based authentication, which has proved to be unreliable in some cases. Migrant workers form 94% (380 million) of India's workforce. They come from the most disadvantaged sections of society and the poorest of the regions (primarily north and east India), and are often forced to migrate (primarily to west and south India and urban centres) to improve their socioeconomic status. Their long march home in 2020 highlighted their precarious existence, and the duty of the Indian State to provide relief. SC's stern order is welcome.



Running out of water

How climate change fuels a crisis in the US west

Except for a brief stint in the military, Paul Crawford has spent his entire life farming in southern Oregon. First, as a boy, chasing his dad through hayfields and now, growing alfalfa on his own farm with his wife and two kids, who want to grow up to be farmers.

"I wouldn't trade a day of farming with my wife and my kids for anything. It's an amazing life," Crawford said. "It just may end if we don't figure something out on this water issue."

The American west is drying out as the region faces an unprecedented drought. Few places are as devastated as the Klamath Basin, where Crawford's farm sits. Straddling the border between California and Oregon, the watershed spans 12,000sq miles - from agricultural lands fed by Upper Klamath Lake to tribal communities surrounding the Klamath River.

Water has long been a

source of contention in the basin, pitting farmers against others who rely on the resource, including fish sacred to local Native American tribes. In a typical year, maintaining the balance between these competing interests is a difficult feat. Now, as climate change fuels ever-worsening drought, it's becoming impossible.

"There's not enough water to go around, and that is going to be the case for the indefinite future," said Jeff Mount, senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California Water Policy Center.

In May, the Bureau of Reclamation - the federal agency that manages water in the region - shut off the primary canal that diverts irrigation water above the Klamath River, leaving farmers without a water supply for the first time since irrigation began in 1907.

"We're going to try to stay alive and keep this farm afloat for another year. And

hope rain comes and snow comes this fall," Crawford said. "We won't know until the season's over, but it could very well end in bankruptcy."

Today's water crisis stems from decisions made over a century ago. In 1906, the Bureau of Reclamation drained wetlands to create farmland, disrupting the careful balance of water needed to sustain others in the basin. Among those affected are federally endangered, long-living sucker fish in Upper Klamath Lake that were a major source of food for Native American tribes in the area until fish populations plummeted, the wetlands where migratory birds make their home, and the salmon that the tribes further downriver depend on.

As drought dwindles water supplies in the region, each of these populations faces a crisis.

Advertisement
Low water levels in Upper

Klamath Lake - where the Klamath Tribes, make their home - leave sucker fish exposed to predators and create low-oxygen conditions in the water.

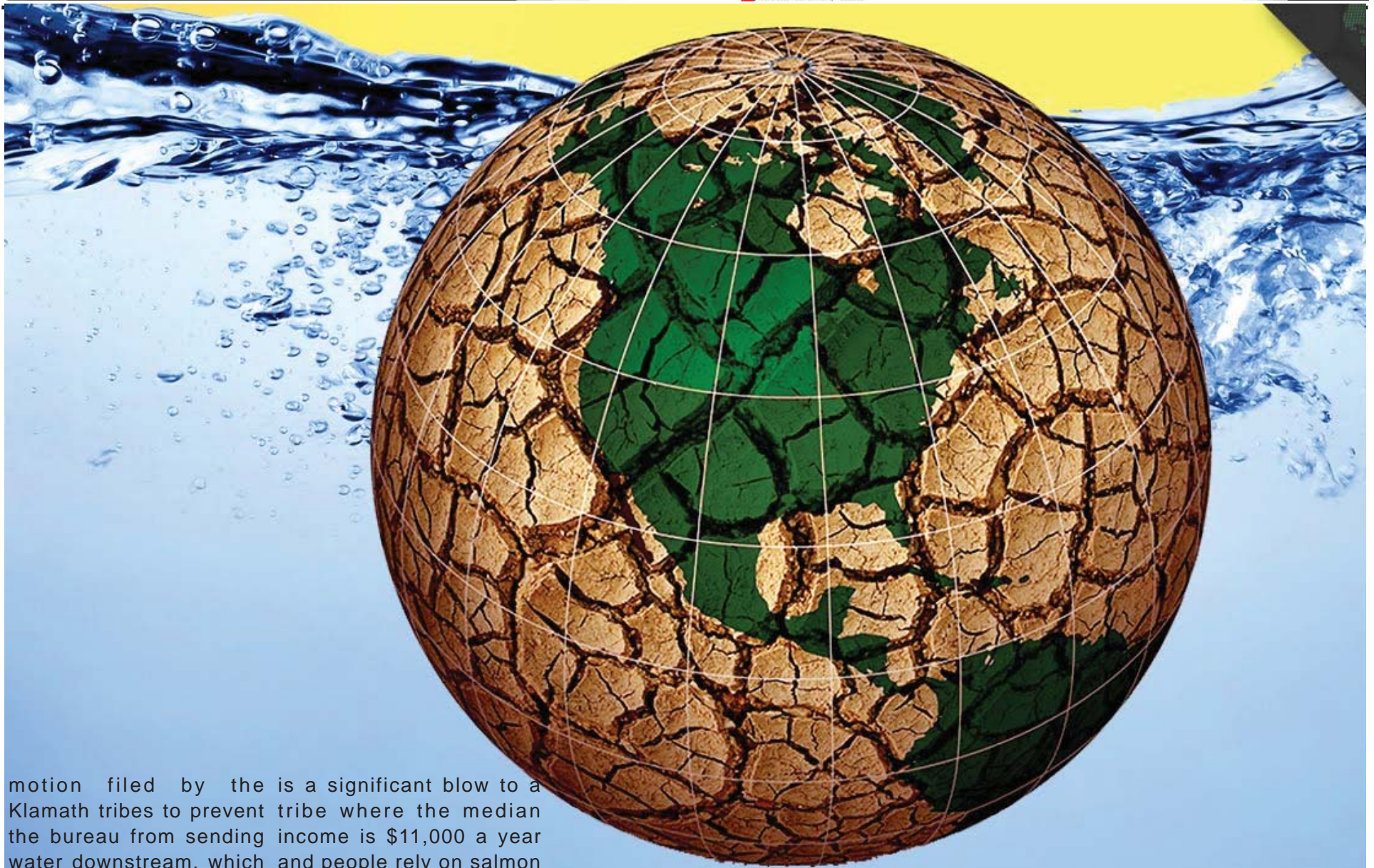
Two endangered sucker species are central to the Tribes' creation story. "We wouldn't be here without those fish," said Don Gentry, chairman of the Klamath Tribal Council. "They were so important to our subsistence."

Gentry, however, said he hasn't eaten a sucker fish in years. In 1986, before their endangered status, the Klamath tribes voluntarily stopped hunting suckers in an attempt to shore up their numbers.

"I won't be surprised if, this summer, we don't see a major die-off in suckers as well," Mount said.

In recent years, lake levels have dipped below federally mandated levels and further endangered the ecosystem. This April, a federal judge denied a

Water shortfalls are also proving deadly for the birds that live in the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake national wildlife refuges. When farmers see water shortfalls, so do the wetlands. "When a bad year comes along, it's a bad year for the farmers. It's a bad year for fish. It's a bad year for birds," Mount said. "This is one of the most important areas for the Pacific flyways."



motion filed by the Klamath tribes to prevent the bureau from sending water downstream, which would have left more water in the areas where the sucker fish are in danger of dying out. The judge said the agency "is not responsible for the unprecedented drought this year".

"The decision that was just made makes us feel even more marginalized in our own homeland," Gentry said. "How can we be the people our creator intended us to be if we're not able to catch, eat and share those fish?"

Downriver, the salmon population - essential to other tribes' identities and culture - is just 10% of what it was historically.

"We would catch more fish in one day back when I was a child than we do in the whole season now," said Ron Reed, cultural biologist for the Karuk tribe. "When I was growing up, you could practically walk across the river on salmon."

Frankie Myers, vice-chairman of the Yurok tribe, said their allocation of salmon this year will come out to fewer than one fish per person. That

is a significant blow to a tribe where the median income is \$11,000 a year and people rely on salmon to feed their families. Salmon are so central to their way of life, he said, that in their native language, the word for salmon, "nepuy", translates to "what we eat".

"The protein that we get from salmon harvest is extremely important to our overall physical health, mental health and spiritual health," Myers said. "Without salmon, we don't exist."

Klamath Basin salmon contend with poor water quality, high water temperatures and slow-moving water, a confluence of factors that can lead to disease outbreaks.

Advertisement A sample of juvenile salmon captured in early May found that 97% were infected with C shasta, a parasite known to kill salmon en masse. In the first two weeks of that month, the Yurok reported that 70% of the salmon found in their traps were dead.

Water shortfalls are also proving deadly for the birds that live in the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake national wildlife refuges.

When farmers see water shortfalls, so do the wetlands.

"When a bad year comes along, it's a bad year for the farmers. It's a bad year for fish. It's a bad year for birds," Mount said. "This is one of the most important areas for the Pacific flyways."

Amid water shortfalls in 2020, the warm, stagnant water in the marshes fostered the growth of the bacteria which produces avian botulism. The disease killed more than 60,000 ducks and shorebirds, according to one estimate. This year, a devastating drought has once again left birds at risk of an outbreak.

These overlapping crises are stirring up conflict in the Klamath Basin, one that reflects the rise of far-right extremism in America. In May, irrigators belonging to the People's Rights Oregon, Dan Nielsen and Grant Knoll, bought land next to the headgates of the Klamath Project's primary canal. People have planted protest signs, hosted

conspiracy theorists and flown Trump 2024 flags. Asked if they were planning a repeat of 2001 - a year that saw federal marshal intervention and threats of armed insurrection, Nielsen told Jefferson Public Radio, "We're gonna do what we gotta do."

Despite the looming threat of violence, conflict isn't inevitable.

Water scarcity is becoming the new normal in the west, with multiple watersheds coping with extreme drought this year and chronically dry conditions for decades. The key to managing that scarcity, in Mount's view, is expecting it and planning for it. "What's lacking [in the Klamath Basin] is a good and durable plan that everyone has signed on to, even if they've signed on to it reluctantly," Mount said. "And that's still elusive in that basin."

What that plan should entail is another point of contention and proposed solutions spark varying

levels of controversy. Most agree about the need to restore salmon habitat along tributaries to the Klamath River. Fish populations will probably get a boost from removal of four dams along the Klamath River, which is expected to be completed by 2024. And then, there are the more fundamental - and controversial - proposals, like overhauling the Bureau of Reclamation and taking agricultural land out of production. Mount believes the solution will inevitably include some combination of these ideas and will require stakeholders in the conflict to find common ground. "There are too many people in the water business whose goal is to defeat someone else, and that is viewed as progress, if they have stopped something bad from happening," he said.

"It's not progress until you get something good to happen."

Courtesy The Guardian

This is what happens to your body during extreme heat

The unprecedented heat wave that's scorching parts of Northern America isn't letting up just yet.

More than 50 million people are under heat alerts Wednesday across the West and Northeast US, while high temperatures are also continuing to bake parts of western Canada.

Lytton, British Columbia, hit 121 degrees Fahrenheit on Tuesday -- setting the Canadian heat record for the third day in a row. Spokane, Washington state, recorded its hottest day ever on Tuesday, at 109 degrees. On the other side of the coast, Boston, Massachusetts tied and Hartford, Connecticut, broke their daily record -- topping at 99 degrees. The sweltering heat is dangerous -- between 2004 and 2018, an average of more than 700 Americans died of heat-related causes each year, according to a US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report. Roughly 90% of those deaths were between the months of May to September, the report said.

And experts say climate change is making heat waves more common and more powerful.

Here's what happens to your body in extreme heat, what you need to watch out for and how to stay safe.

What happens to your body

emergency medicine at Boston Medical Center.

There are a number of different ways in which (the brain) attempts to cool the body down.

One way, the most common way we think of, is that you sweat," Linden said. "The pores open,

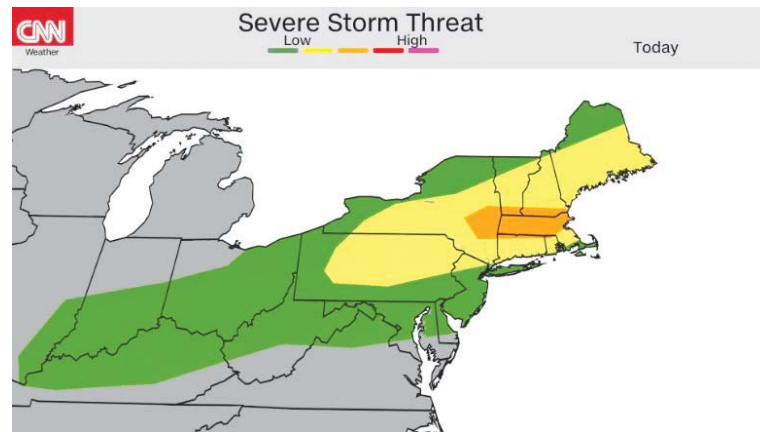
for your body to try and keep up with cooling itself down. And if your environment is hot and humid, sweat doesn't evaporate as easily -- which pushes your body's temperature even higher, according to the Mayo Clinic.

"The higher the humidity, the lower temperatures you need for extreme heat," Linden said. High body temperatures can lead to damage to the brain and other vital organs, the CDC says. They can also lead to several heat-related illnesses.

Types of heat-related illnesses Mild-heat related illnesses, including heat cramps, are most common, Linden said. Heat cramps can develop in people who sweat a lot, including during exercising. The excessive sweating uses up all of the body's salt and moisture and can lead to muscle pains or spasms, usually in the abdomen, arms or legs, according to the CDC. A heat rash can also develop. That's a skin irritation caused by too much sweating in hot and humid weather, and is most

common in young children, the CDC says. It is usually a red cluster of pimples or blisters, and tends to be in places including the neck, upper chest or in elbow creases. When your body's beginning to exceed its ability to cool itself down, you can develop what's known as heat exhaustion. "In this case you're going to see excessive sweating because your body is really going to try and keep up with that extra heat. You're going to feel light-headed, you may feel dizzy, often people present with nausea, headaches and their skin often looks pale and clammy and their pulse is often fast," Linden said. "This is the body's last attempt to cool itself before it really goes into a point of no return." A heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness, and, if left untreated, can lead to death.

"That's where your body's temperature goes above 104 to 105 degrees or so, and this is where your mechanisms are starting to fail," Linden said.



Normally, your body is used to a certain range of temperatures, usually between 97 to 99 degrees Fahrenheit. When your brain senses a change -- either lower or higher than that -- it attempts to help your body cool down or heat up, according to Dr. Judith Linden, executive vice chair of the department of

the body sweats and the sweat evaporates, that cools the body." The second way your body cools itself down is by dilating vessels and upping your heart rate, which helps bring heat and blood to the surface of your body and helps releases that excess heat. When you're exposed to high temperatures, it becomes harder

Deadly Heat Wave Is Triggering Dozens Of Wildfires In Western Canada

The entire village of Lytton in Canada's province of British Columbia was evacuated after a wildfire quickly took over the small town Wednesday.

In his evacuation order, the village's mayor, Jan Polderman described "fire in the village of Lytton" that "threatened structures and the safety of residents." Roughly 250 people live in the town about 150 miles northeast of Vancouver.

Polderman told local media outlets that the fire "took about 15 minutes" to engulf the entire town not long after he issued the evacuation order at 6 p.m. Wednesday. Polderman told CTV News he picked up one man before driving away from the burning village.

The wildfires come after nearly four days of extreme heat in the region. The evacuation of Lytton came a day after the U.S.

National Weather Service noted this week that temperatures reached 121 degrees in the small town - a Canadian record. The flames that quickly consumed the community were part of a new fire, not the separate and ongoing



George Road fire, about 123 acres in size, already burning south of the town, the wildfire service agency said.

Scott Hildebrand, chief administrative officer of the Thompson-Nicola Regional

District told the Vancouver Sun, "It happened so quickly that we're struggling to connect with everybody because power is down, cellphone lines are down. It's a tough situation."

Citing British Columbia Wildfire

Service fire information officer Jessica Mack, the Vancouver Sun reported there were four clusters of wildfires in the region - totaling 16 individual fires.

The Cariboo Regional District issued an evacuation alert for

Deka Lake, which is 100 miles north of Lytton, after five new wildfires sprung up in the area Wednesday, according to the region's wildfire service.

Those wildfires started due to a severe thunderstorm that swept through the region, with lightning strikes igniting the dry grass in the area, according to the wildfire service.

"All of these wildfires are being assessed and will be actioned in a priority sequence," the agency said on Twitter. "Ground crews, helicopters, air tankers, members from volunteer fire departments and heavy equipment have responded and will continue to do so over the coming days."

Much of Western Canada remains under heat warnings as the bubble of high pressure moves east, the country's weather service reports.

Those conditions are expected to last through the weekend in some parts of the country.

The warming climate is making heat waves more frequent and intense, scientists say.

More demand, less supply: Drought and heat test U.S. power grid

The scorching temperatures and the drought pummeling the western United States are creating a perfect storm for the electric grid, exposing how future extreme weather events will increasingly push a thinly stretched power system to the brink.

As Oregon, California, New Mexico and other states grapple with record-setting heat and diminishing water supplies, Americans are relying even more on electricity and water supply systems. Yet the same factors that are driving up demand for power can also limit the ability to generate it.

From generation at power plants to the transmission lines that carry electricity to homes and businesses, just about every part of the power system performs worse in conditions that are intensely hot and dry. That raises significant questions about the nation's readiness for a future in which, climate scientists say, global warming is expected to make extreme weather events even more common.

"This topic is on top of every

utility's agenda right now," said Omar Al-Juburi, a digital power grid consultant at Ernst & Young. "We're going to get to a point where the current infrastructure and the current way of operating is going to continue to be strained by these extreme heat waves."



In Portland, Oregon, temperatures this month have hit 116 degrees Fahrenheit - an all-time high - just one year after the state saw unprecedented wildfires as early in the year as Labor Day. "That is scary, because that means you don't know what's happened," Bob Jenks, executive

director of the Oregon Citizens' Utility Board, said. "That means the past is no longer predictive of the future."

A Portland-area power company even had to install extra cooling systems to prevent its own equipment from overheating.

Those cooling systems themselves use electricity, as do the air conditioners that Oregonians are now buying up in droves. Jenks said that means that the next time the region faces a heat wave, there will be more air conditioners being used demanding even more power and

further straining the system.

The severe drought plaguing huge swaths of the West, with lake levels dropping and riverbeds drying up, poses another challenge to keeping the power on for Americans. Fuel-burning power plants such as coal, natural gas and even nuclear plants often rely on water to cool off their systems.

The less water nearby or available to be pumped from elsewhere, the less power those plants can safely generate, according to energy analysts.

A water shortage can even take a power plant offline - a scenario that has only occurred rarely and for short periods, such as at Connecticut's Millstone Nuclear Power Station. But federal regulators are studying how to respond if that problem gets worse or more widespread. "Researchers have shown that drought threatens coal and nuclear power plant water supplies in the Upper Midwest, and the southeastern U.S., in New England as well as the western U.S.," Joe Smyth of the Energy and Policy Institute, a watchdog group, said.

When drought sets in, the most acute impact on electricity generation is felt by hydroelectric plants, dams that generate power from nature's own resources, many of them federally owned and operated. Those plants provide key resilience for the electric grid through their ability to rapidly ramp up or down production to meet demand, sometimes in as little as a few seconds.

In the current drought, a lower level of water in the Colorado River is already affecting power generation and delivery, said Tracey LeBeau, who runs the U.S. Department of Energy's Western Area Power Administration. "Less water often results in less water running through turbines and creating electricity," LeBeau said. "Right now, in many regions, power is in higher demand because of the higher temperatures. So it's really a double whammy for us." Those effects are especially pronounced at Lake Mead, on the Colorado River. The nation's largest reservoir by volume, the lake provides the water source for the iconic Hoover Dam, which provides power for Arizona, Nevada and California. This week,

water levels in Lake Mead fell to a record low of less than 1,070 feet - 18 feet lower than it was last year. The federal Bureau of Reclamation has said the lower water levels have already reduced the dam's electric output by a quarter, and is expected to worsen.

The blistering heat and wildfires that often accompany drought also have ramifications for other parts of the power system.

A 2012 study from the Energy Department's Argonne National Laboratory examining drought's long-term impacts on power systems in the Southwest stated that during heat wave conditions, transmission lines carry power less efficiently. Gas-fired power plants don't operate as well, and even solar panels produce less electricity under those conditions, the study said.

"Extreme weather is also impacting us with respect to wildfire danger - right now," LeBeau said. "Throughout the last week, we've had wildfires coming perilously close to our transmission lines carrying that federal hydropower to customers." California offers a harrowing example. In recent years, the state's largest utility, Pacific Gas and Electric, forced outages pre-emptively because the extreme heat and power lines risked a dangerous combination, particularly during wildfire season. "As climate change induces extreme weather events more and more frequently, we need to make investments to build a more resilient grid to carry this electricity," President Joe Biden said Monday during a visit to La Crosse, Wisconsin. The challenge of meeting energy demand during extreme weather is likely to be compounded as the nation seeks to rely more and more on electricity in its bid to address climate change, a transition known as "electrification." Rather than burning carbon dioxide-emitting gas or oil to power vehicles, stoves, and heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems, the Biden administration is seeking to transition those devices to run on electricity. If the electricity used comes from renewable sources such as hydro, solar or wind, the process can be essentially carbon-neutral, aiding in the fight to limit climate change.

First Alert: Severe Storms Bring Tornado Warnings and Flooding to Parts of Region



Severe storms brought several tornado warnings and flooding to parts of the region on Thursday.

Tornado warnings were in effect during the early evening for parts of Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean and Burlington counties in New Jersey as well as Bucks County in Pennsylvania and Kent County in Delaware. All of the warnings later expired.

Several people reported seeing possible funnel clouds as the storms passed through.

Rain was already falling late Thursday morning in some neighborhoods ahead of the stormier weather later in the day. Another round of heavy rain moved in Thursday afternoon and lasted through the evening. The rain began to move out late Thursday night.

The strong storms followed a heat wave that gripped the region throughout the week. The heat wave reached its peak on Wednesday with feels-like temperatures of 105 degrees and a high of 97. Philadelphia's heat health emergency expired late Wednesday night. Thursday's high was in the mid 80s.

Hundreds of deaths reported across Canada and the Pacific Northwest amid unrelenting heat wave



Coastal areas in the Pacific Northwest have seen the worst of recent record-breaking heat, but millions in eastern Washington and Oregon are still under heat advisories through the upcoming weekend. Hundreds of deaths have been reported across the Pacific Northwest and Canada amid a heat wave that has also swept through parts of America's Northeast.

At least 486 sudden deaths have been reported in Canada, a 195% increase in deaths that would typically happen in a five-day period. While it is too early to say with certainty how many of these deaths are heat related, it is believed likely that the significant increase in deaths reported is attributable to extreme weather (British Columbia) has experienced and continues to impact many parts of our province," British Columbia Chief Coroner Lisa Lapointe said in a statement.

And while the heat is expected to let up on the US East Coast, more than 4.5 million people in eastern Washington and Oregon are under heat alerts that are likely to last through at least Friday and in some areas until Sunday, according to CNN meteorologist Michael Guy.

Six western states remain under heat alerts Thursday, with record-breaking heat likely to continue from eastern Washington and Oregon to Montana and south into Nevada

and northern California.

The most extreme heat will be centered over eastern sections of Washington and Idaho where temperatures of 110 degrees and higher are possible again.

Record heat will reach the Northern Plains and the Upper Midwest this weekend with the Dakotas and Minnesota reaching well into the 90s.

The Canada heat, which reached the country's highest recorded temperature of 121 on Tuesday in British Columbia, is expected to subside by early next week.

55 of those have been ignited in the last two days, according to the B.C. Wildfire Dashboard. The province saw a total of 464 fires so far this year, the B.C. Wildfire Service said.

The West in the US remains hot and dry, creating perfect conditions for wildfires to flourish. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, 44 wildfires are currently burning more than 667,000 acres across a dozen states, including Arizona, California and Utah. Across the entire country, wildfires have burned 1.4 million acres so far in 2021.

Scientists have told CNN the heat wave is a clear sign of the climate crisis, and say that similar extreme heat events will happen more frequently in the future.

The heat wave has expanded and worsened drought conditions in the Western US, especially in the Pacific Northwest, according to the US Drought Monitor.

"Unprecedented heat in the

worsen by a category, with expansions of the areas of severe and extreme drought. The Southwest remained unchanged, except for some expansion of extreme drought in central Arizona.

Currently, drought coverage in the West has climbed to an all-time high of 93%, with nearly 60% in extreme or exceptional drought, the two highest categories. There are five states completely in drought conditions; California, Nevada, Oregon, North Dakota and Utah. Temps will slowly subside in Northwest

Temperatures are expected to remain above normal over much of the Northwest heading into the weekend, but the record-setting heat will slowly subside. Welcome relief has pushed into Seattle and Portland where highs were in the 70s and 80s Thursday.

Warmer temperatures are expected for the weekend.

Portland had set an all-time,

release said.

Hyperthermia, which the release called "an abnormally high body temperature caused by a failure of the body to deal with heat coming from the environment," was cited as the preliminary cause of death, according to the county.

The county noted that there were only 12 deaths from hyperthermia for the entire state between 2017 and 2019.

"I know many county residents were looking out for each other and am deeply saddened by this initial death toll," said Multnomah County Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Vines. "As our summers continue to get warmer, I suspect we will face this kind of event again."

The Washington Department of Health reported 1,648 emergency department visits statewide for suspected heat related illness since June 25, according to public Information Officer Corey Portner.

Seattle hit 108 degrees, also breaking the all-time record it set just a day earlier. At least two locations in Washington reached 118 degrees, which, if confirmed, would tie the state temperature record that dates back to 1928. The King County, Washington, medical examiner's office on Wednesday reported 11 heat-related deaths and one drowning. There were also 105 emergency department visits for heat-related illness on Tuesday, with 32 admitted to hospitals.

Two people died in Spokane after experiencing symptoms consistent with heat-related stress, city spokesman Brian Coddington said. A man in his 70s, was found by firefighters in an apartment building downtown, Coddington said.

Spokane hit 109 degrees, breaking the previous record of 108 degrees set on August 4, 1961, according to National Weather Service Spokane.

In Oregon, a farm worker in St. Paul, about 30 miles south of Portland, died Saturday, during the heat wave, a spokesperson for the state Occupational Safety and Health told CNN. The man was working on a crew moving irrigation lines when he was found unresponsive in the field, the spokesperson said.



"A colder air mass will be moving into eastern Canada by Tuesday and the Canadian portion of the heat wave will be over by then," Guy said.

While Boston and New York have experienced record-breaking heat, temperatures on the East Coast dropped Wednesday night, and heavy rain is expected for that region on Thursday.

Heat worsens drought, wildfires Both the US and Canada are experiencing wildfire threats.

There are 78 active fires burning in British Columbia, Canada, and

Northwest, combined with another week of dry weather, led to worsening drought conditions across the region," according to the summary of this week's drought numbers released Thursday morning.

Temperatures ranging from 20-30 degrees Fahrenheit above average have increased evaporation, "further drying out soils and vegetation" and worsening the drought in the region.

Many areas in the Northwest saw drought classifications

record-high temperature three days in a row, topping out at 116 degrees on Monday.

The Medical Examiner's Office in Multnomah County, which includes Portland, has identified 51 deaths related to excessive heat since Friday, June 25, according to a county news release Thursday.

The people who died ranged in age from 44 to 97, with an average age of 67. Many had underlying health conditions and were found alone, without air conditioning or a fan, the

Record Northwest heat may have killed hundreds

Hundreds of deaths in Canada, Oregon and Washington may have been caused by the historic heat wave that baked the Pacific Northwest and shattered all-time temperature records in usually temperate cities.

Oregon health officials said late Wednesday more than 60 deaths have been tied to the heat, with the state's largest county, Multnomah, blaming the weather for 45 deaths since the heat wave began Friday.

British Columbia's chief coroner, Lisa Lapointe, said her office received reports of at least 486 "sudden and unexpected deaths" between Friday and 1 p.m. Wednesday. Normally, she said about 165 people would die in the province over a five-day period.

"While it is too early to say with certainty how many of these deaths are heat related, it is believed likely that the significant increase in deaths reported is attributable to the extreme weather," LaPointe said in a statement.

Like Seattle, many homes in Vancouver, British Columbia, don't have air conditioning.

"Vancouver has never experienced heat like this, and sadly dozens of people are dying because of it," Vancouver police Sgt. Steve Addison said



in a statement.

Washington state authorities had linked more than 20 deaths to the heat, but that number was likely to rise.

The heat wave was caused by what meteorologists described as a dome of high pressure over the Northwest and worsened by human-caused climate change,

which is making such extreme weather events more likely and more intense. Seattle, Portland and many other cities broke all-time heat records, with temperatures in some places reaching above 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 Celsius). While

the temperatures had cooled considerably in western Washington, Oregon and British Columbia by Wednesday, interior regions were still sweating through triple-digit temperatures as the weather system moved east into the intermountain West and the Plains. Environment Canada

issued heat warnings Wednesday for southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Heat warnings also were in place for parts of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

In Alberta, "a prolonged, dangerous, and historic heat wave will persist through this week," Environment Canada said.

The very high temperatures or humidity conditions posed an elevated risk of heatstroke or heat exhaustion.

In a statement, Oregon's Multnomah County medical examiner blamed 45 heat deaths there on hyperthermia, an abnormally high body temperature caused by a failure of the body to deal with heat. The victims ranged in age from 44 to 97. The county that includes Portland said that between 2017 and 2019, there were only 12 hyperthermia deaths in all of Oregon. "This was a true health crisis that has underscored how deadly an extreme heat wave can be, especially to otherwise vulnerable people," Dr. Jennifer

Vines, the county's health officer, said in a statement.

The King County medical examiner's office, which covers an area including Seattle, said at least 13 people died due to the heat. The victims were between 61 and 97 years of age. In eastern Washington, the Spokane Fire Department found two people dead in an apartment building Wednesday who had been suffering symptoms of heat-related stress, TV station KREM reported.

The heat led a power company in Spokane to impose rolling blackouts because of the strain on the electrical grid. Avista Utilities says it's trying to limit outages to one hour per customer.

Renee Swecker, 66, of Clayton, Washington, visited a splashpad fountain in downtown Spokane's Riverfront Park with her grandchildren Wednesday, saying they "are going everywhere where there is water."

"I'm praying for rain every day," Swecker said.

Surge of deaths, hospitalizations in U.S., Canada due to historic West Coast heat wave

An unprecedented heat wave in the Pacific Northwest this week sent more than 1,000 people to emergency rooms and has been linked to at least 233 reported deaths in Canada.

Portland, Ore., reached 116 degrees on Monday, a record-breaking high temperature for the city. Seattle, which has had only two other days in the last 50 years with temperatures in the triple digits, also reached a record high of 108 degrees on Monday.

The area is now cooling off, with Portland seeing its biggest overnight temperature drop on record, from 116 to 64 degrees, between Monday evening and Tuesday morning. However, the effects of the heat wave have been consequential.

According to an Oregon Health Authority report published on Tuesday, 459 people have gone to the emergency room or an urgent care clinic due to the excessive heat. There were at least 250 hospital visits on Monday alone, when temperatures were at their highest.

In Washington state, at least 676 people visited emergency rooms for heat-related illnesses between Friday and Sunday, with 81 of the visits leading to inpatient admission, Cory Portner, a spokesperson for the state's department of health, told BuzzFeed News. This number is striking against the state's past data, which shows that heat-



related hospitalizations surpassed 51 patients per year only twice between 2000 and 2018.

A number of fatalities have also been linked to the surge in temperatures. The King County Medical Examiner's Office in

Washington reports that at least two people died from hyperthermia, a condition in which the body's temperature becomes abnormally high, including a 65-year-old Seattle woman and a 68-year-old woman from Enumclaw, a city south of Seattle, according to the Seattle Times.

Three more heat-related deaths were confirmed in Snohomish

County, Wash., on Tuesday, all of whom were men, ages 51, 75 and 77.

In Oregon, state officials on Wednesday linked more than 60 deaths to the heat, the Associated Press reported. That includes 45 deaths in Multnomah

County, the state's largest county, since Friday, according to the county medical examiner's office, which said the preliminary cause of death is hyperthermia. The heat also claimed the life of an Oregon farmworker who died on a worksite in St. Paul on Saturday, according to state officials. "The employee was working on a crew moving irrigation lines. At the end of the shift he was found unresponsive in the field," Aaron Corvin, a spokesperson for the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division told the Salem Reporter. A little north of Seattle, Vancouver, B.C., has also been significantly affected by the heat wave.

"The Coroners Service would normally receive approximately 130 reports of death over a four-day period. From Friday, June 25 through 3 p.m. on Monday, June 28, at least 233 deaths were reported. This number will increase as data continues to be updated." Lisa Lapointe, British Columbia's chief coroner, said in a statement.

Lyfton, British Columbia, a village

162 miles northeast of Vancouver, recorded an all-time high temperature for Canada, reaching 121 degrees on Tuesday - which is comparable to Phoenix's all-time high temperature of 122 degrees.

Vancouver Police have announced that front-line resources are depleted and response times are severely delayed as a result of the sudden influx of heat-related deaths.

These Northern cities, where average June temperatures are in the 70s, are underprepared to combat the heat. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 78 percent of Portland homes have primary air conditioning installed, while Seattle has an even lower number, with 44 percent of homes.

lack of air conditioning is a risk factor for heatstroke, especially if temperatures rise to 104 degrees or higher, per the Mayo Clinic Website. Heatstroke does not cause death directly, but it can induce other, potentially fatal conditions, including cardiac events, respiratory problems and kidney disease.

Heat Waves Prompt Workers To Walk Out: 'We Weren't Going To Tolerate It'

Alicia Lara works the drive-thru at a Jack In The Box in Sacramento. The 55-year-old mother of four says the air conditioning unit inside the restaurant tends to conk out when she needs it most, including during a recent mid-June heat wave.

According to Lara, the unit was not working on June 18 when the outside temperature soared well above 100 degrees. The open window at the drive-thru brought little relief, and she feared for the safety of her co-worker laboring over the grill.

"Most of the heat is in the kitchen and at the fryers," she told HuffPost. "Even if we open the window, it's still too hot."

Lara was one of several workers affiliated with the Fight for \$15 who protested outside the restaurant on Tuesday, saying they were walking off the job because the air conditioner still wasn't working properly. They also filed complaints with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health and Sacramento County Public Health, alleging their employer was endangering them during



unit had been repaired in the past, only to break down again during high heat.

"They fix it but they don't fix it right," she said of the restaurant's management. "What I think they don't want is to pay the money." The demonstration outside Jack In The Box is unlikely to be the last time this summer that workers protest having to clock

workers and others laboring indoors, especially in workplaces not outfitted to deal with extreme heat.

Workers at a Voodoo Doughnuts store in Portland, Oregon, staged a walkout Sunday over what they described as excessively hot working conditions. The union Doughnut Workers United, which narrowly lost a union election at

ultimately fired.

Voodoo Doughnuts disputed the workers' characterization of the store as being too hot. A company spokesperson said they kept the store air-conditioned and shifted production times to avoid the most sweltering hours.

"Employee and customer safety is our highest priority," the spokesperson wrote. "[I]f we felt either were at risk during this time, we would have adjusted operating hours and otherwise made sure everyone was safe." In mid-June, workers at a Houston-area Hooters held a walkout of their own over hot temperatures. Corinne Hill, one of the dozen or so workers, told local news station KPRC that they went a month without functioning air conditioning at the restaurant, forcing them to retreat to the ice cooler to get cool air. Workers said they'd been told that the part needed to repair the unit was out of stock.

"Today we decided as a group we weren't going to tolerate it," Hill said at the time. "We demand A/C, so we walked out."

The restaurant closed the dining room shortly after the walkout, and KPRC reported that an air-conditioning repair company was soon on-site.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration can fine workplaces for heat hazards, but there is no federal standard that clearly lays out an employer's obligations to protect workers in

excessive heat.

When OSHA cites an employer in such cases, it typically relies on the general duty clause, a catch-all rule that says employers have an obligation to provide a workplace free from hazards. Many workplace safety advocates have been pressing OSHA to adopt a federal standard similar to the state requirements that have been adopted in California.

Workers do have nominal rights when they object to working in excessively hot conditions, though the law won't necessarily prevent a worker from losing their job. The Occupational Safety and Health Act grants workers the right to refuse dangerous work if there's a clear risk of death or serious physical harm, but a worker who gets fired for it would have to win a retaliation case under OSHA.

Workers staging a walkout due to heat could also try to lean on the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees the right to engage in protected concerted activity ? i.e., banding together with co-workers to improve working conditions, with or without a union. If workers were retaliated against, they could argue they were trying to protect one another's health.

"I think it's exactly what the act is designed to help workers do, which is join together to make sure they're treated fairly," said Celine McNicholas, labor counsel at the Economic Policy Institute. But the law offers weak remedies for workers who've been illegally punished, and McNicholas cautioned that the success of any legal argument would depend a lot on the circumstances, including how workers framed their walkout.

The six Jack In The Box workers who filed the heat complaint with California did so with the help of the Fight for \$15, the union-backed campaign aimed at improving pay and working conditions in fast food. They asked that safety inspectors visit the restaurant and issue a citation if they find hazards. California is one of 22 states where workplace complaints are handled by a state agency rather than federal OSHA.



high heat.

Jack In The Box told HuffPost in a statement that the restaurant is operated by a franchisee who said the air conditioning unit is up and running.

"We take the health and safety of our employees and guests very seriously. We have spoken to the franchise operator and confirmed that the AC is fully functioning," a spokesperson said in an email.

But Lara said the air conditioning

in under high heat. The calendar hasn't yet reached July, and already, the Pacific Northwest has shattered heat records and much of the Northeast is baking under a triple-digit heat index.

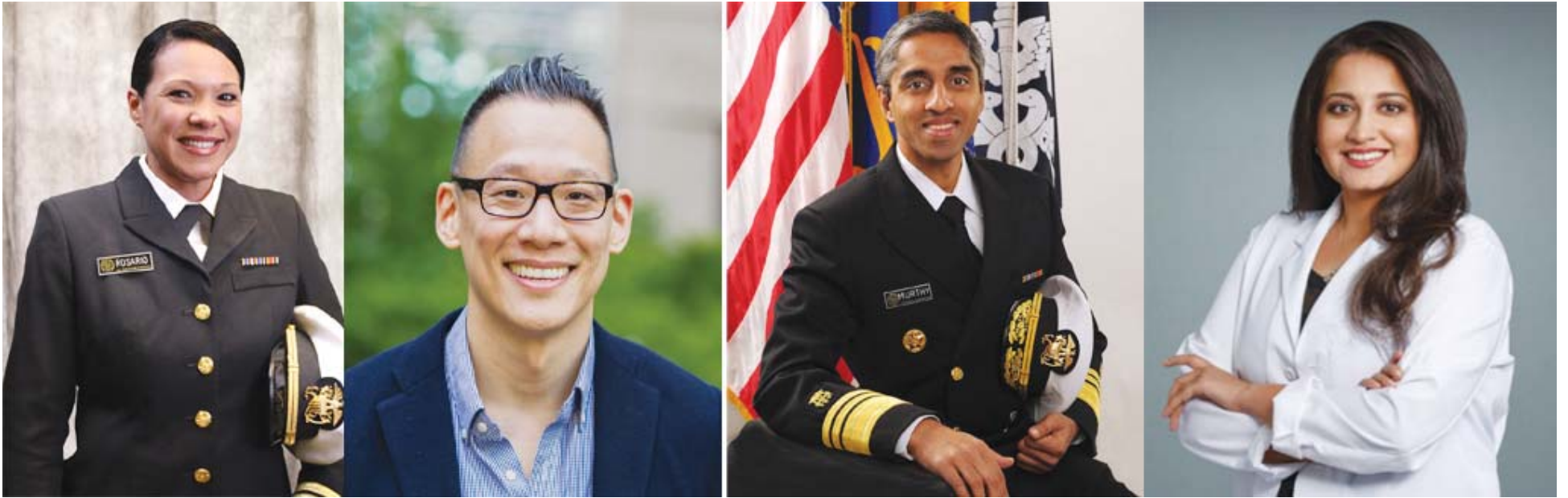
With climate change making heat waves harsher and more common, the sizzling temperatures will affect workers of all kinds ? not just roofers and farmworkers stuck outside, but warehouse pickers, restaurant

the store earlier this year, wrote on Facebook that doughnuts were melting and the frosting couldn't dry inside the store due to high temperatures. "The weak A/C and water is not enough to protect the workers from the hottest day in Oregon history," the group said. "In solidarity with each other the workers left together at 1:00 PM today."

The union said three workers who participated in the walkout were

U.S. Surgeon General and Medical Experts on COVID-19 Vaccine Progress: “We Can Do This”

Dr. Vivek Murthy, Dr. Adelaida Rosario, and Dr. Purvi Parikh share messages about COVID-19 vaccine safety with the South Asian community



(By our Staff Writer) New York.

New York: - In support of the Biden-Harris Administration's We Can Do This public education campaign to increase confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines and encourage vaccination, TDW+Co, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, hosted a virtual press briefing for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) media on Thursday, June 10.

During the virtual event, medical experts from various states provided their pandemic experiences, as well as up-to-date, trusted COVID-19 vaccine information. Special speakers included: Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; Lieutenant Adelaida M. Rosario, PhD, Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and local doctors including Purvi Parikh, MD, Allergist & Immunologist, Allergy and Asthma Associates of Murray Hill and Vaccine Researcher, NYU Langone Health based in

New York. In the live Q&A session, the medical experts answered questions about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines, health inequities for AANHPIs, and how to stay safe and protected from the coronavirus to prevent further spread.

COVID-19 has caused tremendous suffering for millions of Americans, but vaccines are giving many families and communities hope. As of June 10, the CDC reported 172 million people living in the United States are now fully vaccinated. Among this number, at least 6.1% of Asians (non-Hispanic) and 0.3% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups have had at least one vaccination, which is an estimated 6.26 million people.

"More than 300 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in the United States alone. That constitutes a tremendous amount of experience with the vaccine," said Dr. Murthy. "And what we've seen is two things from all this experience. One, the vaccines remain remarkably effective in preventing COVID. And two, they also retain a

very strong safety profile."

AANHPI communities face unique challenges during the pandemic, including obtaining information about COVID-19 and the availability of the vaccines due to language barriers, a low level of familiarity with computer technology, misinformation, and a misunderstanding of the vaccines or the science behind the vaccines.

"As a scientist, the lack of disaggregated data about AANHPI populations concerns me the most," said Dr. Rosario. "The lack of data specific to our diverse populations hide some inequities caused by socioeconomic, health, and access. As a result, our communities are unaccounted for and feel invisible."

"The good news is South Asians overwhelmingly want to get vaccinated and do get vaccinated," said Dr. Parikh. "So many healthcare workers are South Asian, so we've seen firsthand the death and destruction from this virus. And remember, South Asians are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 and deaths from severe COVID-19 because we

have higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and those are all big risk factors."

The medical experts agreed following the CDC guidelines and your own physicians' guidance to get vaccinated as soon as you can to protect your family, loved ones, and community. Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

"Children should get the vaccine because they are not immune or protected like we first thought in the early days of the pandemic," said Dr. Parikh. "One in five coronavirus infections are in pediatrics. And as kids go back to school, we don't want them to fall ill or be compromised. They should get vaccinated so that we can protect them from getting sick and inadvertently passing the infection on to one of their older family members who may be more vulnerable."

The doctors shared that it is normal for people to have questions about the vaccines. However, the vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective. The doctors

encouraged having a trusted conversation with those you trust.

When asked about those who have only received the first dose of the vaccine, Dr. Parikh strongly recommends they get the second shot. "The sooner they do that, the sooner they're protecting themselves, the sooner they are protecting their loved ones and family, and the sooner we as a whole global community can move past this pandemic," she said. "In the history of time, there has not been a single infectious disease that has reached herd immunity without full vaccination. So, it's very important to get that second shot."

In addition to Dr. Parikh leading this briefing for South Asian media partners, other sessions were led by Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Vietnamese physicians from around the country who provided relevant, fact-based information to address the concerns of their respective communities and increase awareness of the vaccine's safety and efficacy.

Network of Drug dealers and gun traffickers dismantled in Queens following long-term investigation

Twenty-One Individuals Indicted by Queens County Grand Jury; Defendants Variouslly Charged with Possessing & Selling Illegal Narcotics and Firearms In Far Rockaway and Surrounding Neighborhoods



Rockaway on September 29, 2020, police allegedly recovered 117 glassine envelopes containing a mix of heroin, fentanyl and tramadol. There were also 65 'twists' of cocaine found.

- During a November 1, 2020 Court-authorized search of the home of defendant Sekou Santiago, police allegedly recovered a Glock pistol, a high-capacity magazine, a loaded magazine, a laser sight, 114 grams of heroin and fentanyl and 269 grams of cocaine.

- During the investigation, one of the wiretap targets, Ernest Thomas, was shot and killed coming out of the Redfern Houses. The District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau is still investigating that murder. Thomas had allegedly been acting in concert with defendant Pauletta Williams and conspiring with others in the case to sell narcotics.

The joint investigation was conducted by the Queens County District Attorney's Office with New York City Police Department. NYPD Detectives James Miles, William Warren (now retired) and Gerald Cuchiarra led the investigation, under the supervision of Sergeants Daniel Nicoletti and Benjamin Nelson, as well as Lieutenant William Buchanan of the Gun Recidivist Investigations Program, under the overall supervision of Captain Thomas Passolo and Inspector Jason Savino, Commanding Officer of the Gun Violence Suppressions Division.

Assistant District Attorney Alana Weber, of the District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Sennett, Bureau Chief; Michelle Goldstein, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief; Philip Anderson and Mark Katz, Deputy Bureau Chiefs; Ajay Chheda, Section Chief; and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of Investigations Gerard Brave.

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by the New York City Police Department, announced today that a group of 21 defendants have been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and were arrested early this morning. The defendants are variously charged in five separate indictments with allegedly running and/or possessing guns and dealing drugs in the Redfern H Far Rockaway and surrounding neighborhoods between November 2019 and March 2021. District Attorney Katz said, "Attorneys from my Office and members of the NYPD's Gun Violence Suppression Division worked tirelessly for months, focusing our investigation where drugs and guns have been a toxic combination for far too long, made so by individual drivers of crime. Police recovered firearms, cocaine, heroin, heroin laced with fentanyl and other illicit drugs during this operation. My Office is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to make certain no community is held hostage to those who seek to profit from human misery." Police Commissioner Dermot Shea said, "This investigation highlights our joint responsibilities in eradicating shootings, illegal firearms and the violence of the narcotics trade that tear at the fabric of life in our City. Our NYPD officers, with our partners in the Queens district attorney's office, have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure that those who live and work in the Far Rockaway neighborhood can be safe

— and we embrace these charges as a measure of

justice."

Utilizing surveillance techniques, undercover buys and other investigative tools, the District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau, working in conjunction with the Gun Recidivist Investigation Program (GRIP – part of the NYPD's Gun Violence Suppression Division) conducted a long-term investigation to uncover gun running and illicit narcotics sales in Queens County.

District Attorney Katz said this investigation began in November 2019 with a Court-authorized eavesdropping warrant on a cell

According to the charges, calls and text messages between Nance and Kimiko Leonard allegedly revealed that the female defendant was Nance's main drug supplier. On a monthly basis Leonard, who works for the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) is alleged to have sold Nance his usual order of cocaine. The pair allegedly used code words to set up buys with Nance texting her that "he needed a ride to 200 Street," which actually meant he wanted to buy 200 grams of cocaine.

Results of the investigation include:



phone belonging to defendant Antoine Nance, 35, who has been charged with criminal sale of a controlled substance, conspiracy and other crimes.

Monitoring this defendant's calls led to the discovery of a network of two groups of alleged dealers in Far Rockaway, Queens. Law enforcement intercepted both narcotics and firearm-related communications between Nance and many of the other defendants.

- According to the charges, one of Nance's associates, Keith Alston, was heard on a wire-tapped line on July 20, 2020, allegedly telling co-defendant Paul Reed that he had recently assaulted someone and needed to hide a gun. The pair allegedly worked out a plan to pass the illegal firearm so that authorities would not find the weapon at Alston's home. Instead, police recovered the weapon in Reed's residence following the execution

of a Court-authorized search warrant.

- As outlined in the charges, another person with whom Nance was in contact with was Kasson Brown. Defendant Brown is accused of being a top supplier of both cocaine and heroin in the region who, to avoid detection by law enforcement, used runners to sell the drugs on the streets. One of his paid runners was allegedly Dewayna Edwards. An undercover officer was introduced to Edwards as a drug buyer and at times when this "buyer" wanted to make a purchase, she would allegedly at times reach out to

Brown to get the drugs. Brown, in turn, would allegedly contact defendant Resean Morris to get him the needed heroin or Raymond Cowan for cocaine.

- DA Katz said defendant Brown's crew of runners even allegedly, branded their drugs, packing the heroin they sold in glassine envelopes stamped in red with

the words "King of Death" along with a photo of the Grim Reaper. Tests on the substance within the little envelopes allegedly revealed a mix of heroin, fentanyl and tramadol. At times, tests showed the substance was pure fentanyl.

- Another one of Brown's alleged street runners, according to the charges, was Jason Bernadotte. During a Court-authorized search of Bernadotte's home in the Redfern Houses in Far

The Delta variant has now been detected in all 50 states and Washington, DC



get vaccinated. The proportion of young people hospitalized is increasing, according to Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director.

Since May, people ages 12 to 29 have accounted for about a third of hospitalizations -- a greater proportion than in the past, Walensky said. CDC data shows, however, that vaccination coverage among young adults is improving. Over the past two weeks, the 18-24 age group made up 12.6% of those becoming fully vaccinated, the CDC said. But spikes in coronavirus cases are "entirely avoidable, entirely preventable" with vaccination, said Fauci, who heads the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fauci's remarks come as the Delta variant, which is more contagious and aggressive, has reached nearly every state and accounted for 26.1% of US Covid-19 cases as of Tuesday, according to the CDC.

(News Agencies)-The Delta variant of Covid 19 has now been detected in all 50 states and Washington, DC, according to the latest tally from CNN. The last state to report the variant is South Dakota, which confirmed its first case on Tuesday. With the more transmissible variant spreading, this puts even more pressure on local and state officials to vaccinate more people. Dr. Anthony Fauci said Tuesday he's "very concerned about" the stark disparity between places with low and high vaccination rates. This unfortunately could lead to there

soon being "two Americas" -- one where most people are vaccinated and another where low vaccination rates could lead to case spikes. "When you have such a low level of vaccination superimposed upon a variant that has a high degree of efficiency of spread, what you are going to see among undervaccinated regions -- be that states, cities or counties -- you're going to see these individual types of blips," he said. "It's almost like it's going to be two Americas." Young people -- age 18 to 24 -- are still a group that officials are trying to

Rescue workers at Surfside building collapse find bodies of two children

(News Agencies)-Two children are among the 18 people confirmed dead in the Surfside, Florida, condo collapse, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said at a Wednesday afternoon news conference.

The bodies of 10-year-old Lucia Guara and 4-year-old Emma Guara were found Wednesday, Miami-Dade police said, adding the girls were sisters. "Any loss of life, especially given the unexpected, unprecedented nature of this event, is a tragedy," Levine Cava said. "But the loss of our children is too great to bear." The number of victims recovered grew by six Wednesday. At a morning update, the mayor announced four bodies had been located. Police also identified Anaely Rodriguez, 42, and Andreas Giannitsopoulos, 21, as among victims found Wednesday. A total of 145 people remain unaccounted for after 55 units of Champlain Towers South crashed to the ground in the

middle of the night last Thursday. As hundreds of rescuers -- some from overseas -- keep digging through the precarious mountain of rubble, some are trying to reconcile hope with realism. Tons of crushed concrete and bad weather

The collapse happened while many residents were asleep, and Vach said crews have been looking for bedrooms buried under 13-16 feet of concrete. "Most of the collapse is very, very tight. The collapse was major," Vach said. Rescue crews will soon face another challenge: inclement weather. Rain and thunderstorms arrived Wednesday and more are expected Thursday. There is a potential for strong winds and lightning. But canine crews will not be hampered after stormy weather, Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said. He said two teams of dogs -- one searching for survivors, the other looking for victims -- are able to follow scents even after wind and rain.

More than 80 teens and staffers at an Illinois summer camp got Covid-19

(News Agencies)-More than 80 teens and adult staffers from a Central Illinois summer camp tested positive for Covid-19 in an outbreak that has impacted people across three states, officials said.

The Crossing Camp in Schuyler County held in mid-June did not check vaccination status for campers or staffers, and masks were not required indoors at the camp, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) said in a news release.

The Crossing Camp has not responded to calls, email or Facebook messages left by CNN on Monday and Tuesday.

All campers and staff were eligible for vaccination, although "IDPH is

aware of only a handful of campers and staff receiving the vaccine," the department said Monday.

One unvaccinated young adult who tested positive after attending the camp was also hospitalized, according to IDPH. In Illinois, 46.1% of the population is fully vaccinated, according to the latest data. However, officials across the country have are becoming alarmed by the reluctance of young adults to get vaccinated, especially as the more transmissible Delta variant is spreading more widely.

"The perceived risk to children may seem small, but even a mild case of COVID-19 can cause

long-term health issues," IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said in Monday's statement. "Additionally, infected youth who may not experience severe illness can still spread the virus to others, including those who are too young to be vaccinated or those who don't build the strong expected immune response to the vaccine," she said. IDPH said that at least two individuals from the camp also attended a nearby conference, which resulted in 11 additional positive cases of Covid-19.

The week-long camp from June 13-17 was designed was for 8th graders -- through graduating seniors.

An upcoming camp created for fourth- and fifth-grade students



has been postponed to August due to the outbreak, according to a message posted on its official website. "We were so looking forward to spending time with your campers this weekend, but we believe the best way to value and love our

students, difference makers, and staff is to delay camp until a safer time," it read. The Schuyler County Health Department worked with camp staffers "to provide guidance and mitigate the situation," according to a county statement from last week.

More people looking for -- but not taking -- jobs after their unemployment benefits end early

(News Agencies)-Jason Smith thought he'd have an easier time filling jobs at his three auto repair shops after Indiana's governor announced that pandemic unemployment benefits would end in mid-June. But it hasn't worked out that way so far. While he is getting more applications for the auto technician, service consultant and administrative assistant postings, the job seekers haven't responded to his requests for interviews. Smith has reached out to more than three dozen people in the last month, but he only

heard back from a few, who said they weren't interested in the position. "I thought it was going to be a situation where it's like: 'Everyone, let's get back to work,'" said Smith, who had to transfer staff from his other locations in and around Merrillville, Indiana, to open a third shop in June. "We're getting applications, but we aren't getting any responses." Indiana is one of at least 26 states that are ending at least one of the pandemic unemployment benefits programs early, citing widespread worker shortages. (An Indiana state judge ruled Friday afternoon that the benefits

must continue while a lawsuit challenging the termination works its way through the court system. Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb is considering an appeal.) Governors argue that the more generous payments, including the \$300 federal weekly boost, are keeping workers on the sidelines. At least 20 have already ceased the payments, and the rest will do so by the end of July. States had to give 30 days' notice before ending the benefits, which will last until early September in the states that are continuing them.

Teenage boy rescued after falling down chimney at public school building in Brooklyn



(News Agencies)- Firefighters were able to rescue a teenage boy who fell down a chimney at a public school in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. Passersby alerted firefighters of a reported child down a chimney at P.S. 255 before 4 a.m. Wednesday. The 16-year-old boy was with others on the roof when he fell down the school's chimney. Firefighters responded and found him in the basement, near the boiler area. He was taken to Maimonides Medical Center in stable condition. Police are investigating. The boy will be issued a summons, likely for trespassing.

Lava Fire grows to over 13,000 acres

(News Agencies)-The Lava Fire burning near the community of Weed, California continues to grow. The lightning-caused Lava Fire was first reported on Friday, June 25 morning, that measurement skyrocketed to 13,300 acres. Evacuation notifications were given Monday morning, but by the afternoon, those notifications were upgraded to orders. The Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office posted the following evacuations for the Lake Shastina and Juniper Valley Areas: Highway 97 was closed in both directions 20 miles



about 3.5 miles northeast of Weed and 4.5 miles southeast of Lake Shastina in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. By Sunday night, the fire was about 550 acres and 20% contained. However, due to strong and erratic winds on dry fuels, the fire grew to an estimated 1,446 acres by Monday. On Tuesday south of the Oregon-California border due to the fire. Visit <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/> for road updates. The fire is burning in rough, rocky terrain and is visible from Highway 97 and Interstate 5. A Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) has been established at Big Springs Elementary School.

Minneapolis protesters hold city council VP 'hostage' by blocking vehicle, demanding riot charges dropped

(News Agencies)-The vice president of the Minneapolis City Council says she was "held hostage" while attending a Pride celebration over the weekend, as video shows a large group of protesters blocked her vehicle until she agreed to sign a list of their demands that included dropping criminal charges against rioters. Andrea Jenkins, who represents Minneapolis' 8th Ward and identifies as the first Black openly transgender woman to be elected to office in the U.S., said in a statement Tuesday that it is also time to stop the holding of Black-owned businesses, the neighbors and residents of the neighborhood near George Floyd Square hostage more than a year after Floyd's death on May 25, 2020. The incident happened Sunday



afternoon while Jenkins was attending the Taking Back Pride event in Loring Park, as video shows her sitting in the front passenger seat of a white vehicle being blocked by a group of extreme Black Lives Matter demonstrators, many

shows the camera a list of "The People's Demands" that Jenkins must agree to before she's free to leave. The handwritten note calls for the formation of a "community police accountability commission," to "reopen all the cases of murderers," to "drop the charges for all 646 protesters and other protesters for 2020," and to "make all information on the murder of Winston Smith available." It also demands the

resignation of Mayor Jacob Frey and to "leave George Floyd Square alone. PERIOD." The protesters shouted each demand and asked if they had Jenkins' support. She agreed, "Yes," to the first few before shaking her head when protesters called for Frey's resignation.

with their cellphones out recording. "It might be three days before I get out of here," Jenkins is heard telling someone over the phone while sitting in the vehicle, according to a 23-minute-long video shared to Facebook by activist Donald Hooker Jr. Hooker

shows the camera a list of "The People's Demands" that Jenkins must agree to before she's free to leave. The handwritten note calls for the formation of a "community police accountability commission," to "reopen all the cases of murderers," to "drop the charges for all 646 protesters and other protesters for 2020," and to "make all information on the murder of Winston Smith available." It also demands the

resignation of Mayor Jacob Frey and to "leave George Floyd Square alone. PERIOD." The protesters shouted each demand and asked if they had Jenkins' support. She agreed, "Yes," to the first few before shaking her head when protesters called for Frey's resignation.

Woman who allegedly caused Tour de France crash arrested

(News Agencies)-The woman who allegedly held out a banner causing the crash of dozens of cyclists during the first stage of the Tour de France last Saturday has been identified and is undergoing police questioning, the Brest prosecutor's office told CNN. The accident happened 45 kilometers from the finish of the first stage of the race on Saturday -- from Brest to Landerneau -- when a female spectator on the side of the road held up a big sign which caused the pile up. It's not evident what she meant to say on the sign which said 'ALLEZ OPI-

OMI !' in French and German, which translates to 'Go Grandma and Grandpa.' According to the race's video coverage of Saturday's incident, the sign hit German rider Tony Martin who was cycling near the head of the pack. Martin fell, which led to the subsequent crash of dozens of riders behind him. Cyclists fell en masse and the crash left bikes and bodies tangled in the road. The fall held the race up for several minutes. Gendarmes from the Finistere region had posted an appeal on Facebook to track down the

female spectator who apparently had left the scene before their arrival.

On Sunday, the Finistere gendarmerie announced the opening of a judicial investigation into "involuntary injuries with disability not exceeding three months by a deliberate violation of an obligation of safety or prudence." The woman could face up to two years in prison and a fine of \$35,000 according to the Brest prosecutor's office. The opening stages of this year's Tour have been marred by a series of crashes.

Covid-19 is killing Brazilian children at alarming rates. Many may be going undiagnosed

(News Agencies)-"Who's mommy's little girl?" 22-year-old Brazilian Sameque Gois asks as she plays with her baby's tiny hand, in one of the several videos she showed CNN. In the footage, little Sarah responds to her mother with an ear-to-ear smile. Sarah was born in January this year. Despite having a few issues during pregnancy that caused her baby to be born prematurely, Gois says her daughter was generally healthy. But after she took her baby girl to the Casa de Saude Hospital in São Paulo's coastal city of Santos to treat a urinary tract infection, Sarah started to present persistent fever and flu-like symptoms. "When her symptoms started, the doctors said it was bronchiolitis, that it wasn't anything serious," Gois explains. But her daughter would not

recover. As Sarah's condition deteriorated, Gois says she felt helpless. "All I knew was that she was in a serious condition and that she could go at any moment. I knew that the only thing I could do was to get on my knees and pray," she said. Despite her pleas, her daughter died from Covid-19 on May 27. She was just five months old. Sarah's case is one of many in Brazil. The Brazilian Health Ministry says 1,122

children under the age of 10 have died from Covid-19 since the pandemic started. The Brazilian government records the number of people who died from severe acute respiratory diseases -- such as severe cases of the flu, and others. However, researchers from global health organization Vital Strategies, which works in more than 70 countries around the world, say its studies suggest such case

numbers have been severely underreported. When comparing the number of Brazilian child deaths from such illnesses in 2018 and 2019 with the number of deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, Vital Strategies found an excess 2,975 deaths. The organization says it's likely that the vast majority of these excess deaths -- not just the official number of 1,122 -- were because of Covid-19.

Reliance Stores In Punjab Seek Chief Minister's Help Amid Farmers Protest

Farmers protesting against the Centre's three farm laws are not allowing Reliance stores to operate in Punjab.

A group of building owners who have rented their premises to Reliance Industries for operating its various businesses across Punjab on Tuesday sought the intervention of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh for reopening of their stores which were laid siege by protesting farmers for the past several months.

Farmers protesting against the Centre's three farm laws are not allowing Reliance stores to operate in Punjab.

The owners said they are in a deep financial crisis and moving towards bankruptcy as they have not been getting any rental

incomes for the past 7-8 months because all Reliance retail outlets are closed due to farmer protests.

They said the agitating farmers have put their tents outside various stores.

Reliance has around 275 stores in Punjab and all of them are shut, they said.

"We are bearing losses in crores as the buildings are on loans from banks and we have to bear the burden of huge EMIs, municipal taxes, electricity and water charges, etc. Moreover, the livelihood of lakhs of workers, employees and their families has also been adversely affected,"

said Prabhnoor Singh Walia from Kapurthala in a statement here.

He added that "farmer leaders warn us of severe consequences if we open the stores. We have even approached the district police and other local authorities but in vain. We have also met Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leaders and 'Kisan Jathebandeyaan' a couple of times and raised our concerns but to no avail".

As per the agreements with the company, no rental payment can be made in case there is no billing or the store is closed due to agitation, Walia added. "We are all Punjabis and fully support



the farmers, but such forced closure of Reliance's stores is only harming Punjab, as Reliance procures a lot of products locally, provides huge direct and indirect employment to Punjabis and pays huge taxes to the state. "No corporate would be interested to invest in the state if they are not allowed to operate peacefully," said Dharampal Singh Nain from Jagraon.

Nirmal Singh from Jalandhar said, "We have borrowed loans and invested all our hard earned money in the properties, but such forced closure is ruining us."

He added that the stores are open in all other states. "But in Punjab, farmers are not allowing to open even those stores which are under essential services, so we are here to request the CM for help."

sED Allowed To Record Gautam Navlakha's Statement In News Portal Case

Gautam Navlakha is currently lodged in Taloja Jail in neighbouring Navi Mumbai.

A special NIA court on Wednesday allowed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to record a statement of activist Gautam Navlakha, arrested in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, in its money laundering probe against Newslick, a news website.

Mr Navlakha is currently lodged in Taloja Jail in neighbouring Navi Mumbai.

The ED had filed an application before the special National



Investigation Agency court seeking to record his statement

in a Prevention of Money Laundering Act case filed against the website.

Judge D E Kothalikar granted the agency's plea.

Following a First Information Report (FIR) registered by Delhi Police against Newslick, the ED registered a money laundering case against the portal with regard to suspicious foreign funding.

In February this year, the ED raided the website's office and

properties of its promoters in Delhi.

Mr Navlakha is among several activists arrested in connection with Elgar Parishad, a conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017. Pune Police had claimed that inflammatory speeches at the event triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon-Bhima war memorial, and the conclave had been backed by Maoists. The case was later taken over by the NIA.

Robinhood slapped with biggest-ever penalty by Wall Street regulator

Robinhood is being ordered to pay about \$70 million for harming millions of customers. It's the largest penalty ever imposed by Wall Street's self-regulator.

The controversial trading app was accused Wednesday by the Financial Industrial Regulatory Authority of "systemic supervisory failures" and hurting investors by giving them "false or misleading information."

FINRA's sanctions on Robinhood focus on large-scale system outages that hit the platform in March 2020 as well as the options trading

procedures at the heart of a lawsuit filed by the family of a 20-



year-old Robinhood trader who died by suicide last year. "The fine imposed in this matter, the

highest ever levied by FINRA, reflects the scope and



seriousness of Robinhood's violations," Jessica Hopper, head of FINRA's department of

enforcement, said in a statement.

FINRA fined Robinhood \$57 million and ordered the startup to pay about \$12.6 million in restitution, plus interest, to thousands of harmed customers. Robinhood neither admitted to nor denied the charges.

Alluding to Robinhood's Silicon Valley roots, Hooper said that compliance with FINRA's rules "is not optional" and can't be sacrificed by a willingness to "break things" and fix them later. In a statement, Robinhood noted that it has heavily invested in improving the platform's stability,

educational offerings, customer support and legal teams. "We are glad to put this matter behind us and look forward to continuing to focus on our customers and democratizing finance for all," a Robinhood spokesperson said in the statement.

'False and misleading' FINRA said that "despite Robinhood's self-described mission to 'de-mystify finance for all,' its investigation found that the startup has "negligently communicated false and misleading information" related to critical issues since September 2016.

Is there methane on Mars? Scientists close to solving mystery of the gas on Red Planet

While the Curiosity rover had identified methane on the surface, Europe's orbiter hovering over it could not notice any trace in the atmosphere.



methane in the atmosphere of Mars are of great interest since the gas is recognised as a potential biosignature for microbes to flourish.

WHY HAS METHANE BAFFLED SCIENTISTS?

On Earth, a significant amount of methane is produced by microbes that help most livestock digest plants. Therefore, its potential presence on a planet 300 million kilometres away has created excitement. The presence of methane on Mars could imply that microbes were, or are, living on the Red Planet. However, there are chances that methane on Mars could have nothing to do with microbes or any other biology and could have been produced by geological processes that involve the interaction of rocks, water, and heat. While its presence is exciting, its detection by one instrument while no trace on the

other has been a cause of concern. The Tunable Laser Spectrometer (TLS) instrument onboard Curiosity had measured less than one-half part per billion in volume of methane on average in Gale crater. "That's equivalent to about a pinch of salt diluted in an Olympic-size swimming pool," Nasa said in a statement. However, the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter hasn't detected any methane higher in the Martian atmosphere. Some scientists had suggested that the rover might itself be releasing the gas as it moved ahead crushing rocks and due to the degradation of its wheels. However, a deep analysis of the machine showed no such chemical reaction happening as Curiosity moved about.

DIFFERENCES IN METHANE CONCENTRATION DURING DAY AND NIGHT

Now scientists have studied the

discrepancy between methane measurements by analysing the time at which the readings are taken. The rover's TLS operates mostly at night when no other Curiosity instruments are working. The Martian atmosphere is calm at night and so methane seeping from the ground builds up near the surface where Curiosity can detect it, scientists observed. However, the orbiter requires sunlight to pinpoint methane about 5 kilometres above the surface. The heat from the Sun churns the atmosphere as warm air rises and cool air sinks. Therefore, the methane that is confined near the surface at night is mixed into the broader atmosphere during the day, which dilutes it to undetectable levels. This leads to no reading on the orbiter. Scientists are now looking at solving why methane is not present in the Martian atmosphere which is 95 per cent carbon dioxide. "Experiments are underway to test whether very low-level electric discharges induced by dust in the Martian atmosphere could destroy methane, or whether abundant oxygen at the Martian surface quickly destroys methane before it can reach the upper atmosphere," Nasa said in a statement.

Asian, tropical coastlines most vulnerable to rising seas: Study

Tropical nations will face more coastal inundation from a rise in sea levels due to climate change than other countries, according to new research that also more than doubles the number of people estimated to be impacted. Using land elevation data gathered by laser pulses beamed by satellite to Earth, scientists identified coastal areas low enough to make them vulnerable to a one-meter rise in sea level - a level the world is on track to see by 2100. Higher water levels will likely lead to more



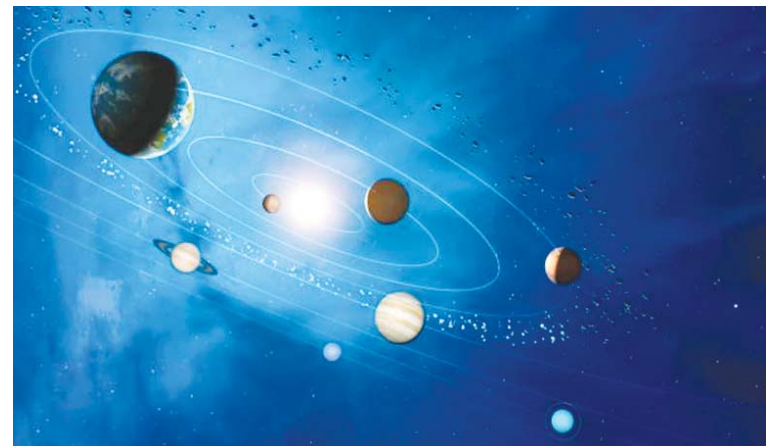
damage and disruption from flooding and storm surges. The team found that 62% of these low-lying areas were located in the tropics, with a third of the total in Asia, said the study, which was published on Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications. Today, those vulnerable lands - at elevations that are less than two meters above sea level - comprise

about 1 million square kilometres (386,000 square miles) and are home to 267 million people, the team found. As sea levels rise, the total amount of vulnerable land could reach 1.46 million square kilometres by 2100, an area on which some 410 people live

exacerbated by land subsidence, as major cities including Jakarta and Bangkok pull water up from underground aquifers. Forest loss can also make it harder for land to absorb rainfall. "There are also man-made factors like loss of forests, drainage for agriculture, poor urban planning that is driving land subsidence," said study co-author Aljosja Hooijer, an environmental scientist at a Dutch research institute, Deltares, and the National University of Singapore. The study is the first to use topographic data collected using laser technology for more granular elevation data worldwide at a half-meter scale. That yielded estimates for how many people are living in flood-risk zones that are much higher than previous studies based on radar measurements with a 25-meter resolution.

today. Already, the global average sea level is rising at more than 3 millimeters per year, accelerating as global warming melts glaciers and polar ice and expands the oceans. **VULNERABLE** The tropics are particularly vulnerable, with a large number of low-lying river deltas and strong tropical storms. For some Asian regions, sea level rise is being

World Asteroid Day 2021: Know about the Tunguska impact that raised threat levels from space



Near-Earth Objects (NEO) flying at intense speeds and passing through Earth or at times hitting the upper atmosphere have always been a source of curiosity for scientists and non-scientists alike. While these objects are a source of information and could have mineral potential, their potentially hazardous effects outweigh their benefits at times. In a bid to create awareness about the threat posed by these objects, the International Asteroid Day is observed every year on June 30. The day is observed to "raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard and to

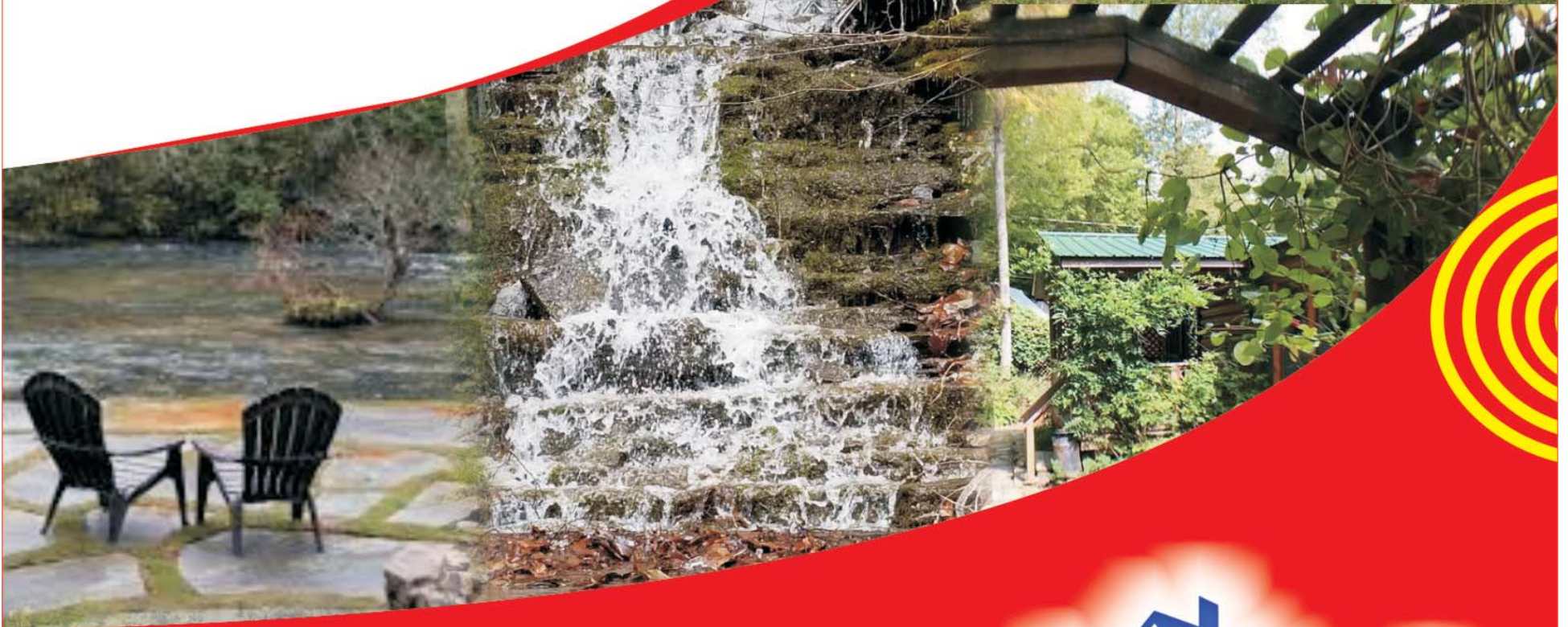
inform the public about the crisis communication actions to be taken at the global level in case of a credible near-Earth object threat."

WHAT IS AN ASTEROID?

Asteroids are rocky fragments left over from the formation of the solar system about 4.6 billion years ago. According to the Nasa Joint Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which tracks asteroid movement, an asteroid is classified as an NEO when its distance from our planet is less than 1.3 times the distance from Earth to the Sun (the Earth-Sun distance is about 93 million miles).

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A New Darkness Falls on the Trump Movement

It was 6 a.m. in Cleveland. I had spent the night trying to sleep stretched out across three chairs in the baggage claim at the airport and was wearing the same sweaty, grass-stained sundress I'd worn at the Donald Trump rally from the night before, when a familiar face sat down next to me on the flight back to Washington, D.C. There was Marjorie Taylor Greene sporting camo shorts and rhinestone bracelets, sipping a green Monster Energy drink. Hours earlier, the Georgia lawmaker and CrossFit devotee had delivered a stemwinder that made Trump's own stream-of-consciousness remarks seem subdued in comparison.

"I saw you speak at the rally last night," I said, my eyes bloodshot and my forehead leathery from baking in the June sun the day before.

"Oh?" Greene perked up, before quickly deflating when I informed her I was a reporter. "You [the media] don't treat me very fairly." My days aren't normally quite this ... unusual. But it seemed oddly appropriate given the moment. Trump's reemergence on the political scene is promising to spark a seismic disruption to America's political system bigger than the one he caused when he came down his gilded escalator six years ago. Where once his supporters were hopeful, they now seemed aggrieved. The crowds are more frenzied, the conspiracies more fantastical, the cast of characters more outlandish.

That includes Greene, a freshman congresswoman from exurban Atlanta and self-

described QAnon repentant who - just six months in office - has managed to get expelled from her committees and nearly censured for comparing mask-wearing to the Holocaust. A resume like that would, in past times, relegate her to the fringes of her party. But, on our chat home, she explained just how central she is set to become in the Trump comeback narrative.

The former president, she said, had personally invited her to the rally and, schedule permitting, she planned to attend his upcoming events across the country this summer.

Greene is an unapologetic type, which goes some way to explaining why she is appreciated by Trump - a man loath to ever admit fault or apologize. On stage, he praised her as "loved and respected, tough, smart and kind."

During our flight home, she explained her penchant for making controversial statements as a byproduct of her northwest Georgia upbringing: that's just how people talk back home. She said she felt the media has given her, a mom and businesswoman, an unfair shake, though the controversy that surrounds her is often of her own making - like the time she attracted headlines for agreeing with people who said the Parkland massacre was a "false-flag planned shooting." She told me she continues to believe the 2020 election was stolen, though its validity has been proven time and again.

She never once asked to go off record as I sat there, in our row, half asleep and half awake. It had been a long 24 hours.

Earlier that day, I had traveled to the Lorain County fairgrounds in rural northeast Ohio to cover Trump's first true post-presidential rally. The events tend to resemble a cross between a NASCAR tailgate and a traveling circus. Vendors from states far away come to sell their MAGA hats and Trump T-shirts. There are die-hard fans who camp out days before to get a prime position. Strangers give each other high-fives and honk their car horns as they pass houses flying Trump, or now, "F--- Biden" flags. On Saturday evening, Trump had come to town to support congressional candidate Max Miller, a former White House aide who gained his endorsement partly because he was a loyal foot soldier willing to take on Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, one of the 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump following the Jan. 6 Capitol riot. But no one seemed to care about any of that. Few of the attendees registered any opinion on the congressional race. Two people I interviewed from the 16th District didn't even know who Gonzalez or Miller were. Instead, they wanted to hear from Trump; and, if not him, then the supporting cast of allies who have eagerly fed the fraud that the 2020 election was stolen, ripped from the hands of voters like them.

MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, a Trump confidant and donor who has pushed conspiracy theories about the election so wild that he is now the defendant in a multimillion dollar defamation lawsuit by Dominion Voting Systems, was greeted like a veritable rock star. Wearing a suit

and tie, sweat glistening off his face, he posed for selfies with fans, as they screamed out "hero!" at his mere passing by. Lindell may have been one of the evening's main actors, but the play itself was a fantasy about last November.

On stage, a math teacher from Cincinnati gave a bizarre PowerPoint presentation to a patient audience that squinted in the sun to see slides of squiggly lines he said amounted to evidence of widespread, coordinated election fraud. He used his fuzzy math to prove Trump actually won the election, and the audience nodded along. When it was Greene's turn to speak, she asked the audience, "Who is your president?" "Trump!," they replied, even though the year is 2021 and Joe Biden occupies the White House. Not that the crowd needed much convincing. I asked Richard Stachurski, a resident of Wellington, Ohio, if he wanted Trump to run in 2024. "How do you run for president if you're already president?" he replied. When he finally took the stage, Trump attacked Biden's policies and became animated when he pivoted to the past, talking about his negotiations with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un and his plans for a border wall.

There was a familiarity to it all. The chants of "4 MORE YEARS!" and "LOCK HIM UP!" (this time, aimed at infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci instead of former campaign rival Hillary Clinton). The recitation of the sinister poem, "The Snake."

And yet, there were signs this rally was different. During past

rallies, Trump's supporters applauded Trump as he trashed immigrants, demonized the media, and echoed his calls to lock up his opponents. But they also felt hopeful the real estate magnate was giving them a voice.

There was a sense that this charismatic outsider would empower them to change Washington, and a joyfulness that came with being part of a movement. Now, they felt cheated. "WE THE PEOPLE ARE PISSED OFF," one popular rally T-shirt read. Their champion was no longer in office, which means he had been stripped of any real power. It seemed to feed a sense of desperation, even from Trump himself. "The subject matter is somewhat depressing," he said of his own speech. In all, Trump spoke for more than 95 minutes, and after the rally was over, supporters marched back to their cars. In the distance, the bright lights of the rally that read "SAVE AMERICA AGAIN" and a lit-up fairground french fries truck painted a dusky dreamscape redolent of Edward Hopper. "Gloria," the one-hit-wonder disco song about a woman driven to insanity because of a man, could be heard blaring from the speakers.

"Are the voices in your head calling, Gloria?"

People sang along.

It was time for us all to go home. And so I did, to the hotel I assumed I had booked. But when I arrived, the receptionist couldn't find my reservation number. And after calling every hotel in the area, I resigned myself to the fact that a few hours in bed just wasn't going to happen.

One Man's Quest to Break Open the Secretive World of American Voting Machines



When President Donald Trump began spreading the conspiracy theories about why Joe Biden beat him in November's election, he swung at all the glitzy targets: The media, Democrats, China. But he saved his most spectacular accusations for a more obscure and implausible target: The companies that make America's voting machines. Over the winter, Trump publicly harangued Dominion Voting, a small company with a headquarters in Denver, and another company called Smartmatic, which barely has a footprint in the United States. Week after week, Trump's lawyers cast them as the hub of a grandiose conspiracy to alter the vote, one machine at a time.

The wonky set of experts and academics who actually study U.S. voting infrastructure watched in shock. It was obvious the Big Lie about the election was patently absurd. And when it came to voting machines, it was also ironic: Precisely thanks to the serious efforts of Trump's own Department of Homeland Security, the 2020 contest was, at least technologically speaking, the most secure election in modern history.

Yet these experts also understood that voting companies were an easy mark for a reason. By just about any measure, they are some of the murkiest and inscrutable firms in the civilian private sector. Relative to their importance to society, few technology sectors are less well-understood than the voting systems market in the U.S. It is an industry funded entirely by taxpayers, and administered mostly by private equity, on whose work

democracy completely depends—and which even committed analysts have struggled to understand. Last year on Capitol Hill, when CEOs from each of the three major voting companies testified before Congress, then-Rep. Susan Davis, a Democrat from California, asked each of

and sell it.

Long before 2020, experts have been concerned, even flummoxed, by the voting-machine industry. One of them is Lee Bollinger, the president of Columbia University. In 2017, Bollinger co-chaired a commission by the National Academies of Sciences to study reforms to America's election system. "The discussion about voting machines was fairly striking to me," Bollinger said, recalling the early sessions in which he first grappled with the private industry. "I could tell from the beginning—and this may not be an entirely appropriate metaphor—but the kind of 'black box' quality to this whole arena was a mystery to me. A puzzle." What was going on in the black box? In the end, even Bollinger's commission would not quite crack it open. "That struck me



them if they could share their annual profits. All three declined. As one CEO, Tom Burt of ES&S, politely explained, "Congresswoman, we're a private company, so we'll keep that information private."

As 2020 fades, a growing vanguard of academics, good-government advocates and even Silicon Valley executives are turning their attention from the security of voting technology toward the companies who build

as strange," Bollinger sighed. "I mean, it's sort of demanding of an explanation."

Someone did have an explanation. It wasn't a White House lawyer, or a senator, or the chair of a Washington commission. Instead, it was a student at the University of Pennsylvania named Matthew Caulfield.

Caulfield grew up in Ocean City, N.J., where he attended public schools. In seventh grade, he

calmly decided he would go to Wharton, the prestigious business school. Seven years later, that's precisely what he did. He arrived on campus with an interest in investment banking. But by the end of sophomore year, Caulfield found himself drawn to policy. In 2014, he took an unusual internship at Third Way in Washington, where he co-authored one of the early policy papers on a quirky phenomenon called Bitcoin. In a school full of whiz kids, Caulfield was a Whiz Kid, graduating summa cum laude.

During the final semester of his senior year, he inherited a puzzle that would torment him for five years. In a public policy seminar, Caulfield's professor assigned his students a research project: How big, precisely, was the U.S. elections industry? It was the kind of assignment that was routine at Wharton, where students frequently were told to evaluate, say, the international market for coffee beans. "It was supposed to be a one-semester thing," Caulfield recalled. "Easy." Caulfield began to consume all the information he could. He learned the history of what happened after Bush v. Gore. Following that fiasco, Congress poured billions into state coffers to upgrade their voting machines. After the flood came the famine, and when the money dried up, the private market began a dramatic consolidation. Big firms gobbled up the smaller ones, until 20 years later, the number of major companies had whittled down to three: ES&S in Nebraska, Hart InterCivic in Texas, and Dominion, whose main headquarters is based in Canada. Today, these companies control just under 90 percent of the American market. All three were majority-owned by private equity companies—Staple Street Capital, Enlightenment Capital and McCarthy Capital. But their business model was unlike any Caulfield had seen before. They sold voting technology to their customers more or less individually, servicing the 3,000-odd small-budgeted counties and jurisdictions around the United States, one clerk at a time. Although their products were complex and vitally important, and used by governments

nationwide, their model looked more like door-to-door globe salesmen than a sizable technology manufacturer.

After huddling together, the Wharton students agreed on a plan. Step One would be to size up the market, in order to get "the basic lay of the land," as Caulfield put it. Then they would regroup.

Just as quickly as it began, however, Step One took a turn for the strange. That week, Caulfield and his classmates hit a brick wall: "We couldn't find anything."

The first sign something was amiss came when they started making phone calls. It was protocol for students to call up a company directly to discuss the state of their industry. In response, executives usually leapt at such a chance—a great way for a small coffee-bean producer to get noticed by the likes of Wharton. Caulfield had never encountered companies that appeared as if they didn't want to be noticed. When he contacted election vendors, seeking an interview, he was essentially ignored, or in some cases given a pro forma hearing before being politely stonewalled. As a Plan B, the students queried PricewaterhouseCoopers, the big consulting firm. But they didn't have any information on the companies, either. In a stroke of creativity, Caulfield made a public records request to the state of Maryland, seeking the financial history documents provided by the state's voting machine vendor, ES&S. "That way, I could know their revenues, their costs, across a couple of years," he explained. From this, he was able to glean a single breadcrumb: the number of full-time employees. The rest of the key data, contained in the all-important financial history portion, came back with every figure redacted. It began to dawn on Caulfield, slowly at first, that the amount the public didn't know about these companies was vast. Quarterly profits, regional market share, R&D budgets, even the number of employees—often, there was simply nothing. "Basic, basic data—the basic layout of the industry—was just not out there," Caulfield recalls. "Eventually, we realized that it didn't exist."

Putin: U.S. and Britain both behind Black Sea 'provocation'



The episode was the latest to raise tensions between Russia and the West since Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014

was making a routine journey through an internationally recognized travel lane and remained in Ukrainian waters. The U.K., like most of the world, recognizes Crimea as part of Ukraine despite the peninsula's annexation by Russia.

Putin charged that the U.S. aircraft's apparent mission was to monitor the Russian military's response to the British destroyer. "It was clearly a provocation, a complex one involving not only the British but also the Americans," he said, adding that Moscow was aware of the U.S. intentions and responded accordingly to avoid revealing sensitive data.

The Russian leader lamented that the move closely followed his summit with U.S. President Joe Biden in Geneva earlier this month. "Why would they make such provocations?" he said. Putin insisted that Russia would firmly defend its territory.

"We are fighting for ourselves and our future on our own territory," he said. "It's not us who traveled thousands of kilometers (miles) to come to them, it's them who have come to our borders and violated our territorial waters."

Putin emphasized that Moscow is concerned about NATO troops

coming to Ukraine for training, reaffirming that a permanent Western military presence on the Ukrainian territory would challenge Russia's vital interests and represent a red line.

He also reiterated, as he often does, that there is a close kinship between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, but accused the Ukrainian leadership of being hostile towards Russia. Putin expressed doubt about the value of a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, describing him as a Western pawn. "Why meet Zelenskyy if he has put his country under full foreign control and key issues for Ukraine are decided not in Kyiv but in Washington, and, to a certain extent, Paris and Berlin?" Putin asked. Earlier this year, Russia beefed up its forces near Ukraine and warned Kyiv that it could intervene if they tried to use force to reclaim the areas in the east controlled by Russia-backed separatists since conflict there erupted in 2014. Moscow later pulled back some of its troops, but the Ukrainian authorities said that the bulk of them have remained close to the border.

The Russian president spent most of the four-hour marathon call-in show speaking about

domestic issues - as is typical for the tightly choreographed annual rite that helps Putin polish the image of a strong leader caring for people's needs. It didn't feature any questions about Russia's beleaguered opposition and the most prominent of Putin's political foes, Alexei Navalny, who is in prison.

He voiced hope that the country could avoid a nationwide lockdown amid a surge of new infections. Coronavirus deaths in Russia hit a new daily record Wednesday, with the authorities reporting 669, but Putin argued that decisions by local authorities in a number of regions who made vaccination mandatory for some workers should help contain the new wave. Russia has been registering over 20,000 new coronavirus cases and around 600 deaths every day since last Thursday. Russian officials have blamed the surge, which started in early June, on Russians' lax attitude toward taking necessary precautions, the growing prevalence of more infectious variants and low vaccine uptake, which experts attribute to widespread vaccine hesitancy and limited production capacity. Although Russia was among the first countries to announce and deploy a coronavirus vaccine, just over 15% of the population has received at least one shot. Amid this hesitancy, Putin revealed that he chose the domestically developed Sputnik V for his vaccination. Putin got his first coronavirus shot in late March out of the public eye and has remained tight-lipped about which vaccine out of three developed in Russia that were available at the time he chose. Amid the surge, about 20 Russian regions - from Moscow and St. Petersburg to the remote far-eastern region of Sakhalin - have made vaccinations mandatory this month for employees in certain sectors. Turning to other issues, Putin said the Russian authorities have no intention of banning Western social media platforms but emphasized that the government merely wants them to abide by Russian laws, promptly remove inappropriate content and open offices in Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft was operating in sync with a British destroyer last week when the ship sailed through the Black Sea in what he described as a "provocation" to test Moscow's response.

Moscow said one of its warships fired warning shots and a warplane dropped bombs in the path of Britain's Defender on June 23 to force it from an area near Crimea that Moscow claims as its territorial waters. Britain insisted its ship wasn't fired upon and said it was sailing in Ukrainian waters.

The episode was the latest to raise tensions between Russia and the West since Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014, a move not recognized by most countries but one that gives it access to a long

Black Sea coast.

The U.S. Defense Department had no immediate comment Wednesday on Putin's claim that one of its aircraft was with the British ship last week.

Asked if the events could have triggered World War III, Putin responded that the West wouldn't risk a full-scale conflict.

"Even if we sank that ship, it wouldn't put the world on the brink of World War III because those who do it know that they can't emerge as winners in that war, and it's very important," Putin said during his annual live call-in show when Russians ask him questions. Russian officials have warned that if a Western warship enters the waters again, the military could fire to hit. Since it annexed Crimea, Russia has chafed at NATO warships visiting the area as destabilizing.

Britain has insisted the Defender

The Power of the Muted Reaction to Derek Chauvin's Sentencing

The good news is self-evident: Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced on Friday to 22-and-a-half years for the murder of George Floyd. Given the overwhelming evidence of Chauvin's guilt, and the evident heartlessness with which he committed the act, the prison time he received for the crime should not be remarkable. But, of course, it is, because Chauvin was a white police officer who, in the course of arresting Floyd, a Black man, killed him.

For most of our history, Black people getting killed or injured during encounters with white police officers was commonplace to the point of being unremarkable. Officers were rarely charged and tried or, when they were, almost never got convicted. Thanks in part to the

steady rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the graphic video footage of Floyd's murder viewed around the world, the long racial lethargy around police killings has broken. One result was Chauvin's trial, conviction and now sentencing. Chauvin didn't get the 40 years sought by the prosecution, but neither did he get probation.

The point is that he will suffer consequences for what he did, and this seemingly obvious outcome counts as progress. Justice, at least this time, was not denied. Because of this, there was no protest following the sentencing. And that's progress, too. It's worth pausing to mark the muted reaction to this moment - it is, if not exactly a first, striking nonetheless.

The calm that's greeted the Chauvin sentencing stands in

contrast to the explosion in 1992 in the wake of the acquittal of all four Los Angeles officers who brutally beat Black motorist Rodney King, the first and most famous incident of police brutality to be captured on video. That verdict touched off historic days off civil unrest in L.A., not really because it surprised Black people but because it infuriated them. For them, the King verdict was yet another insult added to injury - literally, in King's case - and the anger about police misconduct that had simmered for years erupted into rage. The spontaneous protests, fires and looting were a catharsis, but also a demand for change.

The country did not rise to that moment. The soul-searching prompted by the '92 unrest was ultimately overridden by a mounting fear of urban danger -

drugs, violence and gangs, all attributed to Black and brown people in big cities. The desire for racial healing proved not nearly as strong as a need for increased law and order, and cops played a key role in that. For many white people, King's beating and the exoneration of the officers were unfortunate, and even wrong, but they didn't constitute obvious systemic racism or justify anything so drastic as defunding police departments. Indeed, change ran the other way: tougher sentencing, more prison time for nonviolent offenders, the wholesale embrace of incarceration as punitive but necessary - and seemingly unlimited. Last year, the country found itself in a very different place. The protests following Floyd's murder in May 2020 were also angry, born of frustration.

Overdraft Fees Are Big Money for Small Banks

Once upon a time, if you tried swiping your debit card to buy something and your bank account was empty what happened was simple: Nothing. The register denied your payment. This happened all the time, particularly to Americans living paycheck-to-paycheck. Then banks figured out that they could cover the overdraft for their customers with little risk and charge quite a lot for the service. It is hard for people to keep track of just how much is in their bank account, particularly since deposits including direct deposits can take days to post to the account.

Overdraft fees can be high, often \$35, sometimes charged for each swipe of your debit card when you are out of money. This fee has become big money for banks, generating more than \$31 billion in revenues in 2020. It has also become a major cost for tens of millions of families: One out of eleven Americans spends \$350 or more a year in overdraft fees. Overdraft is one of many reasons why it is expensive to be poor in America.

Overdrafts are bigger business for some banks than others. JPMorgan Chase collected the most of any bank, more than \$2 billion in 2019, which works out to more than \$35 in overdraft fees per account. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) called JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon "star of the overdraft show" at a recent Senate hearing. Even when compared to other big banks, JPMorgan Chase earns a lot more in overdraft; Citibank, by contrast, averaged just over \$5 per account.

But stopping the analysis with the largest banks misses an important reality: A handful of smaller banks are the true overdraft giants.

I began researching bank overdraft fees several years ago in an effort to understand how our slow system for processing payments affects lower-income earners and how it contributes to the bottom line of different financial institutions. My research uncovered that a small number of small banks make almost all their profit thanks to overdraft. These banks are running a business model more akin to a check casher than a bank.

According to my calculations, for



multiple years running, at least six small banks depend on overdraft revenue for a majority of their profits. For three of those banks, overdraft revenues have exceeded total profits for each of the past two years - meaning these banks lost money from banking, except for charging overdraft fees.

For the largest banks, overdraft is a lot of money in aggregate, but a small share of their total profit. Even for JPMorgan Chase, overdraft revenue amounted to 7 percent of total profit; for Bank of America it was 6 percent; and for Citibank it was less than 1 percent.

Tiny Woodforest National Bank, on the other hand, which has only 5 percent as many customers as Citibank, manages to generate much more revenue in overdraft fees - an astonishing \$135 per account, almost 24 times as much as Citibank and almost 4 times as much as JPMorgan Chase.

Why do some banks generate so much more in overdraft revenue than others? It's well known that a small number of consumers account for the vast amount of overdrafts; 8 percent of bank customers account for almost 75 percent of all overdraft revenue, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Targeting those specific users would seem to be the business model for Woodforest and others. Woodforest locates most of its branches at discount stores like Walmart. Armed Forces Bank averages \$152 in overdraft fees per account, in part by targeting

lower-income, enlisted military personnel as customers; financial stress is listed more frequently than any other family issue by veterans and military spouses among major causes of stress. Differences in customer base seem unlikely to explain what is going on among the largest banks, however. It is hard to see how JPMorgan Chase's customer base (over 60 million deposit accounts) would vary significantly from Bank of America (almost 113 million). Here the more likely reason for the banks' differing dependency on overdraft fees has to do with the type of accounts being offered, how they are promoted and other bank-specific overdraft policies.

Why does Citibank generate so much less overdraft revenue than other big banks? One reason is that Citibank does not allow overdrafts at ATMs; customers are told they don't have sufficient funds in their account. Citibank also aggressively promotes bank accounts that do not allow for overdraft. These accounts, which meet the general criteria outlined by the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund's "Bank On" certification system for low-cost no-overdraft bank accounts, are estimated to comprise 1 of every 5 new accounts at Citibank. In other words, a bank's business decisions make a big difference in whether customers pay hefty overdraft fees.

Defending his institution, Dimon stated that JPMorgan Chase waived some overdraft fees to consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic. That helps explain

why bank overdraft revenue dropped across the industry in 2020, falling by nearly 50 percent. This decline surprised many (including me), as the Covid recession devastated millions of families.

But there likely is more than bank fee waivers going on. Federal relief (such as Covid stimulus payments and enhanced unemployment insurance), decreases in expenses from remote work (like parking and dry cleaning) and increased certainty in expenses combined with control over the timing (eating at home versus eating out) could have all played a role in reducing overdrafts last year. But absent major change, there's no reason to think that the amount of overdraft fees charged to consumers will not continue to rise.

It is ludicrous to have a banking system where people living on the financial edge pay high fees that de facto subsidize "free checking" for those who always have \$1,000 or so to maintain a minimum balance. Banks are chartered by the government because they serve a public function and agree to abide by certain rules as a result. Our banking system should work to help people accumulate wealth and personal financial stability, not erode it.

How can we fix this and put the overdraft genie back in the bottle? Industry is taking some important steps. Wells Fargo announced a new initiative to increase awareness about its Bank On accounts, while PNC unveiled a sophisticated new tool designed

to allow consumers to reduce their likelihood of overdrafting and, importantly, give customers a grace period of 24 hours to bring their account back above zero. Ally bank has announced it was eliminating overdraft altogether. The American Bankers Association recently urged all banks to offer Bank On accounts as a best practice. A paper coauthored by the largest banking and credit union trade associations also found that "the Bank On program has achieved remarkable success."

Congress and bank regulators should turn these best practices into a requirement: All banks should be required to offer a low cost, no overdraft account to any consumer who wants one. These accounts can be profitable for banks, as Citibank demonstrates, and frankly, they should be considered a requirement for any publicly chartered institution.

Credit unions should also be required to do the same. Credit unions are supposed to be nonprofits focused on their members, but little is known about credit union overdraft practices, since they are exempt from reporting overdraft data. Many credit unions have been sued with allegations of abusive overdraft practices, and absent public data, it's impossible to know just how good or bad their practices are.

The larger problem, of course, is that bank regulators have done nothing about this problem for a long time.

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency regulates both the largest national banks and most of the smaller overdraft giants I've uncovered in my research. The OCC has continually allowed banks that are dependent on overdraft fees for a majority of their profits to be given passing regulatory grades. Instead, the OCC should put those banks on strict regulatory lockdown to reform their ways or be put out of business. The Federal Reserve, FDIC and National Credit Union Administration need to crack down on institutions they regulate who behave similarly. Because banks with assets under \$2 billions are not required to disclose how much they collect in overdraft fees, no one knows the full depth of this problem.

'Kamikaze' Terror Drones Now A Tactical Weapon With Strategic Impact



On 27th June 2021, India woke up to acknowledgement of a new weapon introduced in cross border low intensity conflict being waged by Pakistan for decades now. The Air Force Station in Jammu was subjected to two explosions, caused by IEDs (Improvised Explosive Device) dropped by drones flying over the station, within a period of six minutes, injuring two AF personnel and ripping a hole in the roof of one of the buildings. The DG of J&K police DGP Dilbag Singh has given a hint that Lashkar-E-Taiba, Pakistan based terror outfit, could be the one behind it. As media cameramen jumped over each other to get the same

repetitive shot of AF station gate whole day and anchors in studios turned into drone warfare specialists, the investigating agencies rushed to start their investigations to gauge impact, origin and modus operandi. This single attack, though not much in damage and injuries, sent reverberations down the spine of security forces when they realized their helplessness against this new tactic and weapon. While we have state of the art radars that can pick up an enemy aircraft the moment it takes off from its base, sadly we do not have anything to detect these cheap, light weight and low flying devils. Drones have been in international news for a while now, given the American

propensity to take out specific human targets and bases with super precision using them. But these are high cost, high altitude and long flying hours UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) that carry either devastating and lethal precision bombs or surveillance equipment. American RQ 170 Sentinel and MQ 9 Reaper are examples of these capabilities. Just couple of weeks back, in Jun 2021, US finally tested MQ 25 Stingray for Air to Air refueling. India has been operating flights of Heron, Rustom etc and plans to buy 30 MQ 9 Reapers from US/s company General Atomics for 3 Bn USD. But all these are conventional military grade Drones that are extremely costly and limited. Whereas the weapon of choice for Jammu attack was a low cost, easily available and non-regulated drone, which can be bought by almost anyone from open market or online from e commerce sites. The threat is real and mature. These petty flying and hovering machines can achieve a lot, given their capability to pass through defences undetected. In 'Kamikaze' roles, they can wreak havoc by

crashing into positions laden with explosives and can easily take out few soldiers huddled together, an unarmored vehicle, a radar or even an aircraft. The damage may not be huge but can be very precise and lethal in that limited range of blast. These drones are 3-4 feet at max and never be detected on high capability radars deployed on international borders, LoC and LAC in Anti-Aircraft and Anti-Missile roles. Using them for surveillance is not the best use of them because their capabilities lie in stealth and quick attacks and not hovering over heads for long time. Also, they will not be equipped with costly cameras given their vulnerability to ground forces fire if detected. Hence, we can safely assume that the only role they will be deployed is dropping explosives or diving down with suicidal tendencies. The sudden reaction to this attack is everyone clamoring for buying anti drone system called SMASH 2000 from Israel. It is a rifle mounted system that can be aimed at the drone, tracks it through its sights and enables the soldier to fire on the UAV, thus destroying it. On May 30 2020, US Department of Defence posted images of US

fighters in Syria testing SMASH sights on static and Drone based targets and the results were tremendously positive. However, even if the technical and on ground data supports the theory of giving SMASH systems to Indian soldiers against drone attacks, we still have to figure out, how and where do we distribute them. India shares nearly 750 km of Line of control with Pakistan, that's part of nearly 3300 km border. Where Israel has limited border challenges and more or less definite zones from which threat emanates, India does not have such luxury. We have infiltration, terrorists operating within India, Sleeper cells, Over and Underground supporters of terrorism, smugglers and what not. The attack on Jammu, most probably was carried out by someone operating the drone from within Indian territory. The International border is around 14 kilometers from the Airport, and it would require a high powered drone to carry this payload, drop it and go back.

The Republic Of Hunger

The Government of India has resorted to introducing grand-sounding schemes intended to hide the Union's pathetic performance on feeding the poor during the period of Covid.

In a publication from which I have borrowed this title, Prof. Utsa Patnaik after comparing cereal intakes in contemporary India to the colonial period found that hunger had deepened. These findings would probably be even more true today. India has become the hunger capital of the world surpassing the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa put together. What an indictment for the largest democracy in the world claiming to have a GDP of about 6% and having in its granaries 100 million tons of rice, wheat, and millets, the highest reserves ever. Instead of opening the granaries and feeding everyone seeking food, the Government of India has resorted to introducing grand-sounding schemes intended to hide the Union's pathetic performance on feeding the poor during the period of Covid. For example, section 4 of The National Food Security Act, 2013 mandates that "every pregnant woman and lactating mother shall be entitled to

maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000". This was enacted because of the high levels of maternal and child mortality, child malnutrition, stunting, and wasting in children. This amount goes towards supplementing nutrition during the critical period of childbirth. 2.4 crore women become pregnant every year. Thus the allocation and disbursement of maternity benefits ought to be 14,400 crores. This section of the Act was never implemented. Deliberately so. The 2020-2021 budget allocated only 2500 crores and the expenditure was in the region of fewer than 1300 crores covering less than 20% of eligible women. God knows how many poor women and children died or became severely malnourished during the period of the Covid. Then the conditionalities imposed were the last nail in the coffin. Pregnant women less than 18 years were excluded even though the victims of child marriages needed nutrition the most. The Union restricted this maternity benefit to the

firstborn as if other children did not need nutrition. The benefit was reduced despite the clear requirement in the statute from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 5,000. Another condition was that the delivery had to be institutional, but only 79% of births are institutional. For deliveries at home in remote parts of the country, no maternity benefit was paid. If the woman did not register the pregnancy during the first 3 months she was excluded. If the birth was not registered the woman was excluded. Registration in India stands at 72%. Thus a large section of women mostly poor and illiterate are today excluded from maternity benefits despite a wonderful statute. Then the cruelest act of them all; Government of India closed down 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres even though they ought to have been exempted from the lockdown being an essential service. 10 crore pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children up to 6 years found



themselves without hot cooked meals. They had to make do with miserable "dry rations" erratically supplied. Then the Union closed down the midday meals for 12 crores school-going children despite the decision of the Supreme Court in the Swaraj Abhiyan case that such meals should be given even when the schools are closed to all children including children of migrant workers. The war against hunger became a war of the State against the hungry. How many of the poor died due to lack of food when the granaries were full? Who was responsible for this terrible crime of causing death by withholding food? Will they ever be identified for this mass crime? Will

they ever be punished? While the government followed its usual strategies in Court to muddy the waters by referring to multiple new-fangled schemes diverting attention from the Food Security Act, the Courts in India were almost uniformly ineffective. Almost detached. The order of the Supreme Court of January 2021 ordering the reopening of the Anganwadis though well-intentioned was worded in ineffective language and was never implemented. Judges must venture out of their homes, brave the Covid storm as activists routinely do, feel anger in their hearts when they see deaths by starvation; only then will they deliver judgments from their hearts.

Love Island's Shannon Singh was dumped after she 'wouldn't play ball and refused to kiss anyone'

causing producers to 'orchestrate her exit' - and she will NOT be returning

Shannon Singh was dumped from the Love Island villa after she 'wouldn't play ball and refused to kiss anyone', causing producers to 'orchestrate her sudden exit.'

The Scottish model, 22, was given the boot on Wednesday night's show, leading some viewers to believe she would return during the Casa Amor twist.

TV insiders have confirmed to MailOnline that Love Island bosses weren't impressed by Shannon's resistance to 'play the game', making it an easy decision for them to end her time on the series.

A source revealed: 'During her short time in the villa, Shannon didn't get to know anyone, or partake in the games properly, even refusing to kiss any Islanders.'

'She had always promised to be a fun and exciting contestant, but she wouldn't engage in the way producers had hoped - and they have no plans for her to make a dramatic return.'

A source close to the show told MailOnline: 'Viewers will have seen for themselves that the result of the Islander's re-coupling that evening dictated who left.'

Despite being quoted saying she can have 'sex up to eight times a day', Shannon admitted to feeling 'anxious' about the speed in which romances move in the villa.

Speaking ahead of the series, she said: 'I am not the

type of girl to go and chuck themselves at guys; it's not my thing. I am actually a bit anxious and apprehensive about how the villa is really fast paced and you are chucked into getting to know people straight away.'

MailOnline has contacted ITV and Shannon's representative for comment. A Love Island spokesperson said: 'This is simply not true.' Shannon didn't step forward for anyone during the first episode and initial coupling up, with model Aaron making his move despite her showing no signs the attraction was reciprocated. During one of the show's games in which Islanders had to kiss whoever they believed was guilty of a sexual confession, Shannon refused to snog Toby, whereas the rest of the cast all joined in on the fun. Bombshell Chloe then chose to couple up with Aaron after being given free reign of the boys, leaving Shannon dumped from the villa. Her departure was one of the quickest in the show's history, after she was told to pack her bags after just 48 hours.

Speaking after her exit, Shannon said: 'I am a bit gutted. Do you know what, out of all the girls, I think it is fair it's me because I didn't have any emotional attachments to the guys, but all the girls had tiny little things [going on].' On returning to the villa, she said: 'Yeah, why not? It was very short lived. Surreal, but I'm obviously very grateful I got the opportunity. I'm not coming away fuming from it, I'm coming away grateful.' Thursday's episode will see two new male Islanders head into the villa, while viewers have been voting for who they want to go on dates with the bombshell arrivals. In a twist of events, Sharon and Aaron end up sharing a kiss, despite Chloe coupling up with the events host a few hours prior. Speaking in the Beach Hut, Aaron said: 'I'm definitely getting good vibes from Sharon.' Meanwhile, Sharon confessed: 'There is a lot of chemistry between us, and a lot of flirty banter. It's really good.'

Love Island's Chloe Crowhurst puts on a busty display in pink co-ords as she enjoys night out after being rushed to hospital following car accident

Chloe Crowhurst enjoyed a night out after revealing she has been admitted to hospital following a serious car accident earlier this month. The Love Island star, 24, appeared in high spirits after being discharged from hospital, as she headed to BLVD in Manchester on Thursday night. Chloe put on an eye-popping display in a pink crop top with a matching midi skirt, which highlighted her sensational figure as she posed for pictures. Chloe boosted her already statuesque frame with a pair of strappy black heels, while she accessorised with a delicate pendant necklace. The reality star, who appeared in the third series of the show, opted for a typically heavy coat of make-up



and wore her long blonde locks in a sleek pony. She was joined on the night out by pal and former co-star Shannen Reilly McGrath. Shannen turned heads in a bright blue satin dress, which she styled with a pair of white strappy heels. Chloe recently told of her shock at being admitted to hospital following a 'serious car crash'. The television personality, who rose to fame on the 2017 series, took to Instagram earlier this month where she shared a photo in her hospital gown. Chloe told her fans she had been discharged but is in 'a lot of pain and distress'. The reality star wrote: 'Hi guys, I've just been collected from hospital due to being in a serious car accident. I won't be responding to anyone

until I can. I am in a lot of pain and distress.' It is not known when the crash occurred, but Chloe had been documenting her day prior to the accident. Chloe had filmed herself enjoying lunch with a pal before she filmed her friend driving. MailOnline contacted Chloe's representatives for comment. Chloe shot to fame on the 2017 series of the ITV2 dating show, when she coupled up with Sam Gowland before they were booted off the island. The television personality, who had an on-off relationship with Jon Clarke, recently claimed that Love Island producers turned up at her former work and 'begged' her to appear on the hit ITV show.

Haseen Dillruba Review: Sometimes Good, Sometimes Not - Like Protagonists Rani-Rishabh's Marriage

Cast: Taapsee Pannu, Vikrant Massey, Harshvardhan Rane, Aditya Srivastava

Director: Vinil Mathew

Rating: 2.5 stars

Among the surprises that Haseen Dillruba, streaming on Netflix, springs is a character who looms large over the narrative but never shows up in person. He is a writer of racy crime stories. The titular protagonist cites his words when she is in a bind, which is pretty often. Pulp fiction delivers the pop philosophy she needs when things do not go her way.

One may have issues with the theories about love and lust that Haseen Dillruba spins, but the fact that the film does not feed off Bollywood is refreshing indeed. It draws 'inspiration' instead from Hindi-language fiction that peddles

lurid tales of forbidden passion and crime.

Written by Kanika Dhillon and directed by Vinil Mathew, Haseen Dillruba has the spirit of these quickies at its core, but it also aspires to be a serious exploration of gender dynamics and notions of masculinity in a small town. A tough ask that. The life of the heroine, 28-year-old Delhi girl Rani (Taapsee Pannu), mirrors the sleaze-heavy stories she has been weaned on. The Hindi literature grad devours murder mysteries authored by Dinesh Pandit whose one parallel in the real world would be the exceedingly prolific Surender Mohan Pathak. Dinesh Pandit's books have titles that make their intentions clear - Hawas Ka Aatank (Tyranny of Lust) and Kasauli Ka Qahar (Wrath of Kasauli). The latter emerges as a central

piece of the jigsaw puzzle that Rani's marriage turns into as she struggles to reconcile her desires with the demands of her husband and his mother.

Taapsee Pannu plays Rani with all the flair at her command. The new bride is no pushover. She is a non-vegetarian who fasts on Mondays, but her cantankerous mom-in-law (Yamini Das) can't get her to either play the coy bahu or step into the kitchen to make tea and onion fritters.

Rani believes that she is way too good for Rishabh Saxena (Vikrant Massey), her self-effacing engineer-husband. She has no qualms about keeping tabs on an ex-boyfriend on social media. Being a professional beautician, she even gives her reticent father-in-law (Daya Shankar Pandey) a makeover much to the chagrin of the latter's wife. Here is a



Hindi movie heroine who is worth her weight in gold. Unfortunately, her quirky persona does not fully rub off on the film. Haseen Dillruba kicks off with a homicide in which the victim's body (barring a severed hand with Rani's name tattooed on it) is charred beyond recognition. The film uses pulp fiction conventions as a smokescreen for an intrinsically problematic supposition that love without pain isn't love at all. Amar prem

(eternal love), says Rani quoting Pandit, isn't possible unless some blood is spilled. Not that she weds for love. That is where her troubles begin. Her arranged marriage culminates in an explosion and a grisly death. She is the prime suspect.

The fun-loving, gregarious approximation of a femme fatale winds up in a home that expects her to be docile and homely. She spends the first

Actor Yami Gautam Summoned Over Alleged Forex Violation of ? 1.5 Crore

Bollywood actor Yami Gautam has been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate in Mumbai on Wednesday for alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The probe agency has found foreign exchange transactions to the tune of ? 1.5 crore in her bank account, said officials. Ms Gautam, 32, was summoned earlier too but she could not appear before the agency, the sources said. The investigation is being carried out under the civil proceedings of the

Foreign Exchange Management Act, said sources. Yami Gautam married film director Aditya Dhar last month. She was last seen in Puneet Khanna's Ginny Weds Sunny. She shared screen space with Vikrant Massey in the film, which released on Netflix a few months ago. She has starred in movies like Bala, Yuddham, Badlapur, Sanam Re, Kaabil and Uri: The Surgical Strike.

She made her Bollywood debut with Vicky Donor, co-starring Ayushmann Khurrana.



"We Were Dealing With Corona And Kareena:" Aamir Khan On The "Complications" While Filming Laal Singh Chaddha



Aamir Khan, who is officially a social media recluse now, started trending after a snippet from an interview was shared by a fan club dedicated to the actor on YouTube recently. In

the video, the actor, along with his filmmaker wife Kiran Rao, can be seen talking about his forthcoming project Laal Singh Chaddha, a Hindi remake of the 1994 classic Forrest Gump,

which starred Tom Hanks in the titular role. In the video, Aamir Khan can be seen talking about the "complications" that they had during the shooting of Laal Singh Chaddha. Referring to his co-star Kareena Kapoor's pregnancy during the shooting of the film, Aamir Khan said, "While the rest of the world was dealing with Corona, we were dealing with Corona and Kareena who was the heroine of the film, she got pregnant, another complication, so we are like one more gust of wind has pushed

Assets Of Actor Dino Morea, Ahmed Patel's Son-In-Law Seized In Fraud Case

Assets worth crores of actor Dino Morea, late Congress leader Ahmed Patel's son-in-law and DJ Aqeel Abdul Khalik Bachoo Ali have

been seized in a case linked to the ? 14,500-crore bank loan fraud by Gujarat-based businessman Sandesara brothers. According to the Enforcement Directorate, which

investigates financial crimes, a money-laundering probe in the case led to the discovery of transactions between the Sandesaras and Irfan Siddiqui, Dino Morea and DJ Aqeel. The

investigations revealed that DJ Aqeel received ? 12.54 crore from the Sandesaras, Irfan Siddiqui got ? 3.51 crore and Dino Morea ? 1.4

crore, they said.

Those transactions are considered proceeds of crime, the ED said, adding that assets worth ? 2.41 crore of Irfan Siddiqui, ? 1.98 crore of DJ Aqeel, and ? 1.4 crore



of Dino Morea have been attached. "Out of ? 16,000 crore considered as proceeds of crime in the Sandesaras case, assets worth ? 14,521 crore have been attached so far," an ED official said.

Haseen Dillruba director says he didn't want to 'titillate', wanted to stay true to 'sensuality' of Taapsee's character



Haseen Dillruba director Vinil Mathew spoke about the 'thin line' between sensuality and vulgarity, and whether or not it was a challenge to not cross it while making the film. Haseen Dillruba, starring Taapsee Pannu, Vikrant Massey, and Harshvardhan Rane, is due out on Netflix today. In an interview, Vinil Mathew was asked if he was ever tempted to step into 'Bhatt' territory while making the film, which has been designed as a homage to Hindi pulp thrillers. He told Bollywood Spy in Hindi, "To be honest, that was never our perspective. The film has been written by a woman, Kanika Dhillon, and there's a strong female imprint on the script. Our intention was always to show her sensuality, because that is part of the character. I wanted to be true to the character. We never thought of making it vulgar to attract an audience. We only wanted to do what was right for

the character." He continued, "If you watch the film, it's made in a very organic manner. If we'd inserted something artificial in the film, it would've stuck out. Whatever sensuality there is in the film, depends on the character's requirement. The objective was never to titillate the audience, it was to be true to the character." Haseen Dillruba tells the story of Rani, played by Taapsee Pannu, a woman from Delhi who marries a small-town man named Rishu, played by Vikrant Massey. Their marriage of compromise is further strained when Rishu's cousin, Neel, played by Harshvardhan Rane, enters the picture. Taapsee in an earlier interview had said that Vikrant and Harshvardhan were intimidated by the intimate scenes in the film, and that she took it upon herself to make them comfortable.



Making his way to the ring, Toofaan is poised to be the biggest sports drama of the year. Audiences in India and worldwide can watch this film exclusively on Amazon Prime Video starting July 16

Toofaan stars Farhan Akhtar in the lead role along with Mrunal Thakur, Paresh Rawal, Supriya Pathak Kapur, Hussain Dalal, Dr. Mohan Agashe, Darshan Kumar and Vijay Raaz. Directed by Rakeysh Omprakash

Mehra and produced by Excel Entertainment (Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar) and ROMP Pictures (Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra). Look forward to hearing from you.

Nikki Tamboli says no to 'timepass' relationships: 'I don't want to spoil anyone's life'

Nikki Tamboli, who shot to fame as a contestant on Bigg Boss 14, said that she is not looking for a 'timepass relationship' at the moment. Although she is focussing on her career right now, she is open to the idea of getting married. During Bigg Boss 14, Jaan Kumar Sanu admitted to having feelings for Nikki Tamboli. However, she would often tease him as 'Bhai-jaan'. They are now good friends. In an interview with radio host Siddharth Kannan, Nikki said that she is too busy for a casual relationship. "Mujhe kisi ki zindagi kharab nahi karni. I am very open ki mujhe time nahi hai. Mujhe timepass relationship nahi

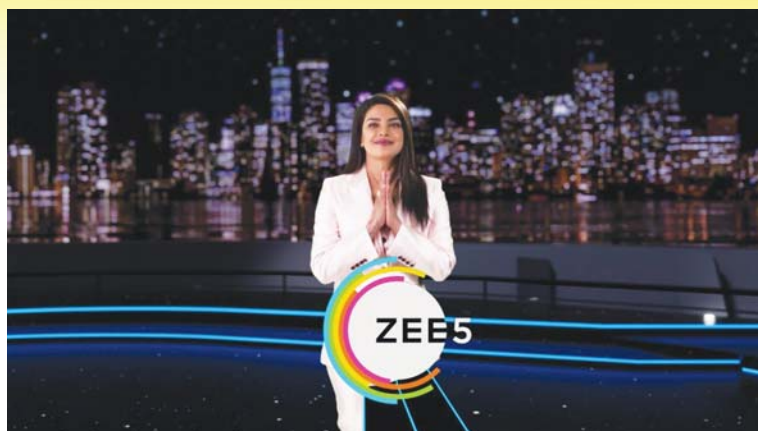
chahiye. Mujhe apne aap ke liye time nahi hai, main kisi aur ko apna jhootha time kyun doon (I don't want to spoil anyone's life. I am very open about the fact that I don't have time. When I barely have time for myself, why should I pretend to have time for someone else)?" she said. On being asked if she is open to a serious relationship, Nikki said, "To be very honest, agar mujhe achcha ladka aaj bhi mil jaata hai, main shaadi bhi kar loon. Mujhe aise timepass ke liye time nahi hai. Mujhe apne career important hai (if I find a nice guy even now, I will get married).



ZEE5 launches in the U.S., ushers in a new era of South Asian Entertainment

ZEE5, the world's largest streaming service for South Asian content, launched recently in the U.S., opening up a world of multicultural entertainment for the South Asian diaspora and mainstream audiences across the United States.

"The launch of ZEE5 in the U.S. is a very significant moment for us," said Amit Goenka, President, Digital Businesses & Platforms, ZEE Entertainment. "We've had a long association of over two decades with this market, bringing our viewers here the best of Indian entertainment through our channels. With ZEE5, we now look to offer both these audiences and the younger demographic access to a much wider choice of premium content



with our Originals, digital premieres and more, on any screen of their choice and with a completely personalized viewing experience." ZEE5's launch announcement was made by Archana Anand, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 Global, at a mega event attended by media and consumers from

the U.S. and across the globe. She was joined by a special guest for the event, Actor, Producer, Activist and Entrepreneur Priyanka Chopra Jonas. Priyanka Chopra Jonas also joined Archana in unveiling ZEE5's upcoming content slate and its new global brand

campaign "Welcome to South Asia: Stories from our world." The campaign spotlights stories from South Asia, where even ordinary stories are extraordinary, therefore leading to the narrative "if this is our reality, imagine our stories." Congratulating ZEE5, Priyanka Chopra Jonas said, "Wishing all the best to my friends at ZEE5 on their new launch. I have really enjoyed celebrating and spotlighting all the incredible talent from South Asia today. I look forward to watching these storytellers entertain new audiences around the world and will be cheering them on from the side lines." Archana Anand, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 Global, added, "Bringing ZEE5 into the U.S. is so much more than just

providing the South Asian diaspora here with a mega entertainment platform through which they can access a vast library of stories. It is a powerful bridge between them, their culture, and their languages. It is also a real-time connect between them and their families as they get to watch the same content across the ocean. And it is a platform through which their stories get showcased on an international stage. With this and the rich library of shows we have, I am confident that we will become the preferred destination for South Asian content and woo both TV and Streaming loyalists across all age groups across both South Asian and mainstream audiences in the shortest possible time."

Health benefits of different teas : Oolong, black or green



(News Agencies) While we many other hidden benefits all drink tea as a stress that different types of tea offer buster, comforter, there are if consumed in a definite time

and manner.

health benefits different teas Oolong black green daily post. While we all drink tea as a stress buster, comforter, there are many other hidden benefits that different types of tea offer if consumed in a definite time and manner. Multiple brands have come up with numerous teas like , Black tea is rarely mentioned in the context of

tea's health benefits but it is rich in antioxidants, improves oral health, boosts weight loss and even brings down stress levels.

Green tea is a storehouse of many antioxidant compounds, it's easy to assume that green tea is one of the healthiest beverages. According to traditional Chinese medicine, drinking green tea helps relieve body

aches and pains, aids digestion, impacts the process of detoxification and, generally, enhances the quality of life. Oolong tea promotes fat metabolism (pushing the body to burn fat for energy), and blocks the absorption of excess fat and cholesterol. Regular consumption of oolong tea can actually boost your weight loss.

Playing video games can change our brains performance



(News Agencies) Playing video games can change brains performance. "Games have sometimes been praised or demonized, often without real data backing up those claims. Moreover, gaming is a popular activity, so everyone seems to have strong opinions on the topic," according to the sources. From their analysis, which included looking at 22 studies on the structural changes in the brain and 100 on changes in brain functionality or behaviour, the team found that playing video games can change both how our

brains perform and its structure. Some of the studies suggested that playing videos games can improve several types of attention, including sustained attention or selective attention, with the brain regions involved in attention appearing to be more efficient in gamers and requiring less activation. However the team also found that playing video games can be addictive in the form of "Internet gaming disorder," with gaming addicts showing functional and structural changes in the brain's neural reward system which are nearly the same as those seen in people with other addictive disorders.

Few tips to reduce the stretch marks post pregnancy



(News Agencies) Few tips to reduce the stretch marks post pregnancy. Stretch marks appear on woman's body during pregnancy and after the delivery. Given below are some tips to reduce those stretch marks from the body and get a flawless skin back. Moisturizing your body is necessary: Use Coconut oil to moisturize your body . It will reduce the dryness and thus won't let the skin to break out. There are certain types of fatty acids present in coconut oil that would provide proper nourishment to the skin. Drink plenty of water: Water is a

vitamin E enriched oil.

Almond oil is the best available option for the same.

Vitamin C: We all are aware of the benefits of vitamin C to our skin. It helps in rejuvenating our skin and keep the body hydrated.

Including vitamin C rich fruits or food products in diet would help to keep the skin free from rashes and stretch marks. Vitamin C also blesses us with the healthy growth of the child. Carry adequate zinc in the body: Studies revealed that the appearance of stretch marks are higher in those women who lack zinc in their body. A proper nutritious diet is required to add zinc to the body. One can also consult their doctor to include supplements in their diet to eradicate this shortfall. Eat gelatin: Gelatin is good to maintain the elasticity of the skin as it contains collagen in it. So consumption of gelatin would help in removing the stretch marks or minimise their appearance on the body. Switch to medicated ointments: Even undertaking all the necessary measures, stretch marks still show up, then switch to the medicated ointments available in the market to get rid of the same.

How to be active in Summer Season?



(News Agencies) When the weather changes, many troubles arise for our health. Humans have always been able to adapt themselves to the weather and win the bad influences of the weather. Whenever there is a problem with eating and drinking, there are many problems in health. In summer, we should mainly eat cold products. Even if many cold things invite coughs. This damages the lungs and throat, so we must eat common cold items, it is okay to not eat cold foods.

Things like cold things should be used less during childhood. In the summer, pollution increases, so walking, walking, or exercising in the morning benefits the lungs. Eyes also affect the summer. This requires a lot of sleep and eyes need rest. Morning bath is of prime importance but in the summer season evening bath is also required.

There are also issues related to digestion in summer, so it is important to lighten up the food, do not eat late-baked, fried foods. Try not to drink water with food.

The salivation of the mouth only works a lot in digesting food. Therefore, do not drink water 30 minutes before feeding and after 30 minutes of drinking water.

You can get a dip or a mint for quick cooking. Health problems are also caused by soft dunk, tea, alcohol, etc. If they are accustomed, skip or reduce them.

The clothes are light and cotton, so the best. In this season, light colored cloths are good. They do not absorb the sun's rays.

Take it easy. Mental stress ups risk of death in heart disease patients

People with persistent mental distress are nearly four times as likely to have died of cardiovascular disease, say

(News Agencies) If you have a heart disease, you may do well to relax. According to researchers, people with persistent mental distress, including depression and anxiety, were nearly four times as likely to have died of cardiovascular disease and nearly three times as likely to have died from any cause. The team analysed the association between occasional or persistent mental distress and the risk of death in 950 people with stable coronary heart disease, who were between 31 and 74 years old. All the participants were part of the Long Term Intervention with Pravastatin in Ischaemic Disease Trial and had had a

heart attack or been admitted to hospital for unstable severe pain in the chest in the preceding three to 36 months.

They filled in a validated general health questionnaire (GHQ30) at six months, one, two and four years. This was graded according to severity and the length of time it lasted at each of the assessments: never distressed; occasional (of any severity); persistent mild distress on three or more occasions; and persistent moderate distress on three or more occasions. The participants' health and survival were then tracked for an average of 12 years.

They found that 398 people died from all causes and 199 died from

cardiovascular disease.

The questionnaire responses showed that 587 (62%) of participants said they had not been distressed at any of the assessments, while around one in four (27%) said they had experienced occasional distress of any severity. The findings suggested that in patients with stable [coronary heart disease], long term mortality risk is related to the cumulative burden of psychological distress. Dr Gjin Ndrepepa from the Technical University, Munich, Germany, describes the research as an "important and elaborate study which



helps to uncover the intricate relationship between psychological distress and cardiovascular disease. Nevertheless, mental distress activates the sympathetic nervous system and boosts stress hormone levels, which, if persistent, can produce potentially harmful physiological changes, some of which may be permanent, he explained. The study is published online in the journal Heart.

Get off your desk and take a short walk. It lowers blood lipid levels

A brisk walk every half hour can lower blood glucose and insulin



(News Agencies) If you're used to a sedentary lifestyle, or working at your office desk for long hours at a stretch, it's bound to affect your health. It's time to change that. According to a recent study, office workers who take brisk walks for two minutes every half hour can lower their blood glucose and insulin levels. Increased sitting is known to be associated with an increased risk of a cardiovascular disease, diabetes and death from all

causes.

Now, the most recent Otago study shows this sort of activity also reduces triglyceride (lipid) levels when measured in response to a meal consumed around 24 hours after starting the activity. High levels of triglycerides are linked to hardening of the arteries and other cardiovascular conditions. The study's lead author, Dr Meredith Peddie of Otago's Department of Human Nutrition says that earlier international research had overwhelmingly failed to detect evidence that regular walking breaks affect lipid levels, but this is likely due to the effect generally not being immediate.

In what is known as a randomised crossover trial, 36 participants completed four two-day interventions in the Otago study: Prolonged sitting

Prolonged sitting with 30 minutes of continuous walking at the end of the first day

Sitting with two minutes of moderate intensity walking every 30 minutes

- A combination of the continuous walking and regular activity breaks described above.

Blood levels of triglycerides, which are non-esterified fatty acids (otherwise known as free fatty acids), glucose, and insulin responses were measured in the participants over five hours on the second day of the experiment. The scientists found that, overall, short regular walking breaks, 30 minutes of continuous physical activity - and especially the two combined - appear to have good potential to improve people's metabolic health, said Dr Peddie.

Worried about early menopause?

Eat the right foods to protect yourself



(News Agencies) Early menopause is a serious concern. Research as indicated that it may predict heart disease and trigger old-age problems in women. Now, a new study says that high intake of barley, brown rice, oatmeal, soya and tofu over a long-term period may protect you from it.

The findings indicated that the women, who consume approximately 6.5% of their daily calories as vegetable protein had a significant 16% lower risk of early menopause compared to women whose intake was approximately 4% of calories. First author Maegan Boutot and Prof Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson conducted the study. The authors from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health explained that dietary vegetable protein intake is associated with ovarian aging and may identify ways for women to modify their risk of early onset of menopause and associated health conditions. Early menopause, the cessation of ovarian function before age 45, affects about 10% of women and is associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and early cognitive decline, the authors note. The team analysed 1,16,000 women aged 25-42 in 1989. The participants were asked to report how often they ate a single serving of 131 foods, beverages and supplements over the previous year, from "never or less than once a month" to "Six+ per day."

Working on the night shift?

It may hinder your body's ability to repair DNA damage

(News Agencies) Beware if you work in late night shifts, as according to a study, working at night may hinder your body's ability to repair damaged DNA caused by normal cellular processes. The findings suggested that night shifts suppress the production of 'sleep hormone' melatonin, which regulates the internal body clock (circadian rhythm). They explained that the night shifts reduced the capacity to repair oxidative DNA damage due to insufficient levels of melatonin and may also result in cells harbouring higher levels of DNA damage. Over time, DNA damage that is not repaired will cause mutations that can lead to cancer. Previous research on 223 night shift workers has showed that day

sleep was associated with lower levels in their urine of a chemical by-product of active DNA tissue repair called 8-OH-dG than night sleep — potentially indicating reduced capacity to repair cellular damage. For the study, the team measured 8-OH-dG levels in the stored urine samples of 50 night shift workers from the previous study. These 50 people had exhibited the widest discrepancies in levels of circulating melatonin between night work and night sleep.

Analysis of the urine samples showed that melatonin levels were much lower when taken during a night shift than when taken during a normal night's sleep. The researchers said explained that a particular pathway

called NER is thought to be involved in the repair of DNA damage caused by oxygen free radicals, which are produced during normal cellular activity. The research has shown that melatonin production boosts the activity of the genes involved in the NER pathway. They noted that relative to night sleep, reduced melatonin production among shift workers during night work is associated with significantly reduced urinary excretion of 8-OH-dG. They added that if such effects are confirmed, melatonin supplementation should be explored as an intervention to reduce the occurrence of potentially carcinogenic DNA damage among shift workers.



Indian Supreme Court issues a stern reminder to Government on migrant workers

(SAI Bureau)- A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court (SC), on Tuesday, gave a slew of directives to the Centre, the states, and Union Territories (UTs) to provide relief to migrant workers, whose lives and livelihoods have been severely affected by the pandemic. Calling the Centre's attitude towards the migrants "lackadaisical," SC directed it to ensure that the proposed national database for unorganised workers (NDUW) is operational by July 31 so that welfare benefits can flow to the marginalised sections. It also ordered states and UTs to implement the One Nation One Ration Card (ONOR) scheme by



July 31 to help beneficiaries, anywhere, irrespective of their home especially migrant workers, avail of subsidised food commodities

(Contd on page 27)

Ambani And Adani - 2 Billionaires, One Green Ambition



(SAI Bureau)-Mukesh Ambani's rivals should be relieved, though perhaps not too much. The petrochemicals czar has just told shareholders that he's undertaking his life's "most challenging" mission by investing 750 billion rupees (\$10 billion) in clean power and fuel over three years. It doesn't appear to be a big capital commitment from India's most powerful businessman, certainly not when he's just raised \$44 billion of capital during a pandemic, and made the \$180 billion balance sheet of his flagship Reliance Industries Ltd. free of net debt.

(Contd on page 26)

Court Calls for Baba Ramdev's speech on allopathy



(SAI Bureau)- The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed yoga guru Baba Ramdev to produce the original text of his speech questioning the efficacy of allopathy that made the Indian Medical Association (IMA) register multiple FIRs against him in different states. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana has asked him to file the document by Monday, the date for next hearing on the yoga guru's plea to stay arrest following two criminal cases filed

(Contd on page 26)

Understanding The Brave New World Of Digital Utilities

(SAI Bureau)- Almost two decades ago, as the co-author of the first book on e-governance that was released by the then President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam, one of the key things I had noted in that book was the need to change many established processes and regulations, as e-governance changed the context of the existing regulations. Let me take an example to explain the issue. As per The Land Records Maintenance Act of 1895, all land records are public information, which may be accessed by the public, on



payment of a certain fee. This implies that one can find out who is the owner of a particular property, by simply depositing certain fees at the land records office. Such a regulation was necessary as one needed to know who is the real owner of a piece of property, in case one wanted to purchase the same. And under this context, the 1895 Land Records Maintenance Act was created.

(Contd on page 27)

NYC Board of Elections throws mayoral primary into chaos by counting test ballots

(SAI Bureau)- The campaign to become New York City's next mayor has come in for another twist. On Tuesday, the City Board of Elections released new numbers that suggested Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams' lead in the Democratic primary had narrowed in the first set of tabulated ranked-choice voting results. Former Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, in this preliminary count, had nearly closed the gap, giving Adams a two-point lead.

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Meghalaya Woman spends 2 days locked in "Bank as robbery attempt fails

(SAI Bureau)-Armed with a hammer and sachets of Oral Re-hydration Solution (ORS), a 40-year-old woman last Friday locked herself inside a bank in Meghalaya's capital Shillong, allegedly to carry out a Hollywood-style money heist. However, sturdy bank locks, impregnable safe and the ineffective hammer she had been carrying foiled her plan. Officials of the Meghalaya Rural Bank found the alleged robber, Isabella Myrboh, severely

(Contd on page 25)

