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Red wave sweeps Long Island, Republicans declare victory



See Full
Story on
page 36

The Next Big Clash For Mukesh Ambani And Gautam Adani



(SAI Bureau)-Don't expect a gabfest in Glasgow to save the planet when the scene of real action is 4,000 miles east. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in the Scottish city is being billed as our last best chance to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-
(Contd on page 34)

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is His Own Worst Enemy



(SAI Bureau) - It was an old joke at Tesla Inc. among executives: get too close to chief executive officer Elon Musk, and you'll get burned. Flying under the radar - instead of too close to the sun - was a survival strategy at the company. In Greek mythology, Icarus ignores his father's warnings and flies too high, causing his wax wings to melt. Icarus falls into the sea and drowns.

(Contd on page 36)

Must invest big to save planet UK to global finance giants at COP26



(SAI Bureau)-Britain called Wednesday for the world's financial industry to channel its vast funds towards greener investments to ensure that global efforts to curb global warming succeed. Treasury chief Rishi Sunak said that while the U.K. government is providing fresh financing to help poor countries cope with climate change, "public investment alone isn't enough."

Speaking at the U.N. climate summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow, Sunak said U.K. financial institutions and

(Contd on page 36)



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Aftab Pureval Becomes First Indian-Tibetan Mayor Of US' Cincinnati City

(Insider Bureau)-Aftab Pureval, an Indian-Tibetan, has been elected as the Mayor of Cincinnati city in US' Ohio, making him the first member of the community to be elected to the position.

Aftab Pureval, 38, a son of a refugee Tibetan mother and an Indian father, defeated his rival David Mann to win the Mayoral election. "Words can't express how honoured and excited I am to be the next Mayor of Cincinnati. Tonight, we made history! Let's get to work!" Mr Pureval, who unsuccessfully ran for the US House of Representatives last year, said this after his impressive electoral victory. Aftab Karma Singh Pureval is the first Tibetan-American and the first Asian-American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) mayor in the city's history. Mr Pureval, a Democrat, had formerly served as the Hamilton County clerk of courts.

"Today, AAPI Victory Fund



celebrates Aftab Pureval's historic win as the first Indian-Tibetan American mayor of a major city who has a bold vision to move Cincinnati forward," AAPI Victory Fund founder and chairman Shekar Narasimhan said. In March of this year, AAPI Victory Fund had endorsed Aftab Pureval as "a necessary progressive voice that has been able to achieve success with Democrats and Republicans alike" in its slate of mayoral candidates.

"This is a triumph for not only Aftab Pureval but also for the

AAPI community nationwide. Aftab Pureval's victory is a major step forward for AAPI's political representation. It is more important than ever to elect diverse leadership across local, state and federal governments, and Aftab Pureval will bring his unique experience to lead Cincinnati toward a more equitable, inclusive, and just city," Mr Narasimhan said.

In a previous interview, Mr Pureval had told news agency PTI that his story is improbably American. "I'm the son of a refugee. My mom was born in Tibet and she was forced to flee her home country along with my grandparents," he said.

"My grandparents and my mother picked up and made their way through the Himalayas through Nepal and into India where she grew up as a refugee," he said. His mother studied in a Mysore school and went to Delhi for college, where she met her Punjabi husband.

Indian-Origin Rapper In Singapore Accused Of Racism: Report



(Insider Bureau)- Subhas Govin Prabhakar Nair in chargesheets, is accused of making those attempts on four occasions between July 2019 and March 2021, according to a Channel News Asia report. Indian-origin Singaporean rapper Subhas Nair was charged in court on Monday with four counts of attempting to promote feelings of ill will among different groups on grounds of religion and race. The 28-year-old, whose full name was given as Subhas Govin Prabhakar Nair in chargesheets, is accused of

making those attempts on four occasions between July 2019 and March 2021, according to a Channel News Asia report. The earliest alleged incident was on July 29, 2019, when Nair published a rap video online. Chargesheets state that Nair attempted to promote feelings of ill will between the Chinese and other races. Nair was given a two-year conditional warning by the police on August 14, 2019, over this incident. The warning indicated that if he reoffended, he could be prosecuted for this incident on top of any fresh offences.

Indian-American Confirmed As Director Of US National Drug Control Policy

(Insider Bureau)-Dr Rahul Gupta, a veteran Indian-American primary care physician, has been confirmed by the US Senate as the Director of National Drug Control Policy, making him the first medical doctor to ever lead the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Dr Gupta, who recently served as clinical Professor in the Department of Medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine, was confirmed for the position by the US Senate on Thursday. "As a practicing physician and former health official who has served in rural communities, I have seen firsthand the heartbreaking toll of addiction and overdose in our communities, but I have also seen how we can save lives if we understand the individuals behind the statistics and meet them where they are," said Dr Gupta in a statement issued by the White House on Friday.

He said he would work diligently to advance high-quality, strategies to make communities healthier. "President Biden has made clear that addressing addiction and the overdose epidemic is an urgent priority. As Director, I will diligently work to advance high-quality, data-driven strategies to make our communities healthier and safer," he said. He most recently served as the Chief

Medical and Health Officer, Interim Chief Science Officer and Senior Vice President at March of Dimes, a US nonprofit organisation that works to improve the health of mothers and babies.

In his role, Dr Gupta provided strategic oversight for March of Dimes' domestic and global medical and public health efforts.

He recently served as clinical Professor in the Department of Medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine as well as adjunct professor in the Department of Health Policy, Management and Leadership in the School of Public Health at West Virginia University and visiting faculty at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the White House said.

A practicing primary care physician of 25 years, Dr. Gupta began his career in private practice in an

underserved community of fewer than 2,000 residents. He has since served under two Governors as the Health Commissioner of West Virginia. As the state's Chief Health Officer, he led the opioid crisis response efforts and launched a number of pioneering public health initiatives, including the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Birthscore program to identify high-risk infants.



Govt Permits NRIs to Own up to 100 Percent Stake in Air India



The government on Wednesday permitted NRIs to control up to 100 per cent stake in disinvestment-bound Air India. The decision comes at a time when the government has sought preliminary bids for 100 per cent stake sale in the national carrier. Today's decision on Air India is one milestone decision where NRIs... will get permission to invest 100 per cent in the airline," Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters briefing about the cabinet decision. Non-resident Indians (NRIs), who are Indian nationals, will get permission to participate in Air India's strategic

sale. Earlier, they were allowed to own up to 49 per cent stake, the minister said. Now they can take 100 per cent," he added.

Allowing 100 per cent investment by NRIs in the carrier would also not be in violation of Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) norms. NRI investments would be treated as domestic investments. Under the SOEC framework, which is followed in the airline industry globally, a carrier that flies overseas from a particular country should be substantially owned by that country's government or its nationals.

FinMin to Clarify on Residency Status of NRIs Stranded in India This Fiscal Due to Covid-19



The Finance ministry will issue a circular to provide clarity on the residency status of NRIs and foreign nationals stuck in India in the current fiscal due to the coronavirus pandemic. For the fiscal ended on March 31, 2020, the ministry, in May last year, clarified that the period of stay of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and foreign nationals in India during the lockdown period would not be counted for the purpose of determining their residency status for the purpose of taxation. "About the circular on residency, we had already issued a circular for previous financial year (2019-20) and for current financial year (2020-21) it would be issued sometime in future," Finance Ministry, Joint Secretary (Tax Policy and Legislation), Kamlesh

Varshney said at a PHDCCI event on Thursday. There were expectations that the government would clarify on the residency status of these individuals in the 2021-22 Budget, which was presented on February 1. Commercial international flights were suspended when the nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25, 2020. Later, such flights were allowed in a restricted manner under bilateral Air Bubble agreements and the services are yet to resume fully. As a result, many NRIs and foreign nationals had to prolong their stay in India. There were apprehensions that this extended stay could lead to these individuals being considered as Indian residents as per Section 6 of the Income Tax Act for taxation purposes.

Ahmedabad Woman Accuses Husband of Not Having Sex for One Year, Forcing Daughter to Drink Beer

woman from the Gota area of Ahmedabad city has filed a complaint with the police against her NRI husband. According to the woman, her husband, who is now based in Dubai, forced beer down the throat of their two-year-old daughter. She also alleged that he had deprived her of sex for more than a year. In her FIR, the woman wrote that she had gotten married in 2016 and had moved to Dubai with her husband in 2017.



He had allegedly then forced her to drink beer and would give their infant daughter empty beer cans to play with. The FIR also says that the husband, unnamed, would beat her and abuse her upon the provocation of her in-laws.

According to a report by Times of India, the woman said that her husband would create a ruckus every time he got drunk. He would apparently force her to drink as well despite the

fact that she never liked it. He also made their toddler drink. She said that the man would taunt her for her delicate physical condition and refused to have sex with her for over a year. He also refused to pay for medicines when their daughter was sick. She said that after she returned to India from Dubai, her husband dropped her off at her maternal home. Then he fled to Dubai with the rest of his family. A few months ago, a 24-year-old man in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, was arrested after he flashed a law student

on the pretext of asking for an address. The incident occurred on January 22 when the woman, who works for a private law firm in the city's Navrangpura area, was stopped by the accused, who lives in the nearby colony on Usmanpura, The Times of India reported. The 21-year-old law student had been visiting a shopping complex in the city when the man accosted her on a scooter and asked her for an address.

14-Day Indo-US Joint Military Exercise Concludes In Alaska

A total of 300 US Army soldiers and 350 soldiers of the 7 Madras Infantry Battalion Group of Indian Army participated in the exercise named 'Ex Yudh Abhyas 2021'.



New Delhi: A 14-day joint training exercise between the armies of India and the US has concluded at Elmendorf Richardson joint base in Alaska, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday. A total of 300 US Army soldiers belonging to First Squadron (Airborne) of the 40th Cavalry Regiment and 350 soldiers of the 7 Madras Infantry Battalion Group of Indian Army participated in the exercise that ended on Friday, the ministry said in a statement.

"The aim of this 14-day exercise was to familiarise each other with operational procedures, combat drills and developing inter-operability," it said. The exercise was conducted in two phases. The

first phase comprised combat conditioning and tactical training by both the contingents. "Training received by both contingents in the first phase was put into practice in the validation stage. Both contingents jointly took part in the validation exercise which comprised combat shooting, rappelling and helicopter-based mobilisation of quick response teams," the statement said. The troops were organised into composite companies with mixed platoons of Indian and US armies and the validation exercise culminated in a raid on an enemy position in mountainous terrain and securing of critical infrastructure, it said. The joint training exercise was named 'Ex Yudh Abhyas 2021'.

China prepared for spike in border tensions with India: US defence dept report

The Chinese army's acceleration of its training and fielding of heavy military equipment has prepared it for any escalation of border tensions with India and to support a "Taiwan contingency", according to a new US defence department report. The annual report prepared for the US Congress on military and security developments related to China has a special section on the India-China standoff on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that began in May 2020 and has taken bilateral relations to an all-time low. The report said that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, border

clashes with India and other significant events in 2020, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "accelerated its training and fielding of equipment from the already fast pace of recent years". This equipment fielding during 2020 "focused on improving mobile firepower and mobility with the PCL-171 120mm self-propelled howitzer and the PCL-181 155mm self-propelled howitzer, as well as field testing of the Z-8L heavy-lift transport helicopter". PLA units also conducted "extensive combined arms and joint training throughout 2020".



PM Modi Says Had "Great Interaction" With The Indian Community In Italy

Narendra Modi Italy Visit: On the second day of his visit to Italy for the G20 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter to share "glimpses" from the community interaction in Rome.

(Insider Bureau)-Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that he had a "great interaction" with members of the Indian community in Italy, including those who are studying about India and those who have developed a close bond with their home country over the years.

On the second day of his visit to Italy for the G20 Summit, Prime Minister Modi took to Twitter to share "glimpses" from the community interaction in Rome.

"In Rome last evening, I had a great interaction with members of the Indian diaspora in Italy, those who are studying about India and those who

have developed a close bond with our nation over the years. It was wonderful to hear their views on diverse topics," he said in a tweet.

Swamini Hamsananda Giri, the President of Sanatan Dharma Sangha, termed her meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "moving".

"It was (meeting with Prime Minister Modi) moving of course, because to be Hindu in Italy is not so easy but to meet the Prime Minister, it was a great honour for us. Hindus in Italy are in minority," she said.

The culture of India is a treasure for the humanity because it is a culture of ancient times since now for the whole

human being and this is a culture of non-violence (Ahimsa), of harmony and respect for the nature and environment since the beginning of this culture, she said, adding that it is a culture for the welfare of human being.

"As Sarvjan Hitaye, every human being, every being in the world has to live in harmony and in peace and we say Shanti, Shanti, Shanti." To each of us he asked something very peculiar of us and asked what I like if we go to India where and what we like from India so and I said Tamil Nadu and he spoke to me in Tamil," Swamini Hamsananda Giri added.

Joe Biden's \$1.2 Trillion Infrastructure Bill Passed Amid Approval Slump

US President Joe Biden is banking on a bounce from the vote, 10 months after he swept to the White House -- only to see his popularity plunge.

Washington: Democrats rescued President Joe Biden's faltering domestic agenda Friday, passing a giant infrastructure package that is one of the pillars of his \$3 trillion economic vision after rebel moderates had earlier blocked a vote on his social welfare expansion. Despite hours of cajoling lawmakers, party leaders had risked seeing Biden's two-pronged legislative strategy collapse as they failed to unite the party's feuding progressive and moderate factions. But the

breakthrough came as lawmakers rubber-stamped the Senate-passed \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill on the House floor by a comfortable 228 votes to 206. The passage of the infrastructure spending marks a legacy-making achievement for Biden, amid plunging personal approval ratings and a humiliating upset defeat for his Democratic Party in the Virginia gubernatorial election. His spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the success was "proof that delivering for the American people is worth all the

painful sausage making." "Clean drinking water for kids, broadband access, electric vehicles, biggest investment in public transit. It's happening. And more to come," she tweeted. Party leadership in the House of Representatives began the day aiming to rubber-stamp the infrastructure bill, the biggest upgrade of roads, bridges and waterways in decades, after sending an even bigger social welfare deal, worth up to \$1.85 trillion, to the upper chamber.

'Market Research Analyst' Recognised As Speciality Job For H-1B Visa



(Insider Bureau)-In a major victory for H-1B employers, a federal court has approved a settlement under which the US Citizenship and Immigration Services has agreed to qualify market research analyst as a speciality occupation for the purposes of determining H-1B visa application of a foreign professional. Based on its prior interpretation of the Occupational Outlook Handbook - a Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics publication profiling hundreds of occupations in the US job market - the USCIS was determining that market research analysts did not qualify as a "specialty occupation".

The settlement approved by the federal district court in the Northern District of California would now let companies request that the USCIS reopen and re-adjudicate their denied H-1B petitions.

"This settlement is an important victory that will benefit hundreds of American businesses and the market research analysts they sought to employ," said Leslie K Dellon, senior attorney (business immigration) at the American Immigration Council.

"The settlement gives US businesses another chance to have their H-1B market research analyst petitions approved - this time under new guidance worked out by the parties to the lawsuit. Each H-1B petition reopened and approved will represent another opportunity for US employers and the workers they sponsored to advance their business objectives," she said. The class action lawsuit in this regard was filed by the American Immigration Council, American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the law firms Van Der Hout LLP, Berry Appleman & Leiden LLP (formerly Joseph & Hall P.C.), and Kuck Baxter Immigration LLC.

Jeff Joseph, partner at Berry Appleman & Leiden LLP, said this settlement finally resolves an issue on which immigration lawyers have been battling the government for years.

"This settlement strikes the right balance between what the regulations actually say and how employers evaluate a candidate's professional qualifications in the real world. It is our sincere hope that USCIS will now interpret other specialty occupations from a perspective that is in line with what actually happens in the free market," he said.



Don't want to talk about spent cartridges, Navjot Singh Sidhu attacks Amarinder Singh

Navjot Singh Sidhu launched an attack on former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and said: "I don't want to talk about spent cartridges."

(News Agencies)-Navjot Singh Sidhu launched a fresh attack on former Chief Minister of Punjab Amarinder Singh and said, "I don't want to talk about spent cartridges. If there were mafias during his regime, then who was earning the money."

Navjot Singh Sidhu attacked Amarinder Singh after his resignation letter from the Congress mentioned Sidhu was a man of an unstable mind, pro-Pakistan and that he would spoil the Congress party. While speaking about Amarinder Singh, the Punjab Congress Chief added: "How many seats

did he win when he formed a party earlier? He is a fraud." Sidhu asked if the Captain was sleeping when his people were doing wrong.

Sidhu even said, forget ministers and councilors, not even his wife is joining Amarinder Singh's new party.

"Not acting against people involved in wrong doings is timid and a show of cowardness. He is a coward," added Navjot Singh Sidhu. Over a month after leaving the Congress, former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on November 2 revealed

the name of his new party as Punjab Lok Congress. The registration of the party is pending approval with the Election Commission of India.

Disclosing the party's name in Chandigarh on Tuesday, Captain Amarinder Singh said, "Since we had announced earlier that we would be forming our own party, our team of lawyers was working on the process and had applied to the Election Commission of India for the registration."

The Election Commission has no objection to the proposed name, he said.

MP: 3 killed, three injured after car overturns on highway in Guna district



(News Agencies)-Three persons were killed and three others injured when their car overturned after colliding with a divider on a highway in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district on Wednesday, police said.

The accident took place near Barkheda village on Gwalior-Betul National Highway around 4.30 am, Binaganj police station in-charge Deepak Bhadoriya said.

Two police constables were travelling with their families to their homes in Morena for Diwali when their car hit a divider and overturned, the official said.

Constable Devendra Dubey (26), Alka Sharma (34) and her three-year-old daughter Priyanshi were killed, while constable Niraj Sharma, his son and Dubey's wife were injured and admitted to Guna district hospital, he said.

The constables were posted in Shajapur district, the official said, adding that a post-mortem is being conducted.

Jaipur: People ignore Covid-19 protocols in markets across city

The mood in markets have changed with people coming out in large numbers, months after battling the deadly second wave of the pandemic.

(News Agencies)-People in Jaipur were seen ignoring Covid-19 protocols while shopping for Diwali festivities. Hundreds of people were seen shopping across different markets in the city without wearing masks or following social-distancing norms.

Scores were milling around, crowding the already congested streets of the city. Even shopkeepers were seen without masks while speaking to customers.

"It becomes difficult to interact with customers while wearing masks," a shopkeeper said.



"You can look outside. Who is wearing a mask?", another shopkeeper questioned when asked about masks.

When India Today visited the walled city area of Jaipur, including markets that exist near Badi Chaupad, Choti

Chaupad and several other market places, including those at MI Road, Malviya Nagar, hundreds of people were seen

ignoring the protocol even as India records over 10,000 Covid-19 cases every day.

Several customers, when spoken to by India Today, came up with different reasons for not following the government-set protocols. "My mask fell off on the road. I made the mistake of coming over here without a mask. I will ensure that I wear a mask in future," a customer said. The mood in markets has changed with people coming out in large numbers, months after battling the deadly second wave of the pandemic triggered by the Delta variant.

Kerala: Owners of 'No-Halal' hotel arrested for attempt to murder, spreading hate

A couple running 'No-Halal' hotel in Kochi have been arrested by the police for attempt to murder two cafe owners and spreading communal hatred.

(News Agencies)- Kerala couple, running 'No-Halal' hotel in Kochi have been arrested by the police for attempt to murder two cafe owners and spreading communal hatred through social media. The couple, identified as Thushara Kallayil and her husband Ajith, has been accused of attempting to kill Binoj and Nakul, the owners of a cafe in Kochi's Kakkanad, near Infopark.

Following the attempt to murder case, the Infopark police registered another FIR (first information report) against Thushara Kallayil and Ajith for covering up this incident and misleading people into spreading communal propaganda.

Thushara had posted a live video on Facebook saying that she was attacked by a group of people who were outraged by the no-halal board and serving of pork meat in their hotel.



Thushara said she was in hospital with injuries.

This video drew massive attention on social media. Several political leaders including Kerala BJP president K Surendran came out in support of the couple.

According to the Infopark police, who are investigating the case,

the plan of Thushara and her husband was to acquire a cafe building in Kochi's Kakkanad. The police said this was what led to violence ending up in the attempt to murder case being filed against the couple.

The police claimed Thushara's husband and his team came to the cafe to create trouble. They

allegedly smashed the cash counter and smuggled many items. Ajith's alleged accomplice identified as Appu attacked the cafe owners Binoj and Nakul, police said. The cafe owners were seriously injured in the incident, police said. The cafe owners are now in hospital and one of them underwent surgery,

said the police.

It was after this incident that Thushara came live on Facebook claiming that she was attacked for serving pork. The police said she attempted to give a communal angle to this incident. The police registered a case against Thushara and her associates on the complaint of the injured cafe owners. The Infopark police said the preliminary investigation found she misrepresented the fact.

Thushara, Ajith, and Appu, who went into hiding after the police launched their investigation, were taken into custody from Kottayam district. Police said two cases were registered against them an attempt to murder case and another for attempting to spread sectarianism through Facebook. The police had earlier arrested Thushara's associates Abin Antony and Vishnu Sivadas in connection with the attack on the cafe.

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BJP, Congress activists lock up Odisha WCD minister inside bungalow for hours

Opposition Congress and BJP workers gheraoed Odisha Women and Child Development Minister Tukuni Sahu and kept her confined for hours in a government bungalow at Kuchinda township here on Wednesday during a 12-hour shutdown by the two parties against the attack on their workers by alleged ruling BJD activists during a visit by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Sahu was in Kuchinda to distribute smart health cards under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, which was launched in the district by Patnaik on Tuesday.

The opposition parties workers rushed to the bungalow when the minister was chairing a meeting of officers there before attending a programme to distribute smart health cards and locked the main gate forcing her to be confined there, the police said.

They raised slogans against the government for Tuesday's attack by BJD workers on Congress and BJP activists who were demonstrating during the chief minister's visit to press their demand for the removal of Minister of State for Home D S Mishra in the Kalahandi woman teacher kidnap and murder case. As Sahu was forced to stay in the bungalow for hours, the local police rushed to it and picked up the protestors.

"We picked up the protestors to maintain the law and order situation as the ruling BJD activists had also reached the place," he said.

Ravi Naik, the BJP state general secretary was among those picked up by the police.

BJP and Congress had separately called the 12-hour Kuchinda bandh after the president of the Kuchinda Youth Congress unit, Jayant Kishan was beaten up mercilessly by a group of people allegedly members of BJD on Tuesday. Kishan is still in hospital.

The bandh evoked partial response in the township as the business community of the area did not extend support in view of Dhanteras and Diwali festivals. Naik told reporters before being picked up by the police that the BJP workers were holding a demonstration when the BJD goons attacked them during the chief minister's visit on Tuesday. "This is gundaraj by the BJD and the police administration had turned a mute spectator to the attack on the opposition party activists. We have therefore called for the bandh from 6 am on Wednesday".

Congress leader Rajendra Kumar Chhatra echoed him and said that the party gave the bandh call to protest against BJD's "gundaraj".

Misra is being accused by the

opposition parties of being close to the prime accused in the Kalahandi teacher murder case and even helping him to escape from police custody on October 17 night, nine days after the crime.

The minister has denied the allegations and has claimed that he had no role in the crime. However, he did not say anything on his alleged link with the prime accused in his two-page statement clarifying his position. Meanwhile, a report from Ganjam said that Odisha Speaker S N Patro and BJD Berhampur MP Chandrasekhar Sahu were also gheraoed by locals at Tikarpada village in Digapahandi when they went there to inaugurate the smart classroom of the village school and a new building of Mission Shakti.

The villagers gheraoed their convoy for about two hours alleging negligence of the development of the area by the state government. The villagers said that Tikarpada lacks a motorable road till and the government welfare schemes had failed to help the beneficiaries.

A scuffle took place between them and the police who were deployed there when the force personnel tried to forcibly take away the two dignitaries. Patro and Sahu were, however, later allowed to go by the villagers after they assured that they will look into their grievances.

Jaipur: People ignore Covid-19 protocols in markets across city

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"You can look outside. Who is wearing a mask?", another shopkeeper questioned when asked about masks.

When India Today visited the walled city area of Jaipur, including markets that exist near Badi Chaupad, Choti Chaupad and several other market places, including those at MI Road, Malviya Nagar, hundreds of people were seen ignoring the protocol even as India records over 10,000 Covid-19 cases every day. Several customers, when spoken to by India Today, came up with different reasons for not following the government-set protocols. "My mask fell off on the road. I made the mistake of coming over here without a mask. I will ensure that I wear a mask in future," a customer said. The mood in markets has changed with people coming out in large numbers, months after battling the deadly second wave of the pandemic triggered by the Delta variant.

Bursting firecrackers not a matter of religion, let people breathe, says Delhi Environment Minister

Bursting firecrackers is not a matter of religion, it affects people's lives, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday and urged the opposition not to jeopardise the wellbeing of children and the elderly for political ambitions. He also appealed to the Centre to issue an advisory to Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to mandatorily stop stubble burning during the Diwali period. At a press conference, Rai alleged that some people of opposition parties are trying to sabotage the AAP government's fight against pollution by linking firecracker bursting to religion. "Bursting of firecrackers is not a matter of religion. It is a matter of people's lives. Some people want to fulfil their political ambitions... I appeal to them with folded hands to not play with the lives of Delhi's children and the elderly. "There are many other issues for politics. Please let people breathe. Diwali means diyas (lamps) not firecrackers," he said. Rai said Delhi's air quality a day before Diwali was the best in five years.

"Favourable weather conditions and people's support to the government's anti-pollution campaign are reasons for best October air quality in five years," he said.

"I also urge the Centre to issue a mandatory advisory to Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to stop burning stubble at least during the Diwali period so that people can breathe easy after the festival," the minister said.



'No child deserves to be treated like this':

Rahul Gandhi on Aryan in letter to Shah Rukh Khan, Gauri

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wrote to Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan last month, expressing his solidarity with them. He wrote to them on October 14 after their son Aryan Khan was arrested on October 3 in the Mumbai cruise drug case.

Sources told India Today that Rahul Gandhi wrote to them, saying he was 'sorry' that they had to go through all the difficulties. He added in the letter: "No child deserves to be treated like this." Rahul Gandhi also mentioned: "I have seen the good work you have done for

people. I am sure their blessings and goodwill will be with you."

Expressing his sympathies, he wished them well and hoped that they will be together soon. Aryan Khan was released on bail from Mumbai's Arthur Road prison 22 days after his arrest in Mumbai cruise ship drugs case.

Aryan Khan stepped out of jail on October 30, after the Bombay High Court granted him bail on October 28. According to sources, the stay at Arthur Road jail had been 'mentally tough and challenging' for the 23-year-old. Hence, Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri are

considering getting a life coach for Aryan to help him overcome the experience he had in prison.

The Narcotics Control Bureau had opposed Aryan Khan's bail plea, stating that he was involved in a conspiracy and therefore should not be granted bail in the Mumbai cruise drugs bust case. "Khan was accused of being used to procure contraband, and the contraband was found in the custody of [Arbaaz] Merchant. The investigations pertaining to transactions abroad need to be investigated and are being investigated," the NCB said.

I-T department detects illegal income of Rs 70 crore of Karnataka firm

The Income Tax (I-T) department has detected unaccounted income of Rs 70 crore allegedly generated by a Karnataka-based group that is engaged in construction of roads and irrigation projects, officials said.

The tax officials had initiated a search and seizure operation on the business group on October 28. Various premises of the group in North Karnataka were searched by the ED.

"The search operation has revealed that this group has been suppressing its profits by booking bogus expenses in purchase of materials, labour expenses and payment to subcontractors," said a statement by the I-T department.

The officials have alleged that various incriminating documents, including digital evidence, indicating non-genuine claims of such expenses, were found and seized during searches.

"Unaccounted cash has been received by the key group person from such vendors and suppliers of materials. It was also found that their own relatives, friends and employees were used as conduits in the name of subcontractors who neither executed any work nor did they have the capability or capacity to execute the work," the I-T department said.

The business group has been allegedly generating unaccounted cash through these transactions.

Aide of ex-DMK minister's son gets 7-year jail term in money laundering case



A Chennai court on Wednesday convicted K Liakath Ali, an importer and an alleged close aide of late DMK minister KC Mani's son Mani Anbazhagan, and sent him to jail for seven years in a money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The court has also imposed a

fine of Rs 1 crore on Ali. If he fails to pay the fine, he will have to undergo one-year imprisonment.

The court has also ordered the confiscation of Rs 1.76 crore which was attached by the ED in the form of a fixed deposit. ED INITIATED MONEY-LAUNDERING PROBE IN 2017 The ED had initiated a money-laundering investigation on the basis of FIR registered by the Central Crime Branch-I (CCB-1), Chennai in March 2017.

The financial probe agency, during its investigation, found that Ali was part of the gang

operating with complete anonymity and was involved in sending the proceeds of crime under the guise of permissible merchandise imports, without making corresponding imports into the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA), by using the forged import documents as genuine.

Ali was arrested on April 3, 2017 for making foreign outward remittance of USD 27.86 lakh (equivalent INR 18.66 crore) through Indian Bank's Thousand Light Branch in Chennai for his role in opening a current account in the name

of Galaxy Impex by submitting forged identity documents under the fake name of 'Waseem Liakath Ali' without disclosing the beneficial owner either within the country or outside the country and end-use in the recipient nation.

After being arrested, Ali remained incarcerated during trial for 33 months on account of the failure to meet the conditions for grant of bail before all judicial forums.

The ED filed a chargesheet on June 6, 2017 and charges were framed by the court in December 2019.

After battling for cracker sellers, Punjab CM Channi now announces Diwali bonus for all construction workers



To mitigate sufferings caused due to the loss of livelihood of construction workers in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Wednesday announced another instalment of interim financial relief of Rs. 3100 each for all construction workers registered with the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Welfare Board.

Notably, each registered construction worker will get Rs 3,100 as a Diwali bonus.

Making this announcement on

the eve of Diwali, CM Channi said, "The financial grant of Rs.3100 is a shagun for the construction workers and their families on the joyous festival of lights."

Pointing out further, the Chief Minister said that the said amount would be directly transferred into the bank accounts of construction workers.

Notably, the Board has nearly 3.17 lakh registered construction workers across the state and the disbursement is likely to involve an expenditure of Rs. 90-100 Crores on this count.

Moreover, CM Channi has also asked the Sarpanches and Councillors both in rural and urban areas to get the maximum number of construction workers registered so that they could be immensely benefitted from various welfare schemes being extended by the Board from time to time.

CM Channi, who is also the Chairman of the Board informed that the said financial assistance is being extended as the livelihood of these construction workers has been impacted due to the Covid pandemic.

Assuring the workers and their families all possible support, CM Channi said that his government is committed to helping the deserving and weaker sections of society who don't have the means to fend for themselves.

Meanwhile, the Labour Minister, Sangat Singh Gilzian said that even though the situation is gradually stabilizing and improving, the progress of ongoing construction projects is still slow in the majority of places and is yet to pick up

Punjab Deputy CM Sukhjinder Randhawa orders probe into 'recruitment of non-Punjabis' in police



Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa ordered a probe on Wednesday into claims of gangster-turned-social activist Lakha Sidhana that Punjab Police recruited nearly 300 constables and other officials from other states.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Lakha Sidhana alleged that "nearly 300 people from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar were recruited in the ranks of constables, inspectors and DSPs [in Punjab]".

"They [those recruited from other states] further got their immediate relatives recruited in various other departments," Lakha Sidhana said.

"The [Shiromani] Akali Dal and the Congress are raking up the BSF jurisdiction issue, saying this is an attack on the federal structure. But, by recruiting people from neighbouring states, they have also infringed on the rights of Punjabis," Lakha Sidhana said.

Taking note of Sidhana's allegations, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa sought a detailed report within seven days from Director General of Police DGP Iqbalpreet Singh Sahota on the matter.

Calling it a serious issue, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said there was a need to take immediate action.

"The Punjab government will go to the root of the case and strict action will be taken if any violation of law has taken place," Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa's fake tweet claims schools to close over rising Covid-19 cases, probe ordered

(News Agencies)-A screenshot mimicking a Twitter post from Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has gone viral on social media claiming that the cases of Covid-19 have gone up in the state and that schools and colleges will remain closed from November 20. This is a "fake" tweet, Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Twitter attaching the screenshot. The government has ordered probe into the incident to find out those



responsible for spreading misinformation. Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "A fake tweet bearing my name is circulating saying that since Covid-19 cases have gone up, schools and colleges in the state are being closed down from November 20. This is fake and wrong, and should be heeded to." The Assam chief minister appealed to people to "stay off misinformation and fake news" as he asked the police "to take note and act" in the matter.



Petrol price cut by Rs 5, diesel by Rs 10 as govt slashes excise duty

The excise duty has been reduced by Rs 5 on petrol and Rs 10 on diesel, effective from Thursday.

On the eve of Diwali, the Government of India announced a reduction in the excise duty levied on petrol and diesel.

The excise duty has been reduced by Rs 5 on petrol and Rs 10 on diesel, effective from Thursday.

Fuel prices were sharply hiked on October 20 by state-run oil marketing companies.

According to a statement by the Centre, the reduction in excise duty on diesel will be double that of petrol. The Centre is hoping that the reduction in excise on diesel will boost the farmers' income

during the upcoming Rabi season.

The statement further read: "In recent months, crude oil prices have witnessed a global upsurge. Consequently, domestic prices of petrol and diesel had increased in recent weeks, exerting inflationary pressure. The world has also seen shortages and increased prices of all forms of energy." "The Government of India has made efforts to ensure that there is no energy shortage in the country and that commodities such as petrol and diesel are available adequately to meet our requirements," it

added.

A fuel-driven inflation hike could, therefore, destabilise the economic recovery as prices of goods - from daily grocery to luxury products - will keep rising and consumer demand will fall as a result.

Higher inflation could also threaten the Reserve Bank of India's plan to maintain a low interest rate regime that has helped the economy recover substantially after two waves of the pandemic pummelled growth.

Despite the risks, the government has defended collecting higher taxes on fuel.

Taxes levied on fuel in India are among the highest in the world.

Meanwhile, the plan to include petroleum products under the ambit of GST, which is expected to significantly reduce petrol and diesel prices, is far from reaching a conclusion. Therefore, the two major options to reduce fuel prices are effectively out of reach at the moment.

Petrol prices on Wednesday, October 3, were as follows:
New Delhi: Rs 110.04
Kolkata: Rs 110.49
Mumbai: Rs 115.85
Chennai: Rs 106.76

Assam govt to survey Char riverine areas in crackdown on land grabbers



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday that a section of people have grabbed the lands of poor people in the Char areas in Assam, forcing them to move to other places. A survey of land in the Char areas is required, he added. "I think, some matabbar (influential) people of Baghbar and Jania constituencies in Barpeta district are grabbing the lands of poor people in the Char areas and they force the poor people to move to other places like Lumding, Dhekiajuli. Matabbari system in Assam can end with a survey of land in Char areas. With this, minority people will benefit," Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

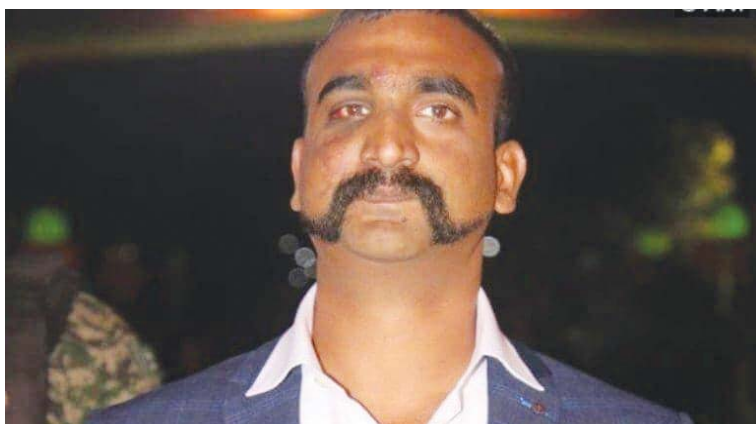
He further said that recently the state government has surveyed the reason behind encroachment in Lumding reserve forest in Hojai district. The Assam CM vowed to issue a white paper on Lumding forest encroachment.

ASSAM CM VOWS TO ISSUE WHITE PAPER

"During the survey, we found that in Lumding reserve forest three businessmen have initiated ginger cultivation; they brought people and settled there. They are making these people work like bonded labour. We will publish a white paper on Lumding reserve forest," the Assam Chief Minister said. "We are all encouraging encroachment of forest and encouraging a Mahajani system. All profits are going to the hands of three mighty Mahajans, not to the poor people," Himanta Biswa Sarma said. On September 23, during the eviction drive carried out by the Darrang district administration in the Dholpur Gorukhuti area in Darrang district, there were violent clashes between locals and police which resulted in the death of two people and injured many others including 15 policemen.

Balakot air-strike hero Abhinandan promoted as Group Captain

(News Agencies)-The Indian Air Force has promoted war hero Wing Commander Abhinandan to the rank of Group Captain. Abhinandan is credited to have been the only Mig-21 pilot ever to have shot down an F-16. Abhinandan was awarded the Vir Chakra for his role in the February 2019 air strike on terrorist camps in Pakistan. He shot down the F-



16 over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but was taken captive by the Pakistan Army after his plane was shot down by enemy forces. However, he maintained his composure even in captivity, holding his head high. Abhinandan's unit 51 Squadron also received a unit citation for its role in thwarting the Pakistan Air Force's aerial attack on February 27, 2019.

'No logic':

Bombay HC on denial of foodgrains to Thane tribals over Aadhaar issues

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

(News Agencies)-Bombay HC has directed the state government to distribute foodgrains to those in Thane's tribal areas even if they have no Aadhaar cards.

The Bombay High Court has directed the Maharashtra government to distribute foodgrains to those in Thane's tribal areas as part of the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the National Food Security Act, even if they do not have Aadhaar cards.

Residents of Thane's tribal areas had approached the High Court with a grievance that they are deprived of foodgrains as their Aadhaar cards are not linked with the system.

The division bench of Justices PB Varale and MJ Jamdar said, "It is disheartening when we, the fortunate, are eagerly awaiting the festive season and the festival of lights would spread joy and happiness. Here are the few petitioners, members of the marginalised section in general and tribals in particular, who have approached this court on a grievance that they are deprived of the basic requirement of human life, i.e., food, only on account that the state

machinery is not technically equipped to give them the benefits flowing from the scheme formulated and floated by the Union of India and to be implemented and executed by the respective states."

In a circular dated October 13, 2016, the Maharashtra government had ordered that for receiving PDS benefits, it is a prerequisite that the Aadhaar card of each member of the family enlisted in the ration card must have been linked to the Revenue Case Management System (RCMS).

The government pleader submitted that the reason for non-distribution of foodgrains to

some persons is that their Aadhaar card is linked to a different place from their residence.

However, the court reasoned that considering these were all tribal persons and not literate as such if a mistake is committed by the shop owner, the same cannot be the reason for denial of foodgrains to the ration cardholder under the benevolent schemes.

After hearing the arguments, the court opined that the government barring the distribution of foodgrains under PDS in absence of Aadhaar linkage was in stark contrast to the notification by the Centre in

2017 which stated that for identification of a beneficiary, Aadhaar card was one of the criteria, and for identification, Aadhaar was not the sole criteria.

85 people had approached the Tahsildar, Murbad, raising the grievance of non-receiving foodgrains under PDS. They made various representations to district authorities.

The court observed that they were the "beneficiaries of schemes framed by the central government and the state government and they are expecting the regular distribution of foodgrains to them and particularly for the

festival season."

The court directed civic authorities by way of an interim order to distribute foodgrains amongst the tribals after verifying their ration cards in compliance with the provisions of the National Food Security Act and the PDS under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

"We are unable to find any logic, reason or rationale for denying the benefits of foodgrain distribution, raising certain technical grounds," the court said. The court directed authorities to complete the exercise by November 4, 2021.

PM Modi to spend Diwali with Army personnel at border outposts in J&K's Rajouri

The forward area of Nowshera sector in Jammu & Kashmir's Rajouri is gearing up for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Diwali visit on Thursday, November 4. Prime Minister Modi is expected to visit the border outposts to spend Diwali with the troops. Ever since he became the Prime Minister in 2014, Modi has been a regular visitor to

the border outposts on Diwali. He gifts sweets and other gifts to the jawans. Modi had spent Diwali with the troops in Rajouri in 2019 as well.

Army personnel are conducting a massive search in the forest belt of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Rajouri to flush out terrorists.

Poonch has seen a number of casualties of Army personnel in

fight against terrorists. An officer and a jawan of the Indian Army were killed in a mine blast near a forward post along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri on Saturday. Another soldier was injured in the incident.

Another important sector for the Indian Army is the Ladakh sector, where troops have been deployed along the India-China

border for more than 18 months now to check any incursion by the neighbouring country.

Since assuming office in 2014, the Prime Minister has been celebrating Diwali by spending time with soldiers in the forward areas in states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Ambanis Deny Move To UK. Why They Bought 300-Acre Property

Reliance Industries Limited said a recent report "has led to unwarranted and baseless speculation in social media regarding the Ambani family's plans to partly reside in Stoke Park, London."

New Delhi: After several reports claimed Reliance Industries Limited chairman Mukesh Ambani and his family are likely to move to London, following their acquisition of Stoke Park estate there, the Reliance group on Friday issued a statement rejecting the "baseless" reports. A recent report in a newspaper has led to unwarranted and baseless speculation in social media regarding the Ambani family's plans to partly reside in Stoke Park, London," the statement said. The company said it would like to clarify that Mr Ambani and his family have "no plans whatsoever to relocate or reside in London or anywhere else in the world." Mukesh Ambani, Asia's richest person, lives with his family in a 400,000 square feet Altamount road residence,

Antilia, in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Recent reports had said that the Ambani family is expected to make the 300-acre country club in Buckinghamshire, Stoke Park, their primary residence. However, the Reliance group said that its Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings Limited, "which acquired Stoke Park estate recently, would like to clarify that its acquisition of the heritage property is aimed at enhancing this as a premier golfing and sporting resort, while fully complying with the planning guidelines and local regulations." This acquisition will add to the fast-growing consumer business of the group. Simultaneously, it will also expand the footprint of India's famed hospitality industry globally," the statement said.



Delhi, Neighbouring Cities Wrapped In Smog Blanket 2 Days After Diwali

Delhi's AQI standing at 6 am was reported at 533, which puts it in the 'severe' category, with particulate matter (PM) levels the highest in the last three years.



"Relief is expected only from the evening of November 7 but AQI will fluctuate within the 'very poor' range," the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research, or SAFAR, said.

Air quality levels in the national capital plummeted to hazardous levels Thursday night and Friday, after thousands in the city and nearby areas violated bans on firecrackers imposed by the Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana governments. The city woke up today under a blanket of toxic smog with particulate matter (PM) at 457 - the highest levels in the past three years.

Concentrations of PM2.5 stood at 341 per cubic metre at Delhi's Jantar Mantar - against the WHO's prescribed safe limit of 25. Airborne PM2.5 can cause cardiovascular and respiratory diseases such as lung cancer. Those with respiratory problems have been advised to stay indoors.

A cyclist complained of "too much smog" and said they were struggling with low visibility and were facing difficulty in breathing. Another said that if the Delhi government were to reinstate its odd-even scheme "there is hope... but right now it doesn't seem like the pollution will

ease". Several reports and studies show that Delhi has the worst air quality of all world capitals. On Diwali day, despite the Delhi government's ban, including the "green" ones, several people were seen bursting crackers, contributing to the deterioration of the air quality. "The firecracker ban didn't seem to be successful in Delhi, which led to hazardous pollution levels adding on top of existing perennial sources," Sunil Dahiya from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) was quoted by news agency Reuters.

New Delhi: A thick blanket of toxic smog gripped Delhi and nearby cities for a second consecutive day today as the national capital region continued to suffer from a post-

Diwali hangover. At 6 am Delhi's AQI was 533, which puts it in the 'severe' category. The AQI in the adjoining areas of Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Greater Noida was higher.

Hike In Excise Duty, VAT On Fuel Prices "Jizyah Tax": Congress Leader

Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said in the first nine months of the year 2021 alone, petrol price was increased by ₹ 28 per litre and diesel price by ₹ 26 per litre.

Chandigarh: Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala on Friday dubbed the "rapid and repeated backbreaking increase" in the excise duty and VAT on petrol and diesel in past as "Jizyah tax" by the Narendra Modi government at the centre and ML Khattar-led government in Haryana. Mr Surjewala made the assertion amid various non-

BJP-ruled states refusing to slash the VAT to further lower the fuel prices in the wake of the Centre lowering its excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹ 5 and ₹ 10 respectively with various BJP-ruled states lowering VAT on them. "The rapid and repeated backbreaking increase in excise duty and State VAT on the two fuels are Jizyah Tax by Modi and Khattar governments,"

he said in a statement. Jizyah was a tax system in countries governed by Islamic law.

"In the first nine months of the year 2021 alone, petrol price was increased by ₹ 28 per litre and diesel price by ₹ 26 per litre. Reduction in the price of petrol and diesel by ₹ 5 and ₹ 10 per litre respectively is being tom-tommed as a Diwali gift. This is a clear deception," Mr

Surjewala said in a statement. "During the previous Congress government up till October 2014, VAT on diesel in Haryana was 8.8 per cent. Post-reduction and even on date, VAT in Haryana is 18 per cent and additional VAT in the state is five per cent. This is a clear increase of over 100 per cent. Even after the so-called reduction of VAT on November 4, 2021, the VAT on petrol is

18.20 per cent and additional VAT is 5 per cent," he added. "Will the duo of Khattar-Dushyant Chautala answer people for this brazen loot by their government?" he asked. The Haryana government had announced a reduction in VAT on the fuels on Thursday, making them cheaper in the BJP-JJP-ruled state by ₹ 12 per litre.

Kiran Gosavi took Rs 50 lakh from Shah Rukh Khan's manager through Prabhakar Sail: Sam D'Souza

(News Agencies)-Sanville Adrian D'Souza aka Sam D'Souza, a business consultant who allegedly 'brokered a deal' to help actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan in the drugs-on-cruise case, has alleged that the panch witnesses in the case - Kiran Gosavi and Prabhakar Sail - took money from Bollywood star's manager Pooja Dadlani.

D'Souza claimed this in his anticipatory bail petition that he filed in the Bombay High Court. In his petition, D'Souza claimed innocence, saying he was tricked by Gosavi to help out Aryan Khan.

He said he arranged the meeting between Pooja Dadlani and Gosavi on October 3, the day after Aryan Khan was taken into custody by the NCB. D'Souza claimed Dadlani and Gosavi spoke in private and Shah Rukh Khan's manager gave Rs 50 lakh to Gosavi.

D'SOUZA'S CONNECTION TO ARYAN KHAN CASE

D'Souza's name had cropped up in the alleged extortion racket case that came up during the Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) probe into the drugs-on-cruise case in which Aryan Khan was arrested.

Sam D'Souza has approached the high court seeking anticipatory bail and a direction to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Mumbai Police to probe the allegations of extortion levelled against NCB officials. In his petition, D'Souza said he worked as a consultant in the stone quarrying business. He elaborated his connection with the Aryan Khan case, saying that on October 1, one Sunil Patil - engaged in corporate liaison - called him to share information about drugs being used in the Cordelia cruise party.

D'SOUZA'S GOSAVI CONNECTION

He claimed that Patil told him about big celebrities being informed about the case. D'Souza

has attached the WhatsApp chat between him and Patil to back his claim in his petition.

D'Souza claimed that Patil asked him for contact with the NCB. D'Souza shared the contact details of an NCB official. He said Patil then informed him about Kiran Gosavi and another individual, Manish Bhanushali, contacting him in the matter.

HOW D'SOUZA GOT INVOLVED IN THE CASE

D'Souza said Patil was then informed on October 2 - the night when the NCB conducted a raid on the cruise - about an influential person being taken into custody. Patil wanted him to find out who that person was, D'Souza said. At first, D'Souza said, he refused but later went along with his associate Kapil Dhole Patil in his Toyota Innova Crysta car at Green Gate, the International Cruise Terminal where the ship was anchored.

D'Souza, however, said it was Gosavi who informed him about



Aryan Khan's arrest. D'Souza then informed Patil about him, who asked him to follow Gosavi's car. Gosavi and Patil were in touch while he followed the car, claimed D'Souza.

D'Souza claimed that Gosavi told him that Aryan Khan wanted to speak with Shah Rukh Khan's manager.

MEETING WITH SHAH RUKH'S MANAGER

His petition said, "Gosavi revealed that Aryan Khan had no drug in

his possession till that time and he is innocent and Kiran Gosavi convinced me that he could help Aryan Khan to get some relief and asked me to connect with Pooja Dadlani."

D'Souza claims to have told Kiran Gosavi that he did not have any direct connection with Pooja Dadlani but he would try to reach out to her. D'Souza managed to get in touch with Pooja Dadlani through a mutual friend, a hotelier.

WARNING: MAY CONTAIN LEAD

Ayurvedic medicines can contain lead, which can cause learning and behavior problems in children, miscarriage in pregnant women, and infertility.

- If you use Ayurvedic medicines, ask your doctor for a blood lead test.

Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/leadfree for more information.

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Health

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Mayor
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Commissioner

Democrats' abysmal election results show it's time to rethink politics

Samir Wankhede controversy in India's Drug wars

This seems like the perfect moment to rethink what we thought we knew about American politics, the way the country runs, and the laundry list of lies that we have been force-fed for the past year. Now is the moment. Because clearly, we're at an inflection point. Last night, if you were to sum it up in a single phrase, we've had enough. There's a limit to which you can push the American population before they gently and politely push back through democratic means. And that's exactly what we just saw. It is now impossible to deny that this country is in the middle of some kind of political realignment, and the people who run our country did not see it coming. There are a lot of examples here, the obvious ones that the not so obvious. Just start with the latter. In Texas last night, Republicans just flipped an overwhelmingly Hispanic district, one that went for Joe Biden by 14 points a year ago. Fourteen points. Because, of course, Hispanic districts go Democrat because Hispanics are Democrats, right? Well, the Republican in that district, John Lujan, won, and he won by calling for the one thing you're not allowed to call for in an overwhelmingly Hispanic district: Border security. Countries have borders. Everybody understands that no matter what color they are, it turns out. Meanwhile, in a place that looks very different from the southern parts of Texas, Minneapolis - really the cradle of anxious White liberalism, the place where the defund the police first sounded like a good idea - in Minneapolis, voters overwhelmingly rejected a measure to defund their own police and get rid of their police department. Turns out we need police even in Minneapolis. That's dawned on them. And then in the state of New Jersey, a truck driver who spent a total of \$150 on his campaign is, as of right now, beating the longtime president of the New Jersey state Senate. And it's not mindlessly populist to suggest he'll probably be better, actually. But the headline is the party that is calling for firing truck drivers is suddenly losing elections to truck drivers, and if that's not sweet, we don't know what the word means. Meanwhile, the governor of that state, the self-appointed king of New Jersey, the finance goon Phil Murphy, was, of course, going to win his race by some massive margin. It's New Jersey, it's a machine state. Joe Biden won it by 16 points a year ago. But that's not what happened. Not even close. Instead, Phil Murphy apparently barely made it across the finish line. That's not even totally settled. But as of right now, Murphy's margin of victory is less than 1%. Does he see that as an endorsement of his

policies? Good job, Phil Murphy winning by less than 1% in New Jersey. He probably does. That's how deluded these people are.

But here's the headline, as you're certainly aware by now as the Commonwealth of Virginia, it's Glenn Youngkin, a man you had not heard of last year. Ten months ago, Glenn Youngkin's name recognition was 2%. If you didn't live next to Glenn Youngkin, you'd never heard of him.

He ran against the former governor of Virginia, who was governor just four years ago, one of the most famous people in the Democratic Party for 30 years, Bill Clinton's best friend, Terry McAuliffe. And he spanked him.

How do you do that, exactly? Well, in a lot of ways. But here's one interesting slice of the demographic pie. Fox News has found that Hispanics voted for Glenn Youngkin by a nine-point margin.

Well, that's odd, because the entire campaign against Glenn Youngkin was based on him being a racist. It turns out normal people don't believe that, and they're sick of hearing it.

In her victory speech, the lieutenant governor of Virginia, the woman who ran with Glenn Youngkin, her name is Winsome Sears made this point - This is the essential point, and it's clear that most Americans very clearly agree with it: This is not a racist country. Stop telling us that it is. Stop lecturing us. Improve our lives. WINSOME SEARS: There are some who want to divide us, and we must not let that happen. They would like us to believe we are back in 1963 when my father came. We can live where we want. We can eat where we want. We own the water fountains. We have had a Black president elected not once but twice. And here, I am living proof. Well, exactly. Nicely put, nicely illustrated. Stop it, Democratic propaganda machine, NBC News, The Atlantic. The White House. Stop lying to a stop picking the scab. Stop trying to divide us by how we look. That was the core message that voters in Virginia sent last night. The question is, will Washington manage to decipher what they have said? And unfortunately, the odds of that are not great. Remember that on his final night of this bitterly fought campaign, Terry McAuliffe, who knows his way around politics, brought in someone called Randi Weingarten to speak on his behalf on stage. Yes, Randi Weingarten, a repulsive teachers union hack from New York who has precisely no interest in or connection to the voters of Virginia. So what's the message of that? The message is really clear: We don't care about you at all, you play no role in this, this is an inside game.

By Susmita Ghosh

Hailed as a super-cop who does not flinch even before the Bollywood royalty to a police officer is marred in controversy and allegation of corruption. The perception about Sameer Wankhede is going for a roller-coaster ride in the recent weeks.

Crucial time it is for India while combatting against the rising drug conflicts. The outcome of this incident can dictate how the war will go and exactly how the officials will take risks of high-profile arrests.

When it comes to Sameer Wankhede, he is no stranger to tussle with the big names. The present Zonal Director of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) did several stints with the National Investigation Agency as well.

He caught the pop singer Mika Singh at the airport with foreign currency. He also led the exposed investigation in Bollywood drug usage after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. He questioned and probed famous personalities like Rhea Chakraborty, Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan and so on. Nevertheless, this is the first time he has faced such hostility from the fans and the political personnel too.

Nawab Malik, a senior minister from Maharashtra, led the charge against NCB and Sameer Wankhede. He has involved Wankhede over social media, claiming irregularities in his 26 old cases. Later he took the matter faraway asking about Sameer's caste, his marriage and even his mother, whom he lost a few years back.

The attack on this scale is unmatched as Nawab Malik took this as his personal revenge, related to his son-in-law, Sameer Khan's arrest by the NCB in an alleged drug case in January, 2021. In the drug-bust case, the officials are caught in the power play of politics. The NCP-Shiv Sena alliance is crying foul in the case. Alternatively, Shri Shiv Pratishthan Yuva Hindustan, (SSPYH) expressed their support with Sameer Wankhede. The BJP, the ruling party in the centre is staying away from the controversy. The NCB is receiving complete support from the centre, hence the case is going ahead.

The allegation of drug usage against several members of the Bollywood industry is not new. Adding politics to the mix has muddled the whole affair. It became difficult for the officials to battle against the rising drug addiction, especially among the youth.

There are two major segments from the strategies taken by the DEA collaborations against the international drug cartels. Apparently, the first one is the supply chain.

The final supplier and the end-user, should be taken into account quite seriously. While positive reinforcements like anti-drug campaigns can boost the movement to a high extent, the negativity of drug abuse can result in holding back the youth from experimenting.

Hence, Aryan Khan case is aptly highlighted in the media. A star-kid and a youth icon in his own rights, Aryan Khan affect his followers across the

(Contd on page 35)



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India can't turn into another China.

It must protect our 'mother nature' from danger

India must reorient its strategy towards an ecologically sustainable pathway. There is no space in the world for another China.

The climate change summit in Glasgow is probably the last chance for the assembled leaders of the world to avoid catastrophic and irreversible climate change. They will have to negotiate a safe passage for our threatened planet through a perfect storm that is building up right around the corner. These negotiations will have to be approached in a new spirit, where each leader comes as a maximalist, not displaying the minimalist mindset that we are familiar with in international negotiations. The latter is guaranteed to deliver least common denominator outcome and the time for that is long past. The results of the G-20 summit in Rome, held on the eve of the Glasgow climate change summit, are mostly disappointing in that respect.

What is at stake is the fundamental question of how humanity relates to nature. For many centuries, Indian sages and philosophers taught us to revere nature as a mother and as a source of nurture; never take from her what she, even in her plenitude, could not replenish. But that message of harmony with nature has become a barely audible whisper in our own ravaged landscape. And yet, it is in our own redemption that we can nudge the world down a different path from the dead-end that awaits it on its present trajectory.

Neglect of the biodiversity conference

There has been virtually no coverage in national and international media of another major conference related to ecology, the 15th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on

Biodiversity, the first of which was convened in the Chinese city of Kunming between 11 and 15 October 2021. But if we are talking about the relationship between humanity and nature as the very heart of the challenge that confronts us, then the outcome of the Kunming meeting should have demonstrated a modicum of the ambition that we all expect from Glasgow.

We cannot be ambitious on climate change but remain indifferent to the relentless and growing loss of biodiversity that is taking place across the planet. They are symptoms of the same ecological degradation that is taking place across our world. You cannot arrest climate change while ignoring the accelerating loss of biodiversity. Think of the growing clamour to sign on to net zero emissions by 2050 as the key goal for the Glasgow summit. Net-zero implies that emissions by that date will be offset by carbon sinks in the shape of forests, the oceans, and technological fixes, as yet unviable, of carbon capture and storage. Forests around the world are depleting at historically unprecedented rates. So how much of this green sink will still be available to absorb emissions by 2050? The oceans are getting clogged with plastic waste, while other hazardous material is also being dumped into them. There are several dead zones devoid of any marine life as a result of chemical runoff from chemical fertilisers and toxic pesticides being used in agriculture upstream of rivers. The oceans' capacity to absorb carbon emissions is depleting. With

continued and increasing biodiversity loss, is there any credibility to the goal of net-zero in 2050?

The depressing biodiversity story The biodiversity story is as depressing as the climate change saga. In 2010, the Aichi Declaration listed 10 biodiversity targets to be achieved by 2020. The latest biodiversity summit in Kunming acknowledged that not one of the 10 targets had been met. Let me just cite one of the targets:

"By 2020 the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible, brought close to zero and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced."

The ambition was not even to stop the loss of forests but to try and halve the rate of loss. And we are now putting our bets on there being enough forest cover by 2050 to serve as a massive carbon sink.

There is a draft of the Framework Process for post-2020 goals which is expected to be finalised when the 15th COP meets again in Kunming between 25 April and 22 May 2022. It is likely to end up with vague but high-sounding goals but with little focus on implementation and financing. The declared objective is to ensure that "biodiversity will be put on a path to recovery by 2030 at the latest." More grandly, it will seek to bring about a "transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and ensure that by 2050 a shared vision of living in harmony with Nature is fulfilled." Here is another goal for 2050.

If the labor shortage continues, the US economy won't be able to recover



After enhanced unemployment benefits expired and schools re-opened in person, many expected workers to go back to work and the nation's labor shortage to ease significantly by September. But recent data suggest that, if anything, the shortage is getting more severe. And though the risk of a severe shortage continuing into 2022 is not the most likely scenario, the chances of it are increasing. That means we could see significantly lower economic growth next year.

A majority of small firms (51%) say that they have job openings they are unable to fill, according to a September survey by the National Federation of Independent Business. The Conference Board CEO Confidence survey revealed that the percentage of firms citing difficulty attracting qualified people jumped from 57% in the second quarter of 2021 to 74% in the third. And the ratio of job openings to hires, a proxy for the average time to fill positions, is at a series high, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as is the rate at which workers voluntarily quit their jobs.

A few factors are still limiting the supply of workers. Some people are delaying a return to the labor market because they still fear catching the virus and becoming deathly ill. The federal mandate for large private employers to require workers to be vaccinated or tested weekly may be a new drag on labor supply, as some workers will not be willing to get the vaccine. What's more, older Americans' labor participation rate, which measures the share of a population that is either employed or looking for work, significantly declined during the pandemic. And there are no signs of it recovering, either because older workers are at a higher risk of becoming extremely ill from catching the virus, or they feel financially prepared for retirement given the surge in stock and home prices in recent years. In addition, many working-age Americans have become more selective in terms of the jobs they are willing to consider, or have decided to stop working altogether. Of course, how selective people can be depends on how long they can survive without a paycheck. And in the last 20 months, a significant share of households was able to increase their savings because of reduced spending, enhanced government support and a large increase in home and stock prices.

Biden Blew It.

Now The Democrats Are In Deep Trouble

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL RATINGS

AFTER 288 DAYS IN OFFICE

BIDEN	43%
TRUMP	38%
OBAMA	52%
CLINTON	47%

(BUSH IS LEFT OUT BECAUSE OF 9/11 BOOST)
Source: 538.com

see the huge double digit swing to the Republicans as major danger to his standing in West Virginia. He has already said, "it's unbelievable...what went on Virginia", and questioned the Democrat strategy of trying to push through a social spending bill, saying "you can't unite (a divided country) by just doing it by a one-party system." And without his support, and that of Sinema, the social agenda supported by the left wing of

holding the White House loses, sometimes substantially. Biden knows that only too well; the Republicans, having picked up Virginia's Governorship in 2009, swept the Democrats out of the House of Representatives gaining 63 seats in 2010, a majority that they only lost in 2018 (Trump's off-year election). The next 6 years the Obama presidency remained hostage to a Republican House and by 2014, a Republican Senate.

For Biden, the tea leaves are clear. Unless he can find some way to reignite his Presidency very soon, he will spend the next three years trying to rule by executive orders, without any legislative support. The problem that he faces, unlike Trump, is that the conservative majority in the Supreme Court, which had been very amiable to Trump's executive orders, looked less kindly on Biden's; it stopped, for example, his reversal of Trump's Mexican immigration order.

The spectre of a Trump whose control on the Republican party seems undiminished will also haunt the Democrats. With the support of more than 78% of registered Republicans, Trump is the front runner for 2024 if he chooses to and is medically fit to run. The lesson from Virginia is clear - the anti-Trump campaign that the Democrats followed didn't work, and white educated voters went back to being Republican.

While the Republicans played down Trump per se, they gave full vent to his agenda of too much government, especially in school education, where the idea of teaching the Critical Race Theory that discussed slavery and America's evolution is strong on many Democrats' agenda. Given how close 2020 was, and how far the Republican states have moved to control early voting and reduce voting access for minorities, it is unlikely that states like Georgia will go Democrat. And the wafer-thin Democratic majorities of the other tipping states in 2020, especially Arizona, Michigan and Wisconsin, may not hold with a complete lack of policies from the Democrats.

Biden stopped a second Trump term, but isn't likely to be up for another fight with him. Kamala Harris, the Vice President, doesn't seem to have cut it either. The Left wing of Democrats has been chastened by the results of Tuesday; people don't want an interfering government, seems to be the message. In this somewhat bleak scenario, the Democrats need a quick fix, or they will end up frozen out of the American political system very soon.

The Biden Presidential pregnancy lasted the full term of nine months and 16 days. It gave birth to a lame duck.

In an off-year election, the Democrats have taken a huge beating, losing both the Governor's mansion in Virginia and probably the Assembly. In New Jersey, the Democrats just managed to win by the slimmest of majorities in the gubernatorial race. Both these states had elected Joe Biden with double digit margins over Donald Trump. In New York city, a Democrat bastion, Republicans gained as well. So, in exactly a year, the public in three strong Democratic states have turned against the party, and more specifically Joe Biden.

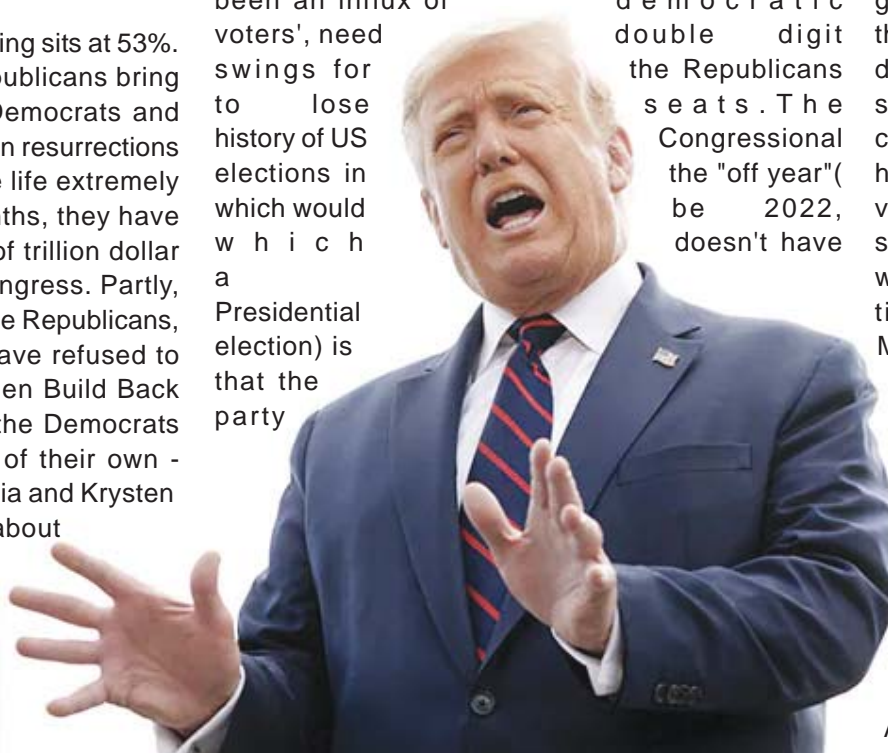
Biden has to carry the can for this. His approval rating is at 43%, Trump is the only recent president that has worse numbers than Biden.

More significantly, the disapproval rating sits at 53%. That seems to have helped the Republicans bring back voters. The tragedy for the Democrats and Biden is that that these two Republican resurrections will, in the short and long run, make life extremely difficult for them. For over nine months, they have struggled to try and get some sort of trillion dollar socio economic agenda through Congress. Partly, it is because of the intransigence of the Republicans, who are 50:50 in the Senate and have refused to cooperate in multi-trillion dollar Biden Build Back Better plan. But more importantly, the Democrats have been held to ransom by two of their own - Senators Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Krysten Sinema of Arizona - who, worried about their more conservative constituents, have refused to supported the overly liberal Big Biden Spend.

Tuesday's results are especially important to Senator Manchin, whose state abuts Virginia and will

the Democrats is dead.

So after more than 9 months of endless haggling, Biden, who projected himself as a negotiator and conciliator, has no positive legislation to show. And on the Covid front, Republican Governors have challenged his attempts to force vaccination on the private sector or enforce "Covid-appropriate behaviour". More importantly, they have pushed through legislation in more than 19 states, which makes it more difficult for Americans (read Democratic supporters, especially minorities) to vote. Many will use their state assembly majorities to redistrict congressional seats (done after every census) in way that assures Republican majorities. Called gerrymandering, it would, in a state like Texas, where there has been an influx of 'democratic voters', need double digit swings for the Republicans to lose seats. The history of US elections in which would be the "off year" (which would be 2022, Presidential election) is that the party doesn't have





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China's hypersonic missile test got US, India racing. It exposes BMD vulnerability

What happens when initial nuclear weapons are fired? India must realise hypersonic missile is part of a larger power chase.

China has carried out a test of a new space capability with a hypersonic missile, as reported first by The Financial Times. The test was supposedly carried out secretly in August 2021. The report relied on experts of the US intelligence community and could be a deliberate leak. It managed to touch the most sensitive cord of any nation's strategic community - potential vulnerability. A barrage of commentaries soon littered the information landscape. It mattered little that the development did not create a vulnerability in the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) of the US or any other nation that is deploying it. The vulnerability already existed, and all the efforts of creating a BMD system have been chasing their tail since 2001-when the US had unleashed the BMD arms race as it withdrew from the 1972 Ballistic Missile Defense Treaty with the Soviet Union. The Financial Times report indicated that the US has now been disadvantaged by China's technological progress. It sits easily with the larger narrative of Beijing's growing technological and military capability. Weakening of mutual vulnerability One ought to read the article 'Cool Your Jets: Some Perspective on the Hying of Hypersonic Weapons' published by The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in January 2020 to understand the barrage of hype that the report has now unleashed. The reality is that the development of the offensive capability to penetrate the BMD has continued to outpace its capability to defend. The White House Statement of the George W. Bush administration, on the occasion of the withdrawal in 2002, is revealing-"With the treaty now behind us, our task is to develop and deploy effective defences against limited missile attacks. As the events of September 11 made clear, we no longer live in the Cold War world for which the ABM Treaty was designed. We now face new threats from terrorists who seek to destroy our civilization by any means available to rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles. Defending the American people against these threats is my highest priority as commander-in-chief." The 1972 BMD Treaty was the outcome of sanity catching up with the unbridled nuclear arms race. It acknowledged mutual vulnerability as the pivot of strategic stability. The premise of the Treaty was that if any party constructed a BMD for protection, it would trigger the buildup of offensive capability by others and a perennial offensive-defensive arms race would ensue. The Treaty permitted the development of defences against short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 introduced the need to protect against terrorists who might come into the possession of missile capabilities. The urge to defend against the terrorist threat weakened the cornerstone of strategic stability-mutual vulnerability. Development of a plethora of missile defence systems ensued. But none of the systems has been able to provide any degree of assurance of protection. The development of offence capabilities has always been ahead of protection against it. The attack on one of Saudi Arabia's most critical oil facilities in September 2019 was indicative of the vulnerability of defence even against subsonic cruise missiles. In 2018, Vladimir Putin announced the deployment of hypersonic weapons that were invulnerable to the US' defences. He noted that the developments were specifically carried out as a response to America's abrogation of the BMD. China has now joined the race. The US, especially with its military arms, has for long been the votary of hypersonic vehicles. With developments in Russia and China, the Pentagon's budget request for hypersonic-related research has been soaring. The race is on, and it still remains a chase of one's own tail. The chase is complicated further by the deliberate reach for ambiguity regarding the payload, which could be either conventional or nuclear. India must remain in the race India is also in the race. According to reports, it is developing a dual-capable hypersonic cruise missile as part of its Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle programme. India had successfully tested a Mach 6 Scramjet in June 2019 and September 2020. Before that, in early 2000, after the Kargil conflict, the country had launched a programme to develop a BMD system that aimed to defend against threats from Pakistan. Recent reports have described its deployment. The acquisition of the S-400 Triumf from Russia and its operationalisation in a couple of years will augment India's BMD capability. India has not had much choice in joining the race to protect itself from ballistic and cruise missiles. But it should be wary of the limitations of its efforts, as the ability to overpower the defence systems will remain the state of nature category. India must arguably be in the race till sanity returns from an impossible task, and an international dialogue attempts to arrest the present madness of seeking vulnerability in the name of strengthening deterrence.



Akhilesh Yadav's Jinnah Remark

- Bad Call Or Concerted Move?

At an event in Hardoi in Central Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, an upbeat Akhilesh Yadav who has embarked on a rath yatra for the forthcoming elections, went on and on about the great contributions of "The Iron Man of India" - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. His hour-long speech appeared to serve for supporters of his party as a master class in history. Except that in the middle of it, Mr Yadav, a one-time Chief Minister of India's most politically crucial state, dropped a name that activated a huge controversy: Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"Sardar Patel, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah studied at the same institute and became barristers. They became barristers and they fought for India's freedom. They never backed away from any struggle," said Mr Yadav in a region where his Samajwadi Party has traditionally performed well. During the peak of the BJP wave in 2017, Hardoi remained with the Samajwadi Party.

First things first - Mr Yadav stated a fact. The four people he mentioned in the same breath were, at various points, alumni from University College London - Jinnah in the Links Inn

wing, Gandhi and Nehru in the Inner Temple and Sardar Patel in the Middle Temple of the college. It is also a fact that they all fought for freedom from British rule. But the part that has infused much backlash was Mr Yadav likening Jinnah's role to that of Patel, the Mahatma and Nehru. While they fought for uniting India, it is a historical fact that Jinnah pressed for the creation of a separate country.

75 years after this happened, why does it matter so much? That too in the build up to an election in UP?

The BJP has maintained an extremely hard position on any form of Jinnah glorification. Who can forget the two famous casualties within the BJP when they crossed the party line. One is Jaswant Singh who was booted out of his party in 2009 for writing a book on Jinnah. The other was the party patriarch, LK Advani, who visited Pakistan and sang praises for Jinnah at his grave in 2005. Though he wasn't removed from his then position as BJP chief, that moment lit the downward trajectory of the rest of his political career.

Mr Yadav's speech had just that one false note in an otherwise flawless celebration of Sardar Patel. But it allowed the BJP the opportunity to pump up its criticism of Mr Yadav as an

appeaser of Muslims, none of it gnomish, with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath tagging it a "Talibani mindset" and his deputy, Keshav Maurya, declaring Mr Yadav should go by "Akhilesh Ali Jinnah".

There are two ways of looking at this.

One - as Mayawati put it on Monday afternoon in a tweet, both parties are catering to their constituencies: Akhilesh appeasing Muslims and Yogi Adityanath appeasing Hindus. Picture this. Around 19 per cent of UP's population is Muslim, most of which has traditionally voted for the Samajwadi Party. Originating with patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, the famous "MY" or Muslim-Yadav vote combo has led the party to several victories. This time around, with Muslim leader and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi planning to contest 100 plus seats via strategic alliances, Mr Yadav needs to track strongly with Muslims.

The prospects of a Bihar repeat stare in the face for Akhilesh Yadav. Mr Owaisi contested on 14 seats out of 243 in Bihar in November last year. These were majorly concentrated in RJD stronghold of Seemanchal. Mr Owaisi's party succeeded in his third attempt and won five seats in Bihar, and significantly

damaged the RJD-Congress alliance in other seats as well.

In UP, Mr Owaisi plans to contest on 100 seats. His is channelising his energy on Samajwadi strongholds like Azamgarh and major pockets in and around Deoband, Shajahanpur and Muzaffarnagar in Western UP. The risk for Akhilesh is real. This could be one explanation for a form of appeasement.

But is Jinnah comments = Muslim votes a flawed assumption? Is Jinnah really important among Indian Muslims? Is praise for him going to resonate to Mr Yadav's advantage? Unlikely that this can help consolidate Muslim votes. For UP's Muslim voters, Jinnah is not a poll issue.

On the other hand, the BJP gets to remind its supporters of its long-standing anti-Jinnah policy in the hope that it will help consolidate their voter base along very predictable lines. The weaponisation of hate can be a powerful and effective tool.

This now brings us to the second point.

Who do these comments benefit? Mr Yadav could try to recover some lost ground by telling his core constituency that the BJP is demonizing Muslims in the aftermath of this comment which is reason to stand by the Samajwadi Party. He could

suggest his party has stood for decades by the Muslims of UP which is why voters should ignore newer entrants. Or he could just choose to ignore the BJP's diatribe and move on.

For the BJP, the Jinnah controversy serves as a sweet distraction. Commercial LPG cylinders in UP now cost more than ₹2,000. Petrol is well over Rs100 per litre and diesel too will hit a century soon. The government was being cornered by the Opposition on this. There are questions about law and order too. The suicide two days ago of an Ayodhya girl for allegedly being harassed by members of the UP administration has embarrassed Yogi. So, Jinnah

will be handy as a political savior. BJP sources in the state say the party will attack Mr Yadav's Jinnah comments even more in the next few days. 70 years later, and a time when price rise has broken the backbone of consumers, it seems that in UP's politics, Jinnah is far more inflammable than the expensive LPG cylinder. Thus it is no surprise that the atrocities by Babar are being highlighted 491 years after his death, names are being changed 163 years after the end of Mughal rule; Jinnah himself died 73 years ago.

Why Ambani and Adani's hydrogen fight will decide if India can contribute to saving the planet



Don't expect a gabfest in Glasgow to save the planet when the scene of real action is 4,000 miles east.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in the Scottish city is being billed as our last best chance to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-Industrial Revolution levels. But that's already unrealistic. With temperatures 1.1 degrees higher than in the second half of the 19th century and greenhouse gas emissions still rising, the ambitious goal adopted by 196 countries in Paris six years ago is a near-certain miss.

That will no doubt lead to a new round of finger-pointing between rich and poor nations about how each side is being unreasonable and unfair. For a clue to how this depressing stalemate will ever be resolved, cast your gaze to Gujarat on India's northwestern coast, where there's no sense of defeat, or even righteous indignation about being forced to go on a low-emission diet by those who were early to industrialize.

Instead, two of the world's richest businessmen are furiously writing billion-dollar checks in their race to shape our climate future. Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani owe their fortunes to carbon, and yet it's in hydrogen - the simplest known element - where a complex contest between them could open a pathway to decarbonized economic growth. India's official position just before the conference was that net zero emissions by 2050 is an unjust demand. Yet, the optimism of the tycoons from Gujarat offered a way out of the impasse. Betting on one or both to succeed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi surprised delegates at the COP26 summit by promising that the world's third-biggest emitter will reach net-zero by 2070, though real work for his team will start only after returning from Glasgow.

On climate change,

China's words and actions don't match up

President Xi Jinping didn't attend the COP26 summit in Glasgow. But it's China's answer to its energy woes that is on everyone's mind - coal.

China has refrained from making any new commitments to tackle climate change at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP26, but its past pledges remain under question.

As world leaders gathered in Glasgow, all eyes were on China - the world's biggest polluter - to assure the world about its plans to address climate change. President Xi Jinping skipped the COP26 summit, addressing it only through a written message, which was short and vague.

"We will speed up the transition to green and low-carbon energy, vigorously develop renewable energy, and plan and build large wind and photovoltaic power stations," Xi Jinping's message read.

China's commitment to reduce its use of coal in the energy sector will be on everyone's mind at the COP26 conference. Xi mentioned coal only once in his written address.

"In the past 10 years, China has eliminated 120 million kilowatts of coal-fired power from outdated installed capacity. China has installed the first batch of large-scale wind power with an installed capacity of about 100 million kilowatts. The photovoltaic base projects have started in an orderly manner recently," Xi Jinping had said in a virtual address at the G20 summit in Rome last week.

In 2020, Xi Jinping announced during his virtual address at the United Nations General Assembly that China will become a carbon-neutral country by 2060. At the assembly, Xi also announced that China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad.

China's energy woes

There has been a significant shift towards a 'green economy'. China was the first to embrace green technologies to tackle air pollution in its cities. Beijing has included reduction of carbon emissions in its domestic policy documents.

The 14th five-year plan says China will "orderly develop offshore wind power, accelerate the construction of hydropower bases in Southwest China, safely and steadily promote the construction of coastal nuclear power, build a number of complementary clean energy bases, and increase the proportion of non-fossil energy in total energy consumption to about 20%."

China's words and actions don't match up. A major energy shortage has consumed its biggest cities and coal is once again the answer. "China is expanding mines to produce 220 million metric tons a year of extra coal, a nearly 6 percent rise from last year," The New York Times reported. Large and small coal mining operations are being revived across parts of Inner Mongolia and Shaanxi where some 170 mines have been told to expand capacity.

Some experts believe that China's recent energy shortage results from the ban on importing Australian coal because of trade tensions between the two countries. But it doesn't entirely explain China's energy shortage.

A dataset from China suggests coal from Australia accounts for 20% to 30% of imported coal, only 6% of which is used for energy consumption. A big share of the imported coal is coking coal, which is used in smelting. Following the shortage, China is relying on Russia and Mongolia as an alternate supplier for its energy needs. Russia exported 24.15 million tons of coal to China in the first half of 2021.

In December 2020, the Chinese government attributed the current shortage to rebound in industrial activity after Covid-19 and the "extreme cold weather" in parts of Northeast China.

The state media has referred to a campaign to ensure energy supply to major cities after recent long power cuts. But experts in China aren't happy with the provincial governments falling back on coal to plug the energy shortage.

"However, local governments are short-sighted and irrational. To make these investments, they must be mentally prepared: high-carbon lock-in

will increase asset idleness and asset waste. After a few years of investment, coal power cannot be sold in the end. How can the cost be recovered? This is an issue that investors and local governments need to worry about," said Pan Jiahua, deputy director of the National Climate Change Expert Committee.

Going back on promises Even though Beijing has allowed some debate on climate change in recent years, it has stopped attempts to develop mass movements among its younger population. Ou Hongyi's story is a good example.

The 17-year-old became the first teenager in China to start a Greta Thunberg-inspired 'Friday for Future' climate strike. Since 2018, provincial authorities have tried to create new hurdles for Ou. She was told to stop her activism or else she would be barred from resuming her studies at the Guangxi Normal University. Authorities have even forced her to take a psychological test before she can apply for readmission.

The US has reached out to China on multiple occasions to bring Beijing onboard the climate negotiations. President Joe Biden's climate envoy John Kerry visited China twice in hope of breaking the ice on climate negotiations.





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Prashant Kishor's prediction about BJP is bang on. India's opposition has a lot to do with it

They say 'who needs enemies when you have friends like these'. For the BJP, who needs friends when you have enemies like these?

Poll strategist Prashant Kishor is right. The Bharatiya Janata Party will remain powerful for decades. But not because of Narendra Modi's legacy or Amit Shah's organisational and electoral management, but because there seems to be no real challenge to it. So if the BJP does indeed continue its iron grip over Indian politics, it can well thank the opposition.

As the BJP, under Modi and Shah, first established and began to tighten its grip over national politics 2014 onwards, the opposition too simultaneously abetted their rise, leaving the ground unchallenged. There are only two alternatives that can bring a tentacled, and now immensely popular, party like the BJP down - a strong and equally compelling pan-India party or a united opposition with a cohesive and saleable vision.

A stronger BJP under Modi-Shah... Support after the Mandir movement and Vajpayee's six-year term surely count as the BJP's milestones but in Modi-Shah era, the party has made huge strides, emerging as the only powerful national party. It's true it has tasted failure in states like Delhi and West Bengal, where popular regional leaders like Arvind Kejriwal and Mamata Banerjee got the better of it. It's also true that the BJP's expansion in the southern region of the country has been limited. But Modi and Shah have ensured the party becomes a national force to reckon with, even if it remains the weaker party in

some states. Just look at the 2019 Lok Sabha numbers in Delhi and West Bengal, the two states where the BJP lost the subsequent assembly polls, and you'll know how, irrespective of its performance in states, the party has truly established itself a national one.

What has made the BJP so powerful and victorious is a matter of greater academic research and debate. As someone who has covered elections, I would say it's a blend of Modi's unprecedented popularity and power of messaging, his government's welfare push, some smart election and voter management and, of course, the party's success in normalising its parochial version of Hindutva and popularising its majoritarian language. ...and why it will remain so

Prashant Kishor's prediction may not be wrong. He believes a party that has secured 30 per cent of the vote share isn't going anywhere in a hurry. The BJP has entrenched itself too deeply in national politics to be dislodged easily. To add to that, it has a well-spread and disciplined organisational structure, a very useful RSS cadre and a popular leader at its helm. But this isn't just about Modi or present-day BJP. It's also about how promising (or not) the opposition looks. Modi will not be the BJP's face forever, and 2024 in all likelihood will be his last Lok Sabha polls as the PM. There is no clarity on who will succeed him and whether she/he will be as effective a leader. Despite this, if it seems the BJP will continue to remain a powerful force, it is because there is no real challenger in the picture even after seven years.

Modi-Shah alone not responsible for

BJP's rise

Since there is no single force, the only other option is a combined opposition with a clear vision and binding factor. Unfortunately, for BJP's rivals, this seems like a long shot. There are way too many contradictions within the opposition for it to come together cohesively. Look at what's happening now. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) are at each other's throats, with the BSP alleging SP's collusion with the BJP, following Akhilesh Yadav's Jinnah comments. The Congress and the Trinamool Congress are fighting in West Bengal and Goa. The TMC and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) are competing to be the outsiders who will make inroads in Goa. The AAP and Congress don't particularly like each other. The Biju Janata Dal and Jagan Reddy's YSR Congress often remain neutral and cautious, as does the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, and these parties have, in fact, helped the BJP in Parliament in the past. Essentially, nobody likes or trusts anybody in the opposition camp, no matter how often they share the dais to hold hands and display a show of strength against the BJP.

Besides the fact that the opposition is deeply splintered, it also lacks that one face or idea with which it can take the BJP on.

Essentially, the BJP is in a comfortable spot for years to come, and a lot of credit for that goes to a lifeless, directionless and vision-less national opposition. They say 'who needs enemies when you have friends like these'. For the BJP, who needs friends when you have enemies like these?

Dems' plans to offer amnesty in spending package will ramp up border chaos



The United States is the most compassionate country in the world. And based upon the many blessings of a loving God, we should be a compassionate nation.

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While I still believe we are the greatest country in the world, our current trend of casting aside the rule of law is challenging that belief. In fact, our blatant refusal to follow and enforce our laws is causing chaos throughout our country and in others, including Mexico. Our children are being harmed and our freedoms are suffering.

I open with these statements because we cannot have an honest conversation about the push for amnesty through the budget reconciliation process without discussing the consequences of casting aside the rule of law. In February of 2017, I accompanied several senators and congressmen to a ranch in South Texas to see firsthand the damage to private land caused by illegal immigration. During the visit, even though amnesty for illegal immigrants was not being discussed in Congress at the time, the ranch owner implored the elected members not to introduce any bills that might include amnesty. She said any time amnesty was discussed she saw a huge influx in illegal immigration across her land. She also found dead people who smugglers abandoned and left to die for the sin of not being able to move fast enough.

During my 24 years in law enforcement, I have also witnessed the effects of amnesty discussions by our lawmakers and others. I can attest to the fact that anytime there is a perceived reward for violating our laws the number of illegal border crossers increases exponentially. I can also personally attest to the human devastation caused by smugglers who are able to advertise their services based upon our current policies and any potential policies discussed in the media. I will never forget the image of a young woman who took her last breath after being abandoned by smugglers to die in the harsh desert near El Centro, California. What we recently witnessed in Del Rio, Texas when 15,000 Haitian nationals camped out under a bridge was not humane. What we see every day on the border due to our failure to enforce our immigration laws is not humane. It is not humane to encourage people to put themselves in the hands of criminal cartels because our current policies are to reward a good number of people for crossing our borders illegally.



Afghanistan: Senior Taliban commander killed in Kabul hospital attack

Mokhlis, a member of the hardline Haqqani network and an officer in the Badri Corps special forces, is the most senior figure to have been killed since the Taliban seized the capital.

(News Agencies)- responded to an Islamic State hardline Haqqani network and an been killed ever since Taliban seized the capital. Hamdullah Mokhlis, a Taliban attack on a hospital, officials officer in the Badri Corps special forces. Sources said Mokhlis is On Tuesday, two explosions hit the entrance of the Sardar was killed after his men Mokhlis was a member of the the most senior figure to have hit the entrance of the Sardar

Mohammad Daud Khan military hospital, followed by heavy gunfire.

ISIS CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY
The Taliban's rivals, the Islamic State group, claimed responsibility for the gun and bomb assault in the centre of the capital.

Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) said in a statement on its Telegram channels that "five Islamic State group fighters carried out simultaneous coordinated attacks" on the sprawling site. "The IS insurgents wanted to target civilians, doctors and patients in the hospital," Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said, claiming that Taliban forces had repulsed the attack within 15 minutes.

As part of the response, he said, Taliban "special forces" were dropped onto the roof of the hospital from one of the helicopters that the group seized from Afghanistan's former US-backed government. The attack got under way when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the facility's entrance. Gunmen then broke into the hospital grounds, firing their weapons.

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Will not travel to India for conference on Afghanistan: Pakistan NSA

Moeed Yusuf said that he will not travel to India to attend the conference hosted by India on Afghanistan on November 10.

(News Agencies)- Pakistan National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf on Tuesday said he would not travel to India for an upcoming conference on Afghanistan on November 10 as he dismissed India's role as a "peacemaker" in the war-torn neighbouring nation.

India extended the invitation to Pakistan to attend the regional conference on Afghanistan being hosted by Indian NSA Ajit Doval. Talking to reporters here, Yusuf said that he will not travel to India to attend the conference hosted by India on Afghanistan on November 10, The Express Tribune reported.

In response to a question during the press conference, Yusuf said that a "spoiler" could not take on the role of a

"peacemaker", the report said. Earlier, Pakistan's Foreign Office confirmed the invitation from India but said the decision would be taken at an appropriate time.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had earlier said that Pakistan's decision would be based on keeping in view the current state of the relationship between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a terror attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by terror groups based in the neighbouring country. Subsequent attacks, including one on an Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship.

The relationship dipped further

after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp deep inside Pakistan on February 26, 2019, in response to the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed.

The relations deteriorated after India announced withdrawing special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into two union territories in August 2019.

India has told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence.

Yusuf said that Pakistan, unlike the West, could not disengage with Afghanistan due to its regional proximity.

It may be a luxury for the Western world sitting 10,000



miles away (to stay away from Afghanistan) but we do not have any option to disengage from Afghanistan," he said. He reiterated Pakistan's stance that we should coordinate and constructively engage with the present Afghan government to avert a humanitarian crisis. Yusuf said that engagement

with Afghanistan was not a political matter for Pakistan but a humanitarian one and a matter of our national security". The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan on August 15, two weeks before the US was set to complete its troop withdrawal after a costly two-decade war.

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

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Beijing tightens measures as Covid cases spike, raises concerns over zero-virus policy

(News Agencies)-The Chinese capital Beijing further tightened measures on Monday to contain the recent spike in Covid-19 cases, asking residents who travelled to other areas of the country that reported a surge to put off their return plans as cases continued to climb nationally, raising concerns about the efficacy of the Zero-Covid policy.

The Beijing Health Commission announced that residents who are on trips outside of the city should postpone their return if they have visited locations that have reported confirmed cases during the same period.

"People who have already come back to Beijing from travels should report their tracks to local communities, hotels or companies immediately and start self-quarantine," the commission said.

The city government is asking residents not to go out of the city when it's not absolutely necessary since the epidemic outbreak has involved 16

municipalities, provinces and autonomous regions.

Health officials are visiting residential compounds to physically verify the travel records of the people living there. After reporting over 20 cases last month, Beijing officially reported no new locally transmitted cases on Sunday.

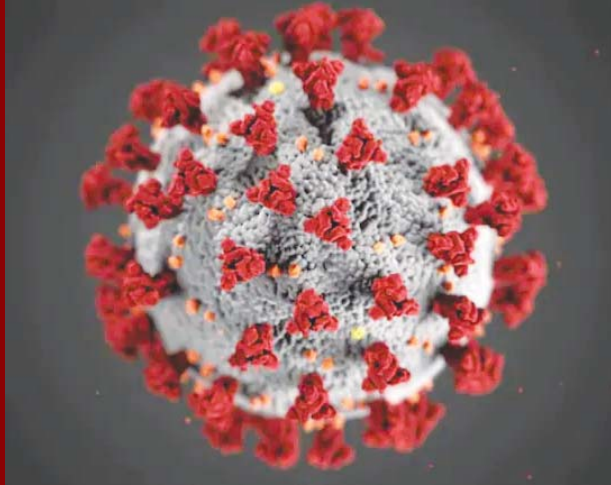
Beijing local government is stepping up measures as the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) is set to host its Plenum, a high-power policy-making body from November 8-11 in which over 370 officials were expected to take part.

The meeting is being held ahead of next year's party conference for leadership change.

The city is also gearing up to host the Winter Olympics in February next year for which hundreds of international athletes are expected to participate.

"If you have fever, cough and other symptoms, please do not

have meals together or participate in parties go to the fever clinic of a nearby hospital as soon as possible, do not take medicine on your own, so as not to delay the treatment opportunity," the commission said.



Meanwhile, Covid-19 cases continued to rise in different parts of the country testing China's zero virus policy, under which China strictly restricted international travel followed by 21-day quarantine to those including diplomats returning to their posts in the country.

On Monday China's National Health Commission reported 92 Covid-19 cases in the country including 59 new locally transmitted cases on Sunday. China continues to ban travellers from India and other South Asian

countries as part of the Zero-Covid policy despite criticism that coronavirus has now turned endemic and the cases continue to surface in different provinces and cities.

Whenever cases increase, hundreds of officials resort to

testing and tracing millions of residents besides banning local flights and trains to contain the spread.

Defending the Zero-Covid policy, an article in the Global Times said, "if we change course to the European and US way of 'coexistence with the virus,'

China will fall victim to the virus within just a few months, with tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of cases a day".

"The daily death toll could mount to hundreds or even thousands of people. The situation is definitely not something most Chinese are willing to bear", it said.

"Every time an outbreak occurs, the implementation of the zero-Covid policy will mean economic and social costs. But if we don't adopt this policy, it will lead to a serious spread of the virus, and the cost will only be higher", the report added.

In order to stop the spread of the virus, Northwest Gansu Province put 83 residential compounds in six cities under closed-off management from October 18 to 31, officials said at a press conference on Monday. The province reported 10 new locally-transmitted confirmed Covid-19 cases on Sunday.

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China, Russia urge UNSC to end key sanctions on North Korea citing economic difficulties

A draft resolution circulated to council members and obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press stresses the economic difficulties in North Korea and says these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

China and Russia are urging the U.N. Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea ranging from the export of seafood and textiles to the cap on imports of refined petroleum products and the ban on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings.

A draft resolution circulated to council members and obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press stresses the economic difficulties in North Korea and says these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and made them tougher and tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program. Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley said in 2018 that the sanctions had cut off all North Korean exports and 90% of its trade and disbanded the pool of workers whom North Korea sent abroad to earn hard currency.

DRAFT RESOLUTION LIKELY

TO FACE UPHILL STRUGGLE

The draft resolution expands on a similar resolution Russia and China had circulated in December 2019. It faced opposition from Western nations when it was discussed and was never formally introduced at the council for a vote.

Several U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because the draft has not been made public, indicated it would likely face a similar uphill struggle today, pointing to North Korea's continuing violations of U.N. sanctions.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations said North Korea has failed to comply with sanctions on its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the Biden administration "remains committed to the sanctions regime" and calls on all member states to enforce the measures. On Oct. 19, North Korea fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine in its fifth round of weapons tests in recent weeks, all of which violated U.N. sanctions. It was the North's first underwater-launched test since October 2019 and the highest-

profile test since President Joe Biden took office in January.

The China-Russia draft resolution makes no mention of the missile tests. Instead, it notes that the North has refrained from conducting nuclear tests since September 2017, has kept to a moratorium on further nuclear tests and test launches of intermediate-range and intercontinental missiles from April 21, 2018, and has taken additional denuclearization measures since.

The proposed resolution underscores "the necessity to respect the legitimate security concerns of the DPRK and ensure the welfare, inherent dignity and rights of people in the DPRK," using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It reaffirms that U.N. resolutions "are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences" and notes "the serious impact of sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic" within the country.

NORTH KOREA IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
North Korea is struggling to deal

with soaring prices of goods and shortages of medicine and other essential supplies that have accelerated the spread of water-borne diseases such as typhoid fever. The country has yet to report any cases of the coronavirus though experts have questioned its claim of a perfect record.

The China-Russia draft calls on all U.N. member nations to intensify their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, "including but not limited to food, fertilizer and medical supplies," and to provide goods, materials, technology and financial services needed by North Korea to combat COVID-19, improve livelihoods and develop the economy.

The draft resolution would lift a ban on North Korea importing some industrial machinery and transport vehicles used to build infrastructure that can't be diverted to the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The long list of construction and humanitarian items that would be exempt from sanctions includes bulldozers and firefighting vehicles; materials for railways and traffic control; air

conditioners and radiators for heating; iron or steel parts for roofs and windows; screws and bolts; sewing needles and vacuum cleaners; kitchen utensils and equipment; agricultural equipment, bicycles and fire extinguishers.

On the political front, the China-Russia draft welcomed "the positive outcomes" of talks between the DPRK and South Korea and between former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. At Kim's second summit with Trump in Hanoi in February 2019, negotiations faltered after the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

The proposed resolution calls on the U.S. and DPRK to resume dialogue aimed at building lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. It calls on all parties to consider taking further steps to reduce military tension and the risks of military confrontation, including by adopting a declaration or peace treaty ending the 1950-53 Korean War.

Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada makes first public appearance in Kandahar



Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada addressed supporters in the southern city of Kandahar, officials announced Sunday, his first public appearance since taking control of the group in 2016.

Akhundzada has been the spiritual chief of the Islamist movement since 2016 but has remained a reclusive figure, even after his group seized power in Afghanistan in August.

His low profile has fed speculation about his role in the new Taliban government -- and even rumours of his death.

On Saturday, he visited the Darul Uloom Hakimah madrassa to "speak to his brave soldiers and disciples", according to Taliban officials.

There was tight security at the event and no photographs or video have emerged, but a 10-minute audio recording was shared by Taliban social media accounts.

In it, Akhundzada -- referred to as "Amirul Momineen", or commander of the faithful -- gives a religious message.

The speech did not touch on political organisation, but sought God's blessing for the Taliban leadership.

He prays for the Taliban martyrs, wounded fighters and the success of the Islamic Emirate's officials in this "big test". Widely believed to have been selected to serve more as a spiritual figurehead than a military commander, Akhundzada's statements will fuel speculation that he now plans to take a more central role in leading the new government. Who is Haibatullah Akhundzada?

Akhundzada rose from low-profile religious figure to leader of the Taliban in a swift transition

of power after a 2016 US drone strike killed his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mansour.

After being appointed leader, Akhundzada secured the backing of Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, who showered the cleric with praise -- calling him "the emir of the faithful".

This endorsement by Osama bin Laden's heir helped seal his jihadist credentials with the Taliban's long-time allies.

Akhundzada was tasked with unifying a Taliban movement that briefly fractured during the bitter power struggle after Akhtar's assassination, and the revelation that the leadership had hidden the death of their founder Mullah Omar for years.

His public profile has largely been limited to the release of messages during Islamic holidays, and Akhundzada is believed to spend most of his time in Kandahar, the main city in the Taliban's southern Afghan heartland.

His last message was on September 7, when he told the newly appointed Taliban government in Kabul to uphold sharia law as they govern Afghanistan.

Last week, Mullah Yussef Wafa, the Taliban governor of Kandahar and a close ally of Akhundzada, told AFP he was in regular contact with his mysterious chief.

"We have regular meetings with him about the control of the situation in Afghanistan and how to make a good government," he said in an interview. "As he is our teacher, and everyone's teacher. We are trying to learn something from him," he added. "He gives advice to every leader of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and we are following his rules, advice, and if we have a progressive government in the future it's because of his advice."



Thieves break into Hindu temple in Pakistan's Sindh, loot jewellery, cash

Thieves broke into a Hindu temple in Pakistan's Sindh province on Friday and looted three silver necklaces and cash, according to reports.

According to reports, three silver necklaces worn around the deities' necks and Rs 25,000 were stolen from the donation box of Devi Mata temple in the Kotri area of Sindh.

A case has been registered based on a complaint lodged by the caretaker of the temple,

Bhagwandas.

The police claimed that the suspects hailed from the vicinity. However, the police dismissed claims that the thieves had desecrated the temple deities during the robbery.

Giyanchand Esrani, the Minister for Minorities Affairs in Sindh, has called for swift police action. He also asked authorities to beef up security around temples, especially at a time when the Hindu community was gearing up

for Diwali.

In August this year, a mob attacked a Hindu temple in Pakistan's Punjab province and burned down parts of it and damaged its idols. India had condemned the attack, blaming Pakistan for "completely failing" to protect religious minorities and said the continued attacks on them is "reprehensible".

According to estimates, Hindus constitute around four per cent of Pakistan's population.

22 killed, 8 injured as Rawalpindi-bound bus falls into ravine in PoK



(News Agencies)-At least 22 people were killed and eight others injured on Wednesday after a bus carrying them fell into a ravine in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), police said.

The accident occurred in the Sudhnoti district of the region when a passenger bus was going to Rawalpindi in Punjab province from the Baloch area of the district.

The bus apparently developed some technical fault and fell more than 500 meters down the road, killing 22 people, including women and children, they said. Dawn newspaper reported that a roadside vendor nearby saw the accident and informed a prayer leader of the local village mosque over telephone about it.

The prayer leader then made announcements on the loudspeaker of the mosque,

asking the villagers to rush to the accident site to aid in the rescue. PoK is a mountainous region with treacherous roads. The carelessness of drivers and faulty vehicles combined with the road situation cause frequent accidents.

Four students and as many passengers were killed and 32 others injured in two road accidents in PoK's Poonch and Neelum districts last month.

Pegasus snooping scandal: US adds Israeli firm NSO to 'black list'

Authorities in the US on Wednesday put NSO group, the Israel-based maker of military-grade spyware Pegasus, on a list of restricted companies.



(News Agencies)-US authorities on Wednesday put the Israeli maker of the Pegasus spyware on the list of restricted companies, after determining the firm supplied software used to target officials and journalists. The company, NSO, was engulfed in controversy over reports that tens of thousands of human rights activists, journalists, politicians and business executives worldwide were listed as potential targets of its Pegasus software. Smartphones infected with Pegasus are essentially turned into pocket spying devices, allowing the user to read the target's messages, look through their photos, track their location and even turn on their camera without them knowing. "These tools have also enabled foreign governments to conduct transnational repression, which

is the practice of authoritarian governments targeting dissidents, journalists and activists outside of their sovereign borders to silence dissent," the US Commerce Department said in a statement. Washington also targeted Israeli company Candiru, Singapore-based Computer Security Initiative Consultancy PTE (COSEINC) and Russian firm Positive Technologies.

Resolution introduced in US Congress to recognise religious, historical significance of Diwali

(News Agencies)- Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has introduced a resolution in the US Congress recognising the religious and historical significance of Diwali, the festival of lights.

"For Sikhs, Jains, and my Hindus here in the United States and across the world, Diwali is a time for gratitude as well as a celebration of the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil,"

religious, cultural, and historical significance of Diwali," Krishnamoorthi said.

"In celebrating another Diwali during the pandemic, I hope that we begin to see light overcome the darkness in the world. I want to wish a safe and happy Diwali to all the families gathering with



Krishnamoorthi said after he introduced the resolution in the US House of Representatives. Recognising the historical and religious significance of Diwali, the resolution expresses its deepest respect for Indian-Americans and the Indian diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion, he said.

"I'm proud to introduce this bipartisan resolution to recognise the enormous

their loved ones to light lamps in their homes and to pray for good health and peace for all people," he said.

Congresswoman Carolyn B Maloney tweeted that the Diwali stamp is now five-year-old.

"Happy five year anniversary to the Diwali Stamp! Proud to have led the legislation that helped make this happen! Read all about the 7-year saga to get this stamp in circulation below," she said.

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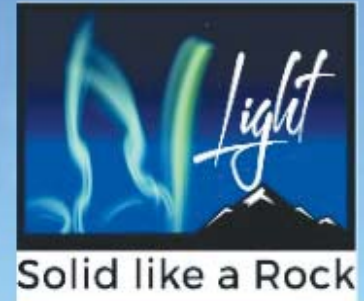
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This Democrat thinks Joe Biden fundamentally misunderstood his mandate



There's been a lot of grumbling and finger-pointing among Democrats in the wake of the loss of the Virginia governor's race and a razor-thin win in New Jersey's gubernatorial contest. But, no one offered a more cutting -- and honest -- assessment of exactly what happened than Virginia Rep. Abigail Spanberger in an interview with The New York Times.

"Nobody elected him to be F.D.R., they elected him to be normal and stop the chaos," said Spanberger, who represents a district that Biden won by a single point in 2020.

There's absolutely no question that since coming into office, Biden has pursued a radical agenda -- in the sense that his proposed spending would represent a major reentry of the federal government into the lives of the average American.

Consider this:

"Congress passed -- and Biden signed into law -- the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan.

"The Senate passed -- and the House is debating -- a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal that would fund much-needed repairs and updates on roads and bridges (and the like).

"Senate and House Democrats are considering a social safety net bill with an estimated price tag of \$1.75 billion.

Total it up and you get almost \$5 trillion in additional government spending in the first year of Biden's first term, to be disbursed over a decade.

That's a stunning reversal from the mid-1990s when Bill Clinton premised his 1996 reelection campaign on the idea that "the era of big government is over."

The Biden view of the 2020 election was that the country was at a crisis moment -- created by the twin cataclysms of Donald Trump's presidency and a once-in-a-century pandemic -- and that he was elected to lead it through to the other side.

One Lesson of Virginia? The Culture War Still Works.

The Democrats have been boxed in by culture politics for decades. After Tuesday's results, America's towns, suburbs and school boards could be in for a brutal three years.

In the Virginia governor's race, pundits have been calling Tuesday night's Republican win - depending who you listen to - a referendum on President Joe Biden, a verdict on the Democrats' performance in Congress or the result of a smart Republican strategy for handling former President Donald Trump. But it's just as reasonable to credit what's been happening right in the middle of Virginia.

The state has been stirred by a wave of local unrest, with protests at school board after school board, a very local version of a big national argument stirred up by right-wing media and grassroots groups.

And that suggests the real lesson for Republicans on Tuesday. One of their most powerful political assets is alive and well: the power of cultural issues over policies. In the broadest sense, "cultural" matters have been challenging and bedeviling Democrats for well over half a century. The backlash to civil rights pulled the South away from the Democratic Party in the mid-'60s; crime, welfare, campus and urban violence eroded white working-class loyalties. These issues helped win Republicans the presidency in five out of six presidential contests from 1968 to 1988; only the post-Watergate fallout took Jimmy Carter to a narrow electoral win

in 1976.

All through this period, Democrats were arguing that the public, by large measures, preferred their actual policies - their approaches to education, health care, taxes. Sometime in the '80s, I sat with House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt as he explained to a roomful of journalists that once voters understood what Democrats were going to do about the high cost of college, health care and housing, electoral success would naturally follow. Spoiler alert: It didn't.

Only when Bill Clinton directly repudiated his party's orthodoxy on crime and welfare did the political tide turn. It was Clinton who promised to "end welfare as we know it." And his "blue wall" wasn't a passel of declining industrial states, but the ranks of uniformed cops who stood behind him as he pledged support for the death penalty. Clinton had a Rotary Club cliché for his strategy: "Voters won't care how much you know unless they know how much you care.

To be blunt, his positions on crime and welfare, as well as his stern repudiation of the provocative words of a Black rapper named Sister Souljah, were signals - or perhaps dog whistles - that he was prepared to push back against what we would now call the "woke" wing

of his own party.

Call it cynical, but what Clinton understood was a root reality of politics: "Culture trumps policy." A six-point program to make schools better and college more affordable will mean very little if voters believe their neighborhoods are unsafe; and while demagogues will eagerly feed such fears, they will motivate voters only if there is an underlying reality to them. Violent crime in America rose sharply all through the 1960s and 1970s; when it began to recede, as it did from the early '90s to two years ago, crime all but disappeared as a political issue. It has resurfaced because in the last year or two, the most violent of crimes - homicide - has resurfaced.

That kind of visceral response to an issue is a perennial "feature" of school board fights. Almost 50 years ago, fights over textbooks in Kanawha County, West Virginia, led to mass boycotts, shootings and the dynamiting of at least one elementary school. Fights over what books should or should not be in school libraries are more or less constant local arguments. Now, the combustible issue of race in America and how to teach about it has quickly become the Republican Party's issue of choice. And Democrats face a significant challenge in pushing back.

On the one hand, there are clear and compelling arguments to be made for teaching kids very directly about the nation's scarred past. Texas children ought to know that the original constitution of the Republic of Texas protected slavery and barred Indians and "Africans" from becoming citizens. New York children ought to learn that suburban developments barred Black people from buying homes. This is not "critical race theory" - an academic concept not taught in elementary or high schools. It's just history. But some of the premises of that theory have in fact gained currency - for instance, the idea that certain widely admired attributes are rooted in "whiteness." It's not hard to pump up the fears of conservative or moderate white suburban parents that such a critique amounts to an attack on some basic, and seemingly colorblind, American values.

What makes all this so maddening for Democrats is that there is plenty of evidence that Black voters themselves don't widely share such views, any more than they support the "defund the police" campaigns of last year. Eric Adams, New York City's next mayor and Jim Clyburn, House Democratic whip, have pushed back strongly against them.



World leaders dial up doomsday warning to kick-start COP26 climate talks in Glasgow

World leaders turned up the heat and resorted to end-of-the-world rhetoric Monday in an attempt to bring new urgency to sputtering international climate negotiations.

The metaphors were dramatic and mixed at the start of the talks, known as COP26. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson described global warming as "a doomsday device" strapped to humanity. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told his colleagues that humans are "digging our own graves." And Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, speaking for vulnerable island nations, added moral thunder, warning leaders not to "allow the path of greed and selfishness to sow the seeds of our common destruction."

Amid the speeches, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his coal-dependent country will aim to stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere by 2070 - two decades after the United States and at least 10 years later than China. PM Modi said the goal of reaching "net zero" by 2070 was one of five measures India planned to undertake to meet its commitments under the Paris climate accord.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel avoided soaring rhetoric and delved into policy.

World leaders opened the COP26 UN climate conference in Glasgow with a doomsday warning. While UK PM Boris Johnson said that the world is facing an ecological "doomsday", UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said bluntly: "We are digging our own graves."

"There's no more time to sit back," Biden said in a more measured warning that also apologized for his predecessor's decision to temporarily pull the U.S. out of the historic 2015 Paris agreement, something he said put the country behind in its efforts. "Every day we delay, the cost of inaction increases." In a recorded welcome message, Queen Elizabeth II said she hoped the conference would be "one of those rare occasions where everyone will have the chance to rise above the politics of the moment."

"History has shown that when nations come together in common cause, there is always room for hope," she said in the video, which was recorded on Friday at Windsor Castle.

One of the United Nations' biggest concerns is that some countries are more focused on amorphous long-term net-zero goals instead of seeking cuts this decade that could prevent temperature increases that would exceed the Paris goal.

Modi also outlined shorter-term goals for the world's third-biggest carbon emitter: raising its goal for non-fossil energy production,

meeting half of its energy needs with renewable sources, cutting carbon emissions by 1 billion tons compared with previous targets and reducing the carbon intensity of its economy by 45 per cent - all by 2030.

While 2070 sounds far off for India's pledge, four outside experts from think tanks and universities said India's new short- and long-term goals are significant, while not huge, because of that nation's development status. Ulka Kelkar, who directs India climate policy analysis for the World Resource Institute, said a lot depends on details, but the 2070 goal would be similar to the US and Europe adopting net-zero goals 20 years ago.

Still, European officials privately expressed disappointment at India's late target, but declined to comment publicly.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen touted already announced efforts to make Europe "the first net-zero continent" in the long-term and cut emissions 55 per cent in this decade. She pushed for other rich countries to aid poorer

nations as much as Europe does and put a price on carbon emissions because "nature cannot pay that price anymore."

Bolivia President Luis Arce said the speeches from developed countries sought to portray them as climate change leaders "but this is far from the truth." He said rich nations need to face their historic responsibilities for causing the warming problem and not fix it by forcing rules on poor countries. The real solution, he said, "is an alternative to capitalism" and "unfettered consumerism." Johnson pointed out that the 130-plus world leaders gathered for the leaders' summit portion of the conference had an average age of over 60, while the generations most harmed by climate change aren't yet born.

Outside the negotiations, youth climate activist Greta Thunberg accused world leaders of "pretending to take our future seriously."

"Change is not going to come from inside there," Thunberg said, "We say no more blah, blah, blah."

The conference aims to get governments to commit to curbing carbon emissions fast enough to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7

degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit). Current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C (4.9F) by the year 2100.

Increased warming over coming decades would melt much of the planet's ice, raise global sea levels and greatly increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather, scientists say. With every tenth of a degree of warming, the dangers soar faster, they say.

The other goals for the meeting are for rich nations to give poor nations \$100 billion a year in climate aid and to reach an agreement to spend half of the money on adapting to worsening climate impacts. But Mottley, of Barbados, warned that negotiators are falling short

"This is immoral and it is unjust," Mottley said. "Are we so blinded and hardened that we can no longer appreciate the cries of humanity?"

"We are already gasping for survival," chimed in President Wavel John Charles Ramkalawan of the Seychelles, another island nation. "Tomorrow is not an option because it will be too late." Guterres struck an equally gloomy note.

Why Democrats are in trouble

Why did Democrat Terry McAuliffe lose was on its way to being lost. Pollsters, pundits and political strategists look to answer this question

Days before it became clear that Republican Glenn Youngkin would win Virginia's gubernatorial race, pollsters, pundits and political strategists were trying to explain why a race that was the Democrat Terry McAuliffe's to lose was on its way to being lost.

Some explanations were more convincing than others.

Least convincing was the suggestion that Youngkin, a former private equity executive, won by dogwhistling Dixie. The pro-McAuliffe Lincoln Project even tried to troll a Youngkin event in Charlottesville with tiki-torch bearers, but they were exposed. That theory fails to explain why Youngkin ever would have thought he could win by moving to the hard right in a state where no Republican has won statewide office in a dozen years, and which Joe Biden won last year by 10 points.

Another explanation is that early political reversals for an incumbent party are normal. Republican Chris Christie of New Jersey won a similar bellwether gubernatorial election in 2009, almost a year into Barack Obama's first term. That win anticipated the GOP's historic 63-seat gain in the 2010 House elections, but it did not keep Obama from getting his signature legislation enacted, much less from being reelected.

Then there is the fact that McAuliffe ran a lousy campaign. State races are about state issues. McAuliffe's focus was to paint Youngkin as a Trumpkin, going so far as to invent a fictional Youngkin-Trump joint campaign event. Youngkin focused on issues like cutting taxes on groceries and giving parents more of a say in their kids' education. Voters typically want governors to solve problems, not serve as moral avatars.

Finally, there's Joe Biden. He is manifestly inept. He cannot get his party to pass a popular infrastructure bill. On inflation, Afghanistan and the southern border, he has offered benign assurances that have been summarily contradicted by events. No president elected after World War II lost more public support in

his first few months of office than he has, according to Gallup. Biden's losses are particularly steep among independents. If Biden doesn't recover, this is bound to have down-ballot effects. The last three explanations are true as far as they go. But they don't sufficiently capture the Democrats' deeper problem, which is the persistent and justified perception of a party too often composed of fake moderates and dissembling radicals. Middle-of-the-road voters - the kind who still decide elections in purplish places like Virginia - sense they've been bamboozled. Who's a fake moderate? Biden campaigned as the most centrist Democrat in last year's primary field. He is trying to govern as the most socially transformational president since Lyndon B. Johnson. Attorney General Merrick Garland looks like a fake moderate, too willing to cite the power of the federal government after angry parents at school board meetings were labeled domestic terrorists. Whatever happened to Democrats as civil libertarians?

As for dissembling radicals, note the way in which the controversy over critical race theory is treated by much of the left as either much ado about an obscure scholarly discipline or, alternatively, a beneficent and necessary set of teachings about the past and present of systemic racism in America.

But CRT is neither obscure nor anodyne. It is, according to many of its leading theoreticians, a "politically committed movement" that often explicitly rejects notions of merit, objectivity, colorblindness and neutrality of law among other classically liberal concepts.

That's no reason to ban teaching it or any other way of looking at the world. But it is dishonest to argue that it is anything less than ideologically radical, intensely racialized and deliberately polarizing. It is even more dishonest to suggest that it exists only in academic cloisters. We live in an era of ubiquitous race-based "affinity groups," incessant allegations of white supremacy, and pervasive censorship and self-censorship in everything from words that can be said and documentaries that can be watched, to jokes that can be laughed at.

No wonder the debate over CRT-

influenced pedagogies in public schools - which liberals insist don't even exist in the state's public schools, although they clearly do - had such a galvanic effect on the Virginia race. It exposed the myth that the illiberal currents at play in the United States today are solely a Republican phenomenon. They are not.

It's fair to debate which kind of illiberalism is worse. But the Democrats' political problem is either dishonesty about the kind of country they want, a lack of self-awareness, or some combination of both. An America in which group identity takes precedence over individual merit, racial categories become moral categories, success based on achievement is denigrated as "privilege" based on ancestry, blind justice is attacked as systemically biased, and independent thinking risks being treated as heresy, will eventually



cease to be a free, fair and just country.

Many liberals who have tasted the progressive moonshine get the point. But too many still feel obligated to take sides against Trumpism when the real enemy is illiberalism writ large, whatever the source. The tragedy of the Republican Party is that too few conservatives had

the nerve to fight the enemy within. Voters penalized the party in 2018 by losing the House, and in 2020 by losing the presidency.

The tragedy of the Democratic Party may yet be its own loss of nerve against its in-house extremists. Whether it's this week or next year, the political penalties are likely to be steep.

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The Next Big Clash For Mukesh Ambani And Gautam Adani

Industrial Revolution levels. But that's already unrealistic. With temperatures 1.1 degrees higher than in the second half of the 19th century and greenhouse gas emissions still rising, the ambitious goal adopted by 196 countries in Paris six years ago is a near-certain miss.

That will no doubt lead to a new round of finger-pointing between rich and poor nations about how each side is being unreasonable and unfair. For a clue to how this depressing stalemate will ever be resolved, cast your gaze to Gujarat on India's northwestern coast, where there's no sense of defeat, or even righteous indignation about being forced to go on a low-emission diet by those who were early to industrialize.

Instead, two of the world's richest businessmen are furiously writing billion-dollar checks in their race to shape our climate future. Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani owe their fortunes to carbon, and yet it's in hydrogen - the simplest known element - where a complex contest between them could open a pathway to decarbonized economic growth. India's official position is that net zero emissions by 2050 is an unjust demand. Yet, the optimism of the tycoons from Gujarat offers a way out of the impasse. Betting on one or both to succeed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi might promise to do more for the climate, though real work for his team will start only after returning from Glasgow. That's when Ambani, 64, and Adani, 59, will want supportive policies.

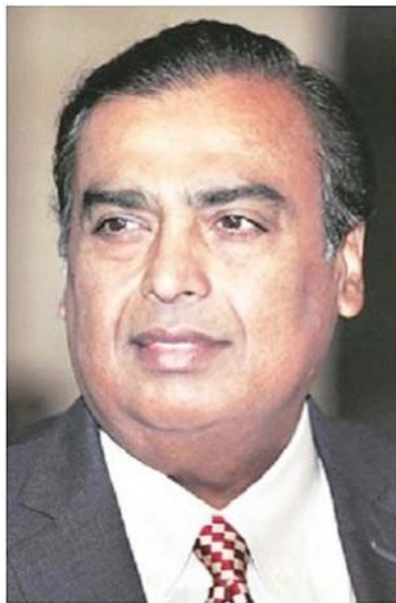
Ambani owes his top spot on Asia's rich list to Gujarat's Jamnagar, host to the world's largest oil-refining complex. It spews out spare cash to invest in retail and the internet. Pivoting away from fossil fuels, Ambani is setting up four new factories in the district, one each for solar panels, batteries, green hydrogen and fuel cells. His flagship Reliance Industries Ltd. has so far spent \$1.2 billion on acquisitions and partnerships, and already Bernstein analysts believe the new enterprise to be worth \$36

billion, compared with \$30 billion for the decades-old refining business.

Before Ambani entered the green-energy race in June, Adani was winning it. For years, the Adani Group mined coal, produced coal-fired power at large plants like Mundra in Gujarat and berthed coal vessels at his vast network of ports. When Adani made news

swathes of the Indian industrial hinterland. An all-weather, all-purpose alternative to fossil fuel may need to exploit the most abundant atom in the universe - not by extracting hydrogen from methane or coal, but by using some form of renewable energy, like solar or wind, to break down water molecules. That's where the two titans will clash next.

With blockbuster commitments,



on an environmental issue, it was usually for the wrong reason. But in the past three years, the second-richest Asian has swiftly assembled a 20 gigawatt solar, wind and hybrid electricity portfolio. Adani Green Energy Ltd. shares have risen 13-fold in the past 24 months, feeding the magnate's ambition to be the world's largest renewable energy producer by 2030.

That won't be easy now. Ambani is moving quickly to capture 100 gigawatts of solar manufacturing, or a third of India's market, by the end of the decade. Reliance has bought Norwegian solar panel maker REC Solar Holdings AS for \$771 million. The deal, according to brokerage Jefferies, comes with 446 patents and a technology that consumes 75% less power than Chinese rivals. Add that to the purchase of 40% of Sterling & Wilson Solar Ltd., a contractor with 3,000 engineering teams putting up renewable-energy farms globally, and you know that Ambani is going to make REC's panels in Jamnagar and install them wherever the sun shines bright.

But sunshine won't power large

both billionaires are promising to tap into India's renewed interest in hydrogen, articulated in August under a vague National Hydrogen Mission. Each businessman, however, only controls certain pieces of the puzzle.

The Price Is Right

Ambani, a huge generator of gray hydrogen - the dirty, cheaper kind produced by refineries to power their own operations and often used by other industrial firms - wants to go green. He's seeking partners to bring viable technology to India. It's an expensive undertaking. Currently, green hydrogen is priced between \$4 and \$6 per kilogram. The cost of production mainly includes capital expenditure on electrolyzers - industrial-scale facilities to break down water or other electrolytes into hydrogen molecules - and electricity, which makes up around 30% to 65%. All told, green hydrogen is between two to seven times more expensive than the carbon-intensive gray kind.

For hydrogen to become a real option, affordability is key. Luckily, India is a testing ground for making everything cheaper.

World-beating pricing lies at the heart of the smartphone data empire Ambani has built up from scratch in six years. The country could make green hydrogen cost competitive with gray by the end of this decade, one of the fastest timelines globally, according to a BloombergNEF analysis. In a speech in September, Ambani talked up a "New Green Revolution," saying he was sure India could produce hydrogen at "under \$1 per 1 kilogram within a decade." He called it the 1-1-1 target.

Ambani's efforts toward building electrolyzers will serve the Reliance empire internally. But to run those electrolyzers and make the hydrogen path green, he will need renewable energy. Power supply is where rival Adani is stronger. As one of the world's largest solar power players, he will have plenty of green electricity. And when it's time to move hydrogen, Adani's dominance over transportation could come into play. Late last year, the Adani Group set up a collaboration with Snam SpA, Italy's natural-gas distribution network.

Adani, too, has talked of green hydrogen as a game-changer and wants to build electrolyzers. Any plans to capture the entire hydrogen supply chain though would be misguided. Producing the gas, processing, storing and distributing it, and then putting

it to use, requires varied expertise. It also needs special handling given its flammability. Rather than trying to do it all - as Adani and Ambani have said they want to - it would be more productive to focus on distinct parts of the value chain, where each billionaire has an advantage.

After Ambani's \$10 billion foray into renewables in June, Adani upped the ante, saying he'll invest twice as much. But as India's experience with solar shows, producing electricity cheaply isn't enough. Even with a strong policy push by the federal government, it's a struggle to make near-bankrupt state distribution utilities honor their long-term power purchase agreements or pay on time.

What's needed is a hydrogen policy that capitalizes on the two tycoons' eagerness to invest, but prepares the ground for an open network with strong competition that whets demand. Still, it's unlikely that the two Gujarati entrepreneurs who have so far avoided going head-to-head will be keen to coordinate by putting their pieces of the jigsaw together.

For all its potential uses and cost advantages, how Ambani and Adani duke it out on hydrogen will decide if a relatively poor, populous country can contribute to saving the planet - without surrendering its shot at better living standards. Just the question that Glasgow, like the other 25 climate summits before it, will probably fail to answer.

Samir Wankhede controversy in India's Drug wars

nation. He is considered royalty in Bollywood, as his father Shah Rukh Khan is, undoubtedly, one of the biggest movie stars.

This arrest is a clear message to the huge fan base and the whole country that even an influential person is not above the law and order as far as drug abuse is concerned. Around the same time, the huge drug

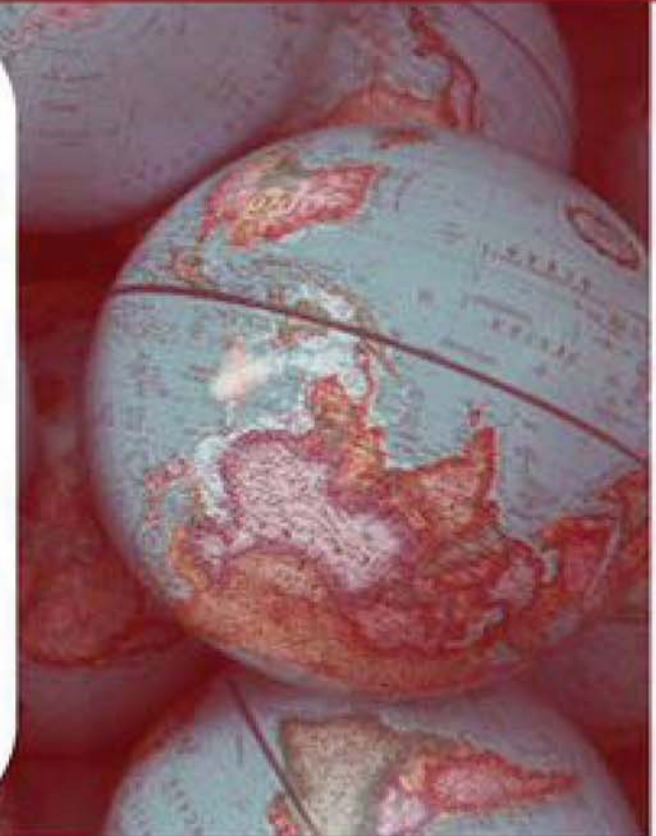
confiscation at Mundra port was on the limelight too, which indicates that there is a steady drug racket at work in India. This incident is still under investigation and yet to get much coverage. Nevertheless, Aryan Khan conviction case can result in diminishing demand of narcotic substances, which will affect the overall drug route too.

By Susmita Ghosh

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Red wave sweeps Long Island, Republicans declare victory

(SAI Bureau)-LONG ISLAND- In the race for Nassau County Executive, Republican candidate Bruce Blakeman declared victory over Democratic incumbent Laura Curran. "We went against a very, very popular, well-funded incumbent, and we're in a great position right now," Blakeman said. "I haven't waited for anything. I've been working since 7:30 this morning on the transition." In a statement overnight, Curran said she's not conceding and that many votes still needed to be counted.

"There are many thousands of absentee ballots that still must be counted, with more coming in," she said. "This is not over, and we must trust the process. Every Nassau resident who participated in this election is owed the opportunity to have their voice heard. I have faith in Nassau County and the good work we have accomplished over the last four years. The residents of Nassau have taught a masterclass in resilience, and I have plenty in reserve. We may not know the winner of this election, but I do know one thing - tomorrow, we get right back to work delivering for the incredible residents of Nassau County." Still, Blakeman sounded very

Republicans appeared Wednesday to be on their way to victories in all three major races on Long Island.

***Republican candidate Bruce Blakeman declared victory over Democratic incumbent Laura Curran * In the race for Nassau County District Attorney, Republican Anne Donnelly defeated Democrat Todd Kaminsky. * In Suffolk County, incumbent District Attorney Tim Sini conceded the race to Republican challenger Ray Tierney, a former federal prosecutor.**



confident in the tight race, even though as many as 20,000 absentee ballots must still be counted with Curran trailing by just over 11,000 votes.

It could be an extremely narrow victory for Blakeman, but ideologically, it is huge for Republicans who seemingly argued successfully that Democrats aren't who they used to be. "This isn't the party of John F. Kennedy anymore,"

Blakeman said. "It's the party of AOC (Alexandria Ocasio Cortez) and Bernie Sanders, and they're rejecting that." Curran is more of a centrist Democrat who was known for working both sides of the aisle, but in the end, experts say Long Island is traditionally republican in its infrastructure. "If you look at the town structures, Oyster Bay, Hempstead, are very Republican friendly with a lot of support

systems there," said Dr. Craig Burnett, with the Hofstra University Political Science Department. "So it's not surprising that they can be organized pretty much all the time."

In the race for Nassau County District Attorney, Republican Anne Donnelly defeated Democrat Todd Kaminsky.

"Thank you for caring enough about Nassau County to want to

keep it safe," Donnelly said. "And thanks for backing the candidate who backs the blue...I'm excited to get to work and make a difference, as I've tried to do for the last 32 years."

Kaminsky conceded the race and thanked his supporters. The issues at the center of the election were property taxes and public safety, and Donnelly hopes to do away with bail reform.

"Last night's result was not what we wanted, but I am so proud of the campaign we ran and the people who volunteered their time and energy to knock on over 100,000 doors across Nassau County," Kaminsky said. "Long Islanders want safe communities and government free from corruption. In my role as a Senator, I will continue to serve my constituents and remain committed to those critical priorities and others to move Nassau forward."

If the Republican victories are confirmed, it will be the first time the party has controlled Nassau County's leadership across the board in nearly two decades. In Suffolk County, incumbent District Attorney Tim Sini conceded the race to Republican challenger Ray Tierney, a former federal prosecutor.

Why Tesla CEO Elon Musk is his own worst enemy

Musk now appears to be entering his own potentially dangerous Icarus phase. With a net worth well over \$300 billion, Musk is the richest person ever. He owns roughly 20% of Tesla and about half of SpaceX. His personal fortune has skyrocketed as the world increasingly embraces electric vehicles and human spaceflight alike. In Tesla's home state of California - until the company moves its headquarters to Austin, that is - zero emission vehicles now account for 11% of new car sales.

Most entrepreneurs flying at Musk's level would take the win, think about their succession plans and start turning their focus more squarely to their philanthropy. But Musk is newly emboldened, and his juvenile swipes on Twitter are reaching new heights. He mocked Jeff Bezos with a Number 2 medal as the gap between their wealth grew. He's taken an



increasing number of potshots at President Joe Biden that sound like they are Republican Party talking points. He told the head of the United Nations World Food Programme he would donate \$6 billion to fight world hunger, if the WFP open sourced the accounting

on their spending.

Last week, Hertz announced plans to buy 100,000 Tesla's, a blockbuster deal that included Tom Brady ads and the fact that Hertz will be paying full price for the vehicles. Now Musk is throwing cold water on it,

saying that "no contract" has been signed. Tesla shares fell Tuesday.

"As we announced last week, Hertz has made an initial order of 100,000 Tesla electric vehicles and is investing in new EV charging infrastructure across the company's global operations," the car rental company said in an emailed statement Tuesday. "Deliveries of the Teslas already have started. We are seeing very strong early demand for Teslas in our rental fleet ... which reflects market demand for Tesla vehicles."

What, exactly, is Musk doing? If there's no contract, why did Hertz announce it? Are they still negotiating terms? Or is Musk - hypersensitive to the idea that Tesla is "dumping" the Model 3 on a car rental company - using his platform to remind Hertz that they aren't getting any special favors?

I've covered Tesla for a

decade, and the arc of the company from scrappy Silicon Valley startup to most valuable automaker in the world has been remarkable. Along the way, Musk has broken the mold of what it means to be a modern CEO and largely gotten away with it - whether that's smoking marijuana on a podcast, pushing a departing executive or being sued for securities fraud. Legions of fans love him for his bluster and brashness; Tesla's board goes along with it.

I hope, for his own sake and that of his employees, Musk doesn't crash and burn. He has proven to be his own worst enemy: self-sabotaging in times of stress (see: 2018); getting extremely cocky when things are going well. He's 50 years old and has many years left to pursue his dreams of colonizing Mars and ushering in a clean energy revolution. The biggest risk, at this juncture, may be his own hubris.-Bloomberg



Must invest big to save planet: UK to global finance giants at COP26

publicly traded companies will be required to publish plans detailing how green their investments and their own businesses are - in order to ensure they're actually contributing to reductions in global warming.

As home to the City of London, one of the world's major financial centers, the U.K. "has a responsibility to lead the way" in financing those and other efforts to fight global warming, said Sunak.

The push for greener investments also represents a major opportunity. The measure is part of a plan that aims to create "the world's first net-zero aligned financial center" to meet the demands of those seeking to profit from the drive toward a low-carbon economy, Sunak said.

Scores of countries, including Britain, have announced plans to cut their greenhouse gas emissions to "net zero" in coming decades to help curb

man-made climate change.

Cities, states and companies have also embraced the goal, which means limiting greenhouse gas emissions to the amount that can be absorbed again through natural or artificial means. Experts caution that there are various ways to calculate "net zero" - and deciding on one standard definition is one of the big challenges going forward.

Sunak called for a "historic wall of capital" to help countries,

companies and cities meet their net-zero goals - but poor nations have noted angrily that Britain and other wealthy countries failed to meet their commitment to provide \$100 billion a year to finance climate-related projects in the developing world by 2020. That target is now expected to be met in 2023.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen described climate change as both a huge financial challenge, with a price tag of \$100 trillion, and "the greatest

economic opportunity of our time."

"Many renewables are now cheaper than carbon-based fuel alternatives and have lower long-term operating costs," she said. "In many cases, it's simply cost effective to go green."

U.S. President Joe Biden issued an executive order earlier this year aimed at requiring companies to disclose climate-related financial risks.

Amazon to launch two satellites part of Kuiper constellation to provide global internet coverage

(SAI Bureau)-After its successful venture into space with Blue Origin that includes two manned flights that shattered world records, Amazon is set to launch its first satellites, part of a constellation to provide fast, affordable broadband around the world. Project Kuiper will launch two satellites by the fourth quarter of 2022. The two satellites dubbed KuiperSat-1 and 2 will be launched into low-Earth orbit to test the communications and networking technology that will be used in the final satellite design. The launch will help Amazon validate operations and mission management procedures that will be used when deploying the full constellation. Rajeev Badyal, vice president of technology for Project Kuiper said "We've invented lots of new technology

to meet our cost and performance targets for Project Kuiper. All of the systems are testing well in simulated and lab settings, and we'll soon be ready to see how they perform in space." The two satellites will be equipped with technology and sub-systems that power the production version of the satellite design including phased array and parabolic antennas, power and propulsion systems, and custom-designed modems. Amazon in a statement said that it will conduct experimental tests using prototypes of low-cost customer terminal, which has been designed to provide fast, reliable service at a more affordable price than legacy antennas. Taking note of growing concerns of space debris that could be detrimental to space assets and

concern from astronomers of these constellations blocking the field of view of the ground-based observatories, the company said that two satellites are designed for atmospheric demise and will be actively deorbited after the mission. "There is no substitute for on-orbit testing, and we expect to learn a lot given the complexity and risk of operating in such a challenging environment. We can't wait to get started," Badyal added. The satellite duo will be launched ABL Space Systems using its all-new RS1 rocket from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. "With a one-ton-plus payload capacity, RS1 delivers the right capacity and cost-efficiency to support our mission profile. ABL's RS1 and GS0



launch system are also fully containerized and mobile, providing the speed and flexibility to support these early launches," Amazon said in a statement. The company is on a course to compete with SpaceX, which already has hundreds of small satellites under its Starlink constellation project to provide

global internet coverage. The plans first announced in 2019 includes a constellation of 3,236 satellites in low Earth orbit, a second space-based pursuit by Jeff Bezos who flew on his company Blue Origin's spacecraft to the edge of space in July this year. The company plans to spend close to \$10 billion on the mega project.



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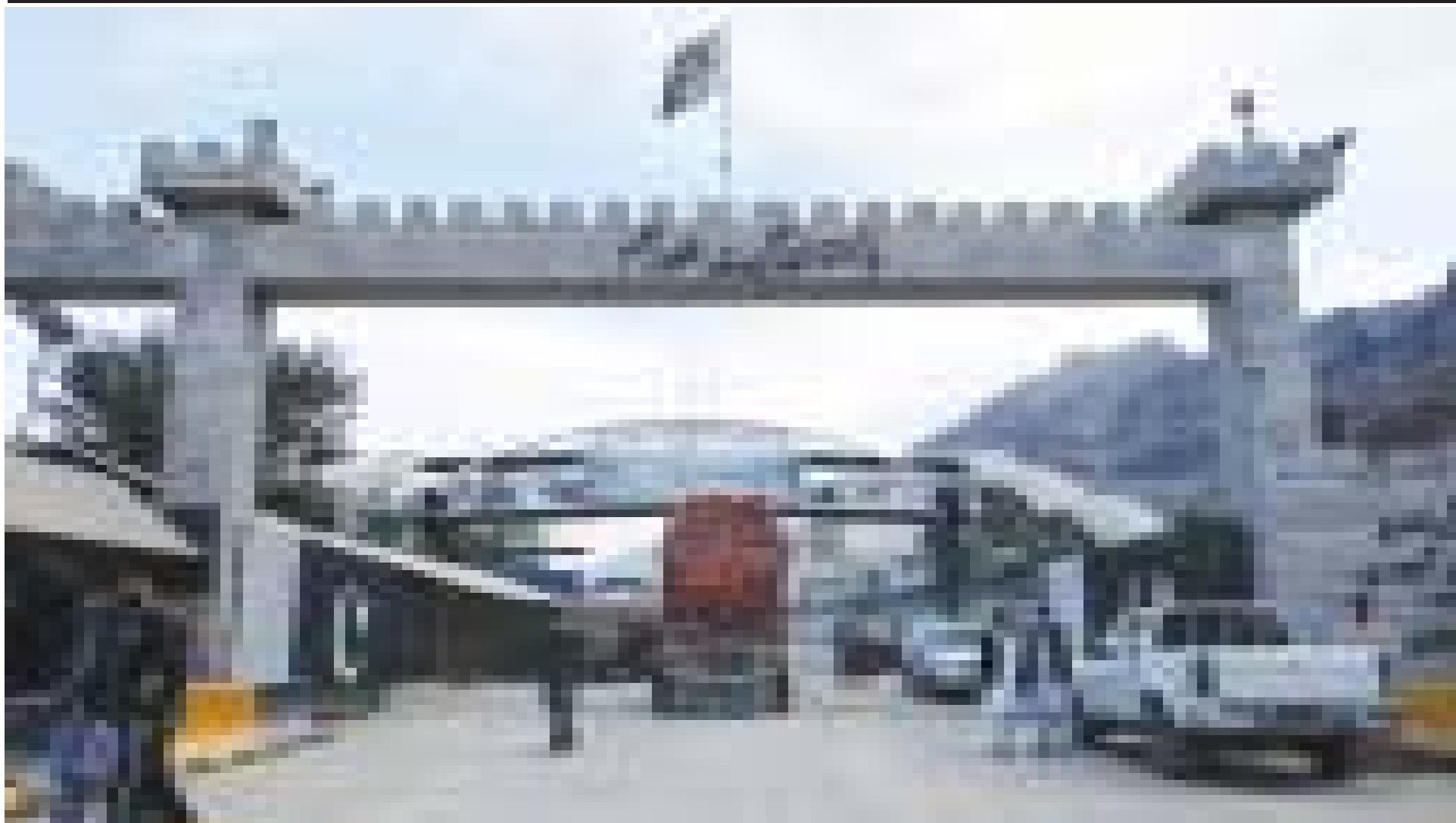


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Pakistan allows Taliban-appointed 'diplomats' to take charge of Afghan missions: Report

Pakistan has reportedly issued visas to Taliban-appointed "diplomats" and allowed them to take charge of Afghan embassy and consulates in the country.

Pakistan has quietly allowed the Taliban-appointed "diplomats" to take charge of the Afghan embassy and consulates in the country, a media report said on Saturday.

Although Pakistan does not recognise the Taliban as the legitimate government in Kabul, it still issued visas to the appointed "diplomats".

Sardar Muhammad Shokaib has started working as the first secretary in the Afghan embassy in Islamabad, while Hafiz

Mohibullah, Mullah Ghulam Rasool and Mullah Muhammad Abbas have been assigned to the Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi consulates of Afghanistan, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Shokaib would effectively be the Afghan charge d'affaires in Islamabad.

ALSO READ: 'Just give us our money, freezing it is unethical': Taliban push to unlock Afghanistan billions abroad

The Afghan embassy here has been without an ambassador

since July when the last envoy under the previous regime, Najibullah Alikhil, left because of controversy due to alleged abduction of his daughter Silsila Alikhil.

No details about Shokaib were shared but according to a report by Voice of America, he is an ethnic Pashtun from Zabul province who served in the Information and Cultural Department in southern Kandahar and was associated with a Taliban magazine. He reportedly once

worked as the Taliban spokesman under the name of Qari Yousaf Ahmadi and was arrested in Pakistan and later lived in Peshawar for several years.

Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Asim Iftikhar tried to play down the new appointments by saying that it was an "administrative matter".

"With regard to appointment of new staff in the Afghan embassy, this is an administrative matter and is meant to enable the embassy to perform its functions,

primarily the consular functions as you are aware there are millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and there are visa issues as well," he said.

Pakistan has been trying to convince the world to diplomatically engage with the Taliban after they establish their de-facto control on Afghanistan on August 15. However, the world is skeptical about them and looking to judge them on promises to respect human rights before any kind of recognition.

Very concerning': Pentagon report says China could have 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030

Pentagon's latest report reveals alarming information that China is now rapidly closing the nuclear weapons gap with the US. The country is increasing its nuclear arsenal at a much faster rate than expected earlier, according to the report.

Contrary to what the Pentagon had predicted earlier, the latest report published on Wednesday says that China might possess 700 nuclear warheads by 2027,

and over 1,000 by 2030.

Only a year ago, the Pentagon said that the country had about 200 deliverable warheads and would double that by 2030. The difference between the two predicted quantities is about two-and-a-half times.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) "is investing in, and expanding, the number of its land-based, sea-based, and air-based nuclear delivery platforms

and constructing the infrastructure necessary to support this major expansion of its nuclear forces," said the US Department of Defense's annual report to Congress on Chinese military developments.

It said that like the United States and Russia, China is also building a "nuclear triad," which will be capable of delivering nuclear weapons from land-based missiles, from air-

launched missiles, and from submarines. The report states that China most likely just seeks to deter attacks from other nations by maintaining a nuclear retaliation threat, and not launch an 'unprovoked' nuclear attack on nuclear-armed adversaries such as the US. However, a US defence official said that the acceleration "is very concerning to us." "It raises questions about their intentions," the official said,

calling for more transparency from Beijing over its nuclear force development. Independent researchers have in recent months published satellite photographs of new nuclear missile silos in western China. Due to Beijing's plans to transform its People's Liberation Army into "world-class forces" by 2049, Pentagon officials have declared China their top security concern for the future.

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Biden says \$450K payments to families separated at southern border are 'not going to happen'



The president discounted news reports saying family members could receive the money as part of settlement negotiations between their lawyers and the Justice Department.

President Joe Biden on Wednesday dismissed the idea that immigrant families separated at the southern border under his predecessor's zero-tolerance policy could receive payments of \$450,000 per person in monetary settlements, calling the report "garbage."

Following remarks at the White House about Covid vaccines for children, Biden was asked by a Fox News reporter whether the payments would incentivize more people to cross the border illegally.

"If you guys keep sending that garbage out, yeah," Biden said. "But it's not true."

When pressed on the matter, Biden appeared surprised by the

\$450,000 figure.

"\$450,000 per person? Is that what you're saying?" the president said. "That's not going to happen."

The Wall Street Journal first reported last week that family members who were separated at the U.S.-Mexico border under then-President Donald Trump's immigration policy could receive hundreds of thousands of dollars as part of settlement negotiations between the families' lawyers and the Department of Justice. The payments could add up to hundreds of millions of dollars as agencies look to settle lawsuits filed by parents and children who say the U.S. government's

actions subjected them to lasting psychological trauma. About 5,500 children were separated at the border during the Trump administration, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, citing figures provided by the government. The number of families eligible for the money will likely be smaller, according to the Wall Street Journal report, and around 940 claims have been filed so far.

Biden's comments on Wednesday drew ire from immigration advocates like ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero, who said Biden might have not been up to speed on the Justice Department's actions as it "carefully deliberated and

considered the crimes committed against thousands of families separated from their children as an intentional governmental policy."

"But if he follows through on what he said, the president is abandoning a core campaign promise to do justice for the thousands of separated families," Romero said. "We respectfully remind President Biden that he called these actions 'criminal' in a debate with then-President Trump, and campaigned on remedying and rectifying the lawlessness of the Trump administration. We call on President Biden to right the wrongs of this national tragedy."

This South Pacific island country prepares for lockdown after reporting its first Covid-19 case

Tonga, a South Pacific island nation, reported its first case of Covid-19 on Friday. The country, which was among the few to not register a single case of coronavirus since the start of the pandemic, has now started preparing for a lockdown.

Tonga's Prime Minister Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa informed on Friday that a fully-vaccinated passenger, who had travelled from New Zealand, tested positive for Covid-19. The passenger had tested negative before boarding her flight from Christchurch, reported CNN.

Even though most of the airport staff, who came in contact with the passenger, have been quarantined, the Prime Minister warned the country's citizens to prepare for a potential lockdown following the detection of the first case.

Meanwhile, after the news became public, the vaccination rate seems to have increased in Tonga with herds of people rushing to get themselves inoculated against Covid-19.

More people are coming forward because now we have coverage of a first dose of about 86% and a second dose of about 62%, so this is a major turnout today and will boost the overall coverage of first and fully vaccinated," Matangi Tonga quoted the country's health minister, Amelia Tuipulotu, as saying. Even though there had not been a single case of Covid-19, Tonga had closed its border for foreign nationals in March 2020, declaring a state of emergency. The government's early action, like in other pacific islands, had saved the country from the Covid outbreak.

Explosion, gunfire hit military hospital in Kabul, 19 dead: Reports

At least 19 people were killed and 50 wounded after two explosions followed by gunfire rocked Afghanistan's biggest military hospital in Kabul, according to a report in AFP.

Photographs shared by residents showed a plume of smoke over the area of the blasts near the former diplomatic zone in the Wazir Akbar Khan area in central Kabul.

Taliban Interior ministry



spokesman Qari Saeed Khosty said the explosions took place at the entrance of the 400-bed

Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan hospital.

"Security forces are deployed to

the area, there is no information about casualties," he said on Twitter.

"Nineteen dead bodies and about 50 wounded people have been taken to hospitals in Kabul," a health ministry official who asked not to be named told AFP.

A health worker at the hospital, who managed to escape the site, said he heard a large explosion followed by a couple of minutes of gunfire. About ten

minutes later, there was a second, larger explosion, he told Reuters. He said it was unclear whether the blasts and the gunfire were inside the sprawling hospital complex, the largest military hospital in Afghanistan. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but the official Bakhtar news agency quoted witnesses saying a number of Islamic State fighters entered the hospital and clashed with security forces.



Aryan Khan-Wankhede story nudges IPS-IRS-IAS officers to call out those who violate their oath

We see what madness for fame and stardom has done to some people from the All India and Class I Services. Even as most others work sincerely, in relative anonymity.

By the time you are reading this, Aryan Khan would be walking out of jail, if 25 days too late. Everything we know about the case as yet tells us there was nothing to justify his arrest, incarceration and being charged under such a draconian law in any case. His ordeal, however, has given us another 'star' of sorts, Sameer Dawood/Dnyandev Wankhede.

What kind of star - good or bad, a wronged hero or a villain who finally got caught out - you can decide. He's a polarising figure. For some, he's a reservation fraud who allegedly claimed a place in the quota reserved for Scheduled Castes, hiding the fact that he's a Muslim. No problem with that, except that caste-based reservation wouldn't be available to him. For others, he's a Muslim and a Dalit who's being victimised by entitled elites only because he dared to go after them.

For some, he's a bully and probable "blackmailer" who targeted the rich and famous, especially in Bollywood, for fame, and allegedly, ransom. For others, he's finally the one brave narc who decided to do his job, no matter how powerful his quarry.

We cannot take any side on this, and we aren't. Because we do not have the facts. Our instinct comes from subjectivity, because that's how we'd see the facts arrayed before us. We shall get off the kerf on this, and focus on something else. Less tangible,

and not polarising. It is called propriety in government service. Especially as applied to the All India and Class I Services.

Let me ask you a trick question. How many IAS officers can you name in the country right now? Not members of your family or pals, but from the headlines, especially the recent ones? Or IPS officers? And finally, that one service we see so little of in our normal lives directly, the Indian Revenue Service, the so-called 'taxman' or woman.

So, is there a prominent IRS officer you can name off the bat? I bet it would be Sameer Wankhede. He's not only the most famous IRS officer in the country today, but in a very long time. It is serendipitous that the two most headlined names from the All India Services at this point, IAS and IPS, have also not necessarily been there for good reasons.

Former Comptroller and Auditor General Vinod Rai gave a grovelling apology to Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam for making false allegations over the 2G case, where he conjured up that notional loss figure of Rs 1.76 lakh crore in 2007.

It was an obvious exaggeration. But such was the mood at that point you couldn't argue with him without risking being labelled 'pro-corruption'. Now that story has unravelled. As indeed, unfortunately, India's telecom sector. The same thing happened soon enough with coal.

The IPS now. The same Mumbai which produced Wankhede, the zonal narcotics chief who now, in his own defence, is citing the testimony of the young man he charged with a crime with a possible 10-year sentence ('see, even Aryan says he's made no charge of extortion against me'), has also given us a police commissioner who's absconding. All of Maharashtra Police cannot find one of its most senior officers, and non-bailable warrants are being posted everywhere.

If IPS, IRS and IAS are the trinity of our vaunted civil services and Param Bir Singh, Sameer Wankhede and Vinod Rai are their representatives in today's most prominent - and bad - headlines, what does it tell us? We have chosen that order deliberately. The IPS guy on top because he's an absconder, ducking multiple criminal charges; the IRS man next because he's in court seeking protection from arrest and yet to answer a hundred questions on his conduct; and the IAS last, for once, because at least one thing we know about Vinod Rai from reputation and track record is that he is, financially, spotless. Just that it has not achieved the best results for India.

These three stars of today speak poorly for our civil services in their own different ways. It is to fight for these services that lakhs of our brightest young people slog for years at coaching academies,

often making their parents sell their land and buffaloes, in that one hope: My kid will crack UPSC. Then, they walk into their respective academies with pride in their hearts, stars in their eyes and mostly - I speak from experience of having spoken at these academies and interacted with young recruits - a great deal of idealism.

No, I am not about to lapse into convenient mass condemnation. Mine has never been the 'sab chor hain' view. It is absolutely to the contrary, which I dared to say even during those bizarre Anna Hazare months. The point here is, for every Param Bir Singh, there are thousands of others in his service doing their jobs honestly, sincerely, and at very modest government salaries. As there must be in the IAS or the IRS. It is just that we do not know about them. It is just that people who are becoming famous have done so for all the wrong reasons.

Trick questions again: Name the last six incumbents in the office of the Cabinet Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau, and Chairperson of the Central Board of Direct Taxes? If you can name six of each, that is 18 who sat at the apex respectively of these three services, I'd say you are brilliant. But you know the three names in the headlines today, sadly.

Britain Begins To Think The Unthinkable - Life After The Queen

The world's leaders are gathered in Glasgow this weekend for COP26, but Queen Elizabeth II - most likely the dignitary they were keenest to glimpse - will not be there to greet them. She will address delegates in a recorded video instead. The conference will lack the magic dust that the physical presence of Europe's last anointed and longest reigning monarch scatters over such occasions.

This is but the latest of several intimations of royal mortality. The Queen, 95 years old this year, long ago handed over arduous foreign tours to her son and heir to the throne, Prince Charles. Just as the Palace begins to transfer more duties around the royal "firm," the U.K. must begin to think the unthinkable: of life without her.

Britain's constitutional head of state cancelled a planned two-day visit to Northern Ireland last week following an overnight stay in a London hospital, news of which Palace officials ill-advisedly withheld from the world's media. The intention was to play down fears for her health and spare her privacy from intrusion. Instead, it set alarm bells ringing and accusations of a cover-up. To avoid a recurrence, aides will have to be more open with the press and public about the monarch's health in old age.

The Queen is now resting at her home in Windsor Castle, although on Tuesday evening she made an appearance at a reception for the government's investment summit, welcoming Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Bill Gates amongst other guests.

But the shadow cast by her years lengthens. The Queen was recently photographed with a cane and now conducts her weekly audiences with Johnson by telephone instead of face-to-face, avoiding London's Buckingham Palace if she can. She has also given up riding, her favorite leisure pursuit. All quite normal for someone her age.

However, one day - later rather than sooner, we hope - bulletins from the Palace will declare something akin to what they said for her grandfather George V ("The King's life is moving peacefully toward its close").

Bypolls aftermath:

BJP and the uphill task it faces in West Bengal

Given TMC's juggernaut in Bengal, and the party's forays into Goa and Tripura, BJP is facing a challenge that it cannot wish away.

It was a clean sweep for the Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Tuesday as the party won all four assembly bypolls in West Bengal held on October 30. The ruling party not just scored a 4/4, it virtually annihilated its nearest rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in this mini-contest.

In Cooch Behar district's Dinhata, TMC's Udayan Guha won by 1,64,089 votes over BJP's Ashok Mandal. In the state elections earlier this year, Guha had lost from this seat to BJP's Nisith Pramanik by 57 votes.

Pramanik, an MP at the time, continued as a Parliamentarian, forcing a bypoll in Dinhata. He was made MoS, Home Affairs, in the July Cabinet rejig. Udayan Guha, who polled 47.58% votes against Pramanik's 47.6% earlier, secured 85.15% votes on Tuesday. His counterpart, Ashok Mandal, had to forfeit his security deposit.

The loss in Dinhata was especially troubling for the BJP, given the party's impressive performance in the north Bengal district of Cooch Behar, where the party had won 7 out of 9 seats in May.

Speaking of deposit forfeitures, the same was the case with BJP candidates in Gosaba and

Khardaha on Tuesday. It was only in Santipur that the saffron party's Niranjana Biswas saved his deposit polling 23.22% votes.

Overall, the TMC's vote share in the 4 bypoll seats was 74.99%, while the BJP had to satisfy itself with 14.50%.

While the Left parties, including CPM and RSP, secured 7.28% and 0.40% votes, respectively, the Congress secured only 0.37%, less than 'NOTA' votes that accounted for 1.07% of the total votes cast in this by-election.

For the BJP, the jolt was no surprise. Party insiders who spoke to India Today said they anticipated these results, which included the two seats - Dinhata and Santipur - that the party had won in the May polls.

What was shocking though was the margin of defeat. In the three seats barring Santipur, the difference of votes polled in favour of TMC and BJP touched close to one lakh or more.

Speaking to India Today from Kolkata, Dilip Ghosh, former Bengal BJP president and current national vice-president, accused the TMC of creating an atmosphere of fear that ensured the BJP's defeat. Ghosh said, "They didn't let us campaign, didn't let our agents even sit at the booth and they terrorised voters. I was not even given a vehicle to

campaign when I went to Gosaba. Dinhata and Gosaba, which were the most communally charged, saw the maximum margin of victories for TMC. How is that?" The party's Bengal co-in-charge, Amit Malviya, tweeted earlier on Tuesday, "Amusing to see TMC gloating at the lead in the bypolls. The entire state machinery, including police and civil admin, was unleashed to intimidate voters."

Alleging that a communally-charged atmosphere like in Gosaba was used by the TMC to secure its win, Dilip Ghosh told India Today, "As an example, please note that a senior and popular leader like Sobhandeb (Chattopadhyay) couldn't register the kind of victory (in Khardaha) a panchayat level leader, who nobody knows, Subrata Mondal, secured in Gosaba. How is that possible, you must ask."

But political commentator Sandip Ghose warned the BJP that living in denial may not yield much. He tweeted, "Losing deposit in three seats can't be attributed to post-poll terror and defections alone. BJP needs to get real in Bengal. Otherwise, they should write off even 2024 Lok Sabha for #WestBengal."

From winning 77 seats in the assembly elections earlier this year, the BJP's tally in the West

Bengal legislative assembly stands at 70 after Tuesday. Besides losing its two won seats of Dinhata and Santipur, five of the party's MLAs have defected since May. And it's not just MLAs who are knocking on the TMC's trends. Going by the current trend, the BJP believes that its fortunes won't change even in the December elections in 112 municipalities and corporations in Bengal, including in Kolkata, Bidhannagar, and Howrah. They allege the TMC will obstruct their campaign again, so much so that it may be difficult for them to find candidates to field.

The reversal of trends, some believe, could only start after a year or so. But that will require some systemic changes, they concede. Speaking to India Today, party leaders said that change has to be from top to bottom.

While the state unit has a new president in 41-year-old Sukanta Majumdar, who replaced Dilip Ghosh in September, the former is yet to announce his new team. Coordination between Majumdar and the party's firebrand Leader of Opposition and Mamata Banerjee's bête noire, Suvendu Adhikari, will also be key to the party's success in the future.

Similarly, the party needs to make district-level changes and

accelerate synergy between the state and district leadership. Such is the state of affairs, say some leaders, that the district leadership and MLAs don't see eye to eye and that needs to change. They believe the launch of sustained campaigns against the ruling establishment, involving the legislators, could be effective.

Political commentator Sandip Ghose told India Today, "It's back to 2011, as things stand in the hinterland. They are burying their heads in the sand, if BJP thinks this will disappear like the Congress usually believes. They seem to be in a total state of paralysis."

Ghose argues that if the BJP doesn't reverse the tide, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee could well be in a formidable position in 2024, asking the populace of West Bengal to deliver all 42 Lok Sabha seats from the state to her, if the latter wanted to see a "Bengali Prime Minister" in Delhi. Given the TMC juggernaut rolling through Bengal, and the party's forays into states like Goa and Tripura, it looks like the BJP is facing a challenge that it cannot wish away. It will require some serious introspection if it wants to stop the 'didi-bhaipo' (aunt-nephew) duo.





Ban India-Pakistan cricket matches till religion bows out

When players start praying midfield and veterans applaud, when Indian social media toxicity overflows on the timelines of our beloved players, when ideology takes the front seat, the sport ceases to be a sport.

As a cricket lover, I say this with a heavy heart: India and Pakistan must stop playing cricket. A religion in its own right, cricket has turned super sectarian and too toxic to go on, for everybody's sanity. You see, an India vs Pakistan contest remains peak cricket but that peak has been poisoned by religion, the two-nation theory and the toxic anonymity of social media. We can't reverse history or social media. What we can do is stop further vitiating the atmosphere for 20 or 50 overs of cricketing pleasure.

An India-Pakistan match is primed for misuse, as we saw in the T20 World Cup, since the two countries are invested in this 5th-generation warfare. Like it or not, that one match became more about point-scoring than about run-scoring. The sight of Pakistan's opening batsman deciding to offer prayers on the field during the drinks break was not because of

any devotional reason but a political stunt. Senior cricketer Waqar Younis just gave expression to what the average symbol-minded Pakistani felt: Rizwan offered namaz in the face of Hindus.

Pakistani cricket was infected with the Tablighi strain a long time ago. Inspired by Maulvi Tariq Jameel, a generation of Pakistani players favoured prayers over practice. Yousuf Youhana had to become Mohammed Yusuf to survive in the team. Dinesh Kaneria didn't survive because he only changed to Danish and did not convert.

Sports stars started sporting maulvi-style beards. Inzamam ul Haq began inviting international players to Islam. He famously or infamously attempted to convert Sri Lankan players and even gave dawah (invitation to Islam) to Brian Lara. That rabid religiosity phase is over, alhamdulillah as Inzibhai would say. Today's Pakistani team

seems to have gotten over the play-for-paradise scheme and you can see the change in the team's fortunes. But then a Mohammad Rizwan couldn't let go of the opportunity to show off his praying skills in front of what Waqar Younis called "Hindus".

At Salaam Cricket, an India Today Group cricket conclave in Dubai, when Harbhajan Singh said Indians and Pakistanis were one people, widely loved fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar objected to ruling that out because Pakistanis believe in the two-nation theory. Shoaib later applauded opener Rizwan for his on-field prayer.

Pakistan's Home Minister Sheikh Rashid went ahead and called it a victory of Islam over the kuffar and added that all the Muslims of the world, including those from India, were overjoyed at the victory. We have heard various Pakistani cricketers and responsible officials making such irresponsible comments because India and

Pakistan were having a go at each other on the cricketing field. That's not cricket. While no Indian cricketer, past or present, or politician of standing went as far as Pakistanis did, there was enough poison on social media to kill the spirit of the game. Some bitter bigots went after Mohammed Shami for the sole reason that he was Muslim. Ably backed by Pakistanis masquerading as Indians, and in some cases not even masquerading, to exploit the growing chasm between the two major communities in India.

And when Virat Kohli came out with his statement, people went after him. Even if the outrage against Shami was a hit job, Kohli had not said anything that he should not have. He spoke about the inclusive way of Indian life and called out the bigotry of some Indians for looking at the sport through their communally jaundiced lens. But that message of love evoked such horrifying

hate. Saying that Pakistanis steered the Shami operation is turning a blind eye to the increasing internal religious divide. The enemy exploited your differences because the differences exist.

If this is where we are, we are headed for trouble. And let us not have cricket add fuel to that latent fire in the hearts already full of hatred. We had not played with each other since the last World Cup. Outside the ICC-ordained playoffs, the two countries do not play each other anyway. Cricket has been doing fine in India without this poisonous play.

The reason we do not have bilateral cricketing ties is that Pakistan continues to send men and arms into Kashmir in the name of moral support. Does that stop during ICC tournaments? No. In fact, India and Pakistan played in Dubai in the backdrop of a new wave of targeted killings in the Kashmir valley.

No country for young girls: Afghan man sells 9-year-old daughter to 'keep family alive'

As Taliban-ruled Afghanistan descends into an economic crisis, a proscribed practice has reared its ugly head in many parts of the country -- that of selling young girls into marriage.

In recent months, many displaced Afghan families battling poverty and starvation have been forced to make the unpalatable choice of marrying off their barely adolescent daughters in exchange for money and sustenance that would ensure their survival.

One such heart-wrenching story



is of nine-year-old Parwana Malik, whose family sold her to 55-year-old Qorban last month, reported CNN. Living in a camp for internally displaced people in

the warn-torn country's Badghis province, Parwana's family of eight could barely make ends meet with jobs hard to come by and foreign aid drying up since

the Taliban takeover.

In an interview to CNN, Parwana's father Abdul Malik revealed he had already sold his 12-year-old daughter a couple of months ago. Now, he was forced to sell off another daughter "to keep other family members alive", a decision that's left him "broken" with guilt, shame and worry.

On her part, Parwana said she wanted to study and become a teacher. But her family's dire financial circumstances have closed this door for her. Asked about her upcoming "marriage", she fears that the "old man" would

beat her and force her to work in his house. Two days later, the buyer Qorban arrived at the Malik family's home, paid 200,000 Afghanis (about \$2,200) in the form of sheep, land and cash to Parwana's father, and drove off with the girl.

Abdul Malik's parting words to his daughter's new owner were, "This is your bride. Please take care of her ... please don't beat her." In response, Qorban assured the weeping father that he would be kind to Parwana and treat her like a family member.



How Priyanka Gandhi and her airport meetings spice up UP polls

So far, Priyanka Gandhi has had "chance" meetings with both SP leader Akhilesh Yadav and RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary at airports within a span of 10 days

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has made the political chatterbox in election-bound Uttar Pradesh a little louder. The latest word going around is that Priyanka Gandhi could spoil the chances of Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav's. The former chief minister is fancying a return to power in Uttar Pradesh banking on anti-incumbency against the Yogi Adityanath government and the prevailing mood among farmers against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

A BJP PROBLEM

First things first. Reports say the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have assessed that anti-incumbency and farmers' stir against the Centre's three farm laws are among the top challenges facing the BJP in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election 2022.

To counter these challenges, the BJP is likely to deny seats to a sizeable chunk of MLAs in the UP polls. This message has spread in both the ruling and the Opposition camps. This is why the SP and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have been seen inducting BJP leaders, including MLAs, into their folds.

THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES

Of the two main Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh, the SP senses a greater chance of returning to power than the BSP. The SP hopes to see a consolidation of votes in the Muslim community and among farmers. Meanwhile, the BSP continues to rely on Dalit, particularly Jatav, votes and is trying to social engineer a Dalit-

Brahmin combination that helped the party in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.

The Congress has felt largely ignored in the Opposition camp. Both the SP and the BSP have made repeatedly made it clear that they will not ally with a 'national' party to defeat the BJP in UP. The SP has already announced alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).

WHAT IS PRIYANKA GANDHI DOING?

This is where Priyanka Gandhi is apparently aiming to strike. She has been critical of both the SP and the BSP, targeting their leaders Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati respectively while positioning the Congress as the only party that is fighting the BJP in UP.

So far, Priyanka Gandhi has not been seen having a meeting with Mayawati but she has had "chance" meetings with both Akhilesh Yadav and RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary at airports within a span of 10 days. Both meetings took place in full public view and photographs subsequently went viral on social media.

POLITICS FLYING

The meeting between Priyanka Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav on a Delhi-Lucknow flight ended with a plan for another meeting between the two leaders. Priyanka Gandhi's meeting with Jayant Chaudhary at the airport named after the RLD leader's grandfather was more dramatic.

Jayant Chaudhary was scheduled to take a flight from Lucknow to Delhi on Sunday and was reportedly waiting for

about an hour when Priyanka Gandhi arrived at the airport to board a chartered plane of the Chhattisgarh government. And then, they 'bumped' into one another.

Priyanka Gandhi offered a ride on her chartered flight, and even got a ticket cancelled so that Jayant Chaudhary and his aides could travel on the chartered flight. News agency PTI reported that when Priyanka Gandhi and Jayant Chaudhary were meeting at the Chaudhary Charan Singh airport in Lucknow, Akhilesh Yadav was also "seen" in the airport lobby.

Why is this significant?

The BJP's surge in Uttar Pradesh since 2014 has pushed all major parties in the state to the margins. This forced the SP to tie up with the Congress in 2017 Uttar Pradesh polls. The alliance was decimated the SP won 47 of the 311 seats it contested and the Congress just seven of 114. The BJP had swept the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls winning 315 seats.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the SP tried its luck with the BSP. The alliance could manage just 15 seats. The Congress, which contested on its own, won just one seat Sonia Gandhi and saw its then president Rahul Gandhi lose his family bastion of Amethi.

WHY RLD

The RLD, once the party of farmers and Jats, has slipped to "nothing" at present. It had contested 277 seats in the 2017 UP Assembly polls but could win only one. Currently, it does not have an MLA in UP.

Fruits and vegetables have a future. This is what UN and India are doing for it



The United Nations (UN) in its 74th session recently declared 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables considering their importance as dietary essentials for consumers. Behind this move were three objectives.

First, raising awareness about healthy diets through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Second, promoting international efforts to boost their production through sustainable value chains. Third, emphasizing the need to reduce losses and waste therein. And most importantly, focusing on the role of women in assuring food security of their families and communities since it impacts all the three objectives.

In the above context, UN envisaged that farmers, especially smallholders and family farms should be given access to short and inclusive value chains. This is to increase their profitability while implementing strategies for reducing production costs of fruits and vegetables. Herein, UN adds, farmer collectives including cooperatives can play a critical role in ushering economies of scale and connecting them to domestic as well as global markets.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), out of 1,850 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables produced globally approximately 44 per cent of fruits and vegetables produced in developing countries are lost in the supply chain between harvest and consumption.

A study conducted by the ICAR-Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering & Technology (CIPHET) points out that in India for fruits and vegetables the post-harvest losses ranges from 4.58-15.88 per cent of the country's horticulture production.

India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables with its share in world production at 11.38 per cent and 11.78 per cent respectively. We are the largest producer of mango, banana, guava, papaya, lemon, lime, okra and the second largest producer of potato, tomato, onion, cabbage, cauliflower and brinjal.

More significantly, the country has recorded its highest ever horticulture production of 331 million tonnes in 2020-21.

The Government of India through the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) has enabled area expansion, development of nurseries and construction of farm ponds. It has also enabled investments in creation of post-harvest cold chain infrastructure through assistance for individual farmers and Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs). Infact, area expansion in 10 each globally popular exotic fruits (e.g. avocado) and indigenous fruits (e.g. sea buckthorn) has been extensively planned.

Cryptocurrency prices today:

Bitcoin rises over \$63,000, Ether rises sharply

Popular cryptocurrency prices improved marginally on Wednesday due to increased optimism among investors over the past 24 hours.

Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency, was trading above \$63,000 despite falling 0.13 per cent over its price 24 hours ago at 3:35 pm. Bitcoin's market capitalization has increased to \$1.19 trillion and the 24-hour traded volume fell marginally to \$1.59 billion.

Ether was trading at least 3.7 per cent higher than its price 24 hours ago at \$4,601.59. The market capitalisation of the cryptocurrency increased to \$540 billion and the volume traded over the last 24 hours stood at \$1.74 billion.

Other popular altcoins like XRP, Solana, Cardano, Polkadot, Terra, Stellar, Uniswap, Polygon and Litecoin jumped sharply over the past 24 hours. However, the meme crypto Shiba Inu has been losing much of its gains made over the past few sessions.

Commenting on the cryptocurrency market momentum, Edul Patel, CEO and Co-founder of Mudrex, a global algorithm-based crypto investment platform, said, "The cryptocurrency market displayed a highly bullish momentum over the past 24 hours." "The sleeping giants, Ripple and Solana, made massive moves driven by huge buying volume," he added. "The fact that the market did not see any profit booking even after surpassing a

total market cap of \$2.7 trillion, is a highly positive sign."

Here are the latest prices and trends of popular cryptocurrencies:

Cryptocurrency	Price (US Dollar)	24-hour change	Volume (24 Hours)	Market cap
Bitcoin	63,418.67	0.27%	\$1.59 billion	\$1.19 trillion
Ether	4,610.14	3.66%	\$1.74 billion	\$541.44 billion
Dogecoin	0.275553	0.32%	\$36.32 billion	\$2.37 billion
Litecoin	207.12	2.91%	\$105.12 million	\$14.27 billion
XRP	1.21	8.53%	\$6.50 billion	\$120.80 billion
Cardano	2.12	7.36%	\$331.42 million	\$69.63 billion

India's price-fixing probe of global seed firms sparked by carrot farmers



An Indian antitrust investigation into suspected price collusion by some prominent global agricultural firms was triggered by farmers who complained about excessive pricing of imported carrot seeds, documents seen by Reuters showed.

A group representing about 1,500 farmers in the mountainous Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, a top carrot-growing state in southern India, petitioned the watchdog in 2019 alleging that an "unfair profit margin" was being charged on the carrot seeds, the regulatory documents showed.

This is the first time the complaint is coming into public view. It has touched off an investigation that has the potential to affect pricing practices in an Indian vegetable seed market expected to be worth \$1.2 billion in five years. In some instances, the agricultural firms' seeds were allegedly being sold at four times the imported price, according to the documents. The farmers were also denied sale of such seeds in the northern parts of India where they were available at prices up to 50% cheaper, they alleged, according to the documents.

As part of the investigation, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) conducted a multi-city search and seizure operation on Sept. 8 at the local units of Germany's BASF, France's Vilmorin & Cie and other firms. The watchdog as a policy does not disclose any ongoing cartel investigations.

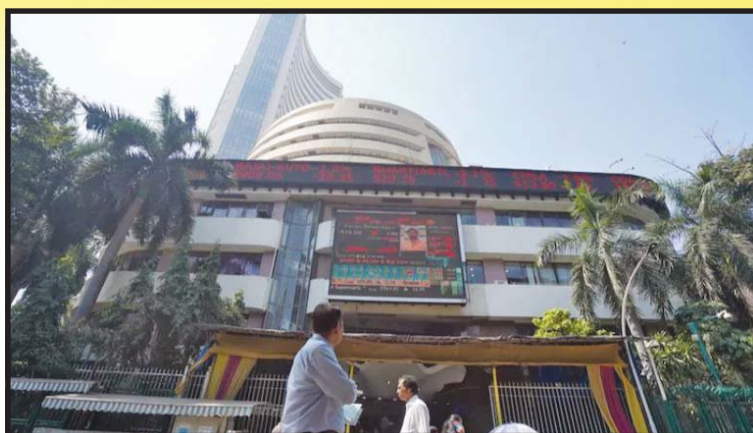
"There appears to be an understanding/arrangement between the seed importing companies to control the supply of imported variety of carrot seeds and determine their prices," the CCI said in May last year in a confidential order, in which it asked its investigation unit to look into the matter.

Sensex, Nifty end lower as banks drag; SBI hits record high on results

Indian shares closed lower on Wednesday, weighed down by banking stocks, though shares of the country's biggest lender State Bank of India hit an all-time high after reporting a record quarterly profit. The blue-chip NSE Nifty 50 index closed 0.33% lower at 17,829.20, while the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex fell 0.43% to end at 59,771.92.

Despite Wednesday's losses, both indexes clocked gains of about 0.8% each for the holiday-shortened week, rebounding from last week's sharp falls triggered by overvaluation concerns and heavy foreign selling.

In Mumbai trading, State Bank of India ended 1.1% higher after



touching an all-time peak earlier in the session. The country's largest lender reported a record quarterly profit as provisions for bad loans more than halved. However, the broader Nifty Bank Index fell 1.34%, snapping a two-day winning streak.

The Nifty Auto Index lost 1.04%, after gaining for three consecutive sessions on the back of strong October sales for automakers and an upbeat earnings report by Tata Motors.

The Nifty Metal Index, which gained 0.93% after posting heavy

losses in the previous session, along with realty stocks limited some of the main index's fall.

The Nifty Realty Index rose for a fourth consecutive session, adding 1.94%, as the festive season adds to demand for housing and office spaces. Indian markets will be open for a special "muhurat" trading session on Thursday and will be closed on Friday for the festive season of Diwali. Traders will also be looking out for the U.S. Federal Reserve's policy statement at 1800 GMT. Markets are almost certain the Fed will announce the tapering of its \$120 billion-a-month asset purchase programme.

Climate change:

Nine Antarctic glaciers that lost 300 gigatonnes of ice named after climate summits

As world leaders try and reach a consensus on reducing emissions to tackle climate change, Antarctica has faced the brunt of it all the most. The polar region, which is experiencing major melting events, now has a glacier named after the city of Glasgow where COP26 is underway.

Nine fast-flowing glaciers in West Antarctica have been named after locations of important climate treaties, conferences and reports, All of which are in the Getz region. Using satellite data scientists found recently that these glaciers combined have lost more than 300 gigatonnes of ice over the last 25 years.

The new name was approved by the UK Antarctic Place-names Committee on the request of scientists from the University of

Leeds, which will be added to the British Antarctic Territory Gazetteer. Researchers at Leeds' School of Earth and Environment found that between 1994 and 2018, all the glaciers in the Getz region accelerated by 25 per cent, with three glaciers accelerating by over 40 per cent.

300 GIGATONNES OF ICE LOST

Satellite analysis and ground observation revealed that 315 gigatonnes of ice have been lost from the Getz region over the last 25-years, adding 0.9 mm to the global mean sea level. The amount of water released was equivalent to 126 million Olympic swimming pools.

"We wanted to permanently mark the outstanding effort the scientific community has put into measuring the present-day

impact of climate change, and its predicted future evolution. Our study was the first to show that glaciers in this remote region of Antarctica were speeding up. The glaciers are named in chronological order, with Geneva Glacier marking the first-ever climate summit in 1979 on the west of the Getz study region and Glasgow Glacier marking the upcoming COP26 on the east," PhD researcher Heather Selley said. CLIMATE CRISIS EXTREMELY VISIBLE ON CAPS

Over the last 40 years, satellites have observed huge iceberg calving events, change in the flow of glaciers and regions of rapidly thinning ice, which has become synonymous with climate change. "The climate crisis affects all of us, whether through flooding of our homes,

increased storm frequency, reduced crop harvests, or the loss of habitats and biodiversity in the natural environment, with some communities impacted much more than others," Anna Hogg, Associate Professor in Leeds' School of Earth and Environment said in a statement.

The newly named glaciers include:

Geneva Glacier: It flows at the western edge of the Getz glacier and was named after the world's first climate conference in 1979. Rio Glacier: It lies further east and commemorates the first Earth Summit in 1992 where the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was opened. Berlin Glacier: It flows further east and is named after the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995

Kyoto Glacier: It commemorates the formal adoption of the Kyoto Protocol at COP3 in 1997.

Bali Glacier: It marks the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fourth assessment report in 2007.

Stockholm Glacier: It honours the IPCC fifth assessment report approval session in 2014.

Paris Glacier: It memorialises the agreement of a legally binding treaty in 2015 that aimed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celcius.

Incheon Glacier: It marks the meeting of the IPCC to consider the special report of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celcius in 2015.

Glasgow Glacier: It marks COP26 being held in Glasgow, Scotland.

Hunting marine plastic: Europe launches study to track plastic pollution in oceans from space

As scientists strive to control the dangerous consequences of climate change, new research is headed into tackling plastic that is damaging the marine ecosystems across the world. Europe is now looking at ways to control the marine menace using space-based technologies.

The European Space Agency (ESA) recently dumped marine plastic litter into a realistic scale model of the Atlantic Ocean to test technologies that can be used to analyse and



control marine pollution. ESA antenna engineer Peter de Maagt, who is overseeing the campaign said, "Our goal here

is to answer a few fundamental questions."

Scientists estimate that an average 10 million tons of plastic

enter the ocean annually equivalent to a fresh truckload of plastic dumped every minute. However, scientists know only about one per cent of this polluting material as to what happens with it once it's dumped into open seas. Satellite monitoring might in future help track its extent, and see where it goes if it can be proven to work in practice, the ESA said.

HUNTING MARINE PLASTIC
The test was conducted at the Deltares research institute near Delft in the Netherlands, inside

its Atlantic Basin Facility. The facility is equipped with wave generators to create realistic deep water waves which can be found in the ocean.

Researchers said that plastics disturb the ocean wave patterns and the satellite measures that disturbance. The test, which will be completed by January 2022 will provide a new way to monitor plastic waste using satellites already in orbit. "If not, a decision could be made to produce a dedicated satellite."



COP26:

We'll lead even if you don't, says Indian schoolgirl with PM Modi in audience

A 15-year-old Indian schoolgirl, whose solar-powered ironing cart project was the finalist of Prince William's inaugural Earthshot Prize, addressed the World Leaders' Summit of the COP26 conference in Glasgow with a clarion call for them to act and save the planet.

Vinisha Umashankar, who is from Tamil Nadu, was part of the "Accelerating Clean Technology Innovation and Deployment", attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi just before he left for New Delhi on Tuesday evening.

She invited world leaders, international organisations, civil society, and business leaders to stand with her generation and back the innovations, solutions and projects working to repair the planet and join the next generation in taking action.

"We, the Earthshot Prize Winners and finalists, are proof

that the greatest challenge in the history of our Earth is also the greatest opportunity. We lead the greatest wave of innovation humanity has ever known," said Umashankar.

"We chose not to complain, but take actions that will make us wealthier and healthier. We chose to do these things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard. Rising to these challenges will shape a new generation. A generation that will build a better world for all of us and generations to come," she said.

"We won't wait for you to act. We will lead even if you don't. We'll build the future, even if you are stuck in the past. Please accept my invite. I assure you won't regret it," she added.

Umashankar had made the shortlist cut of the 1 million pounds Earthshot Prize within the "Clean Our Air" category with

her concept of a solar-powered clean alternative to the charcoal-powered street irons that press clothes for millions of Indians each day.

Earlier, she joined the Indian winner in the category, Vidyut Mohan, for a meeting with Prime Minister Modi.

"It was such an honour meeting the Prime Minister, who was very curious about my winning agricultural waste recycling project and had some very encouraging words about scaling this up to help farmers all over India," said Mohan, the co-founder of Takachar which was named the winner of the prize last month for its cheap, small-scale, portable technology that converts crop residues into sellable bio-products.

"The prize means a lot as it gives the project a global scale and also offers us access to crucial support and funding," said

Mohan, with reference to his 1mn pounds win.

Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, joined the winners and finalists at the World Leaders' Summit, hosted by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson where Heads of State and Government leaders assembled over Monday and Tuesday to deliver national plans to tackle climate change. "Our Finalists are bursting with energy, ideas and ambition, so please expect many of them to come knocking on your doors! Their ingenuity is amazing. Their potential is off the charts. It's my pleasure to introduce you to the real superstars in this room today," Prince William said in his address to the summit.

Earlier on Tuesday, Global Advisor to the Earthshot Prize Winners, Michael R. Bloomberg, hosted an Earthshot Prize Global Alliance Assembly reception in the Green Zone of COP26.

It's already too late: Villages in Bangladesh bear the brutal cost of climate change

With each tide, Abdus Satter watches the sea erode a little more of his life. His village of Bonnotola in southwestern Bangladesh, with its muddy roads and tin-roofed houses, was once home to over 2,000 people. Most were farmers like the 58-year-old Satter. Then the rising seas poisoned the soil with salt water. Two cyclones in the last two years destroyed the mud embankments that shielded the village from tidal waves. Now, only 480 people remain, with the rest rendered homeless by the sea.

The effects of global warming - particularly increased cyclones, and coastal and tidal flooding that bring salt water further inland - are devastating Bangladesh and destroying the livelihoods of millions, said Mohammad Shamsuddoha, chief executive of the nonprofit Center for Participatory Research Development.

"It's a grave concern for a country like Bangladesh," he said, adding that projections show some 30 million people may be displaced from the country's coastal regions. With world leaders gathered in Glasgow, Scotland, for a U.N. climate conference this week, countries like Bangladesh are pressing for more financial support to cope with global warming. A decade-old deal for rich countries to give poor nations \$100 billion each year to switch to clean energy and adapt to climate change has not been fulfilled.

China's UN ambassador slams 'empty slogans' at COP26



(News Agencies)- Tackling global climate change needs more than "empty slogans" and big entourages, China's senior envoy to the United Nations Zhang Jun said on Wednesday, amid criticism of Chinese President Xi Jinping's failure to attend climate talks in Glasgow.

"Responding to climate change requires unbending determination and sustained action, not empty slogans, unchanging policies, luxury

motorcades and crowded entourages, or even irresponsibly letting people get infected!" wrote Zhang, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

President Xi is not attending the COP26 talks in person, and delivered only a written statement to the heads of state session on Monday. His U.S. counterpart Joe Biden told reporters in Glasgow that Xi's absence was a "big mistake". But Zhang wrote on Twitter that

China had announced new action plans and policy targets ahead of COP26, and had a delegation on the ground. He also criticised the United States' record on climate, saying Beijing "has never withdrawn from the Paris Agreement."

"The U.S. government must earnestly meet its responsibilities and come up with specific emission reduction measures, and not try to divert attention and blame others," he said.



Delhi records 1,200 Dengue cases in October, highest in 4 years



Over 1,530 cases of dengue have been reported in Delhi this year so far, of which nearly 1,200 were recorded in October alone, the highest count for the month in the last four years, official data showed.

The national capital had registered a higher count of 2,022 dengue cases for October in 2017, according to figures shared by civic authorities.

Five fatalities due to dengue were registered on Monday. With this, the total fatalities in the city caused by the vector-borne disease reached six, also the highest since 2017 when the official death tally stood at 10.

According to a report on vector-borne diseases released on Monday by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), the city's nodal agency for tabulating data on the matter, 1,537 dengue cases have been recorded this season till October 30, the highest count since 2018 for the same period.

The number of cases reported between January 1 and October 30 in the previous three years was 612 in 2020; 1,069 in 2019 and 1,595 in 2018, the report showed. Of the total dengue cases in Delhi this year, 1,196 have been reported in October till the 30th day of the month. The dengue case count for October in the previous five years were -- 1,517 in 2016; 2,022 in 2017; 1,114 in 2018; 787 in 2019; and 346 in 2020. The total number of cases this year till October 23 was 1,006 and the official death toll till then was one. So, more than 530 fresh cases were logged in one week. In September this year, 217 dengue cases were logged, the highest for the month in the last three years. A total of 1,072 cases and one death, were logged in the entire year in 2020, according to the report released by the SDMC. The number of deaths due to dengue in years preceding 2020, had stood at two in 2019; four in 2018; 10 in 2017; and 10 in 2016.

Covid: US approves Pfizer vaccine for children over five

The US has approved the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for children aged five to 11, clearing the way for millions of young Americans to get vaccinated.

The decision by Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Wolensky comes after careful consideration from US drug regulators.

The US is already giving the vaccine to those aged 12 and over. This approval affects some 28 million US children.

Experts argue that jabbing the young is necessary for a return to normal life.

The authorisation comes after expert panels at the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) weighed the risks and benefits of vaccinating children against Covid-19.

FDA officials determined that the vaccine was around 91% effective in preventing Covid in young children, and that their immune response was comparable to that seen in people aged 16 to 25. No serious side effects were found by researchers.

Children aged five to 11 are given a jab with a third of the dosage given to adults, creating a new logistical challenge for drug suppliers and doctors. Smaller needles are also used and the second jab is required three weeks after the first.

In a statement, President Joe Biden said the child vaccine "will allow parents to end months of anxious worrying about their kids, and reduce the extent to which children spread the virus

to others".

Covid has led 2,300 schools to close this year, affecting 1.2 million pupils and 78,000 teachers since August, NBC reported on Tuesday, citing a senior CDC official.

Among those between five and 11 years old, there have been about 1.8 million Covid cases confirmed in the US, according to the CDC. Fewer than two hundred have died, and most of those had underlying medical conditions. Some medical experts say that, given the persistence of the Delta variant and the return to in-person schooling, vaccinating children is a crucial next step in fighting the pandemic.

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

Dr Versalovic estimates at least 1,500 children have been diagnosed since the beginning of the pandemic with the virus at TCH, the largest children's hospital in the US. "No age group has been spared," he said.

What kind of opposition does it face?

Vaccine hesitancy remains a challenge for US medical authorities. Uptake in the adult population has stalled below 60% over the past several months.

Only a third of parents in a poll last month by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they would get their children vaccinated "right away". Another third said they would like to "wait and see".

Some parents have expressed

concern about hundreds of cases of myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle, that have been reported predominantly in young adults who took the vaccine, mostly after the second jab.

"Heart inflammation link to Pfizer and Moderna jabs

Dr Liz Mumper, chief executive of the Rimland Center for Integrative Medicine, thinks "children should not be given treatments they do not need", pointing to their low risk of contracting Covid and to the lack of long-term data on Covid vaccines.

"I am opposed to rolling these vaccines out to all children in a one size fits all model," she said. "The vast majority of children already have mild cases."

A legal immunity protection offered to drug companies during the Trump administration has also made it nearly impossible to sue drug manufacturers for any side effects suffered from vaccination until 2024.

What would a rollout look like? On Monday, the White House said that it had already purchased enough vaccine to jab all 28 million children who have just become eligible to receive it.

White House Covid Response Coordinator Jeffrey Zients told reporters that 15 million low-dose children's jabs had already been moved from Pfizer storage facilities to distribution centres.

The decision to begin preparing the shipments was made last week after the FDA granted approval, Mr Zients said, adding that jabs will probably begin before the end of the week.

Last month, the US announced

plans to distribute the jabs via more than 25,000 paediatric offices and 100 children's hospitals, as well as through pharmacies, school-based clinics and community health centres.

The plan is designed to take into account that, for this age group, everything from dosing to counselling support from clinicians to the post-jab waiting period looks different than for other age groups, and parents will need a trusted voice in the room.

"It's one thing to have Dr Fauci on the national news say you should get your kid vaccinated, but it's another thing for a trusted physician in the community to have that direct conversation with families," says Amy Wimpey Knight, president of the Children's Hospital Association. Mass vaccination sites are not good settings for jabbing young children, Ms Knight tells the BBC, so state and local health officials will need to quickly link up with schools, community centres and doctors' offices instead. "All plans are local. That's what we learned the first time," she says.

Do doctors support the plan? Patients at Texas Children's Hospital participated in Pfizer's clinical trials for children. Any side effects were "easily treatable and monitored", said Dr Versalovic. "We are fully confident in the paediatric Covid vaccines. It's been tailored to children," he said, referring to the reduced dosage.

Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek Bachchan and Aaradhya return to Mumbai for Diwali, greet paparazzi with folded hands



Actor couple Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan, along with their daughter Aaradhya Bachchan, were clicked on Wednesday as they exited the Mumbai airport. The family returned to Mumbai, a few days after celebrating Aishwarya's birthday. However, the destination where they travelled to is not known. For her airport look, Aishwarya Rai wore a long printed dress, left her hair loose and carried a red bag. Abhishek Bachchan opted for a pink sweatshirt paired with grey pants while Aaradhya was seen in a unicorn-printed pink

sweatshirt with black pants and pink shoes. She also carried a backpack. Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek Bachchan and Aaradhya Bachchan were seen at the Mumbai airport. Aishwarya held Aaradhya close to her as they walked to their car with Abhishek walking in front of them. As they neared their car, Aishwarya wished the paparazzi present at the airport a happy Diwali and also waved at them. Abhishek also wished them and greeted them with folded hands. Earlier this week, Aishwarya rang in her 48th birthday. Taking to Instagram, Abhishek shared her picture and wrote, "Happy Birthday Wifey! Thank you for

being, you. You complete us. We love you...." In the picture, Aishwarya wore a printed off-shoulder dress along with a crown of flowers on her head. Aishwarya, too, shared an Instagram post on her birthday, featuring her along with Abhishek and their Aaradhya. Sharing the post, she wrote, "I love you forever and beyond." Meanwhile, Aishwarya will be next seen in the Mani Ratnam directorial Ponniyin Selvan. She has been on an acting hiatus. With Ponniyin Selvan, she will reunite with director Mani Ratnam. Earlier, the duo worked together on Guru, Raavan and Iruvar.



Gulab Oils ropes in Malaika Arora as brand ambassador

Gulab Oils, one of the leading manufacturers of edible oils in India, has roped in Malaika Arora as their brand ambassador.

Serving the masses for more than five decades now, the brand that has been governed by its endeavour towards quality and trust has now roped in Malaika Arora to encourage the masses to replace ordinary refined oils for cooking with naturally made cold-pressed oils. After all, she has inspired many Indians to stay focused on their fitness journey.

Keeping in mind the health and fitness of Indians, Gulab cold-pressed oils are naturally extracted using the traditional ghani method. Cold-pressing helps retain the rich aroma and flavours of the ingredients used, thereby making it ideal for all



kinds of Indian cooking.

This collaboration with Malaika will help the brand create awareness about the benefits of using natural products like cold-pressed oils and strengthen its reach among a widespread audience.

This move will further play an integral role in driving across the core message of the brand and promoting it at the national level.

Gulab Oils has come up with an integrated campaign on its digital platforms where Malaika Arora will be the star attraction. Arora's fitness level has been an inspiration for many across different age groups, and this will help create a brand recall value and awareness in the category. Speaking on the partnership, Malaika Arora, said, "It is a pleasure to associate with Gulab

Oils, which is one of the leading manufacturers of edible oils in India.

As a collaboration, I will be endorsing the cold-pressed oil range that comes in five variants- groundnut, sesame, coconut, extra virgin coconut and mustard oil. Hope to convey the messaging of a healthy lifestyle and fitness in society together!" Speaking about the collaboration, Dishit Nathwani, Director of Gulab Oils, said, "Through this campaign and collaboration, we would like to convey the message of a healthy lifestyle."



Sunny Leone becomes the first Indian actress to mint NFT : 'It sold out immediately'



Actress Sunny Leone ventured into the NFT (non-fungible token) space after she made an announcement to enter the marketplace following in the footsteps of megastars Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth.

And now, racing ahead, Sunny has gone on to mint her NFTs. Minting is a process through which digital art becomes a part of the Ethereum blockchain - a public ledger that is unchangeable and tamper-proof.

Lionel Messi launches 'Messiverse' NFT crypto art collection

International celebrities such as Ellen Degeneres, Paris Hilton, and Lindsay Lohan have previously ventured into NFT as crypto currency has become a global rage and Sunny's minting has surely taken the Indian crypto enthusiasts by storm. The actress announced her first collectible on Twitter as she tweeted, "MEET the MISFTIZ! This is misfitz HONEY! She loves the color pink...boys with tattoos...and then eats them for lunch. What the world has been waiting for!!! #SUNNYLEONENFT collectibles. Check them all out on <http://Sunnyleonenft.com> (sic.)"

The actress took the lead among Indian actors to secure their digital assets when she broke the news about her association with NFT, two months

back. This made her the first Indian actress to roll out her own NFTs.

Talking about the collectible, an excited Sunny says, "This was a private sale and it sold out immediately. I am beyond excited about the hype behind my collection and the support from the community. In many ways, I am myself a misfit so there wasn't anything that's more appropriate than this collection." This is why Sunny Leone left with family for Los Angeles; check out pics of her bungalow

Talking about how she views crypto, the actress said, "I really believe crypto is the future of the world and NFTs give me an opportunity to express myself with art. Now we are beyond excited for the public sale to start in a few days."

Is Akshay Kumar a part of 'Dostana 2'?

The beleaguered project 'Dostana 2', in the pipeline for ten years, is yet to get its final cast. After Kartik Aaryan's exit from the project in April, the strong buzz doing the rounds is that Akshay Kumar has taken over the project and that the other two lead actors in the project Janhvi Kapoor and newcomer Laksh Lalvani are to be replaced.

However, when I touched base with Karan Johar he said, "Not true at all. Janhvi and Laksh are very much



homophobic hit 'Dostana' in 2008 was no longer helming the sequel. A new director-Colin De Cunha-was all set to direct 'Dostana 2' with Janhvi Kapoor, Kartik Aaryan and newcomer Laksh in the lead. The project was troubled from the start. Producer

Karan Johar tried his best to ensure Mansukhani returned with the sequel. But Tarun Mansukhani couldn't come up with a single idea worth filming. Way back in 2009, Karan Johar announced the sequel with Tarun as director and the same two leading men Abhishek Bachchan and John Abraham with Katrina Kaif replacing Priyanka Chopra. But Karan didn't like the script that Tarun came up with. Karan decided to wait for Tarun to rustle up a decent idea for a sequel. Finally, Karan roped in another director and fresh cast.

Farhan Akhtar is all smiles as he applies tika on girlfriend Shibani Dandekar's forehead during Dhanteras puja

Actor Farhan Akhtar on Wednesday shared a picture with his girlfriend, VJ Shibani Dandekar as they attended a Diwali pooja at his office. Taking to Instagram, Farhan dropped the photo that also featured Ritesh Sidhwani. In the picture, Farhan Akhtar and Shibani Dandekar sat next to each other as he applied a tika (mark) on her forehead. Farhan wore a blue kurta with white trousers and Shibani opted for a dark green dress.

Sharing the image, Farhan wrote "Happy Diwali" as he wished his fans along with a smiling face emoji. Reacting to the post, Siddhant Chaturvedi dropped a heart emoji. Shibani, on her Instagram page, shared the same photo and captioned it, "To a festival full of sweets, memories



and smiles! Happy Diwali with my @faroutakhtar."

Farhan often shares posts on Instagram giving fans glimpses of his life. On Shibani's birthday, he dropped a black and white photo with her and captioned it,

"With all my heart .. happy birthday Shu. Love you. @shibanidandekar."

Recently, he had shared a throwback photo along with his daughter Shakya. Taken almost 20 years ago in London, a young

Farhan posed with baby Shakya on the city streets. He had captioned the post, "Peek-a-Boo #LondonDiaries2002 @chatdelalune."

Farhan and Shibani have been in a relationship for three years now.

Earlier this year, she had tattooed his name on the side of her neck. A day after her birthday she had shared a picture with Farhan and given a peek of the tattoo. Previously, Farhan was married to hairstylist Adhuna Bhabani but parted ways in 2017. They share two daughters -- Shakya and Akira. Also Read | Farhan Akhtar shares throwback pic from London with daughter Shakya, Hrithik Roshan says: 'What! That's you?' Meanwhile, fans saw Farhan last in Toofaan by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra. The film also starred Paresh Rawal and Mrunal Thakur. Recently, he announced his upcoming directorial film Jee Le Zaraa. It features actors Alia Bhatt, Katrina Kaif and Priyanka Chopra Jonas in lead roles.



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