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Low wages ignited Bangladesh



Page 13

Vol. 23

Issue 23

Friday 9 August to 15 August 2024

\$1

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All That India May Lose If Middle East Plunges Into A Full-Blown War



Story on Page 12

UK braces for fresh anti-immigration Protests



Story on Page 13

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Unveiling the external forces behind Bangladesh's regime change



Editorial on Page 4

Is Rahul Gandhi taking a leaf out of Kejriwal's playbook?



Story on Page 11

Stop Politicising Vinesh Phogat's Olympics Disqualification, There's No Conspiracy: This Is What Really Happened



Story on Page 11

US charges Pakistani man with ties to Iran in alleged plot to assassinate Trump



Story on Page 11

Indian-origin doctor in UK fakes assault to drop patient from surgery list

†(Sai Bureau)-A 58-year-old Indian-origin medical practitioner has been suspended for 12 months for fabricating an assault to frame a patient to remove him from his surgery list. Gurkirit Kalkat, who worked at Thames View Medical Centre in Dagenham, Essex, England, wanted to drop the patient due to a merger with



another doctor's practice. He went to extreme lengths, including beating himself up and falsely claiming the patient had attacked him. The incident occurred when Kalkat called the patient in for an appointment, threw himself against the door, and hit himself in the chest while shouting, "Stop hitting me!" The patient, who had drug issues, sat in a chair and looked on in shock. Kalkat then pressed a panic button, and police officers arrived, taking the patient away in

handcuffs. However, the investigation was dropped when Kalkat refused to proceed with a prosecution, reported the Daily Mail.

Kalkat had previously lied to the patient about having terminal blood cancer to encourage him to register with another general practitioner (GP).

He even paid £44,000 for the patient's rehabilitation treatment. Kalkat was unable to explain why he was paying for the patient's treatment out of his own pocket, reported the Daily Mail. During an earlier consultation, the patient secretly videoed Kalkat, a medical practitioner, as he falsely claimed he had six months to live and offered him a further £15,000 to leave the practice, reported the Daily Mail.

At the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service in Manchester, Kalkat from Loughton, Essex, was suspended from practising medicine for 12 months after being found guilty of serious professional misconduct. The tribunal chairman, Stephen Killen, stated, "Dr Kalkat had been taking increasingly inappropriate, desperate and dishonest actions with a view to Patient A registering elsewhere."

Indian-origin grandmother stabbed to death in UK, attacker appears in court

†(Sai Bureau)-A 22-year-old man accused of randomly attacking and killing a 66-year-old Indian-origin grandmother while she waited for a bus in northwest London appeared in court through video link. Jalal Debella, 22, has been charged with the murder of Anita

Mukhey, a medical secretary, who was stabbed to death at a bus stop on May 9. Prosecutor Philip McGhee described the attack as "entirely random and unprovoked". Debella appeared at the Old Bailey via video link on August 6 from His Majesty's Prison Belmarsh, a Category A men's prison in Thamesmead, southeast London, facing charges of murder and possession of an offensive weapon. He spoke only to confirm his name and date of birth during the brief hearing. Proceedings were adjourned due to an incomplete psychiatric assessment, reported the Daily Mail.

Anita Mukhey, who worked part-time for the National Health Service (NHS) as a

medical secretary, was waiting at the Burnt Oak Broadway bus stop in the Edgware area of London on May 9 when Jalal Debella stabbed her in the chest and neck.

Mukhey succumbed to her injuries on the spot. Prosecutor McGhee explained that Debella initially walked past Mukhey, sat on a nearby bench, and then approached her at the bus stop. "There appeared to be some form of exchange between them where the defendant said something which caused Ms Mukhey to look at him," McGhee stated. "He then assaulted her by slapping her forcibly in the face several times, then punching her."

ATTACKER HELD GRANDMOTHER LIKE A RAG DOLL

An eyewitness described the scene, saying Debella was "holding her like a rag doll shaking her about". After slapping and punching her, Debella pulled out a knife and stabbed Mukhey multiple times. Mukhey managed to move a short distance before collapsing in the road.

Bystanders attempted to assist her, but she did not survive.



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Indians caught in UK's anti-immigration crossfire

The UK is witnessing widespread rioting and violence by far-right mobs after three children were stabbed to death. The attacks, which were directed at Muslims after a misinformation campaign, are now also being directed at the South-Asian community. And Indians have been caught in the crossfire.

†(Sai Bureau)- "Earlier, only Muslims were being targeted in the riots, now all kinds of immigrants are being attacked here," an Indian immigrant living in Manchester said on the far-right rioting in the UK.

Broken cars, doors and windows. Violence, bloodshed and riots. This is the UK after a deadly stabbing incident and a false information campaign. A Taylor Swift-themed yoga class turned into a nightmare. This is the worst civil disorder that England has seen in the last decade. Such has been the violence that the High Commission of India in London on Tuesday (July 6) issued an advisory to Indian travellers in the UK to "exercise caution and stay vigilant". It started when three girls were stabbed by Axel Rudakubana in Southport in the yoga class. What followed was misinformation about Rudakubana being a Muslim, rioting and attacks on immigrants.

This started after Bebe King, 6, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, were stabbed to death in Southport by Axel Rudakubana. Eight other children



were injured. WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING TO INDIANS IN THE UK?

Before Rudakubana's identity could be revealed, rumours about him being a Muslim asylum seeker who had entered the UK by boat spread like a wildfire.

Far-right supporters gathered in Southport, before the city could grieve the death of three girls. They injured 50 police officers, reported The Guardian. In Yorkshire, rioters

tried to set fire to an asylum seeker's housing, and they also attacked police officers.

"By taking the killing of three girls, and the rumour that followed. They started attacking Muslims and mosques in the UK. The hate soon spread to all South Asian immigrants. I don't know how they reached that conclusion," an Indian student based in Middlesbrough in North Yorkshire in the UK told

IndiaToday.in.

In Middlesbrough, 300 rioters smashed the cars and windows of many residents. Cars were also set on fire and nine people have been arrested.

There were counter-protests and retaliation too.

"Some Muslim boys retaliated too, but mostly the messaging is to not do that and fall into their argument that we [immigrants] are troublemakers, and we should be 'sent back'. We are trying not to be a part of this violence. The stakes are higher for us. Even the police are being attacked. Maybe if more police were deployed, who knows it could have been stopped," she said.

'RIOTERS LOOTING SHOPS, IT'S TERRIFYING IN THE UK'

A message is also being circulated widely on social media in the UK. "They won't stop coming until you tell them. No more immigration. 8pm. Mask up. Spread this as far as you can," the message, widely circulating in the UK, read. It gives a list of immigration centres and clinics housing immigrants in the UK.

USCIS completes second round of H-1B lottery selection for FY 2025 regular cap

†(Sai Bureau)-The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced that it has completed the second round of H-1B lottery selection for the fiscal year (FY) 2025 under its regular annual 65,000 visa limit. The USCIS earlier decided that it needed to select more registrations for

confirmed there would be no second selection for the advanced degree exemption, or master's cap, as the first round already met the required numbers. "We did not conduct a second selection for the advanced degree exemption (the master's cap), as enough master's cap registrations had already been selected



and sufficient petitions were received based on these registrations as projected to meet the master's cap numerical allocation," said the immigration authority in the US. The H-1B visa cap for FY2025 is set at 65,000 for the regular cap and an additional 20,000 under the master's

cap. In March, USCIS held a random lottery for the fiscal year 2025 H-1B visas, including those eligible for the advanced degree exemption. The initial filing period for these selected registrations was from April 1 to June 30, 2024. The H-1B visa, popular among Indian professionals, is the primary way for Indian IT companies to send their software engineers to the United States. Indians consistently make up the largest group of H-1B recipients. The H-1B visa is highly sought after by US companies, particularly in the technology sector, for hiring skilled foreign workers.

unique beneficiaries to meet the FY 2025 regular cap quota. Additionally, the USCIS have notified all prospective petitioners with selected registrations from this round of selection that they are eligible to file an H-1B cap-subject petition for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration. "Our projections indicate we have now randomly selected a sufficient number of registrations for unique beneficiaries as needed to reach the regular cap from the remaining properly submitted FY 2025 registrations," stated the US immigration agency. The USCIS

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Unveiling the external forces behind Bangladesh's regime change

By Susmita Ghosh

The recent upheaval in Bangladesh is not merely an internal conflict; it reflects the intricate web of foreign interferences and interests that have shaped its route. The military coup that toppled Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5, 2024, was not just a domestic power shift but a stage manipulated by external actors following their agendas.

The Coup's Dramatic Unfolding

The dramatic overthrow of Sheikh Hasina's democratically elected administration by the Bangladeshi military was a stark illustration of how international forces can exploit existing tensions to their advantage. On August 5, 2024, the military's assault on the prime minister's residence forced Hasina to flee in an Indian Army helicopter, evoking unsettling parallels to the chaotic scenes in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in recent years. The 45-minute coup has not only ended a 15-year reign of the Awami League but has also potentially steered Bangladesh a nation previously celebrated for its democratic practices and economic progress towards the influence of Islamic extremists.

The Roots of the Crisis

The tensions that led to this dramatic coup began on July 1, 2024, concerning the controversial issue of government job quotas. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's founding father, had originally reserved 30 percent of government jobs for the families of freedom fighters. However, Sheikh Hasina's administration abolished these quotas in 2018, leading to significant protests. By June 2024, the high court reinstated the quotas, but this was later reduced by the Supreme Court to 5 percent on August 1. The call for a long march on August 5 resulted in a massive crowd storming the prime minister's residence, culminating in Hasina's ousting and the establishment of an interim government led by General Waker-Uz-Zaman.

The Foreign Aspect

At first glance, the turmoil in Bangladesh might appear as a popular revolt against an authoritarian regime. The violent suppression of student protests certainly reinforces this view. Yet, the reality is that foreign actors have played a pivotal role in shaping the outcome.

Bangladesh's strategic significance has attracted global attention since its independence from Pakistan. The August 5 coup reveals the involvement

of international players, particularly the US, Pakistan, and China. India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has hinted at external influences, suggesting that the protests were manipulated to unseat Sheikh Hasina. The US, in particular, has shown a vested interest in Bangladesh. As a major investor and a significant trading partner, the US has been critical of Hasina's increasing alignment with China. The US has expressed concerns about the transparency of recent elections and has been vocal about alleged democratic backsliding. Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist group with historical ties to Pakistan and a reputation for extremist activities, has played a significant role in organizing protests. The group's ties with Pakistani terror networks and its involvement in anti-Hasina demonstrations raise questions about possible external support. Jamaat-e-Islami's coordination with Western NGOs and its role in inciting violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh further complicates the narrative.

Geopolitical and Economic Purposes

The US's discontent with Hasina's foreign policy, which leaned toward China, aligns with its broader strategic objectives. By influencing regime change in Bangladesh, the US aims to counterbalance China's growing presence and secure its interests in the region. The US's strategic calculus involves not only containing China but also tightening its grip on regions of economic significance, such as the Bay of Bengal's hydrocarbon reserves.

Assumption and Realities

Some narratives suggest that China might have played a role in supporting the coup to challenge Indian interests. However, this theory seems less reasonable given the robust economic and development partnerships established between China and Hasina's government. Moreover, there are unverified reports of Chinese funding to Jamaat-e-Islami, but this does not decisively link China to the coup. In summary, the coup in Bangladesh is a complex affair involving multiple foreign interests. While external influences like those of the US and Pakistan are evident, the full extent of their involvement requires a deeper investigation. The coup has not only shifted the political landscape in Bangladesh but has also highlighted the complicated chemistry of international forces shaping South Asian geopolitics.

Weakening economy and volatile markets open door for Donald Trump

Tim Walz says Kamala Harris has brought the *ijoyi* back to the campaign. He's right: Democrats were borderline suicidal when President Biden was still running for reelection; now they are practically giddy over Kamala Harris. Harris, who never won a single primary vote and was unpopular, long considered Biden's best insurance policy against being ejected from the race. Remarkably a fawning press, now considers her the ideal candidate.

Here's a reality check: A new CNBC All-America Economic Survey confirms the race has tightened considerably since Biden dropped out, with Donald Trump now leading Harris by only 2 points, within the margin of error. But on economic issues, by a 2-1 ratio, Americans think they will be better off financially under Trump. Some 79 percent of Republicans believe their economic fortunes will improve if Trump wins, whereas only 48 percent of Democrats think they will be better off under a President Harris. Independents favor Trump on the same issue, with 31 percent believing their economic future is brighter under a Trump presidency compared to a mere 10 percent who expect Harris to make their lives better.

As the U.S. economy slows and anxieties about employment increase, that is huge. One of the negatives for Trump in 2020 is that Americans were understandably hyper-focused on COVID-19, and less worried about the economy. Under the former president, unemployment had declined, inflation was nonexistent and, in response to Trump's tax cuts and a more favorable regulatory environment, growth had accelerated from

the dismal underperforming President Obama years.

Until very recently, employment and economic expansion have not been issues that would have reliably boosted the campaign of the former president. Under Biden, the economy has grown moderately and jobs have been plentiful. There have been weak spots, including manufacturing, which has contracted in 20 of the last 21 months. But overall, the economy has been healthy.

Except for inflation. For most of Biden's presidency, prices have risen faster than wages, leaving most American workers behind. Many economists blame Biden's enormous federal spending spree for causing prices to soar. Under Trump, bipartisan votes in Congress had also authorized a blast of federal spending meant to keep the economy from collapsing during the government mandated economic shutdown. The increase in unemployment benefits, pauses on rent and student loan payments and other measures were meant to be temporary, but President Biden kept those programs alive well past their supposed expiration dates. In addition, he authorized and Democrats voted to allow trillions more in spending, causing government outlays to reach levels relative to gross domestic product never seen before except during national emergencies. President Biden and Vice President Harris have never acknowledged their role in causing inflation. As Americans struggled to make ends meet, they dismissed the jump in everyday costs as *transitory* or blamed Russia's Vladimir Putin, or *greedy* corporations.

INSIDER

ISSN No. 1554 06X

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A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

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A Post-Hasina Bangladesh Doesn't Seem Like A Great Friend For India

By Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy

In Bangladesh, what began as student demonstrations against job quotas quickly turned into the downfall of the country's longest-serving Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina. The protests, which began last month, turned violent on July 15 when the supporters of Hasina's Awami League clashed with the students, prompting the government to use tear gas shells, impose curfews, internet blockades, and shoot-at-sight orders. The opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) were also quick to join the movement, which further exacerbated the violence. As of August 5, over 300 people had been killed and hundreds injured. As an angry mob marched into Dhaka on the same day, the army took responsibility of the country, and Hasina resigned. While an interim government will soon be in place, the future of the country now hangs by a thread, and this is no good news for South Asia.

Hasina's Had Been A Success Story

Hasina's Bangladesh saw significant economic growth and development. The country managed to maintain an average GDP growth rate of 6.6% over the



last decade, and its poverty decreased from 12% in 2008 to over 5% in 2022. Its GDP increased from \$100 billion in 2009 to \$460 billion in 2022. Given this trajectory, the country was expected to graduate from its Least Developed Country status by 2026. The last few decades also ushered in some political stability. By suppressing the 2009 mutiny of Bangladesh Rifles, Hasina had put to end the frequent military coups in the country and subordinated such forces to the country's external conduct, especially with the 'Friendship to all, malice to none' foreign policy, which had been key in attracting

investments and infrastructure from the West, India, Russia, China, and Japan alike.

A crucial aspect of her successful foreign policy had been winning India's trust and improving economic ties. Hasina respected India's three red lines, which the previous BNP and JI governments violated on multiple occasions. This included protecting Hindu minorities, clamping down on extremists and Northeast militants who targeted India from Bangladesh, and respecting Indian security sensitivities and concerns when engaging with hostile countries like Pakistan and China. Under these robust ties,

the trade between both countries grew from \$2 billion in 2007 to \$14 billion in 2022, and as of the following year, New Delhi had even offered Dhaka over \$8 billion in credit lines. Connectivity took precedence too with the reopening of rail lines, a push for transit and port access, and the construction of a diesel supply pipeline. Both countries also resolved their maritime disputes and ratified the land boundary pact, ushering in the golden era of India-Bangladesh relations.

India's Quest for Connectivity

Notably, New Delhi's trust for Hasina incentivised India to promote regional integration and connectivity through its own territory, something Dhaka

had long been calling for. This was done for two reasons: one, it would help India's neighbours to boost their economies by fostering economic cooperation with each other, and two, it would help Delhi deter increasing Chinese presence and investments in these countries. Dhaka's stability and economic growth also made it an attractive market for South Asian countries like Nepal and Bhutan, both of which possess great energy potential, even as they have scant foreign reserves and are landlocked and over-dependent on India. Bangladesh has looked up to these countries for importing energy, exporting its products, and further fuelling its economic growth.

As a result, in 2022, India offered to though this has not been implemented yet to free transit to Bangladeshi trucks headed for Nepal and Bhutan. In June, New Delhi and Dhaka also signed an MoU that enabled Bangladesh railways to reach Nepal and Bhutan using Indian railway lines. Bangladesh itself permitted Bhutan to build a special economic zone in its territory, which would be crucial to the latter's Gelephu Special Administrative Region project when linked through India.

Straight Talk | With Sheikh Hasina Out, Three Winners Emerge in Bangladesh: China, Pakistan and US

By: Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

India is on its path to becoming the world's third-largest economy. Once that goal is achieved, India will have only two countries to beat over a longer period of time - China and the United States of America. For long, there has been a belief in global strategic circles that Beijing and Washington have a tacit understanding on the lines of 'G2'. India is a country whose rise threatens both China and the US, and as such, the interests of Washington and Beijing to contain New Delhi appear to be converging. What has played out in Bangladesh in recent weeks, culminating on Monday with the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, is a stark reminder of how India's interests can be sacrificed at the altar of American and Chinese desires for regional and global domination.



The Americans want a naval base in Bangladesh, a demand Sheikh Hasina time and again rejected. As for the Chinese, they will settle for anything that turns the equations against India in the subcontinent. It is not surprising, therefore, that top Indian intelligence sources have spoken to News18 of an ISI plot, and active Pakistani involvement in the ongoing unrest and violence in Bangladesh. While China uses its

proxy, Pakistan, to raise the tempo against India in Jammu and Kashmir, the PLA is keeping the Indian Army busy along the LAC. Parallely, the US has been making moves which are visibly detrimental to Indian interests. These range from frequent remarks by the State Department and White House on India's internal affairs, to even hitjobs masquerading as government reports highlighting the supposed

rise of intolerance against minorities in our country. Already, Pakistan is trying to remodel the Kashmir conflict into a "resistance" against supposed fascism, so that the world sees it on the lines of what is happening in Gaza. This is according to an analysis by DisInfo Labs. India was, in any case, facing the prospect of a two-front conflict with Pakistan and China. What the unrest and altered equation in Bangladesh does is potentially open a third front against India. Add to that, Washington's tacit support for Khalistanis only adds to India's worries. The US is yet to take any concrete steps to address Indian concerns about the threats posed by Khalistani elements harboured on American soil. The question to ask, therefore, is this: will Punjab be the next front that the American

deep state opens against India? We are obviously seeing an attempt to bog India down with domestic and regional troubles, at a time when the country should be focusing on its economy in a mission mode. Has the idea of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 startled global hegemony, who may now be interested in ensuring India's growth trajectory is stunted due to emerging security challenges? The answer is blowing in the wind. The United States is pivoting towards the Indo-Pacific. The process of that pivot, as is now evident, is classically American. Wherever Washington has historically turned its attention to, under the shroud of countering a rising power (in this case, China and India), chaos and anarchy have followed. One need not strain one's eyes looking at the previous century.

Bedlam in Bangladesh - A new front opens up for India?

India, for now, will be in a wait-and-watch mode. Nobody really knows how things will unfold over the coming days, weeks and months. If there is a prolonged spell of instability in Bangladesh, it will not augur well for India.

By Sushant Sareen

A day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed was forced by violent mobs to flee Bangladesh, the country is on tenterhooks. Law and order has crumbled, and there is no government as yet.

The Hindu minority is being hunted down, and their homes and businesses are being looted. The Bangladesh Army has declared that an interim government will be formed, but there is no agreement on who will form it. Nor is there any clarity on whether those nominated to the interim government will be acceptable to the agitating mobs or to those stirring the pot from behind the scenes. Clearly, the developments of the last few days have plunged Bangladesh into a chaotic situation and the entire region into uncertainty. With Myanmar already in the throes of an implosion, the meltdown in Bangladesh has made India's entire eastern flank vulnerable.

Already engaged on two hostile fronts — on the west with Pakistan and in the north with China — India will now have to contend with a destabilised, possibly even hostile, third front in the east. Add to this the



threat of an internal front — a resurgence of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, the activation of Khalistan gangs, the continuing fraught situation in Manipur, and political agitations that could erupt in the months ahead.

Although India has been an island of stability in the entire region, there are storms raging all around India. The instability in India's neighbourhood will inevitably have an impact on her own security. Since the beginning of this decade, India's security environment — from Afghanistan to Bangladesh, and from the Maldives to Myanmar — has deteriorated rather alarmingly.

While it is tempting to take potshots at the incumbents, the fact is that there are limits to what India could have done to arrest the adverse developments in the region. The fact is also that India didn't really have many options or alternatives. All the carping about not having a Plan B is mostly glib talk. It sounds good in television discussions and op-ed pieces, but in practical terms, such talk is quite hollow and has little relevance, especially given the inimicality of the other players India was supposed to have engaged. Ignored warning signs

Where India can be faulted to an extent is the failure to read the tea

leaves correctly. For instance, in 2021, India went along with the general consensus (or fond belief) that the Afghan republic would resist the Taliban onslaught. But the Ashraf Ghani regime folded like a house of cards, catching not just India but virtually every other country, including Pakistan, wrong-footed.

In Myanmar, everyone assumed the military junta would establish its dominance and control after overthrowing the elected government. But the country exploded in anger and has since imploded. In Pakistan, the army has been struggling to regain its dominance and failing. So much so that Pakistani analysts are now openly wondering if the country is heading for a civil war-like situation with uncontrollable alienation in Balochistan and other provinces. In almost all these cases, the old assumptions did not hold. Even though the ground had shifted, the assessments were still being made on increasingly redundant assumptions. Once again, in Bangladesh, there is an assumption, even a belief, that the Bangladesh Army will restore

normalcy, control the mobs, and that the fires on the streets will soon burn themselves out. Bangladesh has gone through such convulsions many times in the past, and there is a sense that this time, too, things will settle down. But what if this time they don't? What if there are forces at play that militate against things settling down?

For now, the military has assumed control and is trying to set up an interim government. However, there are reports that the agitators are neither ready to accept the names given by the army nor willing to have the army rule directly. The students' leaders have proposed the name of Dr Mohammad Yunus, who has jumped at the opportunity to head the government, and perhaps settle scores with members of the ancient regime. It is still not clear where other players — Bangladesh National Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami, and other opposition parties — stand on the issue of the interim government. There is also no clarity on the future political roadmap.

Gaza war spirals out of control as Israel strikes all regional foes

On the night of July 30, Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in a targeted strike at his residence in a closely guarded area in Tehran.

By Col Rajeev Agarwal (Retd)

Three hundred days, 40,000 dead, more than a lakh injured and around two million displaced internally (many times over): this is the price already paid in the ongoing Gaza conflict. Repeated efforts to secure a ceasefire deal and stop the bloodshed have not yielded any positive results as the war continues unabated. On July 30, when Iran was in a sombre yet celebratory mood as its new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, was being sworn in, little did anyone know that the tempo and tenor of the war were going to change completely soon. On the night of July 30, Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in a targeted strike at his residence in a closely guarded area in Tehran. Although he had been on Israel's target list ever since the war broke out in Gaza on October 7 last year, the sheer audacity of taking out this high-value target in Iran's capital, especially on such an occasion, took the world by surprise. It was a night of chaos in the region as there were



strikes in other capitals in the region too. In Beirut, a precision strike from the air took out senior Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur, whom Israel had blamed for the missile attack in occupied Golan Heights on July 27 that led to the death of 12 Israeli citizens. Elsewhere, in Baghdad, a missile attack by the US forces targeted a base south of Iraq's capital used by Iran-backed Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), killing four members of the group. If that was not enough, unconfirmed reports indicate the successful

assassination of Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Forces of Iran, in Damascus the same night. If this turns out to be true, it would be a night of four strikes across four capitals in the region, leading to three key assassinations — spectacular in achievement yet hugely escalatory in nature. Following it up, on August 1, Israel claimed that it had also eliminated Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif in an airstrike carried out in Khan Younis

city in Gaza on July 13. Hamas has yet to confirm his death. A few weeks ago, Israeli fighter aircraft struck the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeidah in Yemen on July 20, setting a major oil storage dump on fire and killing six people. This was in response to a Houthi drone attack on an apartment building in Tel Aviv on July 19, which killed one civilian and injured at least 10 people. This effectively means that all the three components of the "Axis of Resistance" — Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis — all backed and supported by Iran, have been struck by Israel in the past few days. The current series of strikes was bound to draw an immediate and sharp response, which was led by Iran. Outraged over the killing of the Hamas chief in Tehran, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made firm statement about seeking revenge: "The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear guest in our house and made us sad, but it also prepared the ground for a harsh punishment for itself."

Khaleda's political heir Tarique Rahman could be a thorn in India's side



By Subir Bhaumik

As ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeks asylum after fleeing Dhaka, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader and Khaleda Zia's son, Tarique Rahman, is all set to return home from London, where he has been since the Awami League came to power in 2009.

The Hasina government had often pressured the UK to extradite Tarique to stand trial on various charges, especially for his involvement in the August 2004 grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina's rally, but he had managed to stay and use London as his base to virtually lead the BNP through video conferences with party leaders and activists. Rahman recently congratulated the student leaders of the protest movement that ousted Sheikh Hasina. Then came the formal announcement from BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir who said Tarique Rahman, the party's acting chairman, will be returning to Bangladesh very soon. You all know that our leader, Tarique Rahman, has been unjustly exiled abroad due to false cases. He has fully supported this movement, and we have taken steps to bring him back to the country immediately, Alamgir was quoted as saying.

With the army getting President Mohammed Shahabuddin to exercise clemency powers to let off BNP supremo Khaleda Zia from prison, there is optimism in the party that it is now safe for Tarique to return. With unconfirmed reports suggesting Tarique's business partner, Giasuddin Al Mamun, has also been released, there is hope in the BNP that the cases against Tarique Rahman will be dropped and his conviction in the 2004 grenade attack on Hasina's rally overturned.

Tarique's chequered past In 2013, a Dhaka court first

acquitted Tarique in a money laundering case. Later, after the state's appeal, the high court sentenced him to seven years in prison. Five years later, in February 2018, Khaleda Zia got five years and Tarique 10 years in jail in the Zia Orphanage Trust

corruption case. On October 21, 2018, a special tribunal sentenced Tarique to life imprisonment for masterminding the grisly grenade attack on a rally of then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina on August 21, 2004. He was given a life sentence three

times and 20 years imprisonment under several sections of the two cases of murder and the Explosives Act.

On February 4, 2021, another court sentenced Tarique to two years imprisonment in a defamation case filed in Narail

district on charges of making ugly comments about the "Father of the Nation", Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was also fined Tk10,000, and sentenced to another six months in prison in default of payment.

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Delhi is now a Disaster

By Narayan Moorthy

So, yet another disaster has befallen Delhi and will soon be forgotten as we citizens navigate our daily livesó whether it's dealing with water-filled potholes, the pitfalls created by our overly efficient bureaucracy or caring government, inflated electricity and water bills, a lack of water supply, drivers going the wrong way, malfunctioning streetlights, or unresponsive government websites that crash just when we're about to book an elusive rail ticket or pay our taxes. Politicians will trade blame with each other. The bureaucracy will busily pass the buck. Cleaning of drains and sewers will be wisely planned for August, by which time the monsoon has passed its heaviest phase. And, as they all probably secretly hope, soon we will be knee-deep in winter pollution worries and road accidents caused by smog, to remember any of what befell us a few months ago. India will stoically carry on, as it does - landslide or illegal tree felling notwithstanding. Yet, the time just after a disaster may be the best time to muse over what the causes could be. Three hapless souls have just lost their helpless young lives, just because they were in an illegally run library in a basement to study so that they could ace their exams, to potentially enter the same spineless bureaucracy that now



disavows any responsibility for their deaths. Those children who were doing this at great cost and sacrifice to themselves and their undoubtedly very middle or lower middle class families: who were putting up with cramped PG digs, bad mess food, and small allowances relative to costs in a very expensive city - surely, they and their families deserve at least a little more sympathy than can be heard from iabovei in the frantic blame game that is currently on. Some of the reactions among the powers that be after the Old Rajinder Nagar basement flooding disaster could point us in which direction to look for answers. Firstly, according to the Municipal

Corporation of Delhi (MCD), it was anyone's fault but theirs. Yes, the hitherto open brick drains that ran along the front boundary of every plot of land (at least in planned localities) had been covered over as concrete ramps - but the ramps are really necessary for vehicles to enter the stilt parking floor, now mandatory for all plots of land (barring the very largest). Yes, the floor level of the stilts (and thus the building's entrance and stairs to the basement) is very low. But what else would one expect when fitting a building with stilts plus four permissible upper floors into a mere 15-meter height limit, while also requiring that each habitable floor have a

minimum clear internal height of 2.75 meters? In this direct cause-and-effect situation, the building's features that contributed to this mishap can only be attributed to poorly framed bye-laws. That these stilts are nowhere written in the bye-laws as being mandatory for all plots, is the sudden decision of an erstwhile Lt. Governor's brainwave one early morning only adds grave insult to grievous injury. Yes, possibly four floors and stilts should not even have been permitted in a city where building heights are capped at 15 metres for residential plots, and where inner locality streets are too narrow to permit offsite parking. This same policy has gone on to make gaudy but choked high-rise and low-sunshine slums of many of the city's old low-slung planned coloniesí. Who else permitted this but the MCD's bye-laws. Secondly, according to the MCD and as reported in the papers, all drains were supposedly cleaned before the monsoons. Why are there now complaints about drains being inaccessible due to ramps and encroachments? Shouldn't they have raised this issue before the monsoon, when it was still possible to address it by removing the ramps and encroachments? Instead, they are now belatedly addressing these issues after the damage has occurred.

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Why Do 'Crazy', Childless Cat Ladies Scare Men So Much?

By Shuma Raha

US Vice-Presidential candidate J.D. Vance's 2021 comment about "childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made" has set the cat among the pigeons. Well, not so much among pigeons, but certainly among a lot of women who have come out breathing fire that he dared to make such a disparaging remark about women who do not have children. They have slammed his misogyny, his contempt for the choices that women make, and his portrayal of women without children as joyless creatures who try to fill their empty lives with their cats. (Clearly, Vance thinks that a mewling cat fits his vision of a pathetic childless woman much better than a barking dog).

Vance's remark was, of course, a political one, meant to belittle women leaders in the liberal Democratic fold - women like Vice-President Kamala Harris, for instance - who do not have biological children. Nevertheless, there's no doubt that it sprang from his deeply held belief that there is something lacking in women who are childless. That they are incomplete, incompetent, socially detached, and, hence, unworthy of respect.

Only Contempt, Pity For Childless Women

Sounds familiar? Of course, it does! We Indian women are all too acquainted with this belief system. So much so



that we could be forgiven for wondering what the caterwaul over Vance's comment is all about. Heck, the guy merely verbalised his belief as offensively as he could, but isn't this hostility exactly what childless women in our society are subjected to? Which makes one wonder if Vance's sterling opinion about childless women was also bolstered by his Indian wife Usha, who is a serious procreator and has produced three children.

But let us not speculate. Let us stick to facts. And the fact is that every Indian woman who has not had a child - whether by choice or for medical issues or for any other reason, whether she is affluent or underprivileged, stays in an urban high-rise or a rural hovel - is treated with contempt, pity and, in some cases, murderous cruelty. (We

are talking about married women here, because, chhi chhi, no one expects unmarried women to have children. Besides, single women face another level of derision altogether).

'Born A Woman, Suffer Like One'

Sure, child-bearing is a perfectly natural life choice. But for some weird reason, not having a child is considered monstrously unnatural. Try telling your officious aunt or over-friendly female neighbour that you have seen the misery and exhaustion of your friends who were new mothers, their eyes hollowed from sleeplessness; you've seen them give up their careers for their children, or be torn with guilt because they have gone back to their jobs. And, no, thank you, that life is not for you - you'd rather be childfree and carefree. Said aunt and neighbour will be horrified

by your perversity, your unfeminine rejection of the reproductive instinct. You were born a woman, dammit, you should jolly well go through the pain of being one!

US Vice-Presidential candidate J.D. Vance's 2021 comment about "childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made" has set the cat among the pigeons. Well, not so much among pigeons, but certainly among a lot of women who have come out breathing fire that he dared to make such a disparaging remark about women who do not have children. They have slammed his misogyny, his contempt for the choices that women make, and his portrayal of women without children as joyless creatures who try to fill their empty lives with their cats. (Clearly, Vance thinks that a mewling cat fits his vision of a pathetic childless woman much better than a barking dog).

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The Complex Emotions Bangladesh And Its Crisis Evoke In Me, An Indian

By Mayank Mishra

The visuals from Bangladesh are disturbing, and the anger on the streets is palpable. They are reminiscent of scenes from Colombo just two years ago when the Presidential Palace was ransacked following then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's flight from Sri Lanka.

According to an NDTV report, "On Monday, protesters set fire to a temporary shed at the residence of Bangladesh's Prime Minister (now former). They also looted and vandalised Sheikh Hasina's official residence in Dhaka, smashed a statue of her father, Mujibur Rahman, with hammers, and set her party's offices ablaze as they celebrated her departure as Prime Minister."

Such visuals have been widely circulated and analysed by commentators in the last two days. I will refrain from commenting on whether Bangladesh is falling into the hands of radical Islamic groups or whether there was foreign involvement in the regime change on Monday.

My focus here is different. I want to explore the range of emotions that an average Indian has towards a country that has



largely been a good neighbour. Alongside the term 'ghuspaihiye' (which gained notoriety with the influx of immigrants right after 1947 of migrants from then-undivided Pakistan) and the range of emotions it evokes, there is a mix of empathy, pain, shared legacy, and a common love for Rabindra Sangeet-all experienced in varying degrees and at different times.

The 'Ghuspaihiye' Sentiment

For people living in parts of Assam, Tripura, and the bordering districts of West Bengal and Bihar, the mass migration from then-East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) between 1948 and 1965 significantly impacted local

demographics. The influx surged following the disturbances surrounding Bangladesh's birth in 1971. According to reliable estimates, there are nearly two crore Bangladeshis in India, with half of them settled in Assam and West Bengal alone. Since then, the term 'ghuspaihiye', or 'illegal immigrant', has become ingrained in the Indian psyche, especially in the context of Bangladesh. The attitude towards these immigrants has often been one of contempt, primarily driven by class bias. They are perceived as poor, persecuted, and a drain on scarce resources. Yet, they are not hated, likely due to another powerful

sentiment towards Bangladeshis: empathy.

We Played A Role In Their Liberation

This sense of empathy arises from India's active role in Bangladesh's liberation from Pakistan after a bloody struggle. The partition of Pakistan was also seen by many Indians as a vindication of the belief that creating a nation-state based on religion was a flawed concept—a belief that had led to the partition of India in 1947. This sentiment has persisted, and occasional anti-India protests in Bangladesh are considered minor deviations from an otherwise well-behaved neighbour and are therefore mostly overlooked.

Pain Across the Border

Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, my generation was frequently exposed to news about nature's fury in Bangladesh and its devastating toll. Reports from the November 1970 cyclone, one of the deadliest on record, indicated that nearly 5,00,000 lives were lost in then-East Pakistan. Another cyclone in 1985 killed 11,000 people, and one in 1991 claimed nearly 1,50,000 lives.

Don't Catch a Falling Knife: Message From The Market Correction

By Amitabh Tiwari

On Monday, August 5, 2024, Indian equities corrected by 3% following nearly 13% drop in the Nikkei (the Japanese benchmark index) and steep declines in the Korean and Taiwanese markets. Subsequently, US markets fell by 3%. While most markets on Tuesday were either flat or positive, global markets have been down between 3% and 10% since the beginning of last week.

The key reasons for this sharp decline are as follows:

1. The Yen

The borrowing in Japanese currency, yen, and investing in other markets has been impacted by the Bank of Japan's (BoJ) recent interest rate hike. The yen has appreciated by 10% against the dollar in the past couple of weeks, following the BoJ's rate hike from 0.10% to 0.25%.

With rising interest expenses and a stronger Yen, the carry trade has become costly. Investors are being forced to sell underlying securities before the trade becomes unviable. It is estimated that at least \$1 trillion



worth of such exposure is outstanding across all asset classes.

For context, Lehman Brothers had \$600 billion in debt at its peak in 2007, largely funding mortgage assets. Defaults on these assets led to Lehman's bankruptcy, with estimated economic losses of \$10 trillion-16 times the company's debt. Given advancements in technology and liquidity, the impact of similar issues today could be even larger.

Post-COVID, liquidity-driven rallies have propelled asset prices worldwide. Gold recently peaked at ₹ 76,000 per 10 grams, an all-time high. The Sensex, before Monday's fall, was at its highest level of 81,867,

and real estate prices in many Indian cities have surged, with some premium properties in NCR selling out in days.

With easy and cheap money regime likely coming to an end, assets globally are facing selling pressure as investors seek to book profits or minimize losses due to higher borrowing costs.

2. Recessionary Fears In The US

Last week's US jobs data for July showed a rise in unemployment rate to 4.3%, the highest in three years, following June's 4.1%. This marks the fourth consecutive month of rising unemployment, stoking fears of a recession. Investment Banking firm Goldman Sachs now estimates a 25% chance of

recession in the US, up from a previous 15% probability.

The expectation of a gradual economic recovery appears to be fading, with markets bracing for a possible hard landing. Uncertainty surrounding the upcoming US elections is also adding to the concerns.

3. Rising Geopolitical Tensions

Last week, Israel was suspected of killing senior Hamas officials in Tehran and Beirut. This escalation has prompted Hezbollah to launch drone attacks on Israeli military sites, raising the probability of a broader conflict in the region. And that is bad news for all risky assets.

4. Weak Domestic First Quarter Earnings

Indian corporate earnings have been weak, with 8% quarter-on-quarter decline (Nifty 50) and 6% year-on-year growth. The Indian market's post-COVID rise was driven by strong earnings growth. However, earnings growth has recently been muted, with high inflation, rising crude prices, and lacklustre volume growth posing risks. Achieving a 12-14%

growth in FY25 earnings seems challenging, given the low single-digit growth in Q1.

Following capital gains taxation hike announcement in the budget, the potential for positive news has diminished significantly.

5. India's Outperformance

India has been among the top-performing markets in 2024, with a rise of over 10% (Sensex). Market experts have been warning of an impending correction and advising investors to consider balanced funds or increase exposure to debt products.

SEBI has tightened F&O norms to curb excessive speculation, and AMFI has been promoting debt funds through its 'Mutual Fund Sahi Hai' campaign.

Until there is more clarity on positive developments or limited negative outcomes, investors may be better off booking some profits on their equity investments. As the adage goes, "Don't try to catch a falling knife".

Experts recommend waiting and watching rather than buying on the dips amid global uncertainty.

American Politicians: The Lords Of Sexist Comments

By Bharti Mishra Nat

Since the day United States of America's Vice President Kamala Harris made her bid for the Oval Office, replacing Joe Biden from the race, she has become the subject of trolling and racial abuse. Harris has been the target of harsh condemnation, with many criticising her for not having children.

After Biden ratified Harris, an old video of JD Vance, who has been named as Republican candidate Donald Trump's running mate for the 2024 presidential election, has gone viral on social media. In this 2021 video, Vance called Harris one of the "childless cat ladies", who is "miserable" as she has no direct stake in the US since she is not a mother.

One would have thought Vance would be regretting his disparaging comments after becoming Trump's running mate. All such civilised thoughts vanished when the 'gentleman' in question defended his 2021 remarks recently in an



unabashed manner. Even celebrities including actor Jennifer Aniston and singer Taylor Swift also criticised Vance for his biased comments.

People like Vance only reinforce the discourse from the earliest days of the civilisation that 'women are inferior to men'. Despite changing roles in society, the prominent idea of women is that they are mothers. The lessons in moral science are imparted to women, who rebel or simply choose to be different; they are characterised as irrational and irresponsible. This is one of the

good reasons why women refrain from joining politics, which is reflected in the poor number of women leaders in the world. According to a Pew Research Centre report, of the 193 members of the United Nations, only 59 countries have had a woman leader.

Vance's remarks insult women, who made a conscious choice for whatever reasons, to not have children because it doesn't make them lesser in any way. Harris has been facing both sexism and racism all through her political life. She has been called

a DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) candidate, inferring she got where she is only because of her race and gender, not because she earned it.

There have also been allegations that she has "slept her way to the top," a typical method to demoralise the achievements of a successful woman.

It has been observed globally, that female politicians receive more abuse than their male counterparts and a majority of it is in the form of misogynistic and vicious anti-female hatred. The rise of social media and cyberbullying have aggravated the hatred against women in public life, and many believe that it's an attempt to silence women and keep them out of power.

Harris became vice president because of her intelligence and talent. Her political track record includes being a US Senator from 2017 to 2021, and the attorney general of California from 2011 to 2017, where she managed the largest state justice department in the country.

In contrast, JD Vance spent 18 months as a senator before Trump picked him to be his vice-presidential running mate.

"Many people, out of jealousy or hatred, tend to label ladies on their reproductive capabilities. It surely sets a shallow example for the rest of the world because the statement made by Vance on Kamala Harris goes to prove, how low a man can stoop to hurt the sentiments of accomplished ladies and shame her for her not being able to become a biological mother," says Lakshmi Krishnan, president, Society for the Promotion of Women and Child Welfare, Delhi.

Gender bias

There are many reasons people choose not to procreate: income, health, relationship status and simple preference. For those who are childless not by choice, but perhaps due to infertility or the death of a child, their grief and disappointment can't be assessed.

Is Rahul Gandhi taking a leaf out of Kejriwal's playbook?

On December 4, 2013, when Arvind Kejriwal's debutant Aam Aadmi Party proved every pollster wrong by getting 28 seats in the Delhi Assembly, Rahul Gandhi said he would learn from Kejriwal's success. Almost 11 years later, Rahul Gandhi is doing better than Kejriwal in the Delhi chief minister's style and much more. Before elaborating further, a word of caution. Core Rahul supporters insist that the Gandhi scion had planned to outdo Kejriwal long before Kejriwal emerged as a politician among politicians as a disruptor. It so happened that Rahul the catalyst got bogged down by machinations of the Congress old guard, the cautious nature of his mother Sonia Gandhi, and his own dynastic background. Today, Rahul, as the Leader of the Opposition, is excelling as a daring politician both inside and outside the Lok Sabha. His dramatic claim that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was contemplating booking him was made on a microblogging platform at 1.52am. The timing is significant because for years, many Congress leaders often lamented Rahul's inaccessibility between 10pm and 10am. In daring the ED to act against him, Rahul seems to have made many political calculations. If the ED does not summon him, Rahul will score a victory of sorts. If

the agency goes ahead, Rahul will be quick to dub the ED's move as an act of political vendetta. More significantly, Rahul's claim of having inside and prior information from the ED would gain credibility. The present composition of the Lok Sabha is such that the combined opposition represents 47 per cent as against the ruling coalition's 53 per cent space. In such a scenario, a section of bureaucracy warming up to the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in particular, cannot be ruled out. Like Kejriwal of 2012-14, Rahul's constant attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alleged proximity to certain business houses has been relentless and somewhat successful. During the Lok Sabha campaign, PM Modi sought to link certain industrial houses as fundraisers for the Congress and the Opposition. Modi's remark was seen as a knee-jerk reaction under pressure from Rahul. The LoP has been relentless in naming business houses in his Lok Sabha speeches. Each time, the chair or the treasury benches protest, Rahul's charge of an alleged quid pro quo gains currency. Both Rahul and Kejriwal have been unconventional politicians. Kejriwal, a former bureaucrat, leaned heavily on NGOs and civil society to reap rich

benefits. In fact, he converted his NGO into a political party. Today, key members of Team Rahul come from NGO and activist backgrounds. During the two phases of Bharat Jodo Yatra, over 150 civil society organisations drawn from 21 states were part of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra. In the last few months, Rahul has consciously tried becoming a polarising face against Modi, instead of a popular figure. Like Kejriwal of 2014, he dares Modi at every forum. Kejriwal had, in fact, fought against Modi in the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency in 2014. Many in the Congress feel Rahul or Priyanka Gandhi could have beaten Modi if a Gandhi sibling dared to contest from Varanasi in 2024. Just like Kejriwal of the past, Rahul has started communicating and interacting with the masses almost at will. One day, he could be spotted meeting loco pilots, and another day with coolies at Anand Vihar railway station. Even during his travels, Rahul has developed a habit of stopping and randomly talking to people, and then taking up their cause inside or outside Parliament. This perception of easy access and direct communication is giving Rahul a big advantage over others who accord due importance to security arrangements and advice. Rahul's insistence on sporting a trademark

white T-shirt has scored over a muffler. While there is no dress code in Indian politics, clothes tend to be a tricky choice given that there is no set format. Politicians fancy themselves as people who are clean and puritanical and have a ring of spirituality. White is associated with all those adjectives. Rahul's white T-shirt, therefore, has a strong political message and a connection with the youth.

Rahul's ability to take risks and his spontaneity have a greater chance of success as the Congress legacy and footprint are far bigger than any other political party. It is, therefore, a little surprising how Akhilesh Yadav responded to a query relating to the formation of a shadow Cabinet and a shadow prime minister. The Samajwadi Party supremo, in an interview, questioned why there should be a single shadow prime minister. "Why can't we have two, three, or more shadow prime ministers," Akhilesh hurriedly said, as if showcasing the concerns of other INDIA alliance partners such as TMC, Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP) RJD, DMK, etc. The gambit of Rahul Gandhi emerging as first among equals among the Opposition ranks will play out further if the Congress does well in the Assembly polls of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand.

US charges Pakistani man with ties to Iran in alleged plot to assassinate Trump

A Pakistani man with links to Iran has been charged in a conspiracy to carry out political assassinations on US soil, including Republican nominee Donald Trump and other leaders.

The case of murder-for-hire was disclosed by the US Justice Department on Tuesday. FBI director Christopher Wray called the scheme a "dangerous murder-for-hire plot... straight out of the Iranian playbook." According to the justice department's indictment, Merchant arrived in the US from Pakistan after spending some time in Iran.

In June, Asif travelled to New York for the purpose of meeting a man whom he believed he was hiring to conduct the killings. He even paid a \$5,000 advance to two would-be assassins, who were actually undercover law enforcement officials, the news agency Associated Press reported while citing federal officers. As he was planning to leave the US, he was arrested last month. Before leaving, he told the would-be assassins that he would provide further instructions, including the names of the targets, in August and September after he returned to Pakistan.

While the indictment does not mention Donald Trump's name, sources cited by CBS stated that the Republican nominee was one of the intended targets. After US authorities learned about the Iranian plot to assassinate Donald Trump, the security of the former US President was increased.

"A foreign-directed plot to kill a public official, or any US citizen, is a threat to our national security and will be met with the full might and resources of the FBI," Christopher Wray was quoted as saying by the BBC in its report.

This came a month after 20-year-old Thomas Mathew Crooks tried to assassinate the former president at an election rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. However, in the justice department's indictment, no link to the July 13 assassination attempt has been mentioned.

Stop Politicising Vinesh Phogat's Olympics Disqualification, There's No Conspiracy: This Is What Really Happened

People need to understand that a sport has rules and there is no conspiracy behind Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat being disqualified from the Paris Olympics, Adille Sumariwalla, president of Athletics Federation of India (AFI) and member, Mission Olympic Cell, told CNN-News18 on Wednesday.

Phogat who had a dream run at the Olympics so far was disqualified after she failed to make the stipulated weight on the morning of her 50 kg gold medal bout. Vinesh had scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the gold medal bout in the event. However, India's hopes of securing at least a silver medal were dashed as she will now return empty-handed due to the disqualification a heartbreaking development that also sparked unfounded conspiracy theories and murmurs of betrayal. Speaking to CNN-News18, Sumariwalla said: "She somehow made the cut yesterday. After that, you are allowed to eat. She ate between her bouts because she needs her strength too. But they realised at night that she was overweight. They stayed up all night with doctors and others to reduce her weight. They did sauna, even cut her hair. But somehow, they couldn't manage the few grams. There is no conspiracy. These are the rules. And this is sport. Asked how such a mistake could be made at this stage, he added: "It's not a mistake. It's the human body. It happens. But there is no conspiracy and people need to understand that."

Sumariwalla also said Vinesh is dehydrated and is being treated at the poly clinic that the Indian

contingent has set up with top doctors like Chief Medical Officer Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala.

The AFI chief's statements come amid a section of Opposition politicians alleging conspiracy behind Vinesh's dismissal, alluding to a betrayal without providing any proof. Some of them also asked for an inquiry into the matter.

Sumariwalla's sentiment was echoed by 2008 Olympic Torchbearer and journalist Digvijay Singh Deo who took to social networking platform X to say: "Stop this conspiracy theory. Gagan Narang, Dinshaw Pardiwala, her husband, physios, medical staff, IOA officials, people back in India, OGQ they worked through the night to cut her weight. Dr Pardiwala even said we cannot endanger her life. He added: "They tried everything possible. Vinesh was crying in pain as the body broke down. She was in the sauna early this morning in a last-ditch effort. But contingent officials told me not to sweat came out. This is cruel. She is not in hospital. She is in the Olympic village polyclinic getting intravenous drips to restore the levels. Her parameters are ok. How she is coping I do not know. Since the heart-breaking news, support has poured in for Vinesh from all quarters. In a message to Vinesh, PM Modi tweeted on Wednesday morning and asked the wrestler to come back stronger. "Today's setback hurts. Vinesh, you are a champion among champions! You are India's pride and an inspiration for each and every Indian. Today's setback hurts. I wish words could express the sense of despair that I am experiencing. At the same time, I know that you epitomise resilience."

All That India May Lose If Middle East Plunges Into A Full-Blown War

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, it was clear that India's West Asia policy needed a facelift - even a reset. He made multiple official visits to the region over the next few years and managed to forge strong bilateral ties with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel. It is fair to say that he struck a fine balance between the Arab countries and Palestinians on the one hand and Israel on the other, though some might claim - without credible evidence - that he has tilted slightly towards Israel. The proof of his deft West Asia foreign policy is that India enjoys the goodwill of both sides.

However, Israel's campaign in Gaza in response to Hamas's October 2023 attacks overshadows Modi's Middle East policy. With the spectre of a wider war looming over the region, stiffer challenges are likely. The Middle East has been teetering on the brink of chaos as India watches holding its breath.

A Brazen Act

It is believed that Iran and its regional armed groups, the so-called "Axis of Resistance", are preparing to respond to the assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh. Though Israel has not commented on the assassination, Haniyeh's killing is being attributed to it; in any case, Israel has claimed responsibility for killing a senior Hezbollah leader in Beirut last week.

Targeting a special guest of Iran in the heart of its capital barely hours after he had attended a ceremony to inaugurate the country's newly elected President, Masoud Pezeshkian, was an act as daring as it was provocative. It also proved to be extremely humiliating for Iran and its powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), the force chiefly responsible for the country's security.

Iran In A Quandary

Iran is under compulsion to take action. But it doesn't appear to be interested in escalating the crisis. If it doesn't do anything, the country will be in danger of losing respect and prestige

among its supporters. If it takes action, tensions may escalate and spiral out of control. Regardless of these complexities, the rhetoric for revenge is running strong within Iran. "This crime of the Zionist regime will face a harsh and painful response from the powerful and huge resistance front," the IRGC said in a statement. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, described Haniyeh's killing as a provocation to escalate the conflict in the region and said that it was his country's duty to avenge the assassination. More than the timing of Iran's retaliation, it will be the scale of its attack that will determine



Israel's response. According to Axios, a security analysis group, "US officials expect any Iranian retaliation to be from the same playbook as their April 13 attack on Israel, but potentially larger in scope, and it could also involve Hezbollah in Lebanon". Iran had on April 13 fired more than 200 missiles at Israel in retaliation for an airstrike in Syria that killed a top Iranian general. This was the first time Iran had attacked Israel from its soil. The latter retaliated, but it was a limited response.

However, Haniyeh's killing is different, and his assassination under the protection of the powerful IRGC has embarrassed Iran deeply. Both a response and a non-response can prove to be costly.

How India Will Be Affected

It is nearly certain that the war in the region would unleash a maelstrom of consequences, threatening to upend India's economy, energy security, and

strategic partnerships. With its 9 million-strong diaspora, trade ties, and its geopolitical interests deeply entrenched in the region, India cannot afford to remain a bystander.

Despite diversifying its energy purchase, India continues to rely heavily on the Gulf countries for its oil imports. They account for more than 50% of its oil needs. Disruptions in supply chains because of war would push the price up, which, in turn, would adversely affect India's economy. The instability could increase import costs, reduce economic growth, and create inflationary pressures, thereby undermining India's energy

to 30%. Escalating conflict could reduce these remittances and force many expatriates to return to India. This migration would strain India's social and economic infrastructure, creating additional challenges for the country's economy. Heightened border security concerns, and the potential for a refugee influx, all pose significant threats to India's stability. The humanitarian challenges would include providing adequate food, shelter, and medical care, as well as ensuring the safety and security of both the refugees and the host communities.

Global trade and economic disruptions stemming from potential escalations would also

affect India's economy as it would lead to reduced trade and investment and increasing economic uncertainty. These factors could exert recessionary pressures on India's economic landscape, complicating its growth prospects. In the longer term, it could also affect India's progress towards becoming the world's third-largest economy.

Strategic Partnerships

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has emerged as an influential partner of various Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran, Israel, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. Conflicts in the region could impact energy cooperation, defence and security partnerships, and regional diplomatic efforts, potentially destabilising these strategic relationships.

Last year during the G20 summit in Delhi, the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) was announced

ostensibly to counter China's Belt and Road Initiatives. But the project's future now appears to be in jeopardy. With tensions rising in the region, it might be difficult to take the programme forward. Its declared aim was to establish a seamless trade route connecting India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe. The idea was that it would enhance economic integration, trade, investments, and cooperation. But for now, the priorities of the partner countries have shifted.

India Has Been Here Before, But That's Not Enough

India has the experience of dealing with crises emanating from wars in the region. During the Gulf Wars, India's handling of refugee crises and the airlifting of its citizens from Kuwait showcased its capacity for large-scale evacuation and crisis management. In 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, around 1,70,000 Indians were stranded in Kuwait and Iraq. India undertook a massive airlift operation to evacuate its citizens, coordinating with airlines and using military and civilian aircraft. This operation, spanning nearly two months, became one of the largest civilian evacuations in history, demonstrating India's logistical and diplomatic capabilities.

During the 2003 Iraq War, although the scale was smaller compared to the first Gulf War, India was again proactive in evacuating its nationals. The government, through its embassies in the region, provided support and facilitated the return of Indians. The evacuation efforts were undertaken with an express need to ensure the safety of Indian citizens, providing necessary travel documents and arranging transport back to India.

Modi's huge investment in West Asia diplomacy and increased engagements may come unhinged if tensions spread and engulf the region in a wider war. For now, India and the global community should hope that the crisis passes over soon. For that to happen, the ceasefire in Gaza could be a big first step.

UK braces for fresh anti-immigration protests, thousands of riot police deployed

Thousands of UK riot police on Wednesday stood ready to deal with more potential outbreaks of violence, which erupted more than a week ago after three children were murdered. Far-right groups have planned demonstrations in more than 30 locations, with immigration lawyers and buildings hosting asylum seekers set to be the primary targets, according to posts on messaging app Telegram leaked to the British media. The government has said 6,000 specialist police are being readied to deal with England's worst disorder in over a decade, which has seen hundreds arrested and more than 100 charged. The violence broke out after three girls, aged nine, seven and six, were killed and five more children critically injured during a knife attack at a Taylor Swift dance class in Southport, north west England. False rumours initially spread on social media saying the attacker was a Muslim asylum seeker. The suspect was later identified as 17-year-old Axel Rudakubana, born in Wales. UK media reported that his parents are from Rwanda. Despite the police statement, initial disturbances in Southport centred around a local mosque, and widespread violence has rocked England and Northern Ireland

since. Prime Minister Keir Starmer late Tuesday warned anyone involved would face "the full force of the law", including those inciting violence online. Starmer, a former chief state prosecutor, said he expected "substantive sentencing before the end of this week" for the rioters, after chairing his second emergency meeting in as many days on Tuesday. "That should send a very powerful message to anybody involved, either directly or online," he added in

televised comments. The unrest, Britain's worst since the 2011 London riots, has led a number of countries to warn its citizens about the dangers of travelling in the United Kingdom. Rioting in several cities has seen demonstrators throw bricks and flares at police officers, burn cars and attack mosques and at least two hotels that have been used as accommodation for asylum seekers. Scores of alleged perpetrators were hauled before judges on

Tuesday, with some entering guilty pleas. A 19-year-old man became the first person to receive a prison sentence related to the unrest when he received a two-month term Tuesday, PA Media reported. Another man was convicted after he admitted assaulting a police officer outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Rotherham, northern England, on Sunday. A 15-year-old boy pleaded guilty to committing violent disorder in Liverpool on Saturday after he was identified from a TikTok video, while

a man in Leeds admitted posting threatening words on Facebook to stir up racial hatred. The government, only one month old, has vowed to take a tough line on the unrest. "99.9% of people across the country want their streets to be safe and to feel safe in their communities, and we will take all necessary action to bring the disorder to an end," Starmer said Tuesday. Justice minister Heidi Alexander told BBC Radio 4 that the government had freed up an extra 500 prison places.

Tim Walz is Kamala Harris's running mate, who's his wife Gwen

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, selected on Tuesday to be the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris, has a strong background in education, much like his wife, Gwen Walz. She has also been an advocate for prison reforms. Gwen has been supportive of her husband's political pursuits, and is a dedicated mother.

Gwen Walz, wife of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, has a background in education and is set to take on a higher profile as her husband campaigns alongside Vice-President Kamala Harris for the 2024 presidential election. Gwen has taught in public and migrant schools as well as in prisons. Born in Glencoe, Minnesota, and raised in the western part of the state, Gwen pursued her education at Gustavus Adolphus College and Minnesota State University. She began her teaching career in Alliance, Nebraska, where she met Tim Walz. They married in 1994

and moved to Minnesota, raising their two children, Hope and Gus. Hope, a recent graduate of Montana State University, and Gus, who is in high school.

With over two decades of experience in the Mankato school district, Gwen served as an administrator and coordinator, focusing on eliminating the achievement gap.

She co-founded Educational Travel Adventures with Tim, organising educational trips to China for high school students.

As Minnesota's first lady, Gwen has been an advocate for prison reform. She has toured state prisons, supported the implementation of new college curricula for inmates, and advocated for increased pardons. Gwen's first public event as first lady was a rally supporting voting rights restoration for felons, according to CNN.

Her work in prison reform shows she believes

that including education in the correctional system can reduce repeat offences and improve lives.

GWEN A SUPPORTIVE PARTNER

Throughout Tim's political career, Gwen has remained a supportive partner. When Tim was elected governor of Minnesota in 2018, Gwen's role expanded to include advocating for various social issues. Tim often credits Gwen for her unwavering support and contribution to their shared journey.

In addition to her professional achievements, Gwen is deeply involved in her children's lives. Tim often shares proud moments of their family on social media, from Hope's senior prom to Gus obtaining his driver's licence. Gwen's dedication to her family is evident in her everyday interactions. As Tim campaigns for the vice-presidency, Gwen stands ready to potentially take on the role of the second lady.

Why low wages ignited Bangladesh, and what Adidas, Puma, others had cautioned about

Bangladesh is burning, fuelled by rising unemployment and low living wages. Resentment among the people was further instigated by a jobs quota policy, which led to massive riots and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fleeing the country on August 5. While the 30 per cent quota in jobs for descendants of freedom fighters was the final straw, the populace of the country has been simmering for years due to soaring youth unemployment and low minimum wage. Workers in Bangladesh get the lowest minimum wage in the world, except some countries like Burundi and Rwanda. While the average minimum wage of 110 countries was US\$ 791 in 2022, the minimum wage in Bangladesh

was only US\$ 45 on the basis of purchasing power parity (PPP), according to the International Labour Organization. Bangladesh is the third-largest supplier of garments in the world, next only to China and the European Union. The bulk of the garment industry is based in and around Dhaka. A report by Anker Research Institute in 2023 showed that an average household in Dhaka earned Bangladeshi taka 16,450 in 2016 while family living expenses were 25,990 taka. In 2023, net living wage rose to 25,462 taka (about Rs 18,200) but the family expenses too rose to 40,228 taka (approx Rs 28,800) and the gap of 37 per cent remained the same. The trend across the satellite cities of Dhaka is the same. Notably, 16

apparel and footwear companies, including Adidas, Puma, Gap and Levi Strauss wrote a letter to erstwhile Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to urgently take action regarding minimum wage in Bangladesh on October 11, 2023. The consultations should seek to raise the minimum wage to a level that corresponds with a wage level and benefits that are sufficient to cover workers' basic needs and some discretionary income and take into account inflationary pressures, it wrote. We note that the average monthly net wages for garment workers in Bangladesh has not been adjusted since 2019, while inflation has increased significantly over that time. We continue to recommend that the

government of Bangladesh adopt an annual minimum wage review mechanism to keep up with changing macroeconomic factors, it added.

Last year, garment workers and their unions had demanded an increase in minimum wage from 8,000 taka (Rs 5,700) to 23,000 taka (Rs 16,400). The minimum wage in Bangladesh had remained at 8,000 taka since 2018 which fell below the World Bank Poverty Line for a two- to three-person household in 2022, according to the Fair Labor Association. However, the government's wage board, which largely comprises garment factory owners, proposed a minimum wage of 10,400 taka (Rs 7,400), half of what was demanded. This

led to widespread protests in October and November last year. Though the Bangladesh Minimum Wage Board established the garment sector's updated minimum wage as 12,500 taka, equivalent to \$113 (or about Rs 8,900) in December 2023. However, it did not do much to assuage the anger of the people as they found the increase in wages paltry compared to living expenses. Besides low wages, commoners in Bangladesh have been reeling under severe stress from sky-high inflation. Inflation rose from 5.5 per cent in 2021 to 7.7 per cent in 2022 and a whopping 9.9 per cent in 2023. To add to their woes, the youth unemployment rate has been hovering at more than 15 per cent since 2020.

Harris Chooses Comfort Food: Will America Bite?

Vice President Kamala Harris' debut appearance with her running mate and his runner-up here Tuesday night neatly illustrated the reasoning behind her choice.

Contrary to the wish-casting of the left and the sinister claims of the right, Harris didn't select Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota because she is beholden to her party's base or, more absurdly, uneasy with a Jewish vice president. She picked Walz because she had chemistry with him as a generational peer and saw him as somebody who could be an effective advocate without threatening to overshadow her. When Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, the bridesmaid in his own city, delivered a fiery stem-winder near the start of the evening, and then Walz concluded it with a folksy introduction of himself and a Minnesota not-so-nice takedown of the GOP ticket, Harris' assessment seemed vindicated.

Whether her comfort-food pick will prove not merely a better fit for her personally, but a winning one, remains to be seen. However, the most significant moment yet in Harris' overnight candidacy included signs that she knows she must broaden her appeal to prevail in November. After spending her career in

liberal California, running in the 2020 Democratic primaries and appearing before mostly liberal constituencies as vice president, Harris is suddenly being made to devise a general election message for an audience she has not much considered outside the three months she was on the Covid-cloistered 2020 ticket. How will she run? Will she practice the sort of defensive politics Bill Clinton and Barack Obama mastered, in their own way and in different decades, to reassure middle America they were no radicals? Or will she adopt a new, fit-for-Trumpian-times model of simply rousing core supporters and betting contempt for opposition will carry the day?

She did both on Tuesday and, before a partisan audience, it was not surprising that the red meat drew the loudest applause. Yet for a candidate knocked for being captive to prepared remarks ó and she's still yet to speak extemporaneously for any length since President Joe Biden withdrew from the race ó her most effective moment may have been when she deviated slightly from script.

It was when she hailed 'the promise of America,' recounting how 'two middle-class kids' from very different places,

Oakland, California, and the heartland, could perhaps get to the White House together.

'Only in America,' she said, repeating herself. Then, as if in the pulpit, she said it three more times: 'Only in America.' The crowd, perhaps inspired by the Olympics, got the cue and began chanting 'U-S-A!'

It was the stuff of Republican nightmares. Harris followed with what may be rhetorical boilerplate for many candidates but which seemed more notable for one still defining herself and her message. She vowed to pursue voters of every stripe in Obama-like fashion ó 'from red states to blue states' ó but then broadened her appeal rather than narrowing it to specific affinity groups. 'We are running a campaign on behalf of all Americans, and when elected, we will govern on behalf of all Americans,' Harris said.

It was not exactly a rebuke of her party's identity fixation, but it was a beckoning to something broader.

As was, in a smaller way, her repeatedly calling her running mate 'Coach.' After all, there are few unifying American institutions left beside football.

Walz, too, sent unsubtle signals of reassurance.

He may not have been wearing his sergeant's chevrons or bearing a coach's whistle over his neck, but his remarks made clear he intends to run on his biography and regular-bloke style and not his progressive legacy in St. Paul. He held up his GI Bill and public school credentials, salted his comments with a bit of 'damn' and 'hell' and portrayed the opposition as the country club and the sell-out.

Walz's couch line, referring to a false internet rumor about JD Vance, will get the attention ó I think it was beneath him ó but the sharper cut was when he assailed his GOP rival as an Ivy Leaguer floated by rich guys who then 'wrote a best-seller trashing' his own rural roots. 'Come on,' Walz demanded in the fashion of somebody raised in Butte, Nebraska. Recounting his own career, Walz emphasized his bipartisan work on issues like veterans and agriculture, same as he did in the introductory video the campaign unveiled earlier in the day. The two were clearly taken, perhaps overwhelmed, by the rapturous response. Walz surely didn't mean to knock Biden when, upon taking the microphone, the Minnesotan praised Harris for 'bringing back the joy,' but he didn't have to expound either.

55 Things to Know About Tim Walz, Kamala Harris' Pick for VP

Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, once said he never expected a former high school geography teacher would make it so far in politics. He couldn't have imagined that he would some day run for vice president.

That changed Tuesday when the 60-year-old was chosen by Vice President Kamala Harris to be her running mate on the Democratic presidential ticket. Walz, who has gained a reputation as an energetic and plain-spoken champion of Harris' surprise candidacy, emerged late in a highly compressed vetting process ó edging out Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania and Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona. Here ó culled from articles about his 20-year career in politics ó is a look at how Walz, a former non-commissioned officer in the Army National Guard, went from being the rare Democrat representing a conservative and rural district in Congress to becoming the progressive governor in his adopted state. It offers a glimpse of the person he might be if he becomes America's next vice president.

1. Walz was born in West Point, a Nebraska town of just 3,500 people. But he was raised in an even smaller town called Butte.

2. Walz graduated from Butte High School in 1982. 'I come from a town of 400 ó 24 kids in a class, 12 cousins, farming, those types of things.'

3. Walz credits his rural upbringing for his values: 'A town that small had services like that and had a public school with a government teacher that inspired me to be sitting where I'm at today. Those are real stories in small towns.'

4. Walz enlisted in the Army National Guard when he was 17.

5. In his state Capitol office, Walz displays hundreds of 'challenge' coins that he's traded and collected for years around the world.

6.

7. Walz graduated with a social science degree from Chadron State College in 1989. He earned a Master of Science in educational leadership from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2001.

8. He spent a year teaching in China after college before returning full time to the Army. He traveled to China with one of the first government-sanctioned groups of American educators to teach in Chinese high schools.

9. He still speaks Mandarin.

10. He taught on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. 'I tell folks that managing a high-school lunchroom for years trained me for the craziness that can overtake Washington, D.C.'

11. He rose to the rank of command sergeant major before retiring from the 1-125th Field Artillery Battalion in 2005. He served for a total of 24 years.

12. Walz met his future wife, Gwen

Whipple, a native Minnesotan, as they were both high school teachers in temporary classrooms. The first lady said she was irked by his loud voice disrupting her classroom.

13. The two eventually moved to Mankato, Minnesota, where they both worked at Mankato West High School.

'Gwen loved living in southern Minnesota. We jumped at the chance to move to Mankato and start our lives together.'

14. Walz taught geography and coached high school football. 'I don't know if every high school geography teacher expects to be in this position at some point.'

15. He was the faculty adviser for the school's first gay-straight alliance chapter in 1999.

16. Walz, 60, has drawn criticism for appearing older than his age. Walz responded to this on X, saying that it's because he supervised the lunchroom for 20 years. You do not leave that job with a full head of hair. Trust me.'

17. He has two children, Hope and Gus. Hope recently graduated from college in Montana, and Gus is in public high school in St. Paul.

18. Both children were conceived through IVF and fertility treatments: 'There's a reason we named [our daughter] Hope.'

19. Walz's first job in politics was as a member of former Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. The campaign hired him to

be campaign's county coordinator as well as a district coordinator of Vets for Kerry.

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18. Both children were conceived through IVF and fertility treatments: 'There's a reason we named [our daughter] Hope.'

19. Walz's first job in politics was as a member of former Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. The campaign hired him to be campaign's county coordinator as well as a district coordinator of Vets for Kerry. 20. He said he was inspired to join Kerry's campaign after he took a group of high school students to a George W. Bush campaign rally and security interrogated one of his students because he had a Kerry sticker on his wallet.

21. Walz was first elected to Congress in 2006, in one of the biggest House upsets of the year. The district, home to both the Mayo Clinic and the Hormel meatpacking firm, had twice voted for George W. Bush.

Bangladesh Crisis: Our Hindus safe in Bangladesh? Singer Rahul Ananda becomes a prey of the violence in Dhaka

Following Sheikh Hasina's government collapse, Bangladesh faces a surge in violence against Hindus. Notable attacks, like on musician Rahul Ananda's home, highlight the urgent need to protect minority communities and restore peace amid political turmoil.

†(News Agency)-Since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government in Bangladesh, a wave of violent incidents has erupted, specifically targeting Hindu homes and places of worship. This surge in attacks has intensified dramatically over the last few days in the absence of law enforcement agencies. As the political situation remains unstable, these incidents underscore the vulnerability of minority communities and the challenges Bangladesh faces in maintaining social harmony during this period of turmoil and uncertainty. A new interim government is likely to bring stability in the nation at the moment. A notable incident occurred last night when the home of popular Hindu musician Rahul Ananda was ransacked and set on fire by a mob. The attack happened in the early hours of Tuesday when a group of unknown assailants surrounded his house in the capital city of Dhaka. According to reports, the mob first vandalized the property before setting it ablaze. Fortunately, Ananda, his wife, and their son managed to escape unharmed and are currently in hiding to ensure their safety. Ananda's family is



deeply shaken by the loss of their home and artistic possessions. Close aides report that over 3,000 musical instruments were destroyed, and everything from furniture to personal belongings was looted. The estimated financial loss is around 1 million Bangladeshi rupees. Fans of Ananda and his band, Joler Gaan, have taken to social media to express their support and condemn the violence. They argue that the attack was not related to Ananda's personal beliefs but was part of



a broader wave of vandalism sparked by recent political upheaval. The destruction of Ananda's home, which had once hosted international dignitaries like French President Emmanuel Macron in 2023, marks a somber chapter in the aftermath of political changes in Dhaka. Despite the tragedy, Joler Gaan has responded with resilience, posting a tribute on their official page. The message reflects on the home's role as a sanctuary for creativity and cultural exchange, now tragically reduced

to ruins. This incident highlights the broader issue of instability affecting Bangladesh.

What began as a protest against a quota system in government jobs has spiraled into widespread looting and rioting across the country. With Sheikh Hasina having fled to India and an interim government yet to be formed, reports of attacks on minorities, particularly Hindus, have flooded social media. The unrest has already claimed the lives of at least two Hindu councilors in Dhaka, further emphasizing the precarious situation for the Hindu community.

CONCLUSION

Bangladesh has a history of violence against its Hindu minority, often coinciding with religious festivals. Under Hasina's leadership, efforts were made to curb extremist elements. However, her departure has raised fears of a resurgence in violence, exacerbated by extremist factions within the Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. As Bangladesh navigates this turbulent period, the international community closely watches the unfolding events.

Ex-Sri Lankan strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa's son Namal battles for presidency



Namal Rajapaksa, the 38-year-old heir to the Rajapaksa dynasty, was on Wednesday named as the SLPP candidate for the presidential election, thus officially ending the Rajapaksa family's backing to the incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe. Sagara Kariyawasam, the general secretary of the Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPP, also known locally by its popular Sinhalese name, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), announced the younger Rajapaksa's candidacy early on



Wednesday morning at a ceremony at the party headquarters. Namal's entry has made the election a four-cornered contest. Besides, President Wickremesinghe, the main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and the Marxist JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake are already in the fray. The Rajapaksa's ñ Mahinda, Basil and Gotabaya ñ were instrumental in Wickremesinghe winning the parliamentary vote in July 2022 to take over Gotabaya's remaining term.

It was soon after the unprecedented development of mid-April 2022 when the island nation declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948 and almost civil war-like conditions followed as unrest spread amid locals over inflation and other economic stress that had led to Gotabaya's ouster.

Wednesday's development comes days after the SLPP lost nearly 100 of its MPs to Wickremesinghe after he announced his candidature as an independent.

Those MPs have condemned their party's decision to ditch Wickremesinghe but the SLPP, in turn, has vowed disciplinary action against those who back Wickremesinghe, defying the party decision.

Helicopter crashes in Nepal's Nuwakot, 4 dead: Report

An Air Dynasty helicopter was on its way to Rasuwa from Kathmandu when it crashed in the Shivpuri area of Nuwakot



on Wednesday afternoon, local media reported. A total of four people are dead. As per the local media reports, the

helicopter was on its way to Rasuwa from Kathmandu when it collided with a hill at Surya Chaur-7 in Nuwakot district. Soon after receiving input about the crash, authorities dispatched a rescue team to the spot. The local media outlet, while citing sources at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), stated that the helicopter departed Kathmandu at 1:54 PM. After reaching Surya Chaur, the helicopter

lost contact with the authorities. The chopper lost contact three minutes after taking off.

How Warren Buffett cut losses with record cash reserve before market crash

Warren Buffett's investment empire, Berkshire Hathaway, recently faced losses worth approximately \$15 billion on its major holdings amidst a global stock market sell-off.

Despite the losses, Buffett's strategic decision to amass substantial cash reserves by reducing stock market positions has come into focus.

The move to build a record cash reserve and scale back on stocks significantly mitigated losses during the recent market crash. In the last quarter, Berkshire Hathaway amassed a record \$277 billion in cash reserves, bolstered by a \$76 billion stock sale.

The cash pile was intended to cushion the impact of market volatility, particularly with growing concerns over a potential US recession.

However, even this substantial financial buffer couldn't entirely shield the investment giant from the recent market turmoil.

On Monday, the value of Berkshire Hathaway's stock portfolio took a significant hit. Major holdings, including Apple, Bank of America, and Mitsubishi, saw sharp declines.



The drop contributed to a substantial reduction in the company's overall valuation.

Shares in Berkshire Hathaway itself fell by over 3%, bringing the company's market capitalisation down to \$899 billion.

The market chaos also triggered a notable decline in the value of Berkshire's stakes in several Japanese companies, such as Mitsui, Marubeni, and Sumitomo. Additionally, hundreds of millions of dollars were wiped from the

value of its holdings in American Express, Moody's, and Kraft Heinz.

Cuts Apple stake in half

Apple, one of Buffett's largest investments, saw its share price drop by more than 7%, resulting in a \$5.7 billion loss for Berkshire Hathaway.

Reports emerged that Berkshire had sold nearly half of its Apple stocks, a move reflecting Buffett's growing caution about the broader US economy and high stock market valuations.

Buffett's strategy of accumulating cash reserves highlights his cautious approach in an overheated market, signaling concerns about finding good stocks at reasonable prices.

The move also fuels worries about a potential tech bubble, especially given the significant declines in other major tech stocks like Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Tesla.

Despite the sell-off, some investors view the market downturn as a buying opportunity.

For instance, Blue Whale, an investment fund backed by billionaire Peter Hargreaves, capitalised on the market sell-off to purchase shares in Nvidia, betting on the continued growth of AI applications.

But Berkshire Hathaway's substantial cash reserves have yet again put the spotlight on Warren Buffett's investment philosophy amidst global market volatility.

His approach of seeking low-risk investments with high potential returns, even if it means holding significant cash reserves, remains a testament to his legendary status in the investment world.

WhatsApp replaces green verification badge with a blue one



WhatsApp is looking forward to bring another change to the interface. Nothing major, but the go-to-messenger application is updating its verification system, replacing the existing green badge with a blue checkmark for confirmed businesses and channels. This move aligns with Meta's broader efforts to create a consistent visual identity for verified accounts across its platforms, including Instagram and Facebook, ultimately enhancing trust and authenticity for users. It appears that WhatsApp now intends to offer iOS users the same opportunity to experiment with the new checkmark, as it already does for the Android version. According to the WABetaInfo, WhatsApp has switched to

a blue checkmark to verify businesses and channels to align with Meta's broader visual identity. This update replaces the old green badge, creating a cohesive look across platforms and reinforcing trust with users. The blue checkmark ensures authenticity, safeguarding users from potential impersonation and facilitating secure engagements with verified businesses and channels. By adopting a consistent visual identity across Meta platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, users can seamlessly recognise verified accounts, fostering trust and familiarity. This unified approach strengthens brand recognition, making it easier for users to identify authentic accounts and engage with confidence.

Dell fires 12,500 employees to focus on AI: Full story in 5 points

Dell Technologies has announced a second round of layoffs in the past 15 months. The company has fired around 12,500 employees, which is about 10 per cent of its workforce. The latest move is its strategy to better focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and modern IT solutions. This reduction aims to streamline operations and prioritise investments in areas that will drive future growth. Here is the full story in 5 points.

-Dell has confirmed another round of layoffs, impacting thousands of its employees. Approximately 12,500 employees have been let go, representing about ten per cent of the company's

workforce, in an effort to streamline operations and reorient the business, The Register reports. -The layoffs are part of a broader reorganisation aimed at prioritising investments in AI and modern IT solutions. Dell aims to outpace market growth by using AI to unlock new value for customer organisations.

-The decision was communicated through a memo by Bill Scannell, President of Global Sales and Customer Operations, and John Byrne, Global Channels President. They highlighted the need to "streamline layers of

management" and hinted at the painful but necessary steps to drive future growth. Employees were notified of the layoffs through HR exit meetings, with some finding out through rescheduled one-on-one meetings.

-Affected employees are reportedly being offered severance packages that include two months' wages plus an additional

week per year of service, up to a maximum of 26 weeks. However, there has been discontent among long-term employees over the loss of incentives and stock options. Some employees anticipated the cuts, noting recent budget reductions and cancelled projects. -This round of layoffs follows a trend of workforce reductions at Dell, including a notable reduction of around 13,000 employees in the 2023 fiscal year. The company's decision to call employees back to the office last year, reversing a previous remote-work policy, was also seen as a move to reduce staff.



Women using Instagram to cope with miscarriage distress

The findings are based on a qualitative research study on 200 posts of text and pictures shared by Instagram users.

Despite its common occurrence, there is still a lot of stigma surrounding miscarriage and many women find that their emotional and psychological needs are unmet as they go through a devastating grieving process. But for some, Instagram has emerged as a tool to cope with such distress, a study says.

The study, published in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*,

found that the content posted by Instagram users included rich descriptions of the medical and physical experiences of miscarriage, and the emotional spectrum of having a miscarriage and coping with those emotions, the social aspect, and family identity.

"I find it endlessly fascinating that women are opening up to essentially strangers about things that they hadn't even told

their partners or families," says Dr. Riley. "But this is how powerful this community is," said Amy Henderson Riley, Assistant Professor at the Jefferson College of Population Health, Thomas Jefferson University, US.

The findings are based on a qualitative research study on 200 posts of text and pictures shared by Instagram users. "What surprised me the most

was how many women and their partners identified as parents after their miscarriage and how the miscarriage lasted into their family identity after a successful pregnancy," said Rebecca Mercier, Assistant Professor at Thomas Jefferson University.

"The extent to which this loss affects women and their families, and the longevity of their grief is a blind spot for

clinicians," Mercier said.

These personal accounts also provided insight into patients' perspectives of typically defined experiences.

For example, in the clinic, the typical definition of recurrent pregnancy loss is after three pregnancies. However, the researchers found that many patients who had had two or more miscarriages identified with having recurrent pregnancy loss. "I'm hoping that this study will encourage clinicians to point patients to social media as a potential coping tool, as well as to approach this subject with bereaved and expecting parents with more respect and empathy," Mercier said.

Social media is becoming a common avenue for patient testimonials. For example, the short video-sharing platform TikTok has recently become a home for some users to make videos sharing their personal health struggles.

"As far as we know, this is the first study to look at the intersection of Instagram and miscarriage," Riley said.

"But this is a drop in the bucket. Social media platforms are evolving rapidly and a theoretically grounded research must follow," she added.

Our ancestors learnt to smile so that they can have sex



Believe it or not but our forefathers were way smarter than us when it came to wooing the opposite sex for mating. According to a new study, Neanderthals learnt how to smile and make expressive faces in order to attract less-aggressive mates.

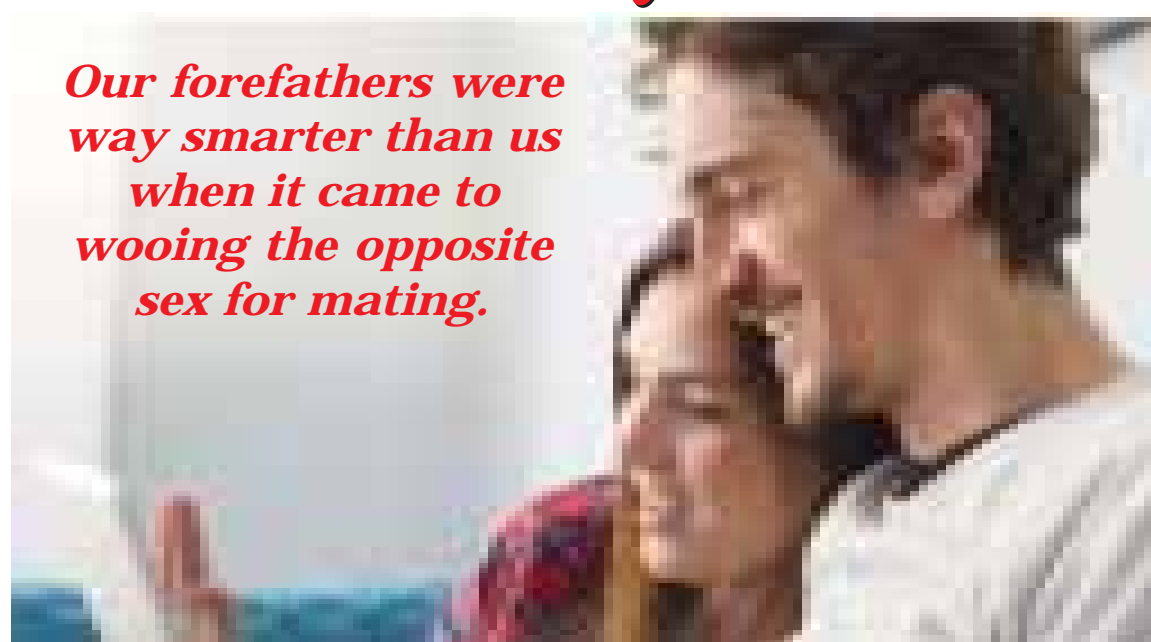
Researchers from the University of Milan focused on genetic samples from Neanderthals, which showed that gene mutations might have led humans to "self-select less aggressive mating partners". This behaviour finally led to the "self-domestication" of ancient humans.

The study suggests that modern humans domesticated themselves after they split from their extinct relatives - Neanderthals and Denisovans - approximately 600,000 years ago, reported sciencemag.org citing the study that was published in the journal *Science Advances*.

Giuseppe Testa, a molecular biologist at University of Milan in Italy, and colleagues knew that one gene, BAZ1B, plays an important role in orchestrating the movements of neural crest cells.

Most people carry two copies of this gene. Significantly, one copy

Our forefathers were way smarter than us when it came to wooing the opposite sex for mating.



of BAZ1B is missing in people with Williams-Beuren syndrome, a disorder linked to cognitive impairments and extreme friendliness.

Genetic data was gathered from human stem cells taken from the remains of two Neanderthals and one Denisovan.

These two groups of prehistoric ancestors lived around the same time and there is even evidence to suggest they interbred.

"BAZ1B" is the gene which allows dogs to make their eyes expressive in a way wolves cannot, reports NYPost.

"It is thought that selected breeding patterns of some Neanderthals led to the BAZ1B gene and could have contributed to Homo sapiens developing distinctively expressive faces".

When the researchers looked at hundreds of BAZ1B-sensitive

genes, they found that in modern humans, those genes had accumulated loads of regulatory mutations of their own.

This suggests natural selection was shaping them.

According to The Sun, Williams-Beuren syndrome causes humans to have what some people perceive as a welcoming expression with a wide mouth and a small nose.

Four hotel workers charged with felony in death of black man in US's Milwaukee

The employees dragged Mitchell out of the Hyatt Hotel after Mitchell entered a woman's bathroom and held him on his stomach for eight or nine minutes..

†(NewsAgency)-Prosecutors charged four Milwaukee hotel employees Tuesday with being a party to felony murder in connection with DiVontaye Mitchell's death.

Mitchell was Black. The incident has drawn comparisons to the murder of George Floyd, a Black man who died in 2020 after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee into his neck for about nine minutes. Floyd's death sparked a national reckoning on race relations marked by multiple protests around the country. Charged were hotel security guard Todd Erickson; front desk worker Devin Johnson-Carson; bellhop Herbert Williamson; and security guard Brandon Turner. If convicted, they each would face up to 15 years and nine months in prison. Reached by telephone Tuesday evening, Erickson referred a request for comment to his attorney, Michael Steinle, who didn't return voicemail or email messages.

It was unclear if any of the other three employees had attorneys. Online court records didn't list any for them Tuesday evening. A telephone listing for Williamson had been disconnected, and The



Associated Press could not immediately locate phone numbers or other contact information for Johnson-Carson or Turner. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's office said in a news release that arrest warrants had been issued for all four employees. The office and the Milwaukee Police Department did not immediately respond to emails enquiring if the employees had been arrested or had attorneys.

According to a criminal complaint, the four employees dragged Mitchell out of the

Hyatt Hotel on June 30 after Mitchell entered a woman's bathroom and held him on his stomach for eight or nine minutes. One of the employees told investigators that Mitchell was having trouble breathing and repeatedly pleaded for help, according to the complaint.

An autopsy showed that Mitchell suffered from morbid obesity and had ingested cocaine and methamphetamine, the complaint said.

Hyatt surveillance video shows Mitchell frantically running into the hotel's lobby

and then into the gift shop before entering the women's bathroom, the complaint said. A few seconds later, a woman emerges and Turner, who was off-duty but happened to be visiting staff at that moment, drags Mitchell out of the bathroom into the lobby by his shirt.

The two begin to struggle, and Turner punches Mitchell, knocking him to the floor. He then punches Mitchell six times and drags him out of the hotel with the help of a bystander. Mitchell gets up and tries to go back inside.

Williamson, Johnson-Carson and Erickson, who was on duty as the security manager, then join the fray. Together with Turner they hold Mitchell down on his stomach for eight to nine minutes before police and emergency responders arrive. The video shows that during that span, Mitchell tries to break free multiple times, and Erickson hits him with a baton before he eventually stops moving, according to the complaint. A video taken by a witness includes audio of Mitchell moaning and saying he is sorry. An autopsy found that Mitchell was morbidly obese and had cocaine and methamphetamine in his system.

Venezuelan Army vows 'absolute loyalty' to Maduro, declines Opposition appeal

†(NewsAgency)-Venezuela's military on Tuesday criticised an appeal by the opposition for the support of the armed forces amid the disputed re-election of President Nicolas Maduro, saying it was "desperate and seditious."

Venezuela's military on Tuesday criticised an appeal by the opposition for the support of the armed forces amid the disputed re-election of President Nicolas Maduro, saying it was "desperate and seditious."

Opposition leaders Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia and Maria Corina Machado on Monday appealed to the "conscience" of the military and police officers -- traditionally staunch allies of Maduro -- to "take the side of the people". They were met with a swift criminal probe from prosecutors investigating them for announcing an election winner other than Maduro, instigating disobedience, insurrection, and conspiracy. In a statement declaring "absolute loyalty" to Maduro, Defense Minister and army chief Vladimir Padrino said: "We strongly reject the desperate and seditious approaches" that "seek to undermine our



unity and institutionality, but will never succeed."

The opposition insists Gonzalez Urrutia was the rightful victor of the July 28 presidential election, which has plunged the oil-rich nation into political crisis.

Multiple countries, including the United States and Argentina, have recognized Gonzalez Urrutia as the winner, while others, such as the European Union, have stopped short of doing so while calling for full publication of voting

records.

The National Electoral Council said Monday it had presented all these records to the Supreme Court for certification, as requested by Maduro -- but not publicly. The contested election sparked protests last week that left at least 24 civilians dead as of Tuesday, according to rights groups, with more than 2,000 arrested. Maduro on Monday called for a boycott of the WhatsApp messaging platform, alleging that military, police and

community leaders who support his re-election had received threats via the app. "I am going to delete my WhatsApp from my phone forever, little by little I will move my contacts to Telegram, to WeChat," said Maduro, who has also taken aim at TikTok and Instagram for promoting "division" and "hatred" among Venezuelans.

Machado -- who was barred from running in the election and backed Gonzalez Urrutia -- on Tuesday denounced a "campaign of terror" in the country.

"They want to intimidate us so that we do not communicate, because isolated we would be much weaker and that is not going to happen. Fear will not paralyze us and we will not leave the streets," Machado said in an audio message released on social media.

European Union spokesman Peter Stano on Tuesday told Venezuela's government that a campaign of intimidation against the opposition "needs to stop".

"We are calling on the authorities to stop this, this campaign of intimidation of the opposition and judicial intimidation," he said.

Regime Change in Bangladesh: Decoding the Role of Foreign Players

In a shocking, but not entirely unexpected development, Bangladesh's Sheikh Hasina-led democratically elected government was ousted from power by the military on August 5, 2024. In a dramatically staged military coup, the Bangladeshi Army marched to the prime minister's residence, following which Sheikh Hasina had to flee Dhaka in an Indian Army helicopter.

Crowds of protestors were seen going berserk, rampaging the PM's house, reminding of the scenes witnessed in Sri Lanka after it went bankrupt in 2022 and Afghanistan after the Taliban comeback. The coup that lasted over 45 minutes has ended the 15-year rule of Awami League and is likely to catapult the destiny of the South Asian nation, much touted as a rare example of an Islamic nation with a functional democracy and flourishing economy, into the clutches of Islamic extremists. As per the most recent updates, Sheikh Hasina was flown to an IAF base in Uttar Pradesh. She was expected to proceed onwards to claim political asylum in the



United Kingdom, but there has been no news since.

THE GENESIS

The power-packed drama that unfolded in Bangladesh began on July 1, 2024, on the issue of quotas in government jobs. After the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first prime minister and the father of the nation, reserved 30 per cent of civil service and public sector jobs for the families of the freedom fighters who fought in the liberation movement against Pakistan. However, in the wake of large-scale

student protests, Hasina scrapped all the quotas in 2018. In June 2024, the high court ruled against the government's decision after the petitions filed by the descendants of war veterans and restored the quota. Finally, on August 1, the Supreme Court nullified the HC decision bringing the quotas down to 5 per cent. However, the anti-quota protests morphed into anti-government protests because of the severe crackdown leading to the death of 300 protestors over the last one month. On August 4, 100 protestors were killed in just one day. The protestors,

particularly the students, launched a civil disobedience campaign, urging people to stop paying taxes and utility bills and to cease work in factories and government offices until Sheikh Hasina resigned. On August 5, they called for a long march, which saw thousands of people participating, ultimately storming the prime minister's residence and forcing her ouster. After her removal, the Chief of the Armed Forces, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, addressed the nation, taking full responsibility for the stability and security of the country and announcing the formation of an interim government.

THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

A superficial glance at the trajectory of events over the last month in Bangladesh suggests a popular uprising against an authoritarian regime that has secured its control through manipulating elections and other unfair practices. The brutal crackdown on unarmed student protests further supports this perception. However, the reality is far more complex than it appears on the surface.

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India's Bangladesh strategy: engage interim govt, work the backchannels with military

By Pradip R. Sagar

As Bangladesh enters the post-Sheikh Hasina era with the formation of a military-backed interim government, the Indian security establishment is busy recalibrating approach towards the key neighbour in the midst of simmering anti-Delhi sentiment there.

Besides accounting for the safety of close to 19,000 Indians, including some 9,000 students, in Bangladesh, the Indian government also needs to fine-tune strategic ties with a nation it shares a 4,096-km-long border with, across five states—Assam, West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura. Observers believe that despite Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus agreeing to oversee the military-installed interim government, a dangerous power vacuum persists in Bangladesh. Reports of killings of leaders and activists of Hasina's Awami League party and attacks on the minority Hindu community are matters of grave concern.

The political crisis in Bangladesh has promoted non-essential staff and families of diplomats at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka to return home. However, the high commission remains functional and a team of senior diplomats are staying put. Besides the high



commission, India has four assistant high commissions in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar, in a statement in Parliament on August 6, said the Indian government expected that the host government will provide the required security protection for these establishments. We look forward to their normal functioning once the situation stabilises.

India had all along viewed ousted Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina as a reliable ally. Her 15-year-long tenure while strongly resented by large

sections back home was considered by New Delhi as pivotal to ensuring regional security, bolstering counterterrorism measures and eliminating anti-India terrorist groups from Bangladeshi soil.

But now, key officials in South Block are wary of the interim government's commitment towards security cooperation with India. They feel any deviation from established protocols could pose a serious security threat to New Delhi. The Indian government is determined to engage with the new administration and the Bangladesh military to firmly communicate its

concerns over this.

At the same time, the government finds itself in a tough spot while engaging with Dhaka till the time Hasina remains on Indian soil. While hurriedly exiting Bangladesh on August 5 in the wake of the unprecedented student-led movement against her regime, New Delhi became Hasina's intermediate stop till her eventual destination had been finalised. To the people of Bangladesh, this could mean India sheltering their most-hated politician. After the hesitant approach shown by the United Kingdom, Hasina is reportedly contemplating countries like the UAE and Finland for residency.

India, meanwhile, is believed to have simultaneously activated backchannels to reach out to the Bangladesh military, particularly Bangladesh army chief Waker-uz-Zaman. Key Indian officials have been in constant touch with the Bangladesh army and extending support for restoring peace and stability in the strife-torn nation. A key official in the Indian security establishment claimed that irrespective of whosoever heads the interim government in Bangladesh, the controls would rest completely with the army. Therein the necessity of New Delhi exploring all negotiation options with the military.

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Sheikh Hasina gone but Bangladesh is leagues away from peace

By Subir Bhaumik

With Sheikh Hasina's unceremonious exit under military pressure, Bangladesh has descended into chaos. A wave of vendetta has been unleashed against ruling Awami League leaders and activists across the country, leaving hundreds dead.

Most of those killed were Awami Leaguers and policemen, but some border guards and a few Hindu community leaders were also among the victims. It is obvious that the Awami League, though technically still in power, has lost the plot and is not likely to figure in any post-Hasina dispensation that may emerge in Dhaka now. This was evident when Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman invited leaders of different political parties to finalise an interim dispensation, but none from the Awami League was invited, even though there were leaders from the recently banned Jamaat-e-Islami. With Hasina's son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, making it clear that his mother will not return to Bangladesh politics, the Awami League is clearly rendered leaderless, a ship without a captain. Most of its leaders are now primarily concerned with sheer physical survival.

What after Hasina

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which has ruled Bangladesh for two full



five-year terms since the restoration of democracy in 1991, is clearly seen as the only party capable of providing Bangladesh with a government. The mood in the BNP is quite optimistic as it believes if not on its own, it can surely govern in alliance with allies like Jamaat-e-Islami. BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, who was facing various prison terms during Hasina's long 15-year rule, was let off immediately after the army took charge. Sheikh Hasina gone but Bangladesh is leagues away from peace
Opinion - India Today

The student leaders have pitched for Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus to take charge of the interim administration that the army wants to install for a smooth transition from the Hasina regime to an elected dispensation in the future.

The names floating around for inclusion in the interim government are non-political entities - a clutch of professionals, former bureaucrats, military generals and academics.

Yunus tried to float a political party during the military-backed caretaker regime in 2006-08. He enjoyed the support of the USA

and many who were looking for a break from Bangladesh's political binary of either the Awami League or BNP at the helm.

Some would say Yunus, if he chooses to, could use this Bangla Spring moment to launch himself into direct politics. He may have strong backing from the student platform and anti-Awami elements in the professional classes, and both India and the US may find him more acceptable than the BNP-Jamaat. However, at 84, Yunus may not be willing to take the plunge into direct politics - much like Manmohan Singh - but remain in a prestigious advisory role to any government that may emerge.

Another possibility in the offing

Is there a possibility that the students - some with a mixed political background but mostly apolitical - emerge with their own political organisation with an agenda for a New Bangladesh? While Bangladesh or West Bengal has not seen such an experiment so far, Assam has: in 1985, leaders of the anti-foreigner agitation walked out of their hostel dormitories straight into the Dispur secretariat to rule the state for two terms. However, some student leaders like Nahid Islam may also be co-opted by anti-Awami League parties due to their current popularity.

British MPs want to haul Elon Musk before parliament over riots

By Laurie Clarke

LONDON - Elon Musk could be summoned for a grilling by British MPs over X's role in race riots that have rocked the U.K. over the last week, as well as his own incendiary comments about the violence.

Labour MPs Chi Onwurah and Dawn Butler, who are competing to chair parliament's science, innovation and technology committee, both told POLITICO they'd press the billionaire X owner and other technology executives to answer questions about the role of social media platforms amid mounting unrest in the U.K.

Musk has spent days beefing with British politicians over the riots, and is locked in a war of words with Prime Minister Keir Starmer over the U.K.'s handling of them. Musk on Sunday wrote "civil war is inevitable" in the U.K. and claimed that the response by U.K. police has been "one-sided." "Far-right riots have spread across the U.K. following the killing of three young girls in a knife attack on a children's dance class in Southport last Monday.

Musk's platform X (formerly Twitter) saw misinformation about the identity of the attacker - wrongly identified as an asylum seeker who had just arrived in the U.K. - spread widely in the immediate aftermath of the attack.



The X boss has also come under fire for re-instating the account of high-profile far-right activist Tommy Robinson, who co-founded the English Defense League. Both committee hopefuls said they would press for more transparency from X if elected by colleagues to head up the tech scrutiny body.

"The really important points here are the way algorithms of platforms promote and amplify misinformation and the spreading of racial hatred, and how the platforms' business models rely on that," Onwurah, who served in a string of roles in Starmer's Labour

opposition team told POLITICO.

The Newcastle upon Tyne MP has already lambasted Musk on the platform for what she called "X's role in spreading misinformation" and said X has a "responsibility not to incite racial hatred." Like Butler, she confirmed that she would press for Musk to appear if she's elected to chair the Commons committee on Sept. 11.

Butler, the MP for Brent East, told POLITICO the committee must "question all owners of social media platforms." She said of X: "It's a very powerful base, and we need to understand that power and

make sure that it's responsible."

Butler said she had personally reported "several abusive messages" on the platform only to be told they don't "reach the threshold" for removal. "We need some transparency in the process," she added.

Tech defiance

It raises the prospect of a major tussle between Musk and the British parliament. House of Commons committees have the power to send for persons, papers and records, and can, as a last resort, issue a formal summons to attend - but only for people currently in the U.K. Defiance of a committee's order can see someone held in contempt of parliament. Overseas tech execs have form in shaking off a grilling, despite the potential reputational hit in doing so.

Famously, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg was summoned by a parliamentary committee as part of an inquiry launched in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, but he refused to play ball.

At the time, the committee threatened to issue a formal summons the next time Zuckerberg entered the country.

A government minister on Tuesday branded Musk's comments about "civil war" in the U.K. "deplorable" and said social media companies had a "moral responsibility" to clamp down on content that incited hatred.

What is Aynaghar, Sheikh Hasina's house of horrors for political prisoners

Sheikh Hasina's regime was known for forced disappearances and torture of political opponents. At least 100 people still remain missing. One of the mysterious dens of custody and torture was Aynaghar or 'House of Mirrors' in Dhaka Cantonment. After Hasina's fall, the focus has shifted to Aynaghar and its prisoners.

On August 21, 2016, Barrister Ahmad Bin Quasem Arman, was going about his day when he was arrested from his home in Mirpur, Dhaka. Two days later, former Brigadier General Abdullahil Aman Azmi was taken away by law enforcement officials for crimes against humanity in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. Both these men ended up in Aynaghar, the House of Mirrors, a secret prison in Bangladesh under the Sheikh Hasina government. Aynaghar is a house of horrors. Those detained there and released hardly talk about what they underwent.

Both Arman and Azmi were released on August 6, reported the Daily Observer, Bangladesh. For 8 long years, they were held as prisoners in the worst conditions without any trial. Hasina's regime fell as she escaped from the country on August 5, and now the focus is on a mysterious prison centre in Bangladesh -- Aynaghar or Aynaghar.

WHAT IS AYNAGHAR, THE HOUSE OF MIRRORS IN DHAKA?

The Hasina regime was known for sudden disappearances and harsh treatment of political opponents.

There are 23 other secret detention centres, with some of them in Dhaka itself, according to reports. One of the mysterious places where prisoners end up is Aynaghar or House of Mirrors in Dhaka Cantonment.

Aynaghar is reportedly run by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Bangladesh's military intelligence agency.

It is believed that not just political prisoners, the Aynaghar facility was used to detain extremists too.

According to a Human Rights Watch report in 2024, Bangladeshi forces have carried out over 600 enforced disappearances since 2009, the year Sheikh Hasina came to power.

Some prisoners were released, others produced in court. Many even died during an armed exchange with security forces. The Hasina government had refused to take the United Nations' help to investigate



enforced disappearances. Allegations of torture are seldom investigated in Bangladesh. Over 100 people still remain missing.

In 2022, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that the party's acting chairman and ex-PM Khaleda Zia's son, Tarique Rahman, was also a victim of Aynaghar. Rahman, who later shifted to London, is planning to

return to Bangladesh.

Those who will be murdered are taken to the torture cell of this Aynaghar, and those who will be kept alive are tortured and confined here for years, Bangladesh newspaper Prothom Alo quoted him as saying.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Gwyn Lewis, visited DGFI headquarters and asked about Aynaghar. Lewis was told that Aynaghar did not exist,

reported The Business Standard of Bangladesh.

HOW PRISONERS ARE TREATED IN AYNAGHAR?

Sheikh Mohammad Salim was at an auto repair shop when he was abducted after a phone call. He also landed in Aynaghar. Hasinur Rahman was a decorated military officer, who was detained here after serving for many years. Both Sheikh Mohammad Salim and Hasinur Rahman have been

interviewed by Netra News.

Salim said his cells had no windows, a high ceiling with just one light, loud and huge exhaust fans. The sounds of these fans drowned every other sound in the room. He could feel vibrations within the building. This meant a nearby airport or an airfield.

Previous prisoners had written DGFI on the walls of the cells, according to his account.

He could not even imagine how many people had been locked in this prison before me, Salim told Netra News.

People wrote "DGFI brought me here" or that "DGFI had picked them from their home".

Some carvings were more touching than the others.

One read, "Please ask my family to not stop searching for me and tell them that the government brought me here."

Salim was not given the respect other more distinguished prisoners would receive. He was tortured and beaten.

One day, they beat me up severely and then took me to a different cell, he told Netra News.

US-Russia Prisoner Swap: Trump's Promise, Delivered By Biden

By Maha Siddiqui

In a high-profile prisoner swap that is being hailed by Biden supporters as a major victory for the administration, Russia released Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and former US marine Paul Whelan, along with 14 others. In a press statement, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "Under President Biden's leadership, we have secured the release of dozens of Americans who were held hostage or wrongfully detained." This set the tone for a political show of strength by the Democrats in the upcoming days as the party prepares for its big event in Chicago, the Democratic National Convention on August 19, where President Biden will be making his baton-handing speech.

A Win To Show

The prisoner swap provides him with the perfect opportunity to show that his administration



got work done while the Republican nominee Donald Trump made false claims. What gives Biden a shot in the arm is that Trump had claimed that Russian President Vladimir Putin would release Evan Gershkovich for him but not for anyone else (by which he meant President Biden, who was still running for a second term in May when Trump made this claim). He has been proven wrong in less than three months.

Social media was abuzz with celebratory notes around the release of Gershkovich, and it

was Eric Columbus, litigator for Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose X post drew attention to the comparison between Biden and Trump when he said, "Trump loses his hostage as Evan Gershkovich is released." Trump's Response

However, Trump remained at his combative best, asking why details of the prisoner swap were not shared yet. He wrote on Truth Social - "How many people do we get versus them? Are we also paying them cash? Are they giving us cash (Please withdraw that question, because I'm sure the answer is NO)? Are

we releasing murderers, killers, or thugs? Just curious because we never make good deals, at anything, but especially hostage swaps."

Trump also claimed that he got back many hostages and gave the other country "NOTHING - and never any cash". He also played on the point that releasing, what may be called prisoners convicted of serious crimes, would set a "bad precedent for the future".

Among those released as part of the deal by the Western governments - US, Germany, Poland, Norway, and Slovenia - is convicted murderer Vadim Krasikov from a German prison. Krasikov was convicted for killing a Georgian asylum seeker who fought in Chechnya against the Russians. He was killed just meters away from the office of the then-German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, in Berlin in 2019. Germany has called the announcement to allow the swap for Krasikov "not an easy decision".

Enough Of Buck-Passing: Need To Fix Responsibility After Delhi Flooding Horror



By Bharti Mishra Nath

Three young, bright minds were lost in a coaching institute basement incident in India's capital, New Delhi, on 27 July. Shreya Yadav of Uttar Pradesh, Tania Soni from Telangana, and Navin Delvin from Kerala died after the basement of the building housing the coaching centre Rau's IAS Study Circle at Old Rajinder Nagar was flooded. The police arrested five people, including the owner and coordinator of the coaching centre, charged them with various offences, and sent them to judicial custody.

In a typical bureaucratic post-incident reaction, the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) sealed the basements of many other coaching institutes in the area, and earth movers were pressed into service at Old Rajinder Nagar to demolish illegal portions of coaching institutes. Sadly, no action will bring the deceased students back to life. Just days before the basement drowning, a 26-

year-old man had died from electrocution when he touched a colony gate electrified by a naked wire.

The dreams of all three aspiring civil servants ended due to callous, indifferent, and perpetually under-prepared civic agencies. This amounts to criminal negligence. It also highlights the constant political wrangling between the ruling AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) and the LG (Lieutenant Governor) of Delhi, which has deprived Delhiites of effective governance.

Three young, bright minds were lost in a coaching institute basement incident in India's capital, New Delhi, on 27 July.

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In a typical bureaucratic post-incident



reaction, the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) sealed the basements of many other coaching institutes in the area, and earth movers were pressed into service at Old Rajinder Nagar to demolish illegal portions of coaching institutes. Sadly, no action will bring the deceased students back to life. Just days before the basement drowning, a 26-year-old man had died from electrocution when he touched a colony gate electrified by a naked wire.

The dreams of all three aspiring civil servants ended due to callous, indifferent, and perpetually under-prepared civic agencies. This amounts to criminal

negligence. It also highlights the constant political wrangling between the ruling AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) and the LG (Lieutenant Governor) of Delhi, which has deprived Delhiites of effective governance.

Local authorities have utterly failed to regulate the growth of coaching centres, which are overcrowded with students and operate in residential buildings, flouting safety norms. There is an entire network of exploitation flourishing in Delhi's Old

Rajinder Nagar and Mukherjee Nagar, hubs of civil service coaching. In June 2023, 61 students were injured while trying to escape a four-storey commercial building occupied by hundreds when a fire on the ground floor filled the upper stories with smoke in Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar.

The Delhi High Court had taken suo motu cognisance of the fire and asked the authorities to examine the safety status of all such institutes. The court instructed the Delhi Fire Service Department to check the fire safety certificates of all coaching centres in the city. Likewise, it asked the MCD to review the sanctioned building plans of such establishments.

In the present case, investigations revealed that the basement, misrepresented as a parking and storage area, was actually being illegally used as a library by the coaching institute, violating building and fire department regulations. The MCD building bylaws specify the activities permitted in basements. Running a coaching centre or a library is not permissible. This is a matter involving

criminal liability.

The officials and staff get away with their errant behaviour because they fear no consequences. They know that after a while, when the issue is no longer grabbing headlines, nothing will change, and they will get away with their criminal acts. It is not an episodic but a systemic problem, says Ash Narain Roy, Director of the Institute of Social Sciences, Delhi. The unregulated coaching industry is being run like a mafia economy with huge money at stake and impunity.

Teaching shops are flourishing under the worst conditions because of the rot in the education system. It is essentially a governance problem where accountability is missing. Citizens suffer as officials dodge their responsibilities, adds Mr Roy.

Stringent Law Needed

Students, whether in engineering, medical, or UPSC coaching, around the country are compelled to study in unsafe conditions, highlighting the need for a law that can regulate the industry not just mere guidelines, like those issued by the Union government earlier this year.

In January, the Union government issued guidelines to ease the pressure on students. However, very little seems to have changed on the ground because these guidelines are not legally binding, as they are not attached to an Act. Since education is a concurrent subject, both central and state governments need to amend their laws and create new, binding rules.

Categorising or recognising coaching centres as part of the formal education system would mean legitimising the industry and its business operations, which is definitely a big NO. The Centre and state governments have a huge responsibility to build awareness, improve regular schooling and college education, and reduce dependency on coaching.

Continuous Bickering

Since coming into power, the AAP has been engaged in a constant struggle with the LG's office over various issues. These conflicts have crippled Delhi's development for the past eight years, with three different LGs and several court orders failing to resolve the disputes.

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The daily tug-of-war between the AAP government and the LG is having a demoralising effect on all institutions. Departments and bodies like the MCD, which deal with citizens, are unaccountable and unresponsive at best, says Mr Roy. The functioning of our urban local bodies is such that the buck doesn't stop with any one stakeholder. After each serious incident, lower-level officials are punished, arrests are made, and cases drag on for years.

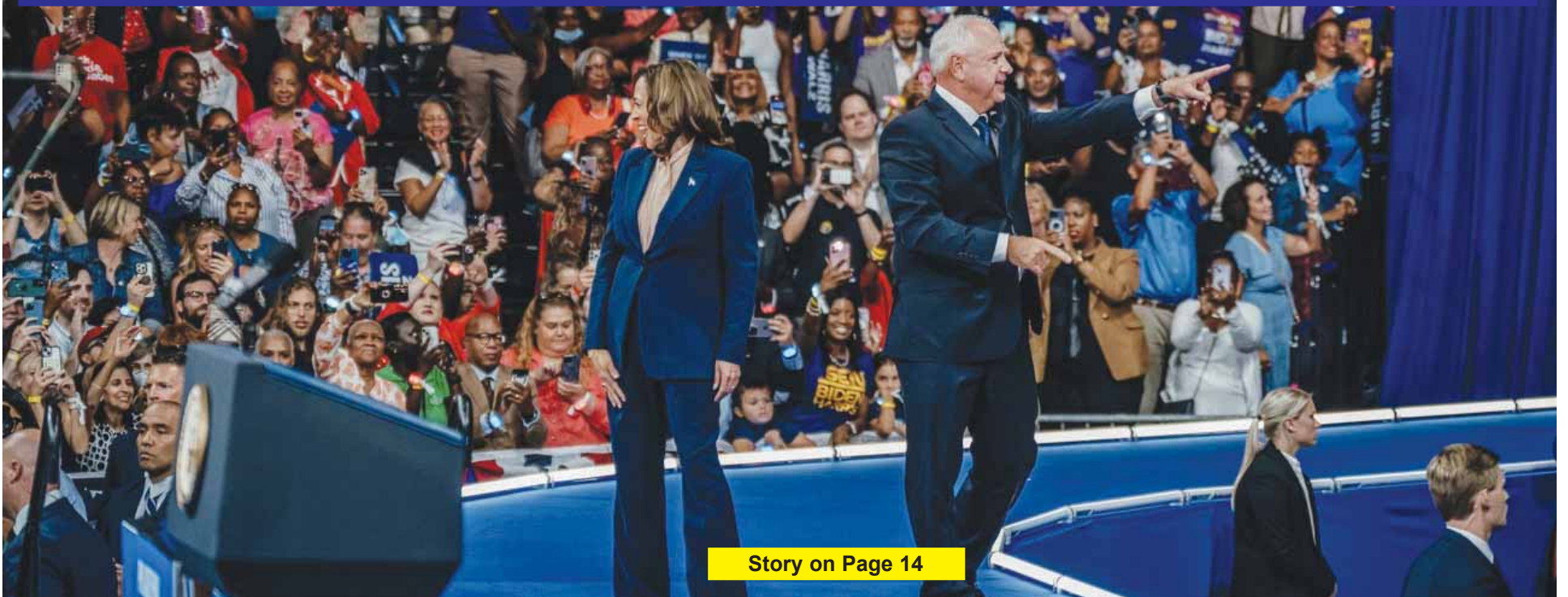
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Vol. 05 Issue 03 Friday 9 to 15 August 2024 \$1 A Media Partners Capital Inc Publication

Harris Chooses Comfort Food: Will America Bite?



Story on Page 14

55 Things to Know About Tim Walz, Kamala Harris' Pick for VP



Story on Page 14