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Why is Trump campaigning in blue New York?



Page 16

Vol. 23

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Friday 20 Sep to 26 Sep 2024

\$1

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Middle East on the Precipice

Hezbollah's Exploding Pagers and killing of it's commander Ignite Fears of All-Out War with



Justin Trudeau grand exit expected in Canada

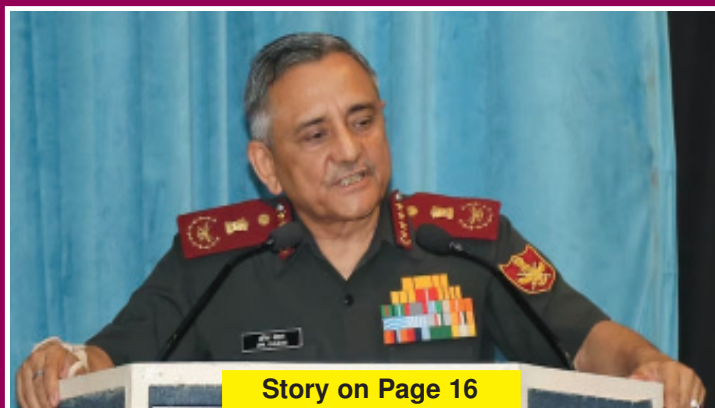


10 Glorious years of Narendra Modi Government (Op-Ed By Jagdish Sewhani)

Story on Page 8-9



India's position is of 'Vishwa Bandhu' in global order: Chief of Defence Staff



Crisis of Youth Unemployment is rattling China



Navratri at the Seaport Museum

(By our staff reporter) New York- South Street Seaport Museum has announced Navratri at the Seaport Museum on Saturday, October 5, 2024, at 2pm. Join the Seaport Museum and The Culture Tree for one of New York City's only public Navratri events—a vibrant and energetic Raas-Garba celebration aboard the historic 1885 tall ship Wavertree! Anu Sehgal, founder and CEO of The Culture Tree, will kick off the afternoon festivities with an introduction to Navratri, the Hindu festival honoring the divine feminine. We will also learn the meaningful connections between Wavertree and India before picking up our dandiya sticks and dancing to the beats of traditional Gujarati music from DJ Magic Mike. A dance by Shehnaaz Dance Acad-



Council Member Tiffany Cabán Calls for Mayor Eric Adams to Resign



(By Staff Reporter) New York City New York City Council Member Tiffany Cabán on Monday Sep 16, 2024 released the following statement in response to the ongoing investigations into Mayor Eric Adams and his associates: Eric Adams leads with corruption and mismanagement. At least 15 of his associates are under investigation. If his track record of cutting critical services and empowering NYPD abuses wasn't enough: it is more clear than ever that Eric Adams is unfit to govern. New Yorkers deserve better. It is time for him to resign."

emy will also be included in the celebration. Whether this is your first time or you're a seasoned dancer, this event is open to everyone and welcomes those who want to learn. Dress in your best traditional attire if you're feeling inspired, and join this unforgettable celebration on the main deck of this iron-hulled cargo ship! Before the dancing begins, come early, between noon and 2pm, for a special Forging Maritime Metals blacksmith demonstration. In keeping with the Navratri tradition of tradespeople wor-

shipping their tools, the Seaport Museum will highlight the vital role blacksmiths played during the Age of Sail. Learn about this important maritime trade and gain insight into the craftsmanship that kept historic vessels, like Wavertree, seaworthy. Don't miss out on this unforgettable afternoon of music, dance, and joy! Advanced registration is encouraged for this event but walk ups will be accommodated as possible. (Compiled from PPress Release shared by Michelle Tabnick)

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Oyster Festival Returns This October

East Coast's Largest Waterfront Family Festival Presented by Catholic Health, with Support from Optimum & Sands, This Fall in Oyster Bay



(By Staff Reporter) Oyster Bay, NY – Senior Vice President Tracey Edwards made the announcement along the waterfront at Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park. Supervisor Joseph Saladino, his colleagues on the Town Board and organizers and sponsors of the 41st Oyster Festival announced the return of the iconic seaside festival this October 19th and 20th. Supervisor Saladino, together with Councilwoman Michele Johnson, Councilwoman Vicki Walsh, Town Clerk Rich LaMarca and Receiver Jeff Pravato; Oyster Festival partner the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Chamber of Commerce President Ryan Schlotter and Las Vegas Sands

Canada to further limit international student permits, tighten foreign worker rules

(By Staff Reporter) In response to the strains of rapid population growth, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government is taking additional steps to reduce immigration. The Canadian government announced it will further cut the intake of foreign students and tighten rules for foreign workers starting next year. Immigration Minister Marc Miller disclosed these measures during a news conference in Ottawa. For 2025, Canada will reduce international student permits by 10% from this year's levels, maintaining this limit through 2026. This represents a 36% decline from the 2023 numbers. However, Universities Canada has indicated that the country is already on track to undershoot this year's target due to fewer applications from foreign students. These changes aim to address

the rapid growth of the temporary resident population, which includes foreign students, temporary workers, and asylum seekers. This demographic has expanded significantly post-pandemic, leading to criticisms of Trudeau's handling of immigration policies. Miller emphasized the importance of a sustainable immigration system, stating, "The reality is that not everyone who wants to come to Canada will be able to — just like not everyone who wants to stay in Canada will be able to — just like not everyone who wants to stay in Canada will be able to. Our immigration system must preserve its integrity and be well-managed and sustainable."

Canada's strong immigration initially supported the country's post-pandemic recovery and mitigated the

impact of high interest rates on economic growth. However, the recent population surge—adding about three million people in the last three years—has put pressure on housing costs and public services, affecting Trudeau's popularity. In March, the government set a goal to reduce the share of temporary residents to 5% within three years, down from the 6.2% recorded

at that time. Since then, this proportion has risen to about 6.8%. The current reduction in foreign student visas is the only major policy contributing to the immigration decline. The measures announced are expected to further decrease the number of temporary immigrants by 525,000 over three years, moving towards the government's 5% target.

NYPD Commissioner Edward Caban resigns

Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani releases statement

(By Staff Reporter) NEW YORK – “Amid multiple federal probes of his closest aides and allies, the Mayor's second NYPD Commissioner in little more than a year has resigned. As a candidate, Eric Adams promised he would “never ask New Yorkers to decide between the safety we need and the justice we deserve.” Instead, Adams' NYPD has surged illegal police stops, ballooned the overtime budget, paid out billions in settlements for misconduct and treated the press as an official enemy. The Mayor fired his first NYPD Commissioner after she refused to submit to pressure not to discipline the highest-ranking uniformed officer who abused his authority, and he pushed out the chairwoman of the independent police oversight panel for criticizing a lack of transparency. City Hall's top public safety officials include an unindicted co-conspirator in a massive corruption scandal and a “good friend” credibly accused of serial sexual harass-



ment; both men had their homes searched by the FBI last week. Eric Adams has stacked the leadership of the world's largest police force with bullies and crooks. Another NYPD commissioner won't fix this—only a new Mayor can.

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Sept 22nd 2023, 10:00 am

AARTI POOJA
Friday - Sunday,
Sept 22, 23 & 24, 2023, 10:00 am

HAVAN CEREMONY
Friday - Sunday,
Sept 22, 23 & 24, 2023, 10:00 am

GANESH VISARJAN
Sunday,
Sept 24th 2023, 6:00 pm
(Loc: Point Lookout)

CULTURAL PROGRAM
Friday - Sunday,
Sept 22, 23 & 24, 2023

GARBA RAAS
Friday - Saturday,
Sept 22, 23 & 24, 2023,
8:00 pm onwards

PAINTING COMPETITION
Sunday,
Sep 24th 2023, 12:00 - 2:00 pm
(Age group : 5yrs - 15yrs)

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Track Immigration At Delhi, 20 Other Airports: How It Will Work

The Fast Track Immigration Trusted Traveller Programme has already been implemented in Delhi and is being expanded to other airports.



(News Agency) New Delhi: Aiming to cut the time taken for completing the immigration process from a minimum of 30 minutes to mere seconds, the Centre has introduced a fast-track programme at the Delhi airport, which will be expanded to 20 other cities soon. Under the Fast

Track Immigration Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP) introduced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi on June 22, biometrics are being used to grant pre-verified flyers a seamless experience for immigration both during depart-

ture and arrival.

Work has begun to expand the programme to seven major airports - Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Cochin, Ahmedabad - and it will be available in 21 airports across the country soon.

"India is becoming an international destination and this programme is being introduced to make travel experience seamless and effortless for all. Eligible passengers will be allowed to utilise automated gates (e-gates) and bypass regular immigration queues for a seamless journey," a senior MHA official told NDTV.

"This programme will soon start in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, and then in other cities. Under it, the immigration process of pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders is done within seconds. The aim is to facilitate international mobility with a faster, smoother and more secure immigration clearance," the official added. According to him, FTI-TTP has already been a success at the Delhi airport and 18,400 individuals (Indian passport and OCI card holders) have registered for it.

How It Works

The FTI-TTP is being implemented through an online portal and the Bureau of Immigration is the nodal agency for fast-track immigration of various categories of travellers under this programme. After nec-

essary verification, passengers are added to a White List of 'Trusted Travellers' fed for implementation through e-gates. Biometrics of the 'Trusted Traveller' passing through the gates are captured at the Foreigners Regional Registration Office office or at airports. When registered passengers reach the e-gates, they scan the boarding pass issued by the airlines to get the details of their flight. The passport is also scanned and the biometrics of the passenger are authenticated. Once the identity of the passenger is established and biometric authentication is done, the e-gate opens automatically and immigration clearance will be deemed to have been granted.

How To Apply

Eligible individuals will need to apply online at www.ftitp.mha.gov.in and provide the required details, which will be verified by the Bureau of Immigration. After their applications are approved, they will receive a message to schedule an appointment for providing their biometrics at international airports or the nearest Foreigners Regional Registration Office. The FTI registration will be valid for a maximum of five years or until the validity of the passport, whichever comes first. Officials said providing biometrics is compulsory and applicants must ensure a minimum passport validity of at least six months while applying for the FTI-TTP.

Government assures no price hikes for essential commodities this festive season

The Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs has highlighted that, as of now, there are no plans to allow any increase in prices for essentials items.

(News Agency) The government has assured citizens that there will be no price hikes for essential commodities during the upcoming festive season.

With rising concerns over inflation, this announcement brings some relief to households that rely on everyday items such as wheat, rice, sugar, and edible oils.

To ensure prices stay under control, the government has pledged to keep a close watch on the market. This includes monitoring the supply and pricing of key products like wheat, rice, sugar,



and edible oils. The Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs has highlighted that, as of now, there are no plans to allow any increase in prices for these essentials.

Recently, the government increased import duties on edible oils, sparking concerns of a potential price hike.

However, officials have clarified that 3 million tonnes of edible oil have been imported at zero duty, which should keep the price stable.

To further safeguard consumers, the government has asked edible oil companies not to raise prices, at least for now.

The Ministry of Food Distribution and

Consumer Affairs also stressed that wheat prices will remain stable. The government will not be releasing wheat into the open market, but traders still hold a stock of around 10 million tonnes. This reserve should help keep wheat prices

in check, as traders have been asked not to raise prices. The government is confident that, with these measures in place, prices for these critical items will remain under control, ensuring that consumers are not burdened with additional costs during the festive period.

In conclusion, while there have been concerns about the impact of import duties on edible oils and the availability of other essentials, the government's efforts appear to be focused on stabilising prices. For now, households can look forward to a festive season without significant price hikes on essential commodities.



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JP Nadda's 'failed product' barb at Rahul Gandhi in letter to Mallikarjun Kharge

(News Agency) BJP national president JP Nadda on Thursday slammed Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge just two days after the latter wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi raising concerns over "extremely objectionable, violent and rude" remarks made by NDA leaders against Rahul Gandhi. "You have written a letter to the Prime Minister in an attempt to polish your failed product, which has been repeatedly rejected by the public, (but) once again put it on the market due to political compulsion," Nadda said in a letter to Kharge. "It seems that you have either forgotten the deeds of your leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, or have deliberately ig-



ignored them. So, I felt that it is important to bring those things to your notice in detail," the BJP chief added. He also questioned Kharge on why he was trying to justify "the person whose history is of abusing the entire OBC community, including the Prime Minister". "I understand that it is your compulsion to defend and glorify your fallen product every day, but at least being the Congress president, you should have introspected." Further intensifying his attacks, the BJP chief

said, "It is very sad that the oldest political party of the country has now become a 'copy and paste' party under the pressure of its famous 'yuvraaj' (prince)." On Tuesday, Kharge, in an apparent reference to the remarks by Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu and Uttar Pradesh Minister Raghuraj Singh, told the Prime Minister that "the violent language used by the leaders of the BJP and your allies is harmful for the future". "The world is shocked that the Minister of State for Railways in the Central government, a minister from BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, is calling the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha 'number one terrorist'." Kharge also mentioned Shiv Sena MLA

Sanjay Gaikwad's announcement of a Rs 11 lakh reward to anyone who will "chop off the tongue" of Rahul Gandhi over his statements on reservation during his recent trip to the US. "Due to such hate-mongering forces, Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had to sacrifice their lives. This political behaviour of the ruling party is an example of rudeness in democratic history," Kharge said. "I request and expect you to please impose discipline and decorum on your leaders. Instruct them to behave properly. Strict legal action should be taken for such statements so that Indian politics can be prevented from degenerating. Nothing untoward happens."

Atishi to become one of youngest woman chief ministers?



(News Agency) AAP MLA Atishi was on Tuesday named by the party to replace Arvind Kejriwal as the Delhi Chief Minister, making her the youngest woman to occupy the top post in the national capital. This comes after Kejriwal, who got bail in the liquor policy case last week, resigned from office earlier today. Atishi (43) is set to become the third woman Chief Minister of Delhi after Congress's Sheila Dikshit (who ruled for 15 years) and BJP leader and former Union Minister and BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, who took office for 52 days in 1998. This marks the return of a woman chief minister in Delhi in over a decade since Sheila Dikshit's rule from 1998 to 2013. While Atishi will become one of the youngest women chief ministers in India, the record for the youngest woman chief minister to date is held by Mayawati, who took over the top post in Uttar Pradesh at 39. Mayawati is also the woman leader to have completed her five-year term as the Chief Minister apart from her male counterparts -- Akhilesh

Yadav and current Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Other than Mayawati, another prominent young woman chief minister to hold the chief minister's office was Rabri Devi, the wife of RJD chief Lalu Yadav, in 1997. She was 42 when she took over after her husband was arrested for corruption charges in the fodder scam. She ruled Bihar till 2005. AIADMK's dynamic leader Jayalalithaa became one of the youngest and the first woman Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at the age of 43 in 1991. However, her tenure as the Chief Minister was very controversial. On September 29, 2014, Jayalalithaa became the first ever sitting Chief Minister to be arrested immediately following her conviction by a special court in Bengaluru in a disproportionate assets case. BJP leader and former Union Minister Uma Bharti became the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh at the age of 44. Among the lesser-known women leaders, Shashikala Kakodkar became the first woman Chief Minister of Goa at 38, while Nandini

Satpathy was the Chief Minister of Odisha when she was 41 years old. Syeda Anwara Taimur was the only female and Muslim Chief Minister of Assam, assuming the post at the age of 44 in 1980. Interestingly, in most of these cases, the new chief ministers were either appointed as succes-

sors because a sitting chief minister was arrested under criminal or corruption charges. The case of Atishi being appointed as the Chief Minister of Delhi brings back the history of sitting chief ministers like Lalu Yadav and Jayalalithaa, who faced arrests while holding their posts.

FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

BHADRESHKUMAR CHETANBHAI PATEL

Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution - First Degree Murder, Second Degree Murder, First Degree Assault, Second Degree Assault, Dangerous Weapon with Intent to Injure

Photograph taken April 2015

DESCRIPTION	
Alias: Bhadreshkumar C. Patel	Place of Birth: Kanotri Ta Visangam, Gujarat, India
Date(s) of Birth Used: May 15, 1990	Eyes: Brown
Hair: Brown	Weight: 165 pounds
Height: 5'9"	Occupation: Employee of donut shop
Sex: Male	Nationality: Indian

REWARD

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$250,000 for information leading to the arrest of Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel.

REMARKS

Patel was last known to be in the Newark, New Jersey, area.

CAUTION

Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel is wanted for allegedly killing his wife by striking her multiple times with an object while they were both working at a donut shop in Hanover, Maryland, on April 12, 2015. A local arrest warrant was issued in the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County on April 13, 2015, and Patel was charged with first degree murder, second degree murder, first degree assault, second degree assault, and dangerous weapon with intent to injure. A federal arrest warrant was issued in the United States District Court, District of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland, on April 20, 2015, after Patel was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

If you have any information concerning this person, please contact the FBI's Toll-Free tip line at 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324). You may also contact your local FBI office, the nearest American Embassy or Consulate, or you can submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.

Field Office: Baltimore

PM turns 74, BJP leaders extend birthday wishes, call him 'captain of the country'

(News Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 74 today, adding another year to his decades of public service. PM Modi's birthday often passes like any other day, dedicated to his official responsibilities. However, it also marks the start of the "Seva Parv," a fortnight-long festival organised annually by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This event serves as a platform to highlight the Prime Minister's enduring commitment to public welfare and his philosophy of service to humanity.

Upon his arrival at Bhubaneswar airport, PM Modi will proceed directly to the Gadakana slum area near Sainik School, as confirmed by Bhubaneswar Police Commissioner Sanjeev Panda.

During his visit, the Prime Minister will engage with beneficiaries of the PM Awas Yojana, underscoring his government's focus on affordable housing and welfare for underprivileged communities. Following his interaction, Modi will head to Janata Maidan, where he will officially launch the Subhadra Yojana, under which Rs 10,000 will be given to more than 1 crore poor women



every year in two equal instalments for a period of five years. The financial assistance scheme, named after Goddess Subhadra, the sister of Lord Jagannath, was a key promise made by the BJP in its Odisha election manifesto. Alongside this, Prime Minister Modi is set to unveil railway projects valued at Rs 2,871 crore and highway infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,000 crore, according to officials. Extending his wishes to PM Modi on his 74th birthday, Tripura Chief Minis-

ter Manik Saha on his official X handle wrote, "Warm birthday wishes to the visionary leader & great son of Maa Bharati, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Your vision for a stronger, prosperous India resonates in every heart. May your dynamic leadership & unwavering dedication continue to transform India and inspire generations!" Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde extended his heartfelt birthday wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying, "My birthday

wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I wish him good health and a long life." "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India is moving towards becoming an economic superpower. I wish him the strength to fulfil his resolve of a developed India by 2047. Maharashtra is also making every possible effort to fulfil Prime Minister Modi's resolve of making the country a 5 trillion economy. I want to say that the 21st century is India's century because the captain of the country is Prime Minister Modi. I wish him a very happy birthday," Shinde added. Renowned sand sculptor Sudarsan Pattnaik also joined in extending birthday wishes to Prime Minister. Known for his intricate and symbolic sand art, Pattnaik has often used his creations to celebrate key national figures and events. "May Mahaprabhu's blessings be with you always and your dreams of a Viksit Bharat be realised. Happy birthday, Hon Prime Minister @narendramodi ji," he wrote on X. On the occasion, he also dedicated a sand art to PM Modi. "Please accept my good wishes through this sand art installation in New Delhi. Jai Jagannath!" he added.

From Bella Ciao to Ar Kobe: How songs, art keep Kolkata doctors' protest alive

(News Agency) Kolkata, celebrated as the cultural capital of India, has long been a crucible for blending artistic expression with social and political activism. The RG Kar protest movement exemplifies this fusion, leaving an imprint on the city's landscape. Songs like 'Bella Ciao' and 'Karaar Oi Louha Kapat' have become anthems of resistance, their melodies echoing through the streets and uniting protesters. 'Ar Kobe' resonates with those longing for change, while the stirring tones of the national anthem serve as a reminder of the broader quest for justice and equality. Slogans such as Shashak tomar kiser bhoi dhorshok tomar ke hoi (Ruler, what are you afraid of? What is your relation with rapists?) capture the spirit of defiance against oppressive policies. Murals and graffiti vividly depict the struggles and hopes of the people. Cultural performances, including street theatre and poetry recitals, further amplify the voices of activists. By weaving these diverse artistic elements into their protests, Kolkata's movements gain a distinctive and powerful resonance.

Here are some examples of how artistic expressions cemented the protest movement in Kolkata. Indian pop icon

Usha Uthup created the impactful song 'Jaago Re' as a powerful protest against the RG Kar rape incident, calling for justice and awakening. The approximately 5-minute-long video song is a rendition of 'Jaago Mohan Pyaare', but framed in the context of the stir in the West Bengal capital. In the video, the 76-year-old Padma Bhushan awardee, along with a few other women, is seen holding placards demanding justice for the victim and urging people to wake up to social evils like crimes against women. rijit Singh's song 'Ar Kobe' went viral in light of the protests. The song's lyrics expressed solidarity with the protesters seeking justice for 'Abhaya'. Speaking about the song, the soulful singer explained that it was a call to action and not merely a melody. With everyone from children to an 85-year-old singing it, all demanded to know when justice would be served for this grave injustice. The song was performed in collective voices across all congregations. All segments of Kolkata united to demand justice, on September 5, delivery agents of major food aggregators Swiggy, Zomato, Blinkit, and Zepto expressed solidarity with the protesters and conducted a march demanding justice for 'Abhaya'.

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Pager Attacks: What Next For Hezbollah?

One could easily dismiss it as a spy film plot if it weren't so real: a highly sophisticated 'pager attack' purportedly by Israeli agencies has left dozens dead and opened a new front in the ongoing Gaza crisis. Nine people were reported killed and over 2,700, including civilians, were injured when a series of text pagers supposedly used by Hezbollah members exploded in various parts of the country. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was also injured in the explosions.

Reports suggest Israel had intercepted the group's supply chains and laced more than 5,000 of these devices with explosives. A Taiwanese company, Gold Apollo, has denied charges that it was the provider of the consignment. Earlier, in February, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah had warned his group against the use of mobile phones.

More Complexity To Deal With

Israel has not officially taken credit for the attack. However, the incident adds one more layer to an intricate and clandestine face-off between Israeli agencies and the Lebanese militia group as both try to avoid a full-scale confrontation.

The intent behind such an audacious attack appears to be to inflict a psychological and strategic blow rather than a tactical one. The attack would be added to a not-too-long but notable list of Israeli operations in the recent past that have primarily been designed to highlight the state's intrusions within its enemy's infrastructure, whether political, military, or technological. Examples include the use of automated AI-assisted weapons to assassinate Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhriyadeh on the outskirts of Tehran in 2021, the elimination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in central Tehran a few months ago, and various other clandestine operations aimed at disrupting Iran's nuclear programme. The basic idea behind these operations, including ones now involving low-grade tech like pagers, is optics, to show that the Israeli state can target its detractors at the time and place of its choosing.

The cat-and-mouse game between Hezbollah and Israel has been on the brink of turning into a full conflict for months now. Recently, Israel flew fighter jets over Beirut just before a sermon by Nasrallah, to show force and awareness. It has also been on a mission to eliminate his immediate deputies, such as Fuad Shukr. Recent reports have once again suggested that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may look to remove Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who has criticised the way decisions have been taken on the war in Gaza. Despite the political fault lines within Israel on these issues - including the far

too public discrepancies between civil and military leaderships - there is a consensus to target both Hamas and Hezbollah in order to secure long-term security narratives, which were deemed lost after the October 7 terror attack.

Will Iran Intervene?

As a critical part of the 'Axis of Resistance', Hezbollah, backed by Iran, remains strong compared to Hamas, which has seen its fighting strength deplete significantly in recent months. Also, in choosing not to join Hamas in the aftermath of the October 2023 attack in Israel, Hezbollah managed to buy some time. The reason for this approach could be attributed to two lines of thinking. First, direct aggression against Israel in the country's north would in all likelihood not only invite a response of Israeli air power but that of the US as well, causing mass casualties on the ground in Lebanon, for which Hezbollah would have to be answerable. Second, there seems to be a lack of clarity on whether Iran would directly intervene in support of the said axis. For instance, Tehran hasn't yet directly responded to the killing of Haniyeh.

Hezbollah thus seemingly prefers a more protracted response, causing nuisance and displacement in Israel's north instead of going for a traditional, full-scale border conflict that it very well will not be able to afford.

Simultaneously, the growing tensions between Israel and Hezbollah are threatening to jeopardise diplomatic tracks being promoted by the likes of the US to put a ceasefire in place. Israeli hostages remain under Hamas captivity in Gaza, and Israeli military operations in response are set to continue. Netanyahu has made no qualms in admitting that such warfare will prevail till Hamas is eliminated.

A Psychological Strike

Ultimately, both Hamas and Netanyahu have, in their own way, obstructed ceasefire efforts. A political settlement today will require a prolonged secession of hostilities. While Nasrallah claims that his group does not want total war, both sides are sliding towards tactical exchanges. But even these tactical attacks can very well lead to a broader conflict.

With the latest explosions, Hezbollah's 'low-tech' pager communication network has already been busted, making it harder for the group to operate, debate, and deploy forces. In the short term, if not tactically, Israel has been managing to secure at least psychological victories against Hezbollah and its ilk. In the long term, things remain as uncertain as before. It won't be surprising if the Gaza crisis and accompanying regional tensions spill well into 2025.

Quad, Indian Diaspora and Donald Trump: PM Modi's High-Powered US Tour

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is embarking on a three-day visit to the United States from 21 to 23 September 2024. This high-powered diplomatic tour comes at a time when India has intensified its efforts to bring Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table and out of the battlefield. PM Modi has a packed schedule, with various bilateral and multilateral meetings lined up on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. Meetings with business and industry leaders are also expected. One of the most watched-out-for events will take place on the 21st, when the sixth Quad leaders' summit will be hosted by US President Biden at his residence in Delaware. Modi also has a significant event planned with the Indian diaspora on the 22nd, an address at the Summit of the Future on the 23rd, and a purported meeting with former US President Donald Trump.

THE QUAD SUMMIT: A MEETING OF GLOBAL POWERS

The first leg of Prime Minister Modi's tour begins not in New York or Washington, D.C., but in Delaware. On the 21st, all eyes will be on Wilmington, where President Biden is hosting the leaders of India, the US, Japan, and Australia for the Quad summit at his own residence. This is a rare gesture from a US President and reflects the depth to which the Quad has evolved as an informal yet effective grouping. Major announcements are expected, as the timing is critical, with Biden not running for re-election and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also stepping down soon. This meeting is particularly significant for outgoing President Joe Biden's legacy. In fact, the US swapped dates with India to host the summit this year. Originally, India was supposed to host the Quad summit this year, but it will now do so in 2025 with a new set of leaders from Japan and the

US.

The Quad Alliance has steadily grown into a powerful group aimed at countering Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific. Discussions this time will focus on topics like security, trade, supply chains and technology cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The summit will not only review progress made in the last year but also discuss how to further assist Indo-Pacific nations in achieving their development goals, an area where India has been increasingly active through initiatives like infrastructure development, technology sharing, and capacity building. India will also be signing a slew of agreements with the leaders of these countries at the bilateral level.

MODI'S MOMENT: ENGAGING WITH THE DIASPORA

With the culmination of the Quad summit, PM Modi will head to one of the prime events of his visit: a grand diaspora event titled 'Modi & US Progress Together'. It will be held in New York on September 22. More than 24,000 Indian-Americans have already signed up, and the number is expected to be much higher.

This event is not just about connecting with the Indian diaspora but also about solidifying India's soft power. Indian-Americans form a crucial part of the US electorate and business community, and Modi's engagement with them strengthens India's constructive influence in the US. With a population exceeding 5 million, Indian-Americans represent about 1.5 per cent of the US population. The New York City metro area alone is home to over 711,000 people of Indian origin. This is an influential diaspora group, known for its achievements across various fields, including science, technology, and business. Indian-Americans are an important cog in the wheel of India-US relations.

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10 GLORIOUS YEARS OF NARENDRA MODI GOVERNMENT: A WIDE-RANGING OVERVIEW

"That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part."



(Jagdish Sewhani is President of The American India Public Affairs Committee in New York)

Thomas Jefferson

"The era of a new Bharat under the Visionary leadership of Honourable Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is here. Today the world is looking at Bharat not only for Leadership, but also Solutions to pressing Global issues". As tens of thousands of loving Indians in person and, tens of Millions on their screens, look forward to welcoming Shri Narendra Modi in the United States of America, "Bharat" smiling with "Garv and Gratitude" for his son, who made this moment happen. May 2014 was the year when a reframing force in Indian politics and governance, the Narendra Modi government first came to power. The BJP under Mr. Modi has become the first party to win clear majorities, one after another. He is the only leader to have earned the title of "Iron man of the masses", throughout India. Narendra Modi Government administration has executed a range of policies and creativities over the past decade. Hence it has left a thoughtful impact on various aspects of Indian society. Here is an overview which will underline the major accomplishments that have well-defined the Modi government's for the last 10 years. It offers a nuanced perception on its decade-long voyage. Economic Reforms and Policies Focusing on economic reform has been one of the most significant aspects of Mr. Modi's tenure. Introduced in 2017, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was a landmark reform intended at uniting India's multifarious tax system. Old tax regime; prior to GST, resulted in incompetence and bigger costs and businesses had to traverse a myriad of state-specific taxes. By substituting multiple indirect taxes with a single, unified tax, GST aimed to streamline the tax structure, enhance compliance, and boost economic growth.



In November 2016, the demonetization move was another prominent economic policy. The stealth and sudden move to withdraw .500 and .1000 banknotes from circulation, aimed to fight black money, forged currency, and corruption. And they did achieve their intended objective as shown in later years. The launch of "Make in India" campaign was another measure to encourage manufacturing and invite foreign investment. The program is required to improve India's effectiveness in the global market by improving the ease of doing business and encouraging innovation. Additionally the Modi government introduced several initiatives to boost the economy. Unveiled in 2016, the "Start-up India" initiative aimed to nurture entrepreneurship and create a favourable environment for start-ups. The benefits like tax exemptions, easier compliance requirements, and funding support were provided. Thereby the government pursued to cultivate a vibrant start-up ecosystem. Infrastructure Development To address the housing shortage in urban and rural areas, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) was launched. With a target of constructing 20 million houses by 2022, the scheme is providing affordable housing to the economically weaker sections of society. Infrastructure development has been proved to be the keystone of Modi's governance.

Another significant initiative, the Bharatmala Project, was expected to enhance economic activity, create jobs, and enable regional development. It was focused on improving

road infrastructure across the country. The project aimed to enhance connectivity by constructing new highways, expanding existing ones, and improving the overall logistics network. Launched in 2015, the Smart Cities Mission also emphasised on urban renewal by the Modi government. This program transformed selected cities into smart, sustainable urban centres with improved infrastructure, better governance, and enriched quality of life for residents.

Digital India and Technological Advancements The Digital India initiative came into being in 2015. Improving digital infrastructure, enhancing online services, and promoting digital literacy among citizens are the aims of the program. Several projects progressed under this initiative. It includes the Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) to promote digital literacy, and the Digital Payment ecosystem to encourage cashless transactions. Broadband connectivity for rural and remote areas, aiming to bridge the digital divide, the government have also have worked such expansion strategies.

Prior to Modi's tenure, the rollout of the Aadhaar biometric identification system originated. But under his government, its expansion plan carried on. It played a decisive role in delivering various welfare benefits and services directly to beneficiaries, thereby dipping leakage and increasing transparency. Social Welfare Schemes Launched in 2014, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, aimed to progress sanitation and hygiene across the country. The campaign fo-

cused on constructing toilets in rural areas, promoting cleanliness, and eliminating open defecation. The Modi government introduced several such social welfare schemes aimed at improving the lives of downgraded and vulnerable populations. One of the world's largest health insurance schemes, Ayushman Bharat was introduced in 2018. It was designed to provide health coverage of up to .5 lakh per family per year to over 10 crore families. It was a scheme required to make quality healthcare more reachable and reasonable for the poor. Aimed to provide clean cooking fuel to women from low-income households by offering subsidised LPG connections, the Ujjwala Yojana was launched in 2016. Designed to reduce reliance on traditional, polluting fuels and improving health outcomes for women and children is the main theme of this initiative. Foreign Policy and Global Engagement To boost trade, investment, and strategic cooperation, the government actively engaged with major powers, counting on the United States, Japan, and the European Union. India has sought to reinforce its global presence and improve its strategic partnerships under Mr Modi's leadership.

Focusing on firming up ties with Southeast Asian nations, the "Act East" policy marked a significant shift in India's foreign policy. Through trade agreements, infrastructure projects, and security cooperation, the government wanted to augment economic and strategic relationships with countries in this region. With neighbouring countries, the Modi government also

10 GLORIOUS YEARS OF NARENDRA MODI GOVERNMENT: A WIDE-RANGING OVERVIEW

pursued closer ties. It includes determinations to resolve age-old issues with Pakistan and toughen economic and security partnerships with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. National Security and Defense National security has been a key priority in the Modi government. Conducted in 2016, the surgical strikes marked a significant shift in India's approach to national security in response to terrorist attacks on Indian soil. The administration adopted a more self-assured stance on issues related to cross-border terrorism and regional security.

Modernising the armed forces and enhancing defence capabilities was also focused on. To strengthen India's strategic and tactical capabilities, several defence procurement and modernization programs were initiated. In August 2019, the abrogation of Article 370, granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. It was another major decision with implications for national security. Economic Challenges and Responses Leading to lockdowns, disruptions in supply chains, and a significant economic slowdown, the COVID-19 pandemic pretended a severe challenge to the economy. The government instigated various measures to alleviate the influence. It included economic stimulus packages, support for small businesses, and efforts to upgrade healthcare infrastructure. The pandemic also highlighted issues in public health and the need for better awareness and flexibility. One of the largest in the world was the government's response on a massive vaccination drive. It was, and effort to address healthcare infrastructure gaps. Judicial and Legislative Changes The Modi government has sought to rationalise the judiciary and legislative processes to expand efficiency and address long-standing matters. Various legislative reforms were introduced to simplify regulations, lessen bureaucratic red tape, and boost governance.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was enacted to address issues related to corporate insolvency and bankruptcy. The code aimed to provide an efficient process for deciding distressed assets and improving the ease of doing business. Ram Mandir, Ayodhya Faith weaves itself into every aspect of life in India. On January 22, 2024, Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the magnificent Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Spanning 7.2 acres within a sprawling 70-acre complex, this majestic three-storey

temple, adorned with stunning pink sandstone and anchored by black granite, features towering pillars and rests upon a vast expanse of pristine white marble measuring 70,000 sq ft. At its heart, a 51-inch (4.25-ft) idol of Lord Ram graces a beautifully crafted marble pedestal. The temple is poised to welcome an impressive 150,000 visitors daily.

To realise this vision, the Modi government is transforming Ayodhya—a serene pilgrim town nestled along the banks of the Saryu River, a tributary of the Ganges—into what officials describe as a "world-class city for pilgrims and tourists." This ambitious project promises to enhance Ayodhya's rich spiritual heritage while inviting visitors from around the globe to experience its unique charm and devotion.

'Viksit Bharat @2047: Voice of Youth'

The initiative 'Viksit Bharat @2047: Voice of Youth' was launched by Shri Narendra Modi. During the program, the Vice Chancellors of Universities, Heads of Institutes, and faculty members were addressed by the Prime Minister in workshops organised at Raj Bhawans across the country to mark the beginning of this initiative. Their contributions to uniting all stakeholders responsible for guiding the youth of the nation in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 were lauded by Prime Minister Modi. "Youth power is both the agent of change and the beneficiaries of change," he stated. The glorious struggle for freedom was reiterated by the Prime Minister as a source of motivation. It was highlighted that each endeavour, such as Satyagrah, revolutionary movements, non-cooperation, swadeshi, and social and educational reforms, was aimed at attaining freedom. During this period, universities like Kashi, Lucknow, Vishwa Bharti, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Nagpur University, Annamalai, Andhra, and the University of Kerala were instrumental in strengthening the national consciousness. The Prime Minister emphasised "We have 25 years of Amrit Kaal in front of us. We must work 24 hours a day towards the goal of Viksit Bharat. This is the environment we need to create as a family." He remarked, "This Amrit Kaal is ongoing" and "this is a pivotal period in India's history when the country is poised to take a quantum leap." Rapidly increasing population of the country is empowered by youth, and India is expected to lead in terms of the working-age population for the next 25-30 years, a fact recognized globally. The Prime

Minister stressed that the roadmap for progress will not be determined by the government alone but by the nation as a whole. 'Viksit Bharat @2047' is envisioned as a plan to transform India into a developed nation by 2047, marking the 100th year of independence. This vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.

PM's Visit to US in September 2024 PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit the United States from September 21 to 23, as announced by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). His trip will commence with the Quad Summit in Wilmington, Delaware, hosted by US President Joe Biden. The highlight of Modi's visit will be the Quad leaders' summit on September 21. This meeting, taking place in Biden's hometown, carries particular significance, as it will be his first time hosting foreign leaders in Wilmington as president. It also comes at a pivotal moment, with Biden not seeking re-election; when India hosts the next Quad summit next year, there will be a new president in the US.

President Biden's spokesperson, Karine Jean-Pierre, noted that this summit reflects Biden's strong personal relationships with the other Quad leaders and underscores the importance of the Quad alliance for all participating countries. In addition to Modi, the summit will include Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. According to the MEA, the leaders will review the progress made by the Quad over the past year and outline the agenda to support development goals in the Indo-Pacific region. Following the summit, PM Modi will address the Indian diaspora at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in New York

on September 22. Reports indicate that over 24,000 members of the Indian community have registered for the event titled "Modi & US: Progress Together."

Additionally, Modi will meet with CEOs from leading US companies to explore opportunities for collaboration in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, and biotechnology. He is also expected to engage with thought leaders and other stakeholders involved in enhancing the India-US bilateral relationship. Modi Ji, known for his good governance, exceptional oratory skills, visionary leadership & organisational acumen, the BJP named him as its PM candidate in 2014. Modi's reputation as a skilled party organiser, honed through his years as an RSS 'Pracharak,' have been critical to his political success. His decisive victory in 2014 enabled him to reintegrate into the global political mainstream. He embarked on extensive international travels, addressing large gatherings of non-resident Indians in the US and the UK, which interprets as his strategic announcement of his global presence. With Narendra Modi emerging as the world leader, Bharat has been recognized as the lightning rod of knowledge and guidance to the world.

(OpEd By Jagdish Sewhani)



Should We Be Worried About Unemployable Human Bots?

The nuclear race and Cold War that followed World War II were brutal and took a significant toll on the world, leading to a major technological competition between the U.S. and Russia. On one hand, this era gave birth to cultural myths like '007'. On the other, it spurred the creation of technologies like the internet and the Global Positioning System (GPS), which today help Domino's deliver pizza in less than 30 minutes and Zepto deliver my vegetables each morning.

Similarly, a monumental project, akin to a moonshot, is underway in AI, amidst a geopolitical race to AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) between the U.S. and China. Project Stargate is an ambitious initiative with a \$100 billion investment in computing that marks a significant collaboration between two of the most influential entities in artificial intelligence: Microsoft and OpenAI. This partnership aims to push the boundaries of AI research and development with a clear and audacious goal: to achieve artificial general intelligence (AGI) by the year 2028, or perhaps earlier. Ilya Sutskever, co-founder of OpenAI, recently left the organisation and raised \$1 billion for his months-old startup, interestingly named Safe Superintelligence (SSI), which aims to build safe AGI.

Apple Intelligence In iPhone & Mainstreaming AI

As demonstrated by the rise and fall of NVIDIA shares, this journey is fraught with the hype of massive expectations. But the AI ship is clearly advancing, propelled by three major waves. The first wave was when we were able to feed the entire internet's knowledge into training GPT models, which produced ChatGPT by OpenAI, enabling highly intelligent chatbots accessible to everyone. Impressive results from o1-preview (the latest breakthrough model from OpenAI) promise to bring reasoning and mathematical capabilities to everyone on a massive scale.

Apple's recent launch of the iPhone 16, equipped with hardware capable of running AI (Apple Intelligence) directly on your phone, signals the mainstreaming of this technology wave. Within a year, hundreds of millions of AI users will leverage this intelligence in their daily interactions - from using Siri to fixing their pictures, correcting their grammar in emails, and understanding their surroundings. The age of the "Intelligence Economy" is kickstarting.

AI Agents In Enterprises

The second wave involves building AI agents that are beginning to automate processes within enterprises, starting with call centre agents and AI tools that enhance coding capabilities. These AI agents will work collaboratively with humans to automate or displace close to



85 million jobs by 2025 (according to the World Economic Forum). They are not at an expert level right now, but they are improving daily, working round the clock with the ability to process massive token context windows - far larger than many novels - at once. Already, some of the best programmers are leveraging coding AI agents from companies like Cursor and powerful tools like GitHub Copilot. The year 2025 is expected to be a breakthrough in the enterprise integration of AI agents at scale. We will see AI customer agents, creative agents, data agents, and security agents transforming initially horizontal enterprise workflows, followed by vertical ones.

Race to AGI

The third wave is when these AI agents will not only change the way we work but also transform how we live and function in the physical world. Physical-digital AI agents, building on the previous two waves, which are constantly learning in simulations and applying that learning in real-world settings, represent this development. The understanding of concepts like gravity through robotics, as suggested by researchers like Pulkit Agrawal at MIT and Deepak Pathak at CMU, could play a significant role in the path toward AGI. That's why embodied cognition and physical intelligence at scale will be critical on the way to AGI. To explore this acceleration to AGI safely, we might need contained environments like AI cities, where we can run experiments at the scale of automating 40-50% of our workflows and assess whether these are sustainable and safe for society. These AI cities will have AI computing and high-bandwidth connectivity infrastructure integrated with physical infrastructure to enable robots and intelligent machines to understand our world and function seamlessly and safely. They will also contain sandboxes built to test AI's safe applications in healthcare, agriculture, logistics, manufacturing, and mining, allowing for sustainable adoption. By

building STPIs (Software Technology Parks), India was able to gain the maximum from the IT wave. By creating AI cities to establish a safe environment for building, deploying, and testing AI at scale, India can capture a lion's share of the new 97 million jobs and \$15.7 trillion of new economic value that AI is expected to create by 2030 (according to PwC). Unleashing intelligence at scale without reimagining our society in the form of AI cities could have dramatic and unforeseen consequences, both social

and economic.

Doing & Building

The neuroplasticity of the human brain is extraordinary, and given a fair chance, it will rapidly adapt to the massive new tools that we are building with AI. However, our current education system, with its flawed focus on memory-driven exams easily passable by AI, is creating a massive trap and drag on our demographic dividend.

China already has 392 robots per 10,000 employees, with a target to reach 500 by 2025. What we really need to fear is not the flooding of cheap humanoids from China, but rather the massive numbers of "human bots" - humans raised and trained to master outdated exams in pursuit of paper degrees - who may be unemployable in the future. Doing is the new learning, and we should be aiming for the art of co-building things with AI. We must teach our demographic dividend of 900 million to "build" the Viksit Bharat future in collaboration with AI in these AI cities. It might be worthwhile to encourage our 300 million young children to explore their inner selves and learn to build their dreams with their unique purpose and passion, given that "Androids are yet to dream of electric sheep".

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'We Lost Her': A Smartphone Epidemic Is Ruining Europe's New Generation

"We lost her, and she lost her childhood." These were the words of Amanda Miller, the mother of a 15-year-old girl who has been in the hospital for a year, undergoing treatment for acute mental health problems. Smartphone addiction has torn the teenager's world apart. Amanda now campaigns to ban the device for children in British schools. The Labour government is currently considering a ban on smartphones for children under 16 in schools.

In an interview with a TV channel, Amanda revealed that she reluctantly bought her daughter a smartphone for her 10th birthday, a decision she now regrets. Her daughter quickly became obsessed with the device. "She would come home from school and lock herself in her room with her phone. We completely lost her. Her mental health deteriorated—she started self-harming, became depressed, and suicidal to the point where she stopped eating. Eventually, she ended up in the hospital."

Amanda pleads with the UK Government to pass a law to help parents "bring their children back".

A Continental Epidemic

Like Amanda, millions of parents across Europe are increasingly vocal about the damaging effects of smartphones on their children. Parent-led movements are pushing for stricter screen time regulations, and even bans in schools, calling for comprehensive policies to protect the next generation's future. More than 10,000 mothers with young children in Spain have created a WhatsApp group to inform one another of the state of their children's mental health and exchange tips on dealing with smartphone addiction. They want help from their government and demand legislation to ban smartphone use in schools.

This growing concern has sparked intense debates across Europe about how to address screen addiction among children. Movements advocating for phone-free schools are gaining momentum. In the absence of any legislation, some schools have started implementing smartphone-free classes and some others have completely banned phones in schools.

A Crisis In India

India's smartphone market has exploded in recent years, with no signs of slowing down. The youth, in particular, spend countless hours on their devices. Deloitte predicts that by 2026, India will be the second-largest smartphone market, surpassing one billion users, with rural areas driving sales.

Indian youth are consumed by social media and smartphones, which have been linked to mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and social isolation. A Boston Consulting Group (BCG) study reveals that half of Indian consum-



ers pick up their phones out of habit, often without purpose.

Researchers in India warn that more comprehensive studies are needed to understand the full impact of smartphones on children.

In response, both central and state governments have set up de-addiction and research centres focused on phone addiction. While the Indian government has taken steps to encourage responsible usage, more action is needed. In 2015, the Modi government introduced the Prevention of Addiction of Technological Gadgets Bill in the Rajya Sabha, but it's unclear whether it was ever passed into law.

Can we expect teenagers to resist what adults cannot?

Like millions of others, I rely on my smartphone for nearly every aspect of life—reading, writing, social media, internet browsing, and communication. I use it for payments, watching TV, and listening to music. With multiple OTT subscriptions, I have more content at my fingertips than I could ever use.

So, is it fair to expect teenagers to limit their screen time and curb their dependence on smartphones? Some experts argue that banning smartphones in schools is ineffective and anti-technology. Instead, they believe students should be educated on responsible usage. Others warn that a ban might lead to covert smartphone use or smuggling of devices into classrooms. The focus, they say, should be on teaching children the benefits of responsible use and the dangers of overuse.

The Scale Of The Problem

Amanda Miller believes smartphones are "killing our children, killing their youth, destroying their mental health". According to a study by the UK's broadcasting and telecommunications regulatory authority, Ofcom, "by the age of 12, 97% of children have their own mobile phones". Studies have shown that increased screen time negatively impacts mental health, academic performance, and social skills. Adolescents, in particular, are at risk of anxiety, depression, and sleep problems due to excessive smartphone use.

By 2022, as much as 68% of the global

population used smartphones, and over 60% of people in many countries admitted to being addicted to their devices.

Smartphones have fuelled the rise of social media platforms, allowing celebrities to connect with their young fans. Cristiano Ronaldo, for instance, reached one billion followers across social media platforms in September, with a large portion of his fanbase being young adults. Other youth icons, such as Selena Gomez, Justin Bieber, and Taylor Swift, also have millions of followers, reinforcing the hold smartphones have over young people.

While smartphones offer practical benefits like communication and education, those opposing a ban argue that implementing it could brand Europe as anti-technology. However, the device's addictive nature, similar to gaming addiction, raises concerns. Last year, UNESCO called for a ban on smartphones in schools, and

France has already enforced one. The UK is seriously considering banning smartphones for children aged five to 16 in schools, in addition to guidelines issued earlier this year supporting head teachers who prohibit mobile phones.

Some British schools have already banned smartphones with great success, seeing improvements in academic performance and reduced distractions.

An Experiment That Gives Hope

Recently, 10 teenagers from a Manchester school participated in a five-day experiment, swapping their smartphones for basic mobile phones that only allowed calls and texts. These boys and girls, aged 14 to 16, previously spent over 12 hours a day on their devices. While one participant demanded his smartphone back, the other nine completed the experiment. One boy reported better sleep and another girl shared that her relationship with her father improved as they spent more time talking. Though a small sample, the experiment suggested that life without smartphones is possible for even the most dependent teens. While the British government contemplates the ban a school trust in England with 35,000 pupils has just announced it is banning smartphones in all its 42 schools in England. The trust hopes that the ban will lead to higher academic achievement and improve the mental health of its pupils.

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Rahul's Rhetoric Dents India's Global Image



Indian politics has reached a critical juncture, where finding a resolution to the current turmoil seems elusive. While dissent and disagreements are inherent to political discourse, they should not translate into anti-national activities. Ideological conflicts are a natural part of politics and, ideally, should lead to constructive criticism aimed at improving public welfare policies rather than being driven solely by a quest for power. However, the current political climate does not bode well for India. Since the general election results, the role of the opposition has increased, but it is troubling to note that the opposition's significance appears to be diminishing.

In a democratic country like India, a strong opposition is generally seen as a positive force. Yet, when ideological differences devolve into hate politics, it becomes a serious concern. Today's opposition seems so disoriented that it is willing to abandon truth and national security in favour of political gains. This was evident when opposition leaders like Rahul Gandhi, often criticized for his shortsightedness, took it upon himself to present a distorted image of India overseas. His remarks, which frequently criticize India's unity and diversity, reflect a troubling trend. At times, he portrays Hindus as violent or intolerant, while other times, he aligns with Western perspectives to undermine Indian culture and the freedoms of Indian women, calling them myths.

Rahul Gandhi failed to mention to his American audience that Narendra Modi has actively promoted women's rights. Instead, he questioned the entire electoral process, alleging that the BJP manipulated the Election Commission (EC) and claiming that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were hacked, implying that the results would have been different if the EC had been non-partisan. Critics argue that these claims undermine Modi's third term. Such statements could be music to the ears of nations like Pakistan and China, which have little regard for Indian interests and could use this as an opportunity to further their own agenda.

It is dishonest and detrimental to highlight India's alleged problems with exaggerations and falsehoods to score political points and present oneself favourably abroad. This raises questions about the

underlying motives: Is this meant to portray India as a fractured nation and a dysfunctional democracy, thereby inviting foreign intervention?

Even more concerning are Rahul Gandhi's comments regarding Sikhs. During his time in the United States, he suggested that the core issue in India was whether Sikhs could wear a turban, carry a kada, or visit a gurdwara. His frequent criticism of India during his foreign travels, including engaging with individuals associated with an anti-India agenda, is highly objectionable. Notably, figures like Ilhan Omar, who have criticized Kashmir's status, align with the INC and Rahul's political stances.

A report sponsored by Friends of Democracy (an organization linked to George Soros), titled "The Modi Mirage: New Study Indicates a Decline in India's Global Reputation under BJP," was released on May 6, 2024, coinciding with the Indian elections. This report, curated by Professor Irfan Nooruddin of Georgetown University, Dr. Subir Sinha of London University, and Dr. Ritumbra Manuvie of Groningen University, synthesizes research from sources like Pew Research Centre, V-Dem, and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. These sources have been involved in anti-India propaganda.

Rahul Gandhi's portrayal of India as a caste-obsessed society where people cannot freely practice their faith and where certain groups are unsafe is erroneous and misleading. His statements, which reflect the views of social media influencers from specific castes and those advocating for a separate Kashmir, undermine the unity and integrity of India. Such objectionable rhetoric from the INC only serves to harm India's global standing and its internal cohesion.

Rahul Gandhi believes that affirmative action will revive the Congress Party in India. He has repeatedly criticized the country's backward castes and communities for their lack of opportunities. His remarks abroad portray India as a Brahmin-Baniya nexus where no one else can succeed. This narrative is misleading and undermines the significant efforts India has made since independence to uplift large sections of its population, who endured centuries of foreign rule. Such statements discredit the efforts of his party to offer all

Indians a fair chance, especially considering the Gandhi family's long history of leadership in independent India.

Gandhi also falsely accuses the RSS, which is linked to the BJP, of devaluing certain Indian languages and cultures. He claims that the RSS and its affiliates view Tamil, Marathi, Manipuri, and Bengali as inferior. However, Rahul Gandhi overlooks Prime Minister Modi's efforts to celebrate India's diverse languages and traditions. For instance, Modi has repeatedly hailed Tamil as one of the world's oldest languages and the BJP manifesto promises to promote Tamil globally. The government has also initiated the annual Kashi Tamil Sangamam, a month-long celebration highlighting the ancient ties between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi, aiming to bridge the north-south divide that has been politically manipulated by some factions.

The recent UNCIRF (UN Commission on International Religious Freedom) report, which labels India as a 'country of particular concern,' seems to reflect a coordinated and biased narrative aimed at undermining India's rising status as a global power. Such interventions, often misguided, raise serious questions about the understanding of India's cultural fabric and reflect the biases of those behind them. The campaign against India abroad involves various fronts with lofty names but similar motives, all working to tarnish India's global image. Reports by organi-

zations like V-Dem, which are perceived to have a colonial bias, circulate in India's political discourse, often targeting the Modi Government.

India is poised for significant progress, and a strong and resurgent India is not in the interests of many global powers. The year 2024 is a turning point in Indian history, marked by attempts to erode nationalistic sentiments through slanted narratives aimed at dividing society. Despite these efforts, India continues to advance towards its goal of becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Congress Party and the INDI Alliance, which Rahul Gandhi has derisively mocked, have adopted divisive narratives against Narendra Modi and BJP leaders. This stance is particularly intriguing given India's commitment to pluralism and respect for all communities. Rahul Gandhi's approach, driven by divisive and appeasement politics, ultimately harms both the Hindu community and the nation. A leadership that represents all Indians, rather than specific communities, is essential. Rahul Gandhi's remarks reveal political immaturity and an anti-national agenda. His statements on global platforms seem more focused on scoring political points rather than fostering constructive dialogue. His actions raise doubts about whether he aims to promote or tarnish India's image for personal gain. It is crucial to oppose such divisive politics to protect India's democracy and cultural values.

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Pager Attacks: What Next For Hezbollah?

One could easily dismiss it as a spy film plot if it weren't so real: a highly sophisticated 'pager attack' purportedly by Israeli agencies has left dozens dead and opened a new front in the ongoing Gaza crisis. Nine people were reported killed and over 2,700, including civilians, were injured when a series of text pagers supposedly used by Hezbollah members exploded in various parts of the country. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was also injured in the explosions. Reports suggest Israel had intercepted the group's supply chains and laced more than 5,000 of these devices with explosives. A Taiwanese company, Gold Apollo, has denied charges that it was the provider of the consignment. Earlier, in February, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah had warned his group against the use of mobile phones.

More Complexity To Deal With

Israel has not officially taken credit for the attack. However, the incident adds one more layer to an intricate and clandestine face-off between Israeli agencies and the Lebanese militia group as both try to avoid a full-scale confrontation.

The intent behind such an audacious attack appears to be to inflict a psychological and strategic blow rather than a tactical one. The attack would be added to a not-too-long but notable list of Israeli operations in the recent past that have primarily been designed to highlight the state's intrusions within its enemy's infrastructure, whether political, military, or technological. Examples include the use of automated AI-assisted weapons to as-

sassinate Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh on the outskirts of Tehran in 2021, the elimination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in central Tehran a few months ago, and various other clandestine operations aimed at disrupting Iran's nuclear programme. The basic idea behind these operations, including ones now involving low-grade tech like pagers, is optics, to show that the Israeli state can target its detractors at the time and place of its choosing.

The cat-and-mouse game between Hezbollah and Israel has been on the brink of turning into a full conflict for months now. Recently, Israel flew fighter jets over Beirut just before a sermon by Nasrallah, to show force and awareness. It has also been on a mission to eliminate his immediate deputies, such as Fuad Shukur. Recent reports have once again suggested that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may look to remove Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who has criticised the way decisions have been taken on the war in Gaza. Despite the political fault lines within Israel on these issues - including the far too public discrepancies between civil and military leaderships - there is a consensus to target both Hamas and Hezbollah in order to secure long-term security narratives, which were deemed lost after the October 7 terror attack.

Will Iran Intervene?

As a critical part of the 'Axis of Resistance', Hezbollah, backed by Iran, remains strong compared to Hamas, which has seen its fighting strength deplete significantly in recent months. Also, in choosing not to

join Hamas in the aftermath of the October 2023 attack in Israel, Hezbollah managed to buy some time. The reason for this approach could be attributed to two lines of thinking. First, direct aggression against Israel in the country's north would in all likelihood not only invite a response of Israeli air power but that of the US as well, causing mass casualties on the ground in Lebanon, for which Hezbollah would have to be answerable. Second, there seems to be a lack of clarity on whether Iran would directly intervene in support of the said axis. For instance, Tehran hasn't yet directly responded to the killing of Haniyeh.

Hezbollah thus seemingly prefers a more protracted response, causing nuisance and displacement in Israel's north instead of going for a traditional, full-scale border conflict that it very well will not be able to afford.

Simultaneously, the growing tensions between Israel and Hezbollah are threatening to jeopardise diplomatic tracks being promoted by the likes of the US to put a ceasefire in place. Israeli hostages

remain under Hamas captivity in Gaza, and Israeli military operations in response are set to continue. Netanyahu has made no qualms in admitting that such warfare will prevail till Hamas is eliminated.

A Psychological Strike

Ultimately, both Hamas and Netanyahu have, in their own way, obstructed ceasefire efforts. A political settlement today will require a prolonged secession of hostilities. While Nasrallah claims that his group does not want total war, both sides are sliding towards tactical exchanges. But even these tactical attacks can very well lead to a broader conflict.

With the latest explosions, Hezbollah's 'low-tech' pager communication network has already been busted, making it harder for the group to operate, debate, and deploy forces. In the short term, if not tactically, Israel has been managing to secure at least psychological victories against Hezbollah and its ilk. In the long term, things remain as uncertain as before. It won't be surprising if the Gaza crisis and accompanying regional tensions spill well into 2025.



Kejriwal Should Know Drama And Theatrics Have Their Limits

Had Arvind Kejriwal been in the movies, he would have won numerous Oscars by now, outshining many acting legends. He has delivered another brilliant performance in front of the cameras, and it remains to be seen if he will secure another Oscar. In his latest role, he portrays a martyr, victimised by a powerful system and imprisoned for a crime he insists he did not commit. He has now presented himself before the public, believing that, as the hero, he will emerge unscathed and victorious, reaffirming his heroic image. However, Kejriwal seems to forget that politics is not a film.

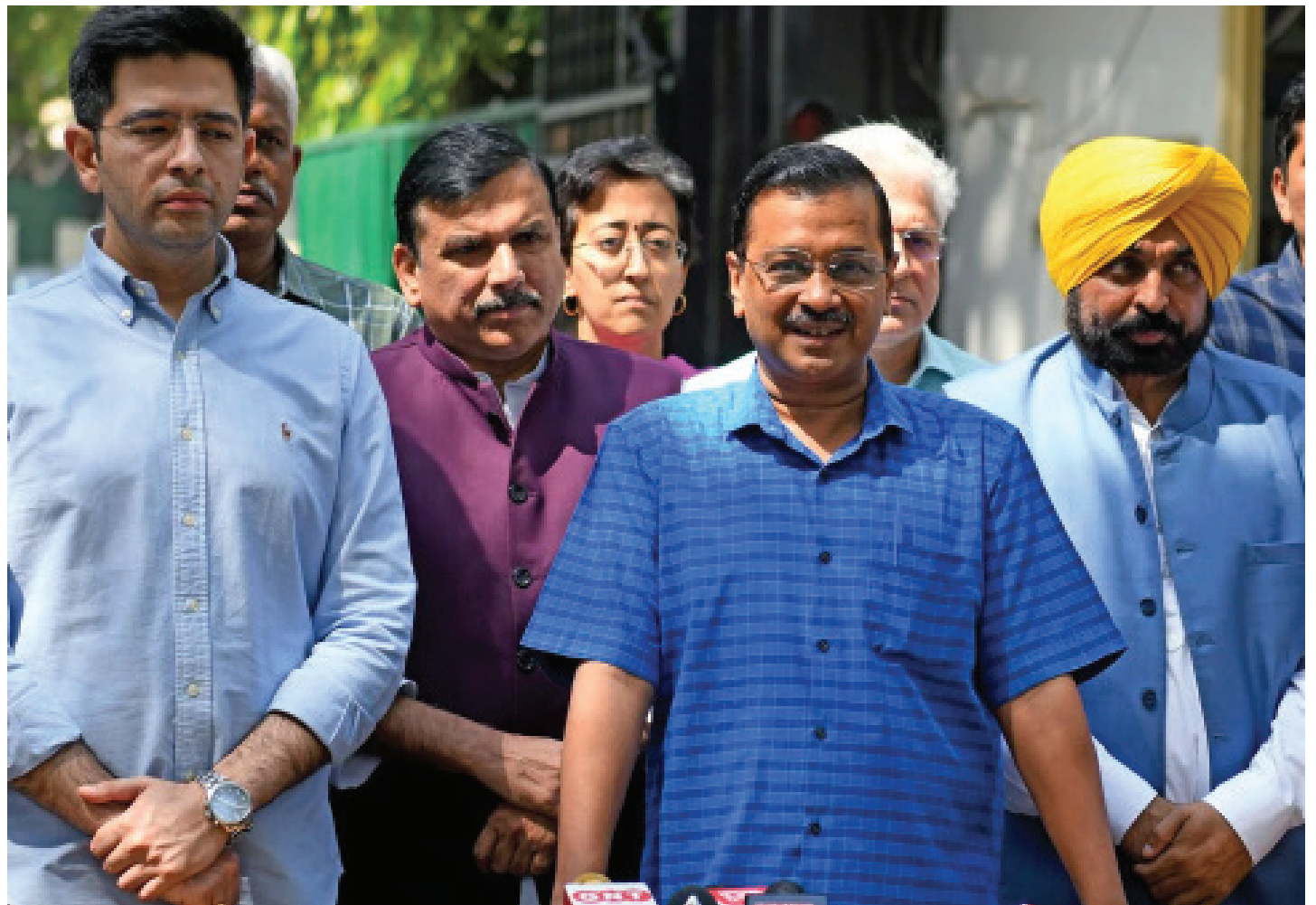
How People Will Judge Kejriwal

Kejriwal's resignation drama resembles the 'lost and found' formula films of the 1970s and 1980s. He needs to be reminded that times have changed, and such formulas no longer guarantee success. In an era shaped by social media and AI, the tastes and aspirations of audiences have evolved. The world now lives in moments. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a similar mistake in the 2024 parliamentary elections and it did not work. Similarly, in Delhi, Kejriwal's theatrics are unlikely to be effective this time. People in Delhi will judge and vote based on the performance of his government. If they believe he has served them well as Chief Minister, he may return to power. However, if public sentiment is otherwise, he may struggle.

His offer to resign and appoint a new Chief Minister is a sign of weakness and has diminished his standing in the eyes of the public. If he intended to resign, he should have done so at the time of his anticipated arrest by the ED. Like Hemant Soren, he could have convened a meeting of the legislature party and appointed a new leader to take charge of the national capital. Instead, he declared he would govern from jail. Kejriwal has played with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution. He forgot that the Constitution is not just a document but a living entity with a soul. Over time, the Constitution is also guided by conventions and traditions that are not explicitly written but are integral to its ethos. He focused on the letter while neglecting the spirit of the Constitution.

Kejriwal Should Have Resigned After Arrest

It is true that the Constitution does not ask a chief minister to resign if he goes to jail. However, the convention states that whenever a chief minister is faced with arrest, he/she has to resign. Lalu Prasad Yadav, Jayalalitha, Hemant Soren did the same thing. Once, out of jail, they again took charge, except for Lalu. Kejriwal broke that tradition



and that has not been liked by the people at large, though his supporters and advisers may like to think differently.

Delhi in the last five months has witnessed a bizarre situation. It had a chief minister but he was in jail. He was incapacitated. He was incapable of discharging his duties. But he did not resign. This was a constitutional breakdown but the central government did not impose the president's rule. Now Kejriwal wants to absolve himself from that sin by resigning. If he was the same Kejriwal, whom the world had seen in 2011, the fearless crusader against corruption, then he would have dared the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other central agencies when for the first time ED had served him the notice to appear before the agency for inquiry. That day itself, he would have dared the ED to arrest him, declaring that he was not scared of it, that he was not scared of arrest, he was not scared of going to jail as he had not committed any crime. As he refused to appear before ED and started looking for excuses, he lost the perception battle.

On His Anti-Corruption Crusade

In his earlier avatar, his crusade against corruption was led by his declarations that anyone accused of corruption should resign. Without any substantial proof, he had accused top leaders of the country of corruption, and dared them to resign and face law enforcement agencies. The sheer scale of fearlessness and his intent to take the bull by the horns endeared him to the public. People saw in him a new

messiah, a man who was not in politics to do politics but to change politics. People fell in love with that man. Hundreds of people like me left their lucrative professions and joined him with the hope that the country would change, but thousands of his supporters and fans felt dejected when they saw their hero running away from agencies to avoid arrest.

He jumped nine notices from ED; to save himself, he sought refuge in court. And when the Delhi High Court refused to save him from the humiliation of arrest, ED reached his residence and the world saw its hero going to jail. He lost the halo of a crusader, the challenger of the system. No wonder, people were not angry, they did not hit the streets, nobody was crying for him. That day I realised that he had lost the plot. Kejriwal is now a man of flesh and bones, an ordinary politician. He is no longer the idea, the phenomenon, that had mesmerised the common man. He is not the mirror in which everyone wants to see a bright future for the country. Now, the mirror has cracked. The future has been lost. The phenomenon is dead. The man is walking but the aura is gone. It is the death of a dream.

Why Were The Streets Empty?

If Kejriwal had resigned the day he received the first notice and had voluntarily surrendered himself for arrest, the Modi government would have hesitated to proceed with his arrest. He would have been hailed as a crusader, and his image as a messiah would have reached new heights. If the Modi government had arrested him

under those circumstances, it could have backfired on them. He seems to have forgotten that during the Anna movement, when the Manmohan Singh government arrested Anna Hazare, Arvind Kejriwal, and others, the streets of Delhi were flooded with protesters, and the government had no choice but to release them. This experience might have troubled him: why were the streets empty when he was imprisoned this time?

Even when he was released from jail to campaign during the parliamentary elections, neither Kejriwal nor his party received any sympathy, and his party failed to win a single seat in Delhi. If a leader of his stature went to jail and failed to garner sympathy, it indicates he has lost his appeal.

The appointment of a new Chief Minister in Delhi won't make much of an impact now. It is well-known that regardless of who gets the post, Kejriwal will remain the real power behind the scenes. This move will not make him a martyr either. If Kejriwal wants to regain the support and goodwill of the people, he needs to think outside the box and present some radical new ideas. Old tricks and theatrics will not suffice. Even if he wins the election, it will not absolve him; only the court can determine his guilt or innocence. He understands that the battle is challenging and may be prolonged, which is why he is engaging in theatrics. However, drama and theatrics are illusions; reality is different. Let's see how far his acting skills will take him this time.

India's Options For Russia-Ukraine Peace Are Growing Complicated

The situation around the Ukraine conflict is becoming more complicated. The US is in an election mode, and that means that any step that might disadvantage the Democratic presidential candidate cannot be taken. After supporting a proxy war in Ukraine against Russia all this while, any step to de-escalate or open the doors to negotiation would be almost impossible politically.

The choice is between escalating or avoiding any serious new escalatory step. It is here that the discussion over allowing Zelenskyy to use NATO-supplied long-range missiles to strike deep into Russian territory comes in. Ukraine is already striking deep into Russia with drones and has also launched a land invasion of Russia in Kursk. But for Russia, it will mean a major escalation by NATO if the UK-supplied Storm Shadow cruise missiles were used against Russia itself, although they have been used against Ukrainian territories that Russia has annexed. Russia has in practice accepted that distinction and not raised the stakes as President Vladimir Putin has now done.

UK Determined To Escalate

The Russian president has warned that such a move will mean NATO entering into a direct conflict with Russia as these missiles cannot be launched without guidance by US satellites and, indeed, by NATO crews on the ground in Ukraine, as the Ukrainian military would not know how to prime them technically for targeting. Putin has declared that Russia will take appropriate steps to counter this escalation. What this could mean is a matter of speculation as Russia could have options below the nuclear threshold. The UK, as usual, is determined to escalate the conflict. Five of its ex-Defence Secretaries want Ukraine to be given permission to use long-range weapons even without the US's approval. The UK's deep-seated hostility towards Russia seems almost compulsive. Its excessive warmongering could also be to both push the US to escalate while also acting as a willing front for the US to make the latter look more "responsible". The US, which is ultimately responsible for managing the consequences of escalation, and not Europe, seems hesitant to allow the use of its long-range missiles to strike deep into Russia but seems prepared to clear the use of British and French missiles. The fiction would be that the US would not be directly involved, though when Putin refers to NATO being involved - as these missiles need NATO technical support for launching them - he is implicating the US too.

The Western Narrative On Ukraine

Zelenskyy's strategy seems to be to drag NATO more and more into the conflict, no matter what the eventual cost is for Ukraine or for Europe, as the survival of his own regime is involved. The Western narrative on Ukraine is simple: Russia has violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a smaller European country; the attack is unprovoked and violates the international order; if Russia were to succeed it would next threaten Western Europe; Russia cannot be allowed to win, and therefore Ukraine has to be supported. Zelenskyy has exploited this simplistic narrative to seek more and more arms from the West, claiming that it is not merely a Ukrainian fight but a European one. He is now intending to go to the US to discuss his "victory plan" with Biden. The US and Europe openly seek to use this conflict to impose a strategic defeat on Russia, and if that looks increasingly unlikely despite imposing draconian sanctions, then to, at least, continue to bleed and weaken Russia by prolonging the proxy war against it. This was the sense of the joint Op-Ed in Financial Times by the US and UK intelligence chiefs, which stressed it was vital to continue supporting Ukraine, with the CIA chief also seeing virtue in Ukraine's land attack against Russia in Kursk. The US Secretary of State and the UK Foreign Secretary also jointly visited Kyiv very recently and announced more financial aid to Ukraine.

India's Options

It is in this background that India is seeking to play some role to nudge the two sides towards a negotiated solution to the conflict. India has not been deterred from taking this initiative despite the complexity of the issue, the seemingly irreconcilable position of the two sides on some fundamental points, and the fact that any peace effort with Russia and Ukraine cannot move forward without the US. We have not announced contact with the US on this subject. Actually, Europe will have to be involved too if India wants to play a substantive role.

That Modi will discuss India's initiative with Biden when he goes to the US this month is likely, now that he knows Putin's mind after his own talks with him and the feedback he has got from National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. But Biden can hardly modify its position in favour of dialogue and diplomacy with the US presidential election in the offing when all along the choice has been to wage a proxy war against Russia for larger geopolitical reasons that go beyond Ukraine.

The rhetoric against Russia has gone up, with accusations against the Russian spread of disinformation in the US and globally, and the effort to seek a worldwide ban on RT and related Russian media for intelligence activities, etc. With German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visiting India shortly, Modi will have a chance to discuss his peace initiative with him too.

Doval's Visit

India has raised its peacemaking profile by Modi sending Doval to St Petersburg to personally brief Putin on the talk the Prime Minister had with Zelenskyy in Kyiv. Despite the controversial comments made by Zelenskyy to the Indian press on India's purchase of Russian oil, calling on India to join the communiqué issued after the first summit in Switzerland if it wanted to hold a peace summit, and differing perspectives on the agenda of the next peace summit that came out in External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's press briefing in Kyiv, enough of substance seems to have emerged from the private talks with Zelenskyy to warrant a personal briefing to Putin. Is it that the Ukrainian position in private is less rigid on substantive

issues than its public enunciation? By accepting to receive Doval in an unprecedented gesture, Putin is endorsing India's peace efforts, though it is difficult to imagine that he would resile from his core position on territory and NATO membership of Ukraine.

Judging from what the Ukrainian ambassador to India said subsequently to the press here on India's peace efforts, it appears that Ukraine continues to aggressively define its position. The ambassador was out of line in asking India to convince Moscow to join peace talks, linking the legitimacy of India's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council to taking a position of its own on global issues and not simply conveying messages from one side to the other and being a courier or messenger or a post box. He reiterated Zelenskyy's position that the condition for India to hold the next peace summit would be to join the Burgenstock communiqué. All in all, it is difficult to judge the dynamics of the peace initiative India has taken as the hurdles to peace are all too apparent at present.

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Why is Trump campaigning in blue New York?

NEW YORK — Donald Trump complained during his Manhattan hush money trial that being stuck in New York prevented him from campaigning in swing states. But on Wednesday, he's opting to forgo those battlegrounds to rally instead in the blue state he has virtually no chance of winning.

The GOP nominee for president is headed to Long Island, a Republican stronghold that has helped make the state more competitive for his party. And even if the suburbs east of New York City don't pave the path to the White House, they are crucial to determining who controls the House next year.

Trump will rally supporters in the district held by Rep. Anthony D'Esposito, one of five freshman Republicans in New York facing tough reelection fights.

"While New York perhaps is not a battleground state, Long Island is a battleground island," D'Esposito said in an interview. "It does benefit him, because as president, he's going to need a majority in the House, and those seats that we're defending on Long Island and around New York are key to that majority."

Trump can expect a warm welcome from Nassau County Republicans who say his visit has been six months in the making. The local GOP takes credit for a red wave that has swept Republicans into local, state and federal office on the

island and for helping the state become a little more purple.

Before he dropped out of the race for president, Joe Biden's lead in historically blue New York had narrowed to just 8 percentage points over Trump, according to a Siena College poll. More recently, with Kamala Harris now topping the ticket, the Democratic Party has opened its lead to 14 points.

"This is not just a rally in a location that is extremely important to him personally, where he has roots going back his whole life, but he's clearly in a far better position, electorally, in New York than he was in 2020," former Rep. Lee Zeldin said in an interview.

Trump leads in Long Island congressional districts, private polling shows. D'Esposito's Democratic rival, Laura Gillen, appears to understand Trump's popularity and has been reticent about criticizing him, limiting her barbs to the issues.

Gillen, who declined to be interviewed by POLITICO, posted on X ahead of Trump's visit that violence has no place in politics — a reference to two attempts on the former president's life — and expressed confidence in Nassau County police's ability to keep residents safe.

Democratic State Sen. Kevin Thomas, who represents the area, said D'Esposito's seat is "easiest to flip."

"Laura Gillen is a great candidate for that seat," he said in an interview. "We just have to do the work on the ground. We've got to knock on doors and be out there in the community."

The rally on Long Island was originally scheduled to coincide with Trump's criminal sentencing date in Manhattan, and the campaign kept it in place even after the sentencing was postponed, according to a person familiar with the planning who was granted anonymity to speak freely.

Trump's campaign coordinated the use of the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale with Las Vegas Sands, which plans to turn the venue into a casino and is owned by Trump megadonor Miriam Adelson, another person familiar with the planning said.

Democratic leaders welcomed Trump's visit to a blue state — as a political misstep for him.

"I'd love to have him here, because anytime he's in Nassau County, he's not in Pennsylvania, he's not in Wisconsin and Michigan, he's not in Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, North Carolina," New York State and Nassau County Democratic chair Jay Jacobs said in an interview. "So he can stay here. I think it's a real good use of his time." But Republican surrogates said Trump doesn't need to be in a swing

state to make an impact.

"He's got a message for all of his suburbs about American values, and Nassau County's the first suburb in America," Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman said in an interview. "And it's an apropos place to talk about the suburbs of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Detroit, Phoenix and Atlanta, just to name a few."

On Tuesday, a day before the rally, Trump sought to catch the eye of Long Islanders and other residents of highly taxed states by posting on social media about what is colloquially known as SALT.

The former president wrote on Truth Social that he would "get SALT back," indicating he would lift the \$10,000 limit on deductions for state and local taxes that he signed into law as part of his 2017 tax package.

When D'Esposito posted that Trump is now the only presidential candidate who has pledged to ax the cap, Gillen responded that Trump is the one who gutted the deduction in the first place. The Democratic National Committee, meanwhile, is counter-programming the rally with a digital ad campaign and mobile billboard attacking Trump, JD Vance and their GOP allies for threatening in vitro fertilization access.

India's position is of 'Vishwa Bandhu' in global order: Chief of Defence Staff

CDS General Anil Chauhan said India's position is of 'Vishwa Bandhu' in the global order and highlighted India's push for self-reliance in defence as crucial to ensuring strategic autonomy.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Wednesday said that India's position is of a 'Vishwa Mitra' and a 'Vishwa Bandhu' in the global world order. He made these remarks during a conclave for Foreign Service Attaches (FSAs) held in Delhi.

"In the most violent decade since World War II, there is a growing propensity amongst nations to use force to contain conflicts. The growing uncertainty and insecurity is leading nations to renew their national security strategy and increase expenditure on defence," General Chauhan said while addressing the conclave. The event, hosted by the Defence Intelligence Agency of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, focused on the growing importance of military diplomacy, with the CDS stressing the pivotal role of FSAs in this arena. He outlined four

key aspects of India's defence policy, which include operational preparedness, modernisation, transformation, and indigenisation. The CDS also underscored the growing relevance of data-centric warfare and artificial intelligence, calling them revolutionary in the future of combat.

Additionally, he highlighted India's push for self-reliance in defence as crucial to ensuring strategic autonomy. Lt Gen DS Rana, Director General of the DIA, apprised the FSAs that India's defence diplomacy was expanding steadily in terms of the nature of activities as well as geographic coverage wherein security cooperation was a key component.

He highlighted the vision of self-reliance and indigenisation in defence and implored FSAs to gain first-hand experience in modernisation programmes.

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Narendra Modi: An Exceptional Leader in Seven Decades of Indian Democracy

While the dust from the 2024 general elections campaign has barely settled down, the public discourse in India has been witness to bizarre political theories and illogical political constructs. Flipping common-sense and logic on its head are a new crop of pundits who have sought virtue in the Congress' failure to cross double digits in seat tally while stretching the limits of arithmetic to delegitimise the BJP-led NDA pre-poll alliance's simple majority in the Lok Sabha.

This debasement of the public discourse is reflective of a broader phenomenon that is unfolding across social media platforms where rumours and conspiracy theories have become the norm while exaggerated extreme arguments have set the tone. The studios of mainstream media have been no exception either with routine brawls and scuffles, high decibel name calling the new normal. Lost in this miasma of asinine arguments is the significance of the 2024 general elections and what it tells us about Narendra Modi's exceptional leadership within the context of seven decades of Indian democracy. To best appreciate what makes Modi's leadership at the helm of Indian democracy exceptional, one must consider the following facts about India's other long-serving Prime Ministers. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had a long six-year run at the helm of the

Constituent Assembly before he faced the Indian electorate for the first time in the 1951-1952 general elections. Being Prime Minister by default since 1947 put him at a distinct electoral advantage when India voted for the first time. His next significant successor Lal Bahadur Shastri never really faced the electorate in a general election to make his case for Prime Minister having passed away less than two years in office.

Indira Gandhi who succeeded Shastri got a helping hand in the form of a three-year shortcut to Parliament through the Rajya Sabha before actually facing the Indian electorate for the first time in 1967 to make her case to be Prime Minister of India. Rajiv Gandhi, her son, inherited her premiership following her tragic assassination, thus facing the electorate for the first time in 1984 with a distinct advantage. Dr Manmohan Singh, who matched Indira Gandhi in serving two consecutive terms as Prime Minister, never faced the Indian electorate taking the safe route of the Rajya Sabha through both his terms. It is also noteworthy that much of Indira Gandhi's second term was mired by Emergency when democracy remained suspended in India.

There are only two Prime Ministers in India's democratic history who served two full democratic terms having duly been elected by the people of India — Nehru

and Modi. Of the two it is only Modi who has the twin distinctions of not only making the arduous trek to Delhi from a state capital serving as a Chief Minister but having done so by making his case to the people democratically in an open election. The absence of a six-year runway that benefited Nehru before his first election, the absence of a Rajya Sabha shortcut that benefited both Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh and the absence of familial inheritance as was the case with Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, is what makes Narendra Modi's leadership as Prime Minister of India for three consecutive terms exceptional in the history of Indian democracy.

Modi's third term as Prime Minister is unique and exceptional within the landscape of Indian elections, for it has occurred in an era of extreme electoral competition, unlike in 1962 when Nehru faced the Indian electorate for a third term with barely any political challenge. Modi's exceptional third term also comes in an era of 24x7 political scrutiny on social media and unprecedented levels of election interference by both global media outlets and international NGOs with potential State support. It is this significance that has been lost in the cesspool of public discourse that is conducted daily across both social media and mainstream media. While exaggerated assertions on a so-called 'diminished mandate' are

being made to synthesise a narrative to delegitimise Modi's third term, it is significant that Modi continues to remain the longest standing democratic leader in the global arena at a time when every major democracy has seen both political turmoil and change in leadership.

The rollercoaster of Indian electoral politics has come to mean that an election to a state assembly every six months would be viewed as a de-facto referendum on Modi. Such severe electoral scrutiny, which has decelerating effect on both policymaking and economic decision-making, notwithstanding it is to Modi's credit that he has remained steadfast to his commitment to Indian democracy and the Constitution. Steering the world's largest and only billion people democracy with its socio-extremities and geo-linguistic diversity is not only an exhausting mess affair but nerve wracking for any leader who is held to account 24x7 by his constituents. As he turns 74, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the most thankless job in the history of democracy not only within its short seven decades in India but over the past three centuries having to administer the nation in the face unceasing domestic challenges and during geo-politically unpredictability making him an exceptional leader for exceptional times.

How China Has Been Rattled by Crisis of Youth Unemployment

In recent years, China has faced a significant crisis regarding youth unemployment. While the ongoing global economic challenges stemming from the pandemic are often cited as a primary cause, they are not the sole contributors to this issue. The long-term effects of various government policies are now becoming evident in the nation's economic framework. Additionally, demographic factors have further intensified this economic dilemma. The youth demographic, which represents a considerable segment of the unproductive workforce, has recently attracted media attention due to the challenging circumstances and their distinctive methods of coping with these hardships. According to the latest census data from 2022, China's working-age population, comprising individuals aged 16-59, accounts for approximately 62.3 per cent of the total population. The youth demographic, defined as those between 14 and 35 years old, constitutes a significant portion of the country's population at 28.4 per cent. Furthermore, around 11.48 per cent of the youth population falls within the working-age bracket of 16-24 years old. The urban youth unemployment rate in China reached a record high of 21.3 per cent in June of the previous year, a trend that has

been steadily increasing since 2022. This alarming situation prompted Chinese authorities to temporarily suspend the publication of official data on youth unemployment. However, the government later released the data, which was believed to have been manipulated to portray an apparent improvement in the situation as of December 2023.

The Hukou system, a population registration policy implemented in China since 1958, has significantly contributed to the country's current youth unemployment crisis. By dividing citizens into urban and rural categories and restricting rural Hukou holders' access to urban areas, the system has limited their employment opportunities, relegating them to low-wage positions in their hometowns. This challenge has been exacerbated by China's long-standing one-child policy, which has resulted in many young people becoming the sole caregivers for their families.

Over time, the Hukou system has widened income disparities between urban and rural workers, despite reforms introduced in 2022 aimed at promoting urbanisation and economic growth. The system's enduring influence has perpetuated a cycle of inequality, with rural Hukou holders facing limited prospects for upward mobility and urban

residents enjoying greater access to public services and employment opportunities. The current economic downturn in China can be directly linked to the government's stringent zero-Covid policy. This approach has disrupted economic activities both domestically and internationally, resulting in reduced job opportunities in the market. China's struggle to recover economically in the post-pandemic era has pushed it further into deflation, contrasting sharply with the inflationary trends observed globally.

In 2022, the country's year-on-year GDP growth plummeted to a mere three per cent, marking its lowest rate. Although GDP growth for the second quarter of the current financial year reached 4.7 per cent, it fell short of the government's target of five per cent. Consequently, China is facing challenges in achieving its annual GDP growth objectives. Additionally, both Chinese exports and foreign direct investment have experienced a decline for the first time this year, which is anticipated to adversely affect China's vital role in the global supply chain.

The ongoing economic slowdown in China has had a disproportionate impact on the services sector, particularly white-collar jobs, which are now facing significant challenges, as evidenced by Beijing's announcement of a 5 per cent headcount

reduction, resulting in thousands of layoffs among the working youth population. These widespread layoffs are expected to have a significant effect on this year's 11.79 million graduates, as the urban youth unemployment rate reached 17.1 per cent in July. This has given rise to the "Ant Tribe" phenomenon, whereby China's educated youth are settling for low-paying jobs that are below their academic qualifications or do not align with their degrees, affecting not only their career prospects but also having implications for the country's economic growth.

Skill advancement is crucial for improving economic performance, leading to a mismatch between the supply of highly educated labour and the demand for skilled jobs, resulting in downward pressure on wages and increased competition for limited positions. The Chinese government should address this by promoting sustainable economic growth, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, fostering innovation, and creating an environment conducive to job creation, as tackling the white-collar youth unemployment crisis is crucial for the well-being of young individuals and the long-term economic prosperity of China.

Mossad's infiltration, precision targeting: Theories around Hezbollah pagers blast

In a highly-sophisticated covert operation, Israel's intelligence agency Mossad reportedly infiltrated Hezbollah's supply chain to place explosive materials inside communication devices used by the group.

The coordinated attack, which led to the simultaneous detonation of hundreds of pagers, has drawn attention due to the advanced technology and meticulous intelligence behind it.

Here's a detailed breakdown of the theories on the said operation based on the latest reports:

According to a senior Israeli military source quoted by Sky News Arabic, Mossad agents planted explosives inside the batteries of pagers used by Hezbollah operatives. The explosive material, PETN (Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate), was inserted into the pagers before they reached Hezbollah through a carefully infiltrated supply chain.

Mossad detonated the devices remotely by increasing the temperature of the pager batteries, causing the PETN to ignite, the report said.

PETN, known for its stability and strength, was chosen for its sensitivity to heat and friction, making it ideal for this type of remote-controlled detonation.

USE OF PETN IN THE OPERATION

PETN is considered one of the most powerful explosives in the world, commonly used in military operations. Its ability to remain stable under normal conditions but ignite under specific triggers, such as heat or pressure, makes it an effective choice for covert operations like this one.

The precise mechanism of triggering PETN by remotely raising battery temperature demonstrates a high level of technical sophistication.

SUPPLY CHAIN INFILTRATION

A key aspect of the said operation was Mossad's infiltration of Hezbollah's supply chain. Reports indicate that the explosive-laden devices were integrated into Hezbollah's communications network without their knowledge.

The fact that these compromised devices entered Hezbollah's possession undetected suggests that Israeli intelligence successfully penetrated the logistical chain through which the group acquires its equipment.

This breach in Hezbollah's internal procurement raises significant concerns for the group, as it underscores the vulnerability of its supply lines to infiltration by foreign intelligence services.

AMOUNT OF EXPLOSIVE USED

According to a report in Al Jazeera, 20 grams of PETN were placed in each pager. Although 20 grams may seem like a small amount, PETN's extreme potency makes this quantity more than enough to cause lethal explosions.

The ability to package such a powerful explosive into a small device like a pager is a testament to Mossad's advanced operational capabilities.

TIMING OF HEZBOLLAH'S USAGE

Reports also suggest that Hezbollah began using these compromised devices five months ago, meaning Mossad had at least half a year to plan and execute this operation.

This timeline suggests a deliberate and

well-coordinated infiltration, giving Israeli intelligence ample time to monitor the distribution and usage of the devices within Hezbollah's ranks.

HOW THE DETONATION OCCURRED

The reported detonation method — remotely increasing the battery temperature — is a novel tactic that avoids traditional forms of detection and interception.

By focusing on thermal manipulation rather than traditional electronic signals, the attackers likely bypassed standard countermeasures that might have otherwise detected radio signals used to trigger explosives.

PRECISION TARGETING

While the reports do not specify whether all pagers were detonated or only specific devices, it is likely that Mossad used intelligence to select high-value targets within Hezbollah.

This precision targeting would align with Israel's history of conducting highly selective strikes aimed at minimising collateral damage while maximising strategic impact.

HEZBOLLAH'S COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPLY VULNERABILITY

Hezbollah has long used a mix of secure communication methods, including encrypted phones, radios, and pagers, to

The loss of these pagers, combined with the psychological impact of knowing their communications infrastructure was infiltrated, could have profound effects on Hezbollah's operational security. The group will now need to reassess its communication protocols and potentially overhaul its supply chain to prevent future breaches.

ISRAEL'S COVERT OPERATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

This operation demonstrates Mossad's continued ability to carry out complex and targeted attacks deep inside hostile territories. It highlights Israel's emphasis on electronic warfare, intelligence penetration, and psychological operations. The success of this mission will likely embolden further such operations against Hezbollah and other adversaries.

The Hezbollah pager attack showcases the advanced capabilities of Israeli intelligence and its ability to infiltrate even the most secure networks. By manipulating the batteries of pagers to trigger PETN explosives, Mossad has once again demonstrated its technical expertise and operational reach, sending a clear message to Hezbollah about the vulnerabilities in its communication and procurement

How recent losses predict a Justin Trudeau grand exit in Canada

The special election in Canada was a litmus test for the Canadian PM Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party. As it turns out, his party had lost the Montreal byelection, which had been a safe liberal seat for three decades. This is the second election his party has lost in the last three months. The Liberals lost Toronto, another party fortress, in June. The defeat of the Montreal by-elections raises questions about "Canada's deeply unpopular leader", according to The New York Times. The Bloc Québécois, a national party, won the elections which were held on September 16.

In Toronto proper, the Conservatives have defeated the Liberals for the first time since 2011. The results of the byelections show one thing, that the support for Trudeau and his party is declining. "Justin's position is seriously weakened inside the party," said Canadian historian Robert Bothwell to AP after the loss of Toronto.

A tough race has been seen between the Liberals, the Quebec nationalist Bloc Québécois and the left-leaning New


Democratic Party (NDP). This is ahead of the general elections which will be held by 2025. Trudeau is sure he will still lead his party despite the double losses in Montreal and Toronto by-elections.

Liberal MPs like Pablo Rodriguez left the party and Trudeau's coalition partner, Jagmeet Singh has walked out of his minority government.

LOSS OF MONTREAL BIG SETBACK FOR TRUDEAU

In the parliamentary seat of LaSalle-mard-Verdun, Louis-Philippe Sauvé from the Bloc Québécois party won by 28% to 27.2% of the Liberal party. The elections were held to replace a Liberal MP who had quit, showing the sinking popularity of Trudeau which might lead to his grand exit after nine years in office. Three years ago, in 2021, the Liberal party emerged victorious in the Montreal seat with 43% vote to 22% of Québécois. Trudeau is still moving forward. "Obviously, it would have been nicer to be able to win," said Trudeau. "But there's more work to do, and we're going to stay focused on doing it."

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By bruising and humiliating Hezbollah, is Israel playing 'Middle East roulette?'

At least 14 people have been killed, more than 450 injured by exploding walkie-talkies, pagers



The attack on Hezbollah's pagers and walkie-talkies has all the markings of a spy thriller: shadowy operatives, clever technology and international intrigue. Except this is real life, with severe injuries and civilian deaths, including children, over two days of widespread explosions in Lebanon and Syria.

And it has triggered calls for revenge, even among Lebanese who aren't supporters of the Iran-backed militia that's based in their country — the apparent target of the booby-trapped handhelds that have killed at least 14 and wounded more than 450. "What happened is like an earthquake," said Beirut resident Ahmad Chamas. "It must be met with a decisive, destructive and shattering response, even if that leads to war."

That may be where all of this is headed as Hezbollah blames Israel for the attacks, with the two sides already trading volleys of rockets and airstrikes across the border almost daily.

Bruised and humiliated, Hezbollah sees reason to retaliate.

In a statement shortly after the explosions on Tuesday, it said Israel would get "its fair punishment." Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah may hint how and when that could happen in a speech set for Thursday afternoon. Israel's government has not commented on the exploding pagers, neither confirming nor denying accusations that its powerful Mossad spy agency and stealthy military intelligence units were the masterminds in the attacks on Tuesday and

Wednesday.

But with the agency's proven expertise of using similar weapons, and a motive, few in the Middle East believe it could be anyone else.

It was applauded by military analysts like Sarit Zehavi at Israel's Alma think-tank for "the confusion that it created among Hezbollah, the psychological damage." But Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi accused Israel of pushing the Middle East to the brink of a regional war by orchestrating such a dangerous escalation.

A shift in the war

In recent days, Israel has made subduing

Hezbollah an official war goal — right alongside winning the conflict with Hamas in Gaza — with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying Israel would "do what is necessary" to protect its north. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told U.S. officials this week that means "military action." In the hours after the pager attacks, Israel moved its large 98th Division from fighting in Gaza to the northern border. The military vows to return more than 60,000 Israelis to their homes in border communities after a safety evacuation that has lasted since fighting began after Oct. 7. "I have said it before,"

declared Netanyahu on Wednesday, "we will return the citizens of the north to their homes safely and that's exactly what we are going to do."

The mayor of Katzrin in the occupied Golan Heights hopes that means an Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

"We prepared for that," said Mayor Yehuda Dua. "And to tell you the truth, we want it to be. We have to destroy the Hezbollah. We have to kill them."

In Israel, the Jerusalem Post "congratulated" those behind the pager attacks against "the evil that is Hezbollah."

But many others worry it brings little relief, just more danger from all sides.

"At a time when Netanyahu was promising the Israeli public until not very long ago that we are just a small step from total victory over Hamas, now it seems we are closer than ever to a large-scale war with Hezbollah, too," wrote Haaretz columnist Amos Harel on Wednesday.

'Obvious that Israel did this'

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is working to avoid that, leading a so-far unsuccessful diplomatic push for a ceasefire in Gaza and de-escalation in the north.

"It's imperative that everyone avoid taking steps that could further escalate or spread the conflict," he warned in a Cairo news conference when asked about the pager attack, stressing that Washington was not consulted or told about it in advance. "It's fairly obvious that Israel did this," Ben Rhodes, a former national security adviser to former president Barack Obama, told the BBC. "This is not what the U.S. wanted."

As a result, Israel may be playing "Middle East roulette," Beirut journalist and author Kim Ghattas said in a BBC interview. "You keep pushing further and further until you actually do ignite a regional war."



Understanding the Flare-up in Baloch Militancy in Pakistan



(News Agency) August 25 and 26 this year marked a grim reminder for Pakistan as Balochistan, the nation's largest province, was engulfed by a series of militant assaults. Carried out by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) these attacks culminated in the deaths of over 70 individuals, including 23 civilians, bringing to the fore persistent fragilities within Pakistani statehood.

These coordinated strikes, timed

to coincide with the anniversary of the assassination of Baloch nationalist leader Akbar Bugti by state forces in 2006, highlighted the long-standing grievances of the Baloch populace towards a government that has continuously suppressed them. The recent surge in insurgent capabilities and their readiness to target significant installations were alarmingly evident. Furthermore, the attacks have starkly brought to the forefront

the ethnic tensions that have simmered since Pakistan's inception, which the state has attempted to brush under the carpet in the garb of a unified Islamic identity.

In a particularly brutal episode, militants halted a civilian bus, verified the identities of the passengers, and executed 23 Punjabis. This was the result of anger caused by the historical disparities in resource allocation and political power that have

favoured Punjab at the cost of Balochistan. Despite Punjab's economic dominance, the dire state of the national economy and profound inequalities have compelled its working class to seek opportunities in Balochistan, the least affluent province. This longstanding ethnic divide has often placed Punjabi migrant workers at the forefront of Baloch rebellion animosity, with the current scale of violence reaching unprecedented levels.

The quest for Baloch independence can be traced back to Pakistan's formation. However, the Baloch insurgency we are witnessing today revitalised around two decades ago. This resurgence happened after the US invasion of Afghanistan, which displaced numerous Pakistani-backed militant factions into Balochistan, thereby destabilising the already marginalised province's traditional power hierarchies. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), established in the year 2000, along with other militant groups, has persistently challenged the Pakistani state,

advocating secession due to the blatant exploitation of the Baloch populace. Despite Balochistan's wealth in oil, gas, uranium, gold, copper, and other valuable minerals, the local people remain socio-economically suppressed, with 70 per cent categorised as 'multidimensionally poor'. The province also lags significantly in socio-economic indicators including education, health, and employment. The gender disparity further complicates the socio-economic landscape, with only 24 per cent of women literate and a mere 19 per cent of girls completing primary education. The maternal mortality rate is alarmingly high at 700 per 100,000 births. Additionally, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)—involving over \$60 billion in infrastructure projects including the pivotal deep-sea port at Gwadar—has exacerbated local grievances about the state's exploitation of Baloch resources. This exploitation has spurred numerous attacks on Chinese interests and personnel in the province, intensifying Beijing's security apprehensions, especially concerning CPEC.

Bangladesh Army Granted Policing And Magistracy Powers After Yunus-Led Interim Government Struggles To Control Violence

(News Agency) Bangladesh's interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, has granted the military special executive magistrate powers throughout the country with immediate effect.

According to a gazette notification issued by the Bangladeshi Ministry of Public Administration on Tuesday, the eligible army officers will be able to act as executive magistrates under the supervision of district magistrates across Bangladesh for the next 60 days. The army magistrates will oversee activities related to offences under Sections 64, 65, 83, 84, 86, 95(2), 100, 105, 107, 109, 110, 126, 127, 128, 130, 133, and 142 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (CRPC), reports Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

The order is being interpreted as a step that will give greater powers to the Army in executing administrative and policing responsibilities across the violence-hit nation.

The order issued by the Ministry of Public Administration did not specify if it would be applicable at the level of the districts and mentioned that the instruction is applicable in "entire Bangladesh". Speaking to the local media,



Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyer Tapash Kanti Baul said that the Army didn't have the power to make an arrest without the presence of an executive magistrate.

However, with the government's order, the Army can now place anyone under arrest since they can exercise the power vested upon them.

Policing in Bangladesh has been severely impacted since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on

5 August as the ouster of the government rendered the police vulnerable to retribution from the masses because of the role of the police in the crackdown against the anti-Hasina protesters.

In recent weeks, there were reports of mob violence at different institutions, places, and attacks on Hindus and other minorities and their places of worship, which the Yunus-led Interim government has failed to stop.

Sri Lanka's Presidential Election: A Critical Crossroads Amidst Economic and Strategic Challenges

(News Agency) As Sri Lanka prepares for its presidential election on September 21, 2024, the island nation stands at a critical juncture. The election comes nearly two years after a severe economic crisis led to widespread public unrest and the dramatic departure of

the
President
Gotabaya
Rajapaksa.
The new
president
will face
the
daunting
tasks of



addressing ongoing economic hardships and navigating complex international relations, particularly with China. Amidst economic instability and political discontent, almost 1.70 crore voters will choose from 39 candidates. However, the primary contenders for the presidency are incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe, opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, and Anura Kumara Disسانayake of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

Ranil Wickremesinghe, who climbed to the presidency following Rajapaksa's ousting in 2022, has faced significant hurdles during his tenure. His administration has faced high inflation and widespread poverty, despite efforts to stabilize the economy with international assistance, including support from the IMF and India. Wickremesinghe's administration took steps to reduce China's influence by banning Chinese military vessels, thereby strengthening ties with India. However, his tenure is overshadowed by a legacy of economic struggle and public dissatisfaction.

Tupperware, once a household name, files for bankruptcy

Tupperware Brands and some of its subsidiaries filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Tuesday. The company, widely known for its food storage containers, has been struggling with falling sales in recent years.



(News Agency) The iconic sound of a Tupperware lid being sealed or forced open is a sound that echoes through many childhood memories.

For decades, Tupperware containers weren't just kitchen essentials — they were symbols of care, as moms packed school lunches with love, often with

strict instructions to not misplace them. And heaven help us if we did!

The beloved household name has now filed for bankruptcy, marking a surprising fall from its once unshakeable status in homes across the world. Tupperware Brands and some of its subsidiaries filed for

Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Tuesday. The company, widely known for its food storage containers, has been struggling with falling sales in recent years.

Last year, the firm, listed on the New York Stock Exchange, warned of "substantial doubt" about its ability to continue operations due to its financial troubles.

Laurie Ann Goldman, Tupperware's president and CEO, said in a statement, "Over the last several years, the company's financial position has been severely impacted by the challenging macroeconomic environment."

She added that after exploring several strategic options, filing for bankruptcy was seen as the best

solution.

The company now plans to seek court approval for a sale process that will allow it to protect its brand and move towards becoming a digital-first, tech-focused company.

Tupperware also intends to keep operating throughout the bankruptcy proceedings, ensuring that it continues to pay its employees and suppliers.

"We plan to continue serving our valued customers with the high-quality products they love and trust throughout this process," Goldman said as per a report in AFP.

Tupperware's shares were trading at just \$0.5099 on Monday, a sharp drop from Rs 2.55 in December of last year.

Despite this, the company

believes it has made progress in modernising its operations and driving efficiencies since the appointment of a new management team last year. It aims to continue these efforts to revive the brand.

In its filing with the US Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, Tupperware listed assets between \$500 million and \$1 billion and liabilities between \$1 billion and \$10 billion. It also reported having between 50,000 and 100,000 creditors.

The company's journey began in 1946, when chemist Earl Tupper came up with the idea of creating an airtight seal for plastic storage containers. His invention helped families save money on food waste, a huge concern during that period.

Adani Portfolio companies to supply 6,600 MW hybrid solar and thermal power to Maharashtra

(News Agency) Ahmedabad : Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) and Adani Power Ltd (APL) have won the bid to supply 6,600 MW of hybrid solar

Kutch, Gujarat, as per the Letter of Intent (LOI) awarded to Adani Power. Also, Adani Power will sign a long-term power supply agreement (PSA) with MSEDCL for the supply of 1,496 MW (net) thermal power to Maharashtra from a new 1,600 MW ultra-supercritical thermal power project. The total of 6,600 MW capacity has been secured through a competitive bidding process, initiated by the MSEDCL for procurement of combined 1,600 MW thermal and 5,000 MW solar power. "We are glad to collaborate with the MSEDCL to meet the states' rising energy demand through renewable sources and fulfil its RE commitments. Our goal is to accelerate India's clean energy transition.



and thermal power to Maharashtra, it was announced on Sunday. Adani Green will sign a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) with the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) for the supply of 5,000 MW (5GW) solar power to the state. The solar power supply will come from the world's largest renewable energy park being developed at Khavda in

This is a crucial step towards the country's energy independence and building a sustainable future," said Sagar Adani, Executive Director, Adani Green Energy. He further said that Adani Green is well positioned to achieve the 50 GW target with secured resource-rich sites in strategic locations, a portfolio mix of renewables and storage solutions, a robust supply chain, and clear evacuation plans.

Flipkart Big Billion Days sale to offer big price drop on iPhone 15 series



(News Agency) After the launch of the iPhone 16 series, it was given that the price of its previous generation, the iPhone 15 series, would drop. The iPhone 15 series was launched at a starting price of Rs 79,999, in 2023. And now, Flipkart is selling it at Rs 69,900. However, with the Big Billion Days sale just around the corner, the e-commerce website is eyeing to reduce the price even more. On the application, giving out a sneak-peak, Flipkart has shared that all smartphones will get great deals, including the iPhone 15 series, including iPhone 15, 15 Plus, 15 Pro and 15 Pro Max. The website has not revealed the exact discounts on the phones. And for that you have to wait till September 23, when Flipkart will disclose the discounted prices. Meanwhile, the question persists: Should you buy an iPhone 15?

iPhone 16 vs iPhone 14: 4 reasons to upgrade, 1 to skip

(News Agency) The iPhone 16 is here, packed with features like Apple Intelligence AI, an improved design, enhanced camera systems, and more. In the lineup, Apple has the iPhone 16, iPhone 16 Plus, iPhone 16 Pro, and iPhone 16 Pro Max, all offering the best of the iPhone experience. The devices will be available for pre-order on September 13, with the official sale starting on September 20. For users who want to enter the iOS world, the new-gen iPhone 16 is, without a doubt, a great option. But

what about users who want to upgrade? Well, that depends. And if you are an iPhone 14 user, continue reading, as we detail 4 reasons why the iPhone 16 could be a good upgrade and one reason why sticking with the iPhone 14 might still be a good decision. Following the iPhone 15, the iPhone 16 also comes with Dynamic Island. One of the visible upgrades in the iPhone 16 is the shift from the traditional notch found on the iPhone 14 to the Dynamic Island, which was previously

exclusive to iPhone 14 Pro models. This dynamic area adapts to your actions, showing notifications, music controls, and more, making it a functional and stylish update over the static notch of the iPhone 14. The iPhone 16 also introduces a new Camera Control button, which offers quick access to photo features like snapping pictures, zooming, and adjusting focus. It's positioned just below the power button, adding convenience for those who frequently use their iPhone camera. Apple

has also brought the customisable Action Button, which was introduced with iPhone 15 Pro variants, to the entire iPhone 16 lineup. Additionally, the iPhone 16's colour-infused glass back resists fingerprints and enhances colour vibrancy, making it look fresh and appealing compared to the iPhone 14's standard glass and aluminium finish.

The iPhone 16 is powered by the A18 Bionic chip, a clear step up from the A15 Bionic chip in the iPhone 14.

JD Vance backs deportation plan in Wisconsin city divided over refugee arrival



Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is facing controversy over the resettlement of refugees, with some residents expressing fear and misinformation, while others, including city manager Stephanie Hirsch, embrace the newcomers. Republican vice-presidential nominee JD Vance fuelled the debate, focusing on anti-immigrant rhetoric and blaming illegal immigration for local issues.

former President Donald Trump campaign. Vance argued Tuesday that illegal immigration has devastated parts of the country, including places like Wisconsin that are far from the US border with Mexico. He blames Vice President Kamala Harris and President Joe Biden for problems such as the flow of illegal drugs, and says he and Trump will secure the border and “put Americans first.” “Every community is a border state,” Vance said. “Every community is a border community.”

The Ohio senator also has continued to promote false claims that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, are abducting and eating pets as he tries to draw attention to Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris’s immigration policies. Officials have said there have been no credible or detailed reports about the claims. Vance defended talking about the claims in Springfield when asked

about it Tuesday. “I haven’t made up anything,” Vance said. “I just listened to people who were telling me things.” Vance said he wants to travel to Springfield and speak with people there, but that wouldn’t be in the city’s best interests right now.

FIGHT FOR A ‘BLUE WALL’ STATE

Western Wisconsin is a target for both sides in one of the “blue wall” states, along with Pennsylvania and neighbouring Michigan, that both parties say they need to win to secure the White House. Vance campaigned in Michigan earlier Tuesday before going to Wisconsin. The city — a regional economic hub about 90 miles east of Minneapolis — is reliably Democratic. But it is located in a county where margins of victory may make a difference in November. Biden carried the county by 11 points over Trump in 2020, when the Democrat won Wisconsin

and the election. Trump lost the county by 7 points in 2016, but won Wisconsin that year. Vance did not mention the resettlement in Eau Claire during his rally, but did talk about Trump’s plan to deport people living in the country illegally, drawing loud cheers from the crowd. He also said communities that are “overrun” by immigration have seen problems such as rising rents, increased car insurance costs and added pressure on healthcare and school systems. The issue of immigration already has polarised people in Eau Claire and the surrounding area. When news broke nearly a year ago that about 75 refugees who fled their countries due to war or persecution were headed to the region — representing about 0.10% of Eau Claire’s population — Republicans introduced bills at the state and federal level designed to give local communities more say.

(News Agency) Stephanie Hirsch remembers growing up in the western Wisconsin city of Eau Claire when the community welcomed newly arriving Hmong refugees from Southeast Asia. So Hirsch, now the Eau Claire city manager, said she was surprised at the hostility, fear and anger she saw last fall, when residents learned several dozen refugees would start arriving legally in the community of about 70,000. Opponents spread

disagree with being afraid of people from different cultures. In fact, I’m really excited about it.” But the way lifelong Eau Claire resident Fred Kappus saw it, the city should have other priorities. “We really should attend to the homelessness situation before we bring in people from elsewhere,” said Kappus, the vice chairman of the Eau Claire Republican Party. The flaring tension over the resettlement of refugees in Eau Claire has been repeated in many other midsize communities across the US. And it served as a backdrop to a campaign rally Tuesday with Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance, who has focused on immigration and anti-immigrant rhetoric as he and

Panic button, bulletproof glass: How US election officials are preparing for threats

US election officials are enhancing security for the November 5 presidential election in response to rising threats. Measures include increased law enforcement presence, panic buttons, and tighter security at polling locations.

(News Agency) Election officials across the United States are increasing security measures for the upcoming November 5 presidential election to protect workers, voters, and ensure the integrity of the ballot-counting process. The actions have been prompted by rising threats of political violence, including two assassination attempts on Republican nominee Donald Trump, as well as incidents targeting election offices since the 2020 election. Cobb County, Georgia, for example, has introduced panic buttons at polling locations and increased law enforcement presence after a poll worker encountered a voter carrying a gun. Local election directors are also working closely with law enforcement to prevent any disruptions during the election, according to news agency Associated Press (AP).

Tate Fall, Cobb County’s election director, took action after hearing from a poll worker who faced an armed, agitated voter during Georgia’s presidential

primary in March. Though the situation ended peacefully, Fall noted, “That made it really real for me -- that it’s so easy for something to go sideways in life, period, let alone the environment of Georgia and elections.”

Jen Easterly, head of the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, expressed her frustration over increasing threats to election workers. “These folks, they are not doing it for pay. They’re doing it because they believe it’s the right thing to do to defend our democracy,” she said, reported AP.

Election offices nationwide have faced harassment, including shootings, “swatting” attacks, and threats by mail.

Some mails even contained harmful substances like fentanyl. In response, many election offices have adopted

stricter security protocols, such as installing bulletproof glass, badge readers, and security cameras.

Election workers are also being trained to handle potentially hazardous mail and



respond to emergencies.

Dean Logan, head of Los Angeles County’s election operations, emphasised that securing elections is vital. “It’s important to me that we can

tell voters they don’t have to be worried about the security of their ballots,” he said.

In places like Durham County, North Carolina, and Washoe County, Nevada, election directors highlighted the increased role of security in their operations, with emergency plans and drills becoming a standard part of election preparations.

Romilda Crocamo, County Manager of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, stated that 40% of her election staff’s time is now spent on security planning and coordination with law enforcement.

“It seems that people are very emotional, and sometimes that emotion escalates,” she said, reported AP.

Election officials are balancing security with the need to maintain open and welcoming polling places for voters. The experiences of 2020, such as the tense protests in Detroit, have prompted major security upgrades at polling sites across the country.

4th US citizen arrested in Venezuela in plot to kill President Maduro

The identity of the arrested person wasn't revealed, but authorities claimed that the CIA, sex workers and organised crime groups were involved in the assassination plot.

(News Agency) Venezuela's government Tuesday announced the arrest of a fourth US citizen in connection with an alleged plot to kill President Nicolás Maduro in which authorities claim the CIA, Spain's intelligence agency, organized crime groups, sex workers and members of the opposition are involved.

Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello revealed the arrest and details of the plot during a speech before the National Assembly, whose members applauded the detention. Cabello did not identify the most recently detained American. The alleged plan joins dozens of other anti-Maduro plans that his government earlier this year claimed to have foiled. "Those who try to mess with Venezuela, we will screw them, regardless of their name," Cabello said. He spoke hours after an independent panel of experts backed by the United Nations' Human Rights Council issued a scathing report against Maduro's government, accusing it of deploying the

"harshest and most violent mechanisms of its repressive apparatus" in the wake of the disputed July presidential election. Cabello told lawmakers that the objective of the latest alleged plot "is political." He claimed the US citizen detained Tuesday in the capital, Caracas, had taken photos of electrical and oil industry infrastructure and military units.

"It is not the first time he has come to Venezuela," Cabello said, without identifying the man. He insisted, without providing evidence, that the CIA designed, promoted and financed the plot and Spain's National Intelligence Center was aware of it. Cabello on Saturday announced the arrests of three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen in connection with the alleged

plan. He identified one of the US citizens as Wilbert Joseph Castañeda Gomez, whom he claimed is a Navy SEAL who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and



Colombia. "Any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false. The United States continues to support a democratic solution to the political crisis in Venezuela," the Department of State said in a statement after the initial arrests were announced. Cabello on

Tuesday also linked to the alleged plot sex workers who were supposedly in contact with the foreigners, and members of the main opposition coalition. Tensions between Venezuela's government and the US have increased since the presidential election, whose result sparked protests across the South American country that resulted in the arrests of more than 2,000 people, including minors, and the deaths of two dozen.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council, which is stacked with Maduro loyalists, said Maduro won a third six-year term, but it did not provide a detailed breakdown of the results.

Members of the opposition, however, surprised the government by collecting tally sheets from 80% of the nation's electronic voting machines and publishing them online. The tally sheets, they said, indicate that former diplomat Edmundo González won the election with twice as many votes as Maduro.

Kamala Harris counts on Ukraine war to swing Polish American votes against Trump

Democrats, led by Kamala Harris, are increasing efforts to win over Polish American voters in key battleground states, emphasising concerns over Trump's stance on Ukraine and NATO. The community, historically divided in its political support, could play a crucial role in deciding close contests in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

(News Agency) Democrats are stepping up their outreach to Polish Americans in this year's presidential election as Kamala Harris and Donald Trump vie for support from a community that could play a decisive role in razor-thin battleground state contests.

Harris hopes to capitalise on Polish Americans' historic animosity toward Russia and on Trump's hesitancy to back Ukraine during last week's debate. The Democratic vice president's team organised a national call with Polish American supporters on Wednesday to

encourage local networks to hold their own events and spread the campaign's message. Although Polish Americans are not a particularly large demographic, many of them live in the so-called "blue wall" states that are critical to victory for either candidate. There are an estimated 784,000 in Michigan, 758,000 in Pennsylvania and 481,000 in Wisconsin, three places that Harris is visiting this week.

"We're talking about an election where a swing of a few thousand voters in any of those states could make all the

difference," said Tom Malinowski, a Polish-born former Democratic congressman from New Jersey.

Filip Jotevski, the newly hired point person for networking with diaspora and ethnic communities, said on Wednesday's Harris organising call that if Trump returns to power "he'll sell out Ukraine" after spending years "cosying up to Vladimir Putin". Trump, for his part, is slated to visit a Polish American shrine in Pennsylvania on Sunday for the unveiling of a monument to the anti-communist Solidarity movement. The

Republican candidate will be there at the same time as Polish President Andrzej Duda. The Polish American community was pushed into the spotlight during the September 10 debate in Philadelphia, when Trump twice refused to say whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war against Russia. "Negotiate a deal," Trump said. "Because we have to stop all of these human lives from being destroyed." Harris fired back that if Trump had been president when the invasion took place, "Putin would be sitting in Kyiv with his eyes on the rest of Europe."

US billionaire says will pull money from market if Kamala Harris wins US election

Billionaire John Paulson, a hedge fund manager and founder of The Paulson & Co., pointed to Kamala Harris' proposed economic policies, saying that they would cause a panic, prompting people to sell assets and eventually cause a recession.

(News Agency) One of the biggest fundraisers for former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said that he would pull his money from the market if his Democratic rival Vice President Kamala Harris is elected president in the upcoming presidential elections.

Billionaire John Paulson, a hedge fund manager and founder of The Paulson & Co., told FOX Business on Tuesday that Harris's proposed economic policies are bound to scare investors. Paulson, who is known for profitably betting against the subprime mortgage market in 2007, was asked what his next big wager is going to be. "Well, I would say it very

much depends on who's in the White House and who controls Congress," Paulson responded. "I'd be very



concerned if Harris is elected and

pursues the tax plans and other economic plans that she articulated." Harris has said she will increase corporate tax from 21% to 28% and also wants to increase capital gains rate from 20% to 28%. In contrast to her proposal, Trump has proposed extending the tax proposals he implemented during his presidential tenure in 2017.

Paulson told FOX Business that another proposal by Harris to increase tax to

25% on unrealised gains for people with a \$100 million net worth or more will cause a mass selling of assets, including homes, stocks and art.

"I think it would result in a crash in the markets and an immediate, pretty quick recession," he added.

Another avid Trump supporter and billionaire Elon Musk reacted to Paulson's comments: "[Warren] Buffet is already planning for this outcome." US is nearing its presidential elections scheduled on November 5, with both the candidates polling not too far from each other. The race is expected to be on a knife's edge and whether Paulson's new bet will pay off remains to be seen.

What pregnant women should know about mpox



complications. Dr Sonal Singhal, Senior Consultant, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospital, Gurugram, mpox, particularly in early pregnancy, can increase the risk of miscarriage. Dr Singhal shared that pregnant people can be safe by practising proper hygiene and avoiding someone who is in close contact with infected individuals. "Regular prenatal check-ups and close monitoring of fetal well-being and growth are crucial to detect any complications early. Under the guidance of healthcare providers and consult your doctor, as antiviral treatment may be considered to manage symptoms and reduce the risk of complications," said Dr Singhal. By following these precautions, pregnant women can better protect themselves and their fetuses from the risks associated with mpox.

(News Agency) The sudden surge of mpox worldwide, most severely in African countries, has prompted countries to be on high alert. Three government hospitals in India, Lok Nayak hospital, Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital and Baba Saheb Ambedkar hospital, have set up isolation rooms and specific beds of mpox patients. While no cases of the new strain of mpox have been detected, a traveller from a country undergoing the outbreak to come to India was diagnosed with the clade 2 strain, a lesser severe variant, that is not a part of the current emergency. Mpox manifests as skin rash turning into pus-filled blisters along with fever, malaise, headache, sore throat, or cough, and (in many cases) swollen lymph nodes. The virus from the same family as smallpox causes mpox. Vulnerable populations like

children, pregnant women and those with pre-existing conditions can have major effects of mpox. Pregnant women with mpox may experience severe symptoms such as high fever, respiratory distress, and dehydration, which can lead to

Stress is good for sperm. A new study says so

(News Agency) Stress has a great impact on our reproductive health. High levels of stress that are chronic can have adverse effects on our sexual health as well. However, the latest study reveals that there is better sperm movement after a stressful event, not during. The new study from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus sheds light on how stress affects reproduction and could help improve foetal development outcomes. Over the past 50 years, sperm quality and fertility have dropped, possibly due to rising environmental

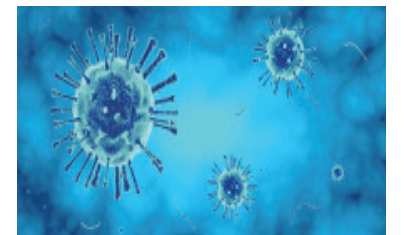
stress. But researchers still don't fully understand how these changes affect sperm. Published in Nature Communications, the study reveals that stress impacts sperm motility, or its ability to move through the female reproductive system to fertilise an egg. Changes in small particles called extracellular vesicles (EVs), which aid in sperm development, were noticed after the stress had passed. These changes occurred after the stressor had passed, not during the stress experience, the researchers noted. "Our re-

search shows that sperm motility significantly improves after stress, which might help boost birth rates after stressful periods, like during the Covid pandemic," explained Tracy Bale, the study's lead author. This effect was seen in both human and animal studies, suggesting a broader connection across species. Dr Nickole Moon, the study's first author, compared the process to a car running more efficiently with a little extra fuel. She noted that the stress-induced adjustments help sperm improve energy production and movement.

Study identifies antibody that can fight off all Covid-19 variants

(News Agency) Researchers have identified an antibody, 'SC27', that can fight off all known variants of the coronavirus responsible for Covid-19, including related viruses found in animals. An antibody is a protein made by your immune system to help fight off harmful invaders like viruses and bacteria. It recognises these invaders, attaches to them, and helps your body destroy or neutralise them, protecting you from getting sick. SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, uses its spike protein to infect human cells. Antibodies produced in response bind to the spike protein, preventing the virus from spreading. The team isolated the 'SC27' antibody, which they identified, from the

plasma of four patients who experienced breakthrough infections after



vaccination. Published in Cell Reports Medicine, the researchers from The University of Texas, Austin, highlighted that SC27 recognises the spike protein across all known Covid-19 variants, making it a promising tool for combating the virus's mutations. This discovery brings hope for developing stronger treatments and vaccines against Covid-19. This discovery brings hope for developing stronger treatments and vaccines against Covid-19.

'Monstrous bodybuilder' dies of heart attack: Why bodybuilders face higher risks

Illia 'Golem' Yefimchyk, a popular Belarusian bodybuilder, died at age 36 due to a heart attack. His death highlights the increasing occurrence of heart issues among younger fitness enthusiasts.



(News Agency) The Belarusian bodybuilder, though never participated in professional events, shared videos on social media of his workout routine, gaining large popularity, which earned him the title "The Mutant." He kept his 25-inch biceps by following a strict diet, consuming as much as 16,500 calories daily. This included over five pounds of steak and more than 100 pieces of sushi spread across seven meals. According to local media, he earlier claimed to bench press 273 kg, deadlift 318 kg, and squat 318 kg.

WHY BODYBUILDERS ARE AT

RISK OF HEART ATTACK?

This incident only highlights the persisting trend of how younger populations are suffering from heart attacks, or simply collapsing while running on the treadmill, in the recent years, more so after the Covid-19 pandemic. But the question still remains: how can a person in their 30s, suffer from a heart attack, while keeping a strict schedule on fitness and workout. "While weightlifting and gym workouts can be highly beneficial for cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and overall fitness but only when it is done correctly and

in moderation," said Dr Manjinder Singh Sandhu, Principal Director, Cardiology, Fortis Hospital. Dr Sandhu added that it's essential to balance these activities and "avoid excessive strain on the body." "For individuals engaged in extreme bodybuilding or weightlifting, it's important to monitor heart health and avoid the use of performance-enhancing drugs, which can increase the risk of heart problems," the expert said. Moderation, proper technique, and regular medical check-ups are key to ensuring that gym workouts contribute positively to long-term health rather than pose risks.

"THREADS OF SUSTAINABILITY"

Unites Role of Indian Textiles and Artisans in Global Fashion Ethics, and Tradition at Asia Society New York

Fempowerment Foundation and Gingerblu showcase sustainable Indian craftsmanship in collaboration with global designers, sparking dialogue on ethical fashion and women's empowerment.



(By Staff Reporter) New York, NY – The Fempowerment Foundation, a global organization committed to social impact, sustainability, and the empowerment of socio-economically disadvantaged populations in India, in collaboration with Asia Society New York and Gingerblu, presented "Threads Of Sustainability: Fashion, Ethics, Traditions, and the Environment" on September 5, 2024 at the Asia Society Museum. The evening included a panel discussion, classical Indian dance performance, and fashion show featuring dresses made in India by Marchesa, Anna Sui, Betsey Johnson, and sustain-

able designers Krishna Mehta, Iro Iro, and Gingerblu, with jewelry provided by Maalicious. The evening was hosted by Rachel Cooper, Director of Performing Arts and Culture as Diplomacy for the Asia Society and began with a thought-provoking panel discussion on sustainability, fashion, and the role of global artisans and fashion designers. The discussion centered on the ongoing tension between a fast-moving fashion industry and a slower, more ethical emphasis on the health and the environmental impacts of the global fashion industry.

The esteemed panelists

included Carmen Artigas, a climate-positive fashion consultant and biocultural researcher, CFDA member Sandy Dalal, a Creative Director and Brand Development Consultant in the luxury fashion space, and Ajay Shrivastav, Creative Director of Gingerblu and co-founder of the Fempowerment Foundation. "Sustainability is about sustaining human life. It is a challenge for families to live a life with dignity, for a woman to buy a pill when she is ill, clean water for her family, and access to basic menstrual care. True sustainability means empowering families to live with hope and respect." says Shrivastav. The fashion show began with a classical Indian dance performance by Jeeno Joseph and Suhana. The performance of Raag Maalkun is an ancient Indian song sung by Parvati, the divine feminine energy, to calm down Shiva, the divine masculine who was doing Taandav, a dance of destruction, in anger after his lover immolated herself because she didn't get approval from father for the union. Shrivastav says "We have enough destruction in the world. We need to invoke the Parvati to bring more peace and balance between masculine and feminine energies present in humanity". The fashion show was choreographed by Ajay Shrivastav and featured a range of apparel pieces by Gingerblu, made from hand woven, hand-printed textile from various techniques including Batik, Ajrak and block printing as well as tie dye using natural and Azo free dyes, along with piece dyed processes in natural Indigo dyes. The textiles used were natural fibers like



Kala Cotton, Hemp etc. The show also had gowns and cocktail dresses beaded by Indian Artisans from Marchesa, Anna Sui, and Betsey Johnson, as well as sustainable brands Gingerblu, Krishna Mehta, Bharat I, 23N 69E, and Iro Iro. The event, proudly brought to you by

Gingerblu and "The Women of India, For The World," included a one day exhibit of Indian textiles, beading, block prints, and samples made in nine different states of India. Gingerblu partners with Fempowerment to use skilled artisans to create textiles and apparel.



MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI TO RECEIVE THE PRESTIGIOUS IIFA UTSAVAM SPECIAL HONOUR

IIFA'S VISIONARY FOUNDER/DIRECTOR, ANDRE TIMMINS, ALONGSIDE MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI, WHO IS SET TO RECEIVE THE PRESTIGIOUS IIFA UTSAVAM SPECIAL HONOUR FOR 'OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN INDIAN CINEMA' AT IIFA UTSAVAM 2024.

The Superhero Megastar of Indian Cinema, Chiranjeevi to Be Honoured with IIFA Utsavam Special Honor for 'Outstanding Achievement in Indian Cinema' at the Multifaceted South Indian Cinematic Extravaganza At Etihad Arena, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi this September 2024.

Commenting on the occasion, Andre Timmins, Founder/Director, IIFA said, "We are incredibly proud to honour and pay tribute to Megastar Chiranjeevi at IIFA Utsavam with 'Outstanding Achievement in Indian Cinema' award for receiving the Padma Vibhushan for his immense contribution to Indian cinema. As one of the highest civilian awards in India, the Padma Vibhushan recognizes his exceptional and distinguished service in the field of cinema, reflecting his decades-long influence and impact. Renowned for showcasing the finest in South Indian cinema, IIFA Utsavam, is proud to honour Padma Vibhushan recipient,



Megastar Chiranjeevi's illustrious career and his achievements, celebrating the richness and diversity of South Indian cinema. Megastar Chiranjeevi, a luminary in South Indian cinema, has left an indelible mark with his versatile acting, charisma, and dedication. His extensive filmography and numerous accolades highlight his talent and commitment, and his significant impact on Indian cinema continues to resonate today. He is truly a formidable force, not only within the industry but also in his individual notable contributions, which have been remarkably profound. We are proud to have him join us at IIFA Utsavam's global tour on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi this September as we celebrate South Indian cinema." Megastar Chiranjeevi, shared his thoughts on being honoured with the 'Outstanding Achievement In Indian Cinema' at IIFA Utsavam, "I'm deeply humbled by this incredible recognition and

honour. Thank you, IIFA Utsavam, for bestowing upon me the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award. I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering love and support throughout my five-decade film journey, a true testament to the invaluable affection of my audience, fans, and industry. I've consistently tried to demonstrate my gratitude through my humanitarian endeavors. While entertaining to the best of my abilities on screen, I am equally dedicated off-screen to actively participating in impactful social humanitarian causes whenever the opportunity arises." International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards' Dynamic, Founder/Director - Andre Timmins congratulating the legendary 'Unstoppable' Telugu Star Nandamuri Balakrishna As He Marks 50 Years Of Cinematic Excellence In The Telugu Film Industry. 'Action King' Balakrishna will be attending the 24th edition of the IIFA Festival 2024 at Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, this September for a momentous celebration of cinematic excellence.



Pooja Hegde finds it 'incredible' to groove on 'fan favourites' 'Butta Bomma', 'Seeti Maar'

Actress Pooja Hegde, performed on popular tracks such as "Butta Bomma" and "Seeti Maar" at the South Indian International Movie Awards (SIIMA) in Dubai and said that she finds it an incredible experience performing to songs that are fan favourites. "It's always an incredible experience performing songs that are fan favourites. Their unwavering love is what makes it all so special," she said. The actress added: "The energy of the audience and the vibe of the city are truly unmatched. I had an absolute blast performing, and I can't wait to come back and do it all over again." Held at the grand Dubai World Trade Centre on September 14 and 15, SIIMA celebrates excellence in South Indian cinema. Pooja performed on track "Butta Bomma" from "Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo", "Arabic Kuthu" from Beast, and the high-energy "Seeti Maar" from "Duvvada Jagannadham". On the professional front, Pooja's next is the action thriller "Deva" alongside Shahid Kapoor, helmed by acclaimed director Rosshan Andrews. She will also be seen in "Suriya 44". Ahead of going to SIIMA, the actress had expressed excitement for her upcoming performance in

the 12th Edition of the event. Pooja said: "Our job is to entertain, and the award show enables us to do that the best. It's an incredible feeling to receive a SIIMA award, and kudos to all the deserving winners this year." "I have a great association with SIIMA, and the love I got during my last performance at the event was incredible. I am really excited for my performance this year as well," she added. Other than Pooja, others in the lineup included names such as Nidhi Agerwal, Shriya Saran, Avika Gor, Shanvi Srivastava, Neha Shetty, Faria Abdullah, and Ashok Galla, among many others. On the work front, Pooja, who was the second runner-up at the 2010 'I Am She-Miss Universe India' pageant, made her acting debut in 2012 with the Tamil film 'Mugamoodi'.



JANHVI KAPOOR TO TAKE THE STAGE WITH A SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCE AT IIFA AWARDS 2024

Renowned for her captivating performances and timeless elegance, Janhvi Kapoor is set to light up the grand IIFA Festival 2024 stage this September 28th at NEXA IIFA Awards co-presented by Sobha, in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. Her journey with IIFA has been nothing short of extraordinary, from her debut appearance, she has enchanted global audiences with her grace and talent, becoming a beloved star on IIFA's prestigious platform. Her deep connection with IIFA reflects her unwavering passion for cinema, solidifying her as an integral part of the IIFA family. As she takes the stage once again, prepare to witness her talent shine at the world's biggest celebration of Indian cinema. Janhvi Kapoor expressed her excitement, saying, "I am ab-

olutely thrilled to perform at the world's biggest celebration of Indian cinema and to take the stage for the first time at the grand IIFA Awards. There is something truly magical about the energy and excitement that IIFA brings. Since my very first appearance, I've felt a profound connection with audiences worldwide who celebrate Indian cinema with such fervour. Every moment, from IIFA's iconic green carpet to the stage, is unforgettable. I am eager to be part of IIFA's landmark global festival of cinematic excellence, achievement, and culture at the 24th Edition of the IIFA Awards on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi this September." IIFA FESTIVAL DATES |September 27th -29th, 2024, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi



World Premiere of **SUPERBOYS OF MALEGAON** at the Toronto International Film Festival

NEW YORK Director Reema Kagti with stars Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Kumar Singh, Shashank Arora, Manjiri Pupala, Anuj Duhan and Saqib Ayub alongside real-life inspiration Nasir Shaikh, writer Varun Grover, and producer Zoya Akhtar attended the World Premiere of SUPERBOYS OF MALEGAON on Friday, September 13th at the Toronto International Film Festival. The audience erupted with an electric response and a standing ovation while glowing reviews were published by Variety, Deadline and many other top outlets. Numerous celebrity guests attended the premiere including Ms. Marvel star Iman Vellani who was thrilled to meet the film team afterwards in a wonderful super hero meets Superboys moment! See photos from the premiere below.



Vernost Joins Forces with IIFA to Unveil 'The Club by IIFA' -A Revolutionary App Transforming Fan Engagement

Vernost, a leading B2B technology company providing AI-driven, next-generation solutions for loyalty, travel and payments, is delighted to announce its partnership with The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) on its recent membership app, "The Club by IIFA." This groundbreaking application is set to transform how fans connect with IIFA, offering an immersive platform for seamless and dynamic interaction. It goes beyond traditional social media and LIVE events, elevating fan engagement to an entirely new level. Using 'The Club by IIFA,' members will have first-hand experience of exclusive content, behind-the-scenes moments and real-time updates directly from the IIFA team.

This innovative application strengthens the bond between IIFA and its global audience, ensuring every fan feels like a vital part of the IIFA family, deepening their connection and engagement on a whole new level. For the past 10 years, Vernost

has focused on growth and innovation. With over 350 employees, it operates in more than 10 countries. Through its ClubClass Loyalty Suite, Vernost changes customer perceptions by creating appealing campaigns and offering unique rewards. This system makes it easy to deepen the ties of the fans with their inspirational figures. The suite is also compatible with "The Club by IIFA" whereby users are able to enjoy a very interactive experience and earn rare prizes and devices hence enhancing their level of engagement with the brand.

Pankaj Tripathi, founder and CEO of Vernost, eloquently stated, "We are delighted to announce our partnership with IIFA, a global platform that celebrates excellence in entertainment. As Vernost marks its 10-year journey, this collabo-



ration stands as a testament to our relentless pursuit of innovation and our commitment to using technology to create meaningful connections. Over the past decade, we've consistently pushed the boundaries of what's possible and now, through this partnership, we aim to bring our cutting-edge B2B digital innovation and loyalty platforms to the forefront. Our goal is to enhance audience engagement by offering seamless and immersive experiences that bridge the gap between the event and its fans worldwide. Together with IIFA, we are committed to making it the best show in the world, setting a new standard for Bollywood with technological differentiation that truly stands out." Mr Andre Timmins, Founder/Director,

IIFA, "We are thrilled to partner with Vernost to launch The Club by IIFA, a transformative leap in how fans connect with the magic of Indian cinema. This innovative app offers a truly immersive platform that redefines fan engagement, providing seamless and dynamic interaction like never before. With The Club by IIFA, fans will experience a deeper, more personal connection that goes far beyond traditional social media and live events. Together with Vernost, we are elevating the IIFA experience, bringing fans closer to the heart of Indian cinema and making them an integral part of this incredible journey."

In addition to its current features, "The Club by IIFA" is set to evolve. Future updates will offer more ways for members to connect and directly engage with their favorite celebrities. Fans will also be given means to display their talent and take part in IIFA activities and campaigns, keeping the app relevant and interesting.

28-year-old made 15 offers, went \$65,000 over asking price and still got rejected: The housing market is 'a slap in the face'

Kelcie Lesko and Tim Khalil remember the moment when they gave up on buying their first home. It was June 2023, when U.S. homebuyers were scrambling to beat out rising mortgage rates and snatch up what they could from a limited number of units on the market. Amid soaring house prices, many buyers made all-cash offers. Lesko and Khalil, a New Jersey couple, had lost out on about 15 bids on properties in Monmouth County at that point. "We were just getting blown out of the water," says Lesko, 28, who works in marketing. They had stretched their original budget from \$300,000 to \$380,000, and had been offering tens of thousands over list price to keep up with other bids.

Their last offer was a "beautiful" two-bedroom house with lots of space and a backyard, which they sensed "was going to be the one," says Khalil, 30, a police officer. They offered \$380,000 on the \$315,000 residence and shook the hand of the seller, who said it was between them and another offer.

When their offer was rejected, "it was like a slap in the face telling us, 'Wake up, this is just not for you,'" says Lesko. They decided to stop looking for a home. Instead, they continue to rent a two-bedroom apartment for just under \$3,000 per month.

"We both make good money. We both have good jobs. We've both done the right things to prepare us to become homeowners," says Lesko. "But the way things are with the real estate market right now, I don't think it's possible for us to own a home."

Lesko and Khalil are emblematic of many frustrated would-be buyers in their late 20s to early 40s who, despite doing everything "right," find themselves priced out of homeownership.

Most members of the millennial generation entered adulthood during the 2008 financial crisis and aftermath. They faced a bleak job market, stagnant wages and mounting student debt, which hindered their ability to save.

As they enter their peak homebuying years, they face a housing shortage that's driven the median U.S. home price to \$412,300. That's 40% higher than their parents paid in 1990, even after adjusting for inflation.

If they manage to stay ahead of rising costs of living and save enough for a bigger down payment, they're further squeezed by higher mortgage rates, which have more than doubled since 2022 and increased monthly payments.

And while buyers must spend more, they often have to lower expectations for what they'll get: They're finding that available homes are smaller, farther away or in need of costly repairs.

In conversations with CNBC Make It, millennial buyers describe the trade-offs they face and their feelings of devastation, disappointment and anger that the goalposts keep moving and they can't seem to win.

First-time homebuyers face a very different real estate market than their parents

omes have always been a major expense for first-time buyers, including boomers and Gen Xers. What's changed is that houses — along with college tuition, rent and health-care costs — have become significantly more expensive, even when adjusted for inflation.

Wages aren't rising fast enough to keep up: Home prices have grown twice as much as incomes since 1985.

In recent years, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate more than doubled from historic lows of around 3% in 2020 to a high of 7.6% in October 2023. The average has since come down slightly to 6.2%

"When you look at mortgage costs relative to how much a typical family earns, it's untenable — there's not really any way for a middle-class family to afford a home right now if they're a first-time homebuyer," says Daryl Fairweather, senior economist at Redfin.

The median house price in the U.S. is now 5.8 times more than the median annual income of \$80,000. In 1990, homes cost just two times as much as the median income.

That means mortgage payments are generally bigger, and it takes much longer for millennials to save for a down payment. Depending on location, it now costs \$74,000 to \$140,000 to put down 20% on a typical U.S. house, not including closing and other costs.

When communications professional Kelly Diehr, 31, and her husband started looking for a Denver-area home in January 2024, they figured a budget of \$600,000 would go a long way. That was, after

all, the median price for a house in the area at the time.

But the upfront costs of owning are much higher compared with those faced by homebuyers her age in the late 1990s, like her parents' generation, she says, and the money doesn't go as far.

"You go into the market, and you realize you have to give up on the ideal home that you thought you were gonna get, because six figures nowadays is nothing to buy a home," says Diehr.

For \$600,000, many of the available homes were over 20 years old, located in less-desirable areas and in need of serious renovations, such as new flooring, kitchens and bathrooms.

When she was growing up, Diehr's immigrant mother from Brazil "hammered" at the idea of the American Dream — a pillar of which is homeownership, long viewed as a source of stability and independence.

"We start looking and think, 'OK, we're making more than our parents, we should be able to get a better home than them right now,'" says Diehr. "For \$600,000, you'd think we'd be getting a turn-key home: three bedrooms, all-wood floors, two bathrooms and a decent backyard. And that is absolutely not the case." To better compete with other bids, the couple upped their budget by dipping into stock investments. They ended up buying a newly constructed three-bedroom home for \$789,000 in April 2024. They were able to negotiate \$47,000 in seller credits, which they used to buy down their mortgage interest rate to a more manageable 4.25%.

Diehr feels grateful they were able to make it work, but the trade-off was withdrawing from their retirement savings and spending about \$200,000 more than they had originally budgeted. For many young Americans, big cities like Los Angeles and New York

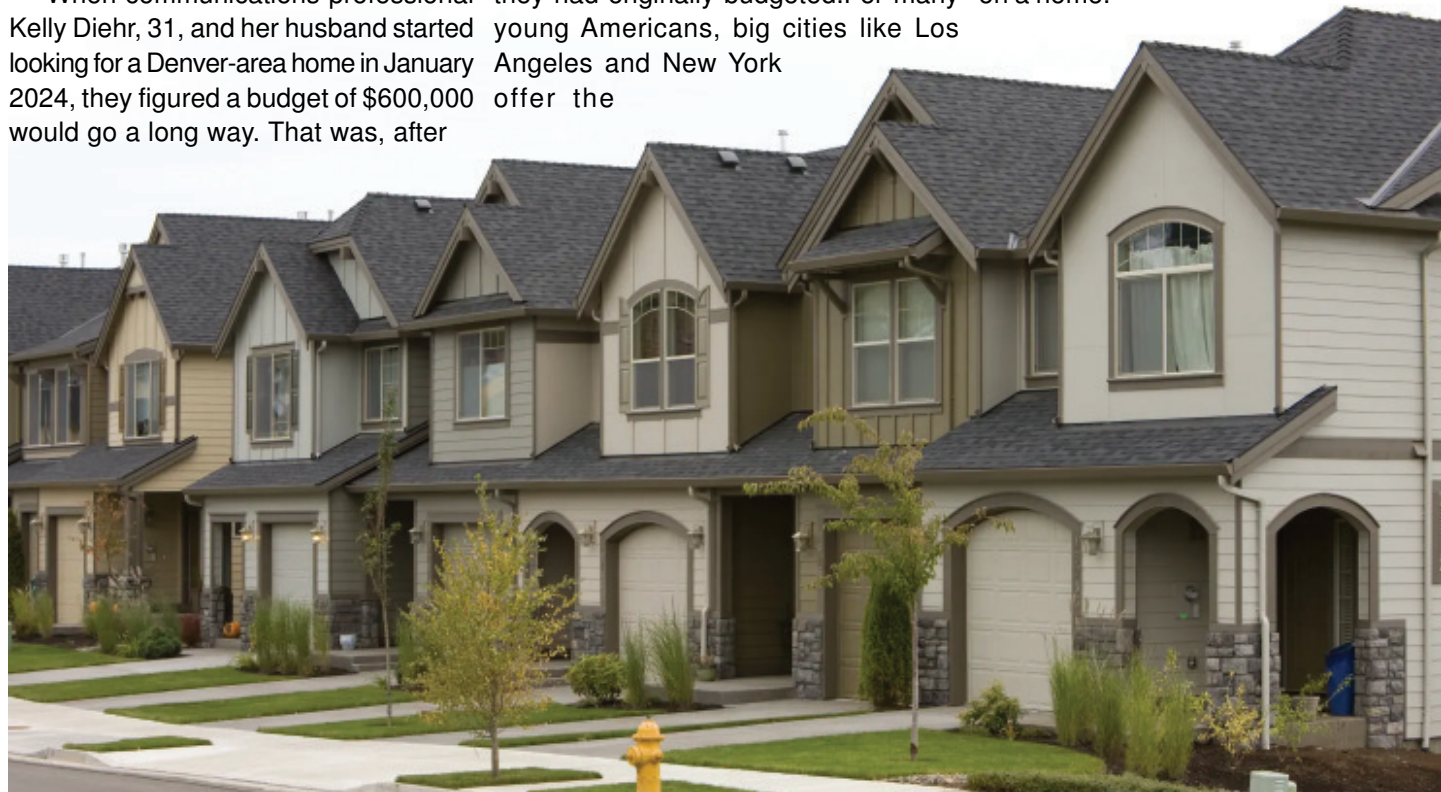
offer the

appeal of more job options, better pay, and a chance to meet different people. The rub? Even entry-level homes there can seem reserved for the wealthy.

When Jonathan Ochart, 32, moved from San Antonio to LA in March 2023, he thought he might be able to buy a small condo for \$450,000. "One bedroom, 600 to 700 square feet, nothing fancy," he says. The founder and CEO of a marketing and public relations company, Ochart was already a homeowner, having purchased a detached, two-bedroom house in San Antonio for roughly \$275,000 in 2021. At that time, he was able to secure a 30-year fixed mortgage rate of 2.86% — a far cry from the nearly 8% banks charged in 2023.

The only reason I was able to accomplish that was the historically low mortgage rates," says Ochart, who now earns a net profit of about \$100 per month renting out the home. In LA, the condo listings in Ochart's price range were far from his preferred neighborhoods and usually needed renovations, or they came with high homeowners association fees as part of a special assessment for repairs. Newer places in his budget turned out to be studio apartments that were closer to 350 square feet, without much closet space.

Ochart could have sold his San Antonio property to increase his budget. But he preferred to keep the home as a fallback option in case he ever had to return to Texas, especially since it was "locked in at a monthly price" that he can afford. In early 2024, Ochart gave up on buying a condo in LA, where monthly mortgage costs would have been around \$3,500 to \$4,000. Instead, he found a rental he likes for about \$2,100 per month, roughly half of what he would have spent on a home.





Which countries still use pagers and why?

Thousands of pagers used by members of the Lebanon-based terrorist group Hezbollah exploded on September 17, killing nine people and injuring nearly 3,000. Pagers are obsolete devices but were used by Hezbollah to evade detection by Israeli agencies. However, several countries across the world still use pagers. Here's why.

Nine people were killed after pagers used by the Lebanon-based terror group, Hezbollah, exploded on September 17. The explosion wounded around 3,000 others. Experts say the supply chain was intruded into to rig the devices with explosives and explosions were triggered remotely. Pagers were used by Hezbollah to bypass the Israeli intelligence agencies that were allegedly snooping on its fighters through their cellphones.

Though considered an obsolete communication device, pagers are still used for several purposes across the world.

WHAT ARE PAGERS?

Pagers are small and portable communication devices which receive and display messages. They came prior to the spread of smartphones across the world. They function on radio frequencies, making them the more efficient choice in areas with poor networks. They also have a long battery life.

WHEN PAGERS ENTERED INDIA RIDING ON LIBERALISATION

India had a short era of pagers. At the stroke of the hour of economic liberalisation, in 1991, the pager found its way to the Indian market. In the West, it was used primarily by people working in courier services. But in India, it was a marker of wealth. The pager was a momentary link as India transitioned from the land phone to the cellphone. Mobile phones came close on the heels of pagers and made the one-way communication device obsolete.

However, there are several countries where pagers are still being used.

WHERE PAGERS ARE STILL BEING USED

1. Japan: Pocket bells or pagers have been used in Japan in hospitals and areas with poor cell reception. In an emer-

gency, they are considered more reliable than smartphones.

It has also been used in various industrial settings, especially in manufacturing and construction services.

2. New Zealand: Pagers have been used for decades and are still used by the nursing staff at the bedside and medical experts who are responsible for providing advice, according to the National Library of Medicine.

3. United States: Pagers have been mainstream in the US. From Gilmore Girls to FRIENDS and many other popular shows from the 90s show the use of pagers by their main characters.

Now, pagers are used in hospitals. They are also used in hospitality services to improve customer experience, sometimes even informing guests when their table is notified without facing an overcrowded waiting area, reports QSR Magazine.

They are also used by the elderly to reduce accidents and to be tracked by their caregivers in assisted living, according to Healthcare Pro. Fire services also use pagers for sending an immediate alert, and they ensure all personnel reach quickly, according to Firehouse.

4. Germany: Pagers are used in logistics companies to ensure quick communication where mobile signals are weak, according to German media outlet Deutsche Welle.

5. Brazil: In Brazil, pagers are used by first responders. They prefer its use to its connectivity and network in all areas.

Privacy, simplicity and urgency are all provided by pagers and, therefore, they have not completely become a thing of history. "As simple as pagers are, they rarely suffer from congestion as cellphone networks. Recent events have shown that pagers work even in times of natural di-

sasters, as opposed to cellphones that ring busy, dead air or all circuits are busy, and pagers have a unique facility in Group Calling where large numbers of pagers can be paged simultaneously," reads the website of Pagers Direct, which sells pagers. It also mentions how pagers do not come with the risk of "robo calls" or AI-generated calls, which now bothers many cellphone users. Although recent research

across the world has questioned its use and discussed its limitations, this does not stop many crucial sectors from using it. While pagers have been used to wound and kill several people in Lebanon, they have also been used to save lives of hundreds and thousands of people across the world. From Germany to the US, pagers, which are considered obsolete, are being used for efficiency.



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How Kejriwal is using Atishi to repackage AAP before polls

AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal stepped down as the chief minister of Delhi and named Atishi as his successor. The move, months ahead of the Assembly polls, is to repackage the AAP by getting a taint-free person as its face even as the hands pulling the strings remain the same.



assist, had the responsibility for the bulk of the departments. She took charge of several important departments, including finance and education, after the duo were jailed.

However, even Atishi knows who the real power rests with. She made that clear in her first remarks as the Delhi CM on Tuesday.

"Delhi has only one Chief Minister and that is Arvind Kejriwal... I will work for the next few months towards the goal of bringing back Kejriwal as Delhi Chief Minister," she said. Though the CM changes, it is clear with whom the actual power remains. The content and the core of the party remains the same, it's just that Atishi will be on the cover of a repackaged AAP, the packs of which will be clean to the eyes.

Reporters visiting the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) office in Delhi in 2015 would find Atishi sitting with young MIT interns and IIT graduates poring over their laptops. An adviser to Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia then, Atishi is said to have added the know-hows to all the education initiatives of the Delhi government.

On Tuesday, Atishi was named the successor to Arvind Kejriwal, who stepped down as the chief minister of Delhi. From an adviser in 2015 to an MLA in 2020 and chief minister in 2024, Atishi's rise has been phenomenal. "She is the most-trusted of the top two AAP leaders, Kejriwal and Sisodia, and has proved herself all the way," a senior journalist who has covered the Aam Aadmi Party since 2013 told India Today Digital.

It isn't just the trust that Kejriwal reposes in her or her mettle, it is a combination of factors that has propelled Atishi to the CM's chair at this critical juncture for the AAP.

Kejriwal and Sisodia are just out of jail and over half of his Cabinet ministers were behind bars on corruption charges. The clean packaging of the AAP, a party that rose from an anti-corruption movement, has been tainted over the last few years.

That is why Kejriwal is trying to repackage the Aam Aadmi Party with a fresh face in the CM's chair.

And Atishi ticks all the right boxes. A woman, well-educated, urban face, handled portfolios, and is free from any corruption charge.

"The choice of Atishi as the chief minister could turn the election in AAP's favour. She doesn't have any corruption taint and has always been far from con-

troversy. Kejriwal as the CM would have faced questions from the people on liquorgate," said the journalist.

Delhi is slated to hold an Assembly election by February 2025. Kejriwal has sought that the election be advanced to November and held alongside the Maharashtra and Jharkhand polls.

Two facts about AAP that are obvious but need to be stated. There is no infighting in AAP, and Kejriwal's decisions aren't questioned by partymen.

AAP leaders made it clear on Tuesday that Kejriwal would return as the Chief Minister.

For now, the need to have Atishi in the CM's chair was to disassociate the AAP government from the excise policy case.

While Atishi can highlight the Delhi government's achievements during campaigning, Kejriwal can tackle the political onslaught. It will also be difficult for the BJP to attack Atishi, who has a clean image.

Kejriwal has made a well-calculated move.

"If AAP loses the election, he won't be blamed. If the party wins, he will return as the CM. There will be no one who will stand in his way," said the journalist who has seen the dynamics of the party for over a decade now.

It was Kejriwal who proposed her name as the CM, and it was accepted by the AAP legislators. Atishi isn't a mass leader and replacing her after the election won't be difficult.

What is actually different now is that, after Congress's Sheila Dikshit, Atishi is the chief minister with portfolios.

Since 2013, Arvind Kejriwal, although the chief minister, didn't handle a single portfolio. Sisodia, whom Atishi used to

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