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Bobby Deol's Villain Era Is Just Getting Started



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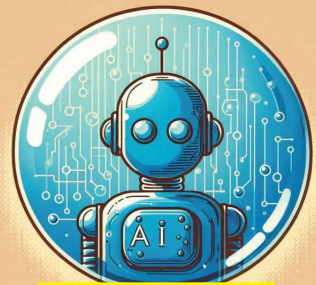
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Biggest Takeaway From Quad Summit Is That It's Here To Stay

British-Indian doc's film on pharma industry premieres in UK

'First! Do No Pharm', which is packed with testimonies from leading medical and sector experts from around the world, seeks to expose the unscrupulous behaviour of the pharma industry and medical research fraud perpetuating a cycle of corruption worldwide

British-Indian cardiologist and healthy lifestyle campaigner Aseem Malhotra premiered a new documentary in London's Leicester Square to throw the spotlight on the global pharmaceutical industry's profit-focused approach towards health care. 'First! Do No Pharm', which is packed with testimonies from leading medical and sector experts from around the world, seeks to expose the unscrupulous behaviour of the pharma industry and medical research fraud perpetuating a cycle of corruption worldwide.



The premiere on Monday evening was introduced by British-Indian filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, who praised Malhotra for his commitment to his Hippocratic Oath, the ethics pledge historically taken by physicians. Advertisement "Aseem is a very old friend of mine and I have watched his brave and often perilous journey confronting corruption and malpractice," said Chadha. "He does this in defence of the Hippocratic Oath, which he took in defence of my health and of millions like me who constantly are looking for the truth about health care. He will not stop until we all understand his vital mission for our benefit," she said. Having previously cam-

aigned against the wholesale statin usage and the dangers of high sugar consumption, Malhotra wanted to explore the state of the broader health system and the feared corruption within that perpetuates certain myths around heart disease. "This film is the most incendiary work I have ever completed. It is going to make a lot of profit-hungry people in the pharmaceutical industry unhappy. But it is going to save lives and that is all that matters," said Malhotra. "We have a pandemic of misinformed doctors and misinformed and unwittingly harmed patients. It is time to put an end to this once and for all," he said. The film, directed by docu-

mentary filmmaker Donal O'Neill, uses a personal storytelling style with interviews of key experts around the world, including Indian American Professor Jay Bhattacharya and Indian environmental activist Vandana Shiva. "We need to apply quite a big dose of scepticism to the medical literature. Medical journals will publish a pharmaceutical trial and then will be paid quite large sums for providing the pharmaceutical company with reprints of that article. And it's very hard for an editor to remove that conflict when making an editorial decision," said Dr Fiona Godlee, former editor-in-chief of the 'British Medical Journal' (BMJ), who is among

those interviewed in the film. Richard Thompson, former president of the Royal College of Physicians, calls for a public inquiry into the "murky practices of big pharma" so that doctors can know that when they prescribe a drug, they are truly putting their patients first and not the financial interests of the drug companies and their shareholders. "For too long doctors have had to make clinical decisions based on non-transparent data on the efficacy and side-effects of drugs that are curated by the drug industry, whose basic motive is to put profits before patients. Therefore, invariably the safety and benefits of many important drugs, such as statins, are exaggerated, so that avoidable illness, and even deaths, occur from the side-effects that have often been ignored or denied by the industry," he said. After some of the very grim prognosis, the film concludes with a visit to Mount Abu in Rajasthan where cardiologist Dr Satish Gupta's lifestyle modification methods to reverse heart damage from blocked arteries and the many benefits of yoga are explored. The film is now available online and will have exclusive screenings across the US and India in the coming months.

On it.

Ending racial injustice requires all of us to work together and take real action.

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Singapore's Indian-origin ex-minister pleads guilty in graft case

Iswaran was arrested in July last year and was accused of taking kickbacks worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from property tycoon Ong Beng Seng

Singapore's former Transport Minister S Iswaran has pleaded guilty to receiving gifts while in office, local media reported, as proceedings began on Tuesday in a rare graft trial involving a state official in this Asian financial hub. The case has gripped the wealthy city-state which prides itself on having a well-paid and efficient bureaucracy as well as strong governance. Iswaran, who joined the cabinet in 2006, is the first Singaporean minister to be tried in court. The 62-year-old was arrested in July last year and was accused of taking kickbacks worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from property tycoon Ong Beng Seng, partly to advance Ong's business interests. Ong has not been charged with any offence. Iswaran had previously rejected the allegations when he resigned from the cabinet. In court, he had pleaded guilty to the charges of obstructing justice and of a public servant accepting anything of value without payment, or



with inadequate payment, from a person with whom he is involved in an official capacity, Channel News Asia (CNA) reported, instead of the charges that include

corruption. Prosecutors also reduced the charges facing Iswaran to five from 35, CNA said. The remaining 30 charges will be taken into consideration for sentencing,

it added. The charge of accepting gifts carries a jail term of up to two years and a fine. For obstructing justice, Iswaran can be sentenced to jail of up to 7 years and a fine. The last corruption case involving a Singaporean minister was in 1986, when the national development minister was investigated for allegedly accepting bribes. The minister died before he could be charged in court.

According to charge sheets in January, the alleged favours Iswaran received included tickets to English Premier League soccer matches, musicals, a flight on Ong's private plane and tickets to the Singapore Formula 1 Grand Prix. Iswaran was advisor to the Grand Prix's steering committee, while Ong owns the rights to the race. Singapore was among the world's top 5 least corrupt countries last year, according to Transparency International's corruption perception index.

Attorney Pleads Guilty to Obtaining Fraudulent Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Money Laundering

ATLANTA - Sanjay Patel, an attorney who formerly operated a Georgia-based real estate law firm, has pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining nearly \$300,000 in Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to using his attorney escrow account to launder more than \$250,000 from unrelated

investor fraud schemes. This office will remain steadfast in coordinating with our federal law enforcement partners to identify and hold accountable those who defrauded the government's COVID relief programs, said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. It is especially aggravating that Patel, an attorney, not only used his

professional standing to commit money laundering, but he also defrauded the American taxpayer out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service will continue to ensure fraudsters who sought to enrich themselves with funds from pandemic-assis-

tance programs are held accountable, said Tommy D. Coke, Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division. This case serves as a reminder to individuals that engage in unlawful activity that law enforcement will spare no resource to bring you to justice for your criminal activity.

Police investigating anti-Modi graffiti attack on New York temple as hate crime

Police in New York are investigating the vandalism of a major Hindu temple as a possible hate crime. A sign board and driveway of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) temple in Melville, Suffolk County, was defaced with spray paint, the police said. The vandals wrote "anti-Hindu" messages that also targeted Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, the police said. The incident took place between 7pm (local time) on Sunday and 6.30am on Monday, they added. The Suffolk police said its Hate Crimes Unit was investigating the graffiti, which had threatening and derogatory anti-Hindu messages. The graffiti was painted on the sign board and driveway of the temple, which was inaugurated in 2016. The incident comes just days ahead of Mr Modi's scheduled visit to Long Island on 22 September, where he will address a community event at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. The Indian consulate on Monday condemned the incident and urged the US authorities to

take action against "the perpetrators of this heinous act". BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, the organisation that runs the temple, held a prayer meeting at the site of the vandalism with US members of Congress Nick LaLota, Tom Suozzi, and senator Mario Mattera in attendance. "There is too much hate," Mr Suozzi wrote on X following the prayer meeting. "Such acts of vandalism, bigotry, and hate are happening far too often because of inflammatory rhetoric by national leaders, extremism, and lack of accountability," the Democrat said. "Acts like these are un-American and contradict the core values of our nation. Police in New York are investigating the vandalism of a major Hindu temple as a possible hate crime. A sign board and driveway of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) temple in Melville, Suffolk County, was defaced with spray paint, the police said. The vandals wrote "anti-Hindu" messages that also targeted Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, the police said.



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Friday
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, 11:00 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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Mayor of only Muslim-majority city in US endorses Donald Trump for President

As the 2024 US presidential election nears, Hamtramck, Michigan's mayor Amer Ghalib has endorsed Republican Donald Trump, citing Trump's principles and desire for peace.

As the 2024 US presidential election approaches, endorsements for both Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump are intensifying. In the latest development, the only US city with a Muslim-majority city council and population, Hamtramck in Michigan, has seen its mayor endorse Republican Trump for the upcoming November 5 election. Michigan, a key swing state, is expected to play a decisive role in the election. Recent polls show a close race between Trump and Harris, with The New York Times reporting a slight lead for Harris at 50% to Trump's 47%. Amer Ghalib, Hamtramck's mayor, took to Facebook to announce his endorsement of Trump, calling him a "man of principles". "Let me be clear, so our expectations are realistic. President Trump and I may not agree on everything, but I know he is a man of principles. Though it's looking good, he may or may not win the election and be the 47th President of the United States, but I believe he is the right choice for this critical time," Ghalib wrote. "I'll not regret my decision no matter what the outcome would be, and I'm ready to face the consequences. For this, and for many other

reasons, I announce my support and endorsement for the former, and hopefully, the next President of the United States, Donald Trump. Now, let the Caravan begin its journey. This is just the starting point," he added. Shortly after, Trump reposted Ghalib's endorsement on his Truth Social account. Trump told Breitbart News that he was "very impressed" with Ghalib's move. "He was a big fan of the Trump administration because he saw no wars -- outside of defeating ISIS, which I inherited. There were no wars. There was

no October 7. There was no Russian attack on Ukraine. He told me he saw a world at peace. Now, we have a world heading toward World War 3, and I can stop that. I'm the only one who can stop that," Donald Trump told Breitbart News. Hamtramck, a city of around 28,000 residents, gained national attention in 2021 when it became the first US city to elect a Muslim-majority city council and a Muslim mayor.

Ghalib, who emigrated from Yemen at the age of 17, recently met

Trump at a town hall in Flint, Michigan, where they discussed issues affecting Arab and Muslim Americans. Ghalib said Trump requested his endorsement during their conversation, according to The Detroit News. Ghalib's endorsement also reflects dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party among some Arab and Muslim Americans. A year into Israel's ongoing war in Gaza, Ghalib and his community have criticised the Biden administration's air strikes on Yemen, citing frustration over US foreign policy.

Canada cuts study permits for international students

Canada has announced to reduce study permits for international students, a move that is likely to affect many Indian nationals. In a post on X late Wednesday night, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "We're granting 35 per cent fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number is going down by another 10 per cent." Immigration is an advantage for our economy but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down," he said. The move comes



as the Canadian government is looking to reduce the number of temporary residents. Canada is one of the most sought-after destinations for Indian students. Trudeau's announcement is likely to impact many Indian students who wish to study in Canada. According to the website of the High Commission of India in Ottawa, education is a key area of mutual interest between India and Canada. India is the largest source country of foreign students with an estimated 4,27,000 Indian students studying in Canada.



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: Kantrodi Ta Viramgam, 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.

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If you have any information concerning this person, please contact the FBI's Toll-Free tipline 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.

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John J. Chin Appointed Interim Dean of the Asian American/Asian Research Institute, Which Reports to Queens College



Flushing, NY, September 18, 2024—John J. Chin has been appointed interim dean of the Asian American/Asian Research Institute (AAARI). AAARI is a CUNY-wide institute reporting to Queens College whose mission is to facilitate

and disseminate research, scholarship, and educational materials on issues that are relevant to Asia, Asian America, and other Asian diasporas, including timely concerns pertaining to New York's diverse communities of Asian descent. It is located at 25 West 43rd Street in Manhattan. As interim dean, Chin will supervise the day-to-day functioning of the institute while providing the vision and guidance to ensure its visibility, viability, and leadership in Asian American/Asian studies, scholarship, advocacy, and outreach.

He will report to Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Patricia Price. "AAARI is an intellectual hub that serves as a bridge between CUNY and Asian American/Asian communities in New York City and beyond," said Queens College President Frank H. Wu. "As we seek permanent leadership for the institute, John will be an exemplary steward of its mission, particularly as it relates to immigrant-led community advocacy and public policy affecting immigrant worker health." Chin, who resides in

Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, comes to Queens College from Hunter College, where he was a professor and department chair in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning. Diana Pan, an associate professor of sociology at Brooklyn College who served as interim executive director, has returned to her position there. A search for the permanent dean will be conducted over the coming year. "We are thrilled that John Chin has assumed the role of interim dean of AAARI," said Price. "He brings a welcome

combination of academic heft and community-focused leadership experience, and we're most fortunate to have him at the helm of this important CUNY-wide Institute. "Chin's research focuses on access to social and health services for under-served urban communities, particularly Asian immigrant communities. His National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research has examined the role of Asian immigrant-led community institutions in delivering HIV prevention and stigma-reduction messages to their constituents.

REP. ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO JOINS INDIA CAUCUS

Congressman Anthony D'Esposito (NY 04) has officially joined the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, following in the footsteps of Congressman Tom Suozzi (NY 03), who joined two months prior. This marks another milestone for the India Caucus Membership Drive Committee, which has been actively working to expand the Caucus' membership. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, a bipartisan group, is focused on strengthening US-India relations through cooperation in bilateral trade, defense, and cultural exchanges. D'Esposito decided to join the Caucus after

meeting with the Membership Drive Committee, which included Chairman Varinder Bhalla and committee members Dr. Dattatreya Nori, Gunjan Rastogi, Gobind Munjal, Hussain Baqueri, and Sudhir Vaishnav. The committee also includes Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Ratna Bhalla, Rajeev Bhambri, Sunil Mehra, and Dev Viswanath. During the meeting, the Congressman was briefed on the rapidly expanding strategic and economic ties between the two nations. Bilateral trade, which stood at \$4 billion in 1993 when the Caucus was founded, has since surged to \$200 billion in 2023.



Voter Registration Drive at Minnesota State Capitol with League of Women Voters

High school student volunteers joined the League of Women Voters of Edina (LWVE) and community workers to educate and register voters at the Annual IndiaFest Festival at the Minnesota State Capitol grounds in St. Paul. Edina High School senior Anoushka Jha and her sister Aditi Jha, a sophomore, regularly participate in voter registration drives at naturalization ceremonies and community events. "I have been volunteering for a while, and am excited to vote when I'm 18," said Anoushka. "While the nation's focus is on the presidential election, I believe that local elections are equally important." Anoushka and Aditi credit their parents Drs. Vaishali and Gautam Jha, preeminent physicians and distinguished members of the community for their



support. "We talk about politics frequently and often have spirited discussions about current issues," said Aditi, who wants to be a lawyer and is very interested in public policy. She continued, "My parents support my passion for policy and regularly take time off from their busy schedule to support me." "We are happy to join local student-leaders in enlisting citizens to register and vote," said Gopal Khanna,

former National Vice President of the Association of Indians in America (AIA) who is currently chairing AIA's national initiative on civic responsibility and community service. "Democracy is strong when people are engaged. It's a privilege and responsibility of every citizen to participate in the electoral process of the country." He continued, "I am heartened to see high schoolers taking the lead to work with

LWVE and volunteering at the voter registration booth. I am inspired by their sense of duty and civic responsibility." Anoushka wants to pursue a career in medicine but is equally interested in politics and public policy. "I am concerned about the future of healthcare," she said. "It constitutes about 17% of GDP and will be about 25% of the nation's economy by the time I enter the practice. It's an unsustainable model.

My generation of future physicians need to think about policy as well, and be part of defining the future of medicine." Her sister chimed in, "As nextGen Americans and children of immigrants we need to continue that legacy of service to our country."

1 dead as rain paralyses Mumbai, schools shut today, more showers expected

Vehicular and rail traffic was back on track in Mumbai on Thursday morning after heavy rainfall battered the city and its neighbouring areas yesterday, which led to waterlogging in several areas, halting of local train services and diversion of 14 flights. Though the situation improved after the rain intensity reduced late in the night, more showers are expected till October 1. Floodwaters receded in most of the affected areas and flight operations at Mumbai airport resumed. However, schools and colleges are closed on Thursday as the weather office issued an orange alert for Mumbai after a red alert was in place for the city till 8:30 am today. Several



areas of the city and its suburbs received over 100 mm of rainfall in over five hours on Wednesday evening, while a woman drowned in an overflowing drain due to heavy rain in suburban Andheri.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON MUMBAI RAIN:

Eastern suburbs recorded the highest average rainfall of 169.85 mm between 8 am to 10 pm, followed by 169.85 mm of rain in the eastern suburbs and 104.17 mm in the western suburbs. Floodwaters receded in most of the affected areas and

flight operations at Mumbai airport resumed. However, schools and colleges are closed on Thursday as the weather office issued an orange alert for Mumbai after a red alert was in place for the city till 8:30 am today. Several areas of the city and its suburbs received over 100 mm of rainfall in over five hours on Wednesday evening, while a woman drowned in an overflowing drain due to heavy rain in suburban Andheri. **LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON MUMBAI RAIN:**

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mm in the western suburbs. Mankhurd area in the eastern suburbs received the highest 276 mm of rainfall followed by 275 mm in Bhandup and 274 mm in Powai area. Sewri Koliwada and Wadala area in the island city witnessed the highest rainfall measuring over 145 mm while the highest rainfall recorded in the western suburbs was 190 mm. The Central Railway said waterlogging was reported between Vidyavihar and Mulund on up and down slow lines, and on down lines between Bhandup and Nahur, resulting in trains travelling at 30 kmph, and leaving hundreds of commuters inconvenienced.

Delhi BJP says Arvind Kejriwal's 'fake' Janta Adalat cannot save his power



The Delhi BJP youth wing on Sunday staged a protest against the AAP government at Connaught Place and claimed that Kejriwal's "fake Janta Adalat can no longer save his power".

The protest was led by Delhi BJP youth wing president Sagar Tyagi. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, MLA Vijender Gupta, and others were also present, an official statement said.

Virendra Sachdeva said that the people of Delhi are fed up with the corruption in the Kejriwal government and demand answers. Kejriwal should not think resigning will resolve everything, he will have to answer for ten years of corrupt misgovernance, Sachdeva added. Kejriwal should understand that elections will be

held in January-February 2025, and the people of Delhi will entrust the BJP and their services, the statement read. After that, the BJP will investigate every act of corruption by the Kejriwal government, it added. MLA Vijender Gupta said, "The AAP is a shop of lies, and the people of Delhi want accountability for the last 10 years, which have set the city back by 50 years".

Gupta declared that the people of Delhi have resolved to rid the city of the AAP government, and Kejriwal's fake 'Janta Adalat' can no longer save his power. AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal, after resigning from Delhi chief minister's post last week, held a 'Janta Ki Adalat' at Jantar Mantar earlier in the day. "The upcoming Delhi Assembly polls are 'agni pariksha' for me. Don't vote for me if you think I am dishonest," Kejriwal said at 'Janta ki Adalat'. South Delhi MP Bidhuri said, "While AAP is celebrating bail from the Supreme Court, the reality is that the court found the charges against Kejriwal valid, and he is out only on bail." Bidhuri further claimed that when the liquor scam sur-

posed, I had told Kejriwal that his policy would fail because it was motivated by corrupt intentions, but when the CBI investigation began, he reversed his decision. Today, even though the Supreme Court has granted bail to Kejriwal, he has

not been proven innocent, he added.

Earlier in the day, the BJP staged a protest against Kejriwal at Rajghat and claimed that the AAP-led Delhi government had "failed" to fulfil none of the promises mentioned in its election manifesto.

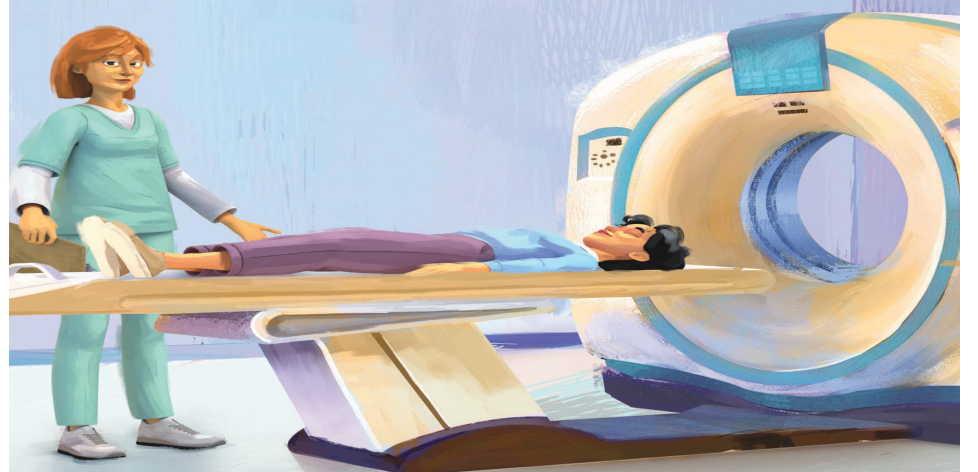
Delhi shop found serving pomegranate juice mixed with chemicals

Two people were detained on Tuesday for allegedly selling pomegranate juice mixed with chemicals in Delhi's Rajinder Nagar area. After receiving information about a chemical being mixed in the juice sold at the shop, police arrived at the spot and found a substance that has been sent for testing.

When confronted, two workers at the shop, identified as Ayub Khan and Rahul, claimed that the owner of the shop, Shoaib, had instructed them to mix the chemical in the juice.



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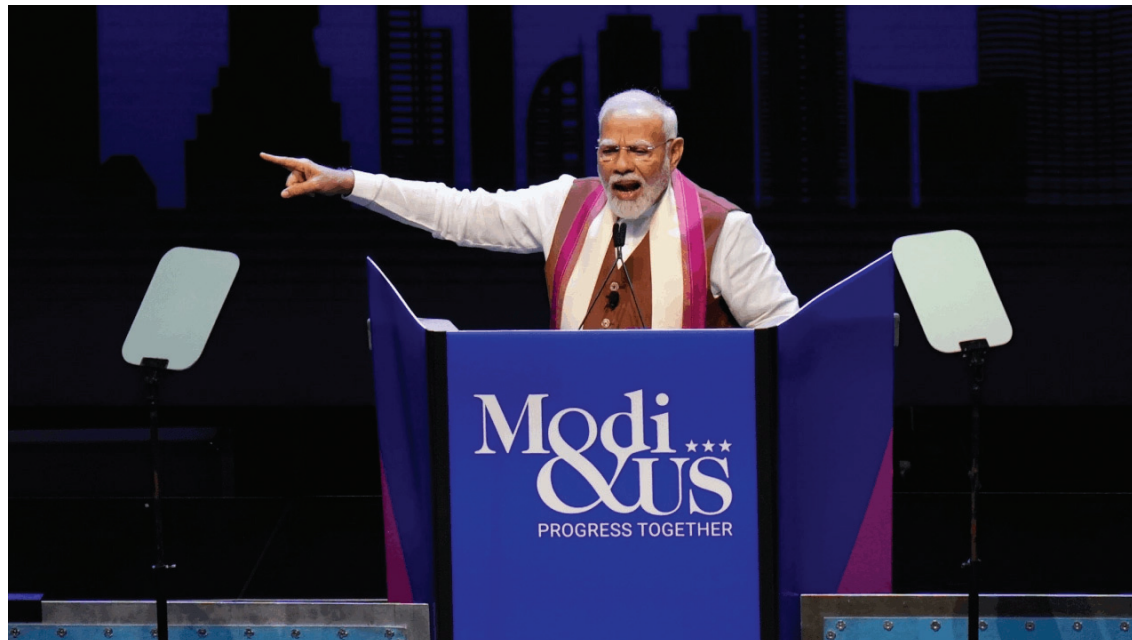
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PM Modi to Indians in US: You are India's strongest brand ambassadors

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the Indian community living in the US and said they were 'Rashtradoots' or the brand ambassadors of India during his address in New York.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday (local time) praised the contributions of the Indian community living in the US and called them 'Rashtradoots' or brand ambassadors of India.

He made the remarks while addressing the members of Indian-Americans at the 'Modi and US' event at the Nassau Coliseum in Long Island, New York, as part of his three-day visit to the country. "I have always understood the capabilities of the Indian community. I understood it even when I held no official position. For me, all of you have been strong brand ambassadors of India. This is why I call you 'Rashtradoots', he told the crowd of around 13,000 people at the venue. "We belong to a country where there are dozens of languages and dialogues, all faiths



and religions of the world, and yet we are moving forward united," he added. PM Modi also noted the magnitude of the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this

year, which his party won for a historic third consecutive time. PM Modi's participation in the New York event marked the second day of this three-day visit

to the US which started on September 21 (Saturday). On Saturday, PM Modi arrived in US President Joe Biden's home town in Wilmington, Delaware for the

Quad summit and the two leaders held bilateral talks. PM Modi and Biden spoke about ways to further improve India-US ties and exchanged views on regional and global issues.

PM Modi and Biden attended the Quad Leaders' Summit, along with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

The sixth Quad summit saw the four leaders discuss a range of global issues, from maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region to health, climate change and the present geopolitical scenario.

PM Modi's three-day US visit will conclude with an address at the Summit of Future at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on Monday.

Centre seeks to withdraw CRPF security cover for Unnao rape survivor



The centre has filed a petition before the Supreme Court to withdraw the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) security cover provided to the Unnao rape survivor and 13 others connected to the case. This development

comes after an assessment reportedly found no substantial evidence of ongoing threats to the individuals involved, leading the Centre to question the need for continued CRPF protection. The Supreme Court,

on Tuesday, asked the survivors and other affected individuals to respond to the Centre's request, which seeks to modify the court's August 2019 order that granted them security. The government argued that the security cover should now be handled by the state police, based on local threat assessments.

The government, citing a recent threat assessment, said there was no specific danger to the survivors or their legal representatives. "The perceived threat from supporters of the convicted individuals is not backed by tangible evidence," the Centre's plea stated. "Local law enforcement can address any general secu-

ity concerns." The plea also highlighted the operational and logistical difficulties faced by CRPF personnel, who have reportedly been subjected to misuse and adverse working conditions. According to the Centre, CRPF troops deployed for this duty lack adequate accommodation, toilet facilities, and sufficient support from local police. Additionally, the Centre's plea expressed concerns over the financial burden of maintaining this security detail, calling it unnecessary and undesirable at this point. The petition revealed multiple challenges faced by CRPF personnel in securing the protectees,

including incidents where the survivors and their associates allegedly manhandled security officers, failed to cooperate, and made sudden movements without informing the personnel. In some instances, protectees reportedly threatened to implicate CRPF personnel in false cases or to harm themselves, further complicating security operations.

The Centre also noted that the current security arrangement places an undue strain on the public exchequer. The security cover for the Unnao rape survivor, her family, and her legal team was ordered by the Supreme Court in 2019 after widespread outrage over the handling of the case.

Army to launch 'future warfare' course to solve threats like pager blasts

In a landmark initiative, the Indian Army will conduct the first-ever tri-services "future warfare" course from September 23 to 27 in New Delhi. This five-day program has been organised by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) under the leadership of Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.

The program will provide crucial insights into the changing dynamics of warfare for officers across all military

branches, ranging from Majors to Major Generals and their equivalents.

The primary goal of the course is to acquaint officers with the technological and operational complexities of modern warfare. It will address the transformation of conflict into both contact and non-contact battles and examine new forms of combat, including kinetic, non-kinetic, psychological, and informational warfare. Officers will gain a deeper

understanding of how future wars will be fought in cyber, space, and electromagnetic domains, while exploring the impact of cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), robotics, and hypersonics on the battlefield.

The course emerged from the necessity for the armed forces to adapt to rapid technological advancements and the evolving global security landscape. It aims to prepare military

leaders to effectively incorporate innovative technologies and tactics into operations, fostering greater inter-service collaboration and developing a cohesive, tech-savvy defence force capable of protecting India's national interests. Curated by veteran and active-duty military experts, the course offers comprehensive insights into future warfare, laying the groundwork for longer-term programs designed to make the Indian Armed Forces "future ready".

Israel-Lebanon front: A regional or limited war?

As the war in Gaza continues, with Israeli hostages still held by Hamas, the fractious Israel-Lebanon border is showing signs of becoming a second front, with Lebanese Shia militia Hezbollah and Israeli armed forces exchanging heavy fire. Israel has conducted multiple airstrikes over the past week, with reports claiming the deaths of senior Hezbollah military leaders, including Ibrahim Aqil and Ibrahim Mohammed Qubaisi. Earlier in July, another senior leader, Fuad Shukur, was also killed by a targeted Israeli strike in Beirut. The opening of the Israel-Hezbollah front was neither entirely surprising nor unexpected. Soon after October 7 of last year, when Hamas carried out its horrific terror attack against Israel, the Palestinian group pushed for Hezbollah to target Israel from the north as Gaza became a fierce battleground. Since then, Hamas's capabilities have been significantly depleted. Its political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated during a visit to Iran, and its current chief, Yahya Sinwar, is missing in action. Meanwhile, over the past year, civilian casualties have skyrocketed in Gaza and are now also rising in southern Lebanon.

It is important to remember that none of these fronts are new, and these battles, involving these very actors, have been fought many times over the decades.

AXIS' UNDER STRAIN

Expectations of this conflict spilling over into a regional one remain palpable. The likes of Hamas and Hezbollah, known to enjoy patronage from Iran, would expect Tehran to not only back them but to formally engage Israel's military, potentially drawing the country into a conventional war.

For Iran, both Hamas and Hezbollah are core components of its 'Axis of Resistance', which also includes the Houthis in Yemen, and other smaller groups peppered across Syria and Iraq. The question on many minds is: What is Iran's red line? At what point does it intend to, if at all, engage Israel directly in aid of the so-called axis it backs?

Contrary to such expectations, Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, has maintained a non-rhetorical stance, replacing expected rhetoric against Israel and the US with dangling a carrot instead: one of willingness to talk with the West, bettering ties, and talking about the nuclear deal once again. This is in contrast to Pezeshkian's swearing-in two months ago, where he took on his new role amidst chants of 'Death to America and Israel'.

CHALLENGES FOR ARAB WORLD

On the other side of the spectrum, the Arab world watches on nervously as the conflict presents them with multiple challenges. Saudi Arabia, till recently being goaded by the US to normalise

relations with Israel as done by some other Arab states such as the UAE and Bahrain by way of the Abraham Accords of 2020 made it clear that it will not do so unless Palestine is recognised as an independent and sovereign state. While this has been a long-standing demand, Riyadh had dangled hope to normalise with Israel to try and sign a comprehensive security arrangement with the US; one as binding as those enjoyed by America's Asian partners, Japan and South Korea.

Regionally, the likes of Saudi Arabia are trying to maintain two main postures. First, to make sure domestic discontent on the Gaza issue does not spiral. Second, to maintain their trajectories of economic diversification, moving away from oil, and becoming global business hubs. The UAE to a large extent has already achieved this, with its priority now, to manage its core security requirements which guarantees missiles not raining down on Dubai or Abu Dhabi.

Both these Arab powers are attempting to remain neutral in a conflict they increasingly see as one between Israel and Iran, and have developed working relations with Tehran to this aim. Egypt, which shares a direct border with Gaza, and has a lot of influence within Palestinian movements, is also careful to not make the problem of the Palestinian cause an Egyptian issue, but a Palestinian one. For this, Gaza plays a critical role.

IDEOLOGIES AT ODDS

Beyond the regional aspect, Arab powers, in fact, may not be completely miffed with Israel's plans to de-fang Hamas and Hezbollah. A pertinent question which continues to be raised is what kind of Palestine would it be if a two-state solution is indeed mobilised? While such an outcome remains largely implausible as of today, a Hamas-led or Hamas-like organisation-led outcome would not change the situation much.

The conflict would continue, with an accepted border but contesting ideologies in play. Extreme ideologues, both in Israel and Lebanon, have also come into political power via electoral processes. While in 2022, Hezbollah lost its majority in the Lebanese parliament, it still holds sway over political power in the country. In Israel, far-right parties such as Otzma Yehudit have gained traction, looking to fight ideological challenges with ideology itself.

Finally, a regional war as of today remains unlikely despite the threat perceptions being drawn. The Israel-Lebanon border will be in all likelihood a contained conflict. The biggest question remains what the political off-ramp for the likes of Hezbollah would be, and ultimately, what kind of long-term security Israel would aim towards beyond just setting a precedent of renewed deterrence?

By Susmita Ghosh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent trip to the United States has created a lot of discussion regarding its impression on India-U.S. relations. As the world changes, this visit not only strengthens the intentional partnership between the two countries but also discloses some complications and encounters.

Focus on boosting economic ties was the major highlight of Modi's visit this time. With the global economy still recovering from the pandemic, Modi promoted India as a top choice for American investments. His "Make in India" initiative aimed to position India as the key player in global manufacturing and innovation, especially in semiconductors and renewable energy sectors. This method looks to enhance self-reliance while greeting American expertise and investment.

However, there are significant challenges to consider. Trade deficits, tariffs, and complex regulations are continuing issues that need to be fixed. The history of trade talks between India and the U.S. shows that making real progress requires continuous effort and goodwill from both sides. Modi's government will need to create a smoother framework for trade to help both nations flourish economically.

Modi's visit also came during a time of rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, especially regarding China. Discussions about defence cooperation were essential, as both the countries face a complex security environment. Strengthening the Quad alliance, which includes India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia, underlines a shared commitment to regional constancy.

However, India's long-standing ties with Russia confuse this partnership. As India works to upgrade its defence ca-

pabilities, it must balance its traditional relationship with Russia against its growing cooperation with the U.S. This balancing act is vital for India's foreign policy and its desire for independence on the world stage.

Another important part of Modi's visit was the focus on cultural ties and the role of the Indian diaspora. The Indian-American community plays a significant role in strengthening relations between the two countries, contributing to both economies and acting as a cultural bridge. The events celebrating Indian culture and interactions with influential Indian-Americans highlighted the depth of this relationship.

However, this focus on the diaspora raises concerns about illustration and the need for comprehensive dialogue.

Despite the promise of greater cooperation, Modi's visit also shines a light on pressing challenges. The ongoing trade deficit and controversial immigration policies, especially regarding H-1B visas, remain significant difficulties. These issues could impede the flow of talent and investment between the two nations, potentially undermining Modi's goals. Modi's visit to the U.S. marks an important moment in India-U.S. relations, filled with both opportunities and challenges. The potential for economic collaboration, security cooperation, and cultural exchange is significant, but achieving this potential will require dedicated efforts from both nations.

As they work to strengthen their partnership, it's essential to address complex issues with mutual respect and understanding. The future will require careful diplomacy and strategic thinking, safeguarding that India and the U.S. can traverse the changing global landscape together, paving the way for a brighter and more stable future for both countries.

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As Israel strikes Lebanon, can Iran sit it out?

While the situation has been escalating in the Gaza war, all eyes have been on Iran, waiting to see how it responds.

The war in Gaza has taken a dramatic turn over the past few weeks. Israel has rapidly revised its war strategy and despite calls for restraints and ceasefire, the conflict is now poised on a dangerous trajectory of escalation and a point of no return. In the past few days, as a result of Israel's use of unconventional and asymmetric methods, Lebanon has suffered huge losses. Hezbollah, in return, has retaliated and with continuing strikes across both sides, there is little hope of restraint and peace right now. It all started on September 17 and 18 when thousands of communication devices, primarily pagers, exploded mysteriously across multiple locations in Lebanon, killing at least 42 people and injuring more than 3,000. Most initial analyses point to a major intelligence success by Israel - a batch of almost 5,000 pagers ordered by Hezbollah was rigged with undetectable explosives that were activated through remote activation.

On September 23, however, events took a turn for the worse when Israel launched the most massive airstrike in Lebanon to date, killing 492 people and injuring over 1,645. Hezbollah responded and rained over 200 rockets into Israel striking deep, up to the city of Haifa - even some West Bank settlements near Tel Aviv. These strikes were part of a carefully planned strategy. There are also strong inputs of Israel firming up plans for a ground invasion into Lebanon and several military formations have been directed towards the North in

anticipation.

What happens now?

The last time the two nations locked horns was the 2006 Lebanon war, which involved a massive Israeli air strike and a subsequent ground invasion. Hezbollah paramilitary forces, though severely degraded by the airstrikes, held their ground, leading to a stalemate and ceasefire on August 14, 2006. During the war, Israel lost over 120 soldiers, whereas more than 1,100 died in Lebanon. Could the current situation be a repeat of the same? Indications are that Israel has decided to take the bull by its horns and end the Hezbollah threat once and for all. Israel's Defense Minister claimed that Israel is decimating all capabilities built by Hezbollah over the past 18 years and that Hassan Nasrallah will be left alone at the top, with his entire leadership structure wiped out.

Where does Iran stand?

While the situation has been escalating in the Gaza war, all eyes have been on Iran, waiting to see how it responds. Iran had vowed to avenge the assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh on July 30 in Tehran. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was firm and clear about this. However, weeks and months have passed and Iran has yet to retaliate. In its defence, Iran is not known to be quick in its response and often exacts revenge through proxy attacks. Whether it was the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps who was killed in January 2020 through a US drone strike in Baghdad, or the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a prominent nuclear scientist and often called the father of Iran's covert nuclear weapons program in November 2020, or the killing of Quds Force General Sayyed Razi Mousavi in an Israeli airstrike in Damascus, Syria, on December 25, 2023, Iran did not directly retaliate. It was only after Israel targeted its consulate in Damascus on April 1 this year that Iran finally shed its strategic patience and undertook a direct strike through a swarm of drones and missiles. It declared any future attack would be met by a swift and equal response - though a response to Haniyeh's assassination is yet to materialise. Reacting to the recent pager attacks on Hezbollah, Iran vowed revenge with IRGC commander-in-chief Hossein Salami stating Israel will face a crushing response from the axis of resistance. Once again, the Iranian response is awaited.

Can Iran wait any longer?

Iran has been the main support behind Hezbollah, both ideologically and militarily. In Israel's war on Gaza, Iran has emerged as the sole protector of Palestinians, as others in the region, including Egypt and Jordan, watch red line after red line being crossed. Since the signing of the Saudi-Iran peace deal in March 2023, there has been a wave of reconciliation in the region with many countries re-opening embassies and even starting economic ties with it. Iran

also benefitted from its growing ties with Russia and an entry into prominent multilateral forums like BRICS and SCO.

Iran realises that Israel has been baiting it to join the war directly since the beginning and except for a brief spat in April this year, it has so far, refrained and exercised caution. The question is: how long will Iran wait? As the rapidly evolving situation in Lebanon indicates, it won't be long before ground action.

If Israel makes major gains in Lebanon, will Iran then keep waiting for the right moment? What will be the right moment if all its proxies and allies bordering Israel have been decimated? How will Iran ensure deterrence against Israel if Israel does not face any direct threat on its borders? What are the chances thereafter that Israel, supported by the US (especially if Donald Trump returns to power), takes the war directly to Iran? If the situation continues to deteriorate in Lebanon, Iran may have no option but to join the battle. But will it be too late by then? Would it have lost the initiative and many Hezbollah lives before it stepped in? This war is set to change the political and security landscape of the region forever. The ongoing elections in the US and the resultant indecision have given Israel a perfect window of a few months to do what it wants to achieve its politico-military objectives. If Iran intends to stop it and retain the strategic advantage that it has so far enjoyed across the Levant, it will have to make quick and big strategic decisions soon.

Quad - And India's Role In It - Will Remain Relevant, Thanks To China

The idea of the Quad is now almost two decades old, emerging for the first time after the tsunami in 2004. Yet, a tone of tentativeness seems to surround this diplomatic partnership, often reflected in experts and media questioning its worth, need, or even existence.

The fourth Quad leaders' summit in Wilmington, Delaware, was no different. Ahead of the summit's start, a reporter asked US President Joe Biden if the Quad would exist beyond November. He quipped, "Much beyond that", and then reiterated the sentiment in his opening statement at the summit. "Challenges will come, the world will change, but the Quad is here to stay." He was backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, who added that the Quad was here to assist, partner, and complement the efforts of Indo-Pacific countries.

The Impact Of AUKUS

In 2021, just a week before the first in-person Quad summit in Washington,

D.C., the U.S. announced a new trilateral security partnership - AUKUS - with an objective similar to that of the Quad: promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The announcement of AUKUS, with its clear military aspect, immediately raised questions about the Quad, a partnership without any military component. The re-emergence of the Quad in 2017, after lying dormant for more than a decade, was tempered by some hesitation from India and Australia. India, a neighbour of China, and Australia, with its trade dependence on China, were wary of antagonising Beijing by appearing to participate in what the Chinese President Xi Jinping called a 'U.S.-led Western effort' to contain, encircle, and suppress China. However, 2020 changed the stance of both New Delhi and Canberra. India became locked in border friction with China in Eastern Ladakh, and Australia faced a trade backlash from China as it pushed for a resolution to identify the origin of

COVID-19. That year saw India advocating for the second and stand-alone ministerial meeting of the Quad in Tokyo, despite the ongoing pandemic. The first ministerial meeting took place in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It was clear that inhibitions had been shed and the Quad was finally coming into its own. Where Quad Has Really Proved Relevant However, since the firming up of AUKUS - the security partnership between Australia, the UK, and the U.S. - comparisons are often drawn to the Quad and its possible ineffectiveness in containing China in the Indo-Pacific due to its lack of military muscle. Nevertheless, the Quad has positioned itself as relevant in another area: reducing China's influence in the global economic space. This year, the Quad Summit announced the Supply Chains Contingency Network to enhance the resilience of semiconductor supply chains. This is a critical area as

semiconductors play a vital role in today's world, particularly in advanced economies. A 2023 report by the research institute RAND stated that Taiwan's dominance in global semiconductor production creates geopolitical and economic vulnerabilities for the US and its allies, as well as for Taiwan, which provides China with a potential asymmetric advantage. The report pointed out that a supply chain disruption could severely impact the U.S. economy and recommended that instead of acting unilaterally, Washington should engage its allies and partners to respond as a united, multinational bloc. Another example is from 2021: the Quad vaccine partnership. As many as 400 million COVID-19 vaccine doses were delivered to Indo-Pacific countries to curtail China's vaccine outreach and influence in Southeast Asian nations. A consultancy that tracks China's impact on global health, Bridge Consulting, reported that China's

Can A Last-Minute CM Change Really Help Kejriwal And AAP?

Two days after submitting his resignation as Delhi Chief Minister to Lt. Governor V.K. Saxena and announcing his plans to vacate his official bungalow, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal showed signs that he was not as impulsive or immune to the allure of power as he had been when he first took office in December 2013. At that time, he had resigned after just 48 days. As a dedicated activist who had ousted the Congress regime of Sheila Dikshit through a movement against corruption, he resigned when he failed to get the Jan Lokpal Bill passed in the Delhi Assembly. He sought a fresh mandate, even though his government was ironically supported by Congress from the outside. Kejriwal is Rebuilding His Reputation A decade later, after winning two consecutive terms in office, Kejriwal's idealism and ideology appear inconsistent. He seeks a fresh mandate to become Delhi chief minister (CM) again and wants to break free from the restrictions imposed by the Supreme Court while granting bail in the corruption cases filed by the Central Bureau of Investiga-



tion (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). However, the AAP made it clear that Kejriwal would vacate his official residence at 6 Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines - his home since 2015 - only if he received suitable accommodation in Delhi's Lutyens Zone, given that he is the leader of the sixth-largest party in the country. This implies that the responsibility for helping Kejriwal vacate his "Sheesh Mahal" would fall on the Modi government, considering he is a Z-plus protectee. All this suggests that his decade in office has undoubtedly "corrupted" this Magsaysay award-winning activist. Moreover, emerging from a six-

month stint in jail on corruption charges related to the liquor policy case, Kejriwal's life has come full circle. He is desperate to restore his image and regain credibility among the chattering classes in Delhi. Yes, he has been trying to do all the right things, and he wants to turn back the clock while retaining some perks of office. He has no problem stepping down as chief minister and engaging with the public again; however, he is not comfortable returning to his old mode. **A Smart Move** He refrained from promoting his wife, Sunita, as chief minister, knowing such a move could irritate the middle class. He also chose

not to prioritise political correctness by selecting a Dalit chief minister. Instead, he opted for the suave, Oxford-educated Atishi, who is recognised as the driving force behind reforming Delhi's government schools. With a reputation for being understated, Atishi embodies the girl next door. It is said her priority will be to implement schemes like the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana, a monthly assistance program of ₹1,000 for women-targeting the 6.7 million female voters in the capital. Will a woman chief minister and his own resignation help Kejriwal regain his moral standing in Delhi? Only time will tell. While Atishi has set the tone for a Kejriwal comeback of Delhi", it remains to be seen whether Kejriwal can convince voters to elect him for a record fourth time (after 2013, 2015, and 2020). Can the AAP chief effectively leverage his resignation after being jailed on corruption charges? BJP

Janata Party (BJP) circles are unconcerned about Kejriwal's clever attempts to reinvent himself. Sources say they are confident they will effectively counter his penchant for drama in the coming months. However, a segment of the Delhi BJP is worried about the AAP's strategy to shed its incumbency by changing its chief minister at the last minute and introducing a new face, Atishi. "So far, we have had running battles against Kejriwal. But the focus of the battle against Kejriwal was always fought by our Lieutenant-General, V.K. Saxena. He has no skin in our political game. We have no popular face to take on Kejriwal. We have changed three BJP chiefs to take on the AAP in the last decade. We do not have a popular leader in Delhi," lamented a BJP MLA. Top party managers, however, dismissed such a bleak scenario for the BJP. "If you recall, we faced a similar dismal outlook regarding the BJP's prospects during the unified Municipal Council of Delhi elections in November-December 2022.

Modi's US visit



PRIME Minister Modi's visit to the US comes at a critical juncture, marked by electoral tensions in the US and diplomatic challenges. The visit is notably subdued compared to his 2019 tour, where he famously endorsed Donald Trump with the slogan 'Ab ki baar Trump sarkar.' This time, India is cautiously treading the line between engaging with both Republicans and Democrats as the US election looms, ensuring it does not appear to favour either side. At the heart of the current diplomatic equation is India's need to maintain a balanced relationship with both political factions in the US. Modi's rapport with Trump may have served India well during the latter's presidency, but it would be risky to appear partisan in the evolving geopolitical landscape. With Vice-President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee, India

must ensure that its strategic ties with the US are not jeopardised, regardless of who wins the White House. Further complicating matters is the backdrop of the Gurpatwant Singh Pannun case. A US court recently issued a summons against key Indian officials over an alleged plot to assassinate the Khalistani activist. While India has dismissed these charges as unwarranted, the issue remains a thorn in India-US relations, threatening to sour diplomatic ties. This visit focuses on multilateral engagements like the Quad summit and the UN Summit for the Future, marking a shift from Modi's earlier high-profile, personality-driven diplomacy to a more nuanced approach. The agenda includes strengthening ties on regional security, technology and climate change, along with solidifying India's position as a global peacemaker.

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The Real Reason US Keeps Accusing Russia Of Meddling In Its Elections

Earlier this month, the US administration sounded the alarm on Russia's alleged attempts to sway the upcoming presidential election through fake accounts spreading propaganda and disinformation. In the US, the move is understood to be Russia's broader strategy to undermine American democracy, with US intelligence officials labelling Moscow as the "primary threat to elections". The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is also investigating Iran's involvement in targeting the presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. However, US officials assert that Russia is the more formidable foe, with a clear preference for Donald Trump as their candidate of choice. The US government has seized 32 internet domains connected to the influencers, who were allegedly paid by Moscow to spread fake news. It has also sanctioned 10 individuals and two entities allegedly linked to these efforts

Russia Facing Allegations Since 2016

This is the third consecutive presidential election in which American officials have accused Russia and President Vladimir Putin of attempting to influence outcomes. It was a huge issue during the 2016 election too. The FBI still lists 12 Russian military officers as "most wanted" for their role in hacking and meddling in that election. These officers, members of Russian military intelligence, were indicted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team in 2018. The indictments allege that they hacked Democratic Party emails and systems and leaked information to influence the election in favour of Donald Trump. Subsequently, hundreds of documents were leaked to Wikileaks. A federal arrest warrant was issued for these 12 officers after a grand jury in a US District Court found them responsible for conspiracy to interfere with the election. Their presence on the FBI's "most wanted" list underscores the ongoing tensions between the US and Russia regarding election interference and cyber-espionage. Moscow has consistently refuted these allegations, with President Vladimir Putin personally denying the claims in various interviews and press conferences. Even Donald Trump came to Putin's defence, as he once told reporters, "He [Putin] said he didn't meddle. Every time he sees me he says, 'I didn't do that', and I really believe that when he tells me that he means it." Western Hypocrisy

The Kremlin accuses the US and other Western powers of hypocrisy, citing numerous examples across decades in which America was accused of meddling in the elections of so many countries. Indeed, the West - particularly the US - has a long-standing track record of influencing elections, backing military coups, providing covert financial support and disseminating political propaganda in foreign countries to advance its own geopolitical interests. The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) long history of alleged involvement in elections and regime changes in other countries is well-documented, with many declassified documents serving as evidence.

Prof Dov H. Levin's research for Carnegie-Mellon University involved looking at the election meddling by both the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. He claims that both countries were found to have interfered in 117 elections between WWII and 2000; the US was involved in two-thirds of them. According to him, in more recent times, 21 election interventions took place between 1990 and 2000, of which 18 were by the US. The alleged meddling by the USSR (later Russia) remained shrouded in secrecy, while the US had been more transparent in some cases. The declassified CIA documents highlight the role of US operations in the overthrow of Iran's Mohammed Mossadegh's government in 1953, Chile's Salvador Allende in 1973, and, more recently, its efforts towards regime changes in Venezuela as well as in Ukraine in 2014, when the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich's government was overthrown.

In the most recent example, Sheikh Hasina, after resigning from office on August 5 and fleeing the country, suggested that the US had a hand in her political downfall. This wasn't the first time she had made such claims - in 2022, she had accused the US of attempting to undermine her rule. Her allegations have been echoed by some non-Western leaders, who accuse the US and other powerful nations, such as France and Britain, of using their influence to destabilise their governments. Propaganda And Fake News The truth is that the ongoing allegations and counter-allegations of election interference are just one front in a larger information war between the West and Russia. It's a battle of narratives, with Western media largely backing the

West and Russian media championing Putin's perspective. Interestingly, Russian media has historically been dismissed by the West because of the Kremlin's tight control over it. But the Western media, long proud of its impartiality, faces accusations of spreading propaganda and even fake news to further Western interests.

For example, a few weeks after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Western media carried fake news about Putin's health. It suggested Putin was suffering from a mystery illness and may not survive for long.

All mainstream Western media carried this lie. And no apologies were offered when it was found to be unfounded. Janusz Bugajski, a renowned expert on Eastern European and Russian affairs and author of many scholarly books, is a senior fellow at the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, D.C. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Bugajski wrote a book titled *Failed State: A Guide to*

Russia's Rupture. In that, he explored the potential disintegration of Russia. Last year, he told me that the Russian Federation's disintegration was inevitable. "I would say it would be a long process, a rolling process, it would be different in different parts of the country. I would say the war in Ukraine would certainly accelerate the process because you have an increasing number of casualties, particularly from poorer parts of Russia and particularly from ethnic parts of Russia who are usually discriminated against in Russia anyway," he said. Many in the West buy into his claim. Putin has often moaned about how the West was working to break up his country.

No One Is Equipped To Challenge Western Media's Dominance In the ongoing information war, Russia appears to be at a disadvantage, with many believing it's already losing or will ultimately lose. This perspective is rooted in history, as Western media has consistently dominated the narrative, often to the detriment of regional media outlets.



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Geopolitical challenges keeping India on its toes

INDIA is recognised as the fastest-growing major economy in the world. The International Monetary Fund's assessment is that India's economy will grow at a rate of 7 per cent this financial year. Even as the country looks to maintain the growth momentum, it must be borne in mind that its position and influence in the world will be determined largely by its economic and technological progress. Given these imperatives, India has little choice but to strengthen its ties with countries in its immediate neighbourhood. This would ensure security and peace in the area extending from the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to its west to the Strait of Malacca to its east. The main challenges India faces beyond its borders arise from the expansionist ambitions and policies of China, even as Pakistan is mired in virtually perpetual bankruptcy. India has also sought for long to develop closer ties with the oil-rich (Persian) Gulf Region, comprising Iran and the Arab nations, where around six million Indians live. India has built good ties with Saudi Arabia while simultaneously reinforcing its strong relations with the UAE. Delhi also played an important role in restoring a cordial working relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia after intemperate comments made by President Joe Biden about the Saudi monarchy were resented by the Saudis. The

national security adviser of the UAE, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also participated in talks between US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman. The talks were reportedly facilitated by India's National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval. An agreement for promoting cooperation between the UAE, the US and India was also reportedly finalised and signed shortly thereafter. The stage is now set for India to play an increasingly positive and cooperative role across the shores of the Indian Ocean, together with six Arab Gulf states. India-US relations have grown significantly amid Washington's expectations that Delhi can balance out the growth of Chinese power across the Indian Ocean. China's policies remain committed to limiting and containing Indian influence. Beijing continues to strengthen Pakistan's missile and nuclear capabilities. It also works in close collaboration with Pakistan along and across India's western border with Afghanistan. New Delhi's recent moves for strengthening ties with Iran, including the construction of the strategic Chabahar Port, give India increasing economic and maritime access to Central Asia and limit the space for Pakistan to hinder India's access to Afghanistan. While the US had objected to India's growing ties with Iran, it now

appears reconciled to Delhi going ahead with the project for a transport corridor linking it to Afghanistan and Iran. Pakistan is predictably not pleased with this corridor, as it prevents Rawalpindi from hindering India's access to Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. This corridor, thereafter, can become a key gateway for India's access to the International North-South Transport Corridor, which, in turn, would eventually link India to Central Asia, Russia and, ultimately, to Europe by sea, rail and road. One important factor that has cast a shadow on India-US relations is the constant criticism by the US media of alleged violation of human rights in India, evidently with some encouragement from Washington. India may be among the few countries whose leadership found then President Donald Trump to be friendly – but blunt – during his visit to India. Trump has no illusions or expectations about China and has little inclination to even think about Pakistan.

India can be confident that this relationship will grow, irrespective of whether Kamala Harris or Trump wins the upcoming presidential elections. Nevertheless, relations with the US have grown steadily, with considerable cooperation for strengthening maritime links. This is an important development amid the tensions and piracy in the high

seas – across the Indian Ocean – that have been accompanied by the Israeli occupation of Gaza. The US continues to regard India as an important strategic partner in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness across the Indo-Pacific region, extending from the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca to the Persian Gulf. Two aircraft carriers and as many nuclear submarines can be used by India to defend the shores of its Indian Ocean neighbours. India's problems and tensions on its borders with China and Pakistan are set to continue. Despite being nearly bankrupt, Pakistan appears determined to continue sponsoring terrorism in India. While the Sharif brothers and their civilian establishment plunged Pakistan into an economic crisis, India is now faced with Pakistan army chief Gen Syed Asim Munir, who wields substantial influence on national security policies. Unlike his mentor and predecessor, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who understood the economic and diplomatic costs of tensions with India, Gen Munir appears bent on fomenting trouble in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. India needs to respond both diplomatically and militarily to this strategy. While the Sharif brothers control Pakistan's civilian and political establishments, they have little say or influence on their army abetting terrorism in J&K and elsewhere in India.

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Bobby Deol's Villain Era Is Just Getting Started

This actor seemed all but forgotten in Bollywood till one Hindi film helmed by a south director resurrected his career. Bobby Deol, now 55, made his big debut in 1995 with Barsaat, but never managed to achieve the kind of stardom his superstar father Dharmendra enjoyed. Despite a few hits, the Hindi industry had signed him off as a flop hero after the 2000s. With no work in sight, the actor himself admitted once that he was depressed and became an alcoholic when producers stopped signing him on.

Then, in 2020 came Prakash Jha's crime web series Aashram, which offered Deol a rare chance to revive his career through the role of 'Kashipur Waale Baba', aka 'Nirala' or Monty Singh. It was a turning point. Deol said goodbye to the cutesy, charming persona that the audience was familiar with but which never quite won him success, and played a sharply built, menacing 'Baba Nirala' with such elan that there was no turning back. Aashram gave Bobby Deol hope, and finally, Sandeep Reddy Vanga's controversial film Animal (2023) officially

announced the arrival his villain era, putting him firmly back in the spotlight.

'Something Snapped In Me'

Essaying the role of the dreaded mute antagonist, Abrar Haque, in Animal, Bobby Deol captured the imagination of the audience like never before. Haque was a revelation against Deol's previous roles. As he took on the big screen all guns blazing - literally - with a chiselled physique, gruff beard and a sinister stare, Deol proved that no one could write him off.

This was not the first time Deol has played a baddie on screen. In 2000, he played the antagonist in both Badal and Bichhoo, but both movies couldn't quite boost his career. Talking about how he got his mojo back, Deol said on Koffee with Karan last year, "I heard my son saying, 'you know Mom, Papa sits at home and you go to work every day'. Something snapped in me. I just said, no I can't. It was a slow process, when I got out of it, it took me time to get into the right mind frame to become okay. It can't happen overnight. My

brother, my dad, my mom, my sisters, they were always there. You cannot always do anything while holding someone's hand. You have to walk on your two feet. Then things started changing. I mean I have gone and met so many people, I said to myself, I will go and meet people, tell them I want to work with you all."

As a star kid, the Race actor has not had it easy. When Animal was declared one of the biggest Bollywood blockbusters, Deol was seen at an event weeping in his car as paparazzi and fans surrounded him. He couldn't believe the love and adulation finally coming his way after the obscurity that had practically erased him from public memory.

South's New Favourite?

Deol's dark era has caught the attention of South cinema too, which has always loved a good villain, especially from Bollywood. This year, Deol will be seen in Tamil star Suriya's pan-India fantasy action film Kanguva as the antagonist 'Udhiran'. The first look of the Hindi actor from the film has created a

strong buzz and received wide praise from fans on social media. In fact, Suriya recently said how having Deol on board as the villain helped him make the film's climax "bigger". The actor will also be part of Thalapathy Vijay's last Tamil film to directed by H. Vinoth.

As for Tollywood, Bobby has already been signed on for Pawan Kalyan's Hari Hara Veera Mallu and Nandamuri Balakrishna's NBK 109. In Hari Hara Veera Mallu, a period film, Deol is reportedly playing baddie Alamgir Aurangzeb. Given that it stars Pawan Kalyan too, the movie is most likely to be another feather in Bobby's cap.

Closer home in B-Town, the actor has been roped in for an Anurag Kashyap flick and also for YRF Spy Universe's Alpha, in which he will be facing off against Alia Bhatt.

It took 30 years for Deol to finally make a mark in the industry. "The audience's desire to watch more of me is what I have always craved as an actor," he said recently. Success delayed, but not denied.

Telegram CEO to share phone numbers, IP addresses with government if users are under suspicion

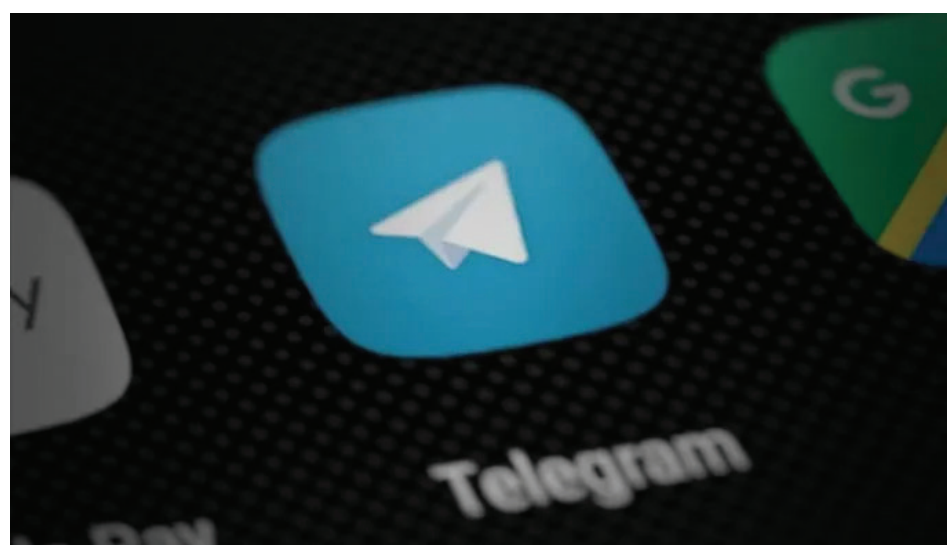
Telegram CEO Pavel Durov has announced that Telegram will share user information with law enforcement when users are suspected of illegal activities. This follows Durov's arrest by French authorities for not cooperating with investigations into illicit activities on the platform.

Telegram CEO Pavel Durov has announced that the messaging platform will start sharing user information, such as phone numbers and IP addresses, with law enforcement when users are suspected of illegal activities. This change follows Durov's arrest by French authorities last month, who accused Telegram of not cooperating with investigations into illicit activities conducted on the platform.

What Changes Have Been Introduced?

Durov revealed that Telegram has updated its terms of service to reflect these changes. One major update is the company's decision to block users from searching for illegal goods or content via Telegram's search feature. If someone continues to try accessing or sharing such content, Telegram will hand over their phone number and IP address to authorities if legally required.

Durov emphasised that Telegram's search function is intended to help users find friends or discover news, not for locating or promoting illegal activities. To support this shift, the platform is also using artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure that



problematic content, such as drugs, scams, or child abuse images, cannot be found through its search bar.

How Will These Changes Impact Users?

For everyday users, these changes won't have much of an effect, as long as they are using the app for legal purposes like messaging friends, joining groups, or following news channels. However, for those involved in illegal activities, the consequences could be significant. If a user tries to access or distribute illicit content, their personal information, including their

phone number and IP address, could now be passed to law enforcement agencies in response to valid legal requests.

The use of AI to monitor searches also indicates that Telegram is trying to keep the platform safer for all users. Problematic content should no longer appear in search results, making it harder for criminals to abuse the platform for illegal purposes.

Why Was Pavel Durov Arrested?

Durov's arrest in France was largely due to Telegram's alleged failure to cooperate with law enforcement

regarding illegal material being shared on the platform. French authorities claimed that Telegram was complicit in allowing illicit content to be distributed without taking sufficient action to block it. They also accused Durov of using certain encryption methods without permission in France.

After his arrest, Durov paid a €5 million bond to be released, but he remains under judicial supervision and is not allowed to leave France. Despite these legal challenges, Durov continues to lead Telegram and implement measures to address concerns about illegal activity on the platform.

Conclusion

Telegram's decision to share user information with law enforcement is a significant change in its privacy policy. While it's aimed at curbing illegal activities, it could raise privacy concerns among users. Durov, known for promoting privacy, now faces the challenge of balancing user privacy with legal obligations, especially in light of his arrest and the ongoing investigations into Telegram's role in facilitating illegal activities.

PM Modi's US Visit: Time to Capitalise on Shared Interests

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting the US where he will participate in the Quad summit, address the Summit of the Future at the UN, and meet American CEOs as well as the Indian diaspora. At the UN summit, he may also have some bilateral meetings with leaders of some countries.

A meeting with Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus is not on the cards, even though Yunus had expressed a desire to meet with Modi. Some may argue that a meeting would provide an occasion for a frank exchange of views on our concerns about the developing situation in Bangladesh and the anti-Indian orientation that it is taking. On the other hand, it is also apparent that Yunus is a figurehead and not in control of the internal forces at play, besides the fact that his interim position is not constitutionally legitimate. In any case, our High Commissioner in Bangladesh is engaging the key members of the interim government.

Donald Trump said at one of his rallies that he would be meeting Modi. Unless Trump is in New York it is not clear how this meeting can be arranged. Since the electoral race is very close and Trump could well win, it might be politic not to appear to snub him by declining a meeting, which he seems to want. On the other hand, politics in the US has got so highly polarised that the Kamala Harris camp may not view Modi's meeting with Trump kindly, especially because of their past Houston bonhomie, and impute it as interference in the election process. Since Modi will not be meeting Harris, it would obviously be best to avoid meeting Trump. The Foreign Secretary in his press briefing has been evasive on the subject.

The Quad summit is being hosted by Joe Biden in his native Delaware. He is still the president but he is a diminished figure because of the manner in which his bid for a second term was ingloriously terminated by Democratic Party leaders, apart from his cognitive difficulties. The presidential election is also only a few weeks away. If he were still in the race, the Quad summit would have had a different meaning. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan, another participant, is also on his way out.

In any case, whether Trump wins or Harris wins, the China challenge, which both parties recognise, means that the Quad will remain relevant and important.

The Biden presidency has, on the whole, been positive for India. During this time, Modi made a state visit to the US and addressed the US Congress for the second time. Differences between the US and India on our ties with Russia, including in the area of defence, our purchase of discounted Russian oil, our unwillingness to take sides in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and abstaining on resolutions in the UN targeting Russia,



were contained, though simmering resentments on the US side remain.

Many agreements in the area of defence-related cooperation, including on the easing of export controls, were signed. Some significant projects such as the supply of GE 404 engines for our Tejas Mk1 and Mk1A aircraft and the co-production of GE 414 engines for Tejas Mk2 and initial batches of the AMCA, with substantial transfer of technology have been concluded. The supply of GE 404 engines has, however, encountered delays because of supply chain issues on the US side, leading to some speculation about the reasons, but it appears that the US had outsourced manufacturing of some parts of the engine to other countries and that is where bottlenecks have arisen.

India-US cooperation in the area of critical and emerging technologies as part of the ICET agreement breaks vital ground for cooperation in areas such as AI, quantum computing, robotics, biotechnology, critical materials, 5G and 6G, human spaceflight semiconductors etc. That the ICET is headed by the National Security Advisers on both sides testifies to the serious commitment of both countries to this initiative. Progress is bound to be slow, and is slow, because of the very complex layers of US controls on technology cooperation, besides the fact that the ICET project involves government, research bodies, academia and the private sector. Added to which are US concerns about leakages of such technologies to Russia from India. The INDUS X is an India-US Defence Acceleration Eco-System involving India and US startups was also launched during the Biden presidency. US NSA Jake Sullivan has been a motivating force in India-US ties.

It is under the Biden presidency that the Quad was raised to the summit level.

In that light, India's decision to cede its turn to hold the summit to Biden, as a farewell gesture to him, is the right one. India is committed to the Quad, which we now describe as a global good, notwithstanding the opposition of both China and Russia as they see it as a throwback to bloc politics. No doubt, China is a glue that binds the Quad together, as all four countries have concerns about Chinese geopolitical assertiveness and expansionism. At the same time, all four have major trade ties with China, which prevents a robust confrontation with China, as the cost to all in varying degrees will be high.

The US does not want a military confrontation with China, which gives China scope for putting steady pressure on Taiwan and the Philippines, and, in general, asserting itself in the South and East China Seas. Australia has reached out to China after a period of tensions. Japan is flexing its military muscles a bit, but the US security umbrella is vital for it. Under Kishida, it has moved even more firmly into the US orbit to the extent of supporting Ukraine and breaking off with Russia.

The Quad is tied to the Indo-Pacific concept. Its weakness as a firm strategic platform has been exposed by US policy in Bangladesh that has facilitated Sheikh Hasina's removal of power and inflicted a strategic blow to India in a very vulnerable part of its territory in the northeast, potentially to China's advantage. It has damaged India's security in the Bay of Bengal.

It is interesting that Kurt Campbell, Deputy Secretary of State in the State Department, who was earlier responsible for the Indo-Pacific affairs in the White House, and a positive force on Indo-Pacific issues, has stated in a Congressional testimony that India and the US will hold a session on the Indian

Ocean to discuss concerns. This suggests that the focus earlier was on the Pacific and not on the Indian Ocean where India's priorities lie. This is not surprising because the US has military bases, force deployments and security alliances in the region, with the Taiwan issue, and now that of the Philippines, presenting a direct challenge to the US in the region. In the Indian Ocean, the direct Chinese military and maritime challenge is to India. Under Biden, relations have been marred by US activism on issues of human rights, the treatment of minorities and the state of democracy in India. Secretary of State Blinken has twice singled out India on human rights issues while presenting the State Department's annual report on human rights across the world, which is unprecedented. In the context of the Modi-Biden bilateral meeting in Delaware, the State Department spokesperson said that the issue of human rights has been raised by Biden with Modi in the past and he assumes it will be raised again as appropriate. This is a very unfortunate aspect of the US's lack of sensitivity and consideration towards India whose democracy is in better shape than that of the US with two assassination attempts against Trump and other vagaries of the US voting system. With the US, given its system, it will not be smooth sailing when it comes to forging increasingly close ties. One should build on the positives, and push back on the negatives without losing sight of the bigger picture. India had good ties with the Trump administration and good ties also with the Biden administration. This suggests that both sides value the relationship, even if in different measures. For us, the challenge is to continue capitalising on shared interests in an increasingly complex international environment.



Elon Musk is at it again, tweaking X (formerly known as Twitter) in ways that users are sure to love... or not. This time, he's targeting the block feature. Normally, when you block someone on social media, you never have to see them again—simple, right? Well, not on X. According to Musk's new plan, if you block someone, sure, you won't be able to interact with them, but here's the kicker: they'll still be able to view your profile. Because who doesn't love being watched by people they've purposely blocked? What could possibly go

wrong? Elon Musk took to X to share his views on the block feature on X: 'High time this happened. The block function will block that account from engaging with, but not block seeing, public posts.' Naturally, users had mixed feelings about this revelation. While some shrugged it off as just another Musk moment, women who regularly deal with stalkers on the platform aren't exactly thrilled. Because, you know, nothing says "progress" like letting your stalker watch your every move. And the

reason why Musk is making changes to its platform is because the whole blocking thing does not make sense to him. When you're blocked on X, the platform shows a "You're blocked" message, preventing you from seeing the person's posts, replies, media, followers, and following list. According to a source close to The Verge, this move is because blocked users can still view content by logging out or using another account. But interestingly, some publications noticed that X doesn't allow viewing someone's profile even when they're logged out. So, while the platform says the change makes sense, the reality seems a bit different. This proposed change to the block feature on X shouldn't be rolled out because it

compromises user privacy and safety, especially for those dealing with harassment or stalking. By allowing blocked users to still view your posts, it defeats the whole purpose of blocking. Social media platforms exist to give users control over their interactions, and this feature would strip away that control, leaving vulnerable users exposed to unwanted attention. While X argues that people can still see posts by logging out or using another account, the solution isn't to weaken the block feature but to strengthen it. If rolled out, this change could alienate users and make X an unsafe space, especially for women and those facing harassment. It's a step backward in terms of protecting users' privacy, and the backlash it's already receiving shows that this isn't what the platform needs right now.

Biggest Takeaway From Quad Summit Is That It's Here To Stay

US President Joe Biden hosted the Prime Ministers of India, Australia, and Japan for the fourth in-person Quad Leaders' Summit at his hometown, Wilmington, last week. This summit was seen as crucial for multiple reasons. First, it was the last one to be attended by Biden, a key architect of the grouping's institutionalisation, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who played a pivotal role in adding political heft to the forum. Second, 2024 marks 20 years since the formation of the grouping. Third, and most importantly, the Wilmington summit further consolidated the grouping by expanding key areas of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Indeed, this summit has been successful in signalling - 'The Quad is here to stay'.

At a time of highly complex global crises playing out in different parts of the world, the Quad leaders' summit took place in the context of critical challenges and vital opportunities. With enduring wars in Europe and the Middle East, China's belligerent activities in the Indo-Pacific region and emerging non-traditional security challenges in the region, the Quad had its task cut out. The Wilmington Declaration - the joint statement of the Quad leaders - amply addressed these critical questions.

The Wilmington Statement

The joint statement issued by the leaders of the Quad grouping in Wilmington exhibits continuity in responding to the war in Ukraine, reiterating the urgent need to put an end to the conflict and uphold the spirit of international law. Similarly, this year's

statement expressed concerns over ballistic missile launches conducted by North Korea and the need to prevent the proliferation of nuclear missiles and technologies. Additionally, the Wilmington Declaration focused on the ongoing conflict in Gaza as well.

The group shared its concerns over the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza advocating for a sovereign, viable, and independent state of Palestine while remaining sensitive to the concerns of Israel. Apart from these, the statement further reiterated concerns over the worsening political and humanitarian situation in Myanmar, as well as attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. However, China remained the big-ticket question for the Quad in the Indo-Pacific context. On the China question, Quad's response this year seems sharper than the previous years. Earlier, at the Quad Foreign Ministers' meet, the grouping called Beijing out - albeit without naming it - for disregarding international law and unilaterally acting in the East and South China Sea region. Similarly, the Quad leaders expressed their concern over increasing militarisation in disputed pockets of the Indo-Pacific. Responding to the tensions in the region, the grouping condemned the use of coastguards and maritime militia vessels, which serve as China's tactics for coercive and intimidating manoeuvres. The slew of announcements made at this year's Quad summit, and the resultant Wilmington Declaration, underscore the enduring promise and relevance of the grouping.

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The Housing Market is a Bubble Full of Fraud, and It's Going To Pop

The U.S. is in a massive housing bubble. Prices are artificially high due primarily to the downstream effects of financialization. Localized supply and demand dynamics ó which today are also downstream of financialization ó are a mess. Decades of housing subsidies, down payment assistance, artificially low interest rates, money printing and endless bank support have turned the American home into a financial product first and a place of shelter second. The extent of the distortion is unprecedented, something covered in *Escaping the Housing Trap: The Strong Towns Response to the Housing Crisis*. What fascinates me more than another obvious bubble ó lím old enough to have been here before ó is the way people talk about it. Everyone, from investors to NIMBYs to YIMBYs to my neighbor up the street, has an oversimplified belief about home prices, one fully supported by their take on the data. As a student of Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, it's easy to recognize the motivated reasoning.

Take this extensive excerpt from a Wall Street Journal article:

That was 2016, during the heady days when the American property boom was just getting going. Even then, the truth was obvious to anyone who knew what to look for: The boom had turned into a bubble ó and was likely to end very badly.

The bubble proceeded to get even worse, though, because no one wanted the music to stop. American developers, home buyers, real-estate agents and even the Wall Street banks that helped underwrite the boom all ignored warning signs.

Developers found ways to obscure the amount of debt they were holding, with the help of bankers and lawyers. Buyers who suspected the property markets were overbuilt bought more anyway. American and foreign investors seeking juicy returns flooded developers with funding. The cheerleaders were operating on a seemingly bulletproof assumption that America's government would never allow the market to crash. American people had invested the majority of their wealth in housing. Letting the market tumble could wipe out much of the population's savings ó and



erode confidence in the Communist Party. I left the *Communist Party* there because there wasn't a suitable substitute. If you didn't click through to the article already, it was titled *The Folly of China's Real-Estate Boom Was Easy to See, but No One Wanted to Stop It*. In the excerpt, I merely changed *China* to *America* and it reads just fine. As Kahneman would suggest, people can see the folly in the actions of others with clarity while rationalizing their own as being far more nuanced and complex. What is true of China is true of the U.S.: We have built an economy on housing as a financial product, and that has distorted home prices in the short term. I suspect we'll end up in the same place in the long term (a bursting bubble), but I am very uncertain as to the timeframe and comparative extent of correction. If there's one thing I've learned it's that we have seemingly unlimited ingenuity when it comes to using financialization and bailouts to extend unreality a bit further. The subtitle of that Wall Street Journal piece is *Developers, home buyers and Western bankers all ignored warning signs; financial anomalies and shenanigans*. Fraud is generally a key component of a bubble. As mania kicks in, people's concerns over fraud lessen as the perceived risk diminishes. Over time, bad

actors crowd out those foolish enough to follow the rules and the market becomes dominated by fraud. This was the case with the 2000s subprime bubble and the 1980s savings and loan bubble. It's the case now, too.

Last year, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia published a report titled *Owner Occupancy Fraud and Mortgage Performance*. Occupancy fraud is where someone states that they plan to live in a home when they apply for a mortgage when, in reality, they are an investor who will never live there. This is fraud because homeowners get preferential loan terms backed by the federal government, while investors pay something closer to a market rate. They can also, therefore, pay more for a home than they otherwise would.

In other words, when someone commits occupancy fraud, banks and mortgage investors aren't compensated for the level of risk they are assuming. They are not compensated because the risk is hidden from them. Investors are more likely to be highly leveraged and more likely to fall into financial distress than regular homeowners. They are also far more likely to strategically default ó to walk away from their repayment commitment when market conditions turn downward.

The Federal Reserve found that occupancy fraud is *widespread*, constituting *one-third* of the effective investor population. These fraudulent loans are being

bundled with other loans and sold as mortgage-backed securities, one of the bedrocks of our banking reserve system. Fraudulent loans are also *common* in the GSE market (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac), both within bundles of securities and within their own portfolios. Fraud is not just rampant in the residential mortgage market. Earlier this month, the Wall Street Journal also reported that Fannie and Freddie were adjusting their rules to address fraud within the commercial real estate market. Read the article; it's astounding.

According to people familiar with the new rules, banks would have to *independently verify* financial information related to borrowers for apartment complexes and other multifamily properties. If this is the first time you're learning that banks routinely don't verify the borrower's financial information before originating loans in the millions of dollars that they then sell to the government, well, I hope you're at least not surprised.

It gets even better. According to the Wall Street Journal, banks wanting to unload their commercial real estate loans to the government may have to confirm *whether a property borrower has adequate cash* as well as verify *their source of funds*. Again, you might be asking what exactly banks do if they aren't doing this. That's a

legitimate question and I don't have an adequate answer except to say that this should surprise nobody who has examined the subprime bubble.

Comically, again hearkening back to 2008, Fannie and Freddie (aka the federal government) are going to require that banks *complete due diligence* on the appraised value of a property. The Wall Street Journal notes that banks have incentives to *trust the figures* they are sent, rather than pursuing expensive audits or risking losing clients to too much red tape.

This is the kind of thing I meant when I wrote earlier in this piece that, in a market dominated by fraud, bad actors crowd out those foolish enough to follow the rules. The only reason these concerns are starting to be raised now is because, as they say in the business, the music is slowing and people are starting to look for chairs. Those of you looking to Wall Street and Washington to help you finance a revolution in housing construction seem likely to be disappointed yet again. As I wrote earlier this year, Fannie Mae ó and all the other purveyors of centralized capital ó are not interested in pursuing strategies that make housing broadly affordable. In fact, they will oppose any policy that actually makes prices go down. It's time for a bottom-up approach to housing. It's time to start building a strong town.

Are We Already In An AI Bubble?

I've been wrestling with a question that many are asking: are we already in an AI bubble? And if we are, what does that mean for India? To get a grip on where we stand, we first need to look at the global picture - because that's where the story of AI's present and future is being written.

Two pieces got me thinking. The first, from The Economist, highlights how the investor frenzy around AI might be cooling off. Some of the biggest AI companies have seen their stock prices dip by as much as 15% in the last month alone. And here's the real kicker: only about 4.8% of American companies currently use AI in their products or services, down from earlier this year. That's a shocking statistic, given all the hype.

Then there's the Goldman Sachs report titled, 'Gen AI: Too Much Spend, Too Little Benefit?'. In it, Jim Covello, the Head of Global Equity Research, points out something we should all be paying attention to: over \$1 trillion is expected to be spent on AI infrastructure and development in the coming years. But will it be worth it?

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Covello's not convinced. He argues that for AI to justify that level of spending, it has to tackle some really complex problems - ones it's not quite ready to solve. Developing and running AI isn't cheap. Unlike other tech shifts that helped cut costs, AI doesn't seem to be bringing down expenses.

So the big question is - will these massive investments ever pay off?

The High Price Of An AI Query

According to The Economist, training models like OpenAI's GPT-4 consume massive amounts of energy - enough to power 50 American homes for a century. Costs for training these models are skyrocketing: current estimates for the biggest models hit \$100 million, with future generations potentially reaching \$1 billion or even \$10 billion. The operational costs - answering queries, for instance - can also balloon, costing up to \$223,000 for tasks like summarising financial reports. This raises serious concerns for investors despite the \$95 billion already poured into AI startups this year.

But here's where things get interesting. Enter Entrepreneurial Optimism. Despite this scepticism, the entrepreneurial spirit around AI refuses to slow down. Just look at Mukesh Bansal, a veteran entrepreneur who recently launched Nurix.ai and secured \$27 million in funding. Mukesh is no stranger to building successful ventures, and his leap into AI signals a strong belief in its potential.

This brings me to a broader observation: we might be on the cusp of a new wave of Indian AI startups ready to go global,

much like the SaaS boom we witnessed a few years ago. These startups are not just riding a hype train; they aim to solve real-world problems and bring tangible value to businesses and consumers alike. Moreover, this massive wave of AI tools and generative AI tech is hitting the market, putting powerful capabilities in the hands of everyday users. It's democratising intelligence like never before - people can now tap into tools that were once only accessible to experts or big corporations. So, while billions - maybe even trillions - are being sunk into AI infrastructure, there's never been a better time to explore and use these tools for yourself.

Finding A Middle Ground

So, where does this leave us? On the one hand, we have warnings of an AI bubble fueled by excessive spending with questionable returns. At the same time, we see relentless optimism from entrepreneurs and investors betting big on AI's future. The truth lies somewhere in between. Yes, there may be overexuberance, but dismissing AI's transformative potential could mean missing out on significant innovations. Do you believe we're in an AI bubble? Or do you think this is just the beginning of AI's true potential being realised?

Sector 36 : How Far Is Too Far For 'Content'?

The discovery of the Nithari killings in Noida in 2006 sent shockwaves across India, instilling fear and horror in many. The recent Netflix film, Sector 36, is unofficially inspired by this tragic event, which involved the kidnapping and murder of numerous children and women.

An Obsession With Gory Details

It is not uncommon for filmmakers to draw from real-life tragedies. But debutant director Aditya Nimbalkar and writer Bodhayan Raychaudhuri's film, released on September 13, perhaps seem to forget how profound a human tragedy the Nithari killings were. The film trivialises the case through its poorly developed characters and overtly graphic depictions of murder, sexual abuse, necrophilia, and cannibalism. Sensational and brutal, it presents nauseatingly grotesque portrayals of its victims. As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that the filmmakers, lacking any social consciousness, appear more obsessed with shocking viewers with dismembered and decaying body parts on-screen rather than with exploring the human aspects of the story. Featuring Vikrant Massey as the psychopathic butcher Prem, Akash Khurana as his wealthy employer Bassi, and Deepak Boriyal as SI Ram Charan Pandey, the investigator, the film betrays a severe lack of thoughtful examination of the case.

From the outset, Sector 36's narrative is centred around disturbing scenes, including ones where Prem is seen



butchering a schoolgirl in a restroom. The treatment raises a few critical questions: what was the intention behind creating Sector 36? How can a real-life horror story be reduced to a mere spectacle? And in what way does this film qualify as entertainment?

Should OTT Face Regulation Too?

Streaming platforms have long had an affinity towards true crime stories and films based on unsolved murders, sensational cases, and freak accidents. Millions are invested in such productions solely because they captivate and fascinate audiences and drive profits. The

entertainment industry banks on this very fascination and curiosity. True, many true crime filmmakers do make an effort to present a well-crafted and thought-provoking narrative. But that can't be said for Sector 36, whose lack of depth and research almost borders on disregard for the victims in the Nithari killings.

There has been heavy debate over censorship on digital platforms in recent years. While the government has cracked down on content deemed vulgar, OTT platforms are expected to self-regulate their offerings in the realm of general entertainment. In the case of

Sector 36, that self-regulation - and reflection - seem absent, both on the filmmakers' end as well as the streaming platform's. If shock value was the intention of the makers, then they have indeed succeeded, but on the back of a horrific tragedy, and by exploiting it for fame and profit. Writers and directors working with real events must consider the ordeal of the victims and their families. Exploiting the trauma of others and inadvertently glorifying killers is a tragedy in itself. In the case of Sector 36, neither the intention is justifiable, nor the execution.

Joe Biden meets Muhammad Yunus, offers US's full support to Bangladesh

According to a press note, Joe Biden said if the students could sacrifice so much for their country, "they too should do more".

Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser of the Bangladesh government, on Tuesday met US President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York. According to a press note from the Chief Adviser's Office, Biden offered the US's full support to the interim government of Bangladesh. The Nobel Peace Prize winner sought the US's cooperation in rebuilding Bangladesh while apprising Biden about how the students "rose against the tyranny of the previous government" and gave their lives to create the opportunity to rebuild Bangladesh, the press note read. According to the press note, Biden said if the students could



sacrifice so much for their country, "they too should do more". Yunus also met a host of other leaders at the UN session, including World Bank President

Ajay Banga and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk. Muhammad Yunus, a noted economist known for founding Grameen Bank and

pioneering the concept of microfinance and microcredit, was sworn in as the chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh on August 8. This

came three days after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country after a violent student-led mass uprising. Notably, there were allegations against the US of orchestrating a regime change in Bangladesh, with Sheikh Hasina herself hinting about the American interference in the past.

However, the White House rejected the claims, saying that the United States government was involved in the Bangladesh situation. On September 15, a high-level US delegation met Muhammad Yunus in Dhaka and assured him of expanding economic and political ties to create a more equitable and inclusive future for the people of the country.

Prevent beggars from entering under Umrah visas, Saudi Arabia urges Pak

Saudi Arabia has raised concerns about the growing number of Pakistani beggars arriving in the Kingdom under the guise of religious pilgrimage and asked Islamabad to take action to prevent them from entering the Gulf country, a media report said.

Saudi Arabia has raised concerns about the growing number of Pakistani beggars arriving in the Kingdom under the guise of religious pilgrimage and asked Islamabad to take action to prevent them from entering the Gulf country, a media report said on Tuesday. Citing sources from Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Express Tribune newspaper reported that the Saudi authorities have also warned that if the situation is not controlled, it could negatively affect Pakistani Umrah and Hajj pilgrims. "The Saudi Ministry of Hajj has issued a warning to Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs, urging action to prevent Pakistani beggars from entering the kingdom under Umrah visas," the paper said. In response, Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs has decided to introduce an "Umrah Act," which aims to regulate travel agencies

facilitating Umrah trips, bringing them under legal oversight, it said. Additionally, the ministry has asked the Pakistani government to find ways to prevent beggars from travelling to Saudi Arabia under the guise of religious pilgrimage.

Earlier, in a meeting with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured him that strict measures would be implemented against the mafia responsible for sending beggars to Saudi Arabia.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been tasked with cracking down on this network, which Mohsin said is damaging Pakistan's image.

Pakistani beggars travel to the Middle East under the guise of ziarat (pilgrimage). Most people visit Saudi Arabia on Umrah visas and then indulge in begging-related activities, Secretary Overseas Pakistanis Zeeshan Khanzada said last year. Arshad Mahmood, Secretary of Overseas



Pakistanis, last year pointed out that several Gulf countries have expressed concerns regarding the behaviour of overseas Pakistanis, particularly in areas of work ethics, attitudes, and involvement in criminal activities.

According to the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, a staggering 90 per cent of beggars apprehended in foreign countries belong to Pakistan.

The FIA has been directed to crack down on the mafias responsible for sending beggars to Saudi Arabia.

A month ago, the FIA offloaded 11 alleged beggars from a Saudi Arabia-bound flight at Karachi airport.

During the immigration process, FIA officials questioned the passengers, who admitted that their purpose for visiting Saudi Arabia was to beg.

In September last year, 16 beggars disguised as pilgrims were offloaded from a Saudi Arabia-bound flight and arrested for trying to travel to the Gulf Kingdom to indulge in begging.

A majority of the pickpockets arrested from within Mecca's grand mosque are Pakistani nationals, Khanzada was quoted as saying in local media.

Retired New York judge kills himself as FBI arrives on doorstep of his expensive home

A former prosecutor and retired judge killed himself on Tuesday as the FBI arrived at his home in New York to arrest him.

Stewart Rosenwasser, 72, died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound during a federal raid on his \$430,000 home in Campbell Hall.

The shamed judge has been embroiled in a federal bribery scandal involving a previous case that he oversaw as a public prosecutor. After authorities arrived at his address to arrest him on Tuesday morning, Rosenwasser allegedly opened

fire on federal agents before taking his own life. Federal prosecutors allege that Rosenwasser had been taking bribes worth \$63,000 while working inside the Orange County District Attorney's Office. The bureau said: 'The FBI is reviewing an agent-involved shooting that occurred earlier this morning in Campbell Hall, NY. The FBI takes all shooting incidents involving our agents seriously. In accordance with FBI policy, the shooting incident is under review by the FBI's Inspection Division. As this is an ongoing matter, we have no further



details to provide.' According to an indictment unsealed just

hours after his death, he had taken money from a Mout'z 'Marty' Soudani, who's nephew Martin Soudani was last year jailed for stealing \$1.9 million from his uncle. Prosecutors allege that Soudani and Rosenwasser had known each other for around 40 years, and Rosenwasser had represented him as a private attorney in the 1990s. Mout'z had accused both his sister, Eman, and his nephew of stealing the money from him October 2022. The charges against Eman were dropped, and Martin later pleaded guilty to taking \$1.6 million from his uncle and

served two months in behind bars. The entire case against the two was prosecuted after Mout'z paid Rosenwasser to go after his own family, according to federal investigators. After Eman and Martin were arrested in Colorado, Rosenwasser is alleged to have text Soudani saying: 'I won't text anymore. Anything you want to tell me, call me. That's it. I will call you tomorrow. We must stop creating text messages. Period. Martin's lawyers are seeking post-conviction relief by challenging the legality of the conviction and requesting the judgement be vacated.

United States Files Suit Against the Georgia Institute of Technology and Georgia Tech Research Corporation Alleging Cybersecurity Violations



ATLANTA ñ The United States has filed a complaint-in-intervention against the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and Georgia Tech Research Corporation (GTRC) raising claims under the False Claims Act and federal common law alleging that those defendants failed to meet cybersecurity requirements in

connection with U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) contracts.

GTRC is an affiliate of Georgia Tech that contracts with government agencies for work to be performed at Georgia Tech and its related entities.

On February 20, 2024, the United States

intervened in a whistleblower suit brought by current and former members of Georgia Tech's cybersecurity team against Georgia Tech and GTRC. Cybersecurity compliance by government contractors is critical in safeguarding U.S. information and systems against threats posed by malicious actors, said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan.

For this reason, we expect contractors to abide by cybersecurity requirements in their contracts and grants, regardless of the size or type of the organization or the number of contracts involved. Our office will hold accountable those contractors who ignore cybersecurity rules.

US to send more troops to Middle East amid rising violence

The US is sending additional troops to the Middle East in response to a sharp spike in violence between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon that has raised the risk of a greater regional war, the Pentagon said Monday.

Pentagon press secretary Major General Pat Ryder would provide no details on how many additional forces or what they would be tasked to do. The US currently has about 40,000 troops in the region.

In light of increased tension in the Middle East and out of an abundance of caution, we are sending a small number of additional US military personnel forward to augment our forces that are already in the region. But for

operational security reasons, I'm not going to comment on or provide specifics. The new deployments come after significant strikes by Israeli forces against targets inside Lebanon that have killed hundreds and as Israel is preparing to conduct further operations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday warned Lebanese civilians in a videotaped message to evacuate their homes ahead of further airstrikes. He spoke as Israeli warplanes continued to strike alleged Hezbollah targets in southern and eastern Lebanon.

The State Department is warning Americans to leave Lebanon as the risk of a regional war increases.

United States Files Suit Against the Georgia Institute of Technology and Georgia Tech Research Corporation Alleging Cybersecurity Violations

The son of the man suspected in the assassination attempt in Florida against former President Donald Trump has been arrested on federal charges of possessing child sexual abuse images.

Oran Alexander Routh was arrested this week after authorities searched his Greensboro, North Carolina, home in connection with an investigation unrelated to child exploitation, and found hundreds of files depicting child sexual abuse, an FBI agent said in court

papers. Investigators who seized multiple electronic devices found videos sent to Oran Routh in July as well as chats from a messaging application commonly used by people who share child sexual abuse material, the FBI agent said. He faces two charges of possessing and receiving child sexual abuse material and is expected to appear later Tuesday in federal court in North Carolina.

There was no attorney listed for Oran Routh in court

papers. Phone messages left for relatives of Oran Routh were not immediately returned.

Oran Routh's father, Ryan Wesley Routh, has been charged with federal gun offences in connection to the attempted assassination at Trump's Florida golf course earlier this month. Prosecutors have indicated much more serious attempted assassination charges are coming. Oran Routh's arrest was first reported Tuesday by ABC News.



Kamala Harris is stumped by question about crucial part of her economic policy during MSNBC interview

Vice President Kamala Harris gave a long pause during her interview on MSNBC when she faced a question over how she would pay for her economic plans. The moment came early in the interview where Harris batted away slow-pitch questions such as 'can we trust you?' Interviewer Stephanie Ruhle asked Harris, who was giving her first network TV interview since securing her party's nomination, how she would pay for her economic plans. 'If you can't raise corporate taxes or if GOP takes control of the Senate, where do you get the money to do that,' her interviewer asked, after Harris outlined some of her plans like a \$6,000 credit for young couples or subsidies for new small business ventures. Republicans stand a decent chance of taking the chamber from the narrow Democratic majority, with a Montana Democratic-held seat growing in-



creasingly vulnerable. 'But we're going to have to raise corporate taxes,' Harris told her after a pause. 'And we're going to have to raise it if we're going to have to make sure that the biggest corporations and billionaires pay their fair share. That's just it,' Harris said. She neglected to say

the details of her plan, which include a new 25 percent minimum tax on people worth more than \$100 million, a capital gains hike, and an increase in the corporate tax to 28 percent.

Ruhle herself said after the interview that 'she doesn't answer the question ... Where is

she going to get the money from?' 'She said we just have to do it. And that's great and that's a campaign promise,' she added. The moment came in an interview where Harris blasted Trump for wanting to extend the array of his 2017 tax cuts.

'The facts remain that

Donald Trump has a history of taking care of very rich people, and I'm not mad at anybody for being rich, but they should pay their fair share,' Harris said. Harris said her plan would cut taxes for 100 million American, protecting those earning less than \$400,000 per year. She talked about building an economy where people have an ability to buy a home, to start a business, to take a nice vacation from time to time. She also responded to Trump's claims she never worked at McDonald's by revealing reciting one of the fast food chain's famous jingles. But the candidate avoided major stumbles, after facing pressure from Republicans and the media to do more interviews. Ruhle also asked Harris how she could raise taxes on corporations without sending them overseas where taxes were cheaper.

What's next for NYC as Mayor Adams faces indictment and calls for resignation



New York City Mayor Eric Adams has received a barrage of calls for his resignation immediately following news of his indictment by a grand jury on federal criminal charges. If Adams were

to step aside following the indictment, he would initially be replaced by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, a progressive Democrat. The next mayoral election is not due until June of next

year. Williams has been the public advocate since 2019 and would take over as acting mayor. Responsibility for setting a date for a special election to decide Adams' successor would fall to Williams and he would need to do so within three days of taking over the post. Williams has long been a harsh critic of Adams casting doubts about his ability to govern amid the current swirl of federal investigations. 'I'm not sure how you continue to govern with, every day, more corrupt arrests, more corrupt suspicions,' he said. He has attacked the mayor's policing strategy which he sees as aggressive.

Donald Trump calls Ukraine 'dead', dismisses its defense against Russia's invasion: 'If they made a bad deal'

Former President Donald Trump described Ukraine in bleak and mournful terms Wednesday, referring to its people as 'dead' and the country itself as 'demolished,' and further raising questions about how much the former president would be willing if elected again to concede in a negotiation over the country's future.

Trump argued Ukraine should have made concessions to Russian President Vladimir Putin in the months before Russia's February 2022 attack, declaring that even 'the worst deal would've been better than what we have now.' Trump, who has long been critical of U.S.

aid to Ukraine, frequently claims that Russia never would have invaded if he was president and that he would put an end to the war if he returned to the White House. But rarely has he discussed the conflict in such detail.

His remarks, at a North Carolina event billed as an economic speech, come on the heels of a debate this month in which he pointedly refused to say whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war.

On Tuesday, Trump touted the prowess of Russia and its predecessor Soviet Union, saying that wars are 'what they do.'

Temple defaced in US with 'Hindus go back' message, 2nd incident in 10 days

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in California was on Wednesday desecrated with anti-Hindu messages, the second such incident in the US in the past 10 days. The BAPS Public Affairs said their temple in

Sacramento was desecrated with a "Hindus go back" message.

We stand united against hate with prayers for peace," the organisation said in a post on X.

The Sacramento Police said that they were

investigating "vandalism being classified as a hate crime" at the BAPS Hindu Temple in Mather.

'Police further stated that the accused also cut water lines at the property.

Meanwhile, members of the Hindu community

gathered at the temple following the incident for a prayer ceremony to promote "harmony".

"Community leaders gathered for a heartfelt prayer ceremony at the BAPS Mandir in Sacramento, CA, following the desecration of

the mandir.

Inspired by Mahant Swami Maharaj, we remain dedicated to promoting harmony and standing against intolerance.

Together we will defeat hate," the organisation said while posting pictures on X.

Big threats to my life from Iran, attacker's death wish is to target me: Trump

Former US President Donald Trump has claimed "big threats" to his life from Iran and that the death wish of the attacker was to attack

Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump alleged "big threats" to his life from Iran and that an attack on him was a "death wish" for the attacker. Trump made the claim after he survived two assassination attempts in two months. The 78-year-old Republican was also briefed by US intelligence agencies on the "real and specific" threat to his life allegedly from Iran in a bid to "sow chaos" in the country, according to his campaign. Big threats to my life from Iran. The entire US military is watching and waiting. Moves were already made by Iran that didn't work out, but they will try again. Not a good situation for anyone. I am surrounded by more men, guns and weapons



communications director said on late Tuesday night, "President Trump was briefed earlier today by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence regarding real and specific threats from Iran to assassinate him in an effort to destabilise and sow chaos in the US.

"Intelligence officials have identified these 'continued and coordinated' attacks heightened in the past few months, and law enforcement officials across all agencies are working to ensure Trump is protected and the November election is free from interference," Cheung said. On July 13, Trump narrowly survived a shooting when a bullet grazed his ear during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

than I have ever seen before," he tweeted on Tuesday (local time). "Thank you to Congress for unanimously approving far more

money to Secret Service - Zero 'No' Votes, strictly bipartisan. Nice to see Republicans and Democrats get together on

something. An attack on a former President is a death wish for the attacker!" he said. Steven Cheung, Trump's Campaign

Joe Biden forgets he's in Midtown Manhattan while addressing world leaders: 'Welcome to Washington'

In his latest gaffe, Joe Biden forgot that he was speaking in Midtown Manhattan on Wednesday, September 25, and instead went on to welcome world leaders to Washington. "Thank you, thank you, thank you. Welcome to Washington," the 81-year-old president said at the InterContinental New York Barclay hotel, which is about five minutes' walk north of the famous Chrysler Building. Biden

then moved on to his speech, which suggests he did not realise he made a mistake. "Fellow leaders, friends, for 944 days [Russian President Vladimir] Putin has waged his vicious onslaught against Ukraine," he said at the gathering, where Western leaders had come together to reaffirm their support for Kyiv. Joe Biden rejected calls for his resignation, even from some Democrats. Biden, the oldest-ever American president, ended his candidacy for a second

term on July 21. He dropped out of the race after a disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump, 78, and endorsed Kamala Harris.

However, before dropping out, Biden tried to dismiss concerns over his debate performance, saying in a campaign ad, "I know right from wrong. I know how to tell the truth. And I know, like millions of Americans know, when you get knocked down, you get back up."



White House journalists' body slams limited media access at Biden's Quad meetings

The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) has criticised the limited press access at President Joe Biden's bilateral meetings at the Quad summit in Delaware and called it "unacceptable".

The Quad summit took place on Saturday (local time) at Biden's home in Wilmington, Delaware, and was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. Reporters, how-



ever, are not allowed to cover bilateral meetings with the White

House, citing "security concerns". In a tweet, CBS News corre-

spondent Ed O'Keefe said, "The White House blocked the American press from documenting the president's 'personal meetings' with the other leaders of the Quad. But somehow, the Indian delegation was able to broadcast live from the front door of the Biden household.

"In an email, WHCA president and Politico correspondent Eugene Daniels said, "The lack of access to the president of the US for these bilateral meetings due to a location chosen by the

White House is unacceptable to the WHCA," Fox News reported. Criticising the Biden administration's stance on press access, Daniels said, "My understanding is that the current posture of the administration is for the press to only see the leaders drive in with no eyes, or cameras on POTUS in this historic moment. I can't remember a time where this president has had a bilateral meeting on US soil and the press and therefore the American people were blocked from seeing it.

Trump calls for 100% tariffs on cars made in Mexico as part of US manufacturing plan

Trump calls for 100% tariffs on cars made in Mexico as part of US manufacturing plan

SAVANNAH, Ga. ó Donald Trump on Tuesday pledged to stop U.S. businesses from shipping jobs overseas and to take other countries' jobs and factories by relying heavily on sweeping tariffs to boost auto manufacturing ó despite warnings that domestic consumers would pay more and a lack of specifics about how his plans would work.

"I want German car companies to become American car companies. I want them to build their plants here," Trump declared during a speech in Savannah, Georgia. Trump added that, if elected, he'd put a 100% tariff on every car coming into the U.S. from Mexico and that the only way to avoid those charges would be for an automaker to build the cars in the U.S. His ideas, if enacted, could cause a huge upheaval in the American auto industry. Many automakers now build smaller, lower-priced vehicles in Mexico ó facilitated by a trade agreement Trump negotiated while president ó or in other countries because their profit margins are slim. The lower la-



bor costs help the companies make money on those vehicles.

German and other foreign automakers already have extensive manufacturing operations in the U.S., and many now build more vehicles here than they send. BMW, for instance, has an 8 million-square-foot campus in South Carolina that employs 11,000 people building more than 1,500 SUVs per day for the U.S. and 120

export markets. Mercedes and Volkswagen also have large factories here. If German automakers were to increase production here, they likely would have to take it from factories in Germany, which then would run below their capacity and be less efficient, said Sam Abuelsamid, principal research analyst for Guidehouse Insights. "It makes no sense," he

said. Trump proposes a "new American industrialism" ó without key specifics Trump has sought to press presidential rival Kamala Harris on the economy and has proposed using tariffs on imports and other measures to boost American industry ó even as economists have cautioned that U.S. consumers would bear the costs of tariffs and other Trump proposals like staging the

largest deportation operation in U.S. history. The former president laid out a broad array of economic proposals during a speech in the key swing state of Georgia, promising to create a special ambassador to help lure foreign manufacturers to the U.S. and further entice them by offering access to federal land. Additionally, he called for lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate from 21% to 15%, but only for companies that produce in the U.S. His opponent, Vice President Harris, wants to raise the corporate tax rate to 28%. It had been 35% when Trump became president in 2017, and he later signed legislation lowering it.

"We're putting America first," Trump said. "This new American industrialism will create millions and millions of jobs."

And Trump suggested wiping away some environmental regulations to boost energy production, saying America has "got the oil, it's got the gas. We have everything. The only thing we don't have is smart people leading our country."

Byju's faces setback as US court upholds \$1.2 billion loan default ruling



The Delaware Supreme Court on September 23 ruled against Byju's, upholding a previous decision that found the Indian edtech company in default on its \$1.2 billion Term Loan B.

The decision by the US court adds another blow to Byju's, which has been facing several challenges in recent months.

The court's decision supports an earlier ruling made by the Delaware Court of Chancery, which allowed the company's

lenders, represented by Glas Trust LLC, to seize control of Byju's Alpha Inc., a key American subsidiary. This subsidiary had been pledged as collateral for the loan. The \$1.2 billion loan was originally extended to Byju's by a group of 37 financial institutions. The loan agreement gave Glas Trust, acting on behalf of the lenders, the right to enforce their claims if Byju's defaulted.

In March 2023, the lenders issued a notice of default after

Byju's failed to renegotiate the loan's terms. Following the default, Glas Trust sought to take control of Byju's Alpha Inc., which was central to securing the loan.

In August 2023, the Delaware Court of Chancery ruled in favour of Glas Trust. The court determined that Byju's had failed to meet its obligations under the loan agreement and that Glas and the lenders were entitled to take control of

Byju's Alpha Inc. through written consent. **Byju's appeal rejected** Byju's appealed the decision, asking the Delaware Supreme Court to dismiss the case. It argued that the matter should be put on hold due to a separate lawsuit pending in a New York court. However, the Supreme Court rejected this argument, stating that Byju's had forfeited its right to raise the issue by not addressing it earlier in the case. The Delaware Supreme Court's ruling said that Byju's had been given multiple chances to raise its concerns before the Court of Chancery, but the company failed to do so. "We find it difficult to see how judicial economy and finality can square with requiring the parties to retry the case, merely because the Appellants failed to address an issue which they now claim is vital to this case," the court stated in its ruling. Following the

court's decision, control of Byju's Alpha Inc. will remain in the hands of Glas Trust and the group of lenders. This subsidiary is a significant asset for the company and was initially offered as collateral to secure the loan. The lenders welcomed the ruling, which bolstered their position on Byju's default. "We are pleased that the Delaware Supreme Court affirmed what we've known: Byju's knowingly breached the credit agreement and defaulted," the lenders said in a statement. They added that Byju Raveendran, the company's co-founder, and Riju Raveendran, a board member, had acknowledged the default when they signed amendments to the agreement between October 2022 and January 2023. The lenders also noted that the ruling confirmed their right to accelerate the loan and take control of Byju's Alpha Inc.

AI will reshape jobs, but we won't run out of work, says OpenAI Sam Altman

AI will reshape jobs, but we won't run out of work, says OpenAI Sam Altman

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, believes that artificial intelligence (AI) will bring profound changes to the job market, though not as quickly or drastically as some may fear. In a recent blog post, Altman shared that AI could significantly reshape labour markets, both positively and negatively, but he doesn't foresee a sudden loss of jobs. He explains, "Most jobs will change more slowly than most people think, and I have no fear that we'll run out of things to do." He stresses

that while AI will replace some tasks, it will also enable humans to focus on more creative and meaningful work, amplifying our abilities. Altman suggests that many of the jobs people do today would seem trivial to someone from a few hundred years ago. In the same way, future generations may view our current work as outdated or unnecessary. However, just as people have adapted to technological shifts in the past, he believes society will adjust to the

changes AI brings. "People have an innate desire to create and to be useful to each other," Altman says, and AI will help us unlock new ways to contribute. Looking beyond jobs, Altman paints a broader picture of how AI will transform society. He is optimistic that AI will enable humanity to achieve things once thought impossible. He envisions a future where AI assists in everything from healthcare to education, offering "virtual tutors who can provide personalised in-



struction in any subject, in any language, and at whatever pace they need." He also foresees AI helping to solve global challenges like climate change and scientific discoveries.

Spiral galaxy 59 million light-years away looks like this: NASA shares stunning video of 'young, hot stars'



The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Hubble Space Telescope has shared a stunning video of a spiral galaxy known as Caldwell 45, or NGC 5248. As per NASA's Hubble, the spiral galaxy is located 59 million light-years away from Earth. The Hubble Space Telescope which launched in 1990 changed the fundamental understanding of the universe

right from determining the atmospheric composition of planets around other stars to discovering dark energy.

Coming back to the video shared by NASA Hubble, it added that NGC 5248 is home to starburst regions — places where stars form at a much higher rate than usual.

Explaining about the video shared, it added that the

bright blue patches seen throughout the spiral arms indicate the presence of young, hot stars. "Many viewers expressed their admiration; one user exclaimed 'Maravilhoso!' (Wonderful in English)" while another described it as "Beautiful." One user commented saying, "This is an awesome watch! Looking at new stars is progress that is not scary, but marvelous!" Another user added and said, "At first glance, I was convinced I was looking at a closeup shot of freshly baked sourdough crust, complete with floury dusted sections. Amazing how so many patterns and appearances are mirrored from micro to macro in our universe." Some one user called it "Dreamy" while another called it "Perfect."

Digital payment transactions value hits Rs 3,659 lakh cr in FY24, UPI clocks 138 pc growth

Mumbai, As the unified payments interface (UPI) goes global, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has urged the banks to explore creating deeper digital opportunities and utilise UPI as a transformative innovation to empower millions.

According to FM Sitharaman, India's UPI currently drives 45 per cent of global digital payments. Speaking at an event in Pune, the Finance Minister said a robust banking system can help achieve economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability, and as UPI spreads its wings, the banks can thrive along with it too. Based on the encouraging response received from several countries, the RBI is now focusing on making "UPI and RuPay truly global".

As per the latest National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data, UPI saw 41 per cent growth (year-on-year) at record 14.96 billion transactions in the month of August, as total transaction amount touched Rs 20.61 lakh crore — a 31 per cent YoY growth. The average daily transaction amount stood at 483 million last month, as the average daily transaction amount reached Rs 66,475 crore. The value of UPI transactions processed has remained above Rs 20 lakh crore for four consecutive months. UPI is now adding up to 60 lakh new users every month, fuelled by the RuPay credit card on UPI and its launch in foreign countries. transactions per day in the coming years.

Enough is enough, says Elon Musk over US FAA fining SpaceX 'for trivial'

Blasting the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for fining SpaceX "for trivial", CEO and founder Elon Musk on Friday said, "enough is enough". Taking to his social media platform X, Musk lashed out at the FAA for "attacking SpaceX for petty matters" while not taking any action against Boeing "for putting astronauts at risk".

The FAA had on Tuesday, proposed \$633,009 in civil penalties against SpaceX for allegedly failing to follow its licence requirements during two launches in 2023, by statutorily-set civil pen-

alty guidelines, a statement read. The FAA stated that SpaceX used the unapproved launch control room for the PSN SATRIA mission and did not conduct the required T-2 hour poll on June 18, 2023. The agency also offered SpaceX a 30-day time to respond. "The FAA News leadership spends their resources attacking SpaceX for petty matters that have nothing to do with safety while neglecting real safety issues at Boeing. This is deeply wrong and puts human lives at risk," he said. "NASA deemed the Boeing capsule unsafe for astro-

naut return, turning, out of necessity, to SpaceX, yet instead of fining Boeing for putting astronauts at risk, the FAA is fining SpaceX for trivial! Enough is enough," the Tesla CEO added. The billionaire's comments came as Boeing's Starliner which launched Indian-origin Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station was deemed unfit by NASA to return the astronauts. While the spacecraft returned safely to Earth without the crew, the US space agency roped in SpaceX to bring the astronauts back next year.



What is the 2:2:2 rule for a relationship?

Feeling like your relationship is losing its spark? Try the viral 2:2:2 rule with your partner and rediscover the joy of quality time together.

If you ask anyone about the best part of a relationship, many would point to the honeymoon phase. It's a time filled with excitement, when everything feels fresh, and you're eager to discover more about your partner. The attraction is magnetic, and you find yourself wanting to be with them all the time. However, as the relationship matures, that initial spark often dims, and with it, the intensity of romance can fade. This shift is probably one of the reasons why many couples are embracing and discussing the 2:2:2 relationship rule on social media as a way to keep their bond strong for a long time. Ruchi Ruuh, a Delhi-based relationship counsellor, tells India Today that the 2:2:2 rule encourages couples to: Go on a date night every 2 weeks, Have a weekend getaway every 2 months, Take a week-long vacation every 2 years. According to Ruuh, this rule is going viral because it offers a structured but simple formula for keeping the relationship fresh and active, allowing couples to create scheduled, planned time for each other despite busy schedules. Dr Neerja Aggarwal, a Gurugram-based psychologist and co-



founder of the mental health startup Emoneeds, also believes that the 2:2:2 relationship rule offers a practical framework for nurturing relationships in a structured yet meaningful way. "Its popularity stems from its simplicity and effectiveness in fostering emotional closeness, reducing relationship burnout, and keeping romance alive. As life becomes increasingly hectic, couples find that this strategy helps them carve out intentional time to reconnect and maintain a healthy, balanced partnership, ensuring

long-term relationship satisfaction and resilience," she adds. It's beneficial for the relationship. The 2:2:2 rule provides planned rituals for couples to reconnect, reduce stress, and share meaningful experiences. Experts believe that dates and getaways can enhance communication, intimacy, and emotional bonding. "Studies suggest that engaging in these activities can reignite passion and excitement in long-term relationships. Dr Arthur Aron's research on 'self-expanding' activities found that couples

who engage in new and exciting experiences together have greater relationship satisfaction. The 2:2:2 rule's focus on ritualistic getaways and date nights encourages couples to break out of their routines and try new, exciting things," mentions Ruuh. Meanwhile, Dr Aggarwal feels that spending quality time together is fundamental for maintaining a healthy relationship because it directly influences how connected and valued each partner feels. This is exactly what the 2:2:2 rule taps into by encouraging couples

to consistently set aside intentional moments for each other. This regular focus on each other helps partners build a reservoir of positive interactions and shared experiences. Over time, these interactions reinforce a sense of security and mutual appreciation. It's important to understand that dates and getaways are essential for escaping the distractions of everyday life. "Spending quality time with your partner fosters intimacy and creates shared experiences outside daily routines. These moments allow you to reconnect, communicate openly, and reignite the romance. Time away from everyday responsibilities can also reduce stress, strengthen emotional bonds, and enhance overall relationship satisfaction," says Aashmeen Munjaal, a Delhi-based mental health and relationship expert.

Is it a relationship saviour? Munjal believes the 2:2:2 rule can help revive a struggling relationship by encouraging intentional quality time and fostering communication.

By dedicating specific time to each other, couples can reconnect emotionally and rebuild intimacy.

Bio-individuality: Understanding why treatments need a personalised approach

In healthcare, it's important to recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach rarely works. Each individual's unique biology, lifestyle, and circumstances need a personalized approach to ensure the best outcomes. For instance, two individuals with Type 2 diabetes might have vastly different treatment needs despite having similar physical attributes. One might thrive on a plant-based food plan with low stress, while the other may need an animal-based one and face high-stress levels. **Also read: Can poor**

sleep increase your belly fat?

These treatments consider various factors like genetics, lifestyle, environment, gut microbiome, emotional well-being, childhood experiences, and medication history to assess how an individual might react to specific medical plans or dietary changes. In the above example, the person with the plant-based plan may have a calm lifestyle that enhances their response to plant-based nutrients. Conversely, an individual relying on an animal-based food plan may have genetic needs for animal proteins but also require effective stress management to support their

overall treatment. This is where bio-individuality comes in. It encourages a personalized approach to well-being, focusing on understanding and responding to the body's signals such as energy levels, mood, and digestion while making tailored adjustments. Embracing bio-individuality is like embarking on a journey of self-discovery, where the key lies in recognizing what works best for one's own body rather than following a one-treatment-plan-fits-all approach. This understanding becomes even more critical when managing stress, as each person's path to stress relief is unique. Chronic stress can worsen underlying health conditions,



including gut issues, anxiety, and other issues.

To address this, incorporating holistic practices such as nature, sound medicine, yoga, meditation, and balanced cellular nutrition is crucial. These methods work together to balance the body's systems, reduce inflammation, boost the immune system, and enhance overall well-being.

However, a holistic approach goes beyond this; it's a complete lifestyle shift that embraces six key pillars: cellular nutrition, adequate exercise/movement, quality sleep, emotional well-being, spiritual health, and breathwork. By focusing on these pillars, healthcare professionals develop a comprehensive, personalized care plan that addresses each individual's specific needs.

Milan Fashion Week: Sheer dresses, fringe and boho-core

The recently concluded Milan Fashion Week saw many designers embracing the 1960s and 1990s



On 17 September, the first day of the recent Milan Fashion Week, designer Alberta Ferretti set the mood for unapologetic bohemian dressing, presenting her signature floaty, sheer, pleated and ruched dresses.

Some other showcases, too, embraced the boho-chic vibe in their showcases, making it the biggest trend of the season.

At the Fendi show, Kim Jones presented a series of slip dresses accented with Art Deco texturing and accessorised with Mama baguettes that featured matching embroidery. Blumarine's newly appointed creative director David Koma balanced the voluminous vibe of the romantic chiffon and georgette dresses by punctuating the line-up with leather separates. Here are some other key trends

that emerged at the fashion week in Milan.

Keeping it bold

Paying a tribute to the late Roberto Cavalli, creative director Fausto Puglisi's showcase for the brand included 62 looks, many of which were presented by Cavalli's favourite models, including Mariacarla Boscono, Alek Wek, Isabeli Fontana and Eva Herzigova. Among the highlights of the show were Cavalli's signature mermaid and bodycon dresses.

It's also been a season of 90s soft grunge, as was evident at the showcases of Versace, Dolce and Gucci. Sabato De Sarno, for instance, offered plenty of boudoir-inspired dresses in neon green and Ancora-red crafted in lace, which most probably be

soon seen on various red carpets.

With polo tees, bringing back the nineties mood of casual glamour. Dolce & Gabbana offered a tribute show to Marilyn Monroe, Monica Vitti and Marlene Dietrich, by dressing models in platinum wigs, babydoll dresses and pointy conical bras.

At Etro too, there was a panoply of form-flattering mesh-meets-prints looks, with a nod to flamenco dancers.

Archival redux

Prada's show saw a resurrection of the archival classics, from Mary Jane shoes and kitten heels with pointy edges, to tie-up ballet pumps and loafers. At Gucci, the historical Bamboo bag got an artistic upgrade.

There were a number of vintage

versions customised by Japanese artists Nami Yokoyama and Daido Moriyama in the show. Missoni also went back to the archives and reignited a colourful striped collection that was originally created in 1990 to celebrate the soccer world cup. The print of Donatella Versace's favourite flower, wild rose, was seen across garments in the collection.

Disco dressing

Some designers, including Prada, Gucci, Bottega Veneta and Versace, presented high-octane glam dresses, reminding that shine is still in fashion.

Emporio Armani's latticed skirts with interlocking macro paillette, for example, stood out, along with sporty vest dresses featuring sparkly horizontal stripes. One of

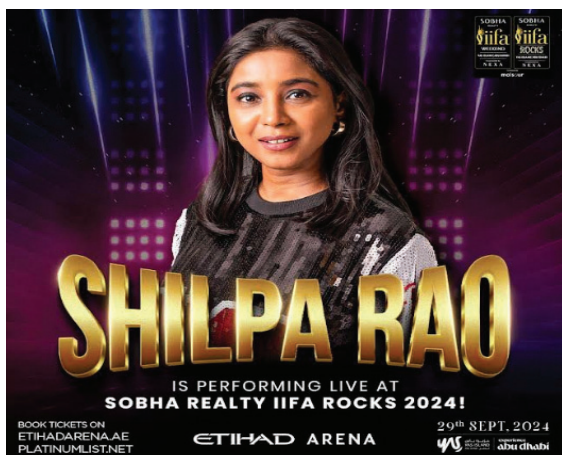
Tom Ford's T-shirt dresses encrusted with silver beads was a statement-maker. Philosophy Di Lorenzo Serafini was a little more adventurous and presented two head-to-toe shine looks in glistening lamé, a co-ord set and a halter gown with a thigh-high slit.

Summer leather

There were a handful of showcases that made summer leather shine. Today's play of sculpting and draping techniques and a masterful extrapolation of leather stood out, especially seen in a forest green pleated leather dress. Also worth mentioning are cutwork leather coats at Ferragamo which evoked instant desirability. At Bally, a standout ensemble was a burgundy leather coat with a nipped waist which was paired with a skirt.



IIFA Rocks: An Unforgettable Night of Unmatched Music and Celebration with Shankar Ehsaan Loy, Shilpa Rao, Honey Singh, Lulia Vantur and Trailblazers of Indian Cinema- Technical Awards Winners



The highly anticipated IIFA Festival 2024 is set to dazzle Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, from September 27th to 29th, culminating in the grand SOBHA Realty IIFA Rocks, Co-Presented by NEXA and Co-Powered by Maisour, on Sunday, September 29th. As the grand finale of the IIFA Festival 2024, IIFA Rocks promises an exhilarating fusion of music, glamour, and star power, bringing together the industry's finest talents for a spectacular celebration. Hosted by the charismatic duo Siddhant Chaturvedi and Abhishek Banerjee, the night will feature electrifying performances by Shankar Ehsaan Loy, Shilpa Rao, Honey Singh, and Lulia Vantur. The evening will kick off with the legendary musical trio Shankar Ehsaan Loy,

whose soulful compositions and high-energy renditions have shaped the very fabric of Bollywood music for the past three decades. Their performance promises a captivating blend of classic hits and contemporary sounds, celebrating their monumental journey. Joining them is the immensely talented Shilpa Rao, whose powerful vocals and versatility have made her one of the most sought-after playback singers in Indian cinema. Her performance is sure to mesmerize the audience with a mix of melodious ballads and upbeat numbers. Adding to the excitement is the dynamic and ever-popular Honey Singh, who will bring his signature fusion of rap and Bollywood beats to the stage. Known for his chart-topping hits and high-energy

performances, Honey Singh's set will undoubtedly get the crowd on their feet. Completing the stellar line-up is the sensational Lulia Vantur, whose captivating presence and vocal prowess will add a layer of elegance and charm to the evening. Together, these performers will create an unforgettable night of music and entertainment, making IIFA Rocks a truly unmissable spectacle. A Landmark Celebration at IIFA Rocks: This extraordinary evening will honour the legendary musical trio Shankar Ehsaan Loy, celebrating their monumental 30-year journey in Indian cinema. Expect a night brimming with soul-stirring melodies and unforgettable moments as their iconic

soundtracks, which have defined Bollywood's musical landscape, take center stage. This dazzling event will celebrate their immense contributions with a perfect blend of music and glamour truly a night not to be missed! IIFA Rocks will also pay homage to the trailblazers of Indian cinema, spotlighting the technical brilliance behind the scenes. The event will recognize excellence in Cinematography, Screenplay, Dialogues, Editing, Choreography, Sound Design, Sound Mixing, Background Score, and Special Effects (Visual). These awards highlight the creativity and technical mastery that power the magic of Indian cinema, celebrating the unsung heroes who bring films to life.

Yas Island, Abu Dhabi Becomes The Heart Of Indian Cinema As It Plays Host To The Epic IIFA Festival 2024 - A Show-Stopping Celebration Of Five Iconic Industries This 27th -29th September!

Global Release: Under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance & Coexistence, the IIFA Awards return for an iconic third edition on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, from September 27th to 29th, 2024, at the renowned Etihad Arena. In partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism of Abu Dhabi and Miral, the 24th Edition of the IIFA Festival is set to be a historic celebration of cinematic excellence, promising to be the grandest yet, bringing together superstars across five legendary industries.

As the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards celebrates 24 years of cinematic excellence, the festivities will commence with the IIFA Utsavam Awards on Friday, September 27th, shining a spotlight on the brilliance of South Indian cinema. Following this, the IIFA Awards will take place on Saturday, September 28th, honoring the finest talents in Hindi cinema in a spectacular, sold-out celebration of glamour and stardom. The festival will culminate in grand style with the much-anticipated IIFA Rocks on Sunday, September 29th, a vibrant celebration of music, fashion, and entertainment that promises to leave a lasting

impression. Mr Andre Timmins, Founder/Director, IIFA stated, 'We are thrilled to unite the grandeur of Indian cinema for a historic star-studded celebration of five iconic industries this 27th -29th September, our biggest and most spectacular IIFA Festival yet. This year's IIFA will be a celebration of unprecedented scale, transcending cinematic boundaries with the convergence of Hindi Cinema and South Indian cinema, set against Yas Island's unmatched hospitality and breath-taking backdrop as a premier international destination.'

He added, 'The excitement is palpable as tickets for IIFA Awards night have sold out! Get ready for unforgettable moments, mesmerizing performances, and a cultural extravaganza during our star-studded three-day IIFA Festival. This galactic celebration of cinema will captivate audiences worldwide and leave a lasting global impact. A true testament to the unparalleled appeal of Yas Island, IIFA 2024 festival will foster meaningful connections, offer unique networking opportunities, and celebrate the visionaries who have shaped the global entertainment landscape, setting the stage for an extraordinary journey to 2025.'



Akshay Kumar Reveals Star-Studded Cast of 'Housefull 5'

Indian film sensation Akshay Kumar has given fans a first look at the star-studded cast of his highly anticipated comedy, Housefull 5. In an Instagram post that quickly went viral, the actor shared a photo from the film's set, showcasing himself with the other cast members Jacqueline Fernandez, Riteish Deshmukh, Abhishek Bachchan, and Dino Morea.

Akshay captioned the image with, 'Just another day with this incredible cast. Housefull of actors, one cruise, and endless stories to tell!' The fun-filled snapshot captured the playful energy fans have come to expect from the Housefull franchise. While Akshay, Riteish, Dino, and Abhishek opted for casual looks, Jacqueline stunned in an all-black



ensemble.

Housefull 5 has been generating buzz for months, especially with the announcement of its stellar lineup. Producer Sajid Nadiadwala has confirmed the inclusion of leading actresses Jacqueline Fernandez, Nargis Fakhri, Sonam Bajwa, Chitrangda Singh, and Soundarya Sharma, amplifying the film's star power. The fifth instalment of the beloved franchise is set to release in theatres on June 6, 2025, and fans are already eagerly counting down the days.

On the work front, Akshay Kumar has a stellar line-up of diverse and promising films including "Singham Again", "Sky Force," "Welcome 3," "Shankara," the threequel to Hera Pheri, "Bhoot Bangla" and more.



Taapsee Pannu decrypts 'diva energy': Being unapologetically yourself

Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu has decoded diva energy and said it is all about being bold and unapologetically yourself. Taapsee took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself dressed in a white formal suit. To complete her look, she chose to go soft with her make-up and tied her beautiful curly hair into a ponytail. 'Diva energy: Bold moves, big dreams, and being unapologetically yourself,' she wrote as the caption. Earlier this month, it was announced that the actress is joining hands with writer Kanika Dhillon once

again for the action thriller christened 'Gandhari', which will be helmed by Devashish Makhija, who made 'Joram'.

According to variety.com, the film has a riveting storyline filled with relentless determination and intense personal stakes, set against the backdrop of gripping mystery and high-powered action. Audiences will see Taapsee Pannu as a fierce mom on a mission, reads the plot description from streaming giant Netflix. After Anurag Kashyap's 'Manmarziyaan', 'Haseen Dillrubai' and its sequel 'Phir

Aayi Haseen Dillrubai', 'Rashmi Rocket' and Rajkumar Hirani-directed hit 'Dunki', 'Gandhari' marks the sixth instance of Taapsee and Dhillon's partnership. Taapsee was last seen in 'Khel Khel Mein' starring Akshay Kumar, Vaani Kapoor, Ammy Virk and Fardeen Khan to name a few. The film was about a game night between couples, which goes wrong after they have to confess secrets in front of each other. She was also seen in 'Phir Aayi Haseen Dillrubai', which is directed by Jayprad Desai.

Genelia Deshmukh reveals half-secret of her 'jawas' chutney

Actress Genelia Deshmukh on Friday delighted her fans by sharing a special recipe for the traditional 'jawas' chutney. The 'jawas' chutney is cherished in many Indian households for its rich nutritional value, particularly its high content of omega-three fatty acids, fibre, and antioxidants. Taking to Instagram, Genelia, who has 14.3 million followers, shared a video, in which she can be heard saying: 'I love Maharashtrian food. I mean look what I have made Jawas. I love making it because it's healthy, it's easy but I have a secret, which makes it the finest in the business. Waise my husband is OG Maharastrian but he also doesn't know. But he loves all my experiments.'

Decoding the recipe, Genelia added: 'For this recipe we use flax seeds, garlic, salt and many more things, which I am not going to tell you, because you have to guess what is my secret in the finest jawas chutney.' In the caption, she

wrote: 'My jawas chutney is the finest in the business. So fine that it passes through the sieve effortlessly. Any guesses on what's the secret behind it?' On the personal front, Genelia is married to actor Riteish Deshmukh. The couple tied the knot in February 2012, following Marathi traditions in a Hindu wedding ceremony. They have two sons, Riaan, and Rahul.

The couple had made their acting debut with the 2003 romantic movie 'Tujhe Meri Kasam'. Genelia then starred in Tamil movies like 'Boys', 'Sachein', 'Chennai Kadhal', 'Santosh Subramaniyam', 'Uthamaputhiran', and 'Velayudham'. She has also featured in Telugu films 'Satyam', 'Samba', 'Sye', 'Naa Alludu', 'Bommarillu', 'Sasirekha Parinayam', and 'Orange'. The 36-year-old has been a part of Hindi movies like 'Masti', 'Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na', 'Chance Pe Dance', 'Mister Mummy', and most recently 'Trial Period'.



Chinese Chatter - What's keeping India from the great Beijing reset?



A recent commentary in the Chinese government mouthpiece Global Times came down heavily on Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, accusing him of being an obstacle to gradually improving China-India ties. However, a closer look at the current Chinese discourse on India suggests that substantial resistance to improving China-India relations continues to come from within Chinese society.

It is true that a section of the Chinese strategic community is keen to create some positive atmospherics around China-India relations, projecting the impression that tensions between the two are gradually easing. Accordingly, there is much deliberation on the Chinese internet about a possible reset, even if tactical, in bilateral ties. It is being argued that since 2024, China-India relations have shown signs of easing, with frequent high-level interactions. In July, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Jaishankar in Astana, the capital of

Kazakhstan; at the end of August, the two met again in Vientiane, Laos. Such intensive high-level interactions have been rare in the past four years, which sends a positive signal to both domestic and international constituencies. In addition to high-level interactions, there has also been some progress in border affairs consultations. At the end of July and August, the two sides held the 30th and 31st border affairs consultations in New Delhi and Beijing, respectively. As the exchanges and consultations between the two sides deepened, India, it is argued, has also begun to adjust its China strategy by gradually relaxing restrictions on Chinese investments and showing a positive attitude towards issuing visas to Chinese personnel. The domestic public opinion in India, the Chinese side notes, is also quietly changing, with a growing consensus on the necessity of restoring Sino-Indian economic ties for India's own economic development. Ac-



According to some Chinese observers, the objective behind these efforts is to create the right conditions for a meeting between the two heads of state during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Kazan for the BRICS summit.

Why are rumours of conflict gaining traction?

On the other hand, in the past few days, sensational news of fresh clashes between Chinese and Indian soldiers have been doing the rounds on Chinese social media websites like Douyin and TikTok. These reports claimed that soon after the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs (WMCC) was held in Beijing, the People's Liberation Army crossed the LAC, pursued the Indian Army to a depth of 20 kilometres, lost 6 soldiers in the process, but finally succeeded in recapturing the Chumar bunkers. The timing of the campaign, the careful design of details (including specific dates, locations, and even the names of the victims), the professionalism on display took the Chinese internet by storm. So much so that on September 6, the PLA Western Theatre Command had to intervene and issue a statement, saying: "The internet is not a law-

less place! The production and dissemination of rumours involving the military should be stopped!"

Social media platforms like South Asia Studies Newsletter, considered close to the Chinese government, went to great lengths in debunking these rumours and argued how such a misinformation campaign is completely out of sync with the current theme of the warming up of China-India ties. Others sought to put the blame on certain vested interest groups within and outside China, accusing them of trying to sabotage the current positive trends in China-India ties. However, common citizens remained somewhat unconvinced by the explanations and wondered if the rumours were true. "There can be no smoke without fire! It may be that the timing of the announcement is contrary to the national strategic policy," read one post on the Chinese social media website Weibo. For India, this is reminiscent of the developments in 2013 as well as 2014, when high-level interactions between China and India took place under the shadow of serious border conflicts. Therefore, the lesson we need to draw is to stay prepared for conflicts, even as we tend to talk peace with China.

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How illegal streaming apps could land you in jail, your info on dark web



Raided by police for watching a film or a TV show? This is true, people might get raided for watching content on illegal platforms. Some IPTV apps and set-top boxes give access illegally to streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime and Hulu. Not just legal action, the use of these apps and devices might also lead to monitoring of users by pirates. Although these apps are a little easy on the pockets, they can lead to data breaches, viruses and malware.

Even getting raided by the police for participating in illegal activities. These pirates operate on the dark web and the customers paying for these illegal activities are contributing to such piracy-related activities in the US and Canada, even in some countries in Europe. "These pirates steal content from content owners, causing significant financial losses and job impacts across the media and entertainment industry," Manjusha of YuppTV tells India Today Digital. Manjusha is the Vice President (Content Acquisition and Strategic Partnerships) at YuppTV. The monitors can also be traced, and all personal information, including credit card details, can be accessed by pirates. The information can also be captured by them and might be sold on the dark web. "The funds generated from piracy serve illegitimate purposes such as drugs, terrorism, and human trafficking.

Through the consumption of pirated IPTV content, customers are indirectly contributing to these illegal activities by providing financial support to the pirates," a statement by YuppTV adds. The illegal pirates in the international markets include Chitram TV, BOSS IPTV, Tashan IPTV, Real TV, JadooTV, World Max TV, Maxx TV, VBox, Vois IPTV, Punjabi IPTV, and Indian IPTV. "The set-top boxes are brought through apps or stores and have

pirated content," Manjusha from YuppTV told India Today Digital. However, people using them might end up paying dearly.

LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FOR USING THESE STREAMING SERVICES

These boxes have spread across the US and Canada. "Our research tells us that there are over 300,000 set-top boxes with access to these illegal streaming services," Manjusha tells India Today Digital. But the users might face legal consequences. The users using these illegal platforms might also have to face legal consequences such as summons from the court. As a penalty, subscribers might also have to pay fines for every content they watch through such pirate services.

"There is news circulating about numerous raids on a major pirate, and customers who have been watching content through this illegal source might face subpoenas from the court. Major content partners are experiencing substantial losses due to IP infringement, and this is considered a serious criminal offence by courts," YuppTV statement adds.

"Recent incidents in the UK and the passing of laws in France on May 15th are consequences customers had to bear for accessing pirated content," it adds. The platform "Piracy Shield" came into existence as a result of anti-piracy laws. It blocks all kinds of illegal streaming of content. It blocks IPTV content and all its DNS and VPN services used to dodge rules. Pirates download content illegally without authorization, which affects the streaming platform owners. These lead to intellectual property theft resulting in a loss of revenue.

LOSS OF MONEY TO DISTRIBUTORS, BROADCASTERS, ACTORS AND CONTENT CREATORS

This leads to losses as well as a large

sum of money is invested in creating content, which is distributed through legal channels at a price. "However, piracy causes substantial revenue losses that impact the entire ecosystem, including content-selling platforms, broadcasters, content creators, actors, artists, and the entire production crew. Creating this content involves significant investments and efforts, and when piracy occurs, it involves illegal theft that leads to job losses and substantial financial losses for companies and the industry as a whole," according to the YuppTV statement. "Piracy leads to direct financial losses for content cre-

ators and distributors," it adds.

This can also bring losses for broadcasters, who pay for rights to air the content and suffer a loss in subscription. In turn, it could also result in loss of revenue for artists and actors.

This might also be a matter of concern for governments across the world. "Governments, whether in India, the US, Canada, or any other country, are losing out on revenues due to tax evasion by both pirates and customers.

India in this case is losing out on huge export revenues," according to the YuppTV statement.



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Lebanon: How Switzerland of Middle East became modern-day nightmare

Lebanon might conjure the image of Hezbollah fighters and a war-torn nation, but some decades ago, the West Asian country, especially its capital Beirut, was a playground for the world's most affluent tourists. Lebanon was about swimsuits, beaches, bustling streets and people walking freely. This was Lebanon -- the Switzerland of the Middle East -- before a political and economic crisis turned it into a modern-day dystopia.

Some of the remnants still survive in Beirut, earlier known as the 'Paris of the Middle East'. Though the hip and happening Lebanon is now in the news for violence and bloodshed. However, such is the resilience that the party begins when the bombs stop. Israeli strikes on Hezbollah targets killed 492 people in Lebanon on September 23, the deadliest day in cross-border attacks. Hezbollah, the Iran-backed terror-group, retaliated by firing 200 rockets into northern Israel. Before this, Lebanon made the headlines after coordinated detonation of thousands of pagans carried by Hezbollah members. In the last 11 months, Hezbollah fired 8,000 rockets into Israel. After the massive devastation in Lebanon, people are recalling the days when Lebanon was called the 'Switzerland of the Middle East' with pictures and videos of women in swimsuits, people relaxing by the beach or partying in the clubs. Lebanon's capital got its first beach club way back in the 1930s with Saint George opening on the coast of Beirut, according to a CNN report. The Saint George Hotel Beirut would go on to host the most recognisable and elite tourists. It would also go on to become the face of the transformed face of Lebanon. It was the inflow of money in the 1950s that created the Mediterranean's very own slice of La Dolce Vita. Five-star hotels, night-clubs and fine-dining restaurants sprang up to cater to the elite tourists dropping in from across the world. Its rich culture,

French architecture, world-class food and fashion, and glamorous lifestyle attracted high-flying tourists into the lap of luxury. It was in the 1960s that Beirut joined the elite party scene. That's when French actress Brigitte Bardot and American star Marlon Brando rubbed shoulders with oil sheikhs and spies at seaside hotel pools, according to Lonely Planet.

The hedonistic party continued at full steam till the mid-70s. And that is when Lebanon's a tragic journey started. From a civil war from 1975 to 1990, to tumbling governments to illegal financial practices and corruption, several factors led to Lebanon becoming a modern-day nightmare.

WHEN A 15-YEAR-LONG CIVIL WAR ENGULFED LEBANON

The Lebanese Civil War was a complex and multifaceted conflict that lasted from 1975 to 1990, involving various internal and external actors. It claimed the lives of 1,50,000 people. It began on April 13, 1975, when the Phalangists, a Maronite Christian militia, attacked a bus carrying Palestinians to a refugee camp at Tall al-Zatar, escalating existing tensions into a broader conflict. The war was rooted in deep-seated sectarian divisions between Christians and Muslims, socioeconomic disparities, and the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon. The PLO, flushed out of Jordan after an attempt on King Hussein's life, regrouped in Lebanon. The PLO's involvement was significant. Lebanese Muslims and leftists supported its cause, while Christians opposed it, fearing that it would undermine their political dominance. The Israeli invasion in 1982 aimed to remove PLO forces and led to the siege of Beirut, culminating in the PLO's expulsion under international supervision. This period also saw the emergence of Shia groups, including Iran-backed Hezbollah. Between 1976 and 1988, in-

ternal conflicts and various failed peace attempts characterized the war, complicating the situation with multiple factions and external powers involved. The Taif Agreement, brokered by the Arab League in 1989, marked the beginning of the end of the war, leading to the election of a new president, Elias Hrawi, and the gradual demobilisation of militias. However, Hezbollah remained a powerful force.

HOW ELITES THREW LEBANON INTO AN ECONOMIC CRISIS

Lebanon is seeing a deep economic crisis as government after government left the treasury in debt after the civil war. It has seen its banks collapse, people being locked out of their saving accounts or their funds that they can't access. This is a result of its sectarian elite borrowing heavily and continuously, reports Reuters.

Several experts have mentioned how Lebanon's financial system was a nationally regulated Ponzi scheme, where new money is taken to pay existing creditors.

It works until new money ceases to flow. After the civil war, Lebanon balanced its finances with tourism, foreign aid and earnings from its financial industry and funds taken from Gulf Arab states. Remittances also came from millions of Lebanese who went abroad to find work. Even in the 2008 global recession, they sent money to Lebanon. **RISE OF HEZBOLLAH FORCED SUNNI PLAYERS TO QUIT LEBANON** emittances, Lebanon's lifeline, slowed down amid sectarian political quarrels in 2011. Sunni Gulf states also started withdrawing after the rise of Iran via its proxy Shia terrorist outfit Hezbollah. This was till 2016, when banks started giving remarkable interest rates for new deposits of dollars. Here, "financial engineering" was introduced which involved giving banks large returns for new dollars. Improved dollar inflows led to a

rise in Lebanon's foreign reserves, but there was also a concerning increase in liabilities. Reports suggest that the central bank's debts may exceed its assets, indicating significant losses. Meanwhile, servicing Lebanon's debt has consumed about a third or more of the government's budget. The economic collapse was triggered by several factors. Politicians approved a public sector pay rise before the 2018 elections, despite the urgent need for fiscal restraint, and the government's failure to implement necessary reforms led foreign donors to withhold promised aid. The situation escalated in October 2019 when a plan to tax WhatsApp calls sparked widespread protests against a political elite perceived as out of touch. As foreign exchange inflows dried up, banks faced a liquidity crisis, leading to closures and the government defaulting on its foreign debt. The national currency plummeted from 1,500 to around 23,000 to the dollar by late January 2022, after reaching 34,000 earlier that month.

Compounding the crisis, an explosion at Beirut port in August 2020 killed 215 people and caused extensive damage. By 2021, Lebanon's government debt was estimated at 495% of GDP, far exceeding levels that previously crippled some European nations.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CRISES IN LEBANON

imed with the civil war, Syrian forces moved into Lebanon in 1976 and continued their occupation till April 30, 2005. The entire duration saw tremendous Syrian military and political influence over Lebanon's government, economy and society. It was after the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005 that the Syrian forces pulled out of Lebanon.

Hariri's killing is a seminal event in Lebanon's politics and society, marred by sectarian divisions.