



The South Asian



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If not Kamala Harris, then who?



*Tackling India's Job Crisis
Requires An Overhaul of Our
Obsolete Education System*



Only 21% of the workforce - or about 122 million people - in India have jobs that pay a salary or wages, compared with 24% before the pandemic. More than half of the 582 million workers in India are self-employed, the figures show.

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*Parliament Debate: Will Disruption, Chaos
Become The Norm In The 18th Lok Sabha?*



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*Non-bailable
warrant against
Vijay Mallya in
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loan default case*



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Many
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Modi's
Russia,
Austria
trip next
week

*Chennai woman
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Sharanjit Singh Thind, Phone 646 875 8495



In Hicksville, New York, Indian Americans orchestrated the car rally to celebrate India's triumph in the T20 World Cup, organized by Mukesh Modi

(By Our Staff Reporter) The windy and hot Saturday afternoon saw enthusiastic Indian Americans show their support for India that won the T20 World Cup. A car rally was organized in Hicksville in Long Island, New York by Mukesh Modi. Hicksville is a hamlet within the Town of Oyster Bay in Nassau County, on Long Island, in New York, with a large Indian population. The rally started from the India Association of Long Island (IALI) Center in Hicksville. Many cars participated in this rally. Each car was adorned with Indian flags. The huge lineup of cars started from Patel Brothers, passing Maharaja and Apna Bazar and finally came back to IALI Center. The participants enjoyed the event cheering iBharat Mata ki Jai and iVande Mataram. The rally was organized by Mukesh Modi along with Nitin Khurana, Kishore Malik, Indu Jaiswal, Shashi Goyal, Tony Kejriwal, Beena Sabapathy, Prafulba Vaghela, Neeru Bhambri and Surin Manaktala. After India's victory Nitin Khurana and Mukesh Modi discussed on the phone and decided to celebrate India's historic win. The event was organized with lightning speed within 1 hour. Mukesh Modi thanked Nitin Khurana for his support and love for India and also thanked all the organizers, participants and Media.



Rajesh Kumar of Bengali Sweets distributed hot Jalebis to all the participants. International film maker Mukesh Modi said the car rally was a tribute to the T20 World Cup victory by India after 17 years. This moment was really a proud and big moment for every Indian. "Finally Rohit Sharma got a feather in his hat before his retirement, and India won the T20 World cup. Many congratulations to all the players and the entire India Team as well ICCI Board of the country for this victory. After years of patience and countless efforts, our Team won the T20 World cup."

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Long Island Indo American Lions Club celebrated 3rd Annual Gala Diner



(By Our Staff Reporter) Gala was attended by the dignitaries from Lions Club International District 20K2 Nassau County & Bermuda and also well-known community leaders and Honorees. Lions Club moto is WE SERVE. Program started at 6:00 pm with cocktails and appetizer and at 7:15 pm

Indu Gajwani Founder President of the club welcomed guest and dignitaries and Ganesh Vandana Dance was performed by Group Macaulay Deewane to remove any obstacles from the Program.

products to needy and donations given to cancer care association, cataract surgeries done and lot of other humanitarian needs. Under the Presidency of Mr. Shyam Gajwani.

Presentation was done by Secretary Sanju Sharma

There were 5 honorees from community who always help and support community were Honored. The names of the Honorees are Mr. Anil Shah, Mr. Kanak Golia, Mr. Krishna Maddipatla, Dr. Nirmal Khurana and Dr. Puranchandra Atluri.

The Prestigious Melvin Jones Award was awarded to Mr. Aron Govil, Mr. Gary Sikka, Mr. Inderpal Chhabra, Mr. Jay Shah, Mr. Kiran Reddy, Mr. Mukesh Ranu, Mr. Nand Panjwani, Mr. Narinder Kapoor and Mr. Pradip Parikh. Mr. Shyam Gajwani President of the Lions Club gave speech



Perfromers names were Khushi Oza, Anil Singh, Alisha Shah, Anjali Cherian, Staisa Bose, Mariya Kooran.

Anju Sharma Vice President of Lions Club Introduce Gala Chair Mr. Kanak Golia and Mr. Kanak Golia gave speech and thank everyone. The presentation was shown for achievements of all the various projects such as collecting eyeglasses, blankets donation to veterans, food to the homeless, school supplies to needy children, Hygienic

and thank all the Executive committee and Chair committee and people who helped him to make this GALA dinner successful. The Program ended with Bollywood Mash up dance by the group Macaulay Deewane and Dance floor was opened and people enjoyed the program. It was elegant and well-organized program. Thank to all the people who attended the program, supporters and all the Lion Members to make it great success.



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This Fourth of July, it's hard to feel optimistic about the US. But I have hope

If you've been paying even the slightest bit of attention, you know that the American Experiment took some gut punches over the last week.

Joe Biden has long considered the best hope for preventing another disastrous Donald Trump term. He had a shockingly bad debate performance, looking and sounding every minute of his 81 years. The tainted supreme court then declared, in essence, that a president is above the law, at least when acting in an official capacity. And that came on top of other high court decisions that have blasted away at the foundations of democracy in the United States.

And much of the mainstream news media continued their campaign of false equivalency, treating the president's age as a worse problem than Trump's criminality and authoritarian intentions. But on this Fourth of July, I haven't given up hope that we will right ourselves. And I'm far from alone.

There is encouraging news in every one of these troubled spheres: politics, justice and media. I asked one of my favorite thinkers, the author and scholar Ruth Ben-Ghiat, an expert in how democracies can wither under authoritarian rule, for some help. I talked to others, too, especially those who are protecting the vote, fostering good journalism and working for justice.

Here's what Ben-Ghiat told me: "Part of the reason for so much aggression from the GOP and the courts to take away our rights, including the right to free and fair elections, is because America is becoming more progressive, and Republicans cannot win without lies, threats and election interference, including assistance in that area from foreign powers."

She sees the US participating in the global renaissance of mass nonviolent protest against authoritarianism and notes that, in 2017, we saw the biggest protest in the nation's history: the Women's March against Trump, which was then surpassed in 2020 by the Black Lives Matter protests, which involved more than 20 million people in multigenerational and multiracial demonstrations.

"These mass protest movements had electoral consequences in the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections," she added, as many women, non-white and LGBTQ+ people were elected to office. Ben-Ghiat is convinced that we are ripe for another round and the stakes are higher than ever.

On the justice front, I'm not suggesting that we somehow set aside the terrible and hugely consequential decision that gives a president a guess who in particular? Immunity for his official acts. But at the same time, the courts, including the jury system, are often functioning admirably, if not flawlessly. Just over a month ago, Trump became the first former US president convicted of felonies. Trump allies who wanted to

charge that the courts have been weaponized found it harder to make that argument less than two weeks later when Hunter Biden, too, was convicted in a jury trial.

Mainstream journalism, as noted, often disappoints. The moderators of the CNN debate clearly should have been empowered by their network bosses to challenge Trump's barrage of lies in real time. The stunning New York Times editorial calling for Biden to set aside his campaign for the good of the nation may have been well-reasoned, but it struck me as another example of targeting the president and letting Trump off the hook. To my knowledge, only the scrappy Philadelphia Inquirer has written a similar editorial about Trump. Too much of the politics coverage is out of whack with reality. The media is baying for Biden's head, but with some exceptions, it seems mostly bemused by Trump or at least habituated to how dangerous he is. But there's good news in journalism, too. Consider ProPublica's essential reporting on Justice Clarence Thomas's rotten ethics. Or the way many news outlets have revealed the threats of Project 2025: the alarming and detailed plan by Trump allies to dismantle democratic norms should their leader win a second term.

I'm also heartened by young journalists who are making their way in a difficult career field.

"No matter what problem we're talking about, good journalism is part of the solution," said Jelani Cobb, the dean of Columbia Journalism School (where I run a journalism ethics center). "The young journalists whom we have the privilege to work with here are some of the sharpest, most committed and talented that I've ever seen."

Their work will be a ballast for democracy, Cobb told me, even amid the giant challenges in front of us right now.

Most of all, I'm moved by the valiant efforts of many ordinary citizens. One friend, active in voter protection efforts, praised all of the grassroots volunteers working to preserve democracy who I am sure will continue in all the ways possible if Trump wins. She mentioned the flood of small-dollar donations that followed Biden's debate debacle, and credited the courageous judges, court personnel, jurors et al who are working, despite the risks to themselves, to see that justice is served in the cases against Trump.

Will any of this matter when so much is going wrong and when the threats are so great? The screenwriter and former journalist David Simon offered a dour view this week: "Our American experiment is so over." More aligned with Ruth Ben-Ghiat's big-picture view and the others quoted here, I remain hopeful, if not optimistic about the future of the United States. On 4 July, at least, let's remember that we've come a long way, and the journey isn't yet complete.

India's T20 Triumph: A master class in skill and strategy

By Susmita Ghosh

In an impressive display of cricketing competence, the Indian cricket team secured a remarkable victory in the T20 format. It establishes their reputation as one of the world's most formidable teams. This triumph, marked by a combination of skill, strategy, and firm determination, underscores India's dominance in the fast-paced and thrilling world of T20 cricket.

The keystone of India's success lies in their depth of talent and strategic insight. From the beginning of the tournament, the team showcased a balanced blend of youth and experience, led by the veterans who provided invaluable leadership on and off the field. Captained wisely, they steered through the challenges posed by various opponents with a combination of aggressive batting, disciplined bowling, and responsive fielding. Behind the scenes, meticulous planning and analysis played a pivotal role in India's triumph. The coaching staff, supported by advanced data analytics, identified opponent weaknesses and formulated game plans tailored to exploit them. This strategic approach was evident in their tactical decisions, like field placements, bowling changes, and batting order adjustments, which steadily produced positive outcomes on the field.

Off-field factors also contributed significantly to India's success. The team's unity and friendship fostered a supportive environment where players could thrive and perform at their best. A culture of continuous improvement and flexibility reinforced their journey. Consequently, it allowed them to bounce back from setbacks and maintain momentum during critical stages of the

tournament.

One of the standout features of India's campaign was their batting prowess. The top order consistently laid strong foundations, with explosive stroke play and calculated risk-taking setting the stage for imposing totals. Key players like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli illustrated consistency and adaptability, anchoring the innings when needed and accelerating when opportunities arose. Their ability to read the game situation and execute shots with precision under pressure was involved in India's victories. Equally impressive was India's bowling attack, which proved to be a potent weapon throughout the tournament. Led by pace spearheads and crafty spinners, the bowlers maintained tight lines and varied their pace skillfully to keep opposition batsmen in check. Jasprit Bumrah's Yorkers and variations, complemented by Ravindra Jadeja's spin magic, often proved significant in crucial moments of the matches. The depth in bowling options allowed the captain flexibility in managing resources, ensuring sustained pressure on the opponents.

Moreover, India's victory extends beyond individual performances to embody a collective triumph of talent and teamwork. It resonates with cricket enthusiasts worldwide, reinforcing the allure of T20 cricket as a thrilling sight where anything can happen until the last ball is bowled. As the celebrations unfold and the significance of this achievement sinks in, India's T20 triumph stands as a testament to their skill, strategy, and firm determination. It not only cements their status as a cricketing powerhouse but also sets the stage for future challenges and triumphs on the global stage.



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Modi-Putin Should Consider Something: Balancing China Together

By Aditi Bhaduri

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will soon embark on a trip to the Russian Federation, where he will hold talks with President Vladimir Putin. This will be Modi's first foreign visit for a bilateral meeting in his third term. While the announcement has already raised eyebrows across the globe, it is emblematic of the fact that India will continue to do a balancing act under Modi 3.0 and reassure Russia of its goodwill and partnership. Meanwhile, Modi will be skipping the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit beginning today in Astana, Kazakhstan, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar representing India there instead. Modi last visited Russia in 2019, when he attended the Eastern Economic Forum and the annual bilateral summit, a process instituted in 2000. The last talks between the two leaders were in December 2021, during Putin's visit to India.

Given that this will be the first bilateral summit between India and Russia since the latter began its "special military operations" in Ukraine in February 2022, the Ukraine



conflict and trade which has reached unprecedented levels mainly on account of discounted Russian oil which will obviously be at the top of the agenda. The two countries are also set to upgrade their defence relations with a new agreement that will involve joint deployment of troops, warships, and fighter jets which something India has never done with any other country. An agreement on logistics support is on the cards too.

Russia-China Friendship Is Deepening, But...

It is widely believed that Modi is skipping the SCO summit to avoid a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping given the fraught relations between the two neighbours since the Galwan

clashes in the summer of 2020. Simultaneously, India in recent times has been alarmed by the deepening ties between Russia and China. No doubt, talks will focus on this aspect too.

The Russia-China partnership has evolved since the Ukraine war began. China was the first country that Putin chose for an official visit after his re-election in March this year. As a bigger neighbouring country with far deeper pockets than India's, this is natural. Bilateral trade between the two countries stands at over \$240 billion. China is Russia's largest crude importer, while Chinese goods, from automobiles to clothes, have been filling the void left by the flight of Western companies

from Russia. The Chinese yuan accounted for 34.5% of Russia's total export payments over the past two years. China has supplied Russia with dual technology, and the two have also been conducting joint military exercises. In fact, Beijing has been accused by the West of both abetting and benefiting from the Ukraine conflict.

Yet, the Russia-China partnership is not foolproof. There are avenues New Delhi and Moscow can explore in order to balance China's influence in the Eurasian region.

There Are Gaps To Fill

Perhaps a big indicator of the gaps in the Russia-China relationship is the lack of movement on the Power of Siberia 2 gas pipeline, which Russia is keen to get started to prop up its economy. According to Russian analysts, this was the main reason for Putin's Beijing visit. Yet, nothing came of it. Rather, industry experts in China have been talking about the non-feasibility of the pipeline. Putin followed up his visit to China with trips to Uzbekistan, North Korea, and Vietnam. All three destinations are symbolic

of larger geopolitical shifts.

Uzbekistan, part of the post-Soviet space in Central Asia, lies in Russia's strategic backyard. China's inroads in the region were restricted to the economic sphere, with Russia retaining its military and strategic influence. This was a key reason for the establishment of the SCO. But Russia's distraction with Ukraine has upended this arrangement. For instance, a railway line mooted almost two decades ago but which remains in the pipeline because of Moscow's reservations, was recently greenlit by China, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan - another close Russian ally in post-Soviet Central Asia. The route will run from Kashgar in China through Kyrgyzstan and will terminate in Uzbekistan's Andijan province, bypassing Russian territory. Moreover, the Kyrgyz part of the route will be financed by Chinese loans, pushing it deeper into Chinese debt.

For perspective, similar Chinese debt owed by Tajikistan, which houses Russia's largest foreign military base abroad, has resulted in Tajikistan ceding territory to the Chinese to station their own base there.

It's Time The US, Forever Preaching To Others, Got Off Its High Horse

By Kanwal Siba

In releasing the State Department's 2023 International Religious Freedom report recently, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken referred to India by name for violating religious freedom. The report covers 190 countries. In his short introductory remarks, Blinken had to decide which countries he should mention by name, as he could cite only a few that are of most concern" to the US.

Blinken obviously made the assessment that India was one of the countries he needed to draw specific attention to. He had also to weigh the diplomatic consequences of naming and shaming any country at his level, and evidently thought that he did not need to be too concerned about India's reaction.

In 2022 too, while introducing a similar report, Blinken had listed India by name. This was the first



time that the country was being singled out in this manner at the Secretary of State level. The spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had reacted sharply back then, and Blinken would have taken into consideration that India would react similarly again. He evidently felt that the US could take that in its stride.

India's Response

In his latest remarks, Blinken

expressed American concern about anti-conversion laws in India, hate speech and demolitions of homes and places of worship of minority communities. This broadside against India could not go unanswered. As expected, India has reacted strongly. The MEA spokesperson has rejected the report, calling it deeply biased, lacking understanding of India's social fabric, visibly driven by vote bank considerations and based on

a prescriptive outlook. He went on to decry the exercise of compiling the report based on inputs from government officials, religious groups, NGOs, journalists, human rights monitors and academics a mix of imputations, misrepresentations, selective usage of facts, reliance on biased sources, and a one-sided projection of issues". This, the spokesperson said, extends even to the depiction of our Constitutional provisions and duly enacted laws of India". He added that the report "has selectively picked incidents to advance a preconceived narrative as well" and that it appeared to challenge the integrity of certain legal judgments given by Indian courts. To emphasise the point that discussions as well as rights and wrongs on these issues were not one-sided, the spokesperson referred to numerous cases of hate crimes, racial attacks on Indian

nationals and other minorities, vandalism and targeting of places of worship, violence and mistreatment by law enforcement agencies, as well as the according of political space to advocates of extremism and terrorism that India had officially taken up with the Biden administration. Such dialogues, the spokesperson said, should not become a licence for foreign interference in other polities".

US's Superiority Complex

Such kind of reports issued annually are one of the many ways through which the US seeks to exercise its political hegemony and assume moral superiority at the global level. The US has huge problems of its own on all the issues it seeks to name and shame others on. Its record on the genocide of the indigenous population of America and slavery and racial discrimination against Blacks is a dark blot on its history.

Politics of the subcontinent - Clothes are the same, only colours are different

By Swadesh Roy

In the recent Lok Sabha elections in India, Sandeshkhali, an island in the Sundarbans, became one of the central issues in West Bengal. I spent the whole day in Sandeshkhali, a part of Basirhat constituency. Here, BJP candidate Rekha Patra from Sandeshkhali was unique - a combination of firebrand pro-women and working-class leader. She was also the third generation of refugees in West Bengal, where the most vulnerable people are the refugees who arrived and continue to do so from former East Bengal/East Pakistan and now Bangladesh. According to a four-part documentary by Bangladesh's legendary film director Tanvir Mokammel, the Jawaharlal Nehru government did not adequately handle this issue at that point of time. So, the refugees are still fighting for their existence. In my ground report on Sandeshkhali, I tried to say that Rekha Patra could add some votes from women for her party, but I did not mention whether she had the chance of winning against the Trinamool Congress candidate, Haji Mohammad Yunus Molla. After reading the report, a prominent editor of an Indian media outlet, who is close to me, sent me a WhatsApp message saying, 'She will lose.' I told him that I got that essence

there.

It was a well-known area to me from the 60s. The Congress dominated the constituency at that time, and after that, it went to the



Left-leaning allies. In the late 90s, I visited the area to observe a local government poll because election reporting is one of my favourite areas of journalism. However, I was shocked to see that the elections were worse than those held by our Bangladeshi military rulers. This time, though, I witnessed a different atmosphere. In the Basirhat constituency, the election was held on June 1, but after the first and second phases of the election, people understood they could cast their vote after a long time.

However, by the different atmosphere, I was reminded of the pathetic history of Bengal, where all the political parties played religious cards, but some wore progressive clothes. I recognise these clothes very well.

I understood that all the Muslim minority votes in that area were

intact in favour of the Trinamool Congress. Even those Muslims who came to the area after 1972, because they were accused of being anti-Liberation in

Bangladesh, were not in favour of Rekha Patra, a third-generation refugee candidate, only because of her religion. Some of these Muslims still maintain two homes, one in Bangladesh and another in India. They are more Catholic than the Pope because, at the core of their belief, they are still living in the politics of the pre-Partition of the subcontinent. A well-known history that doesn't need to be repeated. To establish a modern free state from colonial Britain, politics started with inclusive, liberal thinking. But the ending was backwards with the use of religion. It was the madness of religious fundamentalism. All the political parties were part of it. There were no fresh hands. Rather, it was the same amount of dirt in every hand. We were brought up reading the history of the struggle against the British and its conclusion with the partition. So,

we know the dirty politics of that age and how much of it in the name of religion was passed on, and see the clean and so-called progressive clothes. Even in the context of Rekha Patra's election, as a journalist, I got information from people in our fraternity that the leading gangster of that area, Sheikh Shahjahan, despite being in jail as an accused in smuggling and other criminal cases, was continuing his hold on the people. Nowadays, all over the world, many 'Shahjahans' run their underground empires from the confines of a prison. Their main power is black money and political blessing. Sheikh Shahjahan achieved these two successfully.

Then, I chose the Lok Sabha constituency of Baharampur in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal because it is another constituency where the majority of voters are Muslims.

For a long time, their leader has been Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, the prominent Congress leader. Adhir was very popular among Muslim voters. So, I chose that constituency before the elections. This time, West Bengal's ruling party, the Trinamool Congress, nominated Yusuf Pathan - one of the former Indian national cricket team players. He is from Gujarat. For this election,

Trinamool's slogan was: iBanga is not for outsiders. It is only for Bengalis. But the party fielded a Gujarati candidate there. Ironically, Mamata Banerjee, who always identifies her opponent as a Gujarati, fielded a Gujarati candidate with no prior connection to West Bengal politics.

I went to that constituency and spent 17 hours talking to voters. I could understand that the Hindu vote would consolidate in favour of the BJP candidate, who was also a prominent doctor in that area, and the Muslim vote would consolidate in favour of Yusuf Pathan. It was not because he was a star cricketer; his primary identity in the election was that he is a Muslim.

Trinamool Congress, the progressive party, nominated him as the candidate there only because of his Muslim identity. Moreover, in Basirhat and Baharampur, these Shahjahan and Pathan cards ultimately won because of religion. I am reminded of a TV debate in which I participated after India abrogated Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. I defended India's move and said that it is never wise to reserve anything special in a democratic Constitution. Because the special constantly contradicts the democratic Constitution.

Allies' ambitions, state polls - Heavy lies the LoP crown on Rahul's head

By Rasheed Kidwai

'First deserve, then desire' seems to be the motto of Rahul Gandhi, who has finally taken up the charge of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

When Rahul entered the Lok Sabha in 2004, he had numerous offers and opportunities to serve as a Union minister under then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But he kept declining till the United Progressive Alliance regime was voted out in 2014. Singh has been on record thrice stating that he advised Rahul to join his council of ministers. Rahul, however, stayed away believing he lacked the requisite experience or the competence to get into a ministerial position. Perhaps, subconsciously, Rahul had his father's legacy in mind.

Fulfilling Rajiv's unfinished dream

is Rahul's goal

Rajiv Gandhi became prime minister in 1984 when he was all of 40 ó under tragic and difficult circumstances. Rajiv's



modern outlook, thrust on technology, and a desire to reform the country's economy, society, and mindset were not enough as he was sucked into a web of machinations,

misadventures, and powerplays that ultimately cost his life in May 1991.

At 54, Rahul appears far more prepared and well-grounded.

Between 2011 and 2014, the Gandhi scion took many hits ó calumny and ridicule orchestrated by his political opponents. But he remained unfazed, learning and fine-tuning

his political strategy till the Bharat Jodo Yatra gave him a sense of purpose and direction.

For Rahul Gandhi, the greatest memorial to Rajiv Gandhi's life's work would be to restore the nation to its innate culture of compassion, to heal and reconcile, to harness intellectual independence and technological adroitness, to entrust the young, and finally, to reinvigorate India's economy on principles of economic prosperity with equality. LoP of INDIA? Keeping Mamata in good humour

With these objectives in mind, Rahul as the Leader of the Opposition wants to be a consensus person, taking his INDIA allies along with him rather than building and strengthening the Congress. On Day 1 as the LoP, Rahul kept consulting

Akhilesh Yadav, Kalyan Banerjee, Supriya Sule and TR Baalu almost every hour. He ensured that the strategy over the Speaker's election had Mamata Banerjee's blessings and support.

Mamata's support is crucial for the alliance. Rahul, in consultation with Mallikarjun Kharge and Sonia Gandhi, requested senior leader P Chidambaram to call on the West Bengal chief minister after the 2024 Lok Sabha verdict. Mamata and Chidambaram's ties date back to the Rajiv Gandhi era when they were in the Youth Congress. Among other things, Chidambaram reportedly extracted a firm assurance from Mamata that she would remain an integral part of the alliance.

Was PM Modi's Tough Talk In Parliament Aimed To Pep Up BJP Cadre?

By Lakshmi Iyer

Nothing seems to have hit the Congress harder than PM Narendra Modi's speeches in both houses of Parliament. If in the Lok Sabha, he had focused on "balak buddhi" (infantile mentality) of the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, then in the Rajya Sabha, Modi was asserting that his government had given a free hand to central probe agencies to investigate corruption. Weeding out corruption, he made it clear, was his mission and conviction. "I have given a free hand to central agencies to go after the corrupt. The centre will not intervene if they work with honesty and for honesty. Nobody will be spared, this is Modi's guarantee," he said.

In the Rajya Sabha, he made a pointed attack on Sonia Gandhi and on the National Advisory Council where she presided during the UPA I and II. Underlining that the role of a super body like the NAC was a violation of the Constitution, PM Modi sought to know, "Who gave the power to the NAC to overrule the Prime Minister's post? Who allowed the PM's chair to be ridiculed?"

These questions from Modi are significant in that the Congress has been harping on a narrative that the Samvidhaan, or the Constitution, is under threat during the Modi government. The PM also brought on record how Rahul Gandhi had publicly shredded an ordinance promulgated by the then-Manmohan Singh government to protect a convicted lawmaker in 2013. The tone and tenor of Modi's speech shocked the Congress. Congress leaders who had expected PM Modi to feel the pressure of running a coalition found he had not changed much; he was still speaking tough and sounding uncompromising, the way he had been in the past decade. He was very much speaking the same language. Was he positioning himself for the upcoming assembly elections? Has nothing changed?

Why did PM Modi make these reiterations about his fight against corruption? Who were these words meant for? Clearly, his remarks were in response to the Opposition's charge of misusing central agencies by his government in recent times. Many opposition leaders,

including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, were arrested in alleged money-laundering cases. The Opposition had raised questions over what it called 'deliberate' targeting of its leaders through probes by the ED, the CBI and the Income Tax department. Modi listed incidents before 2014 when many leaders, now in the opposition camp, had accused Congress-led UPA governments of abusing investigation agencies. He recalled how former Uttar Pradesh CM late Mulayam Singh

Yadav had once blamed the Congress Government at the Centre for misusing central investigating agencies. He also cited the 2013 Supreme Court verdict calling the CBI a caged parrot. In the Lok Sabha, Modi lashed out against Rahul Gandhi for speaking against the Hindu

community and warned that displaying posters of gods should not be used for "personal, political interests". He also warned the Samajwadi Party (SP) that the Congress was a parasite or a party that had performed poorly in states where it contested without its INDIA bloc allies.

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White House Down - Biden handed over elections to Trump in first debate

By Rohit Sharma

This frantic message echoed through Democratic circles after the first presidential debate. Four years of relentless attacks ó from claims of dictatorship to doubts about mental and physical fitness, to fears of national ruin ó culminated in this face-off between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. And in a surprising twist, the night left Trump looking unexpectedly more presidential than Biden. The debate held in Atlanta on a hot June night raised eyebrows over its unusual timing and the decision to bypass the Presidential Commission on Debates in favour of a network-hosted format. Historically, Presidential debates, held in the fall, have significantly impacted election outcomes, with memorable moments like the Kennedy-Nixon debate in 1960 and Reagan's quip about his opponent's youth in 1984, shaping public perception and voter behaviour. These debates often serve as a critical platform for candidates to present their visions, counter their opponents,



and connect with voters on a personal level. In 2020, the debates between Biden and Trump were marked by interruptions and contentious exchanges, leaving many voters divided on the candidates' performances. Those two debates in 2020 helped Biden to project himself as the leader America warranted to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath. But that was four years ago when Biden came across as a confident challenger eager to restore normalcy to the White House. Today, however, he struggled to defend his record and policies. His responses were

incoherent and disconnected, reinforcing concerns about his age and ability to lead. This has sparked significant post-debate discussions about his viability as a candidate, with some analysts suggesting he should step aside in favour of a stronger contender at the Democratic convention. In stark contrast, Donald Trump emerged as the perceived winner. His confident demeanour, sharp zingers, and assertive style resonated with many viewers, despite his statements often being factually incorrect. Trump's performance harkened back to his 2016 campaign, where his brashness appealed to a segment

of the electorate looking for a non-traditional politician.

In Presidential debates, several basic principles often guide candidates' strategies and expectations. Both Biden and Trump knew they were speaking to the invaluable independent swing voters in five key states that will decide the outcome of this election. Let's evaluate both candidates and how they fared. Doing no harm

The first basic principle for any candidate is to avoid gaffes. In today's debate, Biden did more self-inflicted harm to his campaign than Trump could have possibly caused. Biden came across as a frail and senile old man. At one point, his incoherence led to Trump landing a zinger: il could not understand the last part of what he just said; maybe even he does not understand what he is saying. No audience was allowed in the studio, but one could imagine Trump supporters across the nation chuckling and high-fiving in their living rooms. On the other hand, expectations for Trump


were so low that despite his factual inaccuracies, repeated deflections, and conceited answers, he did no harm. In fact, Biden's weak performance made him appear stronger. Trump repeatedly spouted populist lies from his lectern, often ignoring the moderators' questions, and deflecting his shortcomings onto Biden. Yet, none of this seemed to damage his image. Instead, he emerged looking stronger, more confident, and more decisive

Winner: Trump

Presenting a clear vision

Candidates in these debates are coached to articulate their policies, vision for the country, and plans for addressing key issues. Biden struggled to make a lasting impression, partly due to the ineffective delivery of his rehearsed lines. He faltered, especially when touting or defending his record. Questions on inflation, immigration, and the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza presented opportunities for him to explain complex issues to voters and gain their trust.

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It takes two to tango: Who will take initiative – ruling or opposition alliance?

By Sandeep Shastri

With a new Lok Sabha that has a reduced gap in numbers between the ruling coalition and the opposition, one had hoped for greater collaboration between parties. The 2024 verdict was clearly a vote for ensuring a numerically strong opposition even as the ruling party was given a majority within the framework of the larger alliance it was part of.

The process of choosing the speaker afforded an ideal opportunity to place the acrimony of the past on the backburner and move forward with a new spirit of meaningful collaboration and constructive criticism. Yet, the developments in the last few days seem to suggest that the strong polarisation that marked the electoral campaign is likely to remain and even further intensify. The point has been repeatedly made that a lot of practices in a parliamentary system have been based on conventions. One has noticed in the past that conventions have often been side-stepped by all parties/coalitions that came to power at the centre, to serve their immediate political interests.

The manner of appointment of governors, people appointed to these positions, the role of governors in determining whether a party/alliance has a majority or whether a government continues to enjoy a majority on the floor of the House, the finer nuances of centre-state relations, the use of Article 356 in the past, logic behind nominating members to the Rajya Sabha are a few



examples that can be cited in this regard. One such convention has been on the position of the deputy speaker. This time around, the confrontation between the ruling and opposition alliance was linked to this factor. While the NDA wanted the speaker's choice to be de-linked from that of the deputy speaker, the Congress-led opposition promised its support to the ruling alliance on the speaker's choice, if the deputy speakership was offered to them. An inability to arrive at a consensus on this matter led to a formal election for speakership. The deputy speaker question has now been postponed to a future date

as and when the speaker decides to announce that election. The previous Lok Sabha did not have a deputy speaker. In the past, at times the convention of leaving that position to the opposition has often been followed. There are other times when the deputy speaker too was from the ruling party or from a party supporting them. Till 1977, all our deputy speakers hailed from the ruling party. In 1977, when the Janata Party came to power, they began the convention of offering the deputy speakership to the opposition. Godey Murahari from the Congress was appointed the deputy speaker. This

convention was again followed in 1989, when the deputy speaker was from the leading opposition party – the Congress. Shivraj Patil was made the deputy speaker.

In 1991, when the Congress formed the government, S Mallikarjunaiah from the BJP was chosen as the deputy speaker. Similarly in 1996, when the United Front government was formed, an MP from the BJP, Suraj Bhan became the deputy speaker. Both in 1998 and 1999, when the NDA formed the government, P M Sayeed from the Congress became the deputy speaker. In 2004, when the UPA formed the government, Charanjit Singh Atwal from the Akali Dal became the deputy speaker and in 2009, BJP's Kariya Munda was appointed the deputy speaker. After 1977, on three occasions, the ruling party/alliance decided to support the candidature of a friendly ally who was not part of the government. In 1980, the Congress that came to power, supported the candidature of Lakshmanan from the DMK for deputy speaker and in 1984, endorsed the AIADMK candidate Thambi Durai. In 2014 too, the BJP-led NDA backed AIADMK's Thambi Durai for deputy speakership. Thus, the post-1977 record of political affiliation of deputy speakership has been mixed. On seven occasions, it has gone to the leading opposition while on three, it has been held by a member of a friendly opposition.

Why A Possible Return Of Trump Is Giving Europe The Jitters

By Syed Zubair Ahmed

President Joe Biden's shaky performance against his rival, Donald Trump, in the first presidential debate on Thursday has sent shockwaves across both sides of the Atlantic. In the US, a CBS News/YouGov poll on Sunday suggested that 72% of registered voters believed Biden did not have the mental fitness to serve as President. Biden is 81 and Trump is 78, but those who watched the debate would have noticed that Biden made his rival look a lot younger. More worrying for the Democratic Party was that the poll indicated that 45% of registered Democrats wanted Biden to step aside for another candidate. In Europe, Biden's poor showing, which dramatically increased Trump's chances of being re-elected, has stirred up a lot of anxiety about what a second Trump term could mean for Europe's security and Ukraine's future. A Polish news website summed up the continent's worry:



"Trump proved once again that his potential victory is bad news for NATO, Ukraine, and by extension, Poland."

Many Europeans believe that Europe's future without a strong US embrace is uncertain. They fear that if Trump wins in the November Presidential election, Europe's security won't be guaranteed. Trump has said he would end the Russia-Ukraine war, and if it ends with the current status quo, it could be seen more as a defeat for NATO than for Ukraine.

NATO Summit At A Critical Juncture

Amidst this anxiety, leaders of the 32-member NATO alliance are meeting in Washington from July 9 to 11 to celebrate its 75th anniversary. But with the ongoing war in Ukraine and Trump's comments in Thursday's debate, there won't be much to celebrate. Trump's views on NATO and Ukraine have cast a shadow over the summit. During the debate, Trump once again chastised European NATO members for not contributing

enough to the alliance's budget, an issue that is most certainly to be discussed. Also, the Russian war in Ukraine will be at the top of the agenda, including the issue of Ukraine's membership in NATO. One of the main reasons European leaders are apprehensive about Trump's potential re-election is his critical stance on NATO during his presidency. He pushed for increased defence budgets among European NATO members. Although this led to some increases, it was often accompanied by harsh rhetoric and threats of withdrawing US support. Many European countries have committed to contributing 2% of their GDP to NATO's budget by the end of this year. With over 3.5% contribution, the US remains the largest contributor to the alliance.

The Reality Of NATO Contributions In his constant complaints about Europe not paying enough for NATO, Trump misses a vital point.

The reality is that the US uses NATO to maintain its authority over Europe. Critics argue that America exerts disproportionate influence within the alliance, directing its strategic priorities and military actions, hoping Europe will follow suit. Historically, whether it is the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan or bombings over Libya, the European members of NATO have always supported the US.

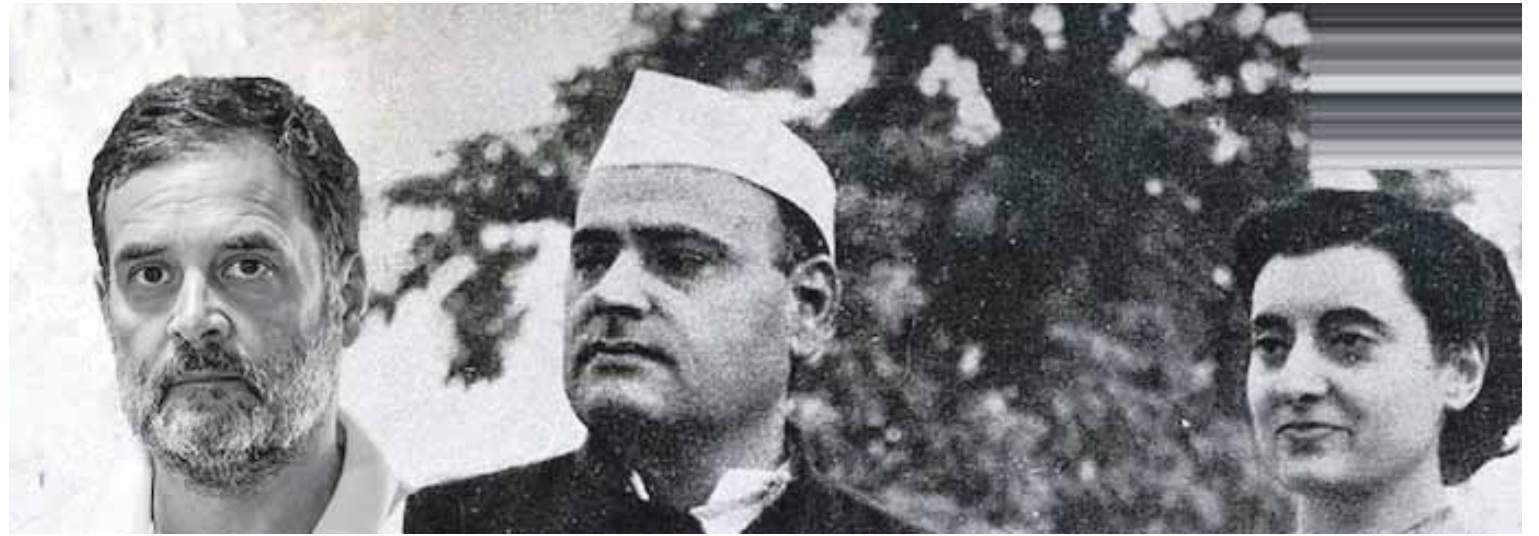
The US's stand on the Israel war in Gaza is fully supported by Britain and many European members of NATO. Many ordinary Europeans feel that their governments' foreign policy is subservient to the US.

Europe's Broader Concerns Europe doesn't only fear Trump's views on NATO and Ukraine - we might recall that during Trump's presidency, several key international agreements and partnerships were abandoned or renegotiated, often to the dismay of European allies.

For Rahul Gandhi, 'dada' Feroze is better role model than Indira

By Rasheed Kidwai

As the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi would be better off following in his dadai's footsteps than his dadi's. In 1999, a poll by the BBC found Indira Gandhi as the greatest woman of the past thousand years. The top 10 included Elizabeth II, Marie Curie, Mother Teresa, and even Burmese politician Aung San Suu Kyi. Rahul Gandhi's dada (grandfather) Feroze Gandhi, considered an outstanding parliamentarian till he died in 1960, was famed for doing the homework of data, statistics, statements, etc. when he took on Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in a memorable expose that came to be known as the Mundhra Affair. The scandal forced close Nehru associate and then-finance minister TT Krishnamachari to resign. Krishnamachari holds the dubious distinction of being forced to step down due to independent India's first financial scandal. Feroze Gandhi exposed a corrupt nexus between insurance companies and businessmen, which eventually led to the nationalisation of life insurance in India. Veteran journalist BG Verghese, who was a reporter covering parliamentary proceedings then, said in an interview later, "Feroze was diligent and thorough in his preparation. In contrast, Indira, a



politician among the politicians, often showed less commitment towards Parliament. During the Emergency, she extended the life of the Lok Sabha, which was clearly wrong. She introduced the Ordinance Raj and made many policy decisions outside Parliament, a dubious legacy that has been practised by many, including the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In July 2018, Rahul Gandhi walked up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and tried to hug him in the full glare of Members of Parliament and television cameras. That day, Rahul was belligerent, threatening to cause a bhukamp (earthquake), but many felt the fire was missing. From Rafale to Doklam, Rahul's speech lacked facts, figures, and details. One could argue that Rahul may have acted more like a politician than an able

parliamentarian and the line between Parliament and public meeting got somewhat blurred. Now that Rahul has formally taken over as the Leader of the Opposition, he would need to be more visible, responsible, and focused. Significantly, Rahul has shown signs of maturity and focus. Soon after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls were over, Rahul held a press conference to question and challenge exit poll findings linking them to upheavals in the stock exchange. In press conferences, Rahul has developed a skill of responding to all queries in a calm, measured tone with facts and figures. Departing from his usual T-shirt, Rahul was seen entering Parliament today in a white kurta-pyjama, thereby lending sobriety to his new role. In 2014 and 2019, the Congress,

with 44 and 52 Lok Sabha seats respectively, did not have the requisite strength to qualify for the office of the Leader of the Opposition. As per norms, a party with more than 10 per cent of the Lok Sabha is entitled to grab the post. The coming days, weeks, and months will see much more action. Rahul's game plan is clear. He wants to dissuade neutral voters from voting in the Modi government again in 2029, even if it means the BJP goes on leading a coalition with 240-odd Lok Sabha seats. It is worth mentioning here that Indira, considered an astute judge of personality, used to greatly value Rahul Gandhi's grit and determination even as a child. When Indira died in October 1984, Rahul was barely 14. But she used to share with him subjects that she often avoided

confiding in Rajiv or Sonia. For instance, Indira feared for her life since June 1984, months before her assassination, and would tell Rahul to "take charge" and not to cry when she died. After Operation Blue Star in June 1984, when the Indian army flushed out dreaded terrorists from the Golden Temple Punjab, Indira Gandhi was somehow convinced that she was going to die, possibly a violent death. She quietly spoke to Rahul about funeral arrangements, telling him that she had lived her life. Rahul was perhaps too young to understand, but in him, Indira had found a perfect companion to share her inner thoughts and trust his judgement. 40 years later, many Congressmen are now veering around the view that Indira's trust in Rahul was true.

Hathras stampede

Draw lessons to improve crowd management

IT was a disaster waiting to happen, with around 2.5 lakh people crammed into a venue in which only 80,000 were permitted by the authorities. The death toll in the stampede that broke out during a ěsatsangi in Hathras (Uttar Pradesh) has crossed 120; the victims were part of the crowd which had gathered to hear a preacher. According to the FIR, the organisers secured permission for the congregation on the basis of a false undertaking about the actual number of devotees who were expected to attend it; they are also accused of refusing to



cooperate with the police in traffic control and concealing evidence after the incident. It is ironical and unfortunate that in a country where people throng one religious

place or the other on a daily basis, crowd management often leaves a lot to be desired. A decade ago, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

had brought out a guide on managing crowds at events and venues of mass gathering. This document was aimed at spurring state governments, local authorities and organisers to adopt an integrated and structured approach to crowd and disaster management. The NDMA had stated that man-made tragedies such as stampedes could be prevented with ěproactive planning and flawless execution by dedicated groups with well-trained personnel. However, all this was conspicuous by its absence at the Hathras event. Giving misleading estimates

about the size of the audience or congregation is a common ploy to get the administration's nod. At times, palms are greased to get the job done. However, the organisers cannot be solely blamed when things go horribly wrong. The authorities should exercise due diligence in granting permission; spot inspections are a must to ascertain whether adequate safety arrangements have been made for even the worst-case scenario. The way forward is to take exemplary action against those whose rank negligence or greed puts lives on the line.

Tackling India's Job Crisis Requires An Overhaul of Our Obsolete Education System

By: Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

India's job crisis is real and here to stay for the foreseeable future. If not addressed soon, India could end up in a far worse situation than China finds itself in right now. Despite China becoming the manufacturing hub of the world in the 21st century, the country is now grappling with a demographic crisis of its own making, where people are growing old before getting any richer. There are signs that India could be heading in the same direction much before it even finds itself positioned in a middle-income trap. Therefore, it is now time to get real and address some structural challenges that afflict India and its ability to generate jobs. After all, if India were to squander away the might of its youth demography by not being able to provide ample jobs, history will indeed remember these years as tragic.

India has the world's largest population with an estimated workforce of 600 million people. The first hard pill to swallow is this: there can never be enough jobs for all. Even if the unemployment rate were to be brought down to 5%, there would still be about 30 million people without a job assuming that the size of the workforce itself remains static at 600 million. Second, the government cannot provide jobs to all. The public sector provides just about 40 million jobs, and the scope of this increasing substantially is close to nil. At best, the government can facilitate the creation of new employment avenues by working alongside the private sector. The private sector, in turn, must do its part by investing heavily in research and development (R&D). At present, the government does much of the research-related heavy lifting. That is neither sustainable nor desirable in a country aiming to become a developed nation by 2047. The odds are stacked against India's youth. An Indian Labour Organisation (ILO) study released earlier this year revealed that nearly 83% of India's unemployed population belongs to the youth demographic. Essentially, acquiring a secondary education and then securing graduate and postgraduate degrees is no longer a guarantee that you will be able to land a job.

For long, parents would push their children to study hard and score good marks. That was when education did, in fact, ensure employment. That is no longer the case. In fact, if the recent ILO study is anything to go by, the chances of an educated youth remaining jobless are much higher than those who stay away from formal education. That should send warning bells ringing across the country. A few years down the line, in the absence of concrete measures to address India's unemployment woes, poor and

underprivileged parents could grow averse to the idea of spending on their child's education altogether. Where that will take India in the long run is anybody's guess. **DISMANTLE AND REBUILD INDIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM NOW!**

The bottom line is this: India's education system is no longer in a position to uplift people. It may help them read, write, calculate and know a little about the world around them, but beyond that, the education system in its present form does little to equip students for either the job market or for capitalising on their entrepreneurial minds. We remain a country where the only way a student climbs up the education ladder is by rote learning. The ill effects of an entire generation mugging up textbooks to pass exams are now becoming visible, as employers complain of not being able to find suitable and skilled candidates to fill their workforce with. In a world where technology, and more recently, artificial intelligence is taking centre stage, humans are of little to no use to employers if all that they have to offer are generic degrees and bare-minimum skills. India's education system in its present form lays little to no emphasis on skill development, mostly because this is a complex and long process that has to be sustained over the years. It requires the identification of students' core strengths and getting teachers to help them build on these. As a concept, this approach remains alien to a majority of Indian schools and colleges. It is no surprise, therefore, that schools and colleges are churning out hordes of graduates with largely similar aptitude levels and close to no mastered skills.

Remember, skill is the keyword. Without it, nobody should expect a job to land on their laps. The data relating to India's skill deficit is hardly inspiring. As per the India Skills Report, close to 49% of Indian youth are unemployable. That means 1 out of every 2 Indians is now unfit for employment. According to the National Employability Report for Engineering, about 80% of Indian engineers do not possess the skills needed in their field of work. That is the scale at which the Indian education system has failed our youth. Skill India is among the Modi government's most ambitious initiatives. However, it will yield results only when it is institutionalised in all Indian schools and colleges as a mandatory part of curricula. The curricula of schools and colleges require a complete overhaul. Today, Indian students deserve a syllabus more in sync with the times they live in, and not what was handed over to us by our colonisers. Formal education curricula must be designed in a way that lays emphasis on skills that are in demand in

the job market. The curricula, in turn, must be dynamic and flexible based on emerging market demands. Finally, the era of generic degrees is over. Bachelor's and Master's degrees in generic fields no longer land the youth anywhere close to a job. That is itself a tell-tale sign of how the job market has pivoted towards individuals who have skilled technical and vocational expertise to offer and not marksheets in which the scores are all a product of rote learning and mugging up. The National Education Policy (2020) laid out the broad contours of how the system must lay special emphasis on skill development. However, forward movement on that front is absent, and students continue being fed absolutely outdated and colonial syllabi in the name of education with little to no practical application in the modern world where AI is humans' biggest competitor. Finally, the government must crack down hard on the commercialisation of the education sector. Coaching

institutes have popped up across the country like there is no tomorrow. These coaching centres promise students a lot from teaching them the ability to crack competitive exams to even helping them land jobs. Most of this is largely a scam aimed at financially capitalising on the desperation of India's youth.

What such commercialisation has done is convince large swathes of the youth that cracking competitive exams and getting a job is all contingent on them paying handsome fees to such coaching centres. Now the question arises, why are graduates flocking to these coaching centres? Simply because the education system of India failed them. It failed them on more counts than one can put into words. What schools and colleges could not offer students; they are now looking for in coaching institutes. This is why India's education system must be completely overhauled. In the absence of that, we are all in a race to the bottom.

Kalki 2898 AD Box Office: Prabhas' Film Surpasses Shaitaan, Becomes 2nd Highest Hindi Grosser Of 2024

New Delhi: Kalki 2898 AD, starring Prabhas, has been in the theatres for a week and has already surpassed the ₹ 600 crore mark globally, as per Sacnilk. In India, the dystopian epic began its box office journey with ₹ 95.3 crore nett. The film's seventh-day earnings reached ₹ 23.2 crore. The film has experienced a 75 per cent drop in collections since its release. Notably, from the sixth to the seventh day, the

behind Fighter, which garnered ₹ 199.45 crore, as reported by Bollywood Hungama. Kalki 2898 AD has surpassed Ajay Devgn's Shaitaan, which earned ₹ 149.49 crore nett.

Despite a challenging year for Hindi films at the box office in 2024, Kalki 2898 AD might become the highest-grossing Hindi film of the year during its theatrical run. Globally, it has emerged as the most successful Indian film of 2024. Six



days into its release, Vyjayanthi Movies reported global earnings of ₹ 610 crore. While it remains to be seen if Kalki 2898 AD will join the ₹ 1000 crore club alongside films like Dangal (Rs 2070 crore), Baahubali 2 (Rs 1788 crore), RRR (Rs 1230 crore), KGF Chapter 2 (Rs 1215 crore), Jawan (Rs 1160 crore), and Pathaan (Rs 1055 crore), it is set

to exceed the global collections of Shankar's 2.0 (Rs 744.78 crore) and Prabhas' Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire (approximately ₹ 600 crore) after its seventh day. Kalki 2898 AD features a dystopian world. The post-apocalyptic film is inspired by Hindu scriptures and is set in the year 2898 AD.

The film is directed by Nag Ashwin and stars Prabhas, Amitabh Bachchan, Deepika Padukone, Kamal Haasan and Disha Patani in lead roles. The decline was only 14.23 per cent, bringing its nett collection to ₹ 393.4 crore according to Sacnilk. On its seventh day, the Telugu version of Kalki 2898 AD recorded an overall occupancy of 31.38 per cent. Directed by Nag Ashwin, the film was released in Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, English and Malayalam. The Telugu release grossed ₹ 202.8 crore in its first week in India, while the Hindi version earned ₹ 152.5 crore, placing it as the second-highest-grossing Hindi film of the year

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If not Kamala Harris, then who?

The problem with President Joe Biden, according to reports, is that he forgets. The problem with Vice-President Kamala Harris is that most people don't seem to remember what she has done.

The poor performance of Biden in the first presidential debate, who at 81 is the oldest president of the US, sparked concerns within the Democratic Party about his fitness to serve a second term. As calls for him to step aside grow, Vice-President Kamala Harris has emerged as the top alternative to replace Biden. However, Harris is not the only name being floated as a potential candidate.

Some influential Democrats have floated alternatives to Biden besides Harris, including popular Cabinet members and Democratic governors like Gavin Newsom from California, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania. These candidates have publicly backed Biden but are being mentioned as potential replacements in top Democratic Party circles.

If Kamala Harris replaces Biden and wins the presidential election, she will make history as the first woman of colour elected as President of the United States. The Democrats need to decide first, and time is running out fast. It is only 124 days to the election on November 5, 2024.

FIRST DEBATE NOT A DEFEAT, BUT DEBACLE FOR BIDEN

During the first presidential debate hosted by CNN on June 27 in Atlanta, Georgia, Donald Trump was declared the winner according to a CNN poll and The New York Times. More than a defeat, the first debate was a debacle for Biden.

Criticism intensified as observers noted moments where Biden appeared to lose focus, with some even suggesting he "fell asleep on stage".

This has also led to increased calls for Biden's replacement, despite his explanation to donors at a fundraiser on

Tuesday that his rigorous travel schedule contributed to his fatigue. Biden emphasised that this was not an excuse, but an explanation, reported the New York Times.

However, Minnesota Democratic Governor Tim Walz said on Wednesday that President Joe Biden is "fit for office".

This statement came after a meeting with the president aimed at addressing concerns about Biden's capability to lead and face Donald Trump in the upcoming presidential election, CNN reported.

"Yes, fit for office," Walz replied to a reporter's question following the private meeting, which included President Biden, Vice-President Kamala Harris, and most Democratic governors in the country.

"None of us are denying that Thursday night was a poor performance. It was a setback, if you will, but it doesn't change my belief: He's delivering," Walz was quoted as saying by CNN.

As the potential candidate after Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, an Indian-American, is seen as the natural choice to take over the fight against Donald Trump. The White House also declared Vice President Kamala Harris as "the future of the Democratic Party" on Wednesday. This statement comes as leading Democrats and their allies prepare to step in as potential replacements for President Biden should the 81-year-old choose not to run again.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre referred to Harris as Biden's political successor and even called her "president" at one point when questioned about Biden's previous comment about being a "transitional" candidate, according to the New York Post.

WHY KAMALA HARRIS COULD BE A NATURAL CHOICE

California Delegate Areva Martin, in an interview with American sports journalist Stephen A Smith, warned that replacing

President Joe Biden with anyone other than Vice-President Kamala Harris for the presidential election would lead black women to "blow up" the Democratic Party.

Harris is the only potential candidate who could directly assume the Biden campaign's \$240 million in funds since their campaign account was registered with the Federal Election Commission in the name of both candidates, as she is his running mate, according to the Associated Press.

Anyone else would face significant challenges in taking over that money, with only months to go before the election which is going to be held on November 5. In a CNN poll, Harris and Trump are nearly tied, with 47% of registered voters supporting Trump and 45% backing Harris. This result is within the margin of error, indicating no clear leader in such a scenario.

Kamala Harris has already withstood rigorous scrutiny and has the backing of influential figures like US Representative Jim Clyburn, a pivotal player in Biden's 2020 victory.

However, Americans have never elected a woman, that too of colour, as President. More than that, American voters don't seem to remember what exactly Harris has done as the Vice-President. There are doubts on her ability to take on a heavyweight candidate like Trump.

Therefore, if Biden opts out or is replaced as the Democratic candidate to take on Donald Trump, it will be interesting to watch if Democrats go with Harris or seek a fresh face. The crucial Democratic National Convention starts on August 19. OTHER DEMOCRATS WHO COULD REPLACE BIDEN

A notable group of Democratic governors, who did not run in the 2020 primaries, stand out as potential candidates. This group includes Gavin Newsom from

California, Gretchen Whitmer from Michigan, JB Pritzker from Illinois, Josh Shapiro from Pennsylvania, and Wes Moore from Maryland, according to Politico.

These candidates have publicly backed Biden but are being mentioned as potential replacements.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has been a strong advocate for several national Democratic issues, such as women's rights, immigration, and the economy. He notably survived a recall election last year. "In the Ipsos poll, Newsom fared 39% to Trump's 42% and in the CNN poll he received 43% to the former president's 48%," according to ABC News.

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, re-elected in 2022, is considered a potential Democratic candidate for the 2028 presidential race. She has frequently countered Republican critics, including Trump, especially those who opposed her pandemic policies.

In a hypothetical 2024 race, an Ipsos poll showed Whitmer trailing Trump 36% to 41%, while a CNN poll had her at 42% compared to Trump's 47%, reported ABC News.

Josh Shapiro, the Pennsylvania governor, has been mentioned as a potential candidate, though less prominently than Newsom and Whitmer.

WILL KAMALA HARRIS DRIVE AWAY SWING VOTERS?

Despite Harris being the leading alternative, some Democrats have doubts about her ability to defeat Trump. There are also concerns that switching to Harris could drive away crucial undecided voters. Tech mogul Reid Hoffman's top political adviser, Dmitri Mehlhorn, expressed these concerns, stating, "Kamala Harris is more threatening to those swing voters than a dead Joe Biden or a comatose Joe Biden," reported The New York Times.

This Wouldn't Be the First Time an Incumbent Stepped Aside. Here's What Happened Last Time.

By JOSHUA ZEITZ

After Thursday's presidential debate debacle is widely regarded as a low point for President Joe Biden, who appeared feeble and sometimes confused to many Democratic elites and nonpartisan pundits are suggesting a break-the-glass-in-case-of-emergency move that resided on the margins of conventional political thought just a week ago: The incumbent president, they argue, should step aside in the interest of the country, and delegates should name his replacement at the upcoming Democratic National Convention.

Any move to replace Biden just four months before the election carries

considerable risk. The party can ill afford to pass over its sitting vice president, Kamala Harris, who represents a core Democratic constituency as a Black woman but Harris consistently underperforms in polling. And allowing delegates to make such a momentous decision, negating the will of millions of primary voters and turning a nomination process that has been the norm for decades upside-down, is surely a recipe for division and rancor. But it's not like we haven't been here before. On March 31, 1968, Lyndon B. Johnson stunned the nation when he announced that he was pulling out of that year's presidential election. The Democratic National Convention that followed several months

later devolved into chaos and violence and left the party's eventual nominee, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, hobbled at the start of the fall campaign season. He ultimately lost a painfully close election to Richard Nixon, in no small part because of the unruly convention in Chicago.

It's not hard to imagine a similar outcome should Democratic leaders persuade Biden to step aside. But in the spirit of that old Mark Twain chestnut "history doesn't repeat itself, but it sometimes rhymes" context is everything. An open convention could well be a "democratic" moment. But it could also provide a jolt to the system and wake

many unhappy voters, who are currently disappointed with their options, from their slumber. By the close of 1967 over 500,000 American troops were bogged down in the war. More than 15,000 had been killed in action. Within 12 months, the casualty count would almost double. The war was all people talked about at cocktail parties or across the back fence, recalled Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. "[I]t was the transcendent issue in American politics. If you lived in Washington, it was the only issue."

As Johnson's approval rating plummeted from 61 percent in early 1966 to 38 percent in October 1967, former Vice President Richard Nixon, now earning

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a lucrative salary as managing partner of a prestigious New York law firm, slowly rebuilt his political base. He'd already developed a political operation that employed full-time advance men and speechwriters as he campaigned for GOP candidates in 1964 and 1966, and by early 1968, he emerged as a leading contender for the presidential nomination. By contrast, Johnson, who throughout his career cultivated a reputation as a relentless campaigner, proved uncharacteristically slow to energize. His days increasingly given to urgent meetings with his national security advisers, he had little time or energy to devote to his reelection prospects. Gradually, his aides awakened him to the urgency of preparation. "I believe we are going to have a real battle for survival next year," cautioned one aide, who urged LBJ to "build an effective national political organization." In November 1967, Johnson begrudgingly convened a group of trusted hands to assemble the shell of a campaign. But the president himself cast only one eye on politics as he searched despairingly for a way out of the Vietnam quagmire. The events that followed are familiar to most students of American history. In early winter, Senator Eugene McCarthy agreed to enter the New Hampshire Democratic primary as an anti-war alternative to LBJ. Most observers didn't regard his candidacy as serious. Other, more prominent Democrats like Robert Kennedy had declined to run. But on March 12, McCarthy scored a stunning near-upset in the New Hampshire primary, winning 42 percent of the vote to Johnson's 49 percent. Shortly thereafter, Kennedy decided to run, and for a time, it seemed LBJ might have a real race on his hands. Although most delegates were still chosen by state and local party leaders, most of whom would fall in with the president, LBJ's team knew that if he suffered a string of embarrassing primary losses, a snowball effect could lead party bosses to reconsider their loyalties. Six days after the New Hampshire primary, Harry McPherson, a presidential aide, summed up LBJ's challenge. The 1968 cycle would culminate in a change election, he argued, and as "the incumbent president you are (to some degree, at least) the natural defender of the status quo. You represent things as they are. This is a tough position today." It was a dilemma that should seem all too familiar to Biden Democrats now. Still, Johnson was unfocused on the campaign. His generals were requesting an additional 200,000 combat troops and \$12 billion more in defense spending to

win the war. Outgoing Defense Secretary Robert McNamara urged by contrast that it was time to deescalate the conflict, a position with which Johnson's circle of security advisers and wise men — Omar Bradley, Walt Rostow, Dean Rusk, George Ball, Arthur Dean, McGeorge Bundy — now largely agreed. All of which led Johnson to schedule a dramatic, televised address in which he would announce a sharp curtailment of bombings — and an offer to cease the bombings altogether — and return to the peace table with North Vietnam. For one of the few times in his presidency, LBJ would also speak in complete candor to the American people about the financial costs of the war and the resultant need to pass a temporary tax surcharge and reduce non-military expenditures in the coming year. "It's only a roll of the dice. I'm shoving all my stack on this one," Johnson told Horace Busby, a longtime adviser. He then surprised Busby by asking him to do something wholly unexpected: draft an extra line in the speech announcing his withdrawal from the presidential race. Historians have long puzzled over the decision. In reality, it was probably not the outcome of one thing, but rather, the culmination of several factors. Johnson had come to believe he could not engage in a hard-fought campaign to retain the White House while also attempting to negotiate peace in Vietnam. He certainly could not travel from city to city, where he would meet with enraged protesters, and govern a country that was on the cusp of yet another long, hot summer marred by urban violence. He also worried about his own health: He had suffered a near-fatal heart attack over 10 years earlier and was haunted by the knowledge that Johnson men tended to die early of heart disease. Yet "the biggest reason to do it is just one thing," he confided to Busby. "I want out of this cage." At 9 p.m., the president began his televised address. Forty minutes later, as he concluded, Johnson announced he would not seek or accept his party's nomination for another term as president. That's when things really began to unravel for the Democrats. Throughout the spring, as Nixon solidified his delegate count and plotted a general election strategy, Kennedy and McCarthy battled it out in several hotly contested primaries. The season was marked by unspeakable violence. In early April, an assassin gunned down Martin Luther King Jr., in Memphis, where the civil rights leader had joined striking sanitation workers. His death sparked another wave of unrest, including riots in Washington, D.C., that were visible from the White House. Two

months later, Kennedy was assassinated in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, just moments after declaring victory in California's hard-fought primary. By August, when the national convention opened in Chicago, 38.7 percent of Democratic primary voters had cast ballots for McCarthy and 30.6 percent had cast ballots for Kennedy, meaning that well over two-thirds of primary voters had supported candidates who called for a negotiated settlement of the war in Southeast Asia. By contrast, only 2.2 percent of voters had supported Humphrey, Johnson's heir apparent, who reluctantly echoed the administration line on Vietnam, and who had not competed in a single primary.

By all reasonable expectations, the Democrats should have nominated an anti-war liberal. But in 1968, only 15 states chose their delegates by primary. Almost three-fifths of conventional delegates were selected by county committee members, state party apparatchiks and elected officials. As early as June 2, even before Kennedy's assassination, the vice president's advisers had sewn up enough delegates to secure the nomination. Humphrey did not need grassroots support to win; he only needed the party bosses.

Given the sharp divisions within the party, it was almost inevitable Democrats would fight and fracture, as indeed they did. Amid reports that various groups planned to disrupt the convention's proceedings, Richard J. Daley, the legendary Chicago mayor and party fixer, mobilized 12,000 city police, 5,000 National Guard and 6,000 federal troops to stand watch over the city. Ironically, Daley had gradually evolved from hawk to qualified dove. He

no longer felt the war could be won, and further, he feared that the war might hurt down-ballot Democratic candidates in the fall election. But he was a party man, through and through, and he would not brook disruption or dissent — not in his city, and not on his watch.

Several organized groups intended to disrupt the convention. Under the direction of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, the "Yippies," a motley band of agitators who combined New-Left politics with street-theater tactics, had all sorts of wonders planned for the benefit of Humphrey's supporters. Among their designs: having 1,000 nudists stage a float-in in Lake Michigan, enlisting 230 "hyper-potent" men to seduce the wives and daughters of prominent delegates, injecting LSD into Chicago's water supply and sending hundreds of activists into the streets to throw handfuls of rice at passers-by. (Their ambitions exceeded their capabilities, and they never managed to turn Chicago's faucets into fountains of psychedelic mania, but they did sow disruption, nevertheless.) Then there were the members of the National Mobilization Committee to End the War (the MOBE), who had orchestrated the highly successful 1967 spring mobilization that drew hundreds of thousands of anti-war protesters into the streets nationwide. And finally, there were McCarthy's supporters, who were deeply embittered that the party was about to coronate a man who had not competed in a single presidential primary. As expected, the convention descended into chaos. Inside the hall, city police roughed up McCarthy delegates, including Alex Rosenberg, a prominent New York politician.

Chennai woman gets son arrested for peddling drugs, helps cops bust racket

The mother of a load driver in Chennai got her son arrested for substance abuse, helping cops bust a ganja (cannabis) smuggling racket, officials said.

Sriram, a load vehicle driver, had recently picked up the habit of using ganja oil. When his mother Bagyalaskhmi became aware of this, she alerted MKB Nagar Police on Wednesday.

Upon reaching Sriram's house, cops recovered 630 ml of ganja oil worth Rs 2 lakh. The team then brought Sriram to the police station for questioning. He revealed that while returning from a cargo trip from Odisha, he brought 300 ml of ganja oil from Andhra Pradesh.

This was part of a contact given by one Arun from Kerala, said Sriram, adding that he handed over the item to an unknown man at a roundabout in Madhavaram area

in Chennai.

The police then tracked the accomplice to Vyasarpadi, and identified the person as Satish, brother of Arun, who were reportedly called as 'Ganja Brothers'.

The duo used Sriram and Pervez, another load vehicle driver, to smuggle ganja from other states. They recently introduced cannabis oil, claiming it was easier to smuggle as it was difficult for sniffer dogs to identify.

The racket came to light after Sriram used a bit of the 630 ml ganja oil which was to be handed over to a local peddler as per Arun's directions.

But as Sriram's mother saw her son's behaviour change after consuming the oil, she alerted the cops, helping them with busting the racket.

Further investigations into the matter are underway.

Parliament Debate: Will Disruption, Chaos Become The Norm In The 18th Lok Sabha?

The Lok Sabha witnessed heated exchanges between the treasury benches and the opposition during the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. The claims, counterclaims, and interjections all point towards a confrontational atmosphere in the 18th Lok Sabha, perhaps shaped by changes in its composition.

From 2019 to 2024, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and friendly parties held a significant lead of around 300 MPs over the INDIA bloc and opposition. However, this session saw the margin narrowing to just 60 MPs. The verbal sparring between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi turned acrimonious and personal, reflecting the recently concluded election campaign dynamics and entrenched positions.

Both Congress And BJP Remain Steadfast While the Congress aims to sustain momentum, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) remains resolute not to concede further ground. The shift in strength, allocation of time for parties, and the calibre of speakers on both sides will significantly influence proceedings over the next five years. During the recent Motion of Thanks debate, Rahul Gandhi, as Leader of the Opposition, spoke for nearly an hour and 40 minutes out of the allotted 16 hours - roughly 15% of the total time allotted to the opposition.

Time allocations are based on Lok Sabha strength. During the No Confidence Motion of August 2023, the BJP received around 45% of the time, while the Congress' share

was just 18%. With the BJP's friendly parties (the Biju Janata Dal, the YSR Congress Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party) losing ground in recent elections, their allocation has shifted notably to opposition parties. Some prominent speakers from the treasury benches, such as Smriti Irani, were notably absent. Conversely, the presence of parties like the Samajwadi Party (SP) has bolstered the opposition, particularly with effective speakers in fluent Hindi. Akhilesh Yadav's speech, noted for its sarcasm without overt anger, followed Rahul's assertive tone.

Rahul's Performance As LoP

During Monday's session, Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on the Modi government, highlighting issues including inflation, unemployment, NEET, Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops, the Agniveer scheme, and Hindutva, aiming to put the government on the defensive. Top ministers, including the Prime Minister, intervened during Rahul's speech.

While Rahul addressed critical issues, some noted the absence of specific data and figures in his speech. There is already an ongoing debate over Rahul's performance in his role as Leader of the Opposition, with supporters arguing his assertiveness marks a significant political presence that cannot be ignored.

Not new to controversy, Rahul made a reference to the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), stating, that those who called themselves Hindu only talked about violence, hatred, and untruth. PM Modi rebutted instantly. References in

Rahul's speech to to Hinduism and violence, two prominent industrialists, the Agnipath scheme, and NEET, were expunged. The LoP subsequently wrote to the Speaker questioning the decision and demanding the restoration of his remarks in parliamentary records.

Modi's Address

On Tuesday, PM Modi delivered the concluding remarks on the Motion of Thanks in the Lok Sabha. His speech, lasting around 2.5 hours, was a scathing attack on the Congress and Rahul. Throughout his address, the opposition shouted slogans, prompting Modi to use headphones to counter the noise. Despite the interruptions, Modi's speech, though not entirely audible, gave enough hints of the things to come in the next five years. Modi criticised the opposition's maturity level, noting that while the treasury benches listened to Rahul's speech with interjections rather than shouting slogans, the opposition did not afford the same respect to the Prime Minister. Expressing displeasure at the sloganeering, Modi

referred to Rahul as "balak buddhi" (childish) and mocked how a party celebrating 99 out of 543 seats was acting as if it had won 99 out of 100. He criticised the Congress party's promise of transferring ? 1 lakh to women's bank accounts, highlighting the public's scepticism about similar promises made earlier.

Modi accused Rahul of resorting to drama to garner sympathy, pointing out his bail status in alleged financial misconduct.

Overall, the debate was disappointing for both the opposition and the ruling party. BJP leaders neglected discussion around their agenda for the next five years, while the opposition failed to engage in constructive criticism and effectively address issues like NEET. Both sides instead resorted to mudslinging, seemingly forgetting that the elections were over.

The session's outcome suggests the potential for more disruptions and chaos in Parliament. Both sides must reconcile with the electoral mandate and strive for a fresh start in the upcoming Budget session.

Non-bailable warrant against Vijay Mallya in Rs 180-crore loan default case

A special court in Mumbai has issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya in a Rs 180-crore loan default case linked to Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).

The NBW was issued against Mallya on June 29 by special CBI court judge SP Naik Nimbalkar and a detailed order was made available on Monday.

Citing other non-bailable warrants issued against the 68-year-old businessman after taking into account CBI submission, and his status as a "fugitive", the court noted, "this is a fit case to issue an open-ended NBW against him to secure his presence". The CBI, probing the case, has claimed the promoter of the now defunct Kingfisher Airlines caused a wrongful loss of more than Rs 180 crore to the government-run bank by "wilfully" defaulting in payments.

The embattled liquor tycoon, who has already been declared a fugitive economic offender in a money laundering case probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), currently resides in London and the Indian government is seeking his extradition.

The warrant was related to a cheating case registered by the CBI for alleged diversion of loans availed by the then-operational Kingfisher Airlines from IOB between 2007 and 2012.

As per a chargesheet filed in the case in the court recently by the central agency, these credit facilities were issued to the grounded private carrier by the bank under an agreement.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had in August 2010 directed the complainant

bank (in the case) State Bank of India (SBI) to consider the proposal of Kingfisher Airlines Ltd (KAL) for restructuring of existing facilities by relaxing the concerned guidelines as a one-time measure for the aviation sector, the probe agency said in the document.

Accordingly, the lenders, including IOB, restructured the existing credit facilities to KAL through a Master Debt Recast Agreement (MDRA). The agreement was signed between the KAL and a consortium of 18 banks.

The allegations in the case pertain to false promises, diversion of loans for the purposes other than it was availed, the CBI said.

The accused dishonestly and with intent to cheat, "wilfully" defaulted on the repayment obligations under the aforesaid loans and caused a wrongful loss of Rs 141.91 crore on the account of default on loans, the chargesheet claimed.

The probe agency further alleged that an additional wrongful loss of Rs 38.30 crores was caused on the account conversion of loans to shares.

Taking cognizance of the charge-sheet, the CBI court issued process (summons) against Mallya and five other accused in the case. However, the probe agency pressed for issuance of an NBW against Mallya, saying "the accused is a fugitive and an absconder". Citing multiple cases where NBWs and summonses have been issued against the embattled businessman, the CBI's plea said he is presently living in England and "continues to subvert the process of law in India."

Many firsts in PM Modi's Russia, Austria trip next week

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on an official visit to Russia and Austria between July 8 and 10, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

"Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will pay an official visit to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Austria on 08-10 July 2024," an official release by the MEA read.

The Prime Minister will be in Moscow on July 8 and July 9, at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin, to hold the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit. "The leaders will review the entire range of multifaceted relations between the two countries and exchange views on contemporary regional and global issues of mutual interest," the ministry said.

Notably, this will be PM Modi's first trip to Russia ever since it launched its military offensive and invaded its neighbour Ukraine in February 2022. His last visit to Russia was in 2019 when he attended an economic conclave in the Far East city of Vladivostok.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said that

deepening trade and economic cooperation would be one of the key themes of the meeting between PM Modi and Vladimir Putin during the latter's visit. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet with Vladimir Putin to discuss further development of the traditionally amicable relations between Russia and India, as well as pressing international and regional issues," the Kremlin said. Putin had last met PM Modi in September 2022, at a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Uzbekistan. In 2021, Putin also traveled to New Delhi and held talks with PM Modi.

After concluding his summit in Russia, PM Modi will travel to Austria during July 9 and July 10, making the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the European nation in 41 years, after Indira Gandhi in 1983.

In Vienna, PM Modi will call on Austria President Alexander Van der Bellen and hold talks with the country's Chancellor Karl Nehammer. Later, PM Modi and Nehammer will also address business leaders from the two nations.

Boeing's crisis in Washington is about to soar to a new phase

Embattled aerospace giant Boeing faces a monumental choice: Plead guilty to a felony fraud charge for its role in past deadly plane crashes, or roll the dice on a high-profile trial against the Justice Department.

The company has until Friday to decide. Both options are potentially fraught. Accepting a plea deal for violating the terms of a 2021 agreement with DOJ would be a black mark for one of the United States' most important manufacturers and defense contractors, whose factories support thousands of U.S. jobs and whose political arm gives heavily to candidates of both parties.

It would bring hundreds of millions of dollars in fines and could complicate the company's ability to continue winning contracts with the federal government. But a trial would spark a potentially damaging discovery process, perpetuate Boeing's ordeal in the news headlines and produce made-for-TV moments of victims' families calling for justice. The legal process would drag out well into next year — potentially bringing an unpredictable face-off against a Trump administration DOJ.

Unlike in some past crises, Boeing has had few if any vocal defenders on Capitol Hill.

Boeing declined to comment on questions related to the decision. It has denied any



wrongdoing, stating it honored the terms of that agreement.

The dilemma Boeing faces stems from twin crashes in 2018 and 2019 in Indonesia and Ethiopia that claimed a total of 346 lives, calamities linked to faulty flight-control software in its workhorse 737 MAX passenger jet.

In 2021, the Justice Department allowed Boeing to avoid prosecution in exchange for a fine and internal changes at the company. But in May, after a new spate of quality-control problems emerged in the MAX this year, the department told a federal judge that the company had

violated the agreement.

DOJ's most recent offer would include a fine and a requirement that the company install independent third-party inspectors. But the families of those lost in the earlier crashes have said they want to see people behind bars and a massive \$24 billion fine. Critics and some industry analysts at least want a shakeup of its board. The department may not have the evidence to win a trial accusing Boeing of knowingly putting passengers in harm's way for the 2018 and 2019 crashes, however. Glenn Leon, head of the fraud section of the DOJ's Criminal Division, told

family members and their lawyers on a phone call Sunday that the company couldn't prove such charges beyond a reasonable doubt, according to a statement issued by the Clifford Law Offices, which represents some family members of the 737 MAX crash in Ethiopia. Families have said that's for a jury to decide. Boeing wouldn't get away scot free if it takes the deal: The plea wouldn't resolve or provide immunity to the company for any other conduct, including a door plug blowout in January that reignited concerns about Boeing's quality control, according to a person familiar with ongoing deliberations about the legal parameters of the case. The person was granted anonymity in order to discuss matters that are still fluid.

Concerns about Boeing's quality control have only mushroomed since the January incident aboard an Alaska Airlines flight over Oregon, triggering multiple probes from regulatory agencies and heightened attention from Congress, not to mention reams of bad press.

Boeing has also been in the hot seat over another quality problem: its Starliner spacecraft, which hasn't been able to bring NASA astronauts back down to Earth from the International Space Station as the company struggles to troubleshoot leaks and other related malfunctions.

'The clock is ticking': Democrats press Biden to decide on his future



A handful more top Democrats on Wednesday questioned Joe Biden's viability as a presidential candidate — and while there's no flood of defections, several are publicly saying time is running out for the president to decide the future of his campaign.

Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) said he would support a "mini-primary" ahead of the August convention to decide the nominee if Biden steps aside, while Rep. Summer Lee (D-Pa.) called Vice President Kamala Harris the "obvious choice" for the top of the ticket if he does. Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) repeated that the "clock is ticking" for the president to convince voters he can perform unscripted. And later Wednesday, Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) became the second House Democrat to call for Biden to abandon his bid for a

second term following his shaky debate performance last week. In an interview with The New York Times, Grijalva said the president should "shoulder the responsibility for keeping that seat — and part of that responsibility is to get out of this race."

The comments by high-profile members of the party are a shift in messaging in the past 24 hours: While outspoken Democrats are still broadly supportive of Biden, their patience is beginning to wear. Biden said on a Zoom call with campaign and Democratic National Committee staff Wednesday afternoon, "I am running. No one is pushing me out. I'm not leaving. I'm in this race to the end and we're going to win," POLITICO reported.

The president said unequivocally to his team he is running for reelection and he

is going to beat Donald Trump," according to a person familiar with Biden's comments granted anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly. Biden plans to meet with a host of Democratic governors Wednesday night and will appear for an interview with ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos on Friday that will air over the weekend. Democrats are urging Biden to use these unscripted opportunities to demonstrate that he's fit to win against former President Donald Trump in November.

Earlier Wednesday, Welch emphasized in an interview with CNN that it is short for Biden to show the public that he's still up for the job. "The only way for him in the campaign to respond is not by talking to senators or governors, because this is not a 'tell me' situation. It's a 'show me' situation," Welch said. "So he'd have to be out and about in the hurly-burly of a campaign, open-ended press conferences with folks like you, engagements with voters."

Clyburn, a longtime Biden friend and ally whose endorsement was pivotal for the president in 2020, told CNN that Biden's debate performance was "concerning." He said if Biden did step aside, he would support a "mini-primary" between Harris and Democratic governors to decide the ticket. His office emphasized in a

statement to POLITICO that the lawmaker was answering a hypothetical question and that he still supports Biden.

In a radio interview, Lee called on the party to "move very quickly" if the president chooses to step aside, adding there is not going to be time for a primary. That time has passed, which means that the vice president is the obvious choice.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) said in a statement Wednesday that he has "grave concerns about his ability to defeat" Trump and that "all viable options on the table."

"When your current strategy isn't working, it's rarely the right decision to double down. President Biden is not going to get younger," Moulton said. "I'm taking time to seriously consider the best strategy for Democrats to win this election and set our country on a positive path forward."

"Maybe folks don't want to hear, but we have time that is running out. Time is not on our side," Lee told SiriusXM host Zerlina Maxwell on Wednesday. "We have a few months to do a monumental task. It's not cheap and it's not easy."

Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) said Wednesday that he felt comfortable earlier publicly calling for Biden to step aside because of his 15-term seniority in the chamber and safe district in deep-blue Austin.

Tucker Carlson vs. Zelenskyy: Kyiv says no interview agreed

Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office denied Thursday that the Ukrainian president had agreed to a sit-down interview with American right-wing pundit Tucker Carlson.

The President of Ukraine has a completely different schedule, and Tucker Carlson is not on it, presidential spokesperson Sergii Nykyforov said Thursday morning, while casting doubt on Carlson's Ukrainian sources.

The Ukrainian denial came after Carlson said Wednesday night that he might have landed a chat with Zelenskyy. "Looks like we've got the Zelenskyy interview," he announced on social media. "We've been trying for two years, and with particular



intensity after interviewing Putin in February," Carlson said. "The point is to bring Americans much-

needed information about the conflict that is completely reshaping their country's position



in the world. Coming soon we hope."

In February, Carlson, a former

Fox News host who left the network amid swirling controversy in 2023, published a two-hour long interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin, during which Putin delivered a lengthy monologue about Russian history and mocked Carlson over his failed attempt to join CIA.

One week later, Putin revealed on Russian state TV that he didn't get complete satisfaction from the interview as he expected tougher questions from the journalist.

Ukraine has been attempting to fend off Putin's full-scale invasion for more than two years now, and Carlson's commentary on the conflict has sometimes mirrored Kremlin talking points.

What's next for Rishi Sunak, the inheritor of loss



When British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said, "Once you make that decision on Thursday, there's no going back. Don't do something you might regret," with just a couple of days remaining for ballots to be cast in the 2024 general election, he surely meant it.

On Friday, Sunak conceded the 2024 general election to the Keir Starmer-led Labour Party. Sunak said the British people had delivered a "sobering verdict" and there was a lot to learn and reflect on. Starmer is on track to become the next UK Prime Minister as trends showed the Labour Party crossing the majority mark in the House of Commons. It was after a number of setbacks for the Conservatives (Tories), that Sunak took over as the first British Prime Minister of colour. He also became Britain's first Hindu Prime Minister and the youngest Prime Minister at the age of 42 in over more than 200 years.

Now, the incidental Prime Minister who campaigned relentlessly has his fingers crossed as the UK votes. Keir Starmer is poised to become the next Prime Minister as millions of cast their votes on Thursday (July 4) across 650 constituencies in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Sunak, who called for the election earlier than anticipated, has shifted his campaign strategy in recent weeks. He has abandoned the pursuit of a fifth consecutive victory, focusing instead on warning against an unchallenged Labour supermajority. The 2024 UK general election was the Conservative Party's worst showing since it was founded in 1834. Rishi Sunak couldn't prevent that, and what happens to him after the election is what is worth watching.

SHADOW OF PAST ON PROSPECTS OF SUNAK, TORIES

Sunak, the face of the Conservative Party in the first general election since Brexit on 31 January 2020, which was a major issue in the previous election, is now facing widespread disillusionment amongst the electorate. Years of austerity measures, Brexit, a sluggish economy and scandals have eroded public trust on the Conservative Party, leaving Sunak to fight an uphill battle against advancing Labour leader Starmer. It is also expected that a betting scandal could likely embarrass the Conservatives and its leader Sunak in the snap poll of July 4.

The backdrop of the election has thus made it increasingly difficult for Sunak to dispel the political chaos.

The Conservative Party was hit hard when Sunak's predecessor, Boris Johnson, and his team held lockdown-breaking parties during the Covid-19 pandemic, attracting widespread anger.

Last month, Sunak left the international commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Normandy landings (D-Day) attended by American President Joe Biden and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, to take part in a television interview that, experts say, was not taken positively in the run-up to the all-crucial polls. Johnson's successor, Liz Truss, further destabilised the Covid-weakened economy with a drastic tax cut package, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis and lasting only 49 days in office. Experts say there is also

widespread discontent over other important issues, including a dysfunctional public healthcare system and rupturing infrastructure.

Sunak in 2023 had said that he had not "got this job [of the British Prime Minister] in not the easiest of circumstances" and hoped he would be the right choice as the leader going into a general election of 2024.

Now, as the election looms, the Conservative Party is grappling with the burden of past misdeeds. Rishi Sunak, the son of Indian immigrants, stands at the forefront, leading the charge in the challenging battle.

RISHI SUNAK FIGHTS TILL THE END TO WOO VOTERS

In making a final push to win over voters ahead of the July 4 national election, Sunak, however, sounded optimistic about a favourable outcome, insisting that "the outcome of this election is not a foregone conclusion" and that "things are in a better place now than they were" during his 20 months in office.

In the final hours, Sunak was seen scrambling between food distribution warehouses, supermarkets, and farms, to connect with voters and emphasise the party's efforts to improve the economy and infrastructure. He has also highlighted the party's commitment to making Britain a "clean energy superpower".

Despite these challenges, Sunak is banking on his party's traditional support, the business

community's endorsement, banking on the recent "improved data", and a pledge to reduce Britain's immigration levels, to secure a victory.

SUNAK'S PRE-10 DOWNING STREET JOURNEY

Before making his way to 10 Downing Street, Rishi Sunak had been the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury under Prime Minister Boris Johnson. He became the head of government of the United Kingdom in October 2022 following the resignations of two successive prime ministers. Before venturing into politics in 2015, Oxford and Stanford-educated Sunak worked at Goldman Sachs and later co-founded a hedge fund called Theleme Partners.

The July 4 election, expected to be a high-stakes contest as Sunak's legacy, could be a milestone, if he is able to stem the tide of discontent and restore the faith of Conservatives among the British people.

There were reports that Sunak might even lose his seat of Richmond and Northallerton. "Rishi Sunak has confided to members of his inner circle that he is fearful of losing his Yorkshire constituency at the general election," The Guardian reported on July 3, quoting sources. "He is genuinely fearful of a defeat in Richmond: the risk that it could be tight has hit him hard. He's rattled if he can't quite believe it's coming so close," a source told The Guardian.

Indian Food Has Run Into A Problem: The Inescapable Red Curry

Can we Indians please get over the onion-tomato-ginger-garlic sauce that we put into everything we eat? Think about it. If Indian food, and I mean food from all geographical directions - North, North-east, East, South and West - was to be defined by a single curry, something often referred to as a "mother sauce" in Western culinary jargon, it would be the good ol' red curry made with onions, tomatoes, ginger and garlic. This base sauce is sometimes turned orange by adding cream to it and other times turned green by adding some pureed spinach. Even lentils are tempered with the same four ingredients because any other tempering often turns the lentils into "hospital-type dal".

Everything Tastes The Same

I'm quite sure that half the market for Eno or Digene in India can be credited to this mother sauce because our stomachs have literally become allergic to it. We eat it day in and day out. We even put it in our eggs in the morning. That famous street side dish, 'anda ghotala', is also a variant of this concoction, blended with boiled eggs and served with fried eggs on top. "Ghotala" literally translates to scam, and such dishes indeed are a scam - and products of sheer lack of imagination.

There's something to be said here about the snob of all cuisines - French food. At least the French tend to glorify every ingredient using sauces made with completely different flavour compositions. So a beurre blanc (literally translates to white butter) is a simple butter sauce emulsified with vinegar and



wine, and boiled with shallots. In fact, each of the mother sauces of French cuisine ó Béchamel, Velouté, Espagnole, Hollandaise and Sauce Tomat (Tomato) ó is defined by a distinct profile that goes with various proteins and carbs. While béchamel's main star is milk, velouté's star ingredient is chicken stock thickened with a roux (all-purpose flour that's cooked with butter). Similarly, velouté uses beef stock with brown roux. Hollandaise uses raw eggs with lemon juice to create an absolutely divine, velvety texture and refreshing flavour, while Sauce Tomat clearly is an ode to tomatoes, which are cooked with herbs and reduced to a delectable thick consistency.

The derivatives of these sauces with multiple other ingredients run into hundreds of other variants, each distinct from the other. For example, sauce Charcutière uses the mother sauce espagnole with dry mustard and onions. Sauce Mornay uses the mother sauce

béchamel, with onions, cloves, Gruyère cheese and Parmesan.

Rescuing Indian Cuisine

It's not that Indian cuisine was always so monotonous. Not in the least bit. It still isn't. Only, it's the on-the-go cooking (the "scummy" type) that has made this onion-tomato-ginger-garlic concoction the mainstay of all "dishes". Things were not supposed to be like this. The original urad dal, also known as 'kali dal' and which is now served as 'makhani dal', was always slow-cooked to perfection with only caramelised onions added for tempering. The famous 'junglee maas' of Rajasthan was a glorification of the mighty Mathania chillies grown locally in Jodhpur to elevate game meat hunted by the royals of yesteryears. The only other ingredients in this dish were ghee and garlic to remove the gamey smell of meat.

Latest and Breaking News on NDTV Can we Indians please get over the

onion-tomato-ginger-garlic sauce that we put into everything we eat? Think about it. If Indian food, and I mean food from all geographical directions - North, North-east, East, South and West - was to be defined by a single curry, something often referred to as a "mother sauce" in Western culinary jargon, it would be the good ol' red curry made with onions, tomatoes, ginger and garlic. This base sauce is sometimes turned orange by adding cream to it and other times turned green by adding some pureed spinach. Even lentils are tempered with the same four ingredients because any other tempering often turns the lentils into "hospital-type dal".

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High cholesterol is 'silent killer': India gets first-ever lipid guidelines

India has received its first set of guidelines to help people control high cholesterol. Cardiologists worldwide, including India, have been following the 2019 guidelines by the European Society of Cardiology. But now, the Cardiologocial Society of India (CSI), a 22-member committee, released the first-ever guidelines tailored to Indians on July 4 for dyslipidemia (high cholesterol) management.

Dyslipidemia is a medical condition where there are abnormal levels of lipids (fats) in the blood, such as high cholesterol or triglycerides. This imbalance can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other health problems. It is often managed with diet, exercise, and medication. This condition is characterised by the high total cholesterol in the blood including elevated LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol), high triglycerides, and low HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol). Dyslipidemia, known as the "silent killer" since it has no



symptoms, is a key marker for cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks, strokes and peripheral artery disease.

HOW TO KNOW YOUR LIPID PROFILE?

Total cholesterol (lipid profile) is measured through a blood test. A healthcare provider draws a small sample of blood, usually from a vein in your arm. The sample is then analysed in a lab to determine the total

amount of cholesterol, which includes low-density lipoprotein (LDL), high-density lipoprotein (HDL), and a portion of triglycerides.

As per the guidelines, the minimum level of cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/DL (milligrams of sugar per decilitre). While high cholesterol levels are quite prevalent across the country, a major part

of this burden is seen in the urban areas. Doctors across the country unveiled the Lipid Guidelines after witnessing the high prevalence of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and how India has the highest number of premature deaths due to CVD in the world.

"We needed a set of guidelines for Indians as we are more susceptible to various diseases because of various factors including environmental, genetic and especially lifestyle. These guidelines by the CSI are catered for Indians to help us understand how important lipid profile is when it comes to heart health," said Dr JPS Sawhney, Chairman, Department of Cardiology, Sir Gangaram Hospital, and the Chairman of the Lipid Guidelines. According to the study conducted by CSI, low levels of HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol) were seen in people living in almost all states of India except Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana and Manipur.

Tesla unlikely to move ahead with India investment plan: Report

Tesla CEO Elon Musk's team has not made further enquiries with officials in New Delhi since the billionaire postponed a visit to India in late April.

Tesla Inc. is unlikely to proceed with its investment plan in India as executives from the electric carmaker have ceased communication, reported Bloomberg, quoting sources familiar with the matter.

The report noted that Tesla CEO Elon Musk's team has not made further enquiries with officials in New Delhi since the billionaire postponed a visit to India in late April, the sources told the publication.

The sources indicated that the government has been informed that Tesla is facing capital issues and does not plan to commit new investments in India in the near future.

Tesla's waning interest in India coincides with the company



reporting its second consecutive drop in quarterly deliveries globally and facing increased competition in China. In April, Musk announced the Cybertruck, has been slow to ramp up, while construction of a new plant in Mexico has been

delayed.

Musk had cancelled a planned visit to India in April, which was to include a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing pressing issues at the company. This visit was announced shortly after India lowered import taxes on EVs from foreign carmakers that pledge to invest at least Rs 4,150 crore and start EV production from a local factory within three years. Instead, the government is now relying on domestic automakers like Tata Motors Ltd. and Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. to boost EV production, the sources told Bloomberg. However, they noted that Tesla would still be welcome to benefit from the new import tax policy should Musk decide to re-engage.

Sebi sends notice to Hindenburg in Adani case: What are the key allegations?

Tesla CEO Elon Musk's team has not made further enquiries with officials in New Delhi since the billionaire postponed a visit to India in late April.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has issued a show cause notice to Hindenburg Research, alleging several violations.

The main accusation is that Hindenburg misled the market by falsely claiming it had no direct or indirect exposure to Adani Group shares listed in India.

Sebi said that Hindenburg's January 2023 report on the Adani Group included misleading disclosures.

Hindenburg stated that its exposure to Adani Group securities was limited to US-traded bonds and non-Indian derivative instruments. These statements appeared in the report's 'Disclaimer,' 'Initial Disclosure,' and 'Disclosure' sections. However, Sebi alleges that these claims were deceptive and contributed to the erosion of over \$150 billion in Adani Group's market capitalization within weeks.



The notice reveals that K India Opportunities Fund Ltd Class F, a Sebi-registered foreign portfolio investor, traded in Adani Enterprises shares just before the report was published and squared off its short position immediately afterward, making a profit of Rs 183.24 crore (\$22.25 million).

An initial analysis of trading during the period immediately prior to

release of the Report and immediately after revealed that one entity, namely, K India Opportunities Fund Limited - Class F... opened a trading account and started trading in the scrip of AEL just a few days prior to publication of the Report, and then squared-off its entire short position post-publication of the Hindenburg

Report, making significant profits of Indian Rupees 183.24 crore (\$22.25 million), the Sebi show cause notice said. Sebi's findings indicate that Kingdon Capital, a client of Hindenburg, and K India Opportunities Fund are connected through Mark Kingdon, who owns 99% of Kingdon Capital. This connection undermines Hindenburg's

assertion of no direct or indirect exposure to Adani Group shares in India. Furthermore, Sebi claims that Kingdon Capital enabled Hindenburg's indirect participation in the Indian securities market by collaborating on trades in Adani Enterprises futures and sharing the profits. This arrangement contradicts Hindenburg's stated lack of association in its report. By effecting a scheme to share with Hindenburg the profits from trades in Indian-listed companies based on an overall negative draft of Hindenburg Report whose timing of publication was known to KIOF Class F through Kingdon Capital, and by failing to ensure that the Research Report was used in compliance with RA Regulations, KIOF Class F failed to exercise due diligence, engaged in fraudulent transactions, which is in violation of the SEBI FPI Regulations, it added.

Scams, Success, and Skepticism: Exploring Crypto's Complex Landscape

By Shruti Kohli

I must confess, I was fascinated by the story of a 21-year-old woman quitting her job to pursue a career in, of all things, cryptocurrency. Eight years on, this gamble has paid off handsomely, providing not just a livelihood but a thriving financial cushion. Her audacity is laudable. And rightly so.

I must confess, I was fascinated by the story of a 21-year-old woman quitting her job to pursue a career in, of all things, cryptocurrency. Eight years on, this gamble has paid off handsomely, providing not just a livelihood but a thriving financial cushion. Her audacity is laudable. And rightly so.

Paperless. Digital. Decentralised. Democratic. This utopian blend seems to promise a financial revolution. However, cryptocurrency often dominates headlines for embodying the financial world's worst vices. Despite this, for many, crypto remains a vital source of income. "Its biggest strength is also its biggest enemy. The fact that it is hugely



independent and is seen as democratising also makes it difficult to regulate," Mitali Mukherjee said in a recent conversation with me. Mitali is a finance journalist and currently a Director at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

It all started when I chanced upon Mitali's

book *Crypto Crimes: Inside India's Best-Kept Secret*. My mind flooded with questions and contemplations, I found myself inevitably drawn to the prospect of a one-on-one conversation. Mitali shared stories of three individuals in the cryptosphere, illustrating its unpredictable nature. She also revealed

a surprising trend: women are breaching the boys' club in crypto land; 'one in every five crypto investors is a woman'.

Reflecting on the past, we pondered the evolution of equities and speculated on cryptocurrency's future role in investment portfolios. Our conversation underscored the critical role of financial education in decoding this volatile market. Mitali points out that influencers and educators play a significant role in dispelling misinformation surrounding cryptocurrency. Accurate information is essential to protect investors from potential scams and losses.

Ultimately, while cryptocurrency currently stands at the crossroads of opportunity and uncertainty, with proper regulation, education, and understanding, it may well evolve into a cornerstone of the financial landscape, much like equities have over the past two decades. The journey towards this acceptance is fraught with challenges, but the potential rewards may justify the effort.

How rising Hinduphobia in the US can be challenged

By Rohit Sharma

Imagine walking past a serene Hindu temple, the melodic chants of prayers wafting through the air. The facade's intricate carvings and vibrant colours speak to a rich cultural heritage. But suddenly, you see shattered glass and graffiti marred across the facade. This is the harsh reality faced by many Hindu Americans. The US media barely whispers about it, leaving many wondering: Why the rise in hate against a peaceful religion that has enriched American society for generations? Why us? The rise of Hinduphobia in the US is an alarming trend that requires immediate and coordinated action from advocacy groups.

A series of attacks on Hindu temples in the Bay Area in just two months between December 2023 and January 2024 led to five Congressional Representatives writing a letter to the US Department of Justice asking for more focused attention and action. Attacks on Hindu individuals, be it women in a Texas parking lot or a Hindu man just visiting his local Taco Bell to eat, have been on the rise. In August 2022, Krishnan Iyer's innocuous order for a bean burrito led to a 10-minute verbal assault. This isn't just about a few isolated incidents. A recent report by the California Civil Rights Department revealed that Hinduphobia was second on the list of reported hate crimes, following antisemitism. "Anti-Jewish (36.9 per cent),



anti-Hindu (23.3 per cent), and anti-Muslim (14.6 per cent) were the most cited reasons for reports related to religious targeting," said the report. The Hindu American community The United States is home to approximately five million people of Indian origin, a significant portion of whom are Hindu. The community contributes immensely to American society through various sectors, particularly science, technology, engineering, and medicine. Doctors like Sanjay Gupta, a renowned CNN contributor, and CEOs like Sundar Pichai, who heads Alphabet, are examples of Hindu Americans pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Yet, this very success can sometimes breed

prejudice, morphing into xenophobia and, ultimately, Hinduphobia.

Hindu festivals like Diwali and Holi have gained popularity and are celebrated across many American cities, highlighting cultural integration and the positive impact of Hindu Americans. Yet, Hindu temples and individuals face increasing hostility and attacks, often overlooked by the mainstream media and misunderstood by the general public.

Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar introduced a resolution condemning Hinduphobia and celebrating the contributions of Hindus in the US. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of advocacy groups is often hampered by internal competition and fragmented

strategies. To counter Hinduphobia effectively, these groups must embrace collaboration, clear messaging, community engagement, and strategic policy advocacy. Additionally, engaging the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) community can significantly bolster their efforts. Here's a look at how we can fight Hinduphobia in the West.

Collaborative efforts

One of the primary challenges facing advocacy groups is the lack of cooperation. Individual organisations vying for attention often result in duplicated efforts and diminished impact. Forming coalitions can help present a united front, amplifying their voice and influence. Coalition building involves developing shared platforms where groups can coordinate efforts, share resources, and plan joint initiatives. By pooling their strengths, these groups can undertake larger, more impactful campaigns that reach broader audiences and yield better results.

A practical approach is to create a leadership council comprising representatives from each advocacy group. This council can facilitate coordination and decision-making, ensuring all voices are heard, and efforts are aligned. This unified leadership can help navigate the complexities of advocacy work and enhance the overall impact of their initiatives.

Adani case: How Hindenburg responded to Sebi's show cause notice

Hindenburg Research has responded to a 46-page show cause notice issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in connection with the Adani case, calling it nonsense and accusing the market regulator of neglecting its responsibility.

"Today we are sharing the entirety of this notice, frankly, because we think it is nonsense, concocted to serve a pre-ordained purpose: an attempt to silence and intimidate those who expose corruption and fraud perpetrated by the most powerful individuals in India," the US-based short seller said. In its detailed response, Hindenburg Research alleged that the Adani Group has not directly addressed the findings of its research report. Rather, it has offered deflections and blanket denials. Here are some of the key highlights from Hindenburg's response to Sebi's show cause notice:

Hindenburg defends Adani report

Hindenburg highlighted that its 106-page report on the Adani Group included 720 citations, collectively detailing evidence that Adani engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades.

It said the report also provided evidence



that Vinod Adani, Gautam Adani's brother, and close associates controlled a vast network of offshore shell entities.

"We detailed how billions were surreptitiously moved through these entities, into and out of Adani public and private entities, often without related-party disclosures. We also detailed how a network of opaque offshore fund operators surreptitiously helped Adani evade minimum shareholder listing rules, citing numerous public documents and interviews to substantiate the allegations," Hindenburg added. "Our work on Adani was never

justifiable from a financial or personal safety perspective, but it is by far the work we are most proud of," the short-seller said.

Questions Adani Group's response to report - Hindenburg also questioned the Adani Group's response to its report, alleging that at least 40 independent media investigations corroborated or expounded on their findings, presenting evidence of widespread fraud by Adani against shareholders and Indian taxpayers.

"To this day, Adani has still failed to address the allegations in our report, instead providing a response that ignored every key

issue we raised and has offered blanket denials of subsequent media allegations," Hindenburg said.

Blames Sebi for neglecting responsibilities The US short-seller also blamed Sebi for neglecting its responsibilities as a market regulator. Hindenburg stated that instead of targeting those who orchestrated a secret offshore shell network involving billions in undisclosed related-party transactions and stock manipulation through sham investment entities, Sebi seems more focused on pursuing those who expose these practices. Hitting out at the market regulator, it said, "In our view, Sebi has neglected its responsibility, seemingly doing more to protect those perpetrating fraud than to protect the investors being victimised by it."

Zero factual inaccuracies

Hindenburg Research also noted that after 1.5 years of investigation, Sebi has not identified any factual inaccuracies in its report on the Adani Group.

It highlighted that much of the notice seemed designed to imply that our legal and disclosed investment stance was something secret or insidious, or to advance novel legal arguments claiming jurisdiction over us.

Bollywood Needs To Stop Bleeding Producers Dry. South Has Lessons

By Latha Srinivasan

Last month saw the release of Kalki 2898AD, and as of July 4, the Prabhas starrer has grossed more than ₹700 crore at the box office. The success of this Tollywood film has naturally sparked comparisons with the Hindi film industry, with its recent flops coming into sharp relief. The recent Bade Miyan Chote Miyan fiasco only highlighted those concerns. Its box-office failure was followed by allegations from crew members that Pooja Entertainment, the production house backing the film, was yet to pay them their dues. In fact, actor Akshay Kumar reportedly had to step in and ask the company to clear the dues before paying him.

The churn Bollywood is going through has stirred up a hornet's nest, with many feeling that there is a serious need for course correction. There is widespread chatter about exorbitant star fees and their entourage costs, and writers, DOPs and other crew members have started speaking up about the extreme disparity in pay structures in the Hindi film industry. Every Friday counts

While Bollywood stars have for years now been able to charge exorbitant fees, the



Covid-19 pandemic set in motion a lot of changes. The Hindi film industry went through deep turmoil, and some say it has still not been able to regain its footing. Only Shah Rukh Khan has managed to deliver blockbusters in the last two years. A slew of big-star Hindi films, like Jayeshbhai Jordaar, Laal Singh Chaddha, Ram Setu, Cirkus, Adipurush, Selfiee, Maidaan and Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, have all flopped at the box office, causing great worry to producers and actors alike.

Back in 2022, ace director S.S. Rajamouli had pointed out that the downfall of Hindi cinema in that year - considered one of the worst periods for Bollywood ever - was because of the high fees of actors and directors. "What happened once corporates started coming into the Hindi film industry and paying high fees to actors, directors and companies, was that the need to 'I have to succeed at any cost' has come down a little bit; the hunger [to succeed] has come down a little bit.

Here, down South, that was not there. You have to swim or you are going to sink." Latest and Breaking News on NDTV

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