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12th India Day Parade
highlights



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One Nation, One Election: How feasible is it and what would be its impact?

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France Bans Abaya in schools



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G20 and the Three Axes of Global Power



(Sai Bureau)-The absence of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G20 Heads of Government summit in New Delhi brings clarity to the future shape of geopolitical power. Three poles are visible, though in overlapping parabolic axes. The first axis is the United States-led coalition of democracies. The second is the China-Russia axis of autocracies. The third pole is the amorphous Global South led by India and other neutral powers.

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Vivek Ramaswamy Says Will Pardon Jan 6 Protesters If Elected US President

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The US government is investigating China's breakthrough smartphone



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Exclusive Highlights of the 12th India Day Parade that was held in Hicksville on Aug 27 2023

Seen in pictures are Grand Marshal Malika Sherawat, Kate Murray, Clerk, Town of Hempstead Town President Deepak Bansal President, Ravi Chopra of ST Financial Vimal Goyal, Jasbir Jay Singh of Hum Hindustani, Bobby Kalootee, Chairman Nassau County Human Rights Commission, Jennifer DeSena, Supervisor Town of North Hempstead, Joe Saladino, Town of Hicksville, Mohinder Singh Taneja of American Diversity Forum.





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This Canadian province is selecting immigrants based on nationality - and Indians have a leg-up

(Sai Bureau)-Canada's Saskatchewan has taken a new approach to selecting skilled immigrants - focusing on their country of residence. This move has raised questions about a departure from Canada's traditionally inclusive immigration system that has welcomed people from all races and nationalities.

In August, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program initiated six draws with the aim of inviting 542 skilled immigrants from various occupational backgrounds to settle in the province as permanent residents. However, there's a catch - only individuals residing in eight specific countries are eligible: Czechia, Germany, India, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

While officials argue that these draws are designed to target immigrants with a higher likelihood of succeeding and remaining in the province, experts express concerns that this may signify a return to Canada's past ethnocentric immigration selection practices. "What is novel is that they are selecting based on nationality. This was a feature of our system when it was racist

by design. It's very controversial to select based on perceived 'fit' simply due to one's nationality," says Ravi Jain, Founder, Jain Immigration Law.

The selection of the eight countries was based on factors like labor pool



characteristics, language proficiency, previous successful recruitment and retention experiences, and job opportunities within Saskatchewan. Credential compatibility with the province's job market also played a crucial role in the selection process. Historically, Canada had an immigration system that favored immigrants from "culturally similar"

countries, excluding those from non-European, South Asian, and Chinese backgrounds. However, in 1967, Canada introduced a points-based system that assessed applicants based on objective criteria such as education, work experience, language proficiency, and employment skills.

Jain says there is now a possibility for other provinces to adopt the same approach to immigration. "Other provinces may try to argue that they are selecting by nationality because they have reason to believe citizens of some countries are more likely to stay in their province and that given each province has a limited number of

'spots' by the federal government, they want to pick those most likely to stay," he adds. While Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta have high immigrant retention rates of over 80 percent, other provinces struggle to retain newcomers despite their provincial nominee programs. Saskatchewan's country-specific pilot is an effort to allocate resources more efficiently

and attract newcomers who are likely to stay.

The federal government allocates quotas for provincial nomination spots, and Saskatchewan is eligible to submit up to 7,250 nominations in 2023. Typically, provincial immigration officials invite applicants from an existing pool of candidates who meet the relevant points thresholds. However, in this pilot, draws were created before the talent pool was established, with recruitment missions planned for Europe and India to identify potential candidates. Statistics Canada data shows that only 64 percent of newcomers who settled in Saskatchewan between 2016 and 2020 remained in the province. For skilled workers and skilled trades categories in 2019, this retention rate dropped to 43 percent.

Saskatchewan plans to evaluate the pilot project's success upon its completion in December. Successful recruits will be issued work permits while their permanent residence applications are processed, aiming to create a win-win situation for both newcomers and the province.

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“Annual Backpack Giveaway Project” organized by Rotary Club of Hicksville South (RCHS)



(By our staff reporter) Long Island- Rotary Club of Hicksville South (RCHS) recently held their Annual Back-to-School “Backpack Giveaway Project” at the Levittown Hall, in Hicksville, NY. Program was by President Mizanur Rehman and Secretary and Project Chair Dr Neeru Bhambri , Co- Chair Arjen Bhatija and Team Members Roopam Maini, Rekha Gupta, Dr Rogers Singh. , Rachna Patel and Syeda Sonia. Organization said in a press release that they distributed about 400 Backpack Bags filled with School Supplies for the local students who are in need.

Hempstead School District; Domestic Harmony Foundation; SACSS; Martin Luther King Center; United Methodist Church; Kingdom Family Ministry; Dept of Social Services; MANNA Project; Long Beach EOC Head-start; Hicksville Public School; and Freeport School District.

Additionally through the Town of Hempstead (TOH) they

distributed some backpack bags also. Rotary International (D7255) District Governor, Mr. Tom Crowley and his wife Mrs. Julie Crowley attended the event.

Several appointed and elected officials, business and community leaders attended the distribution event, among them were Jassbir Jay Singh, Publisher of Hum Hindustani , Rizwan Quereshi CEO of HAB Bank, Deputy Nassau County Executive, Honorable Anissa D. Moore; Director of Minority Affairs, Mr. Lionel Chitty. Supervisors of the Town of North Hempstead, Ms. Jennifer DeSena, Harry Malhotra, Director of the Office of Asian American Affairs of the Town of Oyster Bay, represented Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joe Saladino's Office. Citations were given to the Project Chair, Dr. Neeru Bhambri, Project Co-Chair, Mr. Arjen Bathija, and to the Club President, Mr. Mizan Rahman in recognition of their dedicated work for the project.



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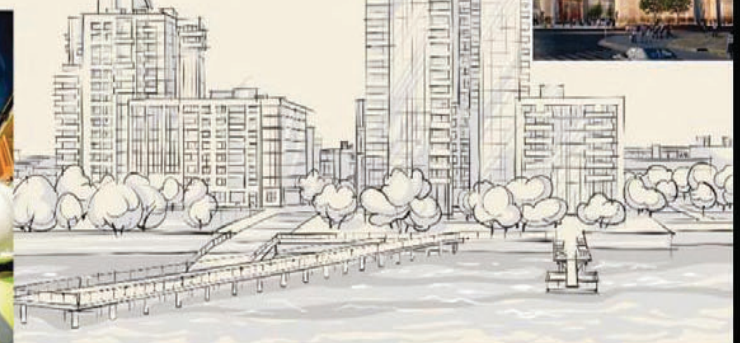
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Rishi Sunak Praises PM Modi, Says "India Showing Global Leadership"

Mr Sunak said the relationship between the UK and India will define the future of the two countries, even more than it is defining the present.

(Sai Bureau)- India's diversity and its extraordinary successes mean it is the "right country" at the "right time" to hold the G20 presidency, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Wednesday, as he hailed Narendra Modi's leadership over the last year, noting that India's presidency of the bloc came when the world is facing innumerable challenges.

In an interview with PTI just days ahead of the G20 summit here on September 9-10, Mr Sunak, the first Indian-origin prime minister of Britain, said the relationship between the UK and India will define the future of the two countries, even more than it is defining the present.

"This country's scale, diversity and extraordinary successes mean India is the right country at the right time to hold the G20 Presidency. I pay tribute to Prime Minister Modi's leadership over



the last year and it's wonderful to see India showing such global leadership," he said.

The prime minister's responses to PTI's questions were sent by email.

"We will also work closely with India through their Presidency of the G20 to address the biggest challenges the world is facing, from stabilising the global economy to dealing with climate

change," Mr Sunak said.

The British prime minister also referred to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and asserted that if Russian President Vladimir Putin is allowed to invade a sovereign neighbour with impunity, then it will have "terrible consequences" for the entire world.

"As two major world democracies, our people define and drive us. That is why the UK is focused on supporting Ukraine to defend itself and defeat this illegal and unprovoked Russian invasion," he said. As a free and democratic country, Ukraine has the right to determine its own future. If Putin is allowed to invade a sovereign neighbour with impunity it will have terrible consequences for the entire world," he said. "Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians, but it is Putin who has the power to end this war tomorrow by withdrawing his troops," Mr Sunak added.

EB-5 can prove to be a lifeline for H-1B holders...if they can afford it

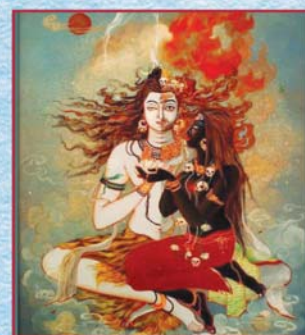
(Sai Bureau)-Several Indians who are in the US on an H-1B non-immigrant visa and are in a decades-long queue for an employment-linked green card are showing a renewed interest in the EB-5 visa (aka the investment linked green card program), albeit this is for those who can afford it. The minimum investment required is a minimum of \$800,000 (Rs. 6.6 crore approximately) in a qualifying project with the creation of at least ten American jobs. The other segment which continues to show interest are Indians within the country whose children are studying in the US or aspire to study in the US.

The main reason for the renewed interest is the Reform and Integrity Act (RIA) that was introduced from March 15, last year, which permits 'concurrent filing' of the conditional green card application in Form I-526E and an application for adjustment of status in (the I-485 application for change of status from a non-immigrant visa to a green card). "The silver lining is that concurrent filing results in obtaining an Employment Authorisation Document (EAD) within 6 months, allowing them to remain in the US while waiting for their green card and be gainfully employed. This also

enables them to change employers without any worries and after receiving advance parole even travel freely to India," states Abhinav Lohia, managing director, global business development at Golden Gate Global - an EB-5 regional center.

"It should be noted that such concurrent filing is only available to foreign individuals who are physically present in the US in lawful US visa status. It grants applicants the ability to enjoy the benefits of permanent resident status while they await the approval of their I-526E petition," states Nicholas A. Mastroianni III, President and Chief Marketing Officer, US Immigration Fund (USIF), a Florida based EB-5 regional center. "The temporary work permit under I-485 Adjustment of Status is valid for two years, is renewable, and allows the holder to work for employers as a salaried employee and/or independent contractor," adds Mastroianni III.

The layoffs had resulted in H-1B workers scrambling to find another job within 60 days or transition to another visa like a F-1 (student visa) or a B visitor visa. EB-5 offers more security. "The concurrent filing stops the 60 days clock and allows the investor to remain in the US," adds Lohia.

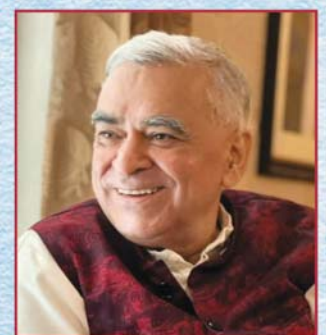


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Shashi Tharoor Suggests 'BHARAT' As Opposition Bloc Name, Full Form Is...

Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday had said while there is no constitutional objection to calling India 'Bharat', he hopes the government will not be so "foolish" to completely dispense with 'India' which has "incalculable brand value".

(News Agency) -Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday took a swipe at the government over the India-Bharat naming row, saying the opposition bloc could call itself the "Alliance for Betterment, Harmony And Responsible Advancement for Tomorrow (BHARAT)" and then perhaps the ruling party might stop the "fatuous game of changing names".

His remarks came after invitations for a G20 dinner sent out by President Droupadi Murmu, describing her position as 'President of Bharat' instead of the customary 'President of India', triggered a massive furore on Tuesday with the opposition alleging that the Modi government is planning to drop India and stay with just Bharat as the country's name.

In a post on X, Mr Tharoor said, "We



could of course call ourselves the Alliance for Betterment, Harmony And Responsible Advancement for Tomorrow (BHARAT). Then perhaps the ruling party might stop

this fatuous game of changing names." The Congress is a constituent of the opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

On Tuesday, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh had on X said, "Mr. Modi can continue to distort history and divide India, that is Bharat, that is a Union of States. But we will not be deterred. After all, what is the objective of INDIA (alliance) parties? It is BHARAT - Bring Harmony, Amity, Reconciliation And Trust. Judega BHARAT. Jeetega INDIA!" Mr Tharoor on Tuesday had said while there is no constitutional objection to calling India 'Bharat', he hopes the government will not be so "foolish" to completely dispense with 'India' which has "incalculable brand value" The Congress MP had also claimed it was Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah who had objected to the name 'India' since it implied that "our country was the successor state to the British Raj and Pakistan a seceding state".

PM to hold 15 bilateral talks on sidelines of G20, Biden, Sunak, Macron on list

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to engage in over 15 bilateral meetings with world leaders on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi from September 9 to 10.



(News Agency) -On the sidelines of the G20 Summit, scheduled to be held in New Delhi from September 9 to 10, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to hold more than 15 bilateral meetings with leaders from across the world.

According to the details, on September 8, PM Modi will hold bilateral meetings with leaders of Mauritius, Bangladesh and the USA.

On September 9, PM Modi will hold bilateral meetings with leaders of the UK, Japan, Germany and Italy.

Further, on September 10, PM Modi will have a lunch meeting with French President Macron.

Prime Minister Modi will also do a pull-aside meeting with Canadian President Justin Trudeau, along with holding bilateral meetings with the leaders of Comoros, Turkey, UAE, South Korea, EU/EC, Brazil and Nigeria.

The G20 Leaders' Summit is set to be attended by more than 30 heads of state and top officials from the European Union and invited guest countries and 14 heads of international organisations.

DELHI GEARS UP FOR G20

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up across the national capital on the eve of the G20 Summit with police, paramilitary forces and other agencies maintaining a hawk-eye vigil in the city, officials told news agency PTI on Friday.

Markswomen and armed forces deployed at strategic locations, enhanced patrolling and intensive checking in border areas are some of the security measures taken by the Delhi Police ahead of the G20 summit that will be held at Delhi's Pragati Maidan.

Delhi Police is being assisted by over 50,000 security personnel, K9 dog squads and mounted police.

"From the airport to hotels and from hotels to the G20 summit venues, foreign delegates will be provided foolproof security by the Delhi Police during the prestigious summit," a senior official said.

In order to strengthen the arrangements, the Delhi Police is also being assisted by the Indian Air Force (IAF) and specialised central agencies like the National Security Guard (NSG) and some of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

UP man climbs 100-foot tower demanding treatment for son at Delhi AIIMS



(News Agency) A man climbed a 100-foot tower reportedly demanding his son's treatment at AIIMS, Delhi. In a protest against hospitals in the area, which, according to him, had not been providing decent medical facilities for his son, the man risked his life from the tall tower and demanded justice in his own way.

Atop the high structure, the father alleged that hospitals had not been treating his son and that they were being referred to one hospital after the other. He further yelled from atop the tower that when he decided to sell his land to get medical treatment for his son, the land mafia allegedly obstructed the sale and didn't "allow the land to be sold". In the visuals, the man could be seen at a height while people asked him to come down.

Nitish Kumar to attend G20 dinner; Manmohan Singh, Deve Gowda also invited

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is expected to participate in the President's G20 dinner amid the India-Bharat renaming row. The government has also extended invitations to former Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and HD Deve Gowda.

(News Agency) -The President's G20 dinner has been in the eye of a political storm after invitations to the event referred to President Droupadi Murmu as the 'President of Bharat' instead of the customary 'President of India'. The move has been met with strident criticism from opposition parties, who have accused the government of attempting to change the country's name to Bharat.

As the controversy continues to simmer, the Centre has also extended invitations to former Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and HD Deve Gowda. The two have not yet confirmed whether they will attend the dinner, where around 500 business leaders are expected to be present.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is also expected to attend the dinner. The JD(S) chief will leave for Delhi at 10.45 AM on Saturday. Kumar will likely run into Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the gala event, which would make it their first meeting



since July 2022. Earlier, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had confirmed that she would be travelling to Delhi on Saturday for the dinner. The news came a day after she sharply attacked the government and questioned the need to "suddenly use only Bharat" while

referring to India in an official communique. The Trinamool chief's decision to attend the G20 dinner was welcomed by the ruling BJP.

The G20 Summit, scheduled for September 9-10 in Delhi, is set to host top leaders from various countries

including the US, the UK, Canada, and the European Union. The summit will be held at the newly inaugurated Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, which has been decked up royally to welcome foreign delegates.

The President's G20 dinner slated for Saturday will be held at a brand-new \$300-million venue designed in the shape of a conch shell, with a menu featuring Indian cuisine with a special emphasis on millets, a grain promoted by the country. Adding to the grandeur of the event, a three-hour concert featuring different styles of classical and contemporary music will be performed for the world leaders.

The performance, titled 'Bharat Vadya Darshanam: Musical Journey of India', by the 'Gaandharva Aatodyam' group, will showcase Indian classical musical instruments such as santoor, saranagi, jal tarang, and shehnai.

Ravana, Kansa failed to erase Sanatana Dharma, will it be harmed by...: Adityanath

(News Agency) -Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said several attacks in the past on the Sanatan Dharma failed to inflict any damage on it, and it will not be harmed today also by any power hungry "parasitic creatures".

His statement comes amid a controversy that started after the DMK leader

Udhayanidhi Stalin allegedly made anti-Sanatan Dharma remarks. "The Sanatan that Ravana's arrogance failed to erase, the Sanatan that Kansa's roar failed to shake, and the Sanatan that Babur and Aurangzeb's atrocities could not annihilate, will that Sanatan be erased by these petty power hungry parasitic creatures," Adityanath said in a four-line verse in an X post in which he also shared a video of his statement.

He was speaking at a cultural programme at the Police Lines on the occasion of Janmashtami.

In his remarks, Stalin had allegedly said the Sanatan Dharma is against equality and social justice, Purportedly likening it to coronavirus and malaria, he had said such things should not be opposed but destroyed. Without taking any name,

Adityanath said pointing a finger at the Sanatan Dharma amounts to making a malicious attempt to put humanity in trouble.

He described Sanatan Dharma as a source of energy like the Sun. "Only a fool can think of spitting at the Sun, for it will naturally come back to the face of the person who spits."

Taking a jibe at the opposition parties, the CM said their future generations will live in utter shame because of their misdeeds. He emphasised that one must feel proud of India's tradition.

"All those who tried to destroy the God were destroyed themselves.

Sanatan was insulted 500 years ago. Today, a Ram temple is being built in Ayodhya. The opposition is trying to do petty politics, trying to create hinderance in India's progress. But it won't work," he said. "In every era, there have been attempts to falsify the truth. Didn't Ravana try to lie? Before that, didn't Hiranyakashyap try to insult the God and Sanatan Dharma? Didn't Kansa challenge the divine authority? But, they were all destroyed in their malicious attempts. Let's not forget that the Sanatan Dharma is the eternal truth. It can't be harmed," the CM said.



Dengue cases cross 2400 mark in Uttar Pradesh, spurt of 138 patients in Lucknow



(News Agency) Uttar Pradesh has been recording a spurt in dengue cases across the state. It has been found that a total of 2,462 patients have been diagnosed with the viral infection since May 15, and more than half of them were diagnosed in the last 25 days.

Eight fresh dengue cases were reported in Lucknow, totalling 138, out of which, 10 cases are from the same area.

The health department and the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) across UP districts are on an alert and arrangements at hospitals, for medicines and dengue tests are being made. The CMOs, across the state, have fixed the rates for dengue tests and platelet readings.

Also, separate wards will be prepared for dengue patients at hospitals in all districts. State Surveillance Officer Dr Vikasendu

Agarwal said, "The situation is under control and all necessary further safety measures are already being taken."

Dengue is caused by the bite of the female Aedes aegypti mosquito. It is characterised by a high fever, severe headache, and pain behind the eyes. Red rashes also appear on the body.

Uttar Pradesh health department has advised people to remove unused items and use mosquito nets.

This year, a total of 3354 dengue cases have been registered, out of which, there are four official deaths recorded, three in Bulandshahr and one in Firozabad. Districts like Gautambudh Nagar 403, Ghaziabad 310 and Kanpur 210 have the highest cases, along with Meerut 174, Morabadad 114, and Varanasi 84 cases this year.

At G20, the end of old multilateralism - G20 will reach the last mile, leave no one behind and the beginning of a new order

By C. Raja Mohan

It can now be said plainly. Post-Cold War multilateralism is past its peak - at both the global and regional levels. This week's East Asia Summit in Jakarta and the G20 summit in Delhi highlight the deep and arguably irreversible crises in the old multilateral order. The dying embers of old multilateralism are marked less by the absence of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at both summits than by their deepening conflicts with the rest of the world. Russia is locked in a war with the West over Ukraine, and China is at odds with many of its Asian neighbours, including India, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, as well as the US.

The gloomy prospect for multilateralism is in contrast with India's brightening opportunities to shape regional and global orders. Delhi's role is critical in the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Forum, in the attempt to broaden the ambit of the G20 to address the concerns of the Global South and in the promotion of balanced globalisation that will help all countries.

Although there is much focus on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the problems it has created for the world economy and the forging of a consensus at the G20, it is Xi's China that presents enduring challenges to multilateralism. With its new-found economic clout and growing military power, Chinese expansionism has begun to pose a great challenge in Asia, and its staunch support for Russia is part of the problem in Europe.

As India's bilateral challenges with China multiply, regional and global multilateralism has emerged at the core of India's national security and international relations. No wonder India is investing so heavily in multilateral diplomacy, including the Quad and G-20 and is making bold departures from the traditional tenets of its multilateralism.

The end of the Cold War at the turn of the 1990s created favourable conditions for an intensive phase of multilateralism. Europe moved towards rapid regional economic integration and expansion under the banner of the European Union. In Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations provided the framework for intensifying regional economic and political cooperation. Regionalism in Europe and Asia was facilitated by the end of the great power rivalry in both continents. Russia was drawn into the Group of Seven leading Western countries, making it the G8. Moscow was also engaged in consultations with the NATO.

In Asia, China became a close partner for the US on economic and political fronts. This, in turn, translated into new possibilities for cooperation among major powers on

global issues - such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, and pandemics. The integration of China into the World Trading Organisation in 2001 gave a huge boost to Beijing's economy, which rapidly emerged as the world's second-largest after the US.

The 2008 global financial crisis underlined the urgency of expanding the G7 to bring in the middle powers to restore stability to the global economic order. But no sooner than multilateralism got a fresh wind behind its back, the contradictions within the system came to the fore.

The Russian occupation and annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 marked the first major crisis of the post-Cold War security order in central Europe and has led to the Russian war against Ukraine. Asia has, over the last decade, seen China's growing unilateral efforts to alter the borders with neighbours. China has also sought to manipulate the rest of the world's dependence on its economy for political and strategic gains. Xi's reversal of key policies initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s - peaceful periphery and common prosperity - has devastated regional and global institutions.

In Asia, the ASEAN-led regional institutions struggle to cope with China's aggressive territorial expansionism. In the inevitable pushback, the last few years have seen the rise of new security institutions like the Quad, the AUKUS that brings together Australia, Britain, and the US, and the trilateral compact in Northeast Asia between the US, Japan and South Korea. This has raised questions about the continuing centrality of the ASEAN in shaping the regional order in Asia.

Beijing's attempt to gain unilateral economic advantages has compelled the US and Japan to de-risk the massive interdependence with China built over the decades. Like much of the world, India also bet in the 1990s that economic cooperation with Beijing would be mutually beneficial and help resolve political differences. Thanks to Xi's hegemonic ambitions, India has been cured of that illusion.

In the 1990s, Moscow persuaded Delhi to join hands with Beijing in promoting a multipolar world that would counter American unilateralism. This core principle of India's post-Cold War multilateralism has begun to unravel as economic and security threats mounted from China. The problem for Delhi, it became increasingly clear, was from a "unipolar Asia" dominated by Beijing, rather than from a "unipolar world" led by the US. An expansive and positive US engagement with India aided this profound shift in Delhi's perspective. India embraced the Indo-Pacific idea and revived the Quad that had gone moribund in 2007.

By Narendra Modi

"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - these two words capture a deep philosophy. The phrase means "the world is one family". This is an all-embracing outlook that encourages us to progress as one universal family, transcending borders, languages, and ideologies. During India's G20 Presidency, this has translated into a call for human-centric progress. As One Earth, we are coming together to nurture our planet. As One Family, we support each other in the pursuit of growth. And we move together towards a shared future - One Future - which is an undeniable truth in these interconnected times.

The post-pandemic world order is very different from the world before it. There are three important changes, among others. First, there is a growing realisation that a shift away from a GDP-centric view of the world to a human-centric view is needed. Second, the world is recognising the importance of resilience and reliability in global supply chains. Third, there is a collective call for boosting multilateralism through the reform of global institutions. Our G20 Presidency has played the role of a catalyst in these shifts.

In December 2022, when we took over the Presidency from Indonesia, I had written that a mindset shift must be catalysed by the G20. This was especially needed in the context of mainstreaming the marginalised aspirations of developing countries, the Global South and Africa. The Voice of Global South Summit, which witnessed participation from 125 countries, was one of the foremost initiatives under our Presidency. It was an important exercise to gather inputs and ideas from the Global South. Further, our Presidency has not only seen the largest-ever participation from African countries but has also pushed for the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20.

An interconnected world means our challenges across domains are interlinked. This is the midway year of the 2030 Agenda and many are noting with great concern that the progress on SDGs is off-track. The G20 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on SDGs will spearhead the future direction of the G20 towards implementing SDGs.

In India, living in harmony with nature has been a norm since ancient times and we have been contributing our share towards climate action even in modern times. Many countries of the Global South are at various stages of development and climate action must be a complementary pursuit. Ambitions for climate action must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology.

We believe there is a need to move away from a purely restrictive attitude of what should not be done, to a more constructive attitude focusing on what can be done to fight climate change.

The Chennai HLPs for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy focus on keeping our oceans healthy.

A global ecosystem for clean and green hydrogen will emerge from our presidency, along with a Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre.

In 2015, we launched the International Solar Alliance. Now, through the Global Biofuels Alliance, we will support the world to enable energy transitions in tune with the benefits of a circular economy.

Democratising climate action is the best way to impart momentum to the movement. Just as individuals make daily decisions based on their long-term health, they can make lifestyle decisions based on the impact on the planet's long-term health. Just like Yoga became a global mass movement for wellness, we have also nudged the world with Lifestyles for Sustainable Environment (LiFE).

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Looking For Excuses, Xi Skips G20 To Avoid Tough Questions On Economy

By Saibal Dasgupta

Chinese President Xi Jinping first tried to avoid meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden and other world leaders by cancelling his scheduled appearance at the two-day G20 summit in Delhi starting September 9. He has now asked his Ministry of Security to find reasons that would allow him to skip the next major international meet in November. The Chinese foreign ministry has said Premier Li Qiang will attend the G20 while suggesting that Xi will skip it. Li was earlier the Communist Party chief for Shanghai city but he has very little experience in the diplomatic field. "Premier Li Qiang will elaborate on China's views and propositions on G20 cooperation, promote the G20 to strengthen solidarity and cooperation and work together to address global economic and development challenges," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. China is ready to work with all parties "to jointly promote the success of the G20" summit and "make positive contributions to

promoting the stable recovery of the world economy and promoting sustainable development," Mao said.

But, analysts say Premier Li will be directed by Xi sitting in Beijing and will likely take no initiatives on his own. As with most Chinese leaders, he will try not to raise his international profile because Xi may not like it. Looking for excuses At another level, China's Ministry of Security has indicated that Xi may not attend another important international meeting - the Asia Pacific Leaders' meet at San Francisco in November.

In a statement, China's Ministry of Security found fault with Washington's "two-faced" China policy. "To truly realise the move from Bali to San Francisco, the US needs to show real sincerity," it said. Bali is where the last G20 meeting took place, and San Francisco is the site of the upcoming conclave of Asia Pacific leaders.

The ministry said the US has taken several steps to undermine

China as it "downplayed China's economy" and approved arms sales and military assistance to Taiwan. China regards Taiwan as part of its territory and opposes American efforts to arm the island. By complaining against the US, China is preparing grounds for Xi



Jinping to skip the meeting in San Francisco, which will be attended by several world leaders including President Biden.

Biden, who is expected to discuss weighty international issues with the Chinese leader, said he was disappointed by Xi's decision to stay away. But, he is still hoping Xi will attend the meeting in San Francisco. "I am disappointed, but I am going to

get to see him," he said.

Why is Xi passing up the opportunity to interact with world leaders, which is a reversal of his policy of presenting himself as a global leader and peacemaker on different international forums?

The Chinese President is clearly trying to avoid awkward questions about the state of the Chinese economy, which is a matter of grave concern to financial markets the world over. China's global influence has severely declined due to the economic slide seen even after the end of the Covid pandemic period, and bleak prospects for 2024.

Within China, the ruling Communist Party is reassessing the country's economic policy because foreign direct investments have fallen to the lowest level in 25 years, and the US is creating new hurdles in the way of Chinese companies almost every month. The party is also worried about internal turmoil as

urban youth employment has fallen to the lowest level in decades. Put simply, Xi finds himself unable to defend his governance on the world stage at this point.

Xi feels isolated

The absence of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who will not come due to his involvement in the Ukraine war, is possibly the other reason he does not want to show up. Xi and Putin have been working together, co-ordinating their responses to global issues, in most international events in recent years. The absence of Putin makes Xi vulnerable to being cornered by Western countries on a range of issues including Ukraine and the Taiwan situation. What is more, China has few friends in the G20 barring Saudi Arabia, Argentina and Turkey. Even these countries are unlikely to stand by China if they face pressures from the US in an international forum. Most of China's close partners are underdeveloped countries -which are not part of G20--that need Chinese financing for infrastructure projects and other reasons.

From St Stephen's to Chhangamal-Make space for Bharat. Indian politics in a tectonic shift

By DILIP MANDAL

The controversy started due to an otherwise regular dinner invitation from the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The invitation to a G20 dinner had a twist - it read President of 'Bharat' instead of India, setting off rumours about a proposed change in the name of the country. Politicians, celebrities, and civilians started hotly debating the issue. But here's one reason why the controversy should never have emerged: Article 1 of the Constitution reads "India, that is Bharat". We have seen hundreds of such invitations from the President of India. One from the President of 'Bharat' should be just fine. After all, both are the same person. But politics isn't so linear and simple.

I won't delve into whether it's right or wrong to replace 'India' with

'Bharat'; many analysts are already doing it.

Rather, I observe a tectonic shift



in Indian politics that's giving rise to such actions and debates. That shift is about the advent of the subaltern or the so-called aam aadmi in Delhi's political power structure. These new political elites are unsophisticated, don't speak chaste English or use spoons and forks to eat or express any appreciation for the

Mozarts, Godards, and Derridas of the world.

I name this transition as a shift

from 'Doon Schools and St. Stephen's to Chhangamal Inter Colleges'. The latter is any other high school or college in India where children belonging to ordinary backgrounds come to study or just spend some time outdoors. Chhangamal Inter College was immortalised by one of the most popular novelists in

Hindi, Sri Lal Sukla, in his 1968 novel Raag Darbari. The book was adapted into a popular TV serial and telecast on Doordarshan, the sole disseminator of mass entertainment in the 1980s. That generation would perhaps be familiar with the trope.

'Chhangamals' in political corridors Chhangamal was not a good college at all.

Much like most colleges in the hinterland. There is nothing to celebrate about these decadent and worthless institutions - government after government has ignored the poor quality of education in these colleges. They are spread all across North India, and nobody wants to study here or even go to the premises. But for most Indians, it is the only choice. I, too, have attended a Chhangamal college.

Interestingly, the Indian political corridors at this juncture of our

democracy are full of leaders who are products of such institutions. Rahul Gandhi once told me that "the Congress parliamentarians are mostly elites and highly educated, but when I see the BJP parliamentarians, they are so diverse and from such humble backgrounds". He was not boasting - his tone was laced with lament and deep concern. The Congress leader can't do much as the party has had a legacy of elite leadership from the time of its inception. Two classes dominated the Congress leadership in the early years and even after Independence: zamindars and advocates. The composition of the elected leaders of the Congress has changed a lot since then, but it is still an elite organisation in terms of party structure.



Bharat's Question for the G20:

Are Some Global Concerns More Equal Than Others?

By: Rahul Shivshankar

In the run-up to the G20 Summit, reams have been written in the West about India's dilemma: how will it go beyond its neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war? Adding to the basic pressures of being this year's G20 president and hosting a major summit, India's influence is also being put to the test. Inevitably, some will judge the success of India's presidency by its ability to evolve enough of a consensus so that the summit communique offers an effective denunciation of Russia's aggression.

For his part, Russian President Vladimir Putin is not only skipping the summit, but Russia's Foreign Minister has already threatened to block a declaration if the joint statement doesn't include their perspective on Ukraine. Even Russia's cohort, China's President Xi Jinping, has decided to forgo the summit.

So far, differences on positions between the core G7 members and the Russia-China grouping on Ukraine have meant that all ministerial meetings during India's presidency have ended without a joint communique that reflects a consensus on other critical issues beyond the war. New Delhi has appealed to all G20 summit participants that the focus should be on development

and the group shouldn't get bogged down by the issues of war.

Indian sherpas are hoping that the summit will help to bridge the expectation gap between the G20 and other developing nations. Towards making the G20 truly global in its outlook, India is hopeful of inducting the African Union (AU) as part of the elite club.

Ahead of the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said: "A divided world will find it difficult to fight common challenges."

It isn't as though Modi is implying that countries around the world should not be on the right side of history on Ukraine, in what has been termed a "defining contest between democracy and autocracy".

In fact, his reminder to Putin that "this isn't an era of war, but one of dialogue and diplomacy and we all must do what we can to stop the bloodshed and human suffering" is an affirmation of India's commitment to a rule-based global order. To be sure, even the slogan on the G20 logo drawn up by New Delhi to mark its presidency emphasises that only mutual co-existence can guarantee the future of humanity. Thus, while India may not have sided with any one bloc, it has made it abundantly clear it's on the side of world peace. In fact, other nations of the Global South

have followed India's lead in maintaining an enlightened equipoise.

The reasons for this are not hard to fathom. It can be argued that, post-pandemic, many nations beyond Europe are faced with a litany of crises that have little to do with the Ukraine war - rising debt, crippling inflation, food and energy shortages, societal inequity and the devastating climate inclemency induced by global warming.

The Ukrainian conflict is a legacy of the long-standing, and yet-to-be-completed, Western post-Cold War project of reconfiguring Europe into a unified whole - a powerful heartland in the Northern Hemisphere that can counterbalance a rising Asia. This self-absorption of the West and the new iteration of its 'great game' at the expense of neglecting critical issues facing the rest of the world has become a sore point among many nations of the Global South.

Standing under the long shadow cast by the self-serving objectives of the elites of the G20, it's easy to lose sight of why the grouping was founded. After the 1999 Asian financial crisis, which came after a cycle of global financial meltdowns, the G7 created a larger forum to find fair and inclusive solutions to the

economic distortions and inequities catalysed by globalisation. It was always meant to be a platform for geo-economic ideating and not a stage for geo-political score-settling.

However, today, the elite powers that dominate the G20 seem to be more interested in providing politically expedient fixes to geo-economic problems. Some examples stand out. First, the sanctions on Russia. While the reasons for imposing them are unimpeachable, the West's motives are being increasingly called into question.

Are the sanctions - especially those imposed on Russia's most lucrative oil and gas exports - an attempt at imposing crippling costs on Moscow or are they more about uniting the world behind the West in a contrived popularity contest? If they are about depleting Russian capacity to finance the war by choking its oil money, then why is the European Union buying Russian natural gas through third parties? This inexplicable hypocrisy is undercutting the impact of slapping sanctions on Russia. In fact, Russia's economy, albeit from a low base, has expanded 4.9% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2023, primarily on energy exports.

Former foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon observes that even the West's attempt to chastise China for its support for Russian adventurism through solutions like "Friend Shoring" are driven by politics "with little or no regard for price consequences on global manufacturing or value chains". China, the most primed among non-Western nations to offer an alternative to Western materialism, has also failed the Global South. Beijing, under Xi Jinping, projects influence abroad using some of the same crude instruments of diplomacy that have alienated the Global South from the US-led Western order.

Little wonder that emerging powers like India are feeling increasingly alienated from the two contending blocs. While an alternative third way is yet to emerge, India is hoping that the agenda it is pursuing at the G20 Summit will serve as a gateway to internal reforms that make existing institutions more inclusive and aligned to the needs of all the world, not just one predominant section of it.

Perhaps this is why India believes that, more than finding consensus on Ukraine, getting an agreement that includes the African Union (AU) in the G20 will birth a more representative platform that works for the global good. One can only hope the elite members of the G20 listen and agree.

China's Xi Stays Cut Off While India's Modi Moves on Diplomatic Speed Rails

By: Shubhangi Sharma

Far from a snub against India, Chinese President Xi Jinping giving the G20 summit a miss is about his own insecurities and misgivings. Xi Jinping simply does not seem to catch a break from being isolated on the world stage. He is set to skip not only the G20 summit in New Delhi but also the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits in Jakarta, Indonesia. In fact, Xi has stayed home far longer than he ever has since the Covid pandemic. The BRICS summit was an exception this year, making his South Africa visit in August the second international trip of the year after he visited Moscow to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic and a brutal clash between Indian and Chinese forces in the Galwan Valley at the border, Xi Jinping remained grounded for more than 1,000 days at a stretch. He broke this self-embargo only in 2022 when he visited Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia and even Indonesia for the G20 summit in Bali.

In 2023, however, Xi has retreated without any Covid-related obligations. Given the global



backlash against China, the Chinese leader is finding it difficult to keep the ignition on when it comes to international diplomacy. BRICS summit was a relatively safe space, but the G20 does not extend that comfort. Not only was the summit in New Delhi but there was little chance of a one-to-one bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as it had become clear from their brief exchange in Johannesburg, where PM Modi stressed on resolving the border issue before all else. Moreover, it was also not clear whether US President Biden and Xi would meet on the sidelines of G20. Without Putin attending, China had the opportunity to de-hyphenate itself and reclaim the

pre-pandemic stature it had attained. However, Xi has checked out from both the G20 and ASEAN summits.

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The ASEAN summit was particularly a no-go for Xi from the start since China's unfounded claim on the South China Sea has rubbed almost every ASEAN nation the wrong way. ASEAN often includes a reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which China is in violation of, with the assertion of its territorial claims. This time around, China made sure to release an 'updated' version of its map but it may have not seen a chorus of direct

opposition coming from Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, following India and Taiwan.

This might all just be China's belligerent little way to save face as Xi gives a hot season in international diplomacy a miss. A vulnerable Xi may have expected to find himself rather snubbed and secluded, which would have further damaged his image domestically, at a time when economic woes and political instability threatened his position in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

ECONOMIC WOES CAST SHADOW ON XI

Amid an unrelenting economic downturn, a few articles critical of Xi Jinping's policies have come up in China, pointing to strengthening factionalism in the CCP.

Moreover, involving the removal of senior Commanders of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force, the speeches by Xi Jinping and security tsar Chen Wenqing during their visits to Xinjiang and Gansu, respectively, which included numerous references to "stability" and the disappearance of former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, there are

additional factors to consider. Unless there are serious health issues, it might be that Xi Jinping is required to stay in China due to the ongoing political instability and infighting within the CCP.

XI'S ISOLATION VS MODI'S DIPLOMATIC POWER

Contrast Xi's isolation with PM Modi's diplomatic prowess. The Indian prime minister and India as a whole are fervently engaged in diplomacy with the G20 presidency taking centre-stage, with the summit planned in New Delhi being just a week away. PM Modi has made nine official visits abroad, reflecting how India's diplomatic machinery is in full swing. First, it was Japan for the G7 and Quad meetings, then it was Papua New Guinea and Australia. A major highlight of this year was PM Modi's state visit to the United States where he met President Joe Biden at the White House amid lots of pomp and glory. This was immediately followed by a visit to Egypt. In July, PM Modi visited France and attended the Bastille Day celebrations with President Macron, following which he made a brief visit to the UAE.

What Singapore's New Indian-Origin President Says On India

By Preeti Dawra

Singapore, a multi-ethnic and diverse nation known for its political stability, prosperity, and efficient governance, witnessed a historic presidential election when Tharman Shanmugaratnam, a multi-generational Singaporean of Tamil ancestry, secured a landslide victory this week to become the ninth president-elect of the city-state.

Widely regarded as one of Singapore and Asia's most influential and respected political leaders and economists, his election to the highest office marks a watershed moment in Singaporean politics. He secured an overwhelming 70.4 percent of the votes in a three-way race that involved two credible Singaporean Chinese contenders from the majority community. Tharman launched his presidential campaign with the slogan "Respect for All." Chinese, Malays, and Indians constitute 74%, 13%, and 9% of the

population, respectively.

Throughout his political career, Tharman has been known for championing racial harmony, social cohesion, and meritocracy, a message that resonated with Singaporeans. After winning the election, he noted how "race was not the only factor in the contest and believed that the results showed that Singaporeans want a non-partisan president."

KV Rao, one of the city-state's respected industry and community leaders,

explained: "This mandate, above all, is an emphatic vote for merit. His win is a great way forward for Singapore and the world. Singaporeans have demonstrated beyond doubt that they stand for unity and not divisiveness."

Born on February 25, 1957, in Singapore, Tharman is born to Tamil parents. His father was the

Emeritus Professor K Shanmugaratnam, a medical scientist known as the "father of pathology in Singapore," who founded the Singapore Cancer Registry. Educated at the LSE,



Cambridge, and Harvard Kennedy School, he is married to Jane Yumiko Ittogi, a Singaporean lawyer of mixed Chinese Japanese ancestry. First elected MP in 2001 with the ruling People's Action Party, he has been elected four times since.

Tharman is one of Singapore's most seasoned politicians widely

respected for an exemplary life in public service, improving social and economic policies for all citizens. He has been Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, advising the Prime Minister on Economic policies, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, and Minister of Education. He also served as the Chairman of the Monetary Authority (MAS) of Singapore and Singapore's GIC Board, one of the three investment entities that manage the country's reserves.

Internationally, he has made his mark, too. He chairs the Group of Thirty, a global council of economic and financial leaders from the public and private sectors and academia and led the G20 Eminent Persons Group on

Global Financial Governance, which in October 2018 proposed reforms in development finance and the international monetary system to advance a new, cooperative international order. He earlier chaired the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) for four years; he was its first Asian chair.

Prof Kishore Mahbubani, one of Singapore's leading diplomats and a global public intellectual, recently wrote on his LinkedIn Post that "it would help to have a President who is globally respected. Few Singaporeans are as highly respected in key capitals, especially Washington D.C. and Beijing, as Tharman is". He also noted: "Quite amazingly, for a deep and serious thinker, he also has a remarkable sense of humour. He always has a twinkle in his eye and a ready smile on his face. His big thoughts and good cheer will also help to lift our spirits, in good times and bad times."



How Long Will BBC Get Away with Being Sympathetic to Pakistani Terror in India?

By: Abhijit Iyer-Mitra

The BBC's article on "speech martyrs" in Kashmir wasn't just your usual clueless Western rubbish. It was far more sinister - a carefully coordinated attempt to pervert the course of justice. That it was shockingly amateurish in its lack of research may therefore have been its redeeming feature, but that still doesn't excuse the fact that the reporter in question crossed an unwritten line.

One person mentioned in the article that it will be focused on Fahad Shah. Leave aside the unverifiable sexual peccadilloes ascribed to Fahad because that's not what he's on trial for. He's on trial for inciting terror. It is unimaginable that the reporter in question, a certain Yogita Limaye, did not know that his hearings were being held at the same time her article was being published.

What's inexcusable though is how she chose not to delve into the details of the charges against Fahad or the relevant laws at all. He is charged with publishing an article by someone called Abdul Aala Fazili. Here are some gems from this piece, clubbed thematically.

"We may not have succeeded in chasing India out yet, but certainly we have succeeded in shaking their hold over Kashmir. The mass uprisings in the recent

past have pushed the discourse out of ambiguities and made our political discourse clear and direct. An informed commitment has transferred to the younger generation and they feel confident in continuing the struggle more creatively, courageously and effectively towards liberation."

I hear you ask, but where's the terrorism here? Ask yourself when was the last time you saw passive resistance in Kashmir? It's been a violent struggle and what's mentioned here is an endorsement of outright murder and genocide. Theme 2: Exhortation to remember terrorists, exact revenge for them. Speaking of martyrs, he says, "We have to refrain from the disease of forgetfulness. We have to refrain from being inconsistent. We have to refrain from being indifferent and callous... The most important contribution of the movement would be taking care of these families who need our moral, financial and political support... Let us institutionalize their memories in our daily lives. These memorials will become an instrument of our strength, solidarity, remembrance, and motivation for future."

What exact "motivation for the future" did you think he was talking about? He means support by way of street protests, pelting stones even on security forces actively engaged in live combat operations,

providing finances, communication facilities, transport, medical attention, hideout and shelter, advance information to escape security cordons and information about who they consider as pro-India and anti-terrorist/secessionist movement for targeted killing.

Don't believe me, the examples are legion. This article appeared in 2011. 2010 was the inflexion point when Pakistan deployed a new strategy for dealing with Indian counter-terrorism operations. Whenever an operation was underway, a stone-pelting crowd would gather and attack security forces. What articles like this did was justify and encourage stone pelters to come out in defraying anti-terror operations. Both Fahad and Fazili knew this very well. Indeed, they did their jobs so well that by 2016, with the killing of Burhan Wani, this trend had become an established phenomenon. Crowds of 2,000 to 5,000 and sometimes up to 10,000 would gather from neighbouring villages at the encounter site and attack the police and security forces viciously. The situation became so desperate that the government issued informal instructions to call off all anti-terror operations that were conveyed in a video conference meeting by the then DGP in late 2017.

But it wasn't just this that Fahad and Fazili did. Their insidiousness was such that they published the article in 2011 during Eid al-Adha - a festival that recalls Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. Para 11 of the article reads, "On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, let us all pledge in the name of the blood of our martyrs..." What these two were doing was urging their readers to emulate Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for a holy cause. Now while one can argue that Limaye, (like most correspondents of foreign outlets in India) is uninformed about these, what excuses her laziness and outright unprofessionalism in not bothering to investigate? Her "research" was so lazy that she neither reached out to the Special Investigation Agency (SIA) nor the Prosecutor. A more responsible media house, on the other hand, had no issues reaching out to both the prosecutor and SIA in March 2023, when the trial started. Both have confirmed to me on record that they received no communication from either BBC or Limaye. There is a further indictment here of both Limaye and the BBC.

The provisions under which Fahad is being tried mirrors the UK's own 2006 Terrorism Act - sections 1 and 2. Examples from this act. The

definition of a terror publication is one that "i) intends members of the public to be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism or Convention offences; or (ii) is reckless as to whether members of the public will be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate such acts or offences." And defines an incitement as one who "a) glorifies the commission or preparation (whether in the past, in the future or generally) of such acts or offences; and (b) in a statement from which members of the public could reasonably be expected to infer that what is being glorified is being glorified as conduct that should be emulated by them in existing circumstances." Both offences are made out not just under Indian law but also under relevant British law. So, are we to assume the editors of the BBC and Limaye, in addition to being clueless about Indian law, were also clueless about British law? Cumulatively they've not just been clueless about the law, but they've also been lazy and thoroughly unprofessional about investigating the story, by not reaching out to either the prosecutor or investigating agency. Finally, she published this simultaneously with hearings in Fahad's trial. Individually, this would be a string of unusual coincidences, but cumulatively, this is a deliberate and institutional attempt by the BBC to influence and pervert the course of justice. The question is how long will the BBC and its minions get away with being the B team of Pakistani terror in India? Ultimately what Limaye was trying to do was no different than what the stone pelters did in 2017 achieving a suspension of anti-terror operations.

It is also worth noting that while all other governments have stopped sponsoring India-Pakistan track 2 events and have ended equivocating the two, the British High Commission is the only one that lavishes funds on these business class five-star hotel junkets for deep state elements of the ISI and their Indian collaborators despite knowing that they yield no results.

Stand-alone, independent journalism? I think not. More like cooperative institutional collusion with Pakistan, aided, abetted and funded by the British state.



India and Bharat:

It is Time to Make the Legacy of Keshav Desiraju Everlasting

By: Akhileshwar Sahay

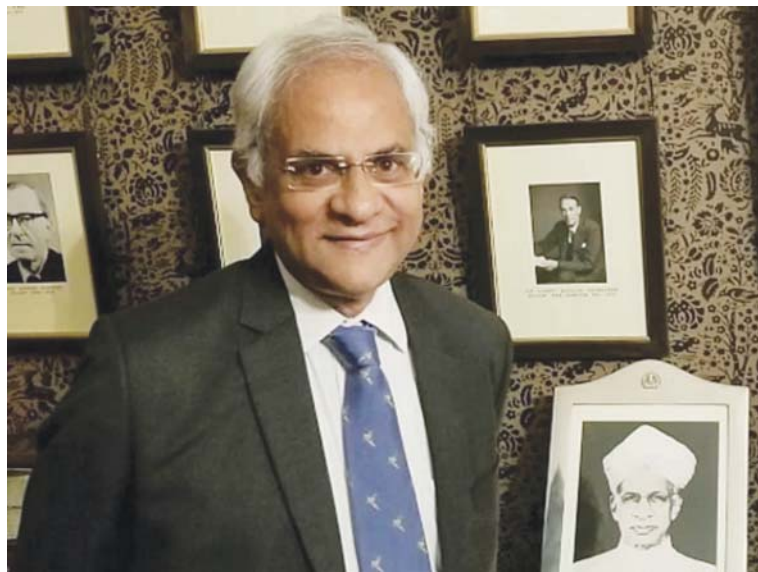
Today is September 5, the birthday of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, celebrated across the country annually as Teachers' Day. Few in the country will recall that today is also the second death anniversary of Keshav Desiraju (1955-2021), the grandson of Dr Radhakrishnan. Keshav suffered a massive acute coronary syndrome early morning on September 5, 2021, and was wheeled to Kauvery Hospital, Chennai. Keshav went to the other world without giving doctors and his well-wishers a chance.

WHO WAS KESHAV?

Humble to the core, multifaceted Keshav held a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Cambridge and a Master's degree in public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Governance, Harvard University and at the time of his death was Chairperson of the Governing Board of Population Foundation of India (PFI). An avid reader, researcher and author, Keshav's foremost books were *Of Gifted Voice: The Life and Art of MS Subbulakshmi* (2020) and *Healers or Predators? Healthcare Corruption in India*, the later written with S Nundy and Sanjay Nagral. By vocation, Keshav was a career bureaucrat belonging to the 1978 batch of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) of Uttar Pradesh cadre (later Uttarakhand) and had myriad accomplishments during his professional life. When Keshav died, obituaries and eulogies

poured in from people across all walks of life, including from eminent historian Ram Guha. Yours truly, too, knew Keshav for nearly 15 years (from his days as Additional Chief Secretary at Dehradun) and chipped in with my own version of obituary.

WHAT MADE KESHAV SO SPECIAL?



Keshav was special in many ways and has left his footprint in many areas of governance, but his tallest contributions were in the field of public health in general, and mental health in particular. He is accredited with singlehanded heavy lifting with his complete devotion and lesser focused attention, thereby bringing the Gestalt of "Mental Health" in the country from the "complete darkness of black hole" to the nation's centre stage.

Amongst many stellar contributions of Keshav to the

public health arena, the one's which stands tallest is India's maiden National Mental Health Policy (2014) and India's own Next Practices (words borrowed from Coimbatore Krishnarao Prahalad, world's greatest management thinker next only to Peter F. Drucker), Mental health Care Bill, 2013 that was unanimously

passed by both Houses of Parliament as Mental Health Care Act, 2017 (MCHA, 2017).

It is the travesty of the nation, that merely after 11 months at the helm of Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, Keshav was shifted out controversially because he would not be party to some governmental decision that pricked his conscience. But Keshav, before being booted out, achieved what he had set out to achieve in 2010 as Additional Secretary, and later and Secretary MOH&FW. He gave

what India the needed most - MCHA, 2017.

I once asked him what he would like to be most remembered for. And Keshav's humbling answer at once was "Mental Health Policy, 2014 and Mental Health Care Act, 2017".

Post-retirement, Keshav continued to work with missionary zeal in the field of mental health, including as member of the governing board of many NGOs, most notably The Banyan, Chennai. Even in retirement, Keshav was brought back by the MOH&FW to head the committee that framed "rules and regulations" for the Mental Health Care Act, 2017.

FLOUNDERED AT IMPLEMENTATION

Today, I remember Keshav more than ever and with profound sadness because his babies, National Mental Health Policy, 2013 and Mental Health Care Act, 2017, have not only been slow to take off, but the truth is they have floundered at implementation, having suffered from the "implementation bug". Alas! There was only one Keshav Desiraju and the lamp that he lit is in serious trouble of being snuffed out of life fast.

TIME TO MAKE LEGACY OF KESHAV DESIRAJU PERMANENT

Some spirited individuals and institutions are trying their best to keep the flame that Keshav lit burning and to keep his legacy in the mental health arena alive. Two such institutions are The

Banyan, Chennai (turbocharged by inimitable Vandana Gopikumar) and Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy, ILS, Pune (and its director Soumitra Pathare). But nation as a whole, including the governance structure of Centre and states, have largely forgotten Keshav and his contribution.

THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRE IN THE BELLY OF KESHAV

The Indian nation is largely unaware as to when and where Keshav Desiraju for the first time publicly took a vow to change the life and times of the mentally-ill in India. As it happened, in many Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities of India, August 6, 2010 was observed as India's first unofficial Mental Health Awareness Day and the week of August 6-13 as Mental Health Awareness Week. Though the clarion call was given by this author through a one-page signed letter, the successful observance of India's first Mental Health Awareness Week was in true sense turbo-charged by Vandana Gopikumar and Vaishnavi Jayakumar, co-founders of The Banyan.

As it happened, on August 7, 2010, at The Convention Centre of All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) New Delhi, where I had instigated the National Conference titled 'Bringing the Gestalt of Mental Health to National Mainstream', I wanted Keshav (then Additional Secretary, MOH&FW) to give the keynote address.

Caste, Crime And Khakee

By Rohit Khanna

"Not the police, only the Army can control this". "Sometimes I feel India needs Martial Law" - familiar sentiments. The anger may even be valid at times.

Be it communal violence, ethnic clashes, caste tensions, even heinous gender-related crimes, the local administration and the local police often struggle while handling the situation. Even in individual cases, we hear of shoddy investigations, deliberate botch-ups, even outright intimidation, custodial torture, and red tape to favour the privileged.

A key reason, we often hear, are inherent biases - communal, caste, regional, or gender-related - ingrained in members of our police forces and administrative officialdom at every level. There is even a vast amount of anecdotal evidence pointing towards this, along with studies and reports confirming this.

The stated "reason" for this bias is well known - that our police personnel and our state and central administration officials are part of the same society, and so, naturally, they bring their socially learnt biases to their jobs as well, and it reflects in their performance.

But then, what about the Army?



Aren't our jawans and officers also from the exact same social milieus? From the same villages, towns and cities? In fact, don't many of us know of families that have members in both the police and the Army? So why do cops retain their caste bias while our army jawans forget about them? What is different?

What changes when an upper caste youth joins the army versus his brother joining the police? Raised in the same family, same town, educated at the same school, they could both carry the privileged upper caste chip on their shoulders, and let it reflect in their jobs. But that doesn't happen. If there is any prejudice that the upper caste army jawan may have grown up with, he leaves them at home. Yet his brother, the upper

caste cop, lets his acquired prejudice reflect in his police work, evidence suggests.

Why is that? Clearly because the army demands that of its jawans and officers. A Brahmin soldier from Uttar Pradesh is expected to take orders from a tribal officer from Assam, no questions asked. It has been a core value of the Indian Army from its very inception. It's central to the army's discipline, it's central to the army's effectiveness in times of conflict, it's central to the army's role in protecting the nation's borders, even on occasion, our internal security. An army teeming with communal or caste or regional differences and biases would be a disaster. We all know that.

So, why can't we, why don't we, demand and expect the same from

our country's police forces? Or even our nation's bureaucracy? Why are we ok with repeated cases of custodial torture, even custodial killings in our police stations, which reek of caste discrimination? Why are we ok with the systemic exploitation and targeting of India's so-called 'criminal' castes and tribes by the police in various parts of the country?

One reason why we see repeated cases of the most heinous caste violence is certainly the fact that the perpetrators believe they can get away. They often believe that the police and government officials will look away, or favor them if they are ever caught. They don't fear the law, there is no deterring factor.

We have seen some brutal caste crimes just in the last few days. In Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi on August 25, a 14-year-old boy allegedly killed his 15-year-old sister with an axe because she spoke to a Dalit youth on the phone. He then surrendered to the police. The girl's parents and older brother were also allegedly involved in the killing.

In Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, on August 27, an 18-year-old Dalit teen was beaten to death and his mother stripped naked by a mob over a sexual harassment case filed by

his sister in 2019.

In Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, four Dalit youth were hung upside down, beaten up, urinated upon, and made to lick shoes that had been spat upon, merely on suspicion the theft of goats and pigeons.

What gives the perpetrators the impunity to commit such crimes? Their misplaced sense of caste superiority certainly plays a part. They believe they are entitled to strip, beat, kill, sexually violate, urinate upon, and abuse members of the less privileged castes. But the lack of deterrence, alongside the subtle (and often unsubtle) collusion of the police, the administrative machinery, and the justice system, is a huge factor.

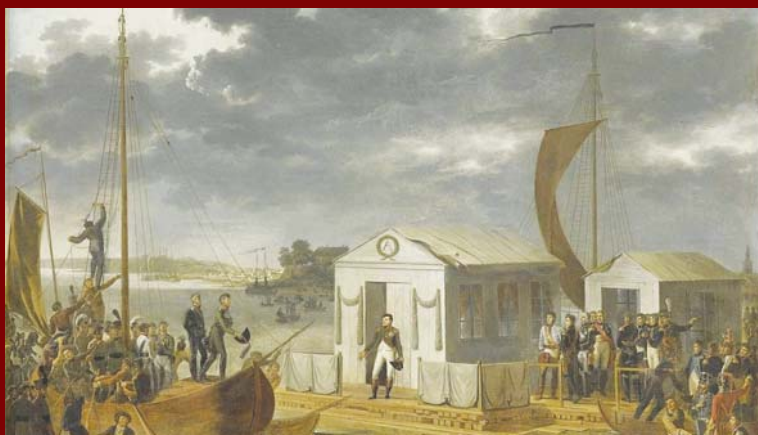
Consider this statistic - in 2020, 50,291 cases were registered for crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs). But just 216 were convicted and no less than 3,192 were acquitted. These numbers are just so lopsided and appalling. A conviction rate of just 4.9 per cent for the entire country. That is where the impunity to commit caste-related crimes originates.

In October 2021, a Supreme Court bench comprising DY Chandrachud (then not yet India's Chief Justice) and BV Nagarathna highlighted exactly this.

G20 shows summitry remains an 'addictive drug' for world leaders. But does it get work done?

By PRAVEEN SWAMI

The emperors gently rowed down the Nieman River in the summer of 1807: As a guide for courtiers who had celebrated too hard, perhaps, the great white tents on their barge were marked with an 'N' for Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France and an 'A' for Aleksandr Pavlovich, Tsar of Russia. King Frederick William III of Prussia, who had lost the battle, didn't get a tent and had to suffer the sight of Napoleon flirting with his wife, Duchess Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The grand gathering of world leaders in New Delhi this coming weekend draws its lineage from the meeting emperors at Tilsit, among the first modern summits between leaders. Though multilateral leadership summits form an ever-greater part of modern diplomacy, the record of



what these gatherings have achieved isn't inspiring. Even as Napoleon and Aleksander plotted the division of Europe during long night-time dinner walks, English spies lurked around them, historian J. Holland Rose has revealed. England's intelligence led the East India Company to strengthen its presence along the northwest borders of India and prepare for Atlantic battles that

would give the Prussians their revenge just a few years later.

"Failures", diplomatic historian Jan Mellisen has ruefully recorded, "did not deter presidents and prime ministers from their unabated love of the summit. The practice of summitry has become an addictive drug for many political principals."

The technologies of the summit The summit meeting is, in some

critical senses, an artefact of technology. For generations before the lack of secure roads, reliable maps did not allow heads of State to meet directly. Thus, diplomatic communication was conducted through traders, friars and imperial envoys. Franciscan monks who visited Mongol courts in the 13th century variously pushed for an alliance with the French emperor Louis IX and sought out means to conquer the Golden Horde.

Mughal emperor Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar did not seek a summit meeting after the women of his court were expelled from Mecca in 1580, historian NR Farooqui's work shows. Instead, he quietly plotted with the Portuguese to harass Turkish-Ottoman shipping in the Indian Ocean.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who

served as the United States' president from 1933-1945, used summit diplomacy extensively during the course of the Second World War, scholar Elmer Plischke notes. Five of his predecessors, though, never once set foot on foreign soil. Foreign affairs were the jobs of Generals, adventurers and diplomats-not leaders.

The coming of the steam train and the turboprop engine fuelled the delusion that diplomacy could be more effectively conducted as a kind of meeting between gentlemen at their favourite club. "If you want to settle a thing, you see your opponent and talk it over with him", said David Lloyd-George, Britain's prime minister from 1916-1922. "The last thing to do is write him a letter."

Bharat for the World: Modi Speaks for the Global Subaltern

By: Rahul Shivshankar

In his interview to Network 18's Money Control, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has detailed how the rich learnings of his government's experiences reaping the dividends of inclusive governance at home can offer solutions for the world.

Indeed, India's presidency of the G20 coincides with the nation emerging as a global bright spot. While this is a fortuitous coming together of dates, India's global surge isn't accidental.

The policies pursued by the NDA under the stewardship of Prime Minister Modi have been shaped by the guiding philosophy of integral humanism and the concept of Antyodaya (welfare of the poorest). Echoing Deendayal Upadhyaya, one of the BJP's founders, the PM has always maintained that the "success of economic planning and economic progress will not be judged by those who are at top of the ladder but through

the people who are at the lowest rung".

Using digital infrastructure, the NDA has strived to reach the last citizen. Its inclusive initiatives have by and large democratised access to resources and opportunities to address the yawning inequity between the haves and the have-nots. Statistics testify to this. In a little over a decade more than 400 million Indians have been lifted out of poverty through empowering welfarism. Importantly, the Prime Minister never fails to point out that the

NDA model is far removed from the economically ruinous dependency creating the 'revadi' model of state patronage. The 'labarthi' (an elegant colloquial name to dignify beneficiaries) who are being drawn into the arc of the NDA's inclusive welfarism have created a virtuous up-cycle of demand-led growth.

But sadly, at the same time,

billions around the world (mostly in the Global South) have slipped into indigence. Their problems have exacerbated particularly because the global elites, who are at the core of multilateral institutions like the



G20, have failed them. The demise of the post-Cold War US-helmed unipolar world order has meant increased geo-strategic and geo-economic disruption as more powers flex their muscles in the race for dominance. Today, the most steadfast votaries of globalisation have torn up the rulebook taking expedient steps to score points over each other

in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Those left behind or abandoned by the global elites are crying out for a third way. It is into this yearning for global leadership that Modi sees a massive role for India. A role which he is keen

to personally steer over two days beginning September 9.

In the interview, the Prime Minister summed it up thus, "It is well known that we have followed the approach of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas in our country over the last 9 years... This is our guiding principle in global relations as well. Over the last many years, the world had been keenly watching India's growth across many sectors... When we laid out our agenda for the G20, it was welcomed universally, because everyone knew that we would bring our proactive and positive approach to help find solutions for global issues.

When global leaders meet me, they are filled with a sense of optimism about India... They are also convinced that India has a lot to offer and must play a larger role in shaping the global future."

India's emergence as a putative fulcrum of global governance has also made it more difficult for Modi's detractors, who've criticised the Prime Minister for using the G20 Summit to boost his own image. While there is no doubting the political dividend when the BJP projects Modi's diplomatic accomplishments in election season, the fact is that taking "G20 to the masses" (200 meetings across 60 cities in all states) is very much in keeping with the aims of deepening the roots of cooperative federalism. But there also may well be another compelling reason why Modi is personally pushing the broad basing of G20 events under India's presidency.

Seeking A New Balance In The Global Economy

By Harsh V. Pant

It has become a cliché to suggest that the world is at an inflection point. Shifting global balance of power is often identified as the key variable driving this change. A perceptible inward orientation in the US foreign policy outlook, complemented by a rising and aggressive China, is resulting in some fundamental reordering of the international architecture.

The rise and fall of great powers continues to be one of the most significant causes of changes in the global order. A rising China is defining its interests in more expansive terms and is demanding a greater voice in international outcomes. A relatively weaker US is pushing back to retain its own space in the inter-state hierarchy. This back-and-forth is reshaping the way foreign policies of various nations are being conducted and operationalised.

The rise of China, for one, has been a persistent theme of the past two decades. But, it was the failure of the international order in the recent years to respond to China's rise that has made many of today's challenges more palpable. After

years of living in denial about the China problem, major powers today appear ready to take the issue head-on.

While this structural change has, for obvious reasons, been the focal point of global conversations for some time now, there is another, equally important structural shift



that is also reconfiguring international outcomes. Attempts by key global actors towards trade and technological decoupling/derisking is setting the stage for a conflict that is challenging the fundamentals of globalisation as we have known it since the early 1990s. An ongoing backlash against globalisation continues to gain momentum, especially as the costs of global integration are

seemingly rising by the day. Already, there is a recalibration across the West where even mainstream political parties have been changing their long-held positions on issues such as trade and migration. It is unlikely, however, to be restricted to the West. As the world becomes more

fragmented - from supply chains to connectivity initiatives - shoring up support for globalisation will only become more difficult. Today the American corporate sector is souring on China with the targeting of businesses on spurious grounds becoming the norm.

Geopolitics is back in the driving seat as trust becomes an essential factor in shaping economic decisions. As

Washington makes policy moves to deny China access to critical technologies and to restructure supply chains away from overdependence on China, it recognizes the need for new partnerships with like-minded states. But, with Washington pushing for supply chain restructuring in critical industries due to foreign policy and national security concerns, this is certainly ushering in a new phase in globalisation.

The forces of untrammelled economic globalisation, once viewed as a panacea for all global problems, are now under retreat. Mutual dependencies are being weaponised, further undercutting the foundations of a globalised world. And if emerging technologies are going to determine the next phase of geopolitics, then the polarisation of supply chains is the new reality that policymakers and market forces will have to contend with. This fragmentation will influence the future of global multilateralism. While most nations continue to profess their abiding faith in multilateralism, the institutional manifestations underpinning the

extant order are hobbled by their internal contradictions. Indeed, a global health pandemic should have been the high point of the search for a collective solution; instead, it has turned out to be its nadir. Not only is China challenging an order that it believes was created in its absence, but even the US, which was its most important founder, seems dissatisfied with the status quo. The same liberal order that has arguably been central to maintaining peace and prosperity worldwide for more than seven decades is proving incapable of finding equitable and effective solutions to today's common challenges. This signals a remarkable retreat - a fragmented global order is emerging not only in traditional spheres of global governance but also in those areas where new norms are needed to be set - such as space, cyber and emerging strategic technologies. Across the world, democracies are facing challenges and states are leaning towards autocracy as a more efficient model of political governance. To be sure, the democratic world has been facing difficulties even prior to 2021.

Vivek Ramaswamy Says Will Pardon Jan 6 Protesters If Elected US President

Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has vowed that he will pardon all peaceful January 6 protesters if he gets elected as the next US president in 2024.

The 38-year-old Indian American entrepreneur has gained traction after he denounced the US Justice Department for its "political persecution" of non-violent protesters at the Republican primary presidential debate last month.

"America now has a two-tiered justice system: Antifa and BLM rioters roam free while peaceful January 6 protesters are imprisoned without bail. Biden's 'Department of Injustice' has executed over 1,000 arrests for nonviolent offenses related to January 6, casting a dark shadow over Lady Justice and the foundational principles of our legal system," he said in a



statement.

"To unify this country, I commit as president to pardon all Americans who were targets of politicised federal prosecutions and those denied due process. This includes all peaceful, nonviolent January 6 protesters who were denied their constitutional due process rights," he said on Wednesday. The January 6 riot saw more than 2,000 people enter the US Capitol as lawmakers certified

the results of the 2020 election, in which President Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump.

The mob stormed the Capitol following a speech from Trump, who was speaking at a rally not far from the Capitol grounds. In his speech, Trump claimed election fraud and called on then-Vice-President Mike Pence to overturn the results. The riot led to the biggest police investigation in US history with hundreds of people accused of

criminal offences.

Ramaswamy said he will end the weaponisation of police power in America and noted that every Republican candidate must be clear on hard issues.

He said on Sunday that while he expects to become the party's nominee for the November 2024 US elections, he will vote for Trump if the former president secures the nomination.

He also expressed his intention to pardon Trump, who currently faces an array of legal challenges, should he be elected as President of the United States.

"If Donald Trump's the nominee -- yes, I will support him, and if I'm the president, yes, I will pardon him because that will help reunite the country. But it's not the most important thing I'm going to do as the next president. It is the table stakes

for moving this country forward," Ramaswamy told ABC news.

Following his impressive performance in the inaugural Republican primary presidential debate last month, Ramaswamy, an entrepreneur-turned-politician, has experienced a surge in popularity, competing alongside fellow Indian American rival Nikki Haley, the former Governor of South Carolina.

Meanwhile, several media outlets reported that Ramaswamy escaped unhurt when a sign reading "Truth" fell on him during a campaign event in New Hampshire over the weekend.

An opinion poll shared by the Trump Campaign showed that Ramaswamy (with 15 per cent) is now a distant second after former president Trump (68 per cent). Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is now at 13 per cent and at the third position.

The US government is investigating China's breakthrough smartphone

The United States government is seeking more information about the Huawei Mate 60 Pro, a Chinese smartphone powered by an advanced chip.

The new flagship device, which reportedly includes a new 5G Kirin 9000s processor developed specifically for Chinese manufacturer Huawei, recently shocked industry experts who didn't understand how the company would have the technology to make such a chip following sweeping efforts by the United States to restrict China's access to foreign chip technology.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said during a White House press briefing Tuesday that the US needs "more information about precisely its character and composition" to determine if parties bypassed American restrictions on semiconductor exports to create the new chip.



In 2019, the government banned US companies from selling software and equipment to Huawei and restricted international chipmakers using US-made technology from partnering with Huawei. The government cited perceived national security concerns, such as the potential for cyberattacks or spying from the Chinese government. The

inclusion of a custom-built 5G chip would be a major benchmark for Huawei as it grapples with the impact of the US restrictions on its device business. Huawei did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"I think the reaction in China seems to be one of mass excitement because Huawei, which was at one time vying to

be the number one smartphone brand worldwide, is seen to be fighting its way back into the smartphone market with Chinese-made silicon, and has no doubt been trading on a 'Made In China' mantra," David McQueen, a director at market research firm ABI Research, told CNN.

But he said the launch also raises questions around how Huawei managed to launch the phone when it has spent the past four years under US restrictions banning access to 5G technology.

"While access to 5G for the chipset is one thing, I'm not sure how the company managed to source all the other components that need to go into a 5G smartphone, such as power amps, switches and filters," he said.

When Huawei unveiled the Mate 60 Pro smartphone late last month, it did not include much information about the

chip on its website product page, beyond that it promises better communication experience and a more stable network connection. But last week, consultant firm TechInsights did a breakdown of the Mate 60 to get a closer look at the chip, which appeared to be a 7-nanometer processor made by China's Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC).

SMIC, which is a partially state-owned Chinese company, was included in the export restrictions set up by the US government several years ago.

National Security Adviser Sullivan added that the United States "should continue on its course of a 'small yard, high fence' set of technology restrictions focused narrowly on national security concerns ... regardless of the outcome."

G20 and the Three Axes of Global Power

The catch in this tripolar world is that several countries have divided loyalties. The newly expanded BRICS, for example, has traditional US allies like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a forum increasingly dominated by China. Beijing has begun to wean both Saudi Arabia and the UAE away from the US orbit.

With most members of the nine-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) leaning towards China and Russia, Beijing is building a platform through BRICS and SCO that can challenge the G7, NATO and other Western alliances.

India finds itself in a piquant situation. It has been railroaded into accepting BRICS' expansion, diluting its relative primacy in the group. In the SCO, the entry of Pakistan makes the forum vexatious. With Russia increasingly dependent on China, India can no longer rely on Moscow's support in the SCO to counter the toxic agenda of Islamabad and Beijing.

But India has several aces up its sleeve. It has over the past few years expanded key relationships with a broad spectrum of countries. The most interesting alliance is the I2U2 forum between India, Israel, the US and the UAE.

The grouping brings together the two most dynamic economies in the Middle East (Israel and the UAE) along with India and the US. Technology and security, including intelligence sharing, form the focus of this small, tightly-knit group unlike the increasingly amorphous multi-nation BRICS and SCO.

The ASEAN-India summit this week reflects the enhanced relationship India is crafting with the powerful East Asian trading bloc.

Less noticed but equally important is the evolving trilateral relationship between India, France and the UAE. The forum allows India to expand its influence through Paris to the European Union (EU) as an independent voice. With the UAE's commercial capital Dubai already dubbed India's fifth metro due to an influential diasporic presence, the group could tick several boxes.

France has historically been the most active supporter of India among Western nations. It



refused to join the US-led ban on providing nuclear fuel for Indian nuclear reactors after the 1974 Pokhran-I nuclear test. It did not join US President Bill Clinton's harsh economic sanctions against India after the 1998 Pokhran-II nuclear test.

There has long been underlying tension between France and Anglo-Saxon powers in the West (Britain, Canada, Australia, Germany and the US). France was a founding member of NATO after World War 2 but withdrew from its integrated military command in 1966. It returned to it only in 2009. France believes NATO is dominated by the US and Britain.

The latest manifestation of this is the Russia-Ukraine war. The US and Britain have been at the forefront of prosecuting the war,

supplying Ukraine with lethal weaponry and military intelligence.

DEEPENING CLEAVAGE

The G20 heads of the government summit this weekend will reveal the deepening cleavage between the three polar axes. With Xi and Putin staying away, the Western bloc will hold sway. But any clause in the final joint communiqué on the Ukraine war that does not satisfy Moscow's or Beijing's concerns will be vetoed. What India as G20 president could be forced to do is issue an omnibus chair statement along with a diluted communiqué papering over Ukraine.

The Ukraine war has established clarity on who stands where. The capitals of Europe continue to seethe at India's neutrality on the

war. The harsh rhetoric of 2022 has been replaced by criticism outsourced to embedded Western media on how the India-led Global South (Africa, South America and the Middle East) has sat on the fence over Ukraine, indirectly encouraging Russia's invasion.

But the West knows it needs India. With the China-Russia axis a growing threat to Western hegemony, Washington has been the most pragmatic advocate of closer ties with India. Unlike Western Europe, which built its wealth on colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, the US is a transactional, not ideological, power. It recognises that India will soon be the world's third-largest economy and fourth-largest military. India offers the free world's largest consumer

market, the largest internet audience and the largest pool of tech talent.

Washington is willing to overlook India's relationship with Moscow as long as India becomes a fully committed partner of the Western alliance. The Quad is a device to tighten the embrace with India. The new I2U2 forum is another.

India's strategy must obviously be to choose its friends and enemies wisely. The two powerful axes led by the US and China do not like the idea of a third axis called the Global South led by India providing an alternative worldview.

India uniquely has a foot in all three poles. It is a centripetal force for the Global South. It is part of the Quad and I2U2, both with a strong US presence. It is also a key member of BRICS and SCO, both dominated by China and Russia.

India's global ascent has been led by technology. For example, France, the UAE and Singapore are among a growing number of countries where India's UPI (Unified Payments Interface) is rapidly becoming operational.

Over 2,000 foreign firms now have global capability centres (GCCs) based in India, employing two million Indian engineers, scientists and researchers. Nearly 40 per cent of the world's GCCs are located in India. They are set to generate \$50 billion in annual exports in 2023-24.



One Nation, One Election: How feasible is it and what would be its impact?

One thing that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is dead against is the Chalta Hai attitude that has become the mainspring of Status-Quo-ist approach. This approach is age-old and omnipresent. Hardly surprising then that the idea of simultaneous elections has once again become a major point of debates and discussions.

Understandably, there is quite a buzz about the Ramnath Kovind-led committee tasked with submitting its report on Simultaneous Elections. (Perhaps 'simultaneous elections' is a more appropriate way of describing the One Nation-One Election idea). As expected, most opposition parties are attributing motives and spreading canards. Yet they can't deny the very merit behind holding elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies simultaneously.

Countries like Sweden, South Africa, Belgium, France and Italy, among others, are popular examples to illustrate the benefits of simultaneous elections to municipalities, state assemblies and parliament. This key democratic reform has enabled these countries to reduce their election spend considerably, consolidate the feeling of national identity and integrity, and above all, stabilise the state machinery and governance with minimal disruption of public life.

In India, we had already implemented simultaneous elections between 1952-1967, almost uninterrupted. This was discontinued after 1967 as the Fifth Lok Sabha Elections were held (in 1971) before schedule (1972). So, there is nothing

unprecedented or impractical about this proposition.

After coming to power in 2014, PM Modi had advocated the need for this key reform. Former President Pranab Mukherjee also had supported this idea. On December 17 2015, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice submitted its report titled 'Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies'. The committee noted that the simultaneous elections would enable the government to reduce:

- (A) The massive election expenditure
- (B) The burden on crucial manpower that is deployed during election time
- (C) The policy paralysis that results from the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct during election time; and
- (D) The impact on essential services.

Against this backdrop, to start with, it is educative to have a look at the present situation. In 2019, the Lok Sabha elections were held over several phases in the months of April and May. The same year, state assembly elections were conducted for eight states - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Sikkim. In 2020, the Delhi and Bihar selections were held. In 2021, five states, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Puducherry and Assam, voted. In 2022, seven state assemblies were elected - Punjab, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Manipur, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. Later in

2023, Karnataka voted. This is barring the other countless elections and by-elections to local bodies, both urban and rural.

First, let's talk about the massive election expenditure. Today, the Election Commission spends not less than ? 10,000 crore on just one round of parliamentary and assembly elections, while the estimated cost of simultaneous elections is about ? 4,500 crore. One certainly cannot ignore the fact that simultaneous elections would help save our national resources to the tune of Rs.5,500 crore. Considering that this amount equals half the annual budget of some of the smaller northeastern states, this saving is not insignificant.

A NITI Aayog paper says with the passage of time, conducting elections too is becoming expensive. Also, the cost of elections and the client-patron relation between political parties and the electorate also pushes up the expenditure, which more often than not goes unrecorded. A case in point is the distribution of goods, liquor, and money. It has been argued that such incentives and bribes are the main source of black money in India.

The second crucial point is about saving on Human Resources. In any general election, the nation sees over 10 million personnel involved as polling officials across 9,30,000 polling stations across the country, which necessitates deployment of over 1,349 companies (each company has 100 soldiers) of CAPF (Central Armed Police Force).

The third important point is about the policy paralysis caused by the model

code of conduct. In 2017 the NITI Aayog had brought out a discussion paper developed by Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai. The discussion paper has argued comprehensively for simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies in India. Its major argument hinges upon the issue of governance and the virtual stalemate of day-to-day administration in some part of the country by virtue of the poll code. There are plenty of examples of how the spirit behind the Model Code of Conduct is forgotten as the provision is stretched too far. For example, when elections to the Teachers Constituency of a legislative council are to be held, the code of conduct is applied to the entire revenue division. In a situation like this, ironically, even a small village with no registered voter for Teachers' Constituency suffers as all development activities are stalled for at least three-four months.

Again, as pointed out by the NITI Aayog paper, in the last 30 years; there has not been a single year without an election to either any of the state assemblies or the Lok Sabha or both. The time consumed by the preps for every election afflicts not only governance but also national development. Not for no reason, senior BJP leader LK Advani had once observed that multiple polls make us a country that is perennially in election mode. Besides, election after election also forces the political class to typically think in terms of electoral gains rather than robust policy implementation.

Macron says enforcement of abaya ban in French school will be 'uncompromising'

French authorities will be "uncompromising" in their enforcement of a new ban on abayas in schools, French President Emmanuel Macron said Friday, following the decision to ban the robe-like garment in the upcoming academic year.

The ban, which was announced by France's education minister, is the latest in a series of contentious restrictions in the country on clothing associated with Muslims. It was criticized by a number of opposition lawmakers, including Danièle Obono, who called it a "new Islamophobic campaign."

Speaking to journalists after visiting a professional school in the Vaucluse region of southern France on Friday, Macron doubled down on the decision. He reiterated that "religious symbols of any kind have no place" in French schools under the country's principle of "laïcité," which translates roughly to "secularism" in English.

"Schools in our country are secular, free, and compulsory. But they are



secular. Because this is the very condition that makes citizenship possible and therefore religious symbols of any kind have no place in them. And we will vigorously defend this secularism," Macron remarked.

Teachers and heads of French schools "will not be left alone" when it comes to enforcing the ban, Macron said, adding that French authorities will be "uncompromising on this subject." "And in high schools or colleges which are

the most sensitive, specific staff will be sent alongside the heads of establishments and teachers to support them and to engage in a necessary dialogue with families and students. But we won't let anything pass," he added.

France has pursued a series of controversial bans and restrictions on items of customarily Islamic dress in recent years, which have frequently drawn the ire of Muslim countries and international agencies.

Last year lawmakers backed a ban on wearing the hijab and other "conspicuous religious symbols" in sports competitions. The amendment was proposed by the right-wing Les Républicains party, which argued the hijab could risk the safety of athletes wearing it while playing sports.

France's earlier ban on the niqab - full-face veils worn by some Muslim women - violated the human rights of those who wore it, the United Nations Human Rights Committee said in 2018.

Death toll from Brazilian floods rises to 31



(News Agency) -Over thirty people are dead after heavy rains and floods in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, state governor Eduardo Leite said Wednesday.

Leite visited the disaster area on Wednesday morning and pledged on social media that no effort would be spared to rebuild the homes and infrastructure destroyed by the rising

waters.

The storm is expected to continue impacting the region for the rest of the week.

According to CNN's regional affiliate CNN Brasil, this week's rains are the worst natural disaster to hit the state in 40 years.

Brazilian meteorologist Dr. Maria Clara Sasaki told CNN Brasil that within a

week the state had received the average amount of rainfall expected for the entire month of September.

This week's rains are the fourth extreme weather event in Rio Grande do Sul in the last three months, according to Leite.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) said at least 50 municipalities in the two southern

states have been affected, with approximately 80% of the city of Muçum in Rio Grande do Sul underwater.

On Wednesday, the regional civil defense service issued a flood alert around the Jacuí River and the Jacuí Delta.

"The situation is critical," MDS Minister Wellington Dias said Wednesday on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Russian missile strikes eastern Ukraine market, killing 17, in one of the worst attacks in months

(News Agency) -At least 17 people have been killed, including a child, after a Russian missile struck a market in a town in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk, officials said, one of the worst attacks in months.

Ukrainian officials said 32 others were wounded in the attack on Kostiantynivka.

"Russian troops are terrorists who will not be forgiven and will not be left in peace," Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal wrote on Telegram. "There will be a just retribution for everything."

Russian missile attacks regularly hit civilian areas but tolls this high are unusual. A strike on an apartment block in the central city of Uman killed 23 people, including children, in April, and a similar strike on Dnipro killed 40 in January.

Kostiantynivka is close to the front lines around Bakhmut and frequently crowded with military personnel.

But footage of the attack shared by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky showed civilians walking along the market street before the missile struck on Wednesday afternoon.

One video showed a large explosion in the middle of the busy thoroughfare, smashing the glass of nearby buildings as pedestrians ran away.



The footage shared by Zelensky then showed a fierce fire and plumes of thick black smoke billowing from burnt-out cars and buildings, as firefighters responded at the scene.

Subsequent images from Kostiantynivka showed the effects of the explosion: blood smeared across the floor of a pharmacy, burning cars, destroyed buildings, and bodies being carried away by emergency services.

An act of 'terrorism'

Zelensky branded the attack as "utter inhumanity."

"When someone in the world still attempts to deal with anything Russian,

it means turning a blind eye to this reality. The audacity of evil," Zelensky wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "The brazenness of wickedness. Utter inhumanity."

The strike was launched just hours after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken landed in Kyiv in his third visit to Ukraine since Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

Blinken is scheduled to meet with Zelensky during his trip, from whom he is expecting a firsthand report of Ukrainian efforts to regain land around Bakhmut, which lies to the east of Kostiantynivka.

The visit comes as Ukraine's counteroffensive enters its fourth month, with both political and military leaders in Kyiv talking up recent gains, especially along the southern front, following growing concerns the concerted push on the battlefield has been slower than had been hoped.

In a brief exchange with Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba, Blinken noted the "good progress" Ukraine has made in its counteroffensive.

Zelensky claimed that the timing of Russia's attack on the civilian area "was deliberate."

"It's the same as it was before: whenever there are any positive offensive steps by the Ukrainian Defense Forces, the Russians always hit civilians and civilian objects... where they can reach with any kind of missiles or artillery. We know this direction very well. We understand that they hit deliberately," Zelensky said, responding to the news of the attack during a joint news conference with the Prime Minister of Denmark in Kyiv.

The strike also came shortly after Rustem Umerov became Ukraine's new defense minister, after the Ukrainian parliament voted to approve his appointment. In his first remarks in his new role, Umerov vowed to wrest back control of "every centimeter" of Ukrainian land from Russia and bring home all those in captivity.

Japan launches X-ray satellite, 'Moon Sniper' lunar lander

(News Agency) -A revolutionary satellite that will reveal celestial objects in a new light and the "Moon Sniper" lunar lander lifted off Wednesday night. The Japanese Space Agency launch, which was rescheduled several times due to bad weather, occurred aboard an H-IIA rocket from Tanegashima Space Center at 7:42 p.m. ET Wednesday, or 8:42 a.m. Japan Standard Time on Thursday.

The event streamed live on JAXA's YouTube channel, offering a broadcast in both English and Japanese.

The XRISM satellite (pronounced "crism"), also called the X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission, is a joint mission between JAXA and NASA, along with participation from the European Space Agency and Canadian Space Agency.

Along for the ride is JAXA's SLIM, or Smart Lander for Investigating Moon. This small-scale exploration lander is designed to demonstrate a "pinpoint" landing at a specific location within 100 meters (328 feet), rather than the typical kilometer range, by relying on high-precision landing technology. The precision led to the mission's nickname, Moon Sniper.

The satellite and its two instruments will observe the universe's hottest regions,



largest structures and objects with the strongest gravity, according to NASA. XRISM will detect X-ray light, a wavelength invisible to humans.

Studying stellar explosions and black holes

X-rays are released by some of the most energetic objects and events in the universe, which is why astronomers want to study them.

"Some of the things we hope to study with XRISM include the aftermath of stellar explosions and near-light-speed particle jets launched by supermassive black holes in the centers of galaxies," said Richard Kelley, XRISM principal investigator at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, in

a statement. "But of course, we're most excited about all the unexpected phenomena XRISM will discover as it observes our cosmos."

Compared with other wavelengths of light, X-rays are so short that they pass through the dish-shaped mirrors that observe and collect visible, infrared and ultraviolet light such as the James Webb and Hubble space telescopes.

With that in mind, XRISM has thousands of curved individual nested mirrors better designed to detect X-rays. The satellite will need to calibrate for a few months once it reaches orbit. The mission is designed to operate for three years.

The satellite can detect X-rays that have energies ranging from 400 to 12,000

electron volts, which is far beyond the energy of visible light at 2 to 3 electron volts, according to NASA. This range of detection will allow for studying cosmic extremes across the universe.

The satellite carries two instruments called Resolve and Xtend. Resolve tracks tiny temperature shifts that help it determine the source, composition, motion and physical state of X-rays. Resolve operates at minus 459.58 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 273.10 degrees Celsius), a temperature about 50 times colder than that of deep space, thanks to a refrigerator-size container of liquid helium.

This instrument will help astronomers unlock cosmic mysteries such as the chemical details of glowing hot gas inside galactic clusters.

"XRISM's Resolve instrument will let us peer into the make-up of cosmic X-ray sources to a degree that hasn't been possible before," Kelley said. "We anticipate many new insights about the hottest objects in the universe, which include exploding stars, black holes and galaxies powered by them, and clusters of galaxies."

Meanwhile, Xtend will provide XRISM with one of the largest fields of view on an X-ray satellite.

Made in Ukraine: Kyiv's burgeoning weapons industry is enabling it to project power far beyond the front lines

(News Agency) -In the early hours of August 29, swarms of Ukrainian drones flew across seven Russian regions. Many were intercepted; some were not.

Several reached a Russian airbase in Pskov, some 600 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, destroying two Russian military transport aircraft and damaging two more.

It was the most dramatic evidence yet of a new dimension to the 18-month conflict: Ukraine's growing appetite to take the war to Russian territory.

Aerial and marine drones, mysterious new missiles and sabotage groups are all part of the toolkit; Russian airfields, air defenses and shipping among the targets.

Ukraine has plenty of reasons for broadening the conflict.

A win is a win wherever and whenever it occurs - whether damaging planes at a distant Russian airbase, disrupting commercial aviation and shipping, putting the residents of Russian border regions on edge or hitting Russian air defenses in Crimea.



drone and missile attacks, evidence of payback (albeit on a much smaller scale) is a welcome morale-booster, especially when the counteroffensive in the south is still struggling to gain traction.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has been unapologetic for taking the conflict to Russian soil, saying recently: "The war is returning to the territory of Russia - to its symbolic centers and military bases, and this is an inevitable, natural and absolutely fair process."

are also evidence of an evolving Ukrainian capability to project power.

That projection very deliberately does not rely upon Western hardware but local adaptations, in terms of both technology and tactics. President Volodymyr Zelensky and Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov have repeatedly assured Western donors that their weapons won't be used against targets inside Russia; that would be viewed by Moscow as an act of

aggression which would make them party to the conflict.

That point was reiterated by Ukrainian presidential adviser an adviser to the Head of the President's office, Mykhailo Podolyak this week. "Ukraine strictly adheres to the obligation not to use the weapons of its partners to strike Russian territory," he said.

Instead, Ukraine is pushing ahead with creating a weapons industry that will provide everything from 155mm artillery shells to longer-range drones and now - it seems - a new long-range missile.

Senior Ukrainian officials have been dropping hints about the development of a new cruise missile. Oleksii Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, posted a video last week of the purported missile with the caption: "The President of Ukraine's missile program in action. The tests are successful, the use is effective."

Later he spoke of a three-year development program, "to provide a distance of thousands of kilometers, this is the work of large teams, powerful work. Now we can say we have a result."

UN forced to cut food assistance from 10 million Afghans



(News Agency) -As of September, 10 million Afghans have lost assistance from the UN's World Food Programme this year, the organization announced this week. They had to cut food assistance from 2 million people in Afghanistan this month. "Due to a massive funding shortfall, going forward WFP will only be able to provide emergency assistance to 3 million people per month," the WFP statement said. "Amid already worrying levels of hunger and malnutrition, we are obliged to choose between the hungry and the starving, leaving millions of families scrambling for their next meal," said Hsiao-Wei Lee, WFP's Country Director and Representative in Afghanistan. "With the few resources we have left, we are not able to serve all those people teetering on the edge of utter destitution." The World Food Programme is often the last lifeline for women, who are increasingly being pushed out of society, with dwindling options for making a living and feeding their children, the statement said. "These cuts mean that 1.4 million new and expecting mothers and their children are no longer receiving specialized food designed to prevent malnutrition," Lee said.

Outrage as mother of biscuit-stealing bear cub shot dead in Italy



(News Agency) -The cold-blooded killing of a mother bear known as Amarena has angered animal rights groups and local politicians in Italy. The brown bear was shot by a local resident of San Benedetto dei Marsi just outside the national park of Abruzzo in central Italy, the park confirmed on Friday. Her 4-year-old cub Juan Carrito made international headlines in 2021 when he broke into a local bakery and devoured hundreds of biscuits. "The park veterinarian intervened on the spot with the emergency team, who however could only ascertain the death of the bear given the seriousness of the wound," the park said on its Facebook page. Amarena was a Marsican brown bear, an endangered species in Italy where fewer than 60 of the bears are still

alive. Her killing is being investigated as a serious crime.

The 56-year-old man who shot her was turned over to the local police.

"The episode is very serious and causes enormous damage to the population of about 60 specimens, affecting one of the most prolific females in the history of the park," the national park statement said.

"Obviously there are no reasons to justify the episode given that Amarena had never created any type of problem for the man," it added. The prosecutor's office in Avezzano, led by Maurizio Maria Cerrato, has opened an investigation into the killing which is against the 544bis penal code, relating to the cruel murder of an animal without warrant, the prosecutor's office told CNN.

A battery swap scheme is turning Africa's roads electric

(News Agency) -Spiro, a startup looking to eliminate fuel-guzzling motorbikes and scooters from the roads by trading them in for electric two-wheelers, is expanding to Kenya.

Ahead of the first Africa Climate Summit, which kicked off in Kenya's capital Nairobi today, the host government announced on Friday that the e-bike and battery-swapping startup would be entering the East African country with its biggest deployment yet: 1.2 million electric vehicles.

This marks a major milestone for the company founded in the West African country of Benin in 2022, says CEO Jules Samain - vastly increasing its fleet from the 10,000 bikes currently in operation across Benin, Togo and Rwanda. This autumn, the company will also begin its five-year rollout of 140,000 bikes in Uganda. **Crushing polluters**

Spiro's goal is not only "to reduce pollution sources, but to eliminate them," Samain tells CNN. Once an old bike has been traded in, the parts will be recycled and repurposed, he explains, adding that the company has held "crushing events" in both Benin and Togo, where motorized vehicles are publicly flattened before the material is reused.

The process for drivers differs between countries. In Kenya, they will be offered 50,000 Kenyan shillings (about \$344) - around a third of the price of a new electric



bike - to swap their existing bike for an electric one. They can then pay a daily subscription of around 255 Kenyan shillings (about \$2) which repays the outstanding balance and gives drivers access to battery-swap stations, where they can quickly switch out depleted batteries for fully charged ones.

Not only does the scheme reduce the number of petrol and diesel vehicles on the road and associated air pollution, but it also cuts costs for drivers in both fuel and maintenance, according to the company. The startup notes that some of its motorbike taxi drivers have reported profits rising from around \$6 to \$11 a day since joining the scheme.

A 2022 report from the FIA Foundation,

an international transport and road safety charity, found that while the purchase price of electric motorcycles is currently greater than that of petrol-powered motorcycles, the operating costs are cheaper. It says that in many African countries, one liter of petrol will power a bike for about the same distance as one kilowatt-hour of electricity but will cost five to 10 times more.

The report adds that battery-swapping initiatives are key in making electric two-wheelers more affordable, because when an electric motorcycle is sold without the battery, it significantly reduces the initial purchase price.

But for battery-swapping to work, there needs to be "reliable and accessible charging infrastructure," says Samain.

"Before distributing the first bike, we build a network of swapping stations, and they aren't placed randomly: we carefully study the terrain and position our swapping stations in both urban and rural areas, ensuring extensive coverage."

Spiro has committed to building 3,000 of these stations across Kenya, meaning that drivers can rid themselves of range anxiety, while also contributing to building up the nation's electric vehicle infrastructure. The company, which currently manufactures most of its bikes and scooters in China, has also agreed to establish a manufacturing base in Kenya to generate local jobs. Kenya's president William Ruto, speaking in the coastal city of Mombasa at the launch of the initiative, said: "It creates jobs and transfers knowledge, technology and skills to our market in a very sustainable way."

Charging forward

According to the FIA Foundation, there were 27 million motorbikes registered in sub-Saharan Africa in 2022, rising from just 5 million in 2010, with around 80% of them used in the motorcycle taxi industry. The demand for two-wheelers is expected to grow even further, with a report from management consulting firm McKinsey estimating that electric and petrol motorbikes will make up over 45% of sub-Saharan Africa's overall vehicle fleet by 2040.

Sensex, Nifty open higher as sentiments improve; Bajaj Finserv jumps 2%



(News Agency) Benchmark stock market indices opened higher on Friday, supported by a rally in energy stocks and an improvement in overall sentiment. The S&P BSE Sensex rose 0.33 per cent to 66,481.18 at around 9:30 am, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 59 points to 19,786.05. Broader markets continued to outperform the benchmark indices. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Realty, Nifty Auto, Nifty Consumer Durables and Nifty Oil & Gas were the top gainers. All

the major sectoral indices started off the trading session in positive territory. Despite the weak momentum due to global cues, domestic shares have managed to extend their winning streak this week. Several individual stocks are likely to be in focus today, including L&T, ONGC, Gail, HCLTech, Cochin Shipyards, Shemaroo Entertainment, Exide Industries and more. Deven Mehata, research analyst at Choice Broking, said, "Notably, the daily charts depict the formation of a robust, long bullish

candlestick pattern, and this achievement is underscored by the index's ability to firmly maintain its position above the previously declining resistance trend line." "This development carries significant weight as it signifies a pivotal milestone. For the first time in three weeks, the Nifty has successfully reclaimed this crucial level. Additionally, the Relative Strength Index (RSI) has shown a positive crossover, currently registering at 63, which emphasizes a moderately bullish sentiment prevailing in the market," he added.

Gold, silver price today, September 8, 2023: Precious metals record hike on MCX



(News Agency) -Both gold and silver prices have recorded a hike on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Friday, September 8. Gold futures, maturing on October 5, 2023, stood at Rs 59,154 per 10 grams on the MCX, after recording a marginal hike of Rs 116 or 0.20 percent. Similarly, silver futures, maturing on December 5, 2023, also witnessed a jump of Rs 289 or 0.40 percent and were trading at Rs 72,094 per kg on the MCX. The prices of gold and silver stood at Rs 58,998 per 10 grams and Rs 71,770 per kg respectively when the market closed on September 7. The gold and silver prices in India depend on several factors,

including the value of the rupee against the dollar. Global demand also plays a key role in determining the trends observed in the rate of precious metals. GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET Gold prices firmed on Friday but were set for a weekly decline as the dollar and Treasury yields held firm with strong U.S. economic data raising concerns of the Federal Reserve keeping interest rates higher for longer, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold was up 0.2 per cent at \$1,922.87 per ounce, as of 0116 GMT, but set for a 0.8 per cent weekly fall. US gold futures rose 0.2 per cent to \$1,946.90.

Adani's new setback | Weathering a second storm

A new set of allegations has hit the Adani Group, claiming evidence of likely stock manipulation through 'opaque' Mauritius funds, putting it once again on the back foot

(News Agency)-In yet another setback to the Adani Group, the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a global network of investigative journalists, has claimed access to exclusive documents that allegedly show how hundreds of millions of dollars were invested in publicly traded Adani stocks through Mauritius-based opaque investment funds. OCCRP relied on files from multiple tax havens, bank records and internal Adani Group emails as part of its investigation that was first shared with two prominent foreign newspaper organisations and later made public on its website on August 31. In at least two cases-representing Adani stock holdings that at one point touched



\$430 million (Rs 3,558 crore)-the mysterious investors were found to have ties with the group's majority shareholders, the Adani family. The two men-Nasser Ali Shaban Ahli and Chang Chung-Ling-have long-time business connections with the family and have also served as directors and shareholders in Adani Group companies and firms associated

with Vinod Adani, group chairperson. Gautam Adani's elder brother, the report alleges. The documents show that two Mauritius-based funds-Emerging India Focus Fund and the EM Resurgent Fund-had invested and traded in large volumes of shares of four Adani companies between 2013 and 2018. Through these offshore firms, the

two men spent years buying and selling Adani stocks via offshore structures that obscured their involvement-and made considerable profits in the process, the report alleges. They also show that the management company in charge of their investments paid a Vinod-promoted company to advise them on their investments. If Indian stock market regulator Sebi (Securities and Exchange Board of India) were to consider Ahli and Chang as part of the promoter group, it would mean that the Adani Group firms flouted laws aimed at preventing artificial inflation of share prices. As per Indian laws, promoters can hold only a maximum of 75 per cent shares in listed companies, and the remaining 25 per cent

should be made available to the public for trading as free float. The key question is whether this law has been breached. The Adani Group, however, has denied the allegations, saying they were "recycled". "These news reports appear to be yet another concerted bid by (George) Soros-funded interests and supported by a section of the foreign media to revive the meritless Hindenburg report," the group said in a media statement on August 31. Soros is a Hungarian-born American financier. On January 24, New York-based short-seller Hindenburg Research had come out with a sensational report that levelled a series of allegations against the Adani Group, including stock market manipulation and accounting fraud.

Watch what you eat at work

A new study has indicated that employees who made unhealthy purchases at workplace tend to replicate the same unhealthy purchase outside work as well that can increase the risk of diabetes and heart ailments.



has shown that obesity contributes to higher absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher healthcare expenses for employers.

“Workplace wellness programs have the potential to promote lifestyle changes among large populations of employees, yet to date, there have been challenges to developing effective programs. We hope our findings will help to inform the development of accessible, scalable, and affordable interventions,” noted Jessica L. McCurley, one of the study’s investigators.

The study included 602 employees from Massachusetts General Hospital who regularly used the hospital’s cafeterias and were enrolled in a health promotion study. As part of the hospital’s “Choose Well, Eat Well” program, foods and beverages in the hospital cafeterias have “traffic light” labels to indicate their healthfulness: green is healthy, yellow is less healthy, and red is unhealthy.

If you think those quick snacks during office won’t have much effect on your health then you need to take note! A new study has indicated that employees who made unhealthy purchases at workplace tend to replicate the same unhealthy purchase outside work as well that can increase the risk of diabetes and heart ailments as compared to the employees who made healthy purchases.

The study published in the journal American Journal of Preventive Medicine, contributes to a better understanding of the relationship of with overall diet and health that can help to shape worksite

wellness programs that both improve long-term health outcomes and reduce costs.

“Employer-sponsored programs to promote healthy eating could reach millions of Americans and help to curb obesity, a worsening epidemic that too often leads to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer,” said Dr Anne N. Thorndike, the lead investigator of the study.

Most Americans spend about half their waking hours at work and consume food acquired at work. Nearly a third of all US workers are obese, which has an impact beyond the individual’s health risks. Previous research

Flower pesticides linked to high BP in kids: Study



Exposure to flower pesticide may increase blood pressure in children and put them at the risk of hypertension, a study has found. Researchers at University of California San Diego in the US found a link between and pesticide exposures in children -- especially heightened pesticide spraying period around the Mother’s Day flower harvest, a holiday with one of the highest sales of flowers. The study, published in the journal Environmental Research, involved boys and girls living near flower crops in Ecuador. According to the researchers, Ecuador is among the largest commercial flower growers in the world, with significant rose exports to North America, Europe and Asia.

Commercial rose production relies on the use of insecticides, fungicides and other pest controls, but little is known about their human. “These findings are noteworthy in that this is the first study to describe that pesticide spray seasons not only can increase the exposure to pesticides of children living near agriculture, but can increase their blood pressures and overall risk for hypertension,” said Jose R Suarez, an assistant professor at UC San Diego. The team assessed 313 boys and girls, ages four to nine, residing in floricultural communities in Ecuador. The children were examined up to 100 days after the Mother’s Day harvest.

Researchers find hormonal link between diet and obesity

Obesity is a growing public health crisis, bringing with it many serious risk factors, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

In a new study researchers have found that low levels of a circulating hormone called adropin predict increased weight gain and metabolic dysregulation during consumption of a high-sugar diet in a nonhuman primate model.

According to the study published in the ‘Journal of Biological Chemistry,’ these findings will help set the stage to develop new therapies for managing metabolic diseases. Obesity is a growing public health crisis, bringing with it many serious risk factors, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. As the number of people who are either overweight or obese now outnumbers those with a healthy body weight by a ratio of two to one, researchers face an urgent need to better

understand how the body burns fuel. Several years ago, Andrew Butler, professor of pharmacology and physiology discovered the peptide hormone adropin. Research by Butler’s lab suggested that adropin regulates whether the body burns glucose or fat. They also found that young men with high adropin levels had lower body mass index (BMI) levels. Moreover, some studies indicated low adropin is associated with biomarkers of insulin resistance.

In the current study, Butler and his colleagues have conducted studies at California National Primate Research Center in order to explore adropin’s role in metabolic health.

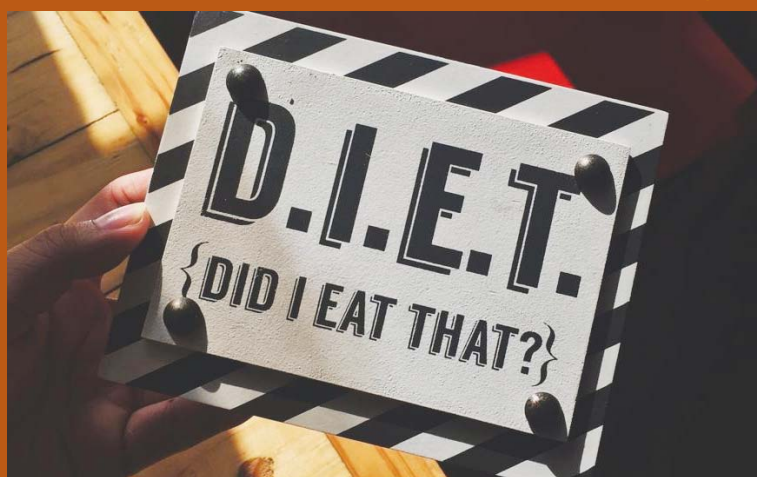
They examined the plasma of 59 adult male rhesus macaques that were fed a high sugar diet. Overall, consumption of the fructose diet produced a 10 per

cent gain in body weight and increases of fasting levels of insulin, indicating insulin resistance, which reduces glucose use and elevated fasting triglycerides which in humans increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Animals with low plasma adropin concentrations developed a more severe metabolic syndrome. Interestingly, development of type 2 diabetes was only observed in animals with low plasma adropin concentrations. These animals also showed more pronounced dysregulation of glucose and lipid metabolism.

Fasting hyperglycemia was also limited to animals with low circulating adropin, indicating glucose intolerance.

“Monkeys with low adropin may therefore not be oxidizing glucose as well, explaining their higher fat content as the glucose is



converted to lipids instead of being used as a metabolic fuel,” Butler said.

“Last year we reported that adropin appeared to be an output of the biological clock using mouse models and cultured human cells. What we show in this paper is that expression of the ENHO gene is higher in daytime and lower at night in most primate tissues,” Butler said.

This is consistent with the idea that adropin expression is controlled via “clock-related” mechanisms.

The current finding suggests that adropin may link the biological clock to rhythms in the way the body uses sugar and fats as metabolic fuel.

“At night time, the body relies on energy reserves stored as lipids in fat cells and in the daytime relies more on the carbohydrates coming in from the diet,” Butler said.

In this way, stimulation of adropin expression by our internal clocks may contribute to increasing the use of glucose as a metabolic fuel during the daytime.

Santhanam's terrific Tamil horror comedy 'DD Returns' is streaming exclusively on ZEE5 Global

(By our staff reporter) Mumbai- ZEE5 Global, the world's largest streaming platform for South Asian content, expands its library with Tamil blockbuster 'DD Returns'. The movie celebrated huge success in theatres with astounding performance and dialogue delivery which made the audiences smile throughout the movie. DD Returns traces the journey of Sathish [Santhanam] who is desperate to save his girlfriend which leads him to a haunted house. Produced by RK entertainment and directed by S. Prem Anand, the film is one of the best Tamil comedy films in recent times with a pinch of horror. The acclaimed movie is currently streaming on ZEE5 Global. The movie features an ensemble cast



that includes Santhanam, Surbhi, Redin Kingsley, Lollu Sabha Maaran, Pradeep

Rawat, Masoom Shankar, FEFSI Vijayan, Rajendran and Munishkanth. The horror comedy chronicles around Sathish and his quest to find and rescue his girlfriend – Sofia when her predicament spirals into a do-or-die situation. Sathish and his team are forced to play a dangerous game called 'Win or Run' organized by the ghosts inhabiting the palace. The cryptic ghosts who devised the lethal game during their lifetime designed it to brutally kill contestants upon failure to advance. Will Sathish and his team emerge victorious and escape the ghosts? Or will someone meet an unfortunate end at the hands of the phantom game designers?

'OMG 2' Surpasses Expectations: Clinches Spot as the Fourth Highest-Grossing Adult Rated Film in Bollywood



As 'OMG 2' continues its theatrical triumph, the film has officially become the fourth highest-grossing adult-certified film of Bollywood, further proving the demand and relevance of its core message. But beyond its box office accolades, 'OMG 2' has played a pivotal role in transforming the conversation around sex education in India.

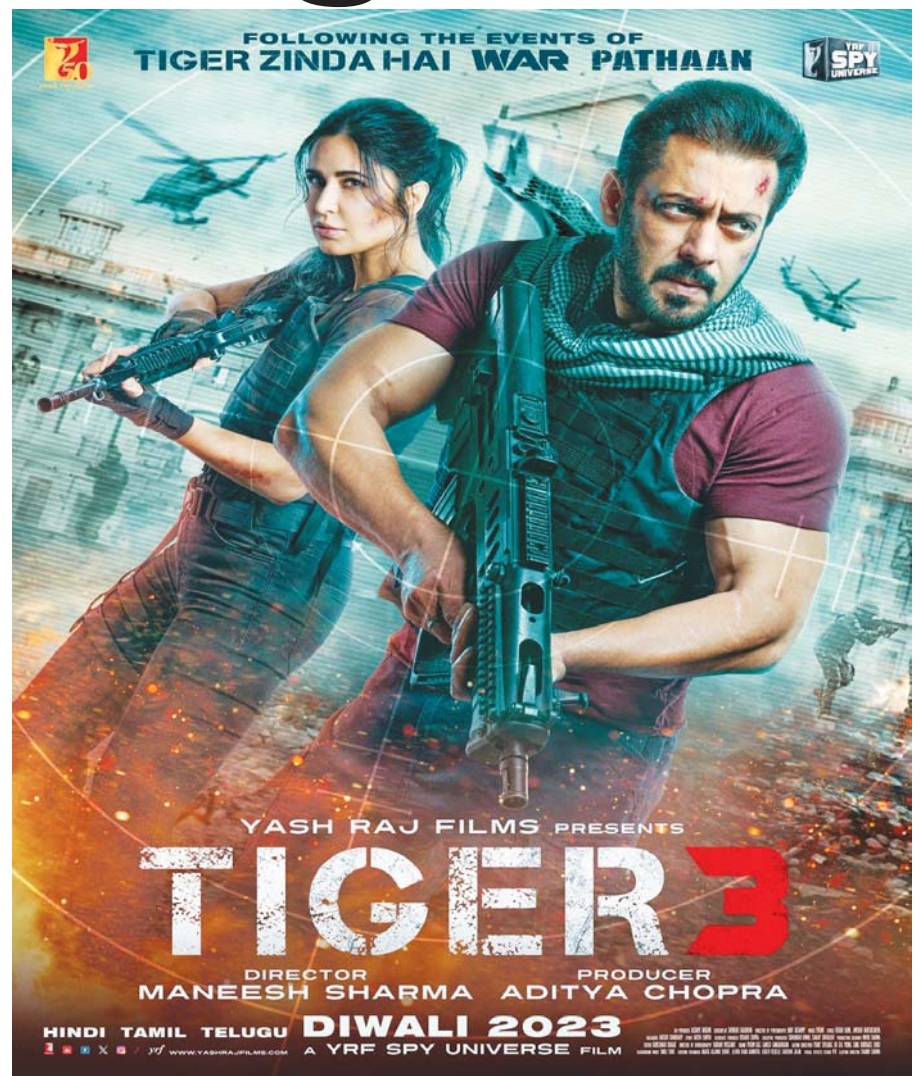
Directed by Amit Rai, 'OMG 2' stands as a sequel to the highly successful satirical comedy 'OMG'. With a stellar cast featuring Akshay Kumar, Pankaj Tripathi, Arun Govil, Govind Namdeo, and Yami Gautam, the film, released on August 11, swiftly collected nearly ₹150 crores at the global box office.

At its heart, 'OMG 2' showcases an unwavering commitment to authenticity. The film provides a responsible representation of sex education, ensuring viewers are presented with a rare, thoughtful, and deep portrayal. It serves as more than just entertainment, but as an essential edutainment tool that testifies to cinema's transformative power.

In an unprecedented move, an education society in Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra, has become the first in India to announce the inclusion of the subject, as portrayed in the film, in their school curriculums. This landmark decision emphasizes the film's influence and its ability to inspire real-world change.

Launched on World Youth Day, 'OMG 2' is primarily aimed at young audiences, equipping them with crucial knowledge and perspectives about sex education. Despite its noble intentions, the 'Adults Only' rating it received in India stands in stark contradiction to its mission. Beyond its Indian roots, the film addresses universal issues surrounding sex education, underlining its global relevance. With its compelling narrative, 'OMG 2' underscores the significance of art and media as catalysts for societal change. The film not only challenges stigmas surrounding sex education but also the very censorship it faces, emphasizing the need for a more informed and inclusive society.

Yash Raj Films drops the first poster of Tiger 3!



Yash Raj Films officially drops the first poster of Tiger 3, reveals it follows the events of Tiger Zinda Hai, War and Pathaan.

Directed by Maneesh Sharma, the fifth film from YRF's Spy Universe promises to be an insane, jaw-dropping action spectacle as two super-spies Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif take on their most deadly mission yet.

Releasing this Diwali, Tiger 3 is a part of Aditya Chopra's fabled YRF Spy Universe which includes blockbusters like Ek Tha Tiger, Tiger Zinda Hai, War and Pathaan.



Sophie Turner seen partying in UK as husband Joe Jonas files for divorce

Sophie Turner and Joe Jonas have hit the rock. The couple, who got married four years back, have parted ways. The 34-year-old singer has filed for divorce from his wife of four years in Miami on Tuesday, September 5.

SOPHIE TURNER PARTIES IN UK AMID DIVORCE

Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner recently confirmed their separation with a joint statement on Instagram. The two also expressed their desire for privacy, particularly for the sake of their young daughter. However, ahead of the rumours that circulated online, Sophie enjoyed a fun night out with friends and castmates.

Just three days before, the 27-year-old actress, was out and about in the U.K. at Birmingham bar Dropshot as she celebrated the wrap party for the Birmingham portion of filming for her new ITV show, 'Joan.'

The bar manager told People that the actress "just felt very comfortable," noting

Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner filed for divorce after four years of their wedding. Following the split, the 'Game of Thrones' actress was reportedly seen partying in Birmingham.

that Turner was wearing a floral dress and "seemed like she was in high spirits" as she spent time with her cast mates and friends.

JOE-SOPHIE SHARE STATEMENT

The duo took to social media to issue their joint statement that read: "After four wonderful years of marriage, we have mutually decided to amicably end our marriage. There are many speculative narratives as to why but, truly this is a united decision."

They also expressed their desire for privacy, particularly for the sake of their young daughter, stating, "We sincerely hope that everyone can respect our wishes for privacy for us and our children." The couple urged their fans not to speculate or believe in any false narratives, stating that their decision was indeed united and mutual. They further requested that their fans and the public respect them and their children by preserving their privacy at this time.



When Tinnu Anand fired Madhuri because she refused to shoot in bra for a scene

Filmmaker and actor Tinnu Anand has been associated with some popular films in the past. Recently, Anand opened up about an unpleasant incident that had occurred on the sets of his 1989 feature Shanakht.

The 1989 movie starred Madhuri Dixit Nene and Amitabh Bachchan in lead roles, their first on-screen pairing.

TINNU ANAND ON THE UNPLEASANT INCIDENT ON SETS But things took an ugly turn on the sets when Madhuri refused to shoot in a bra for a scene in the film. Tinnu Anand became upset when

he heard it and said that the actor could have expressed her discomfort about the situation when she was signing the film and not on the day of shoot. Speaking to Radio Nasha, Tinnu Anand said, "I narrated the entire sequence to Madhuri and I told her that you have to remove your blouse and for the first time, we should see you in your bra. And I am not going to hide anything behind a haystack or anything. Because you are offering yourself to help

a man who is trying to help you. So it is a very important situation and I want to shoot it on the first day. She said okay."

"I said you can design your bra, whatever you want. You don't have to wear a bra bra but you can design your own bra, I don't mind. But it has to be a bra because you are opening your blouse, offering yourself," Anand added.

MADHURI'S REFUSAL TO DO THE SCENE

Even Amitabh, who was a legitimate star at the time, could not play the role of a peacemaker as Madhuri was asked to pack her bags and leave the set after she refused to do the scene. But later, Madhuri's secretary

requested Tinnu Anand to reconsider and said things would turn around. Recalling what had happened on the day, Tinnu Anand shared, "I asked what happened. She said, 'Tinnu, I don't want to do this particular scene.' I said, 'I'm sorry, you have to do this scene.' She said, 'No, I don't want to.' I said, 'Okay, pack up, say good bye to the film. I'll cancel my shoot.'" Eventually, the shoot resumed but was wrapped in only five days.



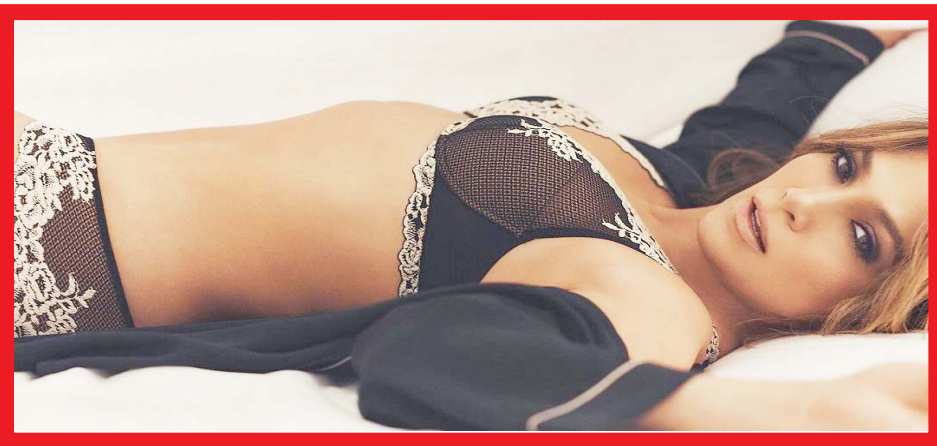


Premiere Date announced for Riveting Crime Drama Bambai Meri Jaan by Prime Video

(By our staff reporter) Mumbai- Bambai Meri Jaan is created by Rensil D'Silva and Shujaat Saudagar and directed by Shujaat Saudagar. The 10-part series features Kay Kay Menon, Avinash Tiwary, Kritika Kamra, Nivedita Bhattacharya and Amyra Dastur in pivotal roles. Prime members in India and across 240 countries and territories worldwide can stream all 10 episodes of Bambai Meri Jaan from 14 September. The Amazon Original series will premiere exclusively on Prime Video in India and across 240 countries and territories on 14 September. Produced by Excel Media and Entertainment's Ritesh Sidhwani, Kassim Jaggamia and Farhan Akhtar, with the story by S. Hussain Zaidi, Bambai Meri Jaan is created by Rensil D'Silva and Shujaat

Saudagar and directed by Shujaat Saudagar. The binge worthy, fast-paced crime thriller is the latest addition to the Prime membership. Featuring a highly versatile and talented cast with Kay Kay Menon, Avinash Tiwary, Kritika Kamra and Nivedita Bhattacharya along with Amyra Dastur in pivotal roles, the fictional crime series is a gripping saga about a father and son who are two sides of the same coin. The series explores the classic, universal battle of good versus evil. Set in the post-independence era, the story chronicles the life and rise of a young man, Dara Kadri (played by Tiwary), torn between his father's law enforcement legacy (played by Menon) and his own journey into the heart of organized crime.

Jennifer Lopez shares hot pics in lingerie, fans say 'you look gorgeous'



Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez is one of the most fit celebrities in Hollywood. On September 4, the actress uploaded a series of pictures on Instagram where she can be seen wearing black lingerie with white lace details. **JENNIFER LOPEZ SHARES STEAMY PICTURES**

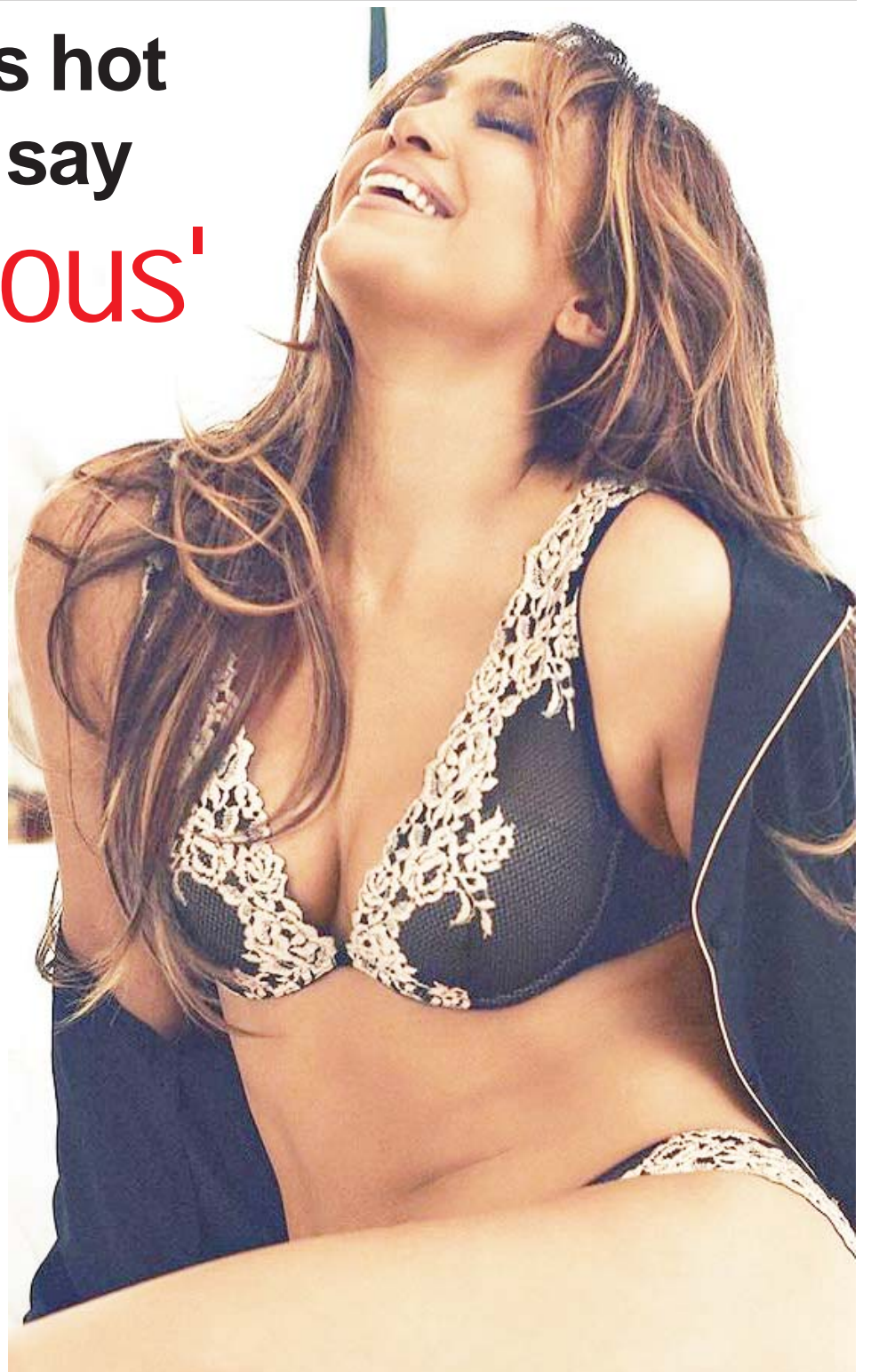
Jennifer Lopez recently graced her Instagram feed with sizzling photographs of herself wearing black lingerie adorned with delicate white lace accents. These pictures were uploaded as a part of a sponsored collaboration with the renowned Italian lingerie brand, Intimissimi. For the caption, Lopez wrote, "When it feels right, nothing else matters (sic)". Take a look at the pictures posted by the singer-actress:

FANS COMMENT ON THE POST

The post received several comments from fans, some calling her 'Queen on fire', while others praised her for her dedication towards maintaining her physique.

Check out some of the comments below: On the work front, Jennifer will star alongside Jharrel Jerome in the biographical wrestling drama 'Unstoppable', produced by Ben Affleck and based on the life of wrestler Anthony Robles. The production began in May 2023 but was put on hold indefinitely due to the 2023 Writers Guild of America strike.

Lopez has also committed to lead and co-produce Netflix's film adaptation of the bestselling novel, 'The Cipher'. She also has several projects in the works as a producer.



Why Science Vs Spirituality Debate is Irrelevant in Indian Context



By: Omer Ghazi

A team of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists visited the Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh ahead of the Chandrayaan-3 mission. Moreover, on his visit to Pournamikaavu, Bhadrakali Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, ISRO Chairman S Somanath also reiterated that he is on a journey to explore both science and spirituality. As if all of that wasn't enough, India decided to name the landing point of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft the Shiv Shakti point. Hence, the self-proclaimed warriors of reason and rationality, most of whom presumably struggled to pass high school physics, suddenly found it necessary to sermonise the ISRO scientists on how to "science"; sparking the age-old debate about whether scientific progress needs to be intertwined with the spiritual prowess, or whether a "secular" country like India should be choosing names like the Shiv Shakti point.

A cursory understanding of both science and spirituality might give the illusion of separation; however, a deeper look reveals that the debate itself is quite irrelevant, at least in the Indian context, and demonstrates a lack of exposure to the rich tradition of science and spirituality leading each other throughout Indian history.

The tradition goes as long back as the Rig Veda, where the Hymn of Creation (Book 10 Hymn 129) discusses scepticism at knowing exactly what existed at the beginning of existence. It states: Then was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.

What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?

He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,

Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

Yes, that is a supposedly religious text teaching the highest levels of scientific inquiry. Ayurveda further contains surgical procedures and modes of synthesis and administering of drugs for specific types of diseases. The four major Sulba Sutras, attributed to Baudhayana, Manava, Apastamba and Katyayana, arguably contain the first ever mention of the Pythagorean triplets which were used to construct fire-altars at the temples. Moreover, one of the greatest breakthroughs in the history of mathematics, i.e. the creation of zero as a number in its own right, is rooted in the spiritual wisdom of India which embraced the concept of "nothingness". The concept of zero is essential to a system that's at the basis of modern computing, binary numbers, which basically helped shape the modern world.

The ancient Hindu texts, curiously enough, delve deep into the debates of human consciousness, the ego and the self; also providing insights into the forces of nature that constitute the very fabric of our reality. Advaita Vedanta emphasises the concept of oneness or non-duality (Advaita), where the ultimate reality (Brahman) is considered a single, interconnected consciousness that underlies all of existence. The Spandakarika, one of the essential texts of Kashmiri Shaivism, discusses vibration or sound inside the Divine, a throb which constitutes both the objective exterior reality and the subjective world. A deeper look at the

subatomic world today reveals that all matter is just energy pulsating, vibrating at different frequencies. The cosmic dance of Shiva is symbolic of a pulsating process of creation and destruction which, for modern physicists, is the dance of subatomic matter, the basis of all existence and of all-natural phenomena. That is the reason that a statue of Lord Nataraja stands tall at the CERN facility in Geneva, where scientists observe the dance of the subatomic particles day in and out. So, when India names the landing point on the moon Shiv Shakti, it is a tribute to the thousands of years old tradition of seeking to understand the forces and phenomena that constitute reality.

This conflict between scientific progress and spiritual seeking arose in the West where, at the time of Renaissance, the church saw the age of reason as an assault on its authority. Galileo Galilei, Giordano Bruno, and Giuseppe Pontremoli are a few names among many who directly or indirectly faced persecution for supposedly challenging conventional beliefs. Even in Western traditions, there were a few thinkers who sought to combine these elements; Baruch Spinoza is one such prominent name in this regard, who also influenced the views of Albert Einstein.

In a relatively recent day and age, Srinivasa Ramanujan took this tradition to new heights. One of the greatest mathematicians of all times, he was able to publish about 4,000 theorems without any formal training in mathematics, attributing this knowledge to the divine providence of Mahalakshmi of Namakkal, a family goddess whom he looked to for inspiration.

The Missile Man of India, APJ Abdul Kalam, who was also instrumental in

bringing about the Indian space program, was the epitome of a spiritual technocrat. In *Wings of Fire*, he writes, "I have always been a religious person with the sense that I maintain a working partnership with God." In one of his books, he writes that whenever he couldn't find a solution to a problem, he would get it during the prayer of Fajr.

For the uninitiated, the works of Swami Vivekananda can provide deeper insights into the intricacies of "practical spirituality", introducing Indian philosophies, including Vedanta, to the Western world. Many Western writers including Alan Watts and Fritjof Capra have kindled a renewed interest in this blend of ancient Eastern philosophies with modern science.

So, when ISRO scientists visit the temples before a launch or a point is named Shiv Shakti on the moon, the ensuing debates either come from a colonial perspective or through ignorance of ancient Indic heritage. Chandrayaan-3 isn't an isolated event but rather a continuation of India's age-old quest for understanding the cosmos. Like Aryabhatta and Charaka before, it symbolises the contemporary pursuit of knowledge flowing seamlessly from India's rich tradition.

The debate between science and spirituality is irrelevant in India, where both have been intertwined for centuries. As we celebrate Chandrayaan-3's achievements, we must also celebrate the enduring harmony between scientific exploration and spiritual contemplation that defines India's unique intellectual heritage. This legacy stands as a potent reminder that science and spirituality can coexist, enriching our understanding of both the physical world and the inner self.

Busing migrants to deep blue cities is working. There's a reason why Dems are to blame for Biden's border mess

By Jarrett Stepman

Republican border-state strategy to send illegal immigrants to Democrat-run cities and states is paying off.

Last Thursday, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul sent a letter to President Joe Biden begging for federal aid. Importantly, she finally acknowledged where the problem is coming from.

"This is a financial burden the city and state are shouldering on behalf of the federal government," Hochul, a fellow Democrat, said of the illegal immigrants pouring into New York.

"I cannot ask New Yorkers to pay for what is fundamentally a federal responsibility," the governor wrote. "And I urge the federal government to take prompt and significant action today to meet its obligation to New York State."

In a press conference following the release of the letter, Hochul further complained about illegal immigrants released into the country by the Biden administration. What happened to all are welcome, no exceptions?

This is an interesting pivot from the New York governor. Until now, Democratic politicians mostly have been unwilling to criticize the White House in any way on the border security issue, or even suggest that the Biden administration is where the problem originates.

If you want to know the reason for the sudden pivot, a new poll sheds light. The Siena College poll released earlier this month shows that New Yorkers are deeply discontented about the surge of illegal immigrants in their state and mostly blame Democrat leaders.

"New Yorkers-including huge majorities of Democrats, Republicans, independents, upstaters and downstaters-overwhelmingly say that the recent influx of migrants to New York is a serious problem for the state," Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg said.

DHS CALLS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO NYC'S MIGRANT CRISIS OPERATIONS AS ADAMS PUSHES BACK

Now, this may seem meaningless in the sense that New York is unlikely to become a red state any time soon. But keep in mind that the crime issue didn't just swing seats from Democrat to Republican in the 2022 midterm elections, it likely also gave the GOP overall control of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Discontent over lawless Democrat policies is much worse now, and New York voters are heaping the blame on Hochul, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and, most of all, Biden.

Open borders and the idea that all immigration-whether legal or illegal-is a positive good is a matter of faith for Democrat Party activists. That's less likely



to be true with rank-and-file voters and independents.

"There is no question in my mind that the politics of this is a disaster to Democrats," said Howard Wolfson, a former deputy and political adviser to former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, in an interview with The New York Times.

"This issue alone has the potential to cost Democrats the House, because it is such a huge issue in New York City and the coverage of it is clearly heard and seen by voters in all of these swing districts in the suburbs," Wolfson said. He described the issue as a "ticking time bomb" for Democrats.

NYC MIGRANT CRISIS COSTS COULD HIT \$12 BILLION, MAYOR ADAMS URGES FEDERAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION

I'd say the bomb already has gone off.

Since Biden entered the White House in January 2021, a historic stream of illegal immigrants has poured across the U.S. southern border. This has had catastrophic consequences for many swamped communities in Texas and Arizona especially. They've shouldered the burden of the border crisis for years, so it's a little rich for New York to be throwing a pity party.

It obviously would be better if the federal government was doing its job and enforcing our laws, but until that time there's little border states can do to "fix" the situation. All they can do is mitigate the damage.

The Biden administration has done all it can to make sure that the border remains nice and open, er, "secure."

The administration's actions have made it clear that Biden and his top officials want to flood the country with illegal immigrants. And that's where border-state busing comes in.

Instead of carrying the entire burden of the Biden-led border disaster, Republican governors such as Greg Abbott in Texas, Ron DeSantis in Florida, and Doug Ducey

point fingers at the Republican governors for their newfound troubles, and some left-wing political commentators tried to say that shipping illegal immigrants to Martha's Vineyard-a posh, liberal vacation destination-was akin to Nazism.

Biden's trusty allies in the legacy media have done all they can to "contextualize" the immigration issue to protect the president from criticism.

However, much like with the crime surge, it's hard to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people forever when they literally see the consequences of bad policies in their neighborhoods.

Thanks to Biden, the bill for once low-cost, sanctuary-city virtue signaling has come due.

I suggest that if Democrat politicians want federal aid to care for illegal immigrants, they should demand that the White House work to restore the policies of the previous administration and actually attempt to get control of the border.

The excuses have run out, the border crisis has become a national crisis, and blame for this mess falls on the "big guy" in the Oval Office.

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Biden keeps crushing the American dream of owning a home

Biden's economic policies are locking first-time homebuyers out of the market. That's not the American Dream, it's a nightmare

By Stephen Moore

In boasting about Bidenomics two weeks ago in Milwaukee, President Joe Biden declared that his policies are "restoring the American dream." Then he went into his creepy whispering mode and assured us "it's working."

Huh?

Isn't a big aspiration of the American dream owning a home? Biden keeps making first-time homeownership harder for young families for two reasons. One is that the overall jump in inflation and the slower increase in wages and salaries means that homes are more expensive.

High home prices benefit those who already own their homes, but much of the increased value is due to general inflation, which reached a high of 9% last year and hurts everyone.

A bigger killer for first-time homebuyers has been the steady rise in mortgage rates under Biden. When he came into office, the mortgage rate was 2.9% nationally. Now it is 7.1%, thanks in no small part to the Federal Reserve's 11 interest rate increases prompted by the \$6 trillion Biden spending and borrowing spree in 2021 and 2022.

So now, according to the mortgage



company Redfin, just the increase in interest rates on a 30-year mortgage from 5% to 7% means that a middle-income family that could once afford a median-value home of \$500,000 can only afford a home worth \$429,000. Great, spend more and you get less house. Or instead of a single-family home, you can only afford a three-room condo or a townhouse. If we compare the rates today versus when Donald Trump was president, the typical homebuyer can only afford a house with a price tag more than \$100,000 less than three years ago.

What a deal? Maybe this is one reason the size of a new home is smaller than in the past.

Here's another way to think about the damage done by Biden policies: If you want to buy a \$500,000 home today, which is close to the median price in many desirable locations, your total interest payments will be at least \$800 more per month. That means over three decades of payments totaling at least \$250,000.

Of course, rents are up nearly 20% as well, so for many 20-somethings, this

means sleeping in the parents' basement. Biden talks a lot about bridging gaps between rich and poor and Blacks and Whites. But the group that is most handicapped by these interest rate shocks is minorities. Black homeownership is still less than 50% for Black households. The Washington Post calls this "heartbreaking," but they blame racism, not bad government policies. There's one other impediment to homeownership for Generation X and millennials. Many 30- and 40-somethings are hamstrung by their existing and expanding debt. Credit card debt is now \$1.03 trillion. Half of all families are expected to have problems paying off this debt each month. Delinquencies are rising, which can mean penalty rates of 20% to 25%.

So, if families can't afford their existing debt, how will they get a bank to approve a \$400,000 or more mortgage loan?

An even bigger question is how in the world can Biden call his economic policies a success? Perhaps Biden has a secret plan to "forgive" trillions of dollars of mortgage debt, as he has already attempted to do with student loans. But that just shifts the debt burden to taxpayers -- hardly a solution.

Biden plans even bigger student loan handout, dumping the bill on you

By Sen. Bill Cassidy

In response to the Supreme Court overturning President Biden's \$300 billion student debt scheme, the Biden administration is now taking a shot at an even larger plan to transfer student debt onto taxpayers.

President Biden's "SAVE Plan" radically overhauls the Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) program meant to aid lower-income borrowers in paying back their loans and turns it into yet another massive loan forgiveness scheme.

This latest attempt to cancel student debt would allow a majority of bachelor's degree student loan borrowers to not even pay back the principal on their loans.

To put that into context, a household making up to \$225,000 a year would now be eligible to have their student loan payments drastically reduced and eventually "forgiven" at the expense of taxpayers. Just like Biden's past schemes, this policy does not "forgive" debt. It transfers the burden of \$559 billion in federal student loans from those who willingly took out the loans onto Americans who chose to not go to college or already sacrificed to pay off their loans.

This week, my Republican colleagues and I introduced

a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution of disapproval to block this unfair and irresponsible IDR policy. The resolution prevents average Americans, 87% of whom don't have student loans, from carrying the financial burden of someone else's student debt. I hope all of our colleagues will join us in supporting this CRA resolution and stand up for the families who will be stuck with a policy that the administration is pursuing not to be fair to all, but rather to favor the few.

In the meantime, the Biden administration still refuses to propose any solutions that address the underlying problems that created the debt crisis in the first place.

In the last 30 years, tuition and fees rose at private nonprofit colleges by 80%. At public four-year institutions, they have jumped up by 124%.

While tuitions at universities have increased, the federal government has made more money available for students to borrow. This has left too many students drowning in debt without a path for success. We need real solutions. As ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, I recently led my

Republican colleagues in introducing the Lowering Education Costs and Debt Act, a package of five bills aimed at directly addressing the issues driving the skyrocketing cost of higher education and the increasing amounts of debt students take on to attend school.

Our legislation puts downward pressure on the cost of colleges and universities that have used the increased availability of federal loans to inflate their prices, leading students to take out rising amounts of debt. Additionally, it equips students and families choosing between schools with information on the cost, enrollment, retention, completion and post-college earnings of the school or program of study to determine if the degree is worth the price of admission. Importantly, our bill also offers students clear information about the duration of their loan, expected monthly payment, likely future earnings opportunities after attending their school and program of choice, and a breakdown of all aid, including scholarships. Presenting students with clear and understandable information ensures they are equipped with the needed tools to recognize the financial commitment they are about to make.

Why do so many powerful men seem allergic to apologies?

By Arwa Mahdawi

Sorry. Five letters, two syllables: it's a fairly straightforward word. Its Spanish equivalent, lo siento, has an extra couple of syllables but it's not exactly difficult to say.

Or so you'd think. An extraordinary number of powerful men seem allergic to apologies, living life by the mantra (sometimes attributed to Winston Churchill) that you should never apologize, never explain.

Take Luis Rubiales, for example. The Spanish soccer chief sparked outrage after he planted an unsolicited kiss on forward Jenni Hermoso's lips during the Women's World Cup medal presentation. If he had just said sorry, if he had just expressed genuine remorse for his actions and tried to understand why forcing a kiss on someone is problematic, the story would have fizzled out and people would have moved on. Most people weren't asking for his head, after all, just for a little introspection.

but he couldn't do that, could he? Instead he dug his heels in and started ticking off every cliched move in the Aggrieved Aggressor's Handbook.

Step one: claim she was asking for it. That's always the first argument to come up in any allegation of assault or misconduct, isn't it? She wanted it, she asked for it. Despite the fact that Hermoso has said she didn't consent to being kissed by the Spanish football federation president, Rubiales has said she did.

Step two: cast yourself as the victim. It's a witch-hunt, they're out to destroy me. Aggressors love to turn the tables by claiming they're the ones that we should feel sorry for. In a bizarre



speech shortly after the incident, Rubiales said his critics are "trying to kill me" and hit out at "false feminism". Dude, nobody is trying to kill you. We just want you to understand the basic concept of consent!

Step three: weaponize the women in your life. Men charged with misconduct routinely go through their Rolodexes and get the women in their lives to vouch for them. If they've got daughters, then they love pulling out the "as a father of daughters" line. During the speech where he railed against "false feminism", Rubiales pointed at his three daughters and addressed them directly.

It's not clear how Rubiales's daughters feel about being used as defensive props by their father, but some of the women in his life would clearly do anything to support him. A flair for drama must run in the family because Rubiales's mother, Ángeles Béjar, has gone quite the extra mile for him: on Monday she locked herself in the Divina Pastora church and announced she

was going on a hunger strike over the "unwarranted, inhumane and bloodthirsty hunt" of her son. "I don't mind dying for justice," she told the broadcaster Telecinco on Tuesday.

By Wednesday, however, it seems she started to think better of the hunger strike and reportedly checked herself into a hospital. (The Santa Ana hospital would not confirm to Reuters whether she had actually been admitted.). A local priest who identified himself as Father Antonio told reporters she was feeling tired and stressed out.

Not everyone in the Rubiales family is starving themselves in support. Juan Rubiales, his uncle and former chief of staff, told reporters on Wednesday that he is Team Hermoso. He also called his nephew, who has been embroiled in many other scandals in the past, "a proud, arrogant person and ... a cowardly man". He didn't stop there. Rubiales, in his uncle's estimation, "is a man obsessed with power, luxury, money and even women.

I think he needs a social re-education program".

I'm not sure he's going to get a social re-education program, but might Rubiales be suspended? The jury is out on that one. Spain's administrative sports court (TAD) has opened a case against Rubiales for a "serious" (but not "very serious") breach of conduct. If TAD had found that his conduct was "very serious" the government could have suspended Rubiales from his role. As it is, he can't be suspended, but there will be an investigation and he might be banned from football for a while. Long story short, this saga is going to drag on and on. The only silver lining to all this is that the misogyny in Spanish football has become impossible to ignore.

Is Texas going to start enforcing pregnancy tests at its borders?

The way things are going it doesn't seem implausible. Texas has some of the toughest abortion bans in the US but it's still theoretically possible to leave the state and get an abortion elsewhere. Anti-abortion activists want to clamp down on that. The Washington Post reports that a wave of new proposals would make it illegal to use certain roads to drive someone out of state for an abortion.

"This really is building a wall to stop abortion trafficking," said Mark Lee Dickson, the anti-abortion activist leading this dystopian initiative.

Tennessee woman sets world record for longest female mullet

Tami Manis is all business at the front and a 33-year-long party at the back. Manis's mullet isn't just record-breaking - it's very ontrend: salons are reporting a surge in demand for the divisive haircut.



MetroPlusHealth Teams up With Community Groups to Gift 30,000 Backpacks to NYC Students

Backpack giveaway and local back-to-school events will help kick off a happy and healthy school year

(By our staff reporter) New York, NY- MetroPlusHealth, New York City's high-quality and affordable health plan, is pleased to announce a gift of 30,000 backpacks intended to reduce stress on low-income families with children headed back to school across the City. In partnership with several other community organizations and elected officials, this effort aims to support families as they prepare for the school year ahead, reaching neighborhoods across all five NYC boroughs and ensuring students have the tools they need to start or continue their academic journey.

Students will benefit from this initiative during 25+ back-to-school and health outreach events through September 26.

These events also serve as an opportunity for attendees to engage with local agencies, encouraging families to discover and access resources available to them throughout



the year.

"As we head into a new school year, NYC parents are facing a list of concerns including heightened costs for school supplies and increasing cases

of COVID, RSV and flu. At MetroPlusHealth, we not only prioritize providing care in the case of health problems, but also preventing them in the first place," said Erin M.

Drinkwater, Chief of Government Relations & Strategic Partnerships. "We're elated to assist these families in making sure their children have a strong and healthy start to the school year." The school bag giveaway program is just one part of MetroPlusHealth's ongoing commitment to making New York students happier and healthier. As parents and kids across New York City get ready for the new school year, MetroPlusHealth has released a resource pamphlet reminding New Yorkers to follow tips for back-to-school health and to facilitate access to the plan's low or no-cost coverage. With MetroPlusHealth's Child Health Plus Plan, children under the age of 19 can receive care from the plan's extensive network of 34,000+ of the City's top doctors, 40+ hospitals including NYU Langone, Mount Sinai, and NY Health + Hospitals, as well as 110+ urgent care sites including CityMD locations.

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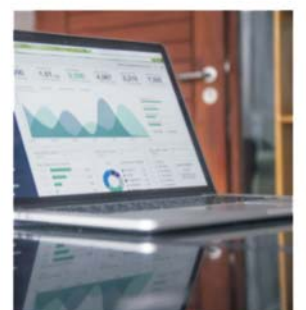
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