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Donald Trump accepts Republican nomination for second term

## “The Best is Yet To Come”

Trump paints Biden as a 'Radical' Candidate and a Danger to America



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# 2020 is special for Indian-Americans in US politics

**Indian-Americans haven't felt so politically coddled - empowered, you can also say - before. "We have arrived, says some. Others call it the "coming of age."**

Donald Trump recently said he has "more Indians" than Kamala Harris, the Indian-descent Democratic nominee for vice-president. His campaign released a video of him with Narendra Modi at the "Howdy Modi" and "Namaste Trump" events, cheered by stadiums packed with Indians (and those of Indian descent).

The Biden-Harris campaign was already on it, building on Harris' part-Indian heritage to further consolidate its hold on the Indian-American community that has traditionally voted Democratic, through outreaches headlined by top campaign officials. It also rolled out a two-pronged agenda for a Biden administration - one part dedicated to relations with India and the other to the welfare of Indian-Americans. It was an unparalleled effort, and

exhaustive in scope. Indian-Americans haven't felt so politically coddled - empowered, you can also say - before. "We have arrived, says some. Others call it the "coming of age."

It's been a long journey, from the Luce-Celler Act of 1946 that allowed Indians to become naturalised Americans, clearing their way for politics. In 1956, Dalip Singh Saund, a California farmer-judge-politician, who helped organise that effort, was elected to the US House of Representatives, becoming the first Indian-American elected to the US congress. There are five now, including Harris, collectively called, by some, the "Samosa Caucus". Indian-Americans have also won an increasing number of state-level positions, including two governorships.

Year 2020 is more special. The

community believes it can make a difference. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns agree. With an estimated 1.8 million eligible voters, Indian-Americans form a tinier than tiny part of the US electorate. But they look heftier because of their weighted equity in battleground - also called swing - states won or lost by slim margins in close contests. Just three of them swung it for Trump in 2016 - Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin; by 0.2, 0.7 and 0.8 percentage points respectively.

Democrats are eyeing the 1.3 million Indian-Americans that live in eight states that they believe are in play this time: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - the above three - and Arizona, Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia.



The Trump campaign is looking at Indian-Americans in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Florida. Indian-Americans have historically favoured Democrats. But only 50% of the registered voters among them identified as Democrat, in a survey of Asian-American voters in the run-up to the 2018 mid-term elections; 18% identified themselves as Republicans; and the rest 32% were "non-identifiers". But two-third of them

- 66% - disapproved of Trump's performance as president and 28% approved.

Does Trump have "more Indians", as he has claimed, than Senator Harris? Only a poll can determine that. But the newly empowered community is clearly enjoying the attention it is getting, with the promise of plenty more in 2024, when, as is being excitedly speculated, it might be Harris versus Nikki Haley.

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## SC refuses to interfere in High Court order on three capitals for Andhra Pradesh

**A division bench of the Supreme Court set aside the special leave petition filed by the Andhra Pradesh government, challenging the high court's order for status quo on continuing Amaravati as the state capital.**

(News Agencies)- In yet another setback to the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government's plan to form three capitals for Andhra Pradesh, the Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant stay on the high court order for status quo on continuing Amaravati as the state capital.

A division bench of the Supreme Court comprising justice Ashok Bhushan, justice R Subhash Reddy and justice M R Shah set aside the special leave petition

filed by the state government, challenging the high court order. The bench said it cannot interfere in the matter, as it is already pending in the high court and is coming up for hearing on Thursday.

The Supreme Court also rejected the plea of the state government to direct the high court to expedite the hearing. "We cannot fix a deadline to the high court to complete the hearing. But we hope it will settle the issue at the

earliest," the bench said.

Senior counsel Fali S Nariman, arguing for the farmers of Amaravati, said the high court was formed in Amaravati as per a presidential order. As such, the state government cannot decide the judicial capital at Kurnool, he said.

The development comes as a big disappointment for the Jagan government which is keen on shifting the executive capital to Visakhapatnam at the earliest.



More than 55 public interest litigation petitions have been filed in the high court challenging the laws pertaining to creation of three capitals and abolition of the Capital Region

Development Authority (CRDA). The HC granted status quo on the two Acts till August 27. The case will come up for hearing in the high court on Thursday.

## Kangana Ranaut says she was exposed to 'sinister world and drugs, debauchery' at film parties as NCB joins Sushant Singh Rajput probe



(News Agencies)- Actor Kangana Ranaut has responded to the news of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

joining the ongoing investigation into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, saying that "many A listers will be behind bars" if the

NCB "enters Bollywood".

Kangana tweeted Wednesday evening, "If Narcotics Control Bureau enters Bollywood, many A listers will be behind bars, if blood tests are conducted many shocking revelations will happen. Hope @PMOIndia under swatchh Bharat mission cleanses the gutter called Bollywood."

She added in another tweet, "I was still a minor my mentor turned tormentor used to spike my drinks and sedate me to prevent me from going to cops, when I became successful and

got entry in to the most famous film parties I was exposed to the most shocking and sinister world and drugs, debauchery and mafia."

A day after speculations of NCB joining the probe, NCB director Rakesh Asthana said in a statement, "We received a letter from ED on Tuesday evening, stating that during their probe into the financial aspects, they found that drug was supplied to Rhea and Sushant. An NCB team will now conduct an inquiry and people involved will be questioned." Kangana has been

actively sharing her views in the case of Sushant's death for long. Recently, she hailed the Supreme Court verdict on handing over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Sushant was found dead in his Bandra flat on June 14. The post-mortem report concluded he died by suicide. The probe was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court, after it upheld the validity of a first information report (FIR) lodged by Bihar Police in response to a complaint filed by Rajput's father, KK Singh.

## FIR against Rhea Chakraborty over drug probe in Sushant Rajput case

**The development comes after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which is probing the money laundering angle, wrote to the NCB that during their investigation they found that drug was supplied to Rhea and Sushant.**

(News Agencies)- In the Sushant Singh Rajput case, the Narcotics Control Bureau has registered an FIR against Rhea Chakraborty and others after reports emerged that drugs were supplied to her and the late actor. The case was registered under sections 20, 22, 27 and 29 of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, which makes possessing, selling of drugs a crime.

The other people named in the FIR are: Rhea's brother Showik, her talent manager Jaya Saha, Sushant Singh Rajput's former manager Shruti Modi and Gaurav Arya.

The NCB is the latest agency to be drawn into the case, which is already being investigated by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate.

The FIR was filed after the Enforcement Directorate sent a letter to the NCB asking the agency to join the probe.

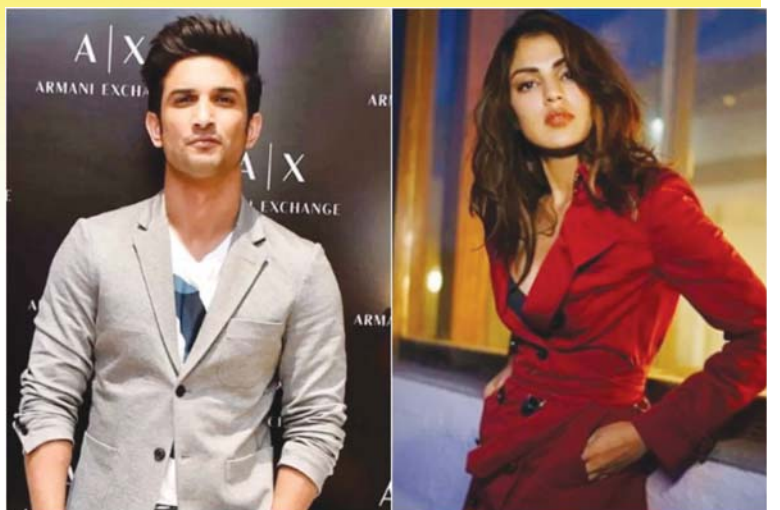
Rakesh Asthana, the NCB director, confirmed that an FIR was filed. "We received a letter from the ED on Tuesday evening stating that during their probe into financial aspects they found that drugs were supplied to Rhea and Sushant. An NCB team will now conduct an inquiry and people involved will be

questioned," said Asthana.

The NCB has been roped in by the ED to probe if drugs were supplied to Rhea Chakraborty and Sushant Singh Rajput.

ED sources said that during their questioning of Jaya Saha, Rhea's talent manager, they found some conversation between them about drugs.

However, none of the three agencies provided any details into the form of drug or if it was consumed by any of the persons involved in the case. Satish Maneshinde, senior counsel and Rhea's lawyer, said, "Rhea has never consumed drugs in her lifetime. She's ready for a blood



test any time." Meanwhile, the ED has once again called Jaya Saha to its South Mumbai office for questioning. On day 6 of the probe, the CBI continued to question the late actor's cook Neeraj Singh, roommate and creative manager Siddharth Pithani at the DRDO guest house in Santacruz (East).

Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead in his Bandra flat on June 14. The post-mortem report concluded he died by suicide. The probe was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court court after it upheld the validity of an FIR filed by the Bihar police in response to a complaint filed by Rajput's father, KK Singh.

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# Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

**FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW:** If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have it, follow the steps below to help protect other people in your home and community.

## Stay home except to get medical care

- **Stay home:** People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Do not leave, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency.
- **Avoid public transportation:** Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.



## Separate yourself from other people in your home, this is known as home isolation

- **Stay away from others:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific “sick room” and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Limit contact with pets & animals:** You should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.
  - Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more information is known.
  - When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick with COVID-19. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.



## Call ahead before visiting your doctor

- **Call ahead:** If you have a medical appointment, call your doctor’s office or emergency department, and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.



## Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office.
- **If you are caring for others:** If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. When caregivers enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask. Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.



## Cover your coughs and sneezes

- **Cover:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Dispose:** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.
- **Wash hands:** Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



## Clean your hands often

- **Wash hands:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Hand sanitizer:** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Soap and water:** Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching:** Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



## Avoid sharing personal household items

- **Do not share:** Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.



# 'Can't have one nation-one political party system': Mamata after seven CMs meet

**Banerjee and Congress' interim president Sonia Gandhi jointly convened the meeting which went on for two hours. Significantly, Gandhi asked Banerjee to conduct it.**

India seems to be moving towards a one nation-one political party system, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee quipped on Wednesday afternoon, minutes after conducting a virtual meeting of chief ministers from seven non-Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled states.

"Let us forget which party is ruling a particular state. To save democracy, we have to unite," Banerjee said without naming the BJP, her main threat in poll-bound Bengal. She alleged that the Centre is taking policy decisions unilaterally and thrusting those on the states without consultation.

"All the chief ministers

complained that they are facing intimidation. Central (probe) agencies are being used. The states are being financially deprived," Banerjee said at the state secretariat after the meeting.

Banerjee and Congress' interim president Sonia Gandhi jointly convened the meeting which went on for two hours. Significantly, Gandhi asked Banerjee to conduct it.

Though the demand for postponement of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) was the primary cause, the meeting's agenda went far beyond.

Gandhi, who opened the discussion, said the states were

facing a lot of problems because of the policies of the Centre. She referred to the rise in fuel prices, arrears in the states' share of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), disinvestment in public sector enterprises, privatisation of airports and several other issues. Besides Banerjee, others who took part in the meeting were Uddhav Thackeray from Maharashtra, Amarinder Singh from Punjab, Hemant Soren from Jharkhand, Bhupesh Baghel from Chhattisgarh, V Narayanasamy from Puducherry and Ashok Gehlot from Rajasthan. Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan could not attend.

This was the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic started that chief ministers of non-BJP ruled



states spoke out against Central policies from a common platform. Asked by the media whether the meeting was a precursor to a united movement for bargaining with the Centre, Banerjee said, "Words such as blackmailing or bargaining do not apply here. We are talking about the problems of the common man. It's been a long time since we got our share of the GST that is collected from the state. We are not getting financial aid for combating the Covid-19 pandemic."

"The Centre is disinvesting shares in public sector units at random but we are not supposed to talk about the interests of the people. The role of the states and the Centre in our federal structure has been clearly defined by the Constitution. Under the current circumstances, a conflict between the Centre and the states is inevitable. That will be harmful. We don't want it. Only strong states can make a strong Centre. Let us work for a united India," said Banerjee.

## Cyber police stations to be set up in each range headquarters of Chhattisgarh

The new cyber police stations will not only help the department in building capacity to tackle cyber crimes but will also help in strengthening cyber infrastructure, senior police officials said.

To deal effectively with increasing cyber crime in the state, Chhattisgarh police has planned to set up five cyber police stations at each range headquarters.

According to the Chhattisgarh police records; there has been an increase in the reporting of cybercrime over the years. In 2019, a total of 237 offences were registered while 255

offences have already been registered till July of 2020.

The new cyber police stations will not only help the department in building capacity to tackle cyber crimes but will also help in strengthening cyber infrastructure, senior police officials said.

"These newly notified police stations will start functioning as soon as the state government sanctions the required new (technical) posts. Currently, cyber cells are functional in each district headquarters," said senior IPS officer and in-charge of police

planning and traffic, RK Vij.

"Cyber criminals have been found mostly to use social engineering tools, like, fraudulently asking bank account holders to reveal their credit/debit cards details, alluring online users to deposit some amount or provide bank details to withdraw award/lottery money, blocking of Aadhaar card etc. Unfortunately, people fall into their trap despite various warnings issued by banks and the police department and people lose their money in no time," Vij said.

Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh police's technical section has already



issued some standard operation procedures (SOPs) which assist the field staff in investigating various cyber crimes, including online pornography and financial fraud.

The technical cyber forensic lab of Police Headquarters (PHQ) is also the state nodal agency to co-ordinate with the Cyber Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs and NCRB.

## Kangana Ranaut says she was exposed to 'sinister world and drugs, debauchery' at film parties as NCB joins Sushant Singh Rajput probe

Actor Kangana Ranaut has responded to the news of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) joining the ongoing investigation into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, saying that "many A listers will be behind bars" if the NCB "enters Bollywood".

Kangana tweeted Wednesday evening, "If Narcotics Control Bureau enters Bollywood, many A listers will be behind bars, if blood tests are conducted many shocking revelations will

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She added in another tweet, "I was still a minor my mentor turned tormentor used to spike my drinks and sedate me to prevent me from going to cops, when I became successful and got entry in to the most famous film parties I was exposed to the most



A day after speculations of NCB joining the probe, NCB director Rakesh Asthana said in a

shocking and sinister world and drugs,debauchery and mafia." statement, "We received a letter from ED on Tuesday evening, stating that during their probe into the financial aspects, they found that drug was supplied to Rhea and Sushant. An NCB team will now conduct an inquiry and people involved will be questioned." Kangana has been actively sharing her views in the case of Sushant's death for long. Recently, she

hailed the Supreme Court verdict on handing over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Sushant was found dead in his Bandra flat on June 14. The post-mortem report concluded he died by suicide. The probe was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court, after it upheld the validity of a first information report (FIR) lodged by Bihar Police in response to a complaint filed by Rajput's father, KK Singh.

# BJP to bank on PM Modi's development plank to fight TMC in Bengal polls

*Even though the party has started a concerted campaign to highlight what it alleges is the "misrule" of the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government; the party has opted to proceed with PM Modi as the face of the election.*

To take on the Mamata Banerjee government in the state assembly polls next year, the BJP will rely on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development agenda" as a poll plank, said persons aware of the details. Even though the party has started a concerted campaign to highlight what it alleges is the "misrule" of the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government; the party has opted to proceed with PM Modi as the face of the election. This is not the first time that the BJP has refrained from naming the chief ministerial candidate; though in states where it seeks re-election it usually prefers leading with the incumbent as it did in Madhya Pradesh with Shivraj Singh Chouhan and in Haryana with Manohar Lal Khattar.

A senior party functionary in the state said, it is too soon to suggest a CM candidate and the party will leave it to the

leadership in Delhi to take a call on the issue.

"The focus right now is the misrule and the governance failures of the TMC. Party cadres have been instructed to create awareness across the state about the benefits they will stand to gain if the BJP forms government. A scheme like Ayushman Bharat that has changed the healthcare delivery is not allowed in Bengal, there is widespread violence and lack of development," the functionary said.

While the BJP is resting its hopes on PM Modi's popularity with the masses to help them wade through the choppy waters of electioneering in the state where the party has traditionally found little support, there are concerns about the cohesion in the party unit itself.

Differences between state unit leaders have surfaced and the national leadership has had to intervene more than once.

More recently, statements made by state in charge Kailash Vijayvargiya that the state unit will contest under the leadership of Modi were perceived as a snub to former governor of Meghalaya Tathagata Roy, who has expressed his desire to re-join the party as a full-time worker. "There are many claimants to the CM's post and there are differences between the party unit chief Dilip Ghosh and some of the team members. The central leadership has had to step in to bury differences," said the functionary quoted above.

Roy, who had earlier served as the governor of Tripura and the party president of the West Bengal unit, has been vocal about joining the party full time after his gubernatorial term came to an end this month.

He however said that while he is eager to serve the party in the state of West Bengal he leaves it to the party high command to choose the role in which he can



contribute. "It is not for me to decide what role I should have in the party since I am just about to enter the party. It is for the party leadership, the president and the observers to decide. But what I have made plain is that I am prepared to shoulder any responsibility that the party gives me. I will turn 75 next month and if the party holds that I am too old for any kind of active post so be it. If the party decides that I am physically fit then also so be it. Meanwhile, there is enough scope for me to work in the party in different capacities," Roy said. He also brushed aside claims that differences have surfaced in the state unit ever since he expressed his intention to join the

party. "There is no party in the country which is free from any kind of internal differences and different parties manage them in different ways. For instance, the communists keep it under wraps and you get to know it only when the party splits. The Congress handles it by allowing everyone to say anything at the public forum. You find five different people saying five different things in the media. The Trinamool Congress handles it by throwing bombs at each other. As opposed to that we have internal dissensions too but we handle them well by arguing among ourselves, by talking it through and ultimately by the Central leadership.

## India formally writes to UN on Pakistan's false claim of making statement in Security Council

*India on Monday exposed Pakistan's litany of lies it peddled in the UN after Islamabad's UN envoy claimed to have given a statement in the Security Council meeting that was not open to non-members of the 15-nation UN body.*

India has formally written to the United Nations about Pakistan's false claim of making a statement in a Security Council meeting on terrorism, which was not open to non-Council members.

India on Monday exposed Pakistan's litany of lies it peddled in the UN after Islamabad's UN envoy claimed to have given a statement in the Security Council meeting that was not open to non-members of the 15-nation UN body. India has now formally written to the UN and put on record about Pakistan's claim that it had made a statement in the Council, which is false.

India on Monday had put out a strong point-by-point rebuttal of the remarks that Pakistan said it made to

the Security Council meeting. The Pakistan Mission falsely claimed that its UN envoy Munir Akram had given a statement at the Security Council debate on Report of the Secretary General on Threats to International Peace and Security posed by Terrorism Actions. However, the Security Council meeting on threats to international peace and security was not open to non-members of the Council.

A photograph of the meeting tweeted by the German Mission to the UN showed only envoys of the 15 Security Council members participating in the meeting. Pakistan is not a member of the Council.

"We have seen a statement put out by the

Pakistan Mission to the UN, claiming that these remarks were made by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan at the UN Security Council.

"We fail to comprehend where exactly did the Permanent Representative of Pakistan make his statement since the Security Council session today was not open to non-members. Be that as it may, the five big lies of Pakistan lies exposed," India's Permanent Mission to the UN had said. Calling out Pakistan's lie that it has been a target of cross-border terrorism for decades, India had said "a lie repeated a hundred times will not become truth. The biggest sponsor of cross-border terrorism



against India now tries to masquerade itself as a victim of terrorism by India," India's Mission to the UN had said on Monday. On Akram's claim that Pakistan has decimated al-Qaeda from the region, India said perhaps the Permanent Representative of Pakistan is "not aware that Osama bin Laden was hiding in their own country in plain sight, and it is the US forces which got him

inside Pakistan. Nor have they heard their Prime Minister refer to Osama bin Laden as a martyr." Giving a strong rebuttal to Pakistan's lies, New Delhi termed Pakistan's claim that India has hired terrorists as mercenaries to hit them as "laughable". "Coming from a country which is a known sponsor of cross-border terrorism which has made the world suffer due to its actions, this claim is nothing short

of being preposterous!", India said, adding that Pakistan is home to the largest number of terrorists proscribed by the UN and many of the sanctioned terrorists and entities continue to operate with impunity inside Pakistan. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan himself had admitted at the General Assembly last year about the presence of 40,000-50,000 terrorists inside Pakistan.

# Adani Joins Ambani In Attempting Full-On Dominance

Two years ago, India rolled out a laudable plan to unlock the capital trapped in some of its smaller airports. But the actual outcome from privatization was less than reassuring: All six airfields put on the block went to one bidder.

If that wasn't enough, multiple media reports now say that Ahmedabad, Gujarat-based billionaire Gautam Adani, an early and enthusiastic supporter of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, might also succeed in taking control of the already-privatized Mumbai airport, as well as a new one coming up on the financial center's outskirts.

Airports are natural monopolies. To have one private owner controlling eight or more - a fresh batch of six will soon go under the hammer - can't possibly be great news for airlines, fliers, or businesses operating from the premises.

More worryingly, the concentration of economic power in aviation infrastructure is now symptomatic of a broader trend in India, particularly in businesses where the government supplies a key ingredient, such as telecom spectrum.

The splashy 2016 entry of tycoon Mukesh Ambani in 4G mobile

was a huge boon. The richest Indian single-handedly crushed data charges for customers to 9 cents a gigabyte, the lowest in the world. But a field that once boasted a dozen players is now effectively a duopoly. The fate of a third service will be decided by a court order about how much time Vodafone Idea Ltd. has to pay its share of the \$19 billion demanded by the government from telecom firms as past dues. If Mr Ambani's vision of a carriage, content and commerce triple play is sexy enough to attract investment from the likes of Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google, Mr Adani's ambition of owning ports, airports, railway tracks, power plants and energy distribution utilities, is humdrum but lucrative.

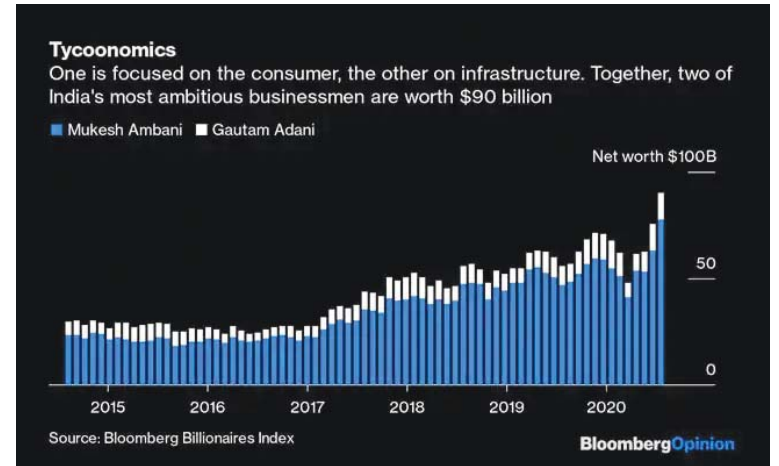
The worry is that dominance by a handful of capitalists may not leave enough space for others. But then, who's even ready or willing to compete, especially in sectors where state policy has a big role in determining winners? Barring some notable exceptions, the Indian business class is overextended, trapped in the debris of assets created with the help of syndicated loans from pliant state-run banks. Politicians even have a name for it: phone

banking, where they make the calls and tell bankers to whom to give loans.

It's impossible to carry on this way. After the Covid-19 disruption, government-owned Indian banks will require as much as \$28 billion in external capital over two years to raise their loss provisions on bad loans to 70 per cent and double credit growth from last fiscal year's abysmal 4 per cent, according to Moody's Investors Service. Much of this money will have to come from a government that can't keep a lid on its borrowing costs. A sharp, private credit-fueled recovery for the economy appears to be out of the question.

That's probably why policy makers are resigned to letting whoever has any financing muscles take what they can. There are antitrust laws, but they're being used to investigate discounting practices of Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc.-owned Flipkart, even though their share of overall retail is minuscule. Tax laws have been used to hound startups.

Courts, which can enforce fair and stable relations between the state and business, are adding to the confusion by asking if banks have a claim on airwaves



- a sovereign asset - held by insolvent telcos. Who'll lend for 5G networks when such basic issues in creditor rights are undecided?

To top it all, the pandemic and badly soured relations with China provide ample cover for an isolationist campaign of economic self-reliance, which can be used by tycoons to charge local customers more. Adani won the bids for six airports fair and square, but then used Covid-19 to negotiate for extra time to take over three of them. However, when it came to winning the Mumbai terminal from GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd., its liquidity-strapped current owner, disruption to travel doesn't seem to have damped the group's eagerness. Abu

Dhabi Investment Authority and PSP Investments, a Canadian pension fund, were separately talking to GVK about a deal. They have written letters to the Indian government, asking for a transparent transaction, the Economic Times has reported. India's 2016 adoption of a modern bankruptcy law raised hopes that global capital would have an equal chance to take productive assets out of weak hands. The expectation was that the government would follow the Australian asset-recycling model to pay for \$1 trillion worth of new infrastructure. But with insolvency courts temporarily shut to new cases, and so many airports going to one buyer, it's unclear if foreigners' ardor will endure.

## The poisoning of critic who exposed Putin regime's corruption

Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny was flown to Berlin Saturday morning. He was in a coma after suddenly falling ill on a flight from the Siberian city of Tomsk to Moscow. Physicians in Berlin confirmed the poisoning of yet another Putin critic, and I very much hope not to lose another brave colleague in the fight against Putin's deadly mafia regime.

Navalny came to prominence as an anti-corruption blogger, using investigation techniques and public documents to expose the incredible scale of looting perpetrated by Russia's ruling elite. He went on YouTube with photos of the spectacular yachts and mansions owned by Russian politicians with modest salaries. Earlier this year, he said that the new prime minister and his family owned \$45 million in properties, even as the Kremlin disputed the source of income. He branded Putin's

United Russia forever as "the party of crooks and thieves." This wasn't the traditional model of opposition figures like Boris Nemtsov and me and our grand rhetoric about democracy and freedom. It was local and concrete-and it worked. The corruption theme struck a chord, especially with young Russians who never knew the Soviet Union and weren't motivated by ideology. But they knew they were being ripped off, and they were empowered by Navalny and his team's use of budget documents and investigative know-how to expose Putin's gang for what they are. He brought a new, young crowd to our coalition movement's a decade ago.

Of course, Navalny's success and popularity put a target on his back, as well as everyone in his family and on his team. He exposed corruption, the lifeblood of Putin's mafia.

Navalny has been arrested over a dozen times, attacked with a chemical that left him with permanent eye damage, and his family's bank accounts have been frozen. His brother was jailed in what was widely seen as a politically motivated case, his group's offices are routinely raided, as are the homes of his staff, even those of their parents and in-laws. That's how mafias work.

But Navalny avoided the worst, at least until now. He wasn't jailed for the long sentences others suffered, or gunned down like prominent investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya and Boris Nemtsov. He didn't fall out of a window like so many Russians seem to do-or go into exile like I did. The impression was that the Putin regime was wary of making a martyr of the popular Navalny, that they preferred to harass



him and limit the damage. That uneasy equilibrium ended in agony on Thursday, when Navalny fell violently ill. It may have been something in his tea, but Russian agents have great experience with various methods of delivering toxins. This is the way of dictatorships, of Putin's in particular, of steady escalation. And please don't insult my intelligence with theories about rogue elements in a KGB-style dictatorship who may be responsible. As with everything

from election interference in the UK and US to a global assassination campaign, no one in Russia would risk attacking such a high-profile target without approval from the very top. Nor was this a trivial operation. It required real-time information, resources and expertise. The heavy involvement of security forces at the Omsk hospital Navalny was first brought to also suggested direct regime involvement.



# Republican Convention proves Trump TV can be quite a show

The star of "The Apprentice" and what could be called "West Wing: The Reality Show" did something all the Hollywood liberals couldn't do. In true Andy Hardy style, he put on a show. And what a show! For three straight nights this week the Republican National Convention has topped its Democratic counterpart held last week. But unlike the Democrats, Republicans didn't blame America - they celebrated it with pride. Trump moved us with the site of five immigrants becoming American citizens in a White House ceremony. He took time to congratulate each in turn. Short videos honored American history. One told the story of how our national anthem was written during the defense of Fort McHenry from British forces during the War of 1812. Mike Pence accepted the vice-presidential nomination for reelection at the historic site. Another video highlighted the history of women's right to vote. It reminded the audience that when Susan B. Anthony registered, she "voted for every Republican on the ballot."

The third night of the Republican Convention celebrated heroes, but was clearly geared toward getting women to vote for Trump. Among the many heroes was White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany. She described how she had a preventative double mastectomy. She reflected on how Trump had stood by her in what was one of many truly compelling personal anecdotes about Trump the man. Every single night of the GOP convention has soared, mixing fact-checks on the media coronavirus narrative with inspiring stories of our nation. The successful convention left the crestfallen and angry anti-Trump media trying to snark or distract, unable to change the topic successfully. No one can deny that the Republican Convention had better production values and more compelling speeches than the Democratic Convention, along with some outstanding high points. Every single night of the GOP gathering has featured the true diversity of the Republican Party - the diversity the left-wing media hide from readers and viewers because they can't stand to discuss it. Monday night included former South Carolina Gov. and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley telling her personal story growing up as an Indian-American. "I was a brown girl in a black-and-white world," she explained as she slammed the media theme on race. "America is not a racist country," she declared proudly. Haley was followed with an amazing performance by Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., who is an African American. He told his compelling history of success. "My family went from cotton to Congress in one

lifetime," he said in one of the most memorable lines of the convention.

Tuesday night culminated in an enthralling speech by first lady Melania Trump telling of her immigrant experience. She joined in the compelling theme of hope.

"It is in times like this that we will look back and tell our grandchildren that through kindness and compassion, strength and determination, we were able to restore the promise of our future," Mrs. Trump said in accented English that was promptly mocked by the Hollywood elite. Actress Bette Midler slammed Mrs. Trump as an "illegal alien." "Oh, God. She still can't speak English," Midler wrote. After that sparked a firestorm of criticism for Midler, she tweeted: "I was wrong to make fun of her accent."

On Wednesday night Vice President Mike Pence took time in his speech to acknowledge the threat to Gulf Coast states from Hurricane Laura. "Stay safe, and know that we'll be with you every step of the way to support, rescue, response and recovery in the days and weeks ahead," he promised. The convention highs were more than just big names. There were ominous warnings of the dangers to America's shining city on the hill. Not from veteran politicians, but from the ordinary men and women who live, strive and try to survive. Cuban American businessman Maximo Alvarez cautioned Americans about communism in a heart-wrenching speech. "I'm speaking to you today because I have seen people like this before. I've seen movements like these before," he said about the left. Mark and Patricia McCloskey told the harrowing story of what can happen to anyone who tries to defend a home against the mob. Covington High School teen Nicholas Sandmann told what it was like to endure "cancel culture." And Maryland Republican congressional candidate Kim Klacik, an African American woman, entranced viewers by describing how Democratic politicians have done a terrible job running cities like Baltimore. "Black people don't have to vote Democrat," she said, repeating a convention theme. The Democrats were front-and-center with big names from Hollywood at their convention. Actresses Eva Longoria, Tracee Ellis Ross, Kerry Washington and Julia Louis-Dreyfus emceed. This was a reminder that Hollywood is the face of the Democratic Party. That wasn't the case for the GOP. Trump turned to old reliables - "two producers of 'The Apprentice,'" according to The New York Times. Add in former NBC executive Chuck LaBella, who worked on producing a TV roast of Trump.

By Dan Gainor

## The myth of inner party democracy

In the aftermath of the "letter bomb" in the Congress that didn't quite explode, there has been much angst over the apparent lack of inner party democracy in the party. "Family-run proprietorship" is a charge often made to describe the Congress' obsession with the Gandhis. In the 51 years since Indira Gandhi split the Congress, a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family has controlled this "new" Congress for all but seven years. To that extent, the charge of being a dynastic party is valid. But does that also mean that the Congress is less "democratic" than its principal rivals? Not quite. Take, for example, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). When did the BJP hold an open election to the post of president or while choosing its prime ministerial nominee? When Rajnath Singh finished his term in 2014, Amit Shah was unanimously "selected" as the BJP chief, no questions asked. He was, after all, the most trusted aide of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. When Shah stepped down in 2019, JP Nadda was again "selected" as party chief simply because he was the most convenient; an affable leader with no mass base who would not rock the boat. While he undoubtedly had the support of the party cadre, the fact is that the decision to elevate Modi was made at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) headquarters in Nagpur, before being rubber-stamped at a BJP parliamentary board meeting in September 2013. When party patriarch LK Advani chose to voice his dissent at the anointment, he was pushed into the marg darshak mandal, a clear signal that no challenge would be tolerated. Sonia Gandhi, by contrast, as the Gandhi family

"bahu" is an obvious beneficiary of the dynastic principle. But while she took over the Congress in a "bloodless coup" from Sitaram Kesri in 1998, she did go through at least the ritual of a contested "election" where she defeated senior party leader, Jitendra Prasad. That Prasad had challenged her leadership didn't prevent his son, Jitin, from becoming a minister in the United Progressive Alliance government subsequently. Even Sharad Pawar, who was forced to quit the Congress after confronting Sonia Gandhi on the foreign origins issue, soon became a valuable ally. Even now, Sonia has claimed that she bears "no ill will" against the letter writers. In comparison, it would seem that there is less space for dissenters to play an active role within the BJP. In the 1970s, when a Jan Sangh stalwart like Balraj Madhok took on the Vajpayee-Advani duopoly, he was banished from the party forever. When Govindacharya, the charismatic Hindutva ideologue, allegedly described the then PM Vajpayee as a "mukhauta" (mask), he was stripped off all party posts and forced into virtual oblivion. In more recent times, all BJP leaders from Gujarat belonging to anti-Modi factions have been downsized or removed. Can anyone in the BJP dare even write a letter today that obliquely questions the PM's style of leadership and expect to survive, much less be heard in party fora? Has there been any vigorous debate within the BJP over the last six years on any crucial issues of national concern, be it demonetisation or Kashmir, or is the party now totally subservient to the PM's office?



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# Biden will stay the course with India

*He will deepen the partnership. Domestic Indian issues are unlikely to derail bilateral ties*

Dhruva Jaishankar

So many major issues appear to be at stake in this November's elections in the United States (US) - the recovery from Covid-19, race relations, unemployment, US-China competition, the composition of the Supreme Court - that Washington's largely cooperative relations with India should normally be but an afterthought. But that did not prevent the Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, his running mate Kamala Harris, and several senior campaign advisers from participating in a virtual event on August 15 dedicated to India and Indian-Americans. While similar events had been held for other countries and constituencies, the content of the speeches and profile of the speakers were significant. The message was essentially two-fold: First, a Biden administration would look to preserve and further deepen the relationship with India and, second, that it would be particularly inclusive of Indian-Americans.

Although Biden is a veteran of the American foreign policy establishment, there had been

questions about his campaign's approach towards India amid competing priorities. In his August 15 address, Biden described the relationship with India as a "special bond" and recalled his role in securing the passage of the India-US civil nuclear agreement as a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He pledged to continue "standing with India in confronting the threats it faces in its own region and along its border," while also working with India to expand trade, tackle global challenges such as the climate crisis, and strengthen democracy. In his words, he hoped for an "honest conversation about all issues as close friends".

Biden's top foreign policy adviser Tony Blinken similarly highlighted the Obama-Biden administration's "significant progress in strengthening relations between our countries," including the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), the Major Defense Partner status for India to be treated on a par with close allies, and cooperation on the Paris Climate Agreement.

"There's probably no common global challenge we can solve without India," he argued. By contrast, Blinken said, Trump's approach to India has been "basically full of photo-ops and short on actual real demonstrable progress."

The broad theme of building a more cooperative partnership with India is consistent with statements that Biden and his advisers have made elsewhere. For example, in an article in Foreign Affairs published in March, Biden effectively promised to build upon Trump's approach to the Indo-Pacific. He argued that the US needed to work with democratic friends beyond North America and Europe, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, India, and Indonesia, "to advance shared values in a region that will determine the United States' future." In his policy platform - articulated in a document called "Joe Biden's Agenda for the Indian American Community" - Biden pledged to "work with India to support a rules-based and stable Indo-Pacific region in which no country, including China, is able to threaten its



neighbors with impunity." Biden's outreach to Indian-Americans, and articulation of priorities concerning India, suggest that the differences between Democrats and Republicans are not as wide on strategic relations with India as they are on most other issues. As an incumbent, Donald Trump's approach to India during a second-term is already somewhat discernible, or at least as discernible as possible for a leader known for his inconsistency. More favourably disposed following his visit to India earlier this year, Trump would be expected to continue to deepen the US strategic partnership with India as part of his administration's Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy. This would potentially translate into even closer security

coordination, deeper technological cooperation, and increased military interoperability, as part of several efforts that are currently underway.

Instead, the differences between Republicans and Democrats of relevance to India would manifest themselves more in bilateral ties. Biden has spoken in favour of greater two-way trade, cooperation on global health and the climate crisis, and improvements in immigration policies. He has also underscored the importance of democracy and pluralism, as part of a cemented partnership between the two countries. By contrast, a second Trump administration would be likely to redouble efforts at eliminating trade deficits and restricting immigration.

## Yes, some people are moving to the suburbs. But cities are far from dead



Robert Reffkin

Robert Reffkin is founder and CEO of Compass, a technology-powered real estate company. The opinions expressed in this commentary are his own. While some people are saying that New York City is dead, I have full conviction that the future of New York is bright. I live here. I work here. I'm raising my family here. Like Jerry Seinfeld wrote in his op-ed earlier this week, I strongly believe that New York will be back. I'm betting on New York

City, and I even bought a home here -- after Covid hit.

I love cities. More than two decades ago, I moved to New York, like so many others, because of the diversity, community, culture, energy and opportunity it offers. Cities make me feel like anything is possible. And I am not alone. In fact, I have some good news to share about cities across the country. After analyzing our real-estate search and transaction data from more than 17,000 Compass

real estate agents in over 150 communities across the country, it's clear that American cities across the country aren't dead. In fact, the real estate markets in most American cities are booming.

Yes, you read that right.

Home prices grew in 96% of metro areas in the second quarter of 2020, according to the National Association of Realtors.

There is a remarkable amount of sales growth for metropolitan areas in the middle of a global pandemic. Looking at our data on the number of home-purchase contracts signed from mid-July through mid-August, compared to the year prior, Los Angeles County is up 29%, Boston's Suffolk County and Texas' Dallas County are both up 49%, and Chicago's Cook County is up 80%.

Now, it's true that home sales in the nearby suburban counties have increased even more than

these metropolitan areas, but that doesn't change the fact that the cities themselves are still seeing a major surge in sales. And many of the suburban purchases we're seeing are actually second homes, with the buyer keeping their city home as well.

This underscores how remarkable this downturn is: Most periods of spiking unemployment and economic stress lead people to move less, but this downturn has inspired many people to make a move. Our New York City real estate agents at Compass are seeing increases in sales activity for two very different types of listings: those above \$20 million and those below \$2 million. This tells me that very wealthy and savvy investors are seeing an opportunity to make a big bet on New York, while people who previously could not afford to buy in the city are taking advantage

of something that New York City has not had in a very, very long time: slightly more affordable housing prices.

Why are people moving to cities right now? Compass agents are hearing all the reasons that people always move: because the energy and vibrancy of a city is where they feel most at home, because they want to realize their professional dreams, because they've gotten married and want to move in together, because grandparents want to be closer to a new grandchild or any number of other reasons.

But during the pandemic there have been some new twists.

New homeowners can't get closer than six feet to the millions of others who share their streets and neighborhoods. They may need more room to be able to work from home. They often rely on family members to lend a hand caring for children or the elderly.

# 'Delhi Riots 2020': Bloomsbury Row Is Not Suppression Of Freedom Of Expression, But Victory Of It

Imaad ul Hasan

"Having different opinions is acceptable in democracy, but the two ways of viewing that issue can't be that one follows Indian Constitution and one does not", said senior BJP leader Bhupendra Yadav who was the guest of honour at the launch of the book 'Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story'. At the very beginning of the launch on a video conference, Yadav said, "You have to decide to follow India's Constitution, its institutions and its elections. The so-called 'Urban Naxals' and jihadis are weakening this theory of 'Indianness', which is very well put in this book."

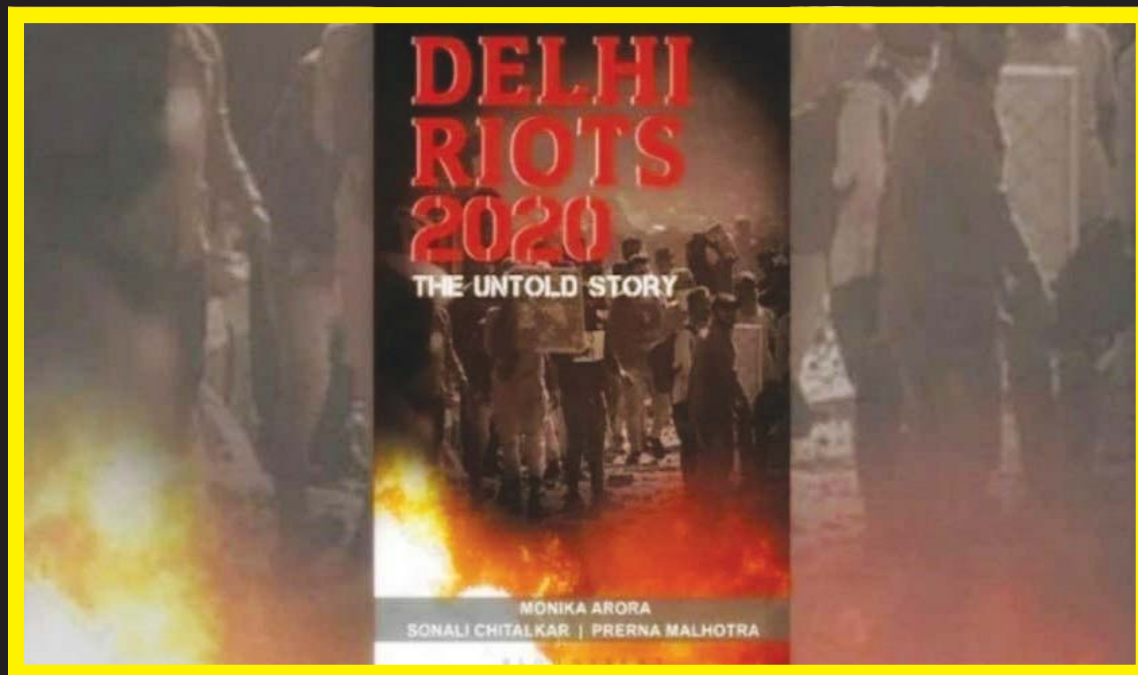
Another guest of honour present on this online panel was Kapil Mishra, who is accused of inciting the riots on which the book is based. Around the time of the riots in February, two of Mishra's videos went viral. In one of the videos, he rejected to follow India's Constitution and its institutions by threatening a police officer to take law in his own hands, and in the other, he said the Delhi Assembly election was about India vs Pakistan. In several other videos, he is seen calling anti-CAA protest sites as 'mini Pakistans' - implying that Muslims are not Indian.

As the book was withdrawn by Bloomsbury, liberals came to be bashed by a section of people.

In a recent piece in Outlook, Anand Neelankantan wrote that Indian liberals are neither liberal nor Indian. After Bloomsbury decided to withdraw the book, many people have accused liberals of being intolerant and suppressing freedom of expression. Many who identify themselves as liberals have also argued that it should not have been censored.

What they fail to understand is that few citizens peacefully tweeting their logical criticism and a publisher withdrawing the book is not banning or censoring. It is, in fact, a healthy democratic exercise. More importantly, a group launching a book that can incite violence and unrest through its misinformation -

**When the peaceful, powerless, unorganised citizens show concern about organised propaganda of hate, it is their duty as Indians to do so.**



which it is seriously accused of doing in the past - is hate speech and not freedom of expression. After declaring that liberals, who he doesn't agree with, are not Indians, Mr. Neelankantan describes in detail how they are extremely intolerant with an opposing view.

Far from suppressing freedom speech, the withdrawing of 'Delhi Riots 2020' by Bloomsbury is a victory of freedom of expression in India. When the entire state machinery is busy curbing any form of dissent, when the TV news media has largely turned into hate speech platform to threaten the views against ruling dispensation, one can clearly say there is no level playing field.

Even on online platforms, the organised social media armies are made to attack, threaten and abuse any form of opposition. And when platforms like Facebook are found complicit in supporting the government, even if it means ignoring incitement of violence, one has to admit the achievement of liberals in making their voice heard in a hostile environment. Similarly, in the film industry, the ones critical of the government - most of whom are outsiders - are maliciously targeted and asked to fall in line in the garb of fighting against nepotism and for justice to a lost life.

When activists, students, professors, journalists, writers, and poets are continuously arrested on baseless and laughable charges, it is called suppressing of freedom of

expression. When citizens ask a publisher about the authenticity of a sensitive work, it is called exercising moral responsibility. When the journalists of Caravan were attacked while doing a story on the Delhi riots, it is called blocking their right to bring out the truth. When the peaceful, powerless, unorganised citizens show concern about organised propaganda of hate, it is their duty as an Indian.

**Content of the Book and Views of Its Writers:**

Many people have argued that just because Kapil Mishra and the OplIndia team -- responsible for spreading fake news during the riots -- were invited to the book launch event, how could one be sure that the book also contained hate speech. That argument may hold some truth in it. In fact, most of us didn't know much about the authors. But the book launch event, which happened a few minutes before Bloomsbury announced its withdrawal, is enough to clear any doubts. The event that lasted more than two hours was all about hate speech and misinformation.

Prerna Malhotra, a Professor at Delhi University, was one of the writers of the book to speak in the panel. In an animated oratory style of a seasoned politician, she straight away declared, "I would like to tell you that Delhi riots were an organised conspiracy of the left lobby and Islamic fundamentalists." "It was a result of the mindset of this

alliance between Urban Naxals and jihadis," she continued while referring to a paper or a screen, "Delhi riots were not riots but a first of its kind Maoist type urban warfare in India."

The second writer Sonali Chitalkar proudly said that this book takes a stand, but it takes a stand against Islamic jihadists and Urban Naxals. At this point I had lost count for the number of times 'jihadi' and 'Urban Naxals' were used. But Sonali soon thanked Vivek Agnohitri for introducing us with this term. Vivek was also one of the guests of honour. According to his own interpretation, the list of Urban Naxals is endless and vague. This term introduced by him was also used for anti-CAA protestors by the Home Minister as well as the Prime Minister. However, in an RTI application filed by India Today, Home Ministry has said that it does not have any information about who Urban Naxals are.

Nupur Sharma, the editor of OplIndia, focused on proving how it was an anti-Hindu riot. Her speech was packed with misinformation ranging from statements like student activist Ladeeda giving an open call for Jihad to referring Kapil Mishra as Kapil Sharma.

After adding some more fake news about the riots and Shaheen Bagh, which have been busted many times over the months, the last speaker and writer of this book, Monica Arora finally addressed the elephant in

the room. Monica defended Kapil Mishra's infamous hate speech and said she would have said the same thing; in fact, anyone would have said the same thing when 'such goons block roads'.

This is exactly why the liberals protested the publication of this book. It is not only whitewashing but also justifying the hate crimes and is blaming the violence on peaceful protestors and students without any substantial proof.

Several people have questioned why someone should protest without reading the book. Some speakers have discussed its content briefly and it does look problematic. Here is roughly the list of chapters given by Monica Arora. 1) Introduction, 2) Theory of Urban Naxalism and Jihadism, 3) Citizenship Amendment Act, 4) Violence in University like Jamia, 5) Shaheen Bagh Model, 6) Riots in northeast Delhi, 7) Conclusion, 8) Ground stories and narratives of victims, And 5) annexure.

Shifting the Overton Window: Maybe perceiving this book and Kapil Mishra's presence as just 'another opinion' is the result of normalising hate. And lack of general opposition could be the reason why calling it out is now perceived as bullying.

Normalisation of such hate has shifted the 'Overton Window' so much to the right that the unthinkable is now accepted. When Mr. Neelankantan says that the rise of militant Hindutva owes a lot to the Indian liberals, it seems similar to the entire logic of all panellists on Delhi riots. This week, two news stories were widely discussed - The Facebook-BJP hate speech controversy and the Bombay HC's remark on Tableeghi Jamaat's media coverage. Facebook is also held accountable in the past for allowing the organized hate speech to flourish in Myanmar which resulted in Rohingya Genocide. Calling out the irresponsibility of these platforms is important to avoid such hate crimes. Calling out the publisher of such a book is no different.

# Rioting in US cities - 5 reasons why violent radicals feel emboldened

## It is clear these groups have financial and logistical support - they are not going to run out of steam

**James Jay Carafano**

The organized violence plaguing Portland and other cities has already lasted longer than Kid Rock's marriage to Pamela Anderson. And there is no sign that the deliberate attacks will end any time soon.

Indeed, the looting, threats, arson, assaults, intimidation and extortion seem to be spreading, now reaching into smaller cities and suburbs. Here are five reasons these emboldened and increasingly violent radicals pose a very real threat to safety on our streets and equal protection under the law.

The street militias have shifted targets and tactics to sustain pressure on communities and local officials. They have become consistently more belligerent. They have developed aggressive legal tactics, allowing them to bail out rioters - even those charged with assaulting police - almost as quickly as they are arrested. They have also developed sophisticated social networking and media strategies that allow them to distribute how-to-riot guidance (such as how to avoid being

identified and arrested) as well as spread disinformation and propaganda. Further, it is clear these groups have robust financial and logistical support. These guys are not going to run out of steam like easily bored teenagers or liberal activists who have to go back to their day jobs. Backed with a large war chest, this organized radicalism presents a persistent threat, constantly seeking new ways and new places to make rest of our lives miserable.

No. 4: There is a war on our streets

Sustained violent protests attract extremists who crave even more extreme violence. And, as we saw over the weekend in Portland, violent extremists draw counter-extremists, who see the challenge as a green light to press their own radical agenda. The Portland tiff between Antifa and the White supremacist Proud Boys was fairly tame stuff - mostly pushing, punching and pepper spray. But, unchecked, these extremist v. extremist clashes could well escalate into deadly violence and mayhem.

No. 3: Local officials have failed us

Portland, Seattle, Chicago and other cities where violence has spiraled out of control share one common liability: political leadership that has utterly failed to address public safety. In every case, they have turned a blind eye toward criminal behavior, creating permissive environments that only encourage ever more extreme protests and violence. In every case, they have hamstrung local police and adjured cooperation with state and federal enforcement. This is a recipe for disaster.

Organized crime of all kinds thrives when it can exploit weak enforcement and gaps between local, state and federal law enforcement.

No. 2: Our media have failed us It is astonishing that the organized violence in American cities has not received wall-to-wall coverage from mainstream media. Equally astonishing is the absence of any substantive investigative reporting into the operations of Antifa, BLM or other organizations creating and condoning chaos in our streets. Apparently unable to distinguish peaceful advocacy



for justice from radical agendas intent on achieving change by warring on the American people, the media remain content to pretend that eyewitness accounts and even videos of nightmarish violence are somehow overblown. Too often, the handful of reporters and commentators who have given the issue the attention it deserves are dismissed, ignored or ridiculed.

No. 1: Our politicians have failed us

The safety of American streets and the sanctity of our homes and businesses ought to be as strongly a bipartisan agenda as the demands for racial equality. They are not. Virtually to a person, one side of the political aisle has ignored this threat, like a fireman at a five-alarm blaze ignoring a fire.

We have to stop playing politics

with the safety and livelihood of the American people.

This won't stop - and, indeed, will get worse - if every day Americans don't start standing up more and saying no more.

Find ways to show support for our law enforcement agencies.

Start demanding that local and state officials work with the federal government to disrupt and demolish the organized, criminal militias on our streets.

Put politics aside and work with your neighbors to reject violence and help bring communities together. And for heaven's sake, stop giving money to groups that funnel that money to those who supply and bail out the people who are tearing up our streets. Use that money instead, to help groups intent on rebuilding our neighborhoods and mending the tears in our social fabric.

## Kenosha riots prove urban unrest is 'class war masquerading as a race conflict'

'Joe Biden's voters really are a threat to you and your family'



The mainstream media was "outraged" by Mark and Patricia McCloskey's remarks at the Republican National Convention, yet the riots in

Kenosha, Wis., proved that Democrats really are a threat to America's safety, Tucker Carlson argued Tuesday.

The McCloskeys spoke out

against protest violence in suburban neighborhoods and claimed Democrats have declared war on the middle class. The "Tucker Carlson

Tonight" host said the media simply couldn't handle the truth. "The usual all-moron panel swung into action to denounce them, [saying] 'everything the McCloskeys said was totally untrue' ... And then nightfall came, and once again the mob descended on Kenosha, Wisconsin," Carlson said. "And we learned that the CNN panel was lying to us. Joe Biden's voters really are a threat to you and your family." Rioters in Kenosha looted businesses and lit the city on fire, knocking unconscious a 71-year old business owner in the process. "It was almost exclusively young people in the street committing violence, it always is," he said. "As the fires burn, normal people in Kenosha cowered in their homes." Carlson pointed out that Kenosha is home to a large Hispanic immigrant population whose members were not seen rioting because working people are meant to work, he said,

not start riots. "As if we needed more evidence that this is actually a class war masquerading as a race conflict," he said. "That's exactly what it is designed to [do]: crush America's middle class. And it's working." Kenosha storeowners woke up Tuesday morning to their livelihoods destroyed, with one owner saying how "wrong" it is since her business services everyone, regardless of race. "You can hear the confusion in her voice [asking] 'Why did they do this to me?'" Carlson said. "And the short answer is because they could. Nobody stopped them from burning down her business or burning down the city. The Kenosha County Democratic Party didn't stop them. The Democratic Party of Kenosha decided to embrace the mob."

**By Tucker Carlson**

# How to make the Trump-Biden debates fair



There are going to be presidential debates this fall. Speaker Nancy Pelosi makes a strong point, though, that President Donald Trump, who has lied, misled and made false claims more than 22,000 times, according to the Washington Post, has not earned the right to stand on the stage with Joe Biden because he can't tell the truth. Regardless, there will be debates. The real question is: What kind of debates will there be? Will we have an honest conversation where both candidates are given the chance to present their vision for the future, or will this debate devolve into a series of lies from the President that former Vice President Joe Biden is forced to react to? Debate rules are determined by negotiations between the two campaigns

mediated by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Although not perfect, the commission has done a very good job of structuring the debates in the past so that both campaigns get what they need and, more importantly, the American public gets to make an informed judgment on who they will vote for. President Trump poses an unprecedented challenge to both the commission and the Biden campaign. He routinely lies about what he has done, what he has said and what is actually happening in the country. He famously said to Americans that they should not trust what they see and read; they should only trust him. Putting the Animal Farm illusions aside, it revealed an essential element of Trump's strategy: He believes he can create a version of history that

brings credit only to him and blame to everyone else, and that he can sell this alternative strategy to the American people. That worked in 2016 -- it may work again in 2020.

So, how do we have debates that are a service and not a circus for the American public? I think it's important the debate commission recognizes the challenge of the moment -- one of the debaters seems incapable of sticking to the truth. They must structure the format to take that into account, to allow for the moderator to call out lies no matter who they come from. The television networks also have an important role to play here. Just broadcasting what gets said in real time creates a perverse incentive to not tell the truth during the debate. Correcting

things with fact checkers after most people have turned off their televisions fails to meet their responsibilities to keep the public informed. They must develop a system for identifying false statements in real time. Whether that be the moderator or a split screen, letting a lie (or lies) pass unchecked for 90 minutes encourages both candidates to create their own reality. That only leaves the character of the candidate to police themselves - creating a huge disadvantage for a candidate whose character compels them to tell the truth. Just as importantly, the viewers they broadcast too are ill-served by a debate that resembles a toddler's argument. Finally, it's incumbent on the Biden campaign to use their leverage to make sure the debate is both fair and valuable. It's not in Biden's

interest to be put in the position of repeatedly needing to correct the President's misstatements. If he does that, he'll have no time to make his own case. And if his case is based on the false pretext created by a dishonest President, it's hard to see how he can effectively make his case. Critics of this thinking will argue the American people will know the difference between the truth and a lie. That is dangerously naïve. Many Americans don't know the difference because they are fed a steady diet of partisan propaganda. It's nearly impossible for anyone in this digital social media age to know what is true and what is not.

That brings us back to the commission, the networks and the Biden campaign and their ability to make these debates fair and useful. I believe they must insist on mechanisms in advance to correct demonstrably false statements as they happen. It will make for a better debate, and importantly, a more informed electorate. It will also remove the perverse incentive that currently exists to replace facts with fictions. The only way to get a liar to stop lying is to call them out on the spot. This can and must be done if these debates are to have any value.

## SG Tushar Mehta refuses permission to prosecute Swara Bhasker for criminal contempt

**Mehta said in his letter to the petitioner, one Usha Shetty from Karnataka that the Attorney General for India (AG), KK Venugopal had earlier rejected a similar request by Shetty and hence the request made to the SG is misconceived.**

Solicitor General of India (SG), Tushar Mehta on Wednesday declined permission for initiation of criminal contempt of court proceedings against actor Swara Bhasker for her statements criticising the Supreme Court and its 2019 judgment in the Ayodhya dispute. Mehta said in his letter to the petitioner, one Usha Shetty from Karnataka that the Attorney General for India (AG), KK Venugopal had earlier rejected a similar request by Shetty and hence the request made to the SG is misconceived.

"The AG, on August 21, has declined to provide his consent for the reasons stated in the reply of the AG. Considering the fact that the AG has already declined to grant his consent, the present

request made to me is misconceived," Mehta said in his letter to Shetty.

Bhasker had, on February 1, said that the Supreme Court acknowledged the illegality of the demolition of Babri Masjid in its November 2019 judgment and yet rewarded the perpetrators who brought down the mosque by handing over the land to them.

The plea seeking initiation of a criminal contempt case against Bhasker, which was filed by Shetty on August 17, was initially placed before AG for his consent to list the matter before the court. As per Section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act and Rule 3 of Rules to Regulate Proceedings for Contempt of Supreme Court, the consent of the AG or SG is required before

the apex court can hear a criminal contempt petition filed by a private individual.

After the AG declined permission, Shetty's lawyers had approached the SG.

The November 9 judgment of the Supreme Court in the Ayodhya dispute, which was delivered by a bench headed by former CJI Ranjan Gogoi, had awarded the 2.77 acre disputed site to Ram Lalla Virajman, the child deity. The bench had also ordered that 5 acres of land at an alternative site should be granted to Muslims for construction of a new mosque.

The top court had, interestingly, acknowledged the existence of a valid mosque at the disputed site and had expressly stated that the acts of Hindus in placing



idols inside the mosque in 1949 and destruction of the mosque in 1992 were illegal.

Bhasker had, on February 1, attended a panel discussion organized by NGO Mumbai Collective on the topic 'Artists against Communalism'. During the discussion, Bhasker, as alleged by the petitioner, made the following statement:

"We are now in a situation where our courts are not sure whether they believe in the Constitution or not... We are living in a country

where the Supreme Court of our country states in a judgment that the demolition of Babri Masjid was unlawful and in the same judgment rewards the same people who brought down the mosque."

Shetty submitted that the statement by Bhasker is derogatory and intended to scandalize the Supreme Court. It is not merely a cheap stunt for publicity but a deliberate attempt to incite masses to "resist and revolt against the apex court", she added.

# For Trump, reality is just a prop he doesn't care to use



"Washington has not changed Donald Trump. Donald Trump has changed Washington," said Ivanka Trump as she introduced her father at the Republican National Convention Thursday night. The scene as President Donald Trump accepted the nomination to run for reelection made it hard not to agree with her. Breaking with precedent, and flouting the Hatch Act designed to prevent politicization of public service, he spoke from the White House grounds to an audience that mostly neglected to wear any protective gear against the raging coronavirus pandemic, but never failed to applaud him on cue.

The acceptance of a presidential nomination is a hallowed American political ritual and the highlight of every election year's conventions. Comparing Trump's 2016 and 2020 speeches, and the political theater that surrounded them, reveals how emboldened Trump has become in his authoritarian designs to protect White privilege, criminalize dissent and turn the Republican Party into an instrument for the consolidation of his personal power.

The 2016 speech made it clear that Trump never intended to be the President of all Americans, but only of Whites

victimized by the supposed chaos that had beset the nation under President Barack Obama. Like strongman leaders from Benito Mussolini to Vladimir Putin, Trump sought to create a sense of threat in order to propose himself as the "law and order" solution. Diagnosing "a moment of crisis for our nation," with (in his telling) police under siege from illegal immigrant-criminals who roamed the streets, he promised to act on behalf of those "forgotten" during eight years of rule by a Black President. "I AM YOUR VOICE," he intoned. "America First," the slogan popularized in this 2016 speech, under Trump's scenario, also meant restoring the country's international prestige and reversing the "death, destruction, and weakness" that was the legacy of Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, then his political opponent. Propaganda works through repetition of key concepts and phrases, and much of what worked in 2016 to

bring Trump into office remained in his 2020 speech. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, labeled by Trump as "the destroyer of American greatness," has replaced Clinton as the target. In Trump's estimation Thursday night, Biden would send American jobs abroad, "eliminate America's borders" and "even take down the wall."

Yet, something has shifted in 2020. Whereas foreigners were the agents of lawlessness in 2016 -- Middle Eastern terrorists, Latino migrants and more -- now Trump informs us the war has come home. Americans are the new target, in the form of "violent anarchists, agitators, and criminals" and "wild-eyed Marxists." Trump, ever the isolationist, may have boasted of keeping America out of new wars and rebuilding the military, but he has merely shifted the battle to the home front. American critics and dissenters against Trump, including journalists who cover him and his administration, are the new enemy -- as federal law enforcement actions in Portland, in Washington DC and elsewhere

the summer of 2020 in response to the Black Lives Matter protests made clear. "We have to give law enforcement, our police, back their power. They are afraid to act," he declared, days after a Black man, Jacob Blake, was shot seven times in the back by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Trump knows what works for him and he sticks to it, with the blessing of a GOP that's become little more than his appendage. It's notable that the RNC decided not to adopt a new platform for 2020 beyond declaring its unanimous "strong support for President Donald Trump and his Administration." Historically, that's consistent with the consolidation of authoritarianism. Over time, illiberal leaders strip politics of all meaning beyond paying homage to their person. Ritual and stagecraft that glorify the leader become the priority. That's why we must look at the behavior of the GOP politicians who enable Trump to assess the tragic change in American political life from 2016 to 2020. \

## Our focus has to be on the victims of Hurricane Laura



Hurricane Laura made landfall late Wednesday night near Cameron, Louisiana. Around this time in a hurricane disaster, when the full effects are still emerging, I normally write things about what the role of climate change may have been. But maybe, by talking just about things like sea surface temperature and tropical cyclone intensity and greenhouse gases and aerosols at these moments, scientists like me actually hinder the conversation we really should be having. That conversation is about climate, but first it's about people.

Laura struck a region in

Louisiana and East Texas that is a contender for the epicenter of climate injustice and environmental racism in the United States. It's a hub of the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries. Wen Stephenson, who records conversations with local activist Hilton Kelley and pioneering environmental justice scholar Robert Bullard in his book "What We're Fighting for Now Is Each Other," describes this part of Texas as famous for its combination of pollution, racial segregation (one area they describe, West Port Arthur, is mostly poor and Black, while many of the jobs in the refineries are held by commuters from the

richer and whiter towns to the north) and economic malaise. Unemployment is high, as are rates of cancer and respiratory illness.

And the entire Gulf coast, including east Texas and Louisiana and beyond, is extremely vulnerable to global warming. It gets hurricanes, of course, and yes, those are probably getting worse. It also has always been a hot and humid place, and the heat and humidity are both increasing due to global warming. And for decades now, this low-lying coastline has been rapidly losing land to the sea --- not just due to sea level rise, but even more because the land is sinking, eroding due to the cutting of ship channels through the bayous by the fossil fuel industry. Oil spills threaten the fisheries, beaches and ecosystems.

While the whole region is affected by these plagues, it is the poorest and darkest-skinned who have inevitably been hurt the most, while drawing the least profit from the industry that causes them all. Hurricane

Katrina showed that 15 years ago, but that was just a particularly vivid example of a much broader history.

In the end, Laura made landfall to the east of the Texas-Louisiana border, with the center passing nearly through Lake Charles as the storm moved northward. Port Arthur, to the west, was spared the worst, because the strongest winds and storm surge tend to be on the right side of a hurricane's path.

The rural Louisiana coast just to the east was almost certainly hit hardest. To get a vivid, if fictionalized, sense of this region, watch the film "Beasts of the Southern Wild," set on Isle de Jean Charles, a shrinking island yet a bit further east that is largely populated by Native Americans. In her book, "Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore," Elizabeth Rush recounts time spent with the few residents left on the island. They are holding out against the efforts of government officials to resettle them elsewhere, but their home's

eventual disappearance is as inevitable as it is heartbreaking. For a long time, the debate on climate has been strongly influenced by atmospheric scientists like me. We use satellites and other global observing systems to look at the planet's atmosphere and oceans, and computer models to simulate them. We're trained to see it as a physics problem of planetary scale --- or, if we become a bit more politicized, as a problem of saving "the planet." We can be a little slow to grasp the climate problem's human dimensions --- and especially to see how, for those most harmed, it is just one piece of a larger set of interlocking injustices.

But things are changing. The young people who are now leading the climate movement certainly respect the science, but more importantly, they understand deeply that global warming is a social justice issue, connected to all the other social justice issues, very much including racism and economic inequality.



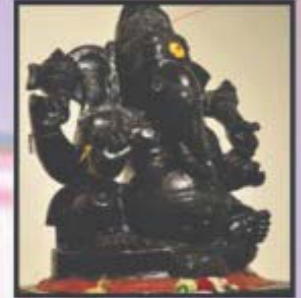
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## Green Berets receive valor awards for grueling eight-hour firefight against elite Taliban force in Afghanistan



(News Agencies)-A group of Green Berets has received valor awards for their heroic actions during a grueling eight-hour firefight against Taliban forces in Afghanistan last year, the Army announced last week.

In August 2019, an operational detachment made up of Army Special Forces soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) "stumbled

upon" a conference between an "elite Taliban force" and their advisors in a small village in Afghanistan's Faryab province, an Army official told Task & Purpose.

The ensuing eight-hour firefight found the soldiers in such close proximity to the Taliban force that "they could hear the enemy speaking, as well as the sound of the spoons being released from

their grenades," said Maj. Andrew Harshbarger, a spokesman for 7th Group. Three Americans and one Afghan commando were wounded in the firefight, prompting the Green Berets to call in a medevac chopper that landed under fire "in a courtyard no larger than the size of half of a football field and within inches of the ODA themselves" to secure the wounded, Harshbarger

said.

"The ODA, who had lost contact with their supporting vehicles after the Taliban shot one of their radios, then fought their way out of the village and moved over a mile, by foot, and under fire, to safety," the official said.

Two Green Berets - Master Sgt. Luis Felipe Deleon-Figueroa and Master Sgt. Jose Juan Gonzalez - lost their lives in the battle.

For their heroic actions during the firefight, as well as their six-month deployment to Afghanistan, members of the 1-7 received two Silver Stars, six Bronze Stars with "V" devices, three Army Commendation Medals with "V" devices, and four Purple Hearts.

Two of the Bronze Stars were awarded posthumously to Gonzales and Deleon-Figueroa, while a third Silver Star was presented to an Air Force pararescueman for his role in rendering aid during the firefight with the Taliban. "With disregard for their own safety, the Green Berets exposed themselves to

enemy fire to thwart the attack, maintain command and control, and recover their wounded teammates," read a summary of the Silver Star citations provided to Task & Purpose.

The awards were presented to members of the 1-7 during an Aug. 21 ceremony at the Rock Garden Memorial at the 7th SFG (A) compound at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

According to officials, the 1-7 was also awarded a Meritorious Unit Citation for applying pressure on the Taliban to "set the stage" for a peace settlement the militant group signed with the United States in February.

"The actions of the warriors we are recognizing today speak volumes about them as individuals. They also clearly reflect the families and communities that shaped these men," said Lt. Gen. Francis Beaudette, the commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command. "Even if they cannot be here physically - thank you for what your families do to support you every day."

## 'Made in Bangladesh' Review: A Quiet Power in Collective Efforts



(News Agencies)-"Made in Bangladesh" opens with a close-up of a woman threading a sewing machine. As the closing credits begin, the sounds of a sewing machine return from that initial sequence; it may not be until that moment that you realize just how much the movie has taken you - minutely, step by step - through an arduous process.

The film, directed by Rubaiyat Hossain, follows a group of garment factory workers in

Dhaka, Bangladesh, as they take steps to form a union after one of their own is killed in a fire. Shimu (Rikita Nandini Shimu) becomes the leader of the effort, obtaining signatures, furtively capturing images of her workplace and pressing bureaucrats not to stall on the paperwork. The manager (Azaz Bari) and the floor boss (Shatabdi Wadud) - who think nothing of withholding wages from the women or forcing them to sleep at the sweltering factory

without a fan - fight the moves to unionize at every turn. For the most part, so does Shimu's patriarchal husband (Mostafa Monwar), even though he is unemployed at the film's start. None of this plays out at the level of subtext, and much of the dialogue is straightforwardly expository, as the women learn about Bangladesh's labor code or as a workers' advocate (Shahana Goswami) tells Shimu the value of the shirts they make. The characters, who are largely ignorant of their rights, need the explanations, but there are times when the lessons feel like needless hand-holding for viewers. Still, as Shimu's efforts ramp up and appear increasingly futile, "Made in Bangladesh" acquires a quiet power.

## Sri Lanka to ban imports of plastic goods to protect elephants



(News Agencies)-Sri Lanka will ban the import of most plastic products in a bid to protect wild elephants and deer that die eating the waste, the environment minister announced Friday. Plastic in Sri Lanka's landfills is a major killer of elephants, with autopsies showing kilos of it in the stomachs of animals who died after rummaging at dumps. Environment minister Mahinda Amaraweera told parliament legislation was being drafted to stop imports of plastic goods, including polythene, that end up in landfills. Officials said it would be introduced within months. "Plastics are doing untold damage to our wildlife --

elephants, deer and other animals," Amaraweera told AFP shortly after his announcement. "We need to take immediate action to arrest this situation." Sri Lanka has already banned the manufacture or import of non-biodegradable plastic used for wrapping food and shopping bags since 2017. Endangered wild elephants are protected in Sri Lanka by law although clashes with farmers are claiming a heavy toll on both sides. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has given wildlife officials two years to implement a plan to reduce human-elephant conflict that has claimed the lives of 607 elephants and 184 people since last year.





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# What Indian TV news anchors get wrong

*Current affairs discussions should be intended for those who want to learn and understand. Not people seeking entertainment*

(News Agencies)- I could tell it was Pertie. The phone has an insistent quality when he calls. He can also let it ring, ring and ring. So the second I heard it I immediately answered. Pertie had a pressing question connected to Congress spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi's death. "Don't television anchors care about what they're doing to their guests? It seems this guy was so dreadfully treated he got a heart attack and died." A long pause followed but I kept silent. I wasn't sure if Pertie was baiting me or voicing a genuine concern. When he next spoke it was to ask a disarmingly simple question. "What's the purpose of these discussions?" The simple answer is to elicit information, in

a clear and intelligible form, so that viewers are acquainted with multiple facets of the issue being discussed. No anchor would disagree. The problem is how you go about it. This is where many television discussions fall apart. If the aim is to get different people to explain their differing viewpoints, then you must spend time talking to each of them to explore their thinking. In turn, that means you must know their positions and have thought carefully of questions that will either reveal their thinking or intelligently challenge it. Otherwise, you can't draw them out. What many anchors do - usually because they haven't done their research - is ask one guest if he agrees with another

and get them to quarrel. No doubt this generates heat and can even create a spectacle, but if it's light you should be shedding, raising the temperature only adds to the confusion and the cacophony. Maybe not heart attacks but blood pressures can certainly rise.

Pertie's next question was obvious. "So, if different people express different viewpoints, how do you come to a conclusion?" Trying to force one is the second mistake many anchors make. A television discussion should air different ways of looking at a subject, leaving it to the audience to decide which they agree with. The audience will come to its own conclusion. It's



not for the anchor to contrive one. "But there are many anchors who pummel their guests until they agree with him. Are you saying that's the wrong way of conducting a discussion?" Actually, Pertie knew that's precisely what I meant. It wasn't confirmation he wanted so much as criticism of the anchors he had in mind. But no sooner did I sidestep this pitfall then he bowled another googly. "Shouldn't there be scope in a

television discussion for guests to contradict or reject a viewpoint? Otherwise, it could be a case of four people talking to the anchor and not to each other." Of course, there should be. Otherwise the programme would be sterile. But any interaction between the guests can only happen after adequately exploring their individual viewpoints. Equally importantly, it has to happen in a structured way.

## A letter rocks the Congress



(News Agencies)- According to a report in The Indian Express, 23 senior leaders of the Congress - including former chief ministers, former Union ministers, members of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), senior office-bearers -

have written a letter to the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi. In it, they have acknowledged the erosion in the support base of the party and pointed to the lack of honest introspection after electoral defeats. The leaders have also

*Party leaders have done well to ring the alarm bell. Act on it*

outlined an agenda for reform - a full-time, effective, active and visible president; elections at all levels in the party (including CWC); establishing an institutional leadership model to collectively guide the party; a national coalition with like-minded parties, among other steps. For weeks, rumours of the letter have swirled around but been strenuously denied by some of its signatories. The report came a day ahead of an important CWC meeting. The letter comes in the backdrop of the exit of young leaders of the Congress over the past year, increased factionalism in state units, a

continued sense of drift over the direction of the party, and uncertainty about leadership - even as Narendra Modi continues to enjoy high levels of popularity. Ever since the 2014 polls, and definitely more so since 2019, many observers outside the party have pointed to the structural, organisational, ideological, and personality-centric weaknesses of the Congress - this view was shared by insiders too, but they weren't willing to speak up publicly. The true significance of the letter is not as much in what it says but the fact that it has finally been said, by a cross-section of

party leaders - from the north and south, old and young, those experienced in electoral politics and those more comfortable with policy. Having served the Congress for decades, they are speaking from a position of anguish and a desire to see the party do better. The letter is also significant because of what it does not say. By emphasising on collective leadership, it is signalling to the Nehru-Gandhi family that the entire notion of the control of party high command needs to be redesigned. By asking for elections at each level, it is seeking democratisation of the organisation.

## 8.8 km long, 3,000 metre above sea: Know everything about Atal Tunnel

(News Agencies)-The 8.8-km strategic Rohtang Tunnel, being built at 3,000 metre above sea level between Himachal Pradesh's Manali and Leh in Ladakh, will be opened by September-end. The Rs 3,200-crore tunnel will shorten the 474-km distance between Manali and Leh by 46km, which means the eight-hour journey will be cut by two-and-a-half hours.

The tunnel is also called Atal Tunnel after former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had announced the project on June 3, 2000. The work was

entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

The project has faced geological challenges which have pushed the deadline since digging started in 2011. The project was to be completed in February 2015, but water ingress from Seri Nullah, ban on rock mining and delay in allotment of land needed for quarrying, and loose rock strata in the middle caused the slow progress. More than 700 men are working in shifts to complete the work of the tunnel. When the coronavirus pandemic-enforced lockdown was imposed,

proactive measures were taken to recommence work in active coordination with the state government.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh was to inspect the work at the tunnel last month, but due to the stand-off between India and Chinese troops, this trip was cancelled. Singh is likely to visit the Rohtang tunnel in at the end of this month. The speed limits in the tunnel will be 80km per hour. The tunnel will accelerate troop mobility to strategic frontiers in Jammu and Kashmir, besides providing a road link to



Lahaul and Spiti in the winters. The tunnel has the capacity to ply 3,000 vehicles per day under any weather condition. The cost

of the project has escalated from Rs 1,700 crore in 2010 to almost its double to Rs 3,200 crore by September 2020.

# India must take the lead in South Asia

**The pandemic will devastate economies, even as China deepens inroads. India must think regional**

(News Agencies)-With the privilege of being the region's largest economy by far comes the power to make a difference. Covid-19 has presented India with an unprecedented opportunity to help restructure its economy and reshape regional cooperation and integration towards a more sustainable path. In a just-released report from the Centre for Policy Research, India as the Engine of Recovery for South Asia: A Multi-Sectoral Plan for India's COVID-19 Diplomacy in the Region that we have co-authored with our colleagues, Shyam Saran and Sandeep Bhardwaj, we look at India's agenda-setting role more closely to map the road ahead as India prepares to assume the G20 presidency in 2022. There are three fundamental reasons why India's Neighbourhood First policy needs reorientation. To begin with, there are dire warnings of a "pandemic depression" with growth projections worldwide revised heavily downward, and an

estimated 42 million people within South Asia out of 100 million worldwide already driven back to extreme poverty. Second, the ongoing global slowdown is projected to hit South Asia's major export earnings - business services, textiles, transport equipment, labour and tourism, severely. This is compounded by a 22% decline in remittances to South Asia mainly from the Gulf, serious problems of finance and capital, as well as what the World Health Organization has termed "supply nationalism" severely disrupting global supply chains. Third, China is using Covid-19 diplomacy to take several strategic initiatives vis-à-vis India's neighbours in South Asia that require a commensurate response. In what meaningful ways can India's Covid-19 diplomacy re-purpose South Asian regionalism in the post-Covid-19 era? There are five critical steps that India can take to invest in a robust regional action plan.

To begin with, India could leverage regional trade, connectivity and investment, and strengthen the South Asian Free Trade Agreement as a game-changer for the region. One step that could dramatically galvanise economic energies would be to lower barriers to intra-regional food trade and encourage regional supply chains. Given that over 70% of South Asia's population is dependent on subsistence agriculture and allied services, its impact could be the equivalent of a rising tide. This single trade policy measure should be supplemented by a series of trade facilitation measures that could uplift Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's call for atmanirbharta (self-reliance) from the national to a regional level as an extension of India's Neighbourhood First policy. These range from offers of freer transit trade through the region, the development of supply and logistic chains, digital data interchange, single-window and digitised clearance systems, risk



assessment and minimisation measures, wider use of trade lines of credit (presently abysmally low), denser connectivity, smoother cross-border inspections, and reduced transaction costs, using technology as a force multiplier. Another area that India could take the lead is in the sectors of health and food security. PM Modi has already taken a laudable initiative in convening a virtual summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) leaders on March 15 to deal with the pandemic. However, its medium-term impact has fallen short of the kind of impact India made in response to the 2004 tsunami in the region. It has also been overtaken by the more

aggressive Covid-19 diplomacy of China that has included a meeting of foreign ministers of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Nepal with offers of sharing its Covid-19 vaccine under development as early as September, duty-free access to its market, and barely-concealed strategic overtones. Although Covid-19 has not led to a visible food crisis, regional food security is another area that India could take a major initiative in with an eye to the future. Measures in this area could include using its ample food reserves of 83 million MT to put in place a South Asian food safety net to deal with crises augmenting access to the Saarc Food Bank that currently stands at less than 500,000 MT.

# The proof of Pulwama

**Pakistan's imprint is clear. India must remain alert**



(News Agencies)-On Tuesday, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a charge sheet in the Pulwama terror attack case. It has formally named 19 people, including the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief, Masood Azhar, for planning and carrying out the attack on the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

convoy, killing 40 security personnel. Azhar's nephew, Mohammad Umar Farooq, was sent to Kashmir to execute the bombing and was in touch with the Jaish leadership back in Pakistan, during, before and after the attack, according to the charge sheet. One of Azhar's brother also told Farooq, who was killed in an encounter

subsequently, that the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) wanted Jaish operatives to find out about Indian Air Force bases; Jaish was also planning a second terror attack after Pulwama, but had to abort it due to international pressure on Pakistan. Pulwama was a defining moment for geopolitics in South Asia. Despite

Pakistan's strenuous denials, it was clear then - and it is clearer now - that the attack had the clear sanction of the Pakistani establishment. A set of observers, at that point, wanted to make a distinction between the Pakistani government and terror-based groups. But while it is still at the charge sheet stage, the NIA investigation has shown that this is an artificial distinction - and in fact, there was a very high degree of synergy and coordination between the Pakistani military intelligence and terror groups based in Pakistan. It also shows that Pakistan was more than willing to escalate the situation with another terror attack, but the Balakot retaliatory attack (framed diplomatically as a "pre-emptive strike") and the concerted international diplomatic pressure, mobilised effectively by India, forced Rawalpindi to back off. The international community today

recognises Pakistan has given patronage to terror groups and supports terrorism as a State policy - but it has vacillated between appeasing Islamabad-Rawalpindi and penalising it in a somewhat half-hearted manner.

Pakistan remains a key source of global instability, and any country - including its best friend, China - which wants stability must force Pakistan to act against terror. For India, the lesson is simple. In terms of security, New Delhi must never let its guard down, for Pakistan's intent is clear. In terms of individuals, letting Azhar get away in 1999 (after the IC-814 hijack) has proved to be enormously costly; such an error must not be repeated. In terms of diplomacy, India must be alert to the joint China-Pakistani project of undermining India and counter it across platforms.

# Delhi-Dhaka ties: India is doing well in the region

**Don't view India's neighbourhood policy in terms of wins or losses. Focus on the structural imperatives**

(News Agencies)- In a telling statement, Sri Lanka's new foreign secretary Jayanath Colombage has said that Colombo will have an "India first" strategic policy outlook. Arguing that while the Rajapaksa government has adopted a posture of neutrality in its dealings with major regional and global powers, he was categorical in underlining that "the president [Gotabaya Rajapaksa] has stated that we have a strategic security-wise 'India first' policy because we cannot be, we should not be, we can't afford to be a strategic security threat for India, period." These are powerful words indeed, and along with Colombage's acknowledgement that the

decision to give Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to China was a "mistake", it underscored the pitfalls of a rather infantile debate in this country about India's neighbourhood policy in recent months.

There has been a barrage of criticism that India is "losing" its neighbourhood as border tensions with Nepal have grown and China has continued to spread its tentacles in India's vicinity. That Indian and Chinese forces are squaring off at the border has reinforced this plaintive cry that New Delhi is getting marginalised in the neighbourhood. Even foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's visit to Bangladesh, his first outside India since the

Covid-19 lockdown, got mired in needless debates about rising Chinese clout in Dhaka.

By all accounts, Shringla's visit to Dhaka was a successful one and it managed to convey Bangladesh's privileged position in Indian foreign policy matrix. Against the backdrop of the two nations celebrating "Mujib Borsho", and the 50th year of the liberation of Bangladesh as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations next year, this visit was key to setting the tone for a busy calendar of events ahead and a number of high-level bilateral visits. From expediting and conceptualising major connectivity projects to diversifying bilateral engagement, the two nations



are getting serious about their priorities. What is key here is the role played by top leadership in both nations. Both Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina, despite some domestic scepticism, understand the importance of cultivating strong bilateral relations. For Modi, the development of India's East and Northeast is a top priority and a strategic imperative for New Delhi. And that region can only

achieve its full potential if it's better integrated with Bangladesh, thereby ensuring that India-Bangladesh connectivity projects will continue to be at the top of the agenda. It is important to recognise that this connectivity push is being shaped by a politician like Narendra Modi who has been forthright about the challenges posed by illegal immigration.

## *Pakistan's attempts to get Islamic countries to condemn India over J&K have had mixed results*

(News Agencies)- To condemn India for changing the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan had approached Saudi Arabia to convene a session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), but the request was turned down. Thereafter Pakistan got together with Turkey and Malaysia to convene a summit of Islamic states - a kind of parallel OIC - which turned out to be a flop. Even Pakistan refrained from attending it as did most other members of the OIC. Then the "released" news came that Pakistan was returning the aid it had got from Saudi Arabia - a billion out of the \$6.2 billion

pledged - after borrowing the billion from China. In fact, the Saudis had demanded their money back.

The Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi tried gauchely to explain: "Saudi Arabia is facing economic pressure due to fall in oil prices and Pakistan is well aware of Saudi Arabia's problems and Pakistan stands by its brotherly country in this hour of need." But the truth is that Saudi Arabia was greatly miffed over what he had said with or without Prime Minister Imran Khan's clearance: "If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries

that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."

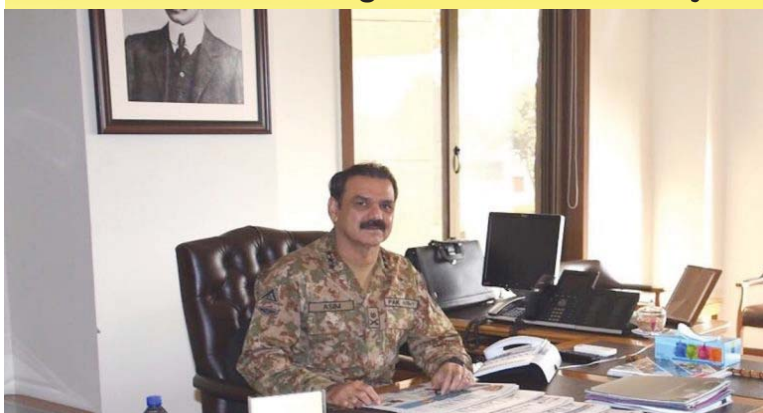
In another move, Pakistan inched closer to Iran after China signed a \$400-billion deal with it and India moved out of the Chabahar project that was seen as threatening Pakistan. But the Arab states across the Gulf will not take kindly to it. Iran is involved in the "Shia" wars that plague Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Turkey is the maverick of the region, challenging the Saudis by supporting the Brotherhood in Egypt, encouraging the maverick Arab state of Qatar in the Gulf to do

likewise. Oddly, however, Turkey doesn't please Iran either because in Syria it is killing the Syrians supported by Iran. It has also forced Iran to side with Saudi Arabia in Libya where Turkey is fighting a proxy war with the Saudis.

Imran Khan has struck up a special relationship with Turkey's President Recep Erdogan, which also touches the heartstrings of most Pakistanis whose school textbooks glorify the Khilafat Movement in India, supporting the deposed Ottoman-Turkish caliph in Turkey. (Today, the Arabs collectively hate the Ottomans for having ruled over them in the past and express it by banning

Turkish cinema in their countries, as in UAE and Egypt.) Prime Minister Khan ignores what Erdogan is doing to the freedom of expression in Turkey because the Turkish president doesn't care if India is upset over his support to Pakistan over Kashmir. He also ignores the dangerously decreased capacity of Turkey to dole out financial support that Pakistan's belly-up economy needs under Khan. Turkey under the dictatorial Erdogan was not expected to perform well economically and that is what has happened after the pandemic struck, increasing unemployment up to 52 per cent.

## **Former Pakistan general Asim Bajwa, who is PM aide and CPEC chief, faces 'corruption' heat**



(News Agencies)- A corruption scandal involving Lt Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa (ret'd), chairman of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and special assistant to Prime Minister

Imran Khan, is gathering a storm in his country.

On Friday, the website of the Pakistan Remittance Initiative was hacked, and a picture of Bajwa and his family was put up,

calling for accountability. This came a day after a Pakistani media report had elaborated the "suspicious" financial dealings of Bajwa's family, worth millions of dollars. "The growth of the Bajwa family's business empire in the United States and later in Pakistan directly matches the rise in power of retired general Asim Saleem Bajwa, who is now chairman of the country's massive China-financed infrastructure project and a special assistant to the prime minister," the report, penned by journalist Ahmed Noorani and published on Fact Focus,

stated. Bajwa is a former director general of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani military, and was appointed as special assistant to PM Khan on information in April this year. Following the publication of the report, Asim Bajwa denied the allegations on Twitter, saying: "A malicious propaganda story published on an unknown site, against me and my family, is strongly rebutted." Bajwa's declared assets versus report's claims

In his declaration of assets and liabilities signed in June as special assistant to the PM,

Bajwa declared an investment of \$18,468 (Pakistani rupees 31 lakh) in his wife's name. He also declared that he and his wife have no immovable property held outside Pakistan, or any business capital outside Pakistan. However, the report traces the Bajwa family's business dealings as far back as 2002, saying that was the year his younger brothers opened their first Papa John's pizza outlet. This was the year Bajwa went to work for Gen. Pervez Musharraf, as a lieutenant colonel on the military dictator's staff.

# Pakistan-Saudi rift: What happened?

**Pakistan's criticism of Saudi-led Muslim bloc OIC for its inaction on the Kashmir issue has threatened their ties.**

(News Agencies)- Pakistan has reaffirmed the strength of its relations with Saudi Arabia this week after a diplomatic spat sparked by perceived inaction by the Gulf kingdom on the issue of Kashmir threatened to derail what has been one of the South Asian country's strongest alliances in the region.

Earlier this month, Pakistan accused the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a bloc of 57 Muslim-majority countries that is led by Saudi Arabia, of inaction over the Kashmir issue - a key policy issue for Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan - and threatened to hold a rival meeting that would bypass the

group. "I am once again respectfully telling the OIC that a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers is our expectation," said Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a television news appearance on August 4. "If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."

Pakistan has been trying to drum up international support following New Delhi's decision to strip Indian-administered Kashmir of its special status last August.

The call was a shot across the bows, ostensibly challenging Saudi Arabian hegemony over leadership of the Muslim world, analysts say, and cut to the heart of the Gulf kingdom's foreign policy.

"It was extraordinary and unprecedented," says Cyril Almeida, senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and a Pakistani journalist. "No one had ever seen anything like it before [in the Pakistan-Saudi relationship]." In response, Saudi Arabia withdrew a \$1bn interest-free loan it had extended to Pakistan in November 2018, when the country was in dire economic straits and required foreign reserves to avoid a possible



sovereign default.

The kingdom has also, so far, refused to renew a deferred oil payments scheme that was part of the same package, aimed at helping Pakistan ease its import bill.

On August 17, Pakistan's powerful Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant-General Qamar Javed Bajwa was dispatched to Saudi Arabia for talks that were downplayed by a military spokesperson as being "routine" and dealing with "military-to-military" matters.

Days later, Pakistan's foreign office issued a statement that was glowing in its praise of the OIC's role on Kashmir, and on Monday, Foreign Minister Qureshi appeared to walk back the comments that initiated the rift.

"The OIC has passed many resolutions on Kashmir and there is no ambiguity in them," he told reporters in the Pakistani capital Islamabad. "They are clear, they are assertive and they are in line with Pakistan's position."

## Chinese banks looking to curtail investments in CPEC due to instability in Pakistan

(News Agencies)-The financial institutions and banks of China are showing reluctance in investing in the China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC), the flagship component of China's massive BRI infrastructure project due to instable political climate in the Islamic republic. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, discussed this issue with Chinese authorities during his visit to China last week.

For China, CPEC is a geopolitical game-changer - the biggest success of Chinese expansionism, and for Pakistan it is a life-time opportunity and

its last chance for economic modernisation.

For the last six months, the multi-billion dollar project has been both a source of interest and concern even as there has been a global debate over its potential and problems. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has turned off the oil tap for Pakistan. Riyadh has halted the provision of "oil on loan" for Islamabad. In 2018, Pakistan had borrowed \$6.2 billion in loan from Saudi Arabia out of this \$3 billion was debt relief in the form of cash and the remaining \$3.2 billion was the worth of oil Riyadh had decided to provide Islamabad annually. The provision expired

two months ago and Saudi Arabia hasn't renewed it, instead, it has forced Pakistan to pay \$1 billion from the cash loan it had secured. The dream project of Pakistan govt has been in news always for wrong reasons.

In May this year, a committee looking into the losses in Pakistan's power sector has dug out a \$625 scam.

The money trail leads to China and it involves two Chinese power producers Huaneng Shandong Ruyi energy (HSR) and Port Qasim Electric Power Company Limited.

Both companies are connected to CPEC power projects. The



allegations against them are of violation of standard procedure and malpractices. Both Chinese plants showed excess set-up costs for extra profits. They were earning annual profits of up to 50 to 70 per cent. The cost was

borne by the consumers of Pakistan. On the other hand, Most of the CPEC workers based in Pakistan belong to the Chinese military in one way or the other. They are trained in martial arts and weapon handling.

## Monsoon rains wreak havoc across Pakistan, killing 63 people

(News Agencies)-Heavy rains hit parts of Pakistan for a fifth straight night, bringing more flooding to the financial capital Karachi and towns and villages and leaving at least 63 people dead, officials said Friday. Rescuers evacuated people from flooded neighborhoods.

About 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain have fallen in Karachi since Sunday, when monsoon rains began lashing the coastal city, forcing authorities to use boats to evacuate people trapped in flooded streets.

Forty-seven people were killed this week in Karachi in rain-related incidents, according to Murad Ali Shah, chief minister of southern Sindh province. He said authorities were working day and night to help rain-affected people in the city and elsewhere in Sindh, where Karachi is the provincial capital.

At least 16 people were killed in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because of flash flooding overnight, said Taimur Ali, a spokesman for the disaster management agency in the northwest.

Downed power lines caused widespread electrical outages in Karachi, adding misery to the lives of many of the 15 million residents in Pakistan's largest city. Some workers stayed at their offices and others spent the night in open areas because there was no transportation to get home in many parts of the city.

Hundreds of vehicles were dragged along city streets by powerful flood waters. The military said it provided food to at least 10,000 people and dozens of relief camps were set



up for residents. Troops also repaired embankments of a swollen canal by which floodwaters entered the city. Eight of those killed in Karachi

a residential area. They included children, who were playing at the time. Other casualties were reported in various parts of Sindh in the past 24 hours.

# Trump deploys federal agents to Kenosha

**Unrest erupted in the city this week after a police officer shot a Black man multiple times in the back in front of his young children.**

President Donald Trump announced Wednesday he will order additional federal forces to tamp down violence in Kenosha, Wis., that has arisen in the wake of a police shooting that left a Black man paralyzed.

"TODAY, I will be sending federal law enforcement and the National Guard to Kenosha, WI to restore LAW and ORDER!" he wrote on Twitter.

Unrest erupted in the city this week after a police officer shot a Black man multiple times in the back in front of his young children. The man, Jacob Blake, survived that shooting but was left paralyzed and his family says he remains in critical condition. The shooting quickly reinvigorated protests against racial injustice in policing that spread across the country earlier this summer after George Floyd, a black man in Minneapolis, was killed by police officers who detained him.

The unrest in Kenosha - a city roughly equidistant between Chicago and Milwaukee - erupted

this week into a violent standoff between anti-racism protesters, rioters, armed militias and police. Rioters in Kenosha set multiple fires overnight earlier this week and three people were shot - two fatally - in confrontations Tuesday night. Videos of the clashes echoed the violence between law enforcement and protesters caught on video in cities across the country after Floyd's death.

Trump, who has issued repeated demands for "law and order" amid protests across the country, called on Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, to forcibly quash the unrest.

"Governor should call in the National Guard in Wisconsin. It is ready, willing, and more than able. End problem FAST!" Trump tweeted Tuesday even though Evers had already deployed the National Guard on the city the day before.

The White House called Evers to offer federal assistance to respond to the uprisings, but

Evers declined, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Tuesday. White House chief of staff Mark Meadows offered agents from the Department of Homeland Security to assist local law enforcement, Evers' office told the Journal Sentinel. But Trump's announcement on Wednesday said the governor and the president had recently reached an agreement on federal assistance. The governors' office, DHS and Justice Department did not immediately return requests for further details on what federal aid will be arriving in Wisconsin.

Senior DHS officials are closely monitoring the situation in Kenosha, according to a DHS official and a second source familiar with the matter. The sources said DHS personnel are on standby to deploy to Kenosha if leadership decides to send them.

The Trump administration's reliance on federal law



enforcement to quell protests in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere has encountered significant criticism throughout the summer. Federal agents without unique identifiers began appearing in protest hot spots earlier this summer, often in military-style gear. Some were completely unmarked, prompting significant backlash after video circulated of plainclothes agents snatching protesters off the street into unmarked cars.

Trump also infamously used federal law enforcement officers to forcibly clear a protest in front of the White House so he could pose for photographs

holding a Bible next to a nearby church. The decision drew criticism for Trump, even from members of his own party. Defense Secretary Mark Esper voiced concern last month over deploying federal agents dressed like military personnel on American streets, and a number of lawsuits were filed challenging the use of federal agents.

Trump, however, did not let any of the summer's criticism diminish his message of force. "We will NOT stand for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets," Trump wrote online Wednesday.

## U.S. blacklists 24 Chinese firms, escalating military and trade tensions

**The move is the latest push by the Trump administration to combat China.**

The Commerce Department on Wednesday blacklisted 24 Chinese companies, saying that they are helping the ruling Chinese Communist Party construct artificial islands in the South China Sea, which the U.S.

sees as a military provocation. Issue at stake: Commerce said that since 2013, the Chinese government has built more than 3,000 acres of islands in the international waters off its southeastern coast, including "air defense and anti-ship missile features."

This appears to be the first time the administration is targeting China's actions in the South China Sea, which has provoked U.S. partners in Southeast Asia like Taiwan and the Philippines. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has recently stepped up criticism of China's claims of outposts in the area. In 2016, the tribunal at

The Hague said China's claims violated international law.

Who's targeted: The 24 companies will be placed on the agency's "entity list," preventing the export of U.S. goods to Chinese companies. The firms

are largely dredging, shipbuilding, infrastructure and technology companies. The blacklisted firms include the state-owned China Communications Construction Company, one of the leading contractors in China's Belt and Road Initiative, the Communist Party's global infrastructure investment program.

"The PRC must not be allowed

to use [China Communications Construction Company] and other state-owned enterprises as weapons to impose an expansionist agenda," Pompeo said in a statement on Wednesday. Context:

Commerce last week put 38 affiliates of Chinese telecom giant Huawei, which the U.S. says enables Communist Party espionage, on the entity list. The department previously put 37 Chinese enterprises on the entity list for engaging in or enabling human rights abuses in the northwestern province of Xinjiang, home to an ethnic minority of Muslims. What's next: The move comes amid deteriorating relations with Beijing, which the president has blamed for the coronavirus pandemic to deflect from his unpopular handling of the virus at home.



## Houston police fatally shoot man who opened fire on motorist and officers



Houston police early Wednesday fatally shot a man who opened fire on a car carrying three civilians and at a patrol vehicle, the police chief said. Chief Art Acevedo described the incident, which occurred about 4:30 a.m. in the Hyde Park section, as an active shooter situation. The male suspect shot about four rounds at a Chevrolet Tahoe carrying three people and then fled, according to Acevedo. Investigators believe the suspect thought the Tahoe "was a police car coming," Acevedo said. Officers dispatched to the area heard gunshots and saw the suspect holding a silver revolver,

according to the police chief. "As they turned the corner, the suspect fired multiple rounds at those officers, striking the patrol car" carrying two officers, Acevedo said. SWAT negotiators attempted to engage the suspect for more than 30 minutes. At one point, the chief said, the suspect said he was "going to shoot officers and he raised his pistol." A SWAT officer fired a single shot and struck the suspect, who was rushed to a hospital, where he was later pronounced dead, Acevedo said. No one else was injured. There will be an internal investigation, according to Acevedo.

# Four American troops are wounded when Russian forces deliberately RAM

Four U.S. troops were injured after a Russian military vehicle deliberately rammed the vehicle they were driving following a tense high-speed confrontation in the east of Syria.

The U.S. service members have been diagnosed with mild concussion-like symptoms, Politico reported, citing a draft statement by U.S. Central Command.

National Security Council spokesman John Ulyot said in a statement that a Russian vehicle struck the American vehicle near Dayrck, in northeast Syria.

Video tweeted of the incident bearing Russian markings shows the drama that resulted in the apparent ramming, which was in a 'deconfliction zone' set up to

In it, a Russian helicopter can be seen overhead while military vehicles bearing U.S. and Russian flags circle.

A National Security Council official said two Russian helicopters flew above the Americans, and one of the aircraft was within about 70 feet of the vehicle

To deescalate the situation, the

coalition patrol departed the area,' Ulyot said. 'Unsafe and unprofessional actions like this represent a breach of deconfliction protocols, committed to by the United States and Russia in December 2019.'

While there have been several other recent incidents between the American and Russian troops who all patrol in eastern Syria, officials described this one as the most serious. U.S. troops are usually accompanied by members of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Two officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details of the incident that were not yet made public. One official said the incident happened deep inside the eastern Syria deconfliction zone, where Russian troops generally should not be present.

The officials said the incident is being discussed by senior officials from both countries who routinely work to prevent conflicts between troops in that area. U.S. and Russian commanders have frequent conversations to try to avoid contact between their troops there.

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke by

phone on Wednesday to Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the Russian General Staff. No details of the conversation were provided. Often the top U.S. and Russian military leaders do not publicly release the contents of their phone calls, so it's not clear if the incident was discussed.

A military scholar who reposted the video said U.S. forces appeared to be blocking the path of a Russian patrol in an open field. It was then the Russian vehicle side-swipe the American one.

The U.S. has several hundred troops in Syria, following a pullout President Trump announced. They are mostly in the east of the country.

The U.S. has supported Syrian Democratic Force in the conflict, while Russia has backed the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

The clash on the ground comes after U.S. and Russian diplomats have taken steps to avoid accidental military engagements between the two nuclear powers. The two sides negotiated in 2015 under the Obama administration over rules for the skies as both sides exercised air power in the



civil war.

The two sides have continued to maintain communication in an effort to avoid confrontations between the two superpowers.

Other videos appear to show a Russian helicopter hovering over U.S. forces in an attempt to make them disperse.

The U.S. vehicle in the encounter appears to be an MRAP, Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected, which is designed to provide protection against roadside bombs.

President Trump announced a pullout from northern Syria in 2019, but faced blowback from critics who said he was ceding the ground to Assad and yielding to Russian influence in the region. The video, which

allegedly occurred on Monday according to footage, emerged on the third day of the Republican National Convention.

It comes weeks after Trump faced political blowback after reports that the U.S. received intelligence that Russia was paying bounties to forces in Afghanistan for killing U.S. troops.

The White House said Trump was never briefed verbally on specific intelligence because it was not fully vetted, although the New York Times reported it was included in his daily intelligence brief. Trump said late last month that he has never raised the issue of Russian bounties with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

## Introducing the Markle Windsor Foundation!

**Prince Harry and Meghan Markle officially change the title of Sussex Royal to MWX Foundation after formally stepping away from The Firm**



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have officially changed the name of their Sussex Royal charity to the MWX Foundation.

The Duke, 35, and Duchess of Sussex, 39, agreed to stop using their 'Sussex Royal' brand after officially stepping away from The Firm on April 1 this year. Their departure - nicknamed Megxit - prompted talks with aides, which ended with the agreement that they would be unable to use the word 'royal' as part of any of new branding. Now paperwork has been published revealing the formal change of name for the

'Sussex Royal The Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex' to MWX Foundation was registered on 5 August. The name could be short for the Markle Windsor Foundation. At the end of July, Prince Harry and Meghan did an astonishing U-turn within just nine minutes by withdrawing a formal notice to change the name of their charitable foundation.

Paperwork for a formal winding-up order stated that the directors, who include Harry and Meghan, would be changing it to the MWX Foundation while it was being dissolved. A formal document to make the name change official -

called a Change of Name Notice - was then filed within hours of the details becoming public.

But just nine minutes later at 11.46am, a notification was sent by Companies House, saying that the same document had been withdrawn. Documents filed at Companies House also revealed that Meghan and five other directors of the foundation had stepped down from their positions, leaving Prince Harry as the sole director. Harry and Meghan agreed to stop using their 'Sussex Royal' brand after officially stepping away from The Firm on April 1 this year. Their departure - nicknamed Megxit - prompted talks with aides, which ended with the agreement that they would be unable to use the word 'royal' as part of any of new branding. This is not the first time the MWX brand has been linked to the couple after they established the company MWX Trading Ltd last August, naming

their lawyer, Gerrard Tyrrell, as its secretary. They registered it at Companies House and have already used the business to apply for trademarks, which included the name Travalyt. Sussex Royal was also the title of their Instagram page and their website, which still bear the name. The couple used their social media to put out visits, talks and speeches the couple were attending and delivering. They said of the July transition: 'The Duke and Duchess of Sussex do not plan to start a 'foundation', but rather intend to develop a new way to effect change and complement the efforts made by so many excellent foundations globally. 'The creation of this non-profit entity will be in addition to their cause driven work that they remain deeply committed to. 'While The Duke and Duchess

are focused on plans to establish a new non-profit organisation,

given the specific UK government rules surrounding use of the word 'Royal', it has been therefore agreed that their non-profit organisation will not utilise the name 'Sussex Royal' or any other iteration of 'Royal'. After announcing they were launching a new charity Archewell in the US back in April, the couple said they were 'looking forward' to getting started with the foundation, which will replace their Sussex Royal brand. The final stage in Sussex Royal's closure comes after the fallout from the Finding Freedom biography, which exposed the resentment and mistrust that led to Harry and Meghan quitting as working royals. Harry and Meghan have been reported to be planning to shift their emphasis on to helping other charitable endeavours and good causes such as their new Archewell foundation which still has to be properly launched.

# Hurricane Laura becomes Category 4 and will bring 'unsurvivable storm surge' that could damage buildings 30 miles inland in Texas and Louisiana



hours remain to protect life and property and all actions should be rushed to completion.'

Louisiana Gov John Bel Edwards said Hurricane Laura 'is shaping up to be just a tremendous storm'.

The NHC kept raising its estimate of Laura's storm surge, from 10 feet just a couple of days ago to twice that size. Satellite images show Laura has become 'a formidable hurricane' in recent hours.

'Some areas, when they wake up Thursday morning, they're not going to believe what happened,' said Stacy Stewart, a senior hurricane specialist. 'What doesn't get blown down by the wind could easily get knocked down by the rising ocean waters pushing well inland.'

A Category 4 hurricane can cause damage so catastrophic that power outages may last for months in places, and wide areas could be uninhabitable for weeks or months, posing a new

disaster relief challenge for a government already straining to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

Storm surge along the Gulf Coast could raise water levels to as high as 12 feet to 15 feet in Intracoastal City and Morgan City, Louisiana, and Laura was expected to drop 5 to 10 inches of rain over the region, the NHC said.

Weather experts say that Laura underwent what's known as 'rapid intensification', a phenomenon where a tropical cycle intensifies by at least 35mph in a 24-hour period.

Laura, located 200 miles south-southeast of Port Arthur on Wednesday afternoon, had maximum sustained winds of 140mph and was expected to pack winds of up to 145mph before landfall on Wednesday night.

'Heed the advice of your local authorities. If they tell you to go, go! Your life depends on it today,'

said Joel Cline, tropical program coordinator at the National Weather Service. 'It's a serious day and you need to listen to them.'

Hurricane warnings were issued from San Luis Pass, Texas, to Intracoastal City, Louisiana, and reached inland for 200 miles. Storm surge warnings were in effect from Freeport, Texas, to the mouth of the Mississippi River.

'Devastating wind damage will occur near where #Laura makes landfall in the hurricane warning area. Well-built homes may incur major damage, trees will be snapped or uprooted, and electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks,' the center added.

A National Weather Service meteorologist in Lake Charles, Louisiana - in the bullseye of Laura's projected path - took to Facebook Live to deliver an urgent warning for people living south of Interstate 10 in southwest Louisiana and

Hurricane Laura rapidly gained strength Wednesday to become a catastrophic Category 4 hurricane with 140mph winds, and is expected to bring an 'unsurvivable storm surge' that could damage homes and buildings 30 miles inland in Texas and Louisiana.

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) tweeted on Wednesday afternoon that an Air Force hurricane hunter aircraft has reported that Laura has become an 'extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane'. 'Catastrophic Storm Surge,

Extreme Winds, and Flash Flooding Expected Along the Northwest Gulf Coast Tonight,' the NHC wrote.

Shortly before that dire warning, the NHC said that the storm is likely to bring an 'unsurvivable storm surge with large and destructive waves' that will 'cause catastrophic damage from Sea Rim State Park, Texas, to Intracoastal City, Louisiana, including Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes'.

'This surge could penetrate up to 30 miles inland from the immediate coastline. Only a few

## NYC: STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS!

New Yorkers working together can slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in New York City.



### PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.



### STAY HOME IF SICK

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever, sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, seek care from your doctor.
- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.



### PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

- If you have chronic conditions like lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary gatherings and events.
- If you have family or friends who have one of these conditions, do not visit them if you feel sick.



### REDUCE OVERCROWDING

- Consider telecommuting.
- Stagger work hours, starting earlier or later.
- Walk or bike to work, if possible.
- If the train is too packed, wait for the next one.

Text COVID to 692-692 for real-time updates or visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/coronavirus).

Call 311 to report harassment or discrimination.

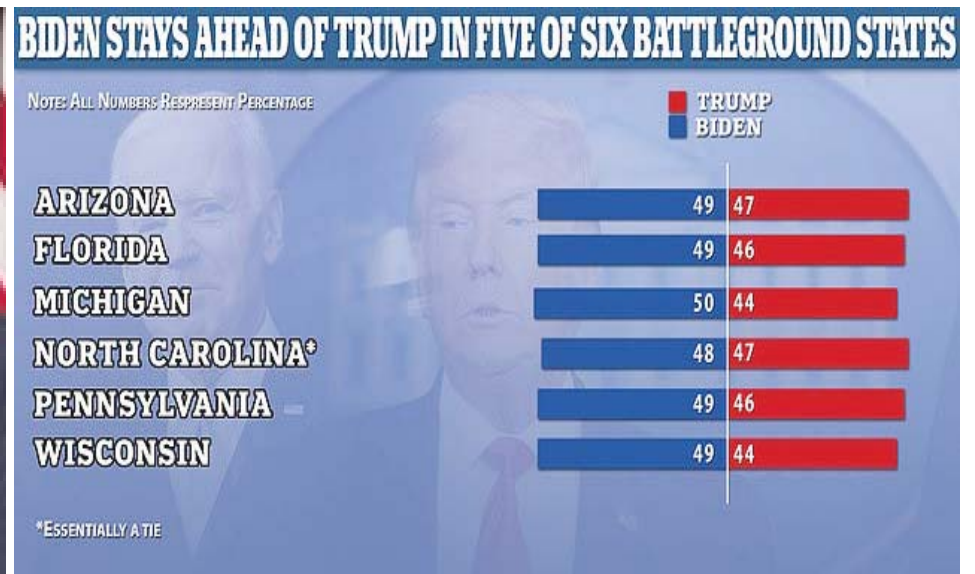
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# Joe Biden stays ahead of Donald Trump in five of six battleground states after DNC in new poll - but president's approval rating goes up and coronavirus concern goes down



Democrat Joe Biden is ahead in five of six key swing states after last week's Democratic National Convention, but new polling also finds that President Donald Trump's approval has bumped up. A survey from CNBC/Change Research has Biden head of Trump in Pennsylvania - where Biden was born - Arizona, Florida, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The two White House rivals are essentially tied - Biden with 48 per cent, Trump with 47 per cent - in North Carolina, where the Republican National Convention was scheduled to be. Instead the GOP only held festivities in Charlotte on Monday and most convention speakers have delivered addresses from Washington, D.C., instead, due to the coronavirus pandemic. New polling found that swing

state voters are still seriously concerned about the pandemic, but that metric is going down. Sixty-nine per cent of likely voters from these six key states said two weeks ago they had serious concerns about the coronavirus. Now that number stands at 66 per cent. Additionally, two weeks ago 49 per cent of swing state voters said they had 'very serious'

concerns about the coronavirus. That share has decreased to 45 per cent. Meanwhile, Trump's approval rating is moving back up. In the last two weeks the president has bumped up from 46 per cent approval to 48 per cent approval. His disapproval rating moved from 54 per cent who disapproved to 52 per cent. Pollsters interviewed 4,904

people across the six states from Friday - the day after Biden's DNC speech - until Sunday, the day before the RNC kicked off. The polls have a plus or minus 1.4 per cent margin of error. About seven in 10 polled gave Biden high marks for his Thursday night Democratic nomination acceptance speech delivered from his adopted hometown of Wilmington, Delaware.

## Trump knocks protesters against racial injustice during New Hampshire rally



Fresh from accepting the Republican nomination, US President Donald Trump had harsh words for anti-racism protesters on Friday during a campaign stop in the politically important state of New Hampshire. Addressing a crowd in an airport hangar, Trump called the demonstrators who sought to disrupt his White House speech on Thursday night "thugs" and said Senator Rand Paul could have died when he was swarmed by protesters afterwards. Paul said on Friday he was attacked by an "angry mob" of more than 100 people near the White House and had to be rescued by the police.

"He'd either be in very bad shape, or dead, and that would include his wife, if those policemen didn't happen to be there," Trump said of the Republican senator. The president has emphasized a "law and order" theme to motivate his political base and attract more voters as he trails former Vice President Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential nominee, in national polls ahead of the Nov. 3 election. "You know what I say? Protesters, your ass. I don't talk about my ass," he said. "They're not protesters. Those aren't protesters. Those are anarchists, they're agitators, they're rioters, they're looters." Trump has been criticized for not showing empathy in the wake of shootings and killings of

Black men by police, including George Floyd, who died in police custody in Minneapolis in May, sparking anti-racism demonstrations worldwide. New protests erupted in Kenosha, Wisconsin, this week after police officers shot Jacob Blake, another African-American man, multiple times in front of his children. He survived. Thousands of people took part in a march in Washington on Friday to denounce racism. Trump has not commented extensively about Blake, but he spoke extensively about protesters on Friday without specifying which demonstration he was talking about. "They're just looking for trouble. This has nothing to do with George Floyd, has nothing to do with anything. They don't even know who George Floyd is," he said. Biden and his running mate, vice presidential nominee Senator Kamala Harris, said Trump was making America less safe with his rhetoric and his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. "The President incites violence, inspires white-supremacist shooters, and his failed Covid response is costing

thousands of lives per day. When you look at the world right now, ask yourself: Do you feel safe in Trump's America?" Biden tweeted. "He (Trump) has been obsessed, I think, with spreading fear and using division to protect his own ego, and more fundamentally to erode the foundations of the democracy that he swore to defend," Harris said at a fundraiser on Friday. Trump, whose speech to the Republican National Convention was low key compared to his rally appearances, seemed to find his footing in New Hampshire, a state he lost narrowly to Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016 and where he is trailing Biden this year. He went over some of his favourite themes, including his insistence that Mexico would pay for a wall along the US border and that Democrats would try to slash funding for law enforcement. Biden has rejected calls from the left to "defund" the police, but Trump has erroneously suggested that is a policy Biden would embrace.

Trump, who has criticized Biden for campaigning mostly from his Delaware home because of the pandemic, intends to travel extensively in the coming months to boost his momentum. He has not been able to hold his signature large rallies for most of the virus outbreak. A June rally at an indoor arena in Tulsa, Oklahoma, attracted a crowd that was well below capacity. The area experienced an uptick in coronavirus cases for weeks after the event. Trump had to cancel a July rally in New Hampshire over concerns about a tropical storm off the East Coast. Biden expects his in-person campaign travel to pick up after Labor Day on Sept. 7, telling lawyers at an online fundraising event on Thursday he was considering traveling to battleground states including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Arizona. "We're going to get out and meet people where it matters, not at irresponsible rallies or staged for TV to boost egos, but real people's communities, in real local businesses, in their lives," Biden said.

# Pence accepts nomination, calls Biden Trojan horse for radical left



Vice-president Mike Pence on Wednesday accepted the Republican party's renomination, calling Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee for President, a "Trojan horse" for the radical left wing of his party, reprising the Trump campaign's chief argument against the challenger.

Republicans are framing the November 3 election as a choice between themselves as protectors of law and order against an onslaught by the radical wing of the Democratic party, which, they argue has a stranglehold on Biden, on this and the issues of taxation,

education, and climate change. Pence deployed that line of attack as the United States struggled to come to grips with yet another shooting of a black man by a white police officer. This time in Kenosha, Wisconsin, which led to the killing of two persons during clashes between anti-racism protestors and armed white militiamen.

"When you consider their agenda, it's clear: Joe Biden would be nothing more than a Trojan horse for a radical left," Pence said in his prepared remarks, seeking to discredit the Democratic nominee in the eyes of American voters by tying him

to the extreme wing of his party. Pence delivered the acceptance speech from Fort McHenry, a historical monument in Baltimore, an hour's drive from Washington DC. Its survival against unrelenting night-long bombardment by the British navy in 1812 inspired the American national anthem "The Star Spangled Banner".

"Last week, Joe Biden didn't say one word about the violence and chaos engulfing cities across this country," Pence said on the third day of the convention, attacking Biden. The Trump administration, on the other hand, he added, "will have law and order on the streets of this country for every American of every race and creed and colour."

Pence went on to defend the president and his policies. "He does things in his own way, on his own terms," he said, seeking to make sense of and explain Trump's chaotic presidency, as had First Lady Melania Trump in her speech to the convention on Tuesday.

# UN chief to renew call to India, G20 nations to invest in sustainable transition post-Covid

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres will renew his call to India and other G20 countries to invest in a clean, sustainable transition as they recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, during his virtual address to The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

Guterres will deliver the 19th

sustainable future', Guterres will renew "his call on G20 countries, including India, to invest in a clean, sustainable transition as they recover from the Covid-19 pandemic". G20 consists of 19 individual countries -- including the US, Russia, China, Japan, Australia, Saudi -- plus the European Union. Dujarric said Guterres is expected to say that as governments mobilise trillions of dollars to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic,



Darbari Seth Memorial lecture on August 28 organised by TERI, a global think-tank focusing on a broad range of sustainable development and climate-related issues, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters on Wednesday.

In his lecture titled 'The rise of renewables: shining a light on a

their decisions will have climate consequences for decades. While Guterres will deliver the memorial lecture, India's Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar will preside and deliver the presidential address. The annual lecture was initiated by TERI in 2002 in memory of the institute's founder Darbari Seth.

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## मोदी का एलान-ए-जंग

# बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा पाक

नयी दिल्ली 28 अगस्त (आईएनए) - भारत के प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने सोमवार को पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान को एक 'एलान-ए-जंग' (युद्ध घोषणा) का संकेत देते हुए कहा कि भारत 'बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा'। मोदी ने कहा कि भारत 'बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा'।

मोदी ने कहा कि भारत 'बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा'। मोदी ने कहा कि भारत 'बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा'। मोदी ने कहा कि भारत 'बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा'।

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# ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

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# Global coronavirus cases top 24 million

**Moderna Inc. presented new safety data from an early trial that provides the first evidence that its vaccine stimulates the immune systems of older people. Abbott Laboratories won U.S. clearance for a 15-minute Covid test that will be priced at just \$5.**

Worldwide Covid-19 infections exceeded 24 million as cases continued to climb in Europe and Asia, with Italy, France and South Korea reporting the most new infections in months. New U.S. testing guidelines drew criticism from state leaders and public-health experts, while a top Trump administration official defended the move.

Moderna Inc. presented new safety data from an early trial that provides the first evidence that its vaccine stimulates the immune systems of older people. Abbott Laboratories won US clearance for a 15-minute Covid test that will be priced at just \$5.

The World Economic Forum postponed its annual gathering of business and political leaders in the Swiss resort of Davos to early summer 2021. The European Union's trade chief stepped down after growing criticism that he broke virus regulations in his

native Ireland.

**Key Developments: Japan Virus Jump Hitting Economy**  
Japanese Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said a jump in virus cases from July and heavy rains are dragging on the nation's economy. He told a parliamentary committee the economy's overall recovery trend is not yet back. Nishimura said on Wednesday a second wave of the virus now spreading in Japan is bigger than the one that caused the government to declare a state of emergency in April.

**South Korea Sees Most Cases Since March**

South Korea had 441 more coronavirus cases confirmed in the past 24 hours, the biggest gain since early March, according to data from the Korea Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. That compared to 320 the previous day. Of the new cases, 154 were confirmed in

Seoul, 100 in Gyeonggi province and 59 in Incheon.

**Vice Finance Minister Kim Yongbeom** said he believed that the nation can handle the resurgence of the coronavirus with current social distancing rules. Still, so-called Level 3 rules would be needed if the situation worsens, he added at a briefing. **WHO Team Didn't Visit Wuhan, FT Says**

A World Health Organization team that was meant to investigate the origin of the coronavirus concluded their trip to China without a visit to Wuhan, the Financial Times reported, citing the UN agency. The WHO told the FT that its advance team had remote conversations with senior scientists from the Wuhan Institute of Virology but declined to comment on whether the team had planned to visit the city. The organization said the initial

team had been laying groundwork before a larger international investigation but didn't provide details on whether the bigger task-force would travel to Wuhan. China's foreign ministry called concerns over the credibility of the inquiry "totally unjustified," according to the FT.

**Singapore to Provide Tests for China-Bound Travelers**

Singapore will offer Covid-19 tests for travelers to China prior to departure, in an effort to align with new Chinese requirements aimed at stemming the growing number of imported virus cases.

The new travel rules were instituted after China earlier registered dozens of passengers arriving from the Singapore who tested positive for the coronavirus. In response, the world's second largest economy had temporarily suspended a number of flights from Singapore

as a precautionary measure.

**Texas Deaths Rise, Hospitalizations Decline**

Texas virus deaths rose by 229, a number that has remained persistently high as new cases and hospitalizations have declined since July. A total of 11,805 people have died from Covid-19, according to state death certificate data, since the outbreak began. Cases climbed to 592,137 after the state added another 5,507 to the tally Wednesday, including some backlogged data. Hospitalizations declined to 4,806, continuing a two-month downward trend.

**Abbott Cleared for \$5, 15-Minute Test-A 15-minute Covid test from Abbott Laboratories that will be priced at just \$5 won emergency authorization for use in the U.S., a breakthrough that could ease the bottleneck that has crimped much of the nation's testing capacity.**

*"Police and Community Working Together"*



## COVID-19 HOTEL PROGRAM

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### Isolation Hotel Program for Those with COVID-19

COVID-19 is extremely contagious, meaning that it is easily transmitted from one person to another. If you tested positive for COVID-19 or think you might have it because of your symptoms, it is very important that you do not come in close contact with others, including people you may live with. This is called "self-isolation." You may qualify to self-isolate in a hotel, free of charge, for up to 14 days if you do not have a safe place to self-isolate. This can mean:

- Your home does not have space for you to stay six feet away from others
- You share rooms or a bathroom
- You live with someone who is vulnerable

Hotel rooms are also available for New Yorkers without COVID-19 but who live with someone who has COVID-19.

For more information click here: [www1.nyc.gov/covid-19-hotel-program](http://www1.nyc.gov/covid-19-hotel-program)

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# How 'Big Brother' is watching you, all the time

By doing this, it was able to discern what many Americans were thinking, what kind of leadership they were seeking and what policies appealed to them. These allegations were not fully substantiated, but it affected the company adversely. Facebook also had to pay a huge price for its actions, its shares nosedived by \$119 billion in just one day. Private information barriers being breached is becoming a real danger. Due to the spread of Covid-19, different smartphone apps have become almost mandatory in almost every country. The data collected through these apps, if used for anything other than medical and scientific purposes, could seriously compromise the privacy of the individual.

Until now, people were monitored through their physical movements and views expressed on social media. Now, for the first time, it would seem that your medical parameters could reach unknown corporates. They could ascertain who is a diabetic, hypertensive or what allergies a

person could have. This can be abused, especially in places with a weak democracy or one without a robust and independent judiciary.

This debate actually began in the



mid-1990s and was initiated by Gabriel Baiman, a researcher at the University of Haifa, Israel. After extensive research, he found that 90% of the recruitment to terrorist organisations was done through social platforms.

After a thorough reading of what topics people read, which videos they had seen, how they expressed their thoughts, what sort of messages they exchanged with loved ones and

others, researchers were able to get an accurate picture of what was going on in the minds of young people.

This information made it easier to influence them. It is easier to

sow the seeds of hate. Jihadi John, an ISIS member from Britain, who became notorious for his beheading videos, was recruited through social media. A number of young Indians were also misled by propaganda on social media platforms.

There was once a time when social media was the only window into people's thoughts. This has changed over time. Various new avenues are

available for people to pry into our personal space.

This moves one step ahead when one uses these platforms to even acquire information about our whereabouts. Everything and everyone is online. There is no guarantee that this data will not reach a terrorist organisation, an anarchist group, a foreign government, rogue government officials or predatory drug companies. The Russian writer, philosopher and political prisoner, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, narrated a surreal story about the Soviet Union in his book *The Gulag Archipelago*. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin was delivering a speech at a conference after which the audience broke into applause. Every person in the room began clapping wildly, with each person waiting for someone else to take the initiative to stop. At last, the director of a paper factory decided enough was enough. He stopped clapping and sat down, and right after that everyone else followed suit. The same night, he was arrested and sent to Siberia

for the rest of his life. Now imagine this scenario. If Stalin had the means to ascertain how many people listening to him were truly interested in what he had to say, many more may have been exiled to Siberia. If North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-un, could determine how many people in his council of ministers agreed with his policies, there is no telling what would happen to them. If physical indicators such as blood pressure could be monitored to gauge reactions to changes in government policy, people could be controlled more closely by the government. Confidential information falling into the wrong hands, or unknown hands, is a huge danger to all citizens of democratic countries.

In his seminal novel, 1984, George Orwell wrote of "Big Brother" who was watching everyone. Today, Big Brother has acquired much more power and can look right into your body and record your vital functions. A scary thought if there ever was one.

## Does marijuana use really cause psychotic disorders?

It is true that people diagnosed with psychosis are more likely to report current or prior use of marijuana than people without psychosis. The easy conclusion to draw from that is that marijuana use caused an increased risk of psychosis, and it is that easy answer that Berenson has seized upon.

However, this ignores evidence that psychotic behavior is also associated with higher rates of tobacco use, and with the use of stimulants and opioids. Do all these things "cause" psychosis, or is there another, more likely answer? In our many decades of college teaching, one of the most important things we have tried to impart to our students is the distinction between correlation (two things are statistically associated) and causation (one thing causes another). For example, the wearing of light clothing is more likely during the same months as higher sales of ice-cream, but we do not believe that either causes the other.

In our extensive 2016 review of the literature we concluded that those individuals who are susceptible to developing



psychosis (which usually does not appear until around the age of 20) are also susceptible to other forms of problem behavior, including poor school performance, lying, stealing and early and heavy use of various substances, including marijuana. Many of these behaviors appear earlier in development, but the fact that one thing occurs before another also is not proof of causation. (One of the standard logical fallacies taught in logic classes: after this, therefore because of this.) It is also worth noting that 10-fold increases in marijuana use in the UK from the 1970s to the 2000s were not associated with an increase in

rates of psychosis over this same period, further evidence that changes in cannabis use in the general population are unlikely to contribute to changes in psychosis. Evidence from research tells us that aggression and violence are highly unlikely outcomes of marijuana use. Based on our own laboratory research, during which we have given thousands of doses of marijuana to people - carefully studying their brain, behavioral, cognitive and social responses - we have never seen a research participant become violent or aggressive while under the influence of the drug, as Berenson alleges. The main effects of smoking

marijuana are contentment, relaxation, sedation, euphoria and increased hunger. Still, very high THC concentrations can cause mild paranoia, visual and/or auditory distortions, but even these effects are rare and usually seen only in very inexperienced users.

There is a broader point that needs to be made. In the 1930s, numerous media reports exaggerated the connection between marijuana use by black people and violent crimes. During congressional hearings concerning regulation of the drug, Harry J Anslinger, commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, declared: "Marijuana is the most violence-causing drug in the history of mankind." He was compelling. But unfortunately, these fabrications were used to justify racial discrimination and to facilitate passage of the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937, which essentially banned the drug. As we see, the reefer madness rhetoric of the past has not just evaporated; it continued and has evolved, reinventing itself perhaps even more powerfully today.

There have been several recent

cases during which police officers cited the fictitious dangers posed by cannabis to justify their deadly actions. Philando Castile, of St Paul, Minnesota, in 2016; Michael Brown, of Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014; and Keith Lamont Scott, of Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2016 were all killed by police who used some version of this bogus defense. Ramarley Graham, Trayvon Martin, Romain Brisbon and Sandra Bland all also had their lives cut short as a result of an interaction with law enforcement (or a proxy) initiated under the pretense of marijuana use suspicion. Back in the 1930s, when there were virtually no scientific data on marijuana, ignorant and racist officials publicized exaggerated anecdotal accounts of its harms and were believed. Almost 90 years and hundreds of studies later, there is no excuse for these exaggerations or the inappropriate conclusions drawn by Berenson. Neither account has any place in serious discussions of science or public policy - which means Berenson doesn't, either.

# 5 Myths About the Postal Crisis

to run an efficient mail system. People move, mail flows change. Mailboxes might seem like permanent fixtures, but they've never stayed in place forever.

Between 1985 and 2011, the number of blue mail collection boxes in Seattle was reduced from 400 to 160. Nationwide, 14,000 mail collection boxes were removed by the USPS between 2012 and 2017, according to the Postal Service Inspector General. Were Presidents Bush I, Clinton, and Obama also trying to rig the vote? The question answers itself. The same holds true for sorting machines. As far back as 2012, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office said the Post Office needed to reduce its paper mail sorting network to respond to the decreased mail volume. Which the USPS has been doing for years. And in the 2018 election the Postal Service was given high scores by its Inspector General for its delivery of election mail.

Trump might be trying to cast doubt on the election for his own reasons, but if this were a plot to sway the actual results via the Postal Service, it wouldn't make much sense. Studies show voting by mail does not benefit one party or the other. Members of the military stationed overseas, hardly a bastion of rabid liberal voters, vote by mail. And if the President wanted to win electoral votes, why would he bother to have mailboxes pilfered from a solidly blue state like Oregon?

Myth 2: Actually, everything is fine.

The fact is, we just don't know how well USPS' operations are working-and that itself is one of the issues. There are anecdotes aplenty of breakdowns. Individuals not getting mail for a week at a time, instead of six days per week per the law. Your author had a parcel handed to the Postal Service by a Miami retailer who paid for 2-day delivery. The box took 16 days to arrive in Washington, D.C. (Thankfully, the contents were a mushroom growing kit rather than critical prescription drugs-or the live chicks that have been arriving dead in Maine.)

The new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, himself acknowledged his new rules limiting overtime and requiring letter carriers to get out on their delivery routes sooner have had "unintended consequences."

But we also have mailing industry experts saying that the postal system is not being crippled. One mailing data company told the Washington Post, "There doesn't appear to be a systemic problem." Another mail analytics company leader said "we have not seen a systemic degradation in service." Additionally, representatives of for-profit and not-for-profit mailers recently told the Wall Street Journal they saw nothing to be concerned about in DeJoy's actions.

So is there a problem, or not? That's where the Postal Service's transparency issues come in. Much of the recent freakout could have been avoided if the USPS publicly reported its trendline data on network rationalization, mail speeds and delivery reliability. The Postal Service does issue all sorts of reports on its operations and provides data-rich briefings for mailers. But the agency isn't required to-and doesn't bother to-share its topline data in formats that are easy to digest. It's very hard for citizens, the media or even congressional overseers to see whether service is getting better or worse, and whether the USPS was removing unusual numbers of mail processing machines and collection boxes, or just making responsible adjustments.

Myth 3: Louis DeJoy is a Trump stooge sent in to cripple the USPS.

The postmaster general has been tarred as a stooge of President Trump-a GOP fundraiser whom Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has blasted as having "no prior postal experience."

In fact, DeJoy has decades of experience in the logistics industry, and the Postal Service is deeply enmeshed in the nation's larger logistics system. USPS pays FedEx to fly mail; private shippers pay USPS to carry parcels the final mile. DeJoy has spent years very successfully navigating the business of moving stuff from place to place. Contrast that record with the last two postmaster generals. They were good people who rose through the ranks of the USPS

to lead the organization, but neither could arrest the Post Office's long slide into crises. It makes sense to bring in a private-sector leader.

Treating DeJoy as the tip of a Trumpy tentacle also ignores the fact that Trump has no direct control over DeJoy. Unlike other major agency heads, the postmaster general is not appointed by the President. He is selected by the USPS Board of Governors, whose six members include four Republicans and two Democrats. Yes, Trump appointed all these governors, but the Senate approved them all by bipartisan votes, and they have seven-year terms.

But what about that Friday night massacre, you may ask, where DeJoy cleaned house and surrounded himself with toadies? It didn't happen. DeJoy, like the previous postmaster general, rearranged some boxes at the top of the USPS' organization chart and mostly moved longtime USPS executives from one position to another. So far only thing DeJoy has done that was remotely Trumpy was ask for a rate hike on parcels. For a couple years now the president has been claiming USPS is losing money on parcels. (Which is either true or false, depending on how you do the accounting. The law on how USPS does this is vague.) DeJoy has moved to raise parcel prices-

but only a little, and nowhere near the quadrupling of prices that the president demanded. And DeJoy's action looks all the more banal when one realizes that private-sector shippers already have added their own COVID-19 surcharge to deliveries.

Myth 4: The USPS needs more money to handle all the election ballots it's about to deliver-and Trump is blocking it.

Congressional Democrats may well force a vote this weekend to give the Postal Service between \$10 billion and \$25 billion. They tried to do this in early March, as well, claiming that the agency was going to go broke due to a plunge in mail volume caused by COVID-19.

For his part, Trump last week said Democrats "want \$25 billion, billion, for the Post Office. Now they need that money in order to have the post office work so it can take all of these millions and millions of ballots." And Trump said he wouldn't let the USPS have the money.

Both sides are talking nonsense. The Postal Service is cash flush. It has \$13 billion in its Treasury account, more than it has had in years. The flood of parcels into the Post Office during COVID-19 has lifted the USPS' third-quarter revenues higher than last year by \$550 million. The CARES Act, signed by Trump in late March, also gave the agency an additional \$10 billion borrowing line from the Treasury.

The Postal Service also doesn't need an emergency appropriation from Congress to carry election ballots. The president made a "wet,

hot mess" here. Rather, it is state and local elections officials who need a heap of money to purchase postage for the surge in absentee voting and to tighten up election security.

Myth debunked, there are two real perils. First, the coronavirus is hitting postal workers. If the virus surges in November, when flu and other bugs begin to proliferate, the mail really could slow down. And second, while the USPS has more than enough mail processing capacity to handle an election, voting by mail can still get tripped up. Many states and localities allow voters to request an absentee ballot be mailed to them just days before the election. This raises the specter of the USPS getting a massive crush of ballots dropped on them late and with little notice. This is exactly what happened in New York in June, when the Postal Service had 30,000 absentee ballots dumped on it the day before the primary. To avoid a repeat of this disaster, before DeJoy's arrival the USPS reached out to states to urge them to get ballots in the mail early so as not to disenfranchise voters. The USPS later warned against putting ballots dropped in the mail at the last second with marketing mail postage, which can take up to 10 days to deliver. But there is only so much the Postal Service can do. The ball is mostly in the court of state officials and election workers, who need to do all they can to flatten the election mail curve.

## Pulwama Attack: The 23-Year-Old Woman Who Helped The Terrorists

The NIA chargesheet states that Insha Jan used to pass on information about the movement of security forces to Umar Farooq, the nephew of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar, a terror mastermind wanted in India for the 26/11 attacks. Masood Azhar is named as the key conspirator in the Pulwama terror.

The NIA chargesheet says Umar Farooq infiltrated into India on April 14, 2018, along with four other terrorists. "We are also probing the Jhajar Kotli case in which some more terrorists crossed over. We arrested two terror operatives

who revealed how many terrorists they had helped cross over to India. Subsequent investigations revealed that the duo had helped Umar Farooq and four others infiltrate into India," revealed an officer handling the Pulwama attack case.

Umar Farooq, he says, managed to reach south Kashmir and started participating in small terror related incidents and activating more terrorists. "It's only after his real brother Ibrahim Haider was killed in an encounter in October 2018 that he received directions from Pakistan to do something big," the officer said. Umar Farooq kept visiting Insha Jan's home. The NIA says in its

charge-sheet that the video released by Jaish claiming responsibility for the attack was shot at her residence.

"The video has the voice of Sameer Dar and shows Fidayeen Adil Dar (the suicide bomber). It was shot for two days - January 28-29 2019. Sameer's voiceover was okayed but Adil was not confident enough, so their lip sync was not matching. After a lot of retakes they managed to shoot the video properly. It was then WhatsApped to Pakistan where it was improvised and then sent back. The video was released after the attack," the officer said.

# Laura victims may go weeks without power; US deaths reach 14

The Louisiana coastline devastated by Hurricane Laura began a long and gloomy recovery Friday as hundreds of thousands of people still without water and power confronted the possibility that basic services may not return for weeks or even longer. The number of dead climbed to at least 14.

A day after the Category 4 storm hit, more bodies emerged in the aftermath in Louisiana and neighboring Texas. The deaths included five people killed by fallen trees and one person who drowned in a boat. Eight people

died from carbon monoxide poisoning due to unsafe operation of generators, including three inside a Texas pool hall, where authorities say the owner had let seven Vietnamese shrimp boat laborers and homeless men take shelter. The other four were in critical condition.

The lack of essential resources was grim for the many evacuated residents eager to return.

Chad Peterson planned to board up a window and head to Florida. "There's no power.

There's no water. There's no utilities," he said.

Thousands of people who heeded dire warnings and fled the Gulf Coast returned to homes without roofs, roads littered with debris and the likelihood of a harsh recovery that could take months.

Lawrence "Lee" Faulk came back to a home with no roof in hard-hit Cameron Parish, which was littered with downed power lines. His metal storage building, 24 feet square, was thrown into a neighbor's oak trees.

"We need help," Faulk said.

"We need ice, water, blue tarps - everything that you would associate with the storm, we need it. Like two hours ago."

The White House said President Donald Trump would visit the region Saturday and survey the damage.

Simply driving in Lake Charles, a city of 80,000 residents that sustained some of the worst damage, was a feat. Power lines and trees blocked paths or created one-lane roads that drivers had to navigate with oncoming traffic. Street signs

were snapped off their perches or dangled, and no stoplights worked, making it a trust exercise with those sharing the roads. Mayor Nic Hunter cautioned that there was no timetable for restoring electricity and that water-treatment plants "took a beating," resulting in barely a trickle of water coming out of most faucets. "If you come back to Lake Charles to stay, make sure you understand the above reality and are prepared to live in it for many days, probably weeks," Hunter wrote on Facebook.

# Biden snags 'Keep America Great' domain in latest act of Trump trolling

**The Democrat's campaign recently learned the web domain was available and snagged it.**

After trolling Republicans throughout their convention, the Biden campaign has pulled its final act of the week: acquiring the web domain KeepAmericaGreat.com. When Trump launched his reelection campaign last year, he rolled out the "Keep America Great" as its official new slogan with great fanfare. But the Biden campaign recently learned the web domain was available and snagged it.

The site now lays out a top-to-bottom rebuke to the Trump administration, including his handling of coronavirus. "Promises Made, Promises Kept Broken," the site's home page screams. "Trump isn't looking for a second term," it charges. "He's looking for

a do-over."

Trump mused last year about adopting the "Keep America Great" campaign slogan.

"How do you give up the greatest theme of all time with a new theme?" Trump said last year, of switching from "Make America Great Again" to "Keep America Great." "If I lose, people are going to say what a mistake that was. But we're not going to lose, so it's not going to matter."

Then coronavirus struck, the economy collapsed and racial strife enveloped the country. Amid the crises earlier this summer, the Trump campaign toyed with another rebranding. But "Keep America Great" hats

are still selling for \$25 a pop.

"You can buy all the domain names you want, but Joe Biden can't ever buy a way out of his 47 years' worth of failure in elected office," Trump campaign spokesman Hogan Gidley said in response to the domain purchase.

Team Trump previously pulled something similar on Biden, purchasing the todosconbiden.com domain when Biden announced its Latino outreach program, dubbed "Todos Con Biden."

The domain play was the Democrats' latest attempt at counterprogramming during the GOP event. Tonight, Biden will air a two-minute ad ahead of



convention programming that includes a not-so-veiled clip of Trump struggling to walk down a ramp, followed by scenes of a vibrant Biden bicycling and jogging up stairs. It will run on all the major networks and over the weekend in battleground states.

The Biden campaign kicked off the week by announcing "Republicans for Biden," a group led by Jeff Flake and

including more than two dozen former members of Congress. The campaign rolled out a series of Republican endorsements during the week, including Justice Department and ethics appointees as well as former staffers for the late Sen. John McCain, 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney and former President George W. Bush.

# India reports 1,000 Covid deaths on third consecutive day

**On Thursday, the country saw the biggest spike in the number of Covid-19 cases reported in a single day so far, with 76,870 samples testing positive for the viral disease**

India reported around a 1,000 new deaths for the third consecutive day on Thursday, taking the total number of patients that has succumbed to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) so far in the country to 61,690.

The first death in India was reported on March 12.

On Thursday, the country saw the biggest spike in the number of Covid-19 cases reported in a single day so far, with 76,870 samples testing positive for the viral disease. It was also the second consecutive day that the country reported at least 75,000 new

cases.

Maharashtra continues to report the maximum number of Covid-19-related deaths in the country, with 355 deaths on Thursday alone, taking the total number of deaths in the state to 23,444.

Another extremely affected state in terms of death toll is Tamil Nadu, with 6,948 cumulative deaths reported so far, and 109 new deaths reported in a single day. Karnataka reported the second-highest (141) new deaths, taking the death toll in

the state to 5,232.

Maharashtra also has the maximum of Covid-19 positive cases in the country as 14,857 people tested positive in the state on Thursday.

Andhra Pradesh is a close second with 10,621 cases reported in a single day, followed by Karnataka with 9,386 cases. As the number of Covid-19 cases and deaths is not going down, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Thursday directed states to focus on districts reporting a high case fatality, and the urgent need for them



to refine as well as strengthen approach and strategies relating to testing, contact-tracing, surveillance, containment, home isolation, availability of ambulances, hospital beds, oxygen, treatment protocols, etc. "There are some

states with certain districts that are not performing well; there is a need to look into specific problems of those districts to be able to better contain the disease spread," said a senior health ministry official, requesting not to be identified.

# Trump paints Biden as a 'Radical' candidate and a Danger to America

President accepts Republican presidential nomination in event staged at White House, raising ethical concerns

Against a backdrop of a global pandemic, heightened racial tensions, and widespread unemployment, Donald Trump framed his Democratic rival Joe Biden as the real danger to the country's safety and economic welfare in his address to the Republican convention on Thursday.

Accepting the party's presidential nomination ahead of November's elections, Trump argued for more than an hour that his administration had accomplished everything it had set out to do and warned that a Biden presidency could be ruinous.

"This is the most important election in the history of our country," Trump told an audience of around 1,500 supporters and officials on the South Lawn of the White House, raising concerns over the ethics of holding a political rally at the site, and over the apparent lack of social distancing measures.

"At no time before have voters faced a clearer choice between two parties, two visions, two philosophies, or two agendas." Trump went on to excoriate the Democratic party and argue that the choice for voters is between a "law and order" president who has a record of unmatched accomplishments, and a "socialist" opposition party and "radical" candidate eager to bring anarchy to the streets.

"Your vote will decide whether we protect law abiding Americans, or whether we give free reign to violent anarchists, agitators, and criminals who threaten our citizens, Trump said.

"And this election will decide whether we will defend the American way of life, or whether we allow a radical movement to completely dismantle and destroy it.

"At the Democrat national convention, Joe Biden and his party repeatedly assailed America as a land of racial, economic, and social injustice," Trump said. "So tonight, I ask you a very simple question: how can the Democrat party ask to lead our country when it spends so much time tearing down our country?"

Trump delivered his speech in front of a line of flags on a stage



at the White House, a decision that raised questions over whether doing so would be violating the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activity while on duty. Though the president is exempt from that law, government officials are not. "It certainly breaches any norms for just good government, the idea of mixing politics with government resources," Daniel Jacobson, a former Obama administration attorney, told the Guardian.

Trump's remarks were the capstone of a night during which speakers focused on national security and policing, describing the country as rife with chaos and lawlessness in the streets because of Democratic leadership.

Speakers also repeatedly stressed that Trump was a longstanding friend of the African American community and minorities. Most speakers of color at the convention devoted significant portions of their speeches to stressing that Trump is not a racist.

Few mentioned the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 180,000 Americans dead and more than 5.8m infected, far more than any other country in the world. "If we had listened to Joe, hundreds of thousands more Americans would have died," Trump claimed, ignoring widespread criticism of his administration's response to the pandemic. "I did what our political establishment never expected and could never forgive, breaking the cardinal rule of Washington politics," Trump said. "I kept my promises."

Trump has kept around half of his 2016 campaign pledges, according to Politifact. Earlier in the campaign cycle Trump struggled when directly asked what he would do if elected to a second term in office, but laid some plans out on Thursday.

Trump promised, if re-elected, to create 10 million jobs within the first year of his second term. He

said more police would be hired and more judges appointed, and he promised to defend social security and protections for Americans with pre-existing conditions, despite his administration's moves to weaken those programs during his current term.

He promised to reduce taxes and cut regulations "at levels not seen before", adding: "We will fully restore patriotic education to our schools, and always protect free speech on college campuses." He also said the country would land a woman on the moon, and "the United States will be the first nation to plant a flag on Mars".

Trump delivered his speech amid heightened tensions across the country over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a black man who was repeatedly shot in front of his children and left paralyzed by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sunday. The shooting has sparked another wave of anti-racism and anti-police brutality protests across the country.

Though the protests have been largely peaceful, Trump condemned "rioting, looting, arson and violence" that he said had taken hold in Democratic-run cities, but did not mention Blake by name. Trump and his campaign have charged again and again that Biden is a "socialist" and liberal extremist who wants to defund police across the country and supports a government-run Medicare for All healthcare plan championed by the Vermont senator Bernie Sanders. Both are untrue, and Biden is seen as a moderate in the party.

Biden himself has pointed out that the dire picture Trump has described is actually what's going on now, during his time in office.

"The violence you've seen is in Donald Trump's administration. Donald Trump's America," Biden said on Thursday.

Trump, Mike Pence, and other speakers have also argued that

under Trump the economy has only improved, foreign terrorists have been defeated, and the coronavirus pandemic is an afterthought. But the US defense department says Isis has not been entirely defeated; tens of millions remain unemployed; and Covid-19 is still claiming hundreds of lives every day.

Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter and White House advisor, gave the most effusive speech of the evening.

"My father isn't deterred by defeatist thinkers. The word impossible, well it only motivates him. Donald Trump rejects the cynical notion that our biggest accomplishments are behind us," she said.

Besides the Trumps, the Arkansas senator Tom Cotton and Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani delivered speeches.

Giuliani, the former New York mayor, used his speech to paint a portrait of an America on the verge of anarchy, and accused New York current mayor Bill De Blasio of allowing protests and crime to spiral.

"Today, my city is in shock. Murders, shootings, and violent crime are increasing in percentages never heard of in the past," Giuliani claimed. In reality, serious crime is down under de Blasio, the annual number of murders is around half the number it was under Giuliani.

"These continuous riots in Democratic cities gives a good view" of a Biden administration, Giuliani claimed. He ended by saying "Mr President, make our nation safe again!"

In a taped speech, senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, described Trump as his friend, and framed himself as a midwestern champion leading the defense of the Senate from Democrats.

"Today's Democratic party doesn't want to improve life for middle America," McConnell said in the video, going on to say "we are the firewall against Nancy Pelosi's agenda".

Unlike most speakers this week, Trump's housing secretary Ben Carson directly addressed Blake's shooting, starting his remarks by saying "our hearts go out to the Blake family" before launching into a full throated defense of Trump on the African American community.

"Before the pandemic African American unemployment was at

**President Donald Trump accepted the Republican Party nomination for reelection Thursday before a large crowd at the White House -- and against a national backdrop of explosive racial tensions and the coronavirus pandemic. "My fellow Americans, tonight, with a heart full of gratitude and boundless optimism, I profoundly accept this nomination for President of the United States," Trump said.**

an all time low," Carson said, in a somewhat misleading statement. "At this point in time President Trump is the man with the courage, the vision, and the ability to keep it shining brightly." The RNC has notably lacked some key party figures and the presence of the last Republican president, George W Bush. Meanwhile, Democrats' convention included speeches by former Republican elected officials who have emerged as outspoken critics of the president.

On Thursday morning, aides to the previous two Republican nominees for president, the late John McCain and the Utah senator Mitt Romney, released statements endorsing Biden. The Biden campaign hopes that support will motivate moderates and Republicans to support the centrist Democrat.

Earlier on Thursday, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, delivered a scathing rebuke of the Trump administration's handling of the pandemic.

"The Republican convention is designed for one purpose: to soothe Donald Trump's ego, to make him feel good," Harris said. "But here's the thing: he's the president of the United States, and it's not supposed to be about him. It's supposed to be about the health and the safety and the wellbeing of the American people."

Thursday night's events ended with Trump and his family standing on the stage in front of the White House balcony listening to a band play Ave Maria, another norm-shattering piece of Trump's convention.



# Keeping it in the family: a guide to the many Trumps speaking at the RNC

As Trump family members take the podium one by one at the convention, here's who's who - and their memorable RNC moments



You may have noticed that the Trump relatives who have been invited to speak this week at the Republican national convention are getting increasingly obscure.

Perhaps the president is simply running out of family members who have not turned against him yet - because these days, it seems Trump family members don't even require the Trump surname to justify them speaking at the event, let alone a formal title within the Republican administration.

The list includes Kimberly Guilfoyle (who was appointed as Trump adviser after she started dating Donald Trump Jr); Eric Trump (who has no role in the administration outside of being his father's son) and even Tiffany Trump (who most of us had forgotten about until this week). If you are finding it hard to keep up, here's a guide on who's who in the Trump dynasty, and their most memorable RNC moments. It has been reported that Melania and Ivanka Trump have been warring for some time over the

top spot in the Trump dynasty. But Melania Trump has so far come out on top at the RNC. Her speech has been commended on all sides for managing to acknowledge the US's racist



history while encouraging unity - and she didn't even need to plagiarize this time.

And people have also rallied around Melania Trump following a xenophobic low blow from Bette Middler, who laughed at Melania Trump's accent on Twitter and called her an illegal alien.

Kimberly Guilfoyle

Kimberly Guilfoyle has managed to become one of the most easily recognizable speakers in the Trump clan. She represents the family on chatshows; has bagged herself a job as a Trump

adviser while Trump's own son Eric has yet to be given a job in the administration - and now has bagged herself a slot at the RNC. Guilfoyle - a former Fox News host and millionaire who has twice dated political royalty (she was previously married to California's governor, Gavin Newsom, hence becoming San Francisco's first lady), devoted

her speech to routing out the "cosmopolitan elite" from telling you what to think.

She did make a few missteps - like when she spoke about her mother being an immigrant from Puerto Rico, when Puerto Rico is, in fact, part of the United States - but she still gets top marks for effort. Why? Because if shouting "The best! Is yet! To come!" full blast during a speech that was pre-recorded in front of a crowd of exactly zero people does not count as good showmanship, then I don't know what does.

Eric Trump

Eric Trump has been accused of having more lies in his speech than verbs (he repeated false claims that Joe Biden wants to defund the police, claimed Biden wants to take away the right to bear arms when he has never said such a thing, and that his father delivered the biggest tax cuts in US history - he didn't). Nonetheless, we believe he should get a special mention for managing to break away from being under

investigation in New York for fraud to speak at Daddy's convention.

Tiffany Trump

You've got to feel good for Tiffany Trump. The much-forgotten Trump sibling, who was overlooked for a role at her father's third wedding to Melania (Donald Trump Jr and Eric Trump were best men; Ivanka Trump did a Bible reading; Trump's show producer's son was a page boy, but Tiffany Trump got to hand out wedding programs), has finally taken her moment to shine.

Her RNC gambit to be recognized as the most relatable Trump (that prize previously went to Donald Trump Jr, who once flew coach) has to be commended. Tiffany Trump wants you to know that she, the president's daughter who has a net worth of \$10m at 26, can relate to the ordinary American student, having graduated during a pandemic.

Tiffany Trump can, at least, call herself one of the more self-made Trumps: instead of inheriting Donald Trump's businesses as a young adult, Tiffany Trump wanted to make a name for herself, as, errr ... a pop singer. And sure, the line in her speech where she celebrates the US being "the only country to have the word dream associated with it" sounds naive at best - but at least she has shown improvement in her writing. Her 2011 song included the lyrics "Diamonds are so shiny / Special things I got on me".

## Ivanka Trump champions father in fiery convention speech

Ivanka Trump, the president's eldest daughter and senior adviser, delivered a fiery speech Thursday in support of her father's reelection bid, simultaneously highlighting many of the issues she has championed during his first term. "Four years ago I told you I would fight alongside my father, and four years later, here I am," Ivanka Trump told hundreds of supporters gathered on the South Lawn of the White House. The roughly 15-minute address attempted to frame President

Trump as a man who has achieved what he set out to do in his first term and portray his brusque personality as an asset. "Dad, people attack you for being unconventional, but I love you for being real, and I respect you for being effective," she said.

Ivanka Trump walked out onto the stage to the tune of "I'm Still Standing" by Elton John. She proceeded to offer an intensely defensive speech of the president's record on the merits of policy and attempted to soften his image, at times contradicting

his own behavior.

She described how hard he takes the toll of the coronavirus pandemic, despite the president rarely offering such sympathy in public. She praised Trump as a consensus builder despite his refusal to meet with Democratic leaders.

Ivanka Trump argued her father has upended Washington, D.C., for the better, rattling establishment politicians and upsetting the status quo.

But Ivanka Trump's speech was as much about rattling off her own role in the last four years. She recounted how the administration has taken on issues like human trafficking, criminal justice reform, and support for working women, all issues she has made a priority.

Four years ago in Cleveland I said President Trump would deliver for working women," Ivanka Trump said.

"Four years ago I told you my father would focus on making

childcare affordable and accessible," she added.

She recounted sitting in the Oval Office when Trump made key decisions about trade deals and halting travel from Europe amid the coronavirus pandemic.

But most of the applause and most passionate lines came in support of her father, whom she described as a "warrior in the White House."

"Washington has not changed Donald Trump," she said. "Donald Trump has changed Washington."

# Donald Trump recycles much of his 2016 message as he accepts renomination

President Donald Trump asked Americans to reelect him for four more years Thursday night, promising to restore the nation's struggling economy to record prosperity, rewriting history on his handling of the pandemic and warning that Joe Biden would be a "Trojan horse" for the radical left wing in America. While the political setting on the South Lawn of the White House shattered all the norms and traditions of American political history, it was a surprisingly flat speech from the President that echoed many of the same promises and attacks as four years ago -- promises to repair the economy, protect the country from Democrats and socialism, ripping into the Washington establishment, bemoaning protests of police violence in the nation's cities and criticizing his opponent's long record -- with Biden taking the place of 2016 opponent Hillary Clinton. While Trump ran through a litany of accomplishments from his first term, the address recycled many lines and themes from other speeches and political events this summer and lacked the energy and soaring pageantry of the speakers over the previous three nights of the Republican National Convention.

While many of the speakers before the President had tried to humanize him and portray him as a caring and compassionate figure, he glossed over the pain and grief that many Americans have felt during the pandemic and economic collapse. At one point during his speech, he went so far as to mock Biden's empathy, which had been a big focus of the Democratic National Convention last week, during a critique of opponent's record on trade. He argued that a Biden administration would lead to "mob rule" in Democrat-run cities and said that "if Joe Biden doesn't have the strength to stand up to wild-eyed Marxists like Bernie Sanders," the Vermont senator, "and his fellow radicals, then how is he ever going to stand up for you?"

Formally accepting the Republican renomination, he said he was "proud of the extraordinary progress we have made together over the last four incredible years and brimming with confidence for the bright future we will build for America

over the next four years."

As expected, Trump papered over his flawed handling of the pandemic, attempting to focus voters' attention on brighter times ahead and vowing to produce a vaccine for Covid-19 before the end of the year.

"We are meeting this challenge. We are delivering lifesaving therapies, and will produce a vaccine before the end of the year, or maybe even sooner," he said. "We will defeat the virus, end the pandemic and emerge stronger than ever before."

Trump once again blamed China for the spread of the coronavirus, noting that "many Americans, including me, have sadly lost friends and cherished loved ones to this horrible disease." He employed selective statistics to disguise that his administration has presided over one of the world's worst responses to the pandemic and now has more cases than any other country around the globe.

"As one nation, we mourn, we grieve and we hold in our hearts forever the memories of all of those lives that have been so tragically taken. So unnecessary," Trump said. "In their honor, we will unite. In their memory, we will overcome."

As Trump spoke Thursday night the nation had passed the grim milestone of more than 180,000 deaths as a result of Covid-19 and some 5.8 million US cases -- more than anywhere else in the world. The President touted the work on "lifesaving treatments" and moves like the administration's purchase of 150 million rapid tests that will be distributed across the country in partnership with Abbott Laboratories.

The President, who has consistently ignored and undercut the advice of scientists and public health officials, accused Biden of wanting to "surrender" to the virus.

"Instead of following the science, Joe Biden wants to inflict a painful shutdown on the entire country," Trump said, arguing, as always, that states should open their economies more swiftly so that Americans can return to work and their children can go back to in-person classroom instruction.

Multiple speakers, such as Vice President Mike Pence and White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow, referred to the pandemic in the past tense during the

convention and Trump too seemed to suggest that the virus was waning, a view that contradicts the facts. As of Thursday afternoon, more than 3,600 Americans had died over the first three days of the convention -- more than the number who died during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

## Pandemic ignored at the White House

Given those statistics, the scene on the South Lawn of the White House Thursday night was stunning. Many of the more than 1,500 guests mingled close before and after the speeches, snapping selfies and chatting in close clusters as though the threat of the pandemic had evaporated. Many of the roughly 1,500 chairs set out on the lawn were arranged as close as 6 inches apart on the lawn, falling well short of the administration's own guidelines for social distancing. Most attendees were milling about without wearing masks.

Chief of staff Mark Meadows told reporters that "a number of people will be tested" for coronavirus before the event, but he did not specify who those individuals would be. Health experts on the White House coronavirus task force have been advising Americans to avoid large crowds during the pandemic. CNN's Jim Acosta reported Thursday night that a senior White House official brushed off concerns about the lack of social distancing at Trump's speech. "Everybody is going to catch this thing eventually," the official told Acosta.

The blatant use of presidential power to help the President's electoral chances was unprecedented. Huge video screens displaying the Trump-Pence campaign logo were on the lawn underneath the White House's iconic Truman Balcony. The convention stage was set up on the grounds of a building known as the "People's House," which has housed American presidents for more than 200 years.

It was just the latest example of how the campaign has trashed normal protocol and decorum designed to protect the institution of the presidency through over-politicization throughout this week.

Among the other blatant uses of

official government property and pageantry for political purposes during the convention this week was the naturalization ceremony in the White House, a pardon for a political supporter, the use of federal property for political speeches and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo addressing the convention while on an international trip.

## Police violence and racial unrest on the agenda

Speaking in an uncharacteristically flat voice, Trump delivered an indictment of Biden, claiming that the November election would decide whether "we save the American dream or whether we allow a socialist agenda to demolish our cherished destiny."

Portraying Biden as beholden to Sanders and the progressives who supported the Vermont senator during the Democratic primary, he said the election would determine whether the country gives "free rein to violent anarchists and agitators and criminals who threaten our citizens." Trump also warned in stark rhetoric that Democrats see a "wicked nation that must be punished for its sins."

"Joe Biden is not the savior of America's soul -- he is the destroyer of America's jobs, and if given the chance, he will be the destroyer of American greatness," Trump said. "For 47 years, Joe Biden took the donations of blue-collar workers, gave them hugs and even kisses, and told them he felt their pain -- and then he flew back to Washington and voted to ship their jobs to China and many other distant lands."

## At the Democratic National Convention last week, Trump said Biden and Democrats "repeatedly assailed America as a land of racial, economic, and social injustice."

"How can the Democratic Party ask to lead our country when it spends so much time tearing down our country?" he asked. But he did not make any efforts himself to heal the racial strife that has swept the nation since the death of George Floyd, who was killed in May by a Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck for more than seven minutes.

In the days leading up to the speech, Trump refused to answer questions about the shooting of Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black

man who was shot seven times in the back Sunday by a police officer as he tried to enter an SUV where three of his children were waiting.

Early Wednesday morning, a 17-year-old Illinois youth -- whose social media accounts show an affinity for Trump, guns and the police -- allegedly shot and killed two people, and injured another, who were at one of the nighttime protests in Kenosha organized to call for justice for Blake.

Trump mentioned Kenosha in passing and instead of attempting to empathize with the tragedy that has brought demonstrators to the streets, he listed the city along with a string of others where he argued that protests have devolved into violence that endangers American families.

"When there is police misconduct, the justice system must hold wrongdoers fully and completely accountable, and it will. But what we can never have in America -- and must never allow -- is mob rule," Trump said. "In the strongest possible terms, the Republican Party condemns the rioting, looting, arson and violence we have seen in Democrat-run cities like Kenosha, Minneapolis, Portland, Chicago and New York."

Earlier in the night Ben Carson, Trump's secretary of housing and urban development, offered condolences to the Blake family, stating at the beginning of his speech that "our hearts go out to the Blake family" and others affected by the violence in Kenosha. "As Jacob's mother has urged the country, let's use our hearts, our love, and our intelligence to work together to show the rest of the world how humans are supposed to treat each other," Carson said.

"In order to succeed in change, we must first come together in love of our fellow citizens," the Housing Secretary added. "History reminds us that necessary change comes through hope and love, not senseless and destructive violence."

Carson also chided Democrats who have called Trump a racist. "They could not be more wrong," he said, arguing that the President had brought African American unemployment to all-time lows and had supported measures in private life and government to promote minority businesses.

# How Trump Mastered the Art of Telling History His Way

*The Republican convention has glossed over the most painful facts about the pandemic and the cratered economy. It's not the first time the president has altered reality.*

Donald Trump, according to the first three nights of the Republican National Convention, is a tireless worker, a peerless truth-teller, a champion of women, an open-arms anti-racist and a decisive leader who created the greatest economy in American history and marshaled the full force of the federal government to beat back the coronavirus. Under Trump's orchestral baton, the program to this point has been defined by not just an unabashed busting of norms but a consistent and bald-faced recasting of reality.

On Monday, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley said Trump had "brought our economy back" when actually he inherited a solid economy from Barack Obama and monthly job growth slowed in his first year in office and then again last year. On Tuesday, White House chief economic adviser Larry Kudlow used the past tense to talk about the pandemic when actually the end is hard to see. And Wednesday, Kayleigh McEnany, the White House press secretary, said the president "stands by Americans with preexisting conditions" when actually his administration has sued to overturn the federal health care program that covers those people. Capping Wednesday night, Vice President Mike Pence proclaimed that Trump had stopped "all travel" from China at the outset of the outbreak, when it's simply not true.

All of it has led to assessments that Trump and his surrogates are trying to "rewrite history." And as commentators and fact-checkers have struggled to keep pace with the scores of speakers, people have puzzled over how he has managed to present a version of himself and his presidency that seems confoundingly at odds with the facts. How, they wonder, does he think he can get away with this? But the rewriting (or even pre-writing) of his past is a lifelong Trump trademark. He is who he is, is where he is, is seen the way he's seen by so many, because of it. He's self-made! (He's not.) He's a businessman with a Midas touch! (He's not.) He's an outsider! (He was an

insider-thanks to his father's political connections-the day he was born.)

**"He is not who he says he is," former Trump casino executive Jack O'Donnell told me Wednesday.**

**"He is," Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio said, "a walking lie."**

Everybody does some version of this, of shading and shaping their personal stories, to present to others more flattering pictures, and politicians, it's fair to say, maybe do it even a little bit more-so some of this is to be expected in any campaign and at any convention. But nobody, in the estimation of political strategists and historians, has ever done it with the bravado of Trump. What he understands, they say, is that most people don't have the bandwidth to keep track of the nonstop glut of stacked-up facts that form any messy backstory-and who, anyway, really likes a constant, correcting scold? Trump's stamina selling these tales laced with falsehoods wins out, almost always, over the work of the diligent nags trying to check him.

And yet this week's effort represents a championship game, of sorts, not only an intensification of his efforts since March to recast the narrative of the pandemic but the apex of his lifelong gambit. It is the stiffest test because Trump is not just trying to rewrite the past, or even the very, very recent past, but the actual present-the ongoing present-of this public health crisis and the attendant economic calamity. The convention itself is happening where it's happening and how it's happening-mostly D.C., of course, instead of Charlotte or Jacksonville, with videos, virtual fare and next to no crowds-literally because nearly 180,000 people have died of Covid-19 and another 50,000 or more are predicted to die before November. His reelection hangs on whom voters hold responsible for those numbers. "He must rewrite history because the true past is something that's bad for him," said former GOP consultant Reed Galen, a co-founder of the anti-Trump Lincoln Project.

"He takes his own failures, and

he just rewrites what you see in front of your eyes," Julian Zelizer, a Princeton political scientist, told me. "This is what he's always done."

**It goes way, way back. In 1964, for instance, at the New York Military Academy, he asked a classmate to recount a play in a baseball game.**

"The bases were loaded," the classmate said. "We were losing by three. You hit the ball just over the third baseman's head. Neither the third baseman nor the left fielder could get to the ball in time. All four of our runs came in; we won the game."

"No," Trump said. "That's not the way it happened. I want you to remember this: I hit the ball out of the ballpark! Remember that. I hit it out of the ballpark!"

The Art of the Deal in 1987 crafted an indelible portrait of a brash master deal-doer-a "nonfiction work of fiction," in the words of Trump biographer Tim O'Brien, that the person who actually wrote it would come to greatly regret. "I drastically misused my skills as a writer and storyteller to make Trump sound like the best version of himself," Tony Schwartz told me Wednesday evening.

It was, however, a truer account than the next two Trump books. Surviving at the Top came out in 1990, when he was barely surviving and nowhere near the top, and The Art of the Comeback came out in 1997, when he was no longer mired in the dire financial and reputational straits he was in the first half of that decade but nonetheless diminished and straining to reclaim a certain stratum of celebrity. The comeback wasn't complete until the debut of "The Apprentice," in 2004, which pitched him as an omnipotent titan of business, which a not small share of Americans believed, which opened evidently a path to the presidency. In his telling of his life, over and over, again and again, failures aren't failures and losses are wins.

"Mr. Trump," Chris Wallace of Fox News said in the first Republican debate in the summer of 2015. "You talk a lot about how you are the person on this stage to grow the economy." He cited his litany of corporate

bankruptcies. "Question, sir: With that record, why should we trust you to run the nation's business?"

**"I have never gone bankrupt," Trump said. "I have never. Not personally bankrupt."**

"But your companies have gone bankrupt," Wallace said. "Is that the way you'd run our country?" "You're living in a world of the make believe, Chris, you want to know the truth. And I had the good sense to leave Atlantic City," Trump said. "I've gotten a lot of credit in the financial pages-several years ago I left Atlantic City before it totally cratered, and I made a lot of money in Atlantic City. And I'm very proud of it. I want to tell you that. Very, very proud of it."

The crowd that night laughed, clapped and cheered.

"And Chris Wallace throws his arms up in the air and moves on to the next thing," former Trump publicist Alan Marcus told me Wednesday.

"We all do," he said. "We all do." While scrutiny, obviously, is higher now than it was ever before, Trump's platform, the implicit legitimacy, the importance and the audience and the attention-all that's higher, of course, than it's ever been, too. He's no longer an avaricious up-and-comer. He's no longer a reality-TV, catchphrase superstar. He's the president of the United States. "Everything he says, every post that he makes, is magnified a million times more than it ever was," Zelizer said. "And it's a collective act now," said O'Brien, the biographer. "The Donald Trump con is now an operating principle for his White House, his family, and everybody around him in the GOP apparatus. They've all seen him do it and do it in a way in which any failures can just be denied and recast."

On Monday, then, Patty McCloskey of the gun-waving St. Louis couple of right-wing cancel-culture quasi-fame said Joe Biden wanted to "abolish the suburbs," an absurd assertion. Former football player Herschel Walker praised Trump as a team owner when his tenure was a disaster that ended with the destruction of the United States Football League. A doctor from

Louisiana commended Trump for his "rapid and efficient response to the coronavirus pandemic," and a nurse from West Virginia stated that he "recognized the threat this virus presented for all Americans early on," when he dismissed it from the start and often still does.

On Tuesday, Trump staged in the White House a naturalization ceremony for a handful of nonwhite new American citizens, jarring considering his record of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric about "shithole countries." Eric Trump said that Biden wants to "defund the police," which isn't true, and that his father had "delivered the largest tax cuts in American history," which isn't true, and that promises were "made, and promises, for the first time, were kept," which obviously isn't true. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi echoed many others over the past few nights and blamed the devastation of the coronavirus on China and China alone. Then came Kudlow. "It was awful," he said. "Health and economic impacts were tragic," he said. "Hardship and heartbreak were everywhere," he said.

"It's not Hubert Humphrey in 1968 saying, 'Well, we're getting closer to the end of the Vietnam War, we're almost there,' which you could argue is spin, or Lyndon Johnson saying that," Princeton's Zelizer told me. "This is saying: The war is over. It's not happening."

It made a basic statement from Melania Trump at the end of the night sound almost shocking: "I want to acknowledge the fact," she said, "that since March, our lives have changed ..."

"If there is a ledger," Galen told me Wednesday, "the 978 lies that everybody else told do not balance out the one truth she managed to sneak in." Biden's campaign issued a statement characterizing the Republicans' convention as "malarkey" in "overdrive," adding: "In Trump's version of reality, up is down, and down with the facts." "Donald Trump is an excellent storyteller. It's like we're all amazed by his ability to cast himself in the best light possible."

# What We Still Don't Know About Trump

***Tyrant, buffoon or a real voice for forgotten Americans? Five years after his escalator ride-and after two 2020 conventions-there's still no consensus. That's a problem for the party trying to take him down.***

**Two former Democratic presidents last week tried to build up Joe Biden in part by taking down President Donald Trump. When they did, there were some important distinctions in how they spoke about the man in their party's crosshairs.**

Here was Bill Clinton: "If you want a president who defines the job as spending hours a day watching TV and zapping people on social media, he's your man." Here was Barack Obama: "I never expected that my successor would embrace my vision or continue my policies. I did hope, for the sake of our country, that Donald Trump might show some interest in taking the job seriously; that he might come to feel the weight of the office and discover some reverence for the democracy that had been placed in his care."

The subtext: America, this is serious. Trump isn't just a bad president, he's an actual threat to our way of self-governance. Buffoon and tyrant aren't necessarily mutually exclusive. But they point in very different directions. And the tension between the two highlights a curious reality.

Five years after Donald Trump leapt on the stage of presidential politics and instantly came to dominate it-and after two national conventions almost totally consumed by discussion of his character and motives-there still isn't a stable consensus on just who Trump is, and what gives him power.

There are three distinct pictures of Trump jostling for primacy in American politics: the would-be tyrant of Obama's speech, the clownish dilettante of Clinton's and a third view that holds him up as a legitimate, if flawed, tribune of a wide swath of America.

In the end, it will be up to historians to decide who Trump really was, and that argument is likely to last far longer than his presidency. But the inability to agree on Trump matters in the moment as well-and perhaps very urgently.

The Republican National Convention that ended Thursday night was less a party event than a kind of recoronation, an effort by the party to embrace the

president and soften his edges-which were then continually reshaped by the Trump family itself. The Democratic National Convention was a demonstration that there are still competing interpretations of what threat he really represents, and thus how to beat him. For Democrats, and to some extent the news media, the now-familiar challenge is that denunciations of Trump are more likely to strengthen his hold on supporters than to dilute it.

From the start of his first campaign in the summer of 2015, there have been three dominant interpretations of Trump and the Trump phenomenon. These three models go up and down in terms of which one has the most currency among the news media, the political class and the public broadly. But it is notable that the entrees at the analytical buffet have not changed:

**Interpretation One: Trump is the political equivalent of a pro wrestling celebrity. He cares about (and is skilled in reaping) media attention and self-affirmation and not really much else-including ideas, or history, or party-building, or how specific policies fit into a larger whole, or how one day in the presidential spotlight connects in some linear way to the next. This is Bill Clinton's buffoon thesis. It's not that someone like this can't cause a lot of damage, but, as a political type, it is different in character than ...**

**Two:** Trump is the American equivalent of Vladimir Putin. In this light, Trump is more than just a self-absorbed improvisationalist. To the contrary, he operates with clear purpose: To weaken the mechanisms of democratic accountability and attack all constraints on his power. Obama offered a mildly more understated version of this thesis at his virtual convention address, standing before a giant blowup of the U.S. Constitution. It is this thesis that justified his dire warning to voters: "Do not let them take away your power. Do not let them take away your democracy."

**Three:** Trump is a tribune of Americans whose voices are mostly unheard by conventional

politicians. Trump may be a bit coarse or hammy, by these lights, but he does possess an intuitive sense of politics and history-of how the system had tilted too far in the direction of self-dealing global elites, diluting frank assertion of national interests and undermining the interests of average Americans.

**So, by one interpretation, Trump is making a mockery of democracy. By another he represents an assault on democracy. And by the third he is an authentic expression of democracy.**

Does one really have to choose? No, it is not essential. Both parties are now headed into the general election with coalitions that include devotees of all three interpretations. Democrats, obviously, draw most support from believers in the buffoon and tyrant categories, along with some people who once believed he was a tribune of their cause but are now disillusioned. Republicans, obviously, have just spent a week-capped by Trump's speech Thursday night-trying to revive support for the idea that Trump has a singular understanding of how to represent ordinary Americans from liberal excesses and elite indifference. But the GOP coalition also includes some who think a dash of American authoritarianism is just what the doctor ordered for current maladies, or who appreciate the buffoonish elements of Trump's persona precisely because they know it drives his critics crazy. What's more, views can change over time. Obama was once firmly an adherent of the buffoon thesis. By some accounts, his mockery of Trump at the 2011 White House Correspondents' Dinner, while Trump was in the audience, helped embolden the Republican to run for president. Even after the 2016 election, the New York Times reported the other day, Obama was calling Trump "a cartoon," and only later did he come to believe that the man posed a more fundamental threat to constitutional values and rule of law.

Addressing the interpretive challenge posed by Trump, "There's no reason to choose among the three," says Yale

historian Timothy Snyder, who wrote the 2017 bestseller *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. "They may be in tension, but there is a way to put them together." Snyder is one of the leading intellectual apostles of the idea that Trump is a genuine danger, with parallels in the bloody history of Europe. Buffoonery can serve the authoritarian's purpose, he noted, by distracting attention from important matters, and most authoritarians in history have tapped into some vein of popular support, even if that is marked by prejudice and exclusion.

**Trump's appeal depends on being criticized.**

Confronting Trump, however, has always been a good bit more complicated for his foes than simply indexing all the reasons they don't like him and trying to convince voters why those reasons are sound. That is because Trump's appeal depends on being criticized-in the same way a plant can't thrive without both water and light.

It's useful to consider the distinction between politicians who have absolute appeal versus those who have relative appeal. One good example is Ronald Reagan. To many conservatives, he has absolute appeal-his political and personal traits represent the beau ideal of how presidents should act, in any time or in any circumstances. Many progressives feel the same way about Barack Obama.

But even many-possibly most-Trump supporters don't think his raffish, roguish, divisive and disruptive style represents the ideal of how presidents should act. They just think his brand of politics is right for this moment. His appeal is relative-compared with the hypocrisy or venality or ineffectuality of conventional politics. Data from the Harris polling firm for Harvard's Center for American Political Studies indicates roughly 40 percent of people who support Trump as a president either dislike him as a person or are indifferent.

So critics can roll their eyes and make fun of Trump as a buffoon if they wish. The risk from a liberal perspective is that this looks complacent-do you think

an authoritarian in our midst is a laughing matter?-and from a pro-Trump perspective it looks like you are patronizing his supporters. The joke may be on you, just as it was on Obama at the end of his term.

Or critics can raise their voices in alarm that he is an incipient American fascist. The risk is that this looks overwrought-and thrills Trump supporters, who love their candidate precisely because he offends liberal pieties.

After the 2016 election many Democrats for a season invested a lot of psychic energy in the notion that Trump might indeed be a tribune of the people and that efforts must be made to better connect with his supporters. The problem with this is that no one's heart is really in it. Most Democrats actually believe, as Hillary Clinton got caught saying out loud in 2016, that Trump draws significant support from racially charged and nativist politics that appeal to ignorant voters and "deplorables." The phoniness of pretending otherwise would be self-evident. So back to the existential question about Trump: Buffoon, tyrant or tribune?

Since all three can be somewhat true, I played a parlor game with a dozen or so political sources and journalists who follow Trump closely. I gave each person 10 chips and said they could distribute them on the three squares however they wished. Put all 10 chips on one interpretation, if that seems right, or split the difference with four on one square and three on the two others.

Even among people who think about Trump all the time, there was wide variance in the answers. No one opted to put all their chips on one square. Trump is too much of a kaleidoscopic character for that. But there were some interesting general trends.

One is that political practitioners were much more likely to give Trump credit for being a genuine tribune.

He may frequently tell lies, the theory goes, but he is not a phony.

# Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio gets nod for sub-sea cable gateway in Bengal

Top government officials present in the meeting said that the landing station is expected to transform West Bengal into a major IT and ITES hub, draw huge investments and generate employment.

Telecom giant Reliance Jio would be coming up with a cable landing station in West Bengal that would increase the state's connectivity with European and Asian countries and attract investment, chief minister Mamata Banerjee said on Wednesday.

She also announced that her government has decided to build a deep-sea port in East Midnapore district - the same district where

the cable landing station would be built. The state is also coming up with a broadband policy.

"Reliance Jio has agreed to set up a cable landing station at Digha. They would invest more than Rs 1,000 crore. Reliance Jio had bid to build the station and the state government has allotted them land. The decision was taken in the cabinet on Wednesday," Banerjee said at the state secretariat after a cabinet meeting.

Submarine cables provide international telecommunication links between countries and these cables terminate in a country through cable landing stations.

Top government officials present in the meeting said that the landing station is expected to transform West Bengal into a major IT and ITES hub, draw huge investments and generate employment.

"Our IT and ITES data centres would be benefited. Our international connectivity with Singapore, Italy and Malaysia will get a boost. Such stations have been set up in Chennai and Mumbai. With the station in West Bengal, the entire eastern region, including Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, would be benefited,"



said Rajiva Sinha, chief secretary of the state.

The chief minister also said that the Tajpur deep sea port would also be built.

"We have been trying to come up with a deep-sea port at

Tajpur. We had requested the Centre for a joint project but it didn't materialise. So the state has decided to go ahead with the project with another partner that would be decided through a tender," Banerjee said.

## Announce another fiscal stimulus



On August 22, this newspaper published an exclusive report based on a presentation made by the ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The presentation said that as on August 1, three-fourths of India's

MSMEs were working at less than half their potential capacity. It also said that more than 90% had opened up, showing that the unlock process, at least in principle, has been almost completed. These statistics underline the central economic

challenge facing the economy. Just allowing enterprises to open is not going to restore the status quo ante, which existed before the pandemic forced a nationwide lockdown. To be sure, the economy was not in great shape even before the pandemic. GDP growth rate fell from 8.3% in 2016-17 to 7%, 6.1% and 4.2% in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Most estimates expect India's GDP to contract by 5% or more this year. MSMEs account for 30% of GDP. They employ almost one-fourth of India's workers. That an overwhelming share of MSMEs is not using even their existing capacity means that they are facing a crisis of demand. If this

situation is allowed to persist, it will generate a vicious cycle. Firms will lay off workers. Laid-off workers will lose their salaries, which will further squeeze demand. Orders for new investments and raw materials will be postponed, or worse, cancelled. This will lead to yet another round of job losses and demand depression. These developments will have an adverse impact on the financial sector as well. As revenues start falling short of past expectations, loan defaults will increase, which will add to the existing mountain of bad debt. All these developments have implications for India's economic recovery, both

in the short-and-medium term. Breaking this vicious cycle requires urgent policy intervention. The government was wise to focus on liquidity challenges in its initial response to Covid-19. But it needs to shift gears. Demand, not liquidity, is the main challenge facing the economy today. At a time when consumer and business sentiment is down, the only way to boost demand is a fiscal stimulus. While there is some merit in the argument that it should be timed appropriately, at least the road map should be laid out as soon as possible. Any further delay on this front will only make matters worse.

## Amazon faces new antitrust challenge from Indian online sellers: Report

***In the latest case, the All India Online Vendors Association, members of which sell goods on Amazon and Flipkart, allege Amazon engages in unfair business practices.***

A group of more than 2,000 online sellers has filed an antitrust case against Amazon in India, alleging the US company favours some retailers whose online discounts drive independent vendors out of business, a legal filing seen by Reuters showed.

The case presents a new regulatory challenge for Amazon in India, where it has committed \$6.5 billion in investment but is battling a complex regulatory environment.

In January, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had ordered an investigation of Amazon and rival Flipkart, owned

by Walmart, over alleged violations of competition law and certain discounting practices, which Amazon is challenging, according to court filings.

In the latest case, the All India Online Vendors Association, members of which sell goods on Amazon and Flipkart, allege Amazon engages in unfair business practices. Reuters was first to report the case filing on Wednesday.

The group alleges that Amazon India's wholesale arm buys goods in bulk from manufacturers and sells them at a loss to sellers such as Cloutail. Such sellers then offer goods on

Amazon.in at big discounts.

"This anti-competitive arrangement ... is causing foreclosure of competition by driving independent sellers out of the market," the group alleged in its Aug. 10 filing at CCI, seen by Reuters.

Amazon said in a statement it complies with all laws and its India website is a pure third-party marketplace where sellers have discretion to decide product prices. Amazon's statement also said its wholesale unit allows businesses to buy products and anyone can register on it.

A Cloutail spokeswoman said it was in "compliance with all



applicable laws in its operations." Unlike Indian court cases, filings and details of cases reviewed by the CCI are not made public. In the coming weeks, the CCI will review the case and could decide to launch a wider investigation or dismiss it.

The CCI did not respond to a

request for comment.

Chanakya Basa, a lawyer for the sellers group, confirmed the case filing with the CCI but declined to elaborate.

India's regulations allow Amazon to operate an e-commerce marketplace where sellers can list goods for a fee.

# Why the international community and UN must embrace Taiwan

**Taiwan is a model of democracy. It is independent. It's not a part of PRC. And it has managed Covid-19 successfully**

In 2020, the world has been hit by an unprecedented public health crisis, with the effects of Covid-19 being felt across every aspect of people's lives. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations (UN). Now more than ever, the global community must make a concerted effort to forge the better and more sustainable future called for by UN and its member-states. Taiwan is ready, willing and able to be a part of these efforts.

With less than 500 confirmed cases and seven deaths, Taiwan has defied predictions and successfully contained the pandemic. This has all come in no small part due to Taiwan's quick response measures, including the establishment of a Central Epidemic Command Centre, the implementation of stringent border controls and quarantine procedures, and transparent information-sharing. And after making sure we had enough supplies to look after our

people, we started providing medical equipment and supplies to other countries in serious need.

By the end of June, Taiwan had donated 51 million surgical masks, 1.16 million N95 masks, 600,000 isolation gowns, 35,000 forehead thermometers, and other medical material to more than 80 countries, including India, the United States (US), Taiwan's diplomatic allies, and various European nations. We have also joined forces with like-minded democracies to explore the development of rapid test kits, medicines, and vaccines. Working together for the greater good is how the world will defeat Covid-19. In the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of UN, governments and heads of States acknowledged that only by working together in solidarity can we end the pandemic and effectively tackle its consequences. They thus pledged to make UN more

inclusive and to leave no one behind as the world looks to recover from the pandemic.

Similarly, in July, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that networked, inclusive, and effective multilateralism would aid global efforts to promote recovery and the continued implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We could not agree more. However, this vision seems lacking when Taiwan - one of the world's model democracies and a success story in containing the current pandemic - continues to be barred from taking part in and exchanging experiences and information with UN system. Not having Taiwan's input in UN is a loss to the global community, and will hamper member-states' efforts to regain normalcy and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in full and on time. Even as the pandemic has made the international community aware of Taiwan's unjust and



discriminatory exclusion from the World Health Organization and the UN system, the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to press UN to use an erroneous interpretation of the 1971 UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 (XXVI) as the legal basis for blocking Taiwan.

The fact is that this resolution does not address the issue of Taiwan's representation in UN, nor does it state that Taiwan is part of PRC. In fact, Taiwan is not, nor has it ever been, a part of the PRC. Our president and legislature are directly elected by the people of Taiwan. Moreover, border controls instituted during the pandemic

offer further evidence to counter PRC's false claims. UN must recognise that only Taiwan's democratically-elected government can represent its 23.5 million people; PRC has no right to speak on Taiwan's behalf.

Unfortunately, the 23.5 million people of Taiwan are denied any access to UN premises. Taiwanese journalists and media outlets are also denied accreditation to cover UN meetings. This discriminatory policy stems from the wrongful claims of and pressure from an authoritarian state, and contravenes the principle of universality and equality upon which UN was founded.

## *With due respect, your lordship*

**India's judiciary is a key pillar which has to be fiercely independent and be seen as such**

India's judiciary is a key pillar which has to be fiercely independent and be seen as such Indian democracy has succeeded for a range of reasons - an enlightened political leadership which wrote a remarkably progressive Constitution; political parties which have played the democratic game within rules; an aware electorate which has kept the parties on their toes; a vibrant civil society which has championed rights and justice; a free press which has kept citizens informed and kept power under check; and, institutions which have fulfilled constitutional obligations. Among these institutions, India's independent judiciary occupies a place of pride. For the most part, it has defended individual liberty and protected fundamental rights; it has expanded the idea of justice and pushed the State to support the vulnerable; it has resolved disputes between the State and citizens, among citizens,

between the Centre and states, and between states; it has stood as a pillar in defence of the basic structure of the Constitution; it has served as a check on executive excesses; and it has given hope to all stakeholders, from the powerful to the weak, that there will be justice. And that is why a robust and independent judiciary is so critical to India's constitutional functioning. In recent years, however, there appears to be a trend which suggests a much closer alignment between the judiciary and the executive than is healthy for a system based on checks and balances. The judiciary is far too important for anyone (including judges themselves) to assume it is perfect. On the basis of the principle that anything can be improved, this trend and its specific manifestations need further discussion. The first is the incentive structure of the judges. This is crucial to

safeguarding the independence of the institution and maintaining its credibility. While the judiciary has fiercely guarded its right over appointments - though the executive has been able to exercise influence, both directly and indirectly, over the collegium process - there is another way in which judges may not be entirely free of external incentives while exercising their duty. A 2017 working paper - Jobs for Justice(s): Corruption in the Supreme Court of India - by Madhav Aney, Shubhankar Dam and Giovanni Ko, based on a dataset of all Supreme Court judgments between 1999 and 2014 involving the government, found that authoring judgments "in favour of the government" had a "positive" association with the likelihood of a prestigious post-SC retirement job. The paper, written for the Singapore Management University, concludes, "Our analysis suggests that the prospect of being appointed to



government positions after retirement could be a way in which the executive exercises control over an otherwise independent judiciary, in countries with judicial term limits." This trend appears to have only continued post-2014. When a former Chief Justice of India ends up becoming a Rajya Sabha member or a governor, nominated by the president on the advice of the council of ministers, doubts grow. In fact, it was the late and widely-respected Arun Jaitley - Bharatiya Janata Party leader, one of the country's top legal minds, and former finance and law minister - who flagged the issue of post-retirement jobs

influencing pre-retirement judgments almost a decade ago. Unless this incentive structure for judges changes - either through a prolonged cooling-off period before they can take on a role after retirement or a very restricted list of appointments - the perception that it is not just the legal facts of the case that determine a final judgment will prevail. The second issue is what legal scholars have termed as "constitutional evasion". To be sure, the SC is overburdened. But there appears to be a pattern where the timing of when a matter is taken up, or when an order is delivered or judgment is pronounced, has been convenient for the executive.

# Mahesh Bhatt Loves Controversies But Sadak 2 Row Is Too Hot To Handle



From doing lip-lock with daughter Pooja Bhatt for a magazine cover to making movies on his past relationships, Mahesh Bhatt remains controversy's favourite child with his proclivity to ruffle a feather or two. But now, he has waded into a big row at what appears to be the most inopportune time in his illustrious career. The 71-year-old, once called a maverick filmmaker for making acclaimed offbeat movies such as *Arth* (1982) and *Saaransh* (1984), is returning to the silver screen as a director for the first time in more than two decades with *Sadak 2*. A sequel to his 1991-hit, *Sadak*, which starred Sanjay Dutt and Bhatt's elder

daughter Pooja Bhatt in the lead, the film is set to be premiered directly on the digital platform, Disney+Hotstar on August 28. Bhatt had last wielded the megaphone for *Kartoos* in 1999 and taken a voluntary retirement of sorts in the new millennium. He was happy producing movies and giving breaks to newcomers under his home banner of Vishesh Films, until he decided to return to direction with *Sadak 2*, apparently at the prodding of Sanjay Dutt as well as his daughters Pooja and Alia Bhatt. Ideally, the return of somebody like Bhatt, who has an awesome repertoire to boast of, should have been a cause for big celebration

and his comeback project an eagerly-awaited one in and outside the film industry. He has, after all, been one of the finest filmmakers in Hindi cinema. In his heyday, he not only made several avant-garde movies like *Arth* and *Saaransh* but also delivered commercial hits like *Naam* (1986) and *Jakhm* (1998).

A sequel of *Sadak*, his biggest success so far, ought to have created a positive buzz all around solely because of his comeback but that was not to be. Instead, *Sadak 2* is being brutally trolled and not being talked about either for the return of Bhatt or for that matter, its cinematic merits. Worse, the film's trailer, released on August 12, has become the most disliked trailer and second most disliked video ever on YouTube in the world. (YouTube Rewind 2018 with 1.8 crore thumbs-down remains the most disliked video so far).

As of August 26, in just a fortnight since its release, *Sadak 2* trailer on YouTube has garnered more than a whopping 1.2 crore dislikes. The primary reason behind the tsunami of dislikes for the film apparently is Bhatt's open support

to actress Rhea Chakraborty, whose boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his Bandra home in Mumbai on June 14. Some of Bhatt's pictures with Rhea -- an accused in a case of abetment of suicide and embezzlement of money lodged by Sushant's father --- went viral soon thereafter. His brother Mukesh Bhatt was also quoted in a section of the Press as saying that Sushant reminded him of actress Parveen Babi, who had allegedly suffered from depression before her death in 2005. The Bhatt's unstinting support to Rhea, who had played the lead in their home production *Jalebi* (2018), immediately after Sushant's death, apparently angered the admirers of the late actor, who suspected foul play in his death. At the outset, Sushant's fans blamed the rampant nepotism in the film industry for driving Sushant to take his life. An online call for *Sadak 2*'s boycott was given by people running a campaign to seek justice for Sushant. The film

was also singled out for being "98 per cent nepotistic" as per a "Nepometer" launched by a kin of the departed actor.

As the suicide-or-murder mystery over Sushant's death has since deepened with the CBI launching its investigation now, there is no sign of let up in the anti-*Sadak 2* or anti-Bhatt campaign. A WhatsApp chat purported to have taken place between Bhatt and Rhea shortly after she left Sushant's house on June 8 has further infuriated the trolls. Bhatt now needs to let his latest movie do all the talking. A few fellow film-makers such as Prakash Jha have come out in support of Mahesh Bhatt, calling it obnoxious, sad and unfair to drag the name of a director of Bhatt's calibre into a conspiracy theory without any evidence but it has made no difference to the trolls. It has left Bhatt's ambitious comeback movie mired in an unsavoury controversy that the filmmaker himself might not have wished for at this juncture, regardless of his usual predilection for anything that kicks up a storm.

## The Grand Old Meltdown

### What happens when a party gives up on ideas?

Earlier this month, while speaking via Zoom to a promising group of politically inclined high school students, I was met with an abrupt line of inquiry. "I'm sorry, but I still don't understand," said one young man, his pitch a blend of curiosity and exasperation. "What do Republicans believe? What does it mean to be a Republican?"

You could forgive a 17-year-old, who has come of age during Donald Trump's reign, for failing to recognize a cohesive doctrine that guides the president's party. The supposed canons of GOP orthodoxy-limited government, free enterprise, institutional conservation, moral rectitude, fiscal restraint, global leadership-have in recent years gone from elastic to expendable. Identifying this intellectual vacuum is easy enough. Far more difficult is answering the question of what, quite specifically, has filled it. Bumbling through a homily about the "culture wars," a horribly

overused cliché, I felt exposed. Despite spending more than a decade studying the Republican Party, embedding myself both with its generals and its foot soldiers, reporting on the right as closely as anyone, I did not have a good answer to the student's question. Vexed, I began to wonder who might. Not an elected official; that would result in a rhetorical exercise devoid of introspection. Not a Never Trumper; they would have as much reason to answer disingenuously as the most fervent MAGA follower.

I decided to call Frank Luntz. Perhaps no person alive has spent more time polling Republican voters and counseling Republican politicians than Luntz, the 58-year-old focus group guru. His research on policy and messaging has informed a generation of GOP lawmakers. His ability to translate between D.C. and the provinces-

connecting the concerns of everyday people to their representatives in power-has been unsurpassed. If anyone had an answer, it would be Luntz.

"You know, I don't have a history of dodging questions. But I don't know how to answer that. There is no consistent philosophy," Luntz responded. "You can't say it's about making America great again at a time of Covid and economic distress and social unrest. It's just not credible."

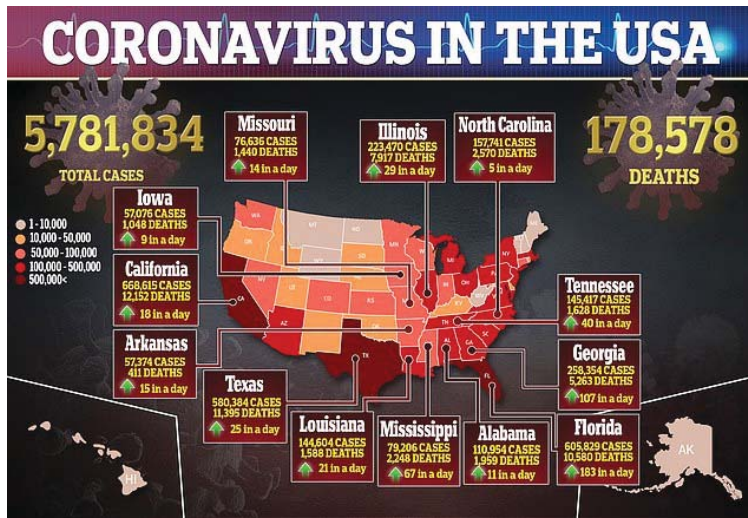
Luntz thought for a moment. "I think it's about promoting-" he stopped suddenly. "But I can't, I don't-" he took a pause. "That's the best I can do." When I pressed, Luntz sounded as exasperated as the student whose question I was relaying. "Look, I'm the one guy who's going to give you a straight answer. I don't give a shit-I had a stroke in January, so there's nothing anyone can do to me to make my life suck," he said. "I've tried to give you an answer and I



can't do it. You can ask it any different way. But I don't know the answer. For the first time in my life, I don't know the answer." Every fourth summer, a presidential nominating convention gives occasion to appraise a party for its ideas, its principles, its vision for governing. Recent iterations of the GOP have been easily and expertly defined. Ronald Reagan's party wanted to end the scourge of

communism and slay the bureaucratic dragons of Big Government. George W. Bush's party aimed to project compassion and fortitude, educating poor Americans and treating AIDS-stricken Africans, while simultaneously confronting the advance of Islamic terrorism. However flawed the policies, however unsuccessful their execution, a tone was set in these parties from the top-down.

# Two doses of Moderna's coronavirus vaccine produced strong immune response in elderly participants, early results show



Moderna Inc says early data of its experimental coronavirus vaccine shows it induced immune responses in older adults that were similar to younger participants. The drug developer is one of the leading US contenders in the race to develop a safe and effective jab against COVID-19 and its candidate, mRNA-1273, is already in the Phase III stage of human testing. However, this marks the first time the company has released data on how well its immunization works in older patients.

Elderly volunteers not only produced high levels of neutralizing antibodies but also T-cells, which are a type of white blood cell that binds to and kills viruses, Moderna said on Wednesday. What's more, the levels of antibodies were higher than those among patients who have recovered from coronavirus infection. Moderna's vaccine, mRNA-1273, tricks the body into producing some of the viral proteins, which the immune system then recognizes and builds a defensive

response against. Despite currently being in Phase III testing, these results are from Phase I, and include new analysis from 20 additional people and details on how the vaccine performs in older people. Older adults are among the groups at highest-risk of developing severe cases of COVID-19, which could result in hospitalization and death. Because the immune system weakens with age, it is often hard for vaccines to induce a sufficient immune response, which has made some experts worry that

any experimental vaccine for the coronavirus might not be as effective in the elderly. Researchers tested the virus in two groups of 10, the first between ages 56 and 70 and a second in elderly adults aged 71 and older. All volunteers received two 100 microgram doses of the inoculation, which were administered 28 days apart. In addition to high levels of antibodies, the vaccine did not appear to result in any severe side effects, according to the Massachusetts-based company

said. Some participants reported chills, fatigue, headaches and pain at the site of injection, but most symptoms resolved within two days. The data will be presented at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meeting on Wednesday. The results have not been published yet, but the company says it plans to submit them for publication in a peer-reviewed medical journal. Moderna, which has no drugs in the market, has received nearly \$1 billion from the US government under a plan called Operation Warp Speed to speed up vaccine development for COVID-19, which has killed more than 178,000 Americans. Earlier this month, Moderna also struck a \$1.5 billion supply agreement with the US to produce 100 million doses. The deal allows the government to buy another 400 million doses if the jab proves successful.

## Brazilian city Manaus - where dead bodies were piled up in refrigerated trucks - may have reached herd immunity with no lockdown, scientists say



A Brazilian city where the dead bodies of coronavirus victims had to be piled up in refrigerated trucks may have reached herd immunity against the disease without a lockdown, scientists say. Manaus has witnessed a sharp but unexplained fall in Covid-19 cases, deaths and hospitalisations - despite a lack of control measures, suggesting the coronavirus has naturally fizzled out. The city, situated in the middle of a rainforest, was ravaged by the coronavirus at the start of the

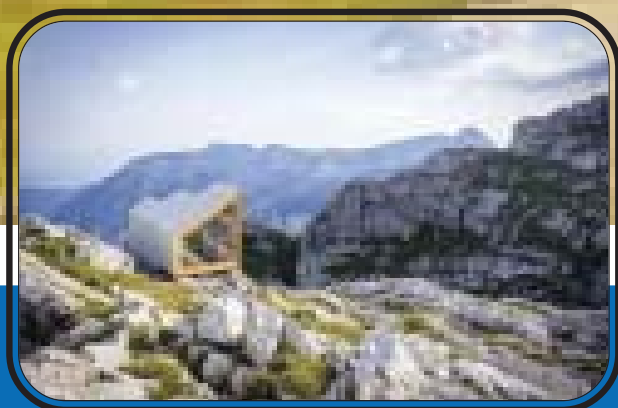
pandemic. It made international headlines four months ago when drone images captured bulldozers digging mass graves for Covid-19 victims. Hundreds of bodies were stored in refrigerated trucks in scenes described by the city's mayor as a 'horror movie'. But unlike the majority of Asia and Europe, the city never imposed a lockdown, strict social distancing rules or enforced face masks. Brazil's president was a vocal critic against the measures, which have crippled economies but

saved lives. Jarbas Barbosa da Silva, assistant director of the Pan American Health Organisation, claimed the peak of the outbreak was very strong, which may have produced some kind of 'collective immunity'. But he added the city, in the Amazonas state, had 'paid a very large price'. Figures show it has suffered 3,300 deaths among the 1.8million residents - the equivalent of one in 500 residents being killed by the virus. Herd immunity would mean a country is no longer at risk of Covid-19. However, to achieve it, up to 70 per cent of the population needs to have had the virus, which in turn would see millions of people die. Scientists still don't know the death rate of the disease for certain but believe it kills around 0.6 per cent of all patients, most of whom are elderly. Brazil's coronavirus outbreak is the world's second most severe, after the US, with more than

3.6million cases and 115,309 deaths recorded since March. But its outbreak is still rattling on, with Brazil registering 1,271 Covid-19 deaths and 47,134 new cases on Monday. The Amazonas is one of hardest-hit states, with 116,579 cases and 3,588 reported deaths as of Tuesday. Most are in Manaus. The city accounts for all of the intensive care units in Amazonas and 80 per cent of its specialised doctors, according to Bernardo Albuquerque, an infectious disease expert at Amazonas Federal University. No formal lockdown was imposed on the city. Mask-wearing is not encouraged across the country. Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro, who was infected himself, has dismissed the effects of the virus. He has described it as a 'little cold' and demanded an end to lockdown measures. Many regional leaders ignored him and imposed their own quarantine measures.

Brazil's State Public Prosecutor's Office in Manaus tried to establish a lockdown to contain the pandemic in the city in April. But a local judge denied the request, citing insufficient information, a report in the medical journal Nature Medicine states. On May 6, the Legislative Assembly of the state of Amazonas approved a bill allowing the reopening of temples and churches, 'non-essential' retail stores opened on 1 June. Private schools reopened last month. But despite this, Manaus has not seen cases increase like other countries that have relaxed Covid-19 restrictions on movement - including the UK and swathes of Europe. There are close to zero 'excess deaths' and the city's field hospital, built specifically for Covid-19 and once completely overwhelmed with patients, has been closed due to a lack of Covid-19 cases.





# SLOVENIA

## Where nature comes alive

**Slovenia is a small country that packs in a lot of delights - from a lively, picture-perfect capital city to castles and magnificent nature at every turn.**

**S**lovenia is probably one of the most underrated countries when it comes to holiday and travel in the whole of Europe. It's a small country that packs in a lot of delights - from a lively, picture-perfect capital city to castles and magnificent nature at every turn. Thanks to the mountains, lakes, wine valleys, Slovenia was a perfect destination for rejuvenation. It is a country where the locals' joke that in May you could spend the morning skiing on the snowy peaks and the afternoon swimming in the sea. I started my journey in Slovenia from Ljubljana. Ljubljana means 'beloved,' and it did not take me long to fall under its charm. The gorgeous cobbled part of the city is sandwiched between the imposing hill-top castle and the Ljubljanica River. It's like someone decided it'd look

nice as a backdrop to the city when they built it. I set off to reach the Dragon bridge. Ljubljana's dragon is comfortably the city's most recognisable resident. Not only does it perch with teeth bared and wings spread on all four corners of the bridge, but its image also appears on the town's coat of arms, flag, manhole covers and even on the crest of the local football team. If stories are to be believed, then Mythological Greek hero Jason and his Argonaut comrades stole a Golden Fleece from the King of Colchis on the Black Sea. The Argonauts fled their pursuers and found themselves at the mouth of the River Danube instead of going back to their Greek homeland. There was no way back, so they went on, up the Danube and then along

the river Ljubljanica. They stopped at the source of the river and overwintered here. They came across a large lake with a marsh dragon that Jason killed after a heroic struggle. This monster is believed to be the Ljubljana dragon.

### Tolmin Gorge

The weather was stunning the next morning and the plan was to drive to Tolmin, located in the southern part of Triglav National Park. The drive through the winding roads of the national park was quiet and breathtaking.

The gorge is enchanting with a boardwalk running along the clear blue water and little waterfalls. The moss-covered rocks and narrow passages gave it a mysterious vibe. A little fun fact, the two turquoise rivers namely Soca and Tolminka meet along the

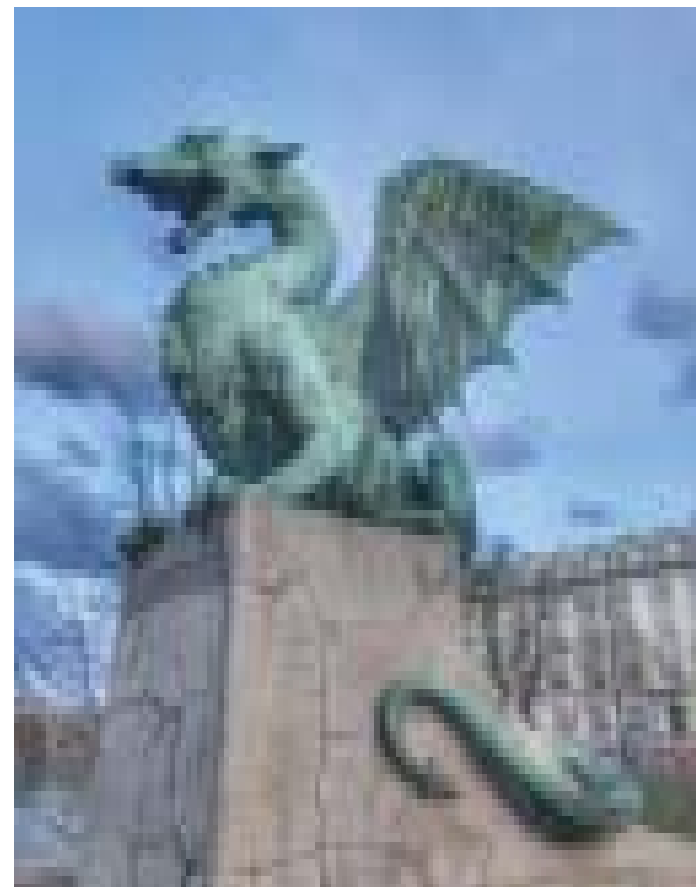
gorge.

### Lake Bled

I was a little heartbroken to leave Tolmin. Fortunately, the next stop was Bled — a picturesque town at the foothills of the Julian Alps. As I crossed the lake in a Pletna towards the island, which is also home to a church, I was captivated by the story of the bell that lies below the emerald green waters. It is believed that once upon a time, there lived a young widow in the castle of Bled. Robbers killed her husband and dumped his body into the lake. She was sad and visited the chapel on the island every day to offer her prayers. One day, she gathered all her gold to commission a bell for the chapel. During the transport of the bell, there was a storm, which sank the boat. On clear nights, people say we could hear the bell ringing from the deep waters of the lake.

Years later, the Pope blessed the chapel with another bell. It is to this blessing that a wish will be granted to anyone who rings the bell. A little research about the place, got me to do the Ojstrica hike. If it is the best "value" hike you're looking for (best reward per amount

of physical turmoil), then this one is your best bet. I have to admit, spotting where to begin the hike was tricky. But once I found it, I began climbing the steep uphill (611m). I walked on a dirt path surrounded by trees until I reached the signpost.



## *Chemical Hearts movie review*

# *Amazon's gut-wrenchingly glorious film provides chicken soup for the romantic soul*

**Chemical Hearts movie review: Starring Lili Reinhart and Austin Abrams as teen lovers, the new Amazon Prime film is here to provide chicken soup for the romantic soul.**

**Chemical Hearts**

Director - Richard Tanne

Cast - Lili Reinhart, Austin Abrams

Chemical Hearts is a movie about impermanence, about the complexity of human emotion and the equally messy desire to make sense of it. As far as high-school melodramas go, it's among the finest in many years -- a film that doesn't look at the teen experience with derision, and dares to invoke Spike Lee.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Hollywood watched Twilight mint millions and decided that its success signalled a new dawn for young adult movies. And so it threw everything at the wall, hoping that something - it didn't really matter what - sticks. You'd be surprised how many potential YA franchises were abandoned after first instalments, mostly because the audience - a mildly obsessive teen audience, remember - thought that cheating on its first love was not something that it wanted to do.

And so, while some franchises like Twilight and The Hunger Games survived, the most memorable films of this Golden Age of YA - a movement in American filmmaking that I am happy to have witnessed at precisely the right time - are standalone dramas based on books. Like *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Paper Towns*, *The Spectacular Now*, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* - all personal favourites - *Chemical Hearts*, the new teen film out on Amazon Prime Video, also offers a wise take on the volatility of youth. And like each of those films, it has tremendous affection for its characters. How often do we see filmmakers, who are probably in their 40s, try to appease younger audiences in the most superficial manner possible? There has been no bigger culprit of this crime in recent months than Imtiaz Ali, who with *Love Aaj Kal* reduced an entire generation's emotional truth to hashtags and an overreliance on mobile apps. At no point in *Chemical Hearts*

does director Richard Tanne, who made the terrific Barack Obama film *Southside with You*, pretend to be a teenager himself. He views his characters not with judgement - like most kids, they tend to do stupid things - but with empathy and earnestness.

So much of what happens in the film to both Henry Page and Grace Town -- named as only characters in movies can be -- is essentially happening to them for the first time. You watch as they struggle to comprehend their feelings, the hollowness of heartbreak and the euphoria of first love. You watch as they learn to appreciate the roles they play in each other's lives -- when to offer support, but more importantly, when to leave the other person alone. And both Henry (Austin Abrams, doing his best Timothee Chalamet impression) and Grace (an absolutely knockout Lili Reinhart) are unsure of what they feel for each other. He is cripplingly inexperienced in matters of the



heart; so it is not surprising that he falls head over heels in love with Grace, who, it is revealed in an elegantly directed scene, is a survivor of trauma. Much of the film is devoted to her personal growth. As she surrenders herself to him, she is consumed by an overwhelming sense of guilt, an emotion that she recognises all too well, but not quite like this. She did not know that guilt - a very primal feeling - could take such drastically different, yet equally intense forms. By comparison, Henry's puppy love feels positively puerile. Mere moments after meeting her for the first time, he adopts Grace's favourite poems and songs as his own. And shortly after that, he

begins stalking her - both on the internet and IRL. But these scenes are designed to highlight the vast chasm of emotional maturity that Henry must leapfrog across to understand Grace's deliciously dark, and considerably more evolved mind. It is a mind consumed by the idea of death - not in a morbid way, but more out of curiosity. She has come close to it, and it has changed her perspective on life. Henry's understanding of the world, having been born in a happy household, is based on what he has read, and not on what he has experienced. I was also delighted to observe that the film has no time for technology.

## *The One and Only Ivan movie review*

# *Angelina Jolie adds depth to dour Disney+ Hotstar family film*



**The One and Only Ivan**

Director - Thea Sharrock

Cast - Angelina Jolie, Sam Rockwell, Bryan Cranston, Helen Mirren, Danny DeVito, Brooklynn Prince

With enough Oscar winners in its cast to clog up a Vanity Fair red carpet, *The One and Only Ivan* is yet another high-profile children's film that Disney has dumped online during the pandemic. The would-be franchise-starter *Artemis Fowl*

was roasted upon release, and now all eyes are on *Mulan*, the most expensive film ever made by a female filmmaker with a reported \$200 million budget. *The One and Only Ivan*, to use a network TV analogy, feels like lead-in programming. The trouble with the film, if you've seen the trailer, is that despite featuring the talents of Angelina Jolie, Sam Rockwell, Helen Mirren, Danny DeVito and others, it restricts them to playing CGI animals of

different shapes and sizes. The only recognisable live-action performer is Bryan Cranston, who, don't get me wrong, is a wonderfully talented actor with his own devoted fanbase, but hardly someone who can sell a big-budget film targeted at children. None of these actors, with the exception of Rockwell (who plays the titular gorilla Ivan, a role that would have gone to Owen Wilson a decade ago), Cranston (Ivan's smarmy circus ringleader), and DeVito (who plays a blabbermouth dog named Bob), have much to do. With a running time of around 90 minutes, *The One and Only Ivan* provides only about a dozen lines each to its talented cast - I'm sure that Jolie, who also serves as producer, wrapped recording her material in a day. Do children care how famous the man or woman voicing the serene elephant in the film is? Probably

not. But their parents might.

Casting movie stars in animated films is a trend that began in the early 2000s, when Dreamworks, in an effort to set itself apart from Pixar, lured audiences in with glossy marketing campaigns featuring some of the biggest names. Which is precisely the strategy used in this film. It remains as distracting now as it used to be in the past. *The One and Only Ivan* is an uncommonly pensive Disney film - one that is closer thematically with *Christopher Robin* and *Pete's Dragon* than, say, *Aladdin* or *The Jungle Book*. Writer Mike White and director Thea Sharrock slather the film with a layer of melancholy that might be too intense for children. Ivan, who used to be the star of the show once upon a time, finds that he no longer has any desire to perform daily shows at a strip mall. All he wants to do is retire in peace. I didn't expect this

movie to remind me of *The Irishman*, another film in which a character devoted to their job is struck by mortality, but there you have it. In scene after scene, Ivan sits in silence, stewing in a mixture of regret - at a life not lived - but also hope, of going out on his own terms. Rockwell is excellent, despite being severely hindered by ones and zeroes. Like fellow Disney+ live-action and CGI hybrid *Lady and the Tramp*, *The One and Only Ivan* features stunning visual effects work. The animals, especially Ivan, are breathtakingly realised. Their expressions aren't as animated as they would've been in a motion-capture movie - recall the almost human-like faces of the beasts in Andy Serkis' *Planet of the Apes* films and *Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle* - but neither does the film resemble National Geographic documentary footage.



## Kubbra Sait slams derogatory tweet that called Rhea Chakraborty 'sex bait'

**Actor Kubbra Sait has slammed a tweet by Madhu Kishwar, in which Rhea Chakraborty had been called a 'sex bait'.**

Actor Kubbra Sait has slammed a tweet attacking actor Rhea Chakraborty, who has been accused by Sushant Singh Rajput's family of having abetted his suicide and siphoning off his funds. Rhea, in a tweet, had identified herself as Sushant's girlfriend. The case is now being investigated by the CBI, based on Sushant's father's FIR against Rhea and a few others. "Imagine the day you wake up one morning and you realise that the bile you've spewed, won't allow you to look at yourself in the mirror. That would be a horrible day. Be responsible, or don't use social media," Kubbra wrote in her response to a tweet by women's rights activist Madhu Kishwar.

Kubbra wasn't the only one to slam the tweet. "This woman started Manushi. Was an academic feminist who was an inspiration to so many of us. And, now - she crucifies a woman based on gossip and innuendo, using the worst possible misogynist descriptions - fortune huntress, mafia moll," another person wrote. "What drives some women to speak ill of other women? Also why do ppl talk so much about an on going investigation-is it because they don't trust the investigation agencies or are they being just being

gossip mongers?" a third person commented. Earlier this week, a HuffPost report quoted anonymous friends of Rhea as saying that the attacks on the actor are unfair. "They haven't had a moment to grieve. Has anyone paused to think that here's a young woman who lost the love of her life? It's bonkers for us to even process the hysteria that's



unfolding right now. It's so far from the truth, it shocks the mind," a friend said. Sushant's death is being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation. A separate investigation into the allegations of misappropriation of funds against Rhea is being carried out by the Enforcement Directorate. Recent reports suggest that the Narcotics Bureau could enter the picture after a drug angle was recently uncovered in relation to the case.

## Tom Cruise makes surprise appearance at Tenet screening in London, says 'great to be back in a movie theatre'.

Hollywood star Tom Cruise posted a video of himself at a preview screening of Christopher Nolan's new film, Tenet, in London. Cruise expressed his excitement to return to the theatre and when asked what he thought of the film, he said, "I loved it!"

In a video shared on his Instagram page, Cruise is seen braving the London rain and going to the theatre in a car. "How does that happen? I am wearing a mask," he says in the clip. He is also seen waving to fans outside.

As Cruise reaches the theatre, he poses outside a giant hoarding of Tenet and says, "Here we are, back to the movies!" He is then seen applauding as the film plays, as a masked man that looked like his Mission: Impossible 7 director Christopher McQuarrie sits next to him. Before leaving, he tells his fellow moviegoers, "Great to be back in a movie theatre, everybody!" On being asked what he thought of the film, he says, "I loved it!"

"Big movie. Big screen. Loved it," Cruise captioned his video, which has been viewed more than

7,00,000 times on Instagram.

Nolan's time-bending espionage epic, Tenet, is the first big Hollywood film to hit the screens since the coronavirus pandemic shuttered theatres worldwide earlier this year. Though it will be officially released on Wednesday in select US



and overseas markets where theatres have reopened, previews began over the weekend. Cruise was lauded for supporting Tenet as the exhibition sector desperately needs a boost. "Yes Tom! Thank you for supporting movies at an

important time for the film industry to rebound! You are the man, would love to see you in a Christopher Nolan project! Cheers," one Instagram user commented on his post. Another wrote, "Awesome positive post THISSSSSSSS!!!!!" Tenet shows John David Washington in the 'afterlife', as he attempts to prevent World War III. While it is not clear exactly how disastrous that could be, we are told that it is 'something worse' than nuclear holocaust. The film also stars Robert Pattinson, Elizabeth Debicki, Dimple Kapadia, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Kenneth Branagh and Michael Caine.

## BTS fans' rape threats force Neha Bhasin to file police complaint

Singer-songwriter Neha Bhasin has filed a complaint with the Mumbai Police's Cyber Crime branch, after the 37-year-old singer was "trolled, bullied, abused and given rape threats" along with her "family and friends". "I waited for a week, this time. I tried warning them. But it just kept getting worse and worse every day and I decided that I couldn't take it any longer, and filed a complaint with the cyber crime department of Mumbai police yesterday," she says. "I posted a photo of my father, who

by the "so called fans" of (the Kpop sensation) BTS. "I dont even know Badshah personally. But he was being trolled and called average musician, because he said something about buying google ad words, and what he said was completely alright. I had just given my opinion that every artist needs to be respected, and added that I am not a big fan of Kpop music. Since then, for nearly two months I was abused and criminally threatened," says Bhasin. But it did not



passed away two years back, and in the comment section on that post, people are threatening me. I am scared," she adds. For the uninitiated, last year Bhasin, after defending rapper-composer Badshah on Twitter, had faced a barrage of abuse and rape threats, "which included many young girls dishing out threats,"

end there. This year, ever since it was reported that Badshah was questioned by the police about buying fake likes, The BTS Army, as the fans of the popular South Korean band like to call themselves, "abused, gave rape threats and bullied" Bhasin to apologise them, for her remarks that she made last year.

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## Pulwama Attack: The 23-Year-Old Woman Who Helped The Terrorists

Insha Jan was in touch with the main conspirator Mohd Umar Farooq, the Pakistani bomb-maker killed in Kashmir by security forces in March through phone and other social media platforms.

(News Agencies)-The lone woman arrested in the Pulwama investigation played a crucial role in facilitating the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists who carried out the deadly suicide attack last year, the National Investigation Agency (NIA)'s charge-sheet reveals. The NIA claims Insha Jan, 23, was involved with main conspirator Mohd Umar Farooq, the Pakistani bomb-maker killed in Kashmir by security forces in March. She was in touch with him on the phone and other social media platforms.



13,500-page charge-sheet. Insha Jan's father Tariq Pir was also aware of the relationship, according to the NIA. Tariq Pir allegedly facilitated the movement of Umar Farooq and two other associates in and around Pulwama. "The father-daughter duo provided Umar Farooq, Sameer Dar and Adil Ahmed Dar (the three key players in the attack) food, shelter and other logistics on more than 15 occasions. The terrorists stayed for two to four days at a time at their home, several times between 2018 and 2019," the officer revealed. Over 40 soldiers were killed when a suicide bomber rammed a car full of explosives into a security convoy at Pulwama on February 14 last year. The NIA says Adil Ahmed Dar was the suicide bomber. **(Contd on page 30)**

## Does marijuana use really cause psychotic disorders?



(News Agencies)- Does marijuana cause psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, and do associated symptoms like paranoia lead to violent crimes? That's what writer Alex Berenson is claiming. As part of his new book promotion, Berenson published a New York Times op-ed that also blames the drug for "sharp increases in murders and aggravated assaults" purportedly observed in some states that allow adult recreational marijuana use. As scientists with a combined 70-plus years of drug education and research on psychoactive substances, we find Berenson's assertions to be misinformed and reckless. **(Contd on page 29)**

## How 'Big Brother' is watching you, all the time



(News Agencies)- Facebook has been in the news in India for all the wrong reasons recently. A criminal case has been registered in Raipur against a top Facebook executive, Ankhi Das, for overlooking inflammatory posts by a politician, allegedly because removing it would anger the ruling dispensation. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress have been engaged in a war of words on this issue and it is likely to spill over into the next session of Parliament. There have also been allegations about the Arogya Setu app not being fully secure, but information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has assured people that it is safe. Let us recall what happened with Cambridge Analytica. The company was alleged to have systematically influenced the 2016 United States (US) presidential election. There were claims that the company illegally monitored the accounts of around 85 million Facebook users. ? **(Contd on page 29)**

## 5 Myths About the Postal Crisis

And why Congress might be coming back to fix all the wrong problems.

(News Agencies)- Suddenly everyone seems to be worried about the U.S. Postal Service. Mail delays during Covid-19 were already stoking fears that the agency is collapsing right when we need it most. Then President Donald Trump stoked even bigger fears by telling Fox Business News that he might deliberately starve it of money to block mail-in voting.



and even spend billions of dollars, without fixing the real underlying issues. What's just hype-and what should we actually worry about? Here's what's really going on with the 240-year-old agency.

The Postal Service is the nation's favorite federal agency, and even Trump seemed to realize he'd overstepped; he soon tweeted "SAVE THE POST OFFICE!" But people aren't wrong to worry: The Postal Service really does have big

problems, and it really will be central to the election this year. The problems just aren't the ones everyone is panicking about. As Congress comes back this weekend for a special session to address the mail crisis, there's a risk it will scramble to patch some holes,

Myth 1: There's a Trumpian plot afoot to cripple the post office, in plain sight.

Since Trump's comments on Fox, the Internet has lit up with stories mail collection boxes being locked or trucked away and postal sorting machines being taken out of service "to prevent Americans from voting."

What these anecdotes ignore is that USPS is always making adjustments **(Contd on page 30)**

**Josh india tv**

**BOI BOX OFFICE INSIDER**

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**ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ**  
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