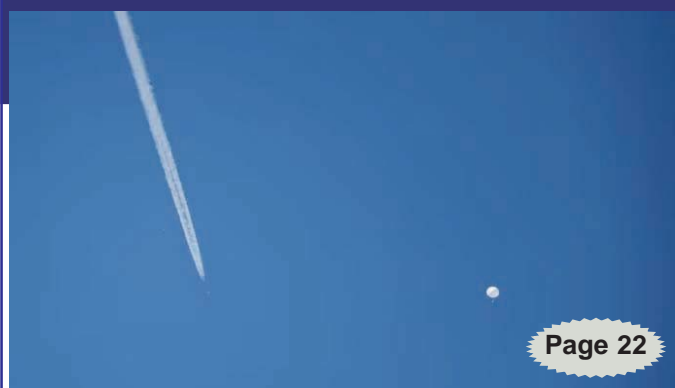




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Anger grows in Turkey as earthquake death toll passes 20,000 and rescue hopes dwindle

Why did China's balloon over America raise alarms of spying?



Page 22

Chinese spy balloons have crossed into US territory in the past but the way that this one maneuvered toward sensitive US sites raised alarms.

When China's suspected surveillance balloon first passed into US airspace north of Alaska's Aleutian Islands on Jan. 28, American officials believed there was a good chance it would keep traveling on a northern trajectory over sparsely populated areas.

But two days later, the balloon did something unexpected: it slowed down, almost loitering, over Canada. Then it changed course and headed south on

a new trajectory that would eventually take it over the US state of Idaho, officials said. That's when we knew this was different," a US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Chinese spy balloons have crossed into US territory in the past but the way that this one maneuvered, steering toward sensitive US sites, raised alarms at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), officials said.

Dental Practice Owners Charged with Fraud and RICO Conspiracy



Page 24

Indian Man Arrested For Killing Fellow Countryman In US

Police and fire medics found Mahankali with a life-threatening gunshot wound at about 9:30 pm on Sunday in the 3200 block of Eastern Boulevard.



Page 23

Twenty-Three Individuals Charged in \$61.5 Million Medicare Fraud Schemes



Page 23

High rent, cost of living making lives of Indian students miserable in Britain

International students in the UK have to give almost triple the fees as compared to the local students and then they are allowed to work 20 hours a week.



clothes, forcing him to stay out of suitcases.

Dharin is not alone. There are thousands like him. A UK website dedicated to higher education revealed that after China, India is the place from where the largest number of students come to study.

In 2022, 143,820 Chinese students landed here to study while the number from India was 84,555.

"I was motivated to come because of the YouTube videos promising the world, making the UK to be a land of possibilities while the reality is quite the opposite," said Dharin. The increased cost of living has crippled even the local population who are struggling to put two square meals on the table. The international students, who are already paying a higher education fee as compared to the local students, have to do even more cost-cutting to make ends meet.

"Back home I used to drink and have fruit every day and now I can only afford one meal," said Sonal, who is studying data analytics at Westminster University.

Soon after her morning classes, Sonal was on a mission to find a job. Knocking the doors of shops, restaurants, hotels, supermarkets and so on has become a part of the routine of most students.

The UK announced a post-study work visa called the "graduate route," in September 2019 that allows international students – including those from India, to work, or look for work, in any career or position of their

choice, for two years after successfully completing their studies. In 2018-19, 26,685 students from India came to the UK. With the coming of the graduate visa, the number more than doubled to 84,555 in 2021-22. The caveat is that the pandemic, combined with the war in Ukraine, contributed to inflation in the UK. "A 5 litre pack of oil used to cost 4.50 to 5 pounds not so long ago and now it's almost 10, just double," said Syed Muhammad Ali, an education law expert who represents students in trouble -- from disciplinary, race-relation issues to non-payment of fees.

(SAI Bureau) High rents, lack of jobs, triple tuition fees as compared to the local students, scarcity of accommodation and, if this was not enough, inflation and ever-increasing expenses in the UK have made the lives of international students miserable.

Many want to go back home but are stuck having locked their time, money, and resources into a course. "I just feel that I should go back to India," said Dharin Patel, who has come to do his post-graduation in cyber security from a London

University. He took a loan of about Rs 32 to 35 lakh to cover his tuition fees and the initial cost of living, but the expenses were so high that he had to ask for money from home. Dharin added, "My rent is 700 pounds and then there is the travel cost, food, mobile, and so on. I have to ask for money from home." Due to the high rent, Dharin shares a very small room with another student. The room is so small that it barely fits a double mattress with a small makeshift cloth drawer that barely accommodates his

Indian-American Ro Khanna, Mike Waltz elected co-chairs of House India caucus

Indian American Democratic lawmaker Ro Khanna and his Republican House colleague Mike Waltz have been chosen as co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans

(SAI Bureau) Ro Khanna, an Indian American Democratic lawmaker, and Mike Waltz, his Republican House colleague, have been selected as co-chairmen of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the 118th Congress. The India Caucus, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in the House of Representatives, is the largest country-specific group of its kind and is dedicated to enhancing the bond between the two largest democratic nations in the world. Khanna, 46, is the second Indian American to hold the position of co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans since its inception in 1993. During the 115th Congress (2015-2016), Congressman Ami Bera served as co-chair, and at that time, he was the sole Indian American in Congress. Currently, the number of Indian Americans in Congress has risen to five, including DR Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Pramila Jayapal, and Shri Thanedar. "I am honoured to chair the India

caucus and will look forward to involving the national Indian American diaspora in helping strengthen the US India relationship," Khanna was quoted as saying by the news agency, PTI. Ro Khanna, an Indian American, represents California's 17th Congressional District. He was recently elected for his fourth consecutive term in November. According to NBC News, Congressman Andy Barr and Marc Veasey will serve as Vice Co-Chairs. Brad Sherman, formerly the Chair and now serving as Chair Emeritus, represents California's 32nd Congressional District. The members of the caucus plan to continue their efforts to promote stronger ties between policymakers and Indian American communities and reducing India's dependence on Russian defense systems in this new Congress. "A strong relationship with India is critical for our economy and national security. It is an honour to serve alongside my colleague Rep. Waltz as co-chair of the India Caucus," Khanna said.

Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj stolen from park in California's San Jose



(SAI Bureau) The statue was given to the city as a gift from Pune -- San Jose's sister city in India. It is the only statue of the Maratha ruler in North America. The only statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in North America was stolen from a park in California's San Jose city. "We regret to inform our community that the Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue at Guadalupe River Park is missing," San Jose's Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services tweeted on Friday. It is

not clear when the statue was taken, the KTVU reported. The statue was given to the city as a gift from Pune -- San Jose's sister city in India. It is the only statue of the Maratha ruler in North America. "The city is deeply saddened that this landmark has been stolen. We are working with community leaders to find solutions and will provide updates as we receive them," the department said in a tweet. Authorities are investigating the matter and have sought help from the public, the department said.

A Standoff Is Coming in Summer 2023 and It's Over the National Debt

(Bloomberg) -- President Joe Biden is headed toward a standoff over the national debt next year, when Republicans newly in control of the US House threaten to demand concessions for raising the government's legal borrowing limit.

Democratic leaders in Congress say they've run out of time to force through an increased debt ceiling this year, with most Republicans opposed. Two Democratic senators — Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona — insist that any vote should be bipartisan.

That will push the fight off until 2023, when Republicans will assume the majority in the House. From that perch, they've promised to win Biden's signature on some of their priorities in exchange for a vote to increase the borrowing limit before a default on US payments as soon as July.

Their demands could include large spending cuts — including to Social Security and Medicare, the retirement and health programs for the elderly and disabled — or policies such as stricter immigration controls. Biden has vowed that he won't yield. The result may well be a crisis. The last time Republicans and the president engaged in such political brinkmanship, in 2011, the prospect of a default on the nation's debt caused huge volatility in the stock market. Standard & Poor's for the first time ever downgraded the US



credit rating. Consumer confidence plummeted. "The situation is far more perilous than it was 10 years ago. The Republicans' conference is so much further to the right," said Tom Kahn, a former Democratic staff director of the House Budget Committee who is now a distinguished faculty fellow at American University. Some conservative Republicans insist a default would simply force government spending cuts without widespread economic repercussions. Financial markets dismissed the S&P downgrade in 2011, pushing the yield on the 10-year Treasury note to a record low just seven weeks later.

But many economists say a default would be catastrophic, especially with a recession already looming for the US economy. The 2011 crisis was resolved after then-President Barack Obama agreed to more than \$2 trillion in spending cuts over a decade. Republicans are trying

to force Biden into a similar negotiation again next year, with their House majority buttressed by Democrats' narrow margin in the Senate. "The debt ceiling is a real opportunity to figure out how to live within our means," Florida Senator Rick Scott, a member of GOP leadership, said Tuesday.

Democrats will hold a 51-49 majority after Senator Raphael Warnock's re-election on Tuesday. Because of the Senate's filibuster rules, 60 votes are required to advance most controversial measures. The government right now is roughly \$98 billion away from reaching the \$31.4 trillion statutory limit, although analysts doubt the government is actually at risk of defaulting until the second half of 2023 because of the extraordinary measures it usually uses to avoid exceeding the cap. Treasury has been cutting the size of its bill auctions as of late, an indication that the department will be running

significantly lower cash balances than it forecast in its quarterly financing estimates. Wrightson ICAP estimates Treasury's cash balance level will be around \$500 billion by the end of the year. Privately, the administration anticipates the government will run out of methods to avert a default on some payments in the third quarter of 2023. The Treasury Department has declined to provide a more specific estimate. Analysts from Goldman Sachs predict government accounts could run dry as early as July.

Techies may soon be able to get their renewed H-1B visas stamped while still in the United States

H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in occupations that require technical expertise.



New Delhi: A big relief may be on the horizon for thousands of Indian techies in the United States as the country is planning to resume "domestic visa revalidation" in certain categories on a pilot basis with the goal of scaling it up in the next few years.

The pilot project which is scheduled to begin later this year has deep implications for foreign tech workers on H-1B and L1 visas who may now be able to renew their visas more easily.

According to a PTI report, a State Department

spokesperson said, "We are working in earnest on plans to restart this service for certain petition-based NIV categories, and we hope to have a pilot up and running later this year. This would eliminate the need for these applicants to travel abroad to renew visas."

Further adding, "We cannot comment on how many visa holders would be initially eligible, but the pilot would begin with a small number of cases before scaling over the following 1-2 years."

H-1B visa is a Non-Immigrant

Visa (NIV) that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in occupations that require technical expertise. Tech companies use it to hire employees from countries such as India and China. H-1B visas are issued for three years at a time. Before 2004 certain categories of non-immigrant visas, particularly the H-1B, could be renewed or stamped inside the US. But after that, for visa renewal of these visas, the foreign workers with H1, and L1 visas, had to go to their home countries to get an H-1B extension stamped on their passports. Once their visa is renewed, they need to get their passports stamped with renewal dates. This is important if they want to travel outside of the US and then re-enter the country.

At present, H-1B visa restamping is not allowed within the US and restamping can only be done at any US consulate. This was a big inconvenience for foreign workers as the visa wait time could take from 800 days to 2 years. The much-sought-after H-1B visas are issued for three years at a time.

2.25 lakh people renounced Indian citizenship in 2022: Govt data

Over 16 lakh Indians renounced their Indian citizenship since 2011 including 2,25,620 last year, the highest during the period, while the lowest of 85,256 was in 2020, according to government data. The year-wise number of Indians who renounced their citizenship was provided by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in response to a question in Rajya Sabha. Jaishankar said the number of Indians who renounced their Indian citizenship in 2015 was 1,31,489, while 1,41,603 people gave it up in 2016 and 1,33,049 in 2017. In 2018, the number was 1,34,561, while 1,44,017 renounced their citizenship in 2019, 85,256 in 2020 and 1,63,370 in 2021. The number in 2022 was 2,25,620, according to the minister.

For reference purposes, Jaishankar said the data for 2011 was 1,22,819, while it was 1,20,923 in 2012, 1,31,405 in 2013 and 1,29,328 in 2014.

The total number of Indians who gave up their

Indian citizenship since 2011 comes to 16,63,440. To a specific query, he said, according to information, five Indian nationals obtained the citizenship of the United Arab Emirates during the last three years.

Jaishankar also provided a list of 135 countries whose citizenship Indians acquired.

To another question, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said the government is aware of the issue of professionals having been laid off by US companies in recent months.

"Of these, a certain percentage is likely to be Indian nationals on H-1B and L1 visas. The government of India has consistently raised issues relating to the movement of high skilled workers, including IT professionals, with the US government," he said. "It has also been working with various stakeholders, including industry organisations and business chambers on these issues," Muraleedharan said.

Trinamool to bring motion against partition of Bengal in state assembly

"We will bring the motion in this budget session and would want every MLA, including those in the opposition, to support it," Bengal minister Sovandeb Chattopadhyay told India Today TV.



(South Asian Insider Bureau) The Budget session of the West Bengal assembly will start tomorrow with the Trinamool Congress planning to bring in a motion against the demands for separate statehood for North Bengal. "There are attempts being made to break Bengal. We will bring a motion against this in this budget session. We want every MLA, including those in the opposition, to support this resolution," Bengal minister

Sovandeb Chattopadhyay told India Today TV. Biman Banerjee, the Speaker of the state legislative assembly, also supported the call for disputation over the issue. "This is a very important matter. If such resolutions are raised, the legislative assembly surely should consider discussing this issue," he told reporters. BJP MLA Manoj Tigga hit back at the Trinamool Congress and said, "Neither the BJP's central

leadership nor the state leadership ever supported the call for a separate statehood for North Bengal. It is the ruling party which is adding fuel to the fire over this controversy. The BJP never supported the separation of Bengal. Our party will consider supporting the motion." BJP leaders and MPs from North Bengal often raise the demand for a separate statehood, saying that the people of North Bengal are 'deprived'.

Mr A has topi pehnau-ed India: Mahua Moitra on Adani row

(SAI Bureau) Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra, in a stinging attack on the government over the Adani row, said "A, the billionaire businessman," has 'topi pehnau-ed' or duped the country. Participating in the debate on the 'Motion of Thanks to the President's Address' in Lok Sabha, Mahua Moitra said a famous person whose name starts with 'A' and ends with 'I', who stinks of crony capitalism, has duped everyone.

Her remark led to an angry exchange between Trinamool and BJP MPs as she used an offensive word once her speech concluded. The fiery speech was aided by props as Moitra brought two birthday caps into the House to press her argument that the businessman being most talked about had "topi pehnau-ed" Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. She demanded that an inquiry be ordered into the activities of the Adani Group and the allegations raised by Hindenburg Research.

"Mr A travels with you, with your delegation. He meets heads of state on their visits to India. He makes it appear to the world that he is remote-controlling the prime minister," she alleged. Referring to a statement by the Adani group in which it had said that short-seller Hindenburg's report was a calculated attack on India, she said, "The pride of India is not the wealth of one individual, the pride of India lies in the robustness of its institutional structures."

"Home minister, he has topi pehnau-ed you. He is getting security clearance from your ministry. Finance minister, he has topi pehnau-ed you," she added.

"This man has been allowed to use LIC and SBI to get money as and when he likes. Honourable civil aviation minister, he has topi pehnau-ed, you. Shipping minister, he has topi pehnau-ed you. Petroleum minister, he has topi pehnau-ed oil PSUs. Power minister, he has topi pehnau-ed you," she further said.

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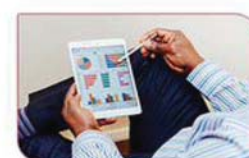
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OpenAI ChatGPT Vs Google Bard: Is Google's Newly Introduced AI Chatbot Superior?

(South Asian Insider Bureau) In response to ChatGPT, Google-one of Microsoft's biggest competitors, has made their chatbot 'Bard' public. Like ChatGPT, which is based on GPT-3.5, Bard is also a language model chatbot built on Google's LaMDA (Language Model for Dialogue Applications) technology-previously only available to a select few through their AI Test Kitchen program.

ChatGPT, since its arrival as a free research preview, has caused a stir in the tech industry. Its impact was so significant that it prompted Google to declare it a 'code red' internally. OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, has also changed the perception of artificial intelligence in the minds of many people-with many questioning if AI is here to snatch jobs.

For those unaware, Microsoft has made an investment worth \$1 billion in 2019 in OpenAI, and later, closed an investment amounting to \$3 billion in 2021, and more recently, in January last month, invested another \$10 billion to double down on its AI commitment and take on rivals like Google, Amazon and Meta.



With Google joining the rapidly evolving AI race, it's worth considering how their Bard chatbot compares to Microsoft and OpenAI's ChatGPT. But is there a clear winner between the two?

CHATGPT VS GOOGLE BARD: WHO IS HERE TO WIN THE AI RACE?

In order to compare the two, it's important to first understand the key differences between Google's Bard and ChatGPT. Bard is an AI-powered discussion service that utilizes LaMDA (Language Model for Dialogue Applications) and Web content to provide relevant, up-to-date answers to questions.

"We've been working on an experimental conversational AI service, powered by LaMDA, that we're calling Bard. And today, we're taking another step forward by opening it up to trusted testers ahead of making it more widely available to the public in the coming weeks, Google CEO Sundar Pichai said in a blog post on Bard.

ChatGPT is based on GPT-3.5 (Google's equivalent of LaMDA) but with a knowledge cutoff of 2021. This means that it lacks access to the most recent information and is unable to provide 'fresh' responses. Initially, this appears to be a significant advantage for Bard over

ChatGPT.

ChatGPT Vs Google Bard: Key Differences

It's worth noting that OpenAI's GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) model has been extensively refined in recent years, leading to its current level of proficiency. However, Google's Bard, powered by LaMDA, brings some key differences to the table. Firstly, Bard is built on a lighter version of LaMDA, which requires fewer computational resources, enabling it to serve a larger user base and gather more feedback. Secondly, LaMDA by Google has been the subject of recent discussions. Blake Lemoine, a Google engineer, made a public statement that LaMDA was 'sentient,' sparking a conversation on the capabilities of AI. This led to the termination of Blake Lemoine by Google for making false statements. On the other hand, no such controversy has arisen surrounding OpenAI's ChatGPT. And, in general, Google's database of information, and native integration with Google Search could place it in a league of its own when it comes to offering detailed

responses, and more factual data spread. Microsoft has acknowledged this and evidently, CEO Satya Nadella has been vocal about bringing ChatGPT to Bing-Microsoft's own search engine. If anything, this could close down the gap between both chatbots-if there's any to begin with.

Moreover, with Google's proficiency in providing accurate and concise information with ease, its extensive infrastructure enables it to create a seamless user experience unaffected by high traffic, and delivers prompt responses to queries.

No Clear Winner, At Least Not Yet
It's too soon to determine which chatbot is superior as Bard by Google is currently only accessible to a limited number of individuals and has not yet faced the same level of public examination as ChatGPT, which was made available as a free research preview. Direct comparisons can only be made when Google releases Bard to the public. But from the looks of it and Google's claims, Bard seems like a promising addition to the fast evolving artificial intelligence space.

Rahul's Rafale Gambit Didn't Fly in 2019

Can He Be Back in Business in 2024 with 'Adani Ammo'?

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Rahul Gandhi picked "Rafale" as his main poll plank in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls but failed as the electorate rejected his "Chowkidar chor hai" war cry against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This time, for 2024, Rahul Gandhi has picked a new poll plank - "Adani". Gandhi's long address in Parliament on Wednesday during the discussion on the Presidential address made it clear that his main issue for next year's elections is going to be businessman Gautam Adani. Much of his address was focussed on Adani. The effort in 2019, and now in 2024, of Rahul Gandhi remains the same - to stick some taint of corruption or favouritism on Narendra Modi.

However, there is a hitch here that may blunt the narrative that Gandhi is trying to build against the government. Many states ruled by the Congress and other

BJP rivals are also in big business with the Adani Group. The BJP, in fact, is set to attack Rahul Gandhi on this front,



daring him to direct the Congress chief ministers in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh to snap all their investment ties with the Adani Group.

2019 CAMPAIGN

"Chowkidar chor hai" thundered Rahul Gandhi from the stage in

rallies in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh in November 2018, to raise the alleged Rafale scam

and accuse Modi of corruption and favouritism in the deal to buy the Rafale fighters from France. While the Congress did win those state elections, there was a full reversal of fortunes in the 2019 general elections.

Modi decided to take Rahul

head-on and the BJP rolled out its poll slogan "Main bhi chowkidar" to back the Prime Minister. Modi asked the electorate if they believed that he could do anything wrong in a defence deal struck directly with another government. "The electorate refused to digest Rahul's charge that Modi was corrupt. It was summarily rejected at the voting booth," a top BJP leader said.

The Rafale acquisition has since proved to be a key national security asset, given the tensions that erupted with China in 2020. Rahul Gandhi had tried to reverse the game of 2014 when UPA was brought down on a plank of corruption scams, but this charge did not stick on Modi. The Supreme Court, later in 2021, gave a clean chit to the Modi government in the Rafale deal, ending that chapter.

ADANI AND 2024

A year ahead of the 2024 elections, the Hindenburg report on the Adani Group has come as a blessing for the Congress which has been searching for a narrative against the Modi government. Rahul's charge in Parliament on Wednesday mainly revolved around linking Adani's rise in fortunes to Modi becoming the PM in 2014 and cited their old links from Gujarat. The BJP kept objecting to this. Like the BJP did in Parliament pre-2014 regarding corruption scams such as 2G and Coalgate, the UPA is now demanding a joint parliamentary committee (CPC) probe into the Adani issue. The BJP is dead against it, saying the exposure of government entities like LIC and SBI is less than 1% in the Adani Group and the matter is in no way connected to the government or the public sector at large.

Turkey earthquake: Missing Indian man's body found under rubble

(South Asian Insider Bureau) The body of an Indian man, reported missing in southeastern Turkey following the February 6 earthquake, was found under the rubble of his hotel, Indian authorities said on Saturday. Vijay Kumar, 35, was a resident of Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand and had been sent by his employer, a gas plant installation firm based in Bengaluru, for some work on a gas plant in the Turkish city of Malatya, which was extensively affected by the massive quake. "We inform with sorrow that the mortal remains of Shri Vijay Kumar, an Indian national missing in Turkiye since February 6 earthquake, have been found and identified among the debris of a hotel in Malatya, where he was on a business



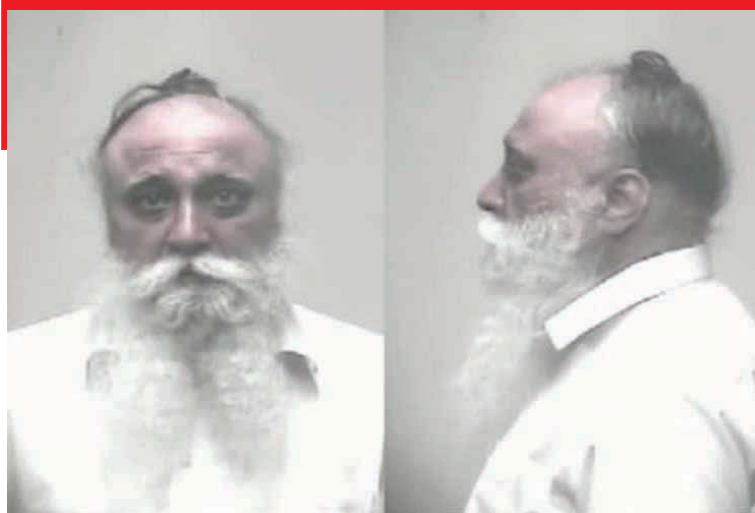
trip," the Indian embassy in Ankara said on Twitter. "Our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. We are making arrangements for the earliest possible transportation of his

mortal remains to his family," the embassy tweeted. No further details were immediately available. Kumar was reportedly asleep within the multi-storey hotel when the

earthquake hit the city early on February 6. His passport and belongings were earlier found in the rubble of the building. There were no other reports of Indian casualties in the quake. A handful of

Indians were stuck in a difficult situation immediately after the quake, though they were safe. There are 3,000 Indians in Turkey, with 1,850 in and around Istanbul, 250 in Ankara and the rest spread across the country. Extending its hand for help to the earthquake-hit Turkey, India has sent a contingent of more than 250 personnel, including search and rescue teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and a 99-member field hospital team from the Indian Army to Ankara. India has also airlifted more than 130 tonnes of equipment and relief materials to help the victims of the quake, which has killed more than 24,500 people in Turkey and Syria.

Father-son duo under Delhi Police scanner for fueling Khalistani propaganda



Delhi Police identified father-son duo from California who orchestrated terror threat along with the terrorist outfit Sikh for Justice ahead of India's 74th Republic Day.

Delhi to put up anti-India posters ahead of India's 74th Republic Day. Gagandeep and his father, Jasbir Singh, are believed to be residents of California in the United States. The duo conspired with the SFJ terrorist Gurupatwant Singh Pannu.

The father-son duo funded their sleeper cell members, along with Gurbant Singh Pannu, to put up posters to further

Khalistani propaganda, threatening terrorist attacks at 12 places across the national capital. "Stay indoors on January 26, or you'll be thwarted by the SFJ. Delhi will be our target, and we will unfurl the flag of Khalistan," said Pannu. He also offered 5,00,000 dollars to anyone who unfurls Khalistan's flag on the Red fort. Jasbir Singh was declared a

fugitive in 2004, following which he fled to America. In 2018, he even made failed attempts to kill the Akali leader Manjeet Singh GK. He was arrested by the US agencies only to be released later. Jasbir was also supposed to testify against a congress leader accused of the 1984 anti-Sikh riot but purportedly refused in exchange for money.

(News Agency) Delhi Police on Saturday identified a father-son duo - associated with the

terror outfit Sikh for Justice (SFJ) - accused of funding their sleeper cell members in

Delhi to put up anti-India posters ahead of India's 74th Republic Day. Gagandeep and his father, Jasbir Singh, are believed to be residents of California in the United States. The duo conspired with the SFJ terrorist Gurupatwant Singh Pannu.

The father-son duo funded their sleeper cell members, along with Gurbant Singh Pannu, to put up posters to further

'No freedom of speech after BJP...': Kharge slams Centre over Parliament speech being deleted

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge expressed his disappointment over parts of his speech being expunged in the Parliament earlier this week.

(News Agency) Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said that there was no freedom of speech in the country after the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power at the Centre. Addressing a rally in Jharkhand's Sahibganj district, Kharge expressed his disappointment over parts of his speech being expunged in the Parliament earlier this week. "There is neither freedom of speech inside Parliament nor outside... Those who dare to speak up are put behind bars," claimed Mallikarjun Kharge in the rally. He further said

that ever since the BJP came to power in 2014 with the promise of reducing inflation, the price of essential commodities and poverty have only risen. Mallikarjun Kharge said that it was the Congress government that developed the infrastructure of the country and fought for its freedom. After launching Congress's 60-day "Haath Se Haath Jodo" mass outreach programme at the Guman Ground in Jharkhand's Pakur, party workers will make door-to-door visits to aware citizens of the Centre's policies, which according to Congress are "anti-people."



Chandigarh Police release photographs of 10 persons involved in violent clash with cops

Police said the informer will be rewarded with Rs 10,000 and his identity will be kept secret

(News Agency) Chandigarh : The Chandigarh Police on Saturday released pictures of 10 persons allegedly involved in a violent clash with policemen at the Chandigarh-Mohali border, asking people to share any information regarding them. On February 8, several protesters, demanding the release of Sikh prisoners, clashed with the Chandigarh Police at the dividing road of sector 52-53 when they were trying to head towards Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's official residence to press their demands. Many policemen were injured in the clash while several vehicles were damaged. Police had named seven persons, associated with the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha that is spearheading the protest to seek the release of Sikh prisoners, in the FIR, and many unidentified persons were booked under 17 sections including 307 (attempt to



murder) of the Indian Penal Code, the Arms Act and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act. The Chandigarh Police in the FIR had mentioned that protestors allegedly snatched a teargas handgun, its ammunition and

attempted to kill policemen amid raising of pro-Khalistan slogans during the violent clash. In a public notice on Saturday, the Chandigarh Police released the pictures of 10 accused and asked the public to share any information regarding

them.

Police said the informer will be rewarded with Rs 10,000 and his identity will be kept secret.

Under the banner of Qaumi Insaaf Morcha, people from various parts of Punjab have been holding the protest and laying a siege at the YPS chowk near the Mohali-Chandigarh border since January 7. Nihangs (Sikhs armed with traditional weapons), members of several Sikh bodies and some farm bodies have extended support to the morcha. They have been seeking the release of Sikh prisoners, including Balwant Singh Rajoana, a convict in former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh's assassination, and Devinderpal Singh Bhullar, a 1993 Delhi bomb blast convict. They are also seeking justice in the 2015 sacrilege and police-firing incidents in Faridkot.

Ahead of Lalu Yadav's return to India post kidney transplant, daughter Rohini's emotional appeal

Rohini Acharya, who donated one of her kidneys to her ailing father Lalu Prasad Yadav, informed her father's supporters and well-wishers' regarding do's and don'ts that need to be followed once the RJD chief is back in the country.



my father is protected from any kind of infection as advised by doctors. Doctors have advised my father not to meet a lot of people." On December 5 last year, Lalu Prasad underwent a kidney transplant in Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital after both of his kidneys stopped

functioning and daughter Rohini gave him a kidney to save his life. The selfless act by Rohini Acharya to donate one of her kidneys to her ailing father, Lalu Prasad, has made her an idol overnight. She won the hearts of even Lalu's bitterest critics, such as Union Minister Giriraj Singh. "Beti ho to Rohini Acharya jaisi. Garv hai aap par...Aap udaharan honghi aane wale pidhiyon ke liye (Let all daughters be like Rohini. I'm proud of you...you have set an example for future generations)," Giriraj Singh had tweeted.

AirAsia fined Rs 20 lakh after DGCA finds breach of pilot training norms

(News Agency) The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a penalty of Rs 20 lakh on AirAsia for violation of pilot training requirements. Eight examiners of AirAsia, too, were fined Rs 3 lakh each for violations that were unearthed during an inspection. "DGCA penalises AirAsia for few mandatory exercises of the pilots that were not done during Pilot Proficiency Check/

lakh only) has been imposed to M/s Air Asia (India) Ltd for violation of applicable DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements." The airline's Head of Training was also removed from his



position for three months "for failing to discharge his duties as per applicable DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements". The Directorate General of Civil Aviation, or DGCA, had issued show cause notices to the concerned manager,

(News Agency) Rashtraiya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo and former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav will return to India on Saturday after undergoing a successful kidney transplant in Singapore. Sharing the news of his arrival in India, Lalu's daughter Rohini Acharya posted a series of tweets and confirmed that the RJD chief would be reaching India today. Rohini Acharya, who donated one of her kidneys to her ailing father Lalu Prasad, informed her father's supporters and well-wishers' regarding do's and don'ts that need to be followed once the RJD chief is back in the country. Your love

for Papa is limitless. From my side, I want to say this to all of you that whenever you meet my father after reaching India, be careful while meeting him. Wear a mask when you meet him and help us take care of his health," Rohini said in a tweet. In another tweet, she said, "Doctors have said that even if you want to meet someone, everyone has to wear a mask. Papa should also wear a mask when he meets someone. Doctors have advised this." (sic) Emphasising that her father needs to be protected from any kind of infection, she further said, "One more important thing I must add is that it is very important that

Instrument Rating check (which is an International Civil Aviation Organization requirement) as per schedule, resulting in violation of DGCA regulations," a statement read. The statement further read, "Financial Penalty of Rs 20, 00,000/- (Rupees twenty

head of training, and all designated examiners of AirAsia as to why enforcement action should not be taken against them for lack of oversight of their regulatory obligations. Their written replies were examined, and action was taken on this basis.



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Hindenburg showed skin in the game with report on Adani. It can't be dismissed as 'suspect'

Adani Group had the opportunity to disprove and discredit the report. The fact that they failed to only reaffirms the veracity of Hindenburg's findings.

Nearly 4,000 years ago, King Hammurabi of Babylon established Law 229, which said that if a builder builds a house and it collapses, causing the death of the resident, then the builder shall also be put to death. Hammurabi posted his set of laws in a public square for every literate person to read, and believed this law was necessary to ensure high-quality construction in his empire. Author Nassim Nicholas Taleb cites this nugget of history to explain his philosophy of 'skin in the game', an ethical principle of symmetric incentives. It is a seemingly simple but intuitively hard-to-grasp idea of an equal share of risks and rewards for all stakeholders in a transaction.

The ongoing Hindenburg – Adani saga can be viewed through this prism to explain some of the confusion and scepticism ascribed to Hindenburg's motives. Hindenburg Research, a US-based short-seller, published a voluminous research report that cast severe aspersions on the Adani Group's operations and claimed in a shrill manner that Adani was the 'biggest con' in corporate history. But they didn't stop there; they also revealed that they had placed a 'big bet' against the shares of Adani Group, and stand to gain if the shares drop in value. And the implied corollary, that they would lose all their money if they were proven wrong and the shares did not fall. In essence, Hindenburg put their money where their keyboard was. Senior political leaders, public commentators and even economics professors in ivy league universities have questioned Hindenburg's motives and argued that the report is just a facade to drive the price down and gain profits. They argue that Hindenburg published a fallacious and exaggerated report because the short seller made a bet against Adani shares and is not indulging in some act of investor protection. So, was Hindenburg's revelation of its ability to profit from the report a case of 'skin in the game' or skewed motive?

hops, or media stories in the past, that have highlighted some of the very same issues that Hindenburg has raised about the Adani group. Those were waved away nonchalantly, either through intimidation with the threat of a lawsuit, or labelling them as 'easily motivated operations.' Hindenburg's transparent disclosure that it stands to gain financially if its report was taken seriously, or lose if it wasn't, created symmetric incentives that established the credibility of the report. It was a signal to the market that they believed so strongly in the quality of their research that other Adani shareholders would be convinced to sell their positions, and hence, the stock price would fall. In Talebian terms, Hindenburg had 'skin in the game' in this transaction.

Options three and four satisfy the 'skin in the game' condition, but option four also

signals to the rest of the market about Hindenburg's 'skin in the game', which was the option it chose.

Hindenburg's report not 'suspect'

To be sure, I am not for a moment arguing that markets are perfect and cannot be manipulated by mischievous reports. If any, I believe markets are more often imperfect than perfect. But to argue that Hindenburg's motive is suspect because it stood to profit misses the entire notion of symmetric incentives because it also stood to lose its money if the market did not believe its report. Adani Group had the opportunity to disprove and discredit the report and cause a lot of financial ruin to Hindenburg. The fact that they failed to only reaffirms the veracity of Hindenburg's findings, at least before the market.

It is common practice in the world of finance for investors to buy shares of a certain company and subsequently talk up that company in public to let the world know, so that they can benefit from a rise in its share price. This is an accepted norm, and it is left to the markets to either believe or disbelieve the greatness of that company. No one questions the motives behind this established practice. But even erudite people seem to struggle to accept the flip side of the same practice—to talk down a company in public and bet against its shares.

The idea that one can profit from a fall in the share price seems to be far more challenging to comprehend and accept for most people than the idea of profiting from a rise in the share price. This asymmetry of the human mind has been researched and documented in great detail by Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman and Israeli mathematical psychologist Amos Tversky, who called it "loss aversion". Ethical philosophers may justifiably argue that it is worse to profit from someone else's misfortune than from their fortune; hence, the two cannot be equated. But that is beyond the scope of this discussion.

Betting against a share or 'short sell' establishes symmetric incentives that are more credible. It is naïve and fallacious to argue that a 'short sale' induces perverse incentives, but a 'long sale' does not. The fact that Hindenburg could lose money if its report was wrong or rebutted easily, was actually the biggest signal of its credibility. Arguably, the exacerbated problem of 'fake news' in the modern world is, at its core, a problem of asymmetric incentives, where there is no punishment but ample reward and encouragement for false reportage in the guise of free speech. Establishing symmetric incentives, like in the Hindenburg example, can be a solution to stem the fake news malaise in society. But in this specific case, Hindenburg's 'skin in the game' act removed Gautam Adani's skin, metaphorically.

Who is right on border crisis, Biden or Republicans?

Who is responsible for the border crisis?

Republicans claim that the Biden administration caused it by rolling back Trump-era border security measures, and the administration blames the Republicans for not supporting Biden's \$4 billion border security funding request and his immigration reform bill.

The situation at the border is very bad. Illegal border crossing apprehensions have increased during Biden's presidency from 458,088 in fiscal 2020 to 2,378,944 in fiscal 2022. And there were 1.2 million gotaways. Gotaways are illegal crossers who are detected but not apprehended. Are the Republicans right that the administration's rollback of Trump's border security measures caused the increase in illegal crossings? This certainly was a contributing factor, but it's not the entire explanation. Under the Migrant Protection Protocols or MPP program, individuals who arrive at the southern border and ask for asylum can be sent back to Mexico to wait for their asylum hearings instead of being allowed to wait in the United States.?

This discourages migrants who do not have good asylum claims and are just trying to get into the United States. The Biden administration's restricted use of the program virtually eliminated this deterrent value.

When Biden became president on January 20, 2021, he ordered his administration to stop sending asylum seekers back to Mexico to wait for their hearings and to start winding down the program. By March, the MPP refugee camp in Mexico had been emptied out and nearly everyone in it had been released into the United States.

Then, on June 1, 2021, the administration

terminated the program. The states of Texas and Missouri successfully challenged the termination in federal court. On August 15, 2021, a federal judge issued an injunction ordering the administration to start the MPP program again and execute it in good faith. The administration resumed the program but limited it almost exclusively to young men from Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba.

A year later, a federal judge lifted the injunction, and the administration resumed its efforts to terminate the program.

Trump's Title 42 order

The administration has not been able to rescind the Title 42 order yet, but it has never fully complied with it. It did expel 1,071,075 migrants in fiscal 2021, and 1,103,966 in fiscal 2022. But the expelled migrants have mainly been single adults.

A recent report from the DHS Inspector General indicates that most of the illegal crossers who were not expelled under Title 42 were released into the interior of the country. The administration released nearly 1.35 million undocumented migrants – and there were 1.2 million gotaways. This means that more than 2.5 million undocumented migrants were able to enter the United States during the first two years of the Biden administration! If that many undocumented migrants are able to enter the country during the last two years of the Biden presidency, it will increase the population of undocumented migrants in the United States by almost 50 percent. The Republicans opposed this request because they realized that the main reason for wanting the additional funds was to get more personnel and other resources for processing and releasing the much larger number of undocumented migrants that is expected when Title 42 is terminated.


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Rahul Gandhi's reckless allegations against PM Modi stem from entitlement, frustration

It is the Congress that has overseen the worst corruption scandals in contemporary India

The Presidential Address at the commencement of the Budget Session is a very important event in parliamentary tradition. It has great sanctity and propriety attached to it. This Budget Session has its own added significance because it was the maiden address of President Droupadi Murmu whose elevation to the top-most post is historic. After all, she comes from a deprived community and is a leader of great distinction.

It is tragic that Rahul Gandhi used the "Motion of Thanks" to level baseless, reckless, and shameful allegations against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. While doing so, he threw all parliamentary propriety to the winds and indulged in lies. Rule 353 of the parliamentary procedure rules clearly stipulates that "No allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature shall be made by a member against any person unless the member has given adequate notice to the Speaker and also to the Minister concerned". None of these procedures was followed. What is utterly irresponsible is that even in sensitive matters such as foreign relations with neighbouring countries, he deliberately uttered a lie related to the award of a contract in a power facility: The president of Sri Lanka publicly repudiated the



statement of a particular officer, who also withdrew his comments. Rahul Gandhi did not mention this. It is evident that despite his nearly 4,000 km-long "Bharat Jodo Yatra", Rahul Gandhi still has deep-seated frustration over the repeated losses of the Congress Party. In fact, he had not walked for "Bharat jodo" but to seek validation for the entitled idea that only he and his family have the divine right to rule India. This entailed an arrogant assumption not to accept Modi as a Prime Minister and that the BJP is in power. The Congress has consciously and deliberately ignored the contributions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. It is PM Modi who accorded them and many other freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country due respect. This has included naming islands after Paramveer Chakra awardees in Andaman & Nicobar.

Rahul Gandhi has no moral

authority to speak about corruption. Along with his mother Sonia Gandhi, he is out on bail in the National Herald case, which carries allegations of the fraudulent acquisition of costly real estate. Bofors, AgustaWestland, 2G, the coal scam, the Commonwealth Games scam, Adarsh Housing Society scam — all of these allegations and improprieties bear testimony to the soaring corruption under the watch of the Congress party. All of these cases happened because of the rank patronage extended by the Manmohan Singh government under active pressure from the "family". The "family" also facilitated the flight of many accused — for instance, Ottavio Quattrocchi, the middleman of the Bofors scam — from India. Robert Vadra, brother-in-law of Rahul Gandhi, allegedly made millions by the fraudulent appropriation of a massive chunk of costly land at a throwaway price and then earning an

overnight profit of selling is a textbook case of the "Vadra Model of development" fully facilitated by the Congress-ruled state governments of Haryana and Rajasthan.

The allegations levelled against Gautam Adani are equally curious. It was in 2008 during UPA rule that Adani purchased the Bunyu Coal mine in Indonesia, his first overseas purchase. In 2010, he purchased the Carmichael mine in Australia and Adani announced a \$1.65 billion deal with the Indonesian government to set up rail and port infrastructure. It was in 2011 that Adani bought the Galilee mine and Abbot Point Port in Australia. All of this happened under the UPA government. Going by Rahul Gandhi's logic, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh facilitated all of these. The Adani group plans to invest Rs 65 thousand crore in Rajasthan in projects secured by the Ashok Gehlot government and also has permission for a big coal project

in Chhattisgarh and a port in Kerala — these states are under non-BJP governments. These are larger issues at stake. Should Indian entrepreneurs be encouraged to become international players?

It was evident from his allegations that Rahul Gandhi is a deeply frustrated politician and has serious grievances as to how his sense of entitlement is being repelled by the people of India. His reckless allegation of the Agniveer scheme being sponsored by RSS is laughable. Today, lakhs of youth are applying and getting selected under the scheme. I always held the view that Rahul Gandhi does not do his homework and now even he does not cross-check the information his aides feed him.

he timing is also suspect. As chairperson of the G20, India is getting global attention. It has become the fifth-largest economy in the world. Then comes a report against a group picked up by favourable platforms and Rahul Gandhi unleashes the attack. There are just too many coincidences. India has moved beyond the myopic view of Rahul Gandhi. It is marching with pride and confidence as a nation of substance and eminence in all fields, globally. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress will face the same fate in the 2024 Lok Sabha election as they did in 2019.

Why PM Modi may want to bring Uddhav's Sena back into BJP fold ahead of 2024 polls

Winning every election, and especially a historic third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is currently the "only to-do" in the Modi and (Amit) Shah planner. And, if this means patching up with an estranged ally - the Uddhav Sena - the duo is game for it.

And, with barely 350 days to go for the big one - the 2024 elections - the duo is eyeing the 48 Lok Sabha seats that Maharashtra brings to the table and the return of the BJP's saffron twin - Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena - back to the fold. The BJP's 'Yuti' (alliance) with the Sena which lasted nearly 25 years was also its first foray into the politics of alliance. I spoke to Maharashtra leaders across the political spectrum and the one thing they were united on was that PM Modi enjoyed a warm personal relationship with both Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, the chief of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) — the shrewdest leader currently in Indian politics. Thackeray takes care not to attack PM

Modi. His frequent jibes are limited to Devendra Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde. Pawar, who conjured up the unlikely MVA (Maha Vikas Aghadi) alliance and government is also Thackeray's trouble-shooter. Pawar has forged personal relations with PM Modi.

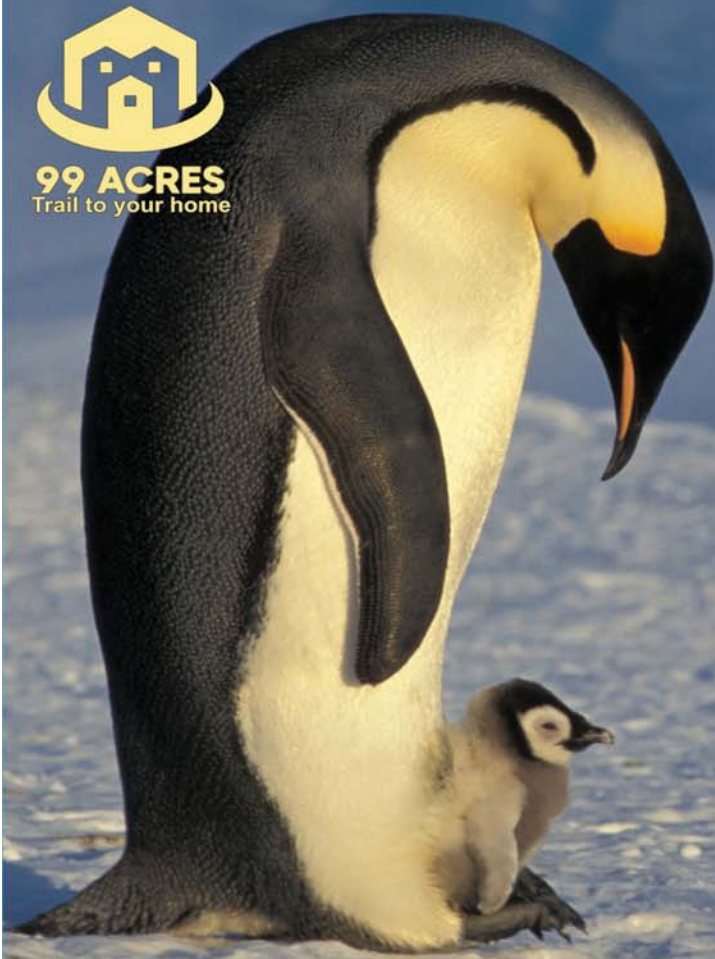
The NCP and the Congress along with the Shiv Sena formed the MVA alliance and government which was toppled by Shinde's rebellion in June 2022 and his decision to tie up with the BJP. The "resignation" of Maharashtra governor BS Koshiyari is a pointer that the Centre is trying to remove "irritants" in the relationship with the Sena. He had waded into politics and presided over the controversial 6 am swearing-in of

Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar in November 2019. Koshiyari has also made several controversial comments. The recent internal strife in the Congress has also made its allies wary as the election date of the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Cooperation (BMC) - which has a budget of over Rs 40 thousand crore - are likely to be announced soon. The BMC, the richest cooperation in India, is currently controlled by the Sena's Uddhav Thackeray faction, with the BJP following a close second. The Sena's Thackeray faction will ensure it moves heaven and earth to retain control of the BMC. The BMC provides funds and power to the Sena and it will not be averse to making a deal to ensure its decades-long control.

PM Modi's desire for the return of the Sena's Thackeray faction into BJP is at direct variance with the vaulting ambitions of Fadnavis, the BJP leader who was once the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and is currently serving as deputy to Shinde. Fadnavis is impatient about his old job and wants the Sena's Shinde Sena faction to merge into the Maharashtra BJP, which he feels is a logical corollary of Shinde-Thackeray break-up.

Shinde is paranoid about Fadnavis's actions and utterances. Recently, some BJP leaders in Maharashtra said that Fadnavis should be the CM, which upset Shinde.

(Contd. on page 24)



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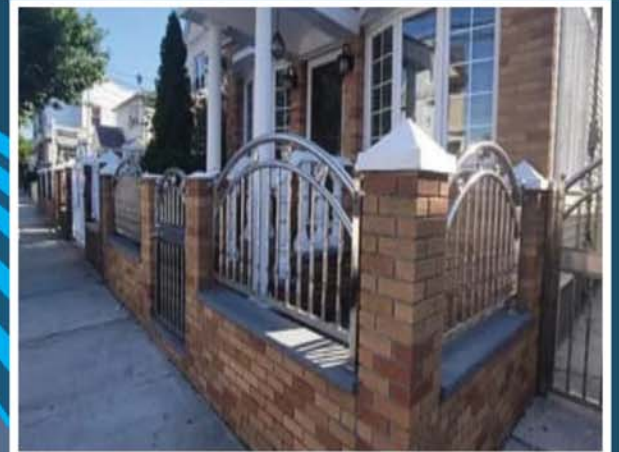
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Bharat Jodo Yatra lends new image to Rahul Gandhi, but will it help?

Though it was hoped that 150 new faces were going to emerge during the long march, nothing of the sort has happened. The image of Rahul Gandhi is definitely shining and is being seen in a new light.

After the completion of the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, Rahul Gandhi is back. The campaign started at the memorial ground of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a victim of politics of hatred and terrorism, and ended at Lal Chowk in Srinagar. The 117 'Bharat Yatris' covered 14 states while walking for 116 days. On the political map of India, it has drawn a virtually vertical line of 4,000 km. Rahul Gandhi seems to have left the old image of 'Pappu' behind him and emerged on the national scene like a philosopher with a long beard. During this march, his team tried hard to build an all-new image for him. Although he himself rejected its relation with any electoral prospect, such acts of one of the top leaders of a grand old political party and its members need a kind of interpretation. The foot march infuses energy into the party workers at a crucial juncture. Its impact on electoral prospects is a deal of the future. But it has brought serious issues like

inflation, unemployment and communal disharmony to public discourse. People from different



corners and all walks of life tried to keep pace with the marching team. Senior leaders like Jairam Ramesh and Digvijaya Singh have played a significant role in it. Though it was hoped that 150 new faces were going to emerge during the long march, nothing of the sort has happened. The image of Rahul Gandhi is definitely shining and is being seen in a new light. Rahul Gandhi started Bharat Jodo for extensive public contact. He described it as a medium for the propagation of his ideology with a new slogan, to open the 'counter' of love in a market of hatred (nafrat ke bazaar mein

pyaar mohabbat ki dukaan). It was repeated so often. At the same time, the hatred that was

the principal reason behind the idea of Bharat Jodo (Knit India) was nowhere in the country, as he observed. It has divided the life of Rahul Gandhi into two different phases - before and after the foot march. In addition to RSS and BJP, the media was also his target constantly.

Even though people associated with the BJP and RSS maintained tolerance and peace. Many among them wished him success and good luck for the yatra. Repeated violation of security norms created scores of problems for the government. The idea of Bharat Jodo turned out to be a

part of an initiative of the government of India during the presidency of the G-20 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been leading these days. The feeling of mutual love and harmony among countrymen is certainly commendable. Recently, PM Modi has made a clear appeal for social harmony on two different occasions. In the last meeting of the National Executive of BJP, the emphasis was laid on it. He had addressed the rally of the NCC (National Cadet Corps) and appealed for unity and asserted, "Several issues are raked up to create division among the children of Mother India" (Bhaanti, bhaanti ki baatein nikaal kar, Maa Bharti ki santano ke beech main doodh mein darar karne ki koshishe ho rahi hain). It seems, there is a similarity between the common people of India and the two leaders on the question of harmony. For the national interest, political workers and religious leaders can be helpful to improve the situation while keeping these facts in mind.

Mahatma Gandhi started the politics of foot march and Satyagraha in 1930 with Salt Satyagraha (Salt March) and

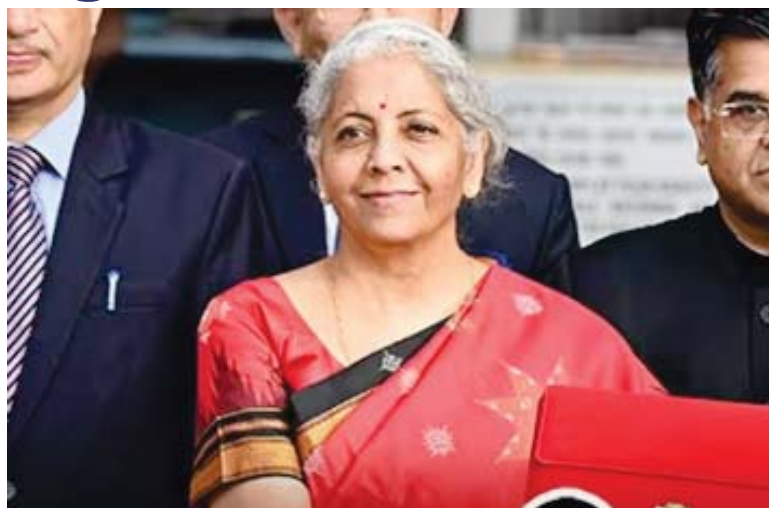
Dandi March. It has inspired former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar in 1983 to initiate the long march from Kanyakumari to New Delhi. Digvijaya Singh is known to circumambulate the Narmada River on foot. The Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh could not run for its full term, but his foot march definitely helped Congress win the assembly seats in that track. Jagan Mohan Reddy did the 3,600-kilometre march on foot from his native village in Andhra Pradesh that lasted 11 months. It has ensured his victory in the assembly elections. In Andhra Pradesh, the Bharat Jodo Yatra came across certain difficulties. Meanwhile, the Congress has elected its new President to obtain the certificate of becoming democratic. It reflects the tough fight between the two leaders-Mallikarjun Kharge and Shashi Tharoor. The hold of the Nehru-Gandhi family on the party initially appeared to deteriorate. But the success of the yatra strengthened its hold further and also confirmed the position of Rahul Gandhi as the next prime ministerial candidate of the party. This is the reason that leaders of the regional parties aspiring to be the next prime minister kept a distance from the yatra.

Union Budget 2023 fails to get sabka vishwas

It was hoped that the budget would act as a tool in nudging social and behavioural change in enhancing the position of women in the society, especially in the backdrop of India's poor performance in the Global Gender Gap Index.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman began her speech claiming it as the 'first budget of the Amrit Kaal'. Yet, it failed to fully acknowledge and encapture the goals, vision, and aspirations of India's population. Despite repeating the slogan of 'sab ka saath, sab ka vikas', it fell short of gaining sabka vishwas.

One of the most significant stakeholders in this regard are women, who comprise 48.39 percent of India's total population. In spite of the portfolio of both President as well as Finance Minister currently being led by



women, the budget pays only a lip service to gender empowerment. While on one hand, the Honourable President as well as Prime Minister have made repeated references to 'hari shakti', the policy interventions to encourage women entrepreneurship, financial empowerment and economic

participation of women could not find a place in the budget announcements. The abysmally low labour force participation of women at 19 percent & policies to encourage more economic participation of women should have been addressed by the Minister, but she announced only one savings scheme for women.

The women of 21st century's India have ambitions that surpass such simplistic and routine financial allocations.

It was hoped that the budget would act as a tool in nudging social and behavioural change in enhancing the position of women in the society, especially in the backdrop of India's poor performance in the Global Gender Gap Index. Unfortunately, the gender budget, in line with the trends of this government's previous allocations, saw only a marginal increase of 0.7 percent (5 percent from previous year's 4.3 percent).

For that matter, the lack of spending on gender-specific measures is not surprising for a budget that has been disappointing on social spending in general. For instance, the MGNREGA, which is one of the

biggest sources of employment generation in rural India saw a slashing of 32 percent in its allocation. This comes despite the fact that government had to seek additional funds in the previous fiscal years.

Reduced spending on social welfare sectors leads to great governance burden on the state governments for these subjects without any consequent fiscal federalism cooperation on the part of the Centre, these areas are bound to suffer. It will also add to more inequalities which have already sharpened over the years especially post Covid. For the aam aadmi there has been no relief on petrol, diesel prices, cement prices or fertiliser expenses. No relief from irrational GST in some commodities or for that matter the cess levied.

Don't Hail Pervez Musharraf as Proponent of Peace, He Was a Dictator Who Hated India

The death of Pakistan military dictator, Pervez Musharraf, on Sunday, 5 February, in Dubai has provoked unprecedented comment, even controversy, in India. Musharraf succumbed to a prolonged bout of amyloidosis. The disease is a relatively rare condition in which protein gathers around vital organs damaging them over time. It has been likened to debris gathering around an obstacle, snagging the flow of a river.



Musharraf was the shrewdest and most dangerous of India's enemies, both as the Pakistani Army Chief and a military dictator. So it is utterly surprising how a large section of Indian influencers, politicians, and intellectuals have hailed him as a proponent of peace. It is another matter that the adventurist who caused the Kargil invasion and war against India did even more damage to his own country, Pakistan. Musharraf sabotaged the Pakistani democracy by possibly going over then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's head to cause the Kargil occupation. It was a bold move, comparable to Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir in

October 1947. That so-called "tribal" offensive was backed by the Pakistan army. The invaders, who had reached the outskirts of Srinagar, were pushed back to the present "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir" (POK) line of control (LoC), but large parts of Indian territory were lost.

It is another matter that the founder of Pakistan, "Quaid-e-Azam" Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who took over as that country's first Governor General, died in September 1948, while India's first war with Pakistan was still underway. A formal ceasefire was declared only on 1 January 1948 and came into effect on 5 January, when it was adopted by the

United Nations commission of the Security Council. It was, arguably, among Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's first "Himalayan blunders" to take matters to the United Nations. He miscalculated the promise of his own stature and charisma or the effectiveness and the justness of India's cause at the international body. We are still to recover either the loss of our territory or its consequences in Jammu and Kashmir from that miscalculation.

Nehru, however, did not learn his lesson. Kashmir suffered under his direct intervention, with many flip flops with his approach and attitude to the state and its

leader, "Sher-e-Kashmir," Sheikh Abdullah, whose dynasty continued to lead Kashmir. But Nehru's other Himalayan great blunder came towards the end of his life, when China invaded India in 1962, giving us a bloody nose and resulting in the loss of more territory, almost 40,000 sq km of it in Aksai Chin. Another telling contrast, however, when it comes to Pakistan: while Nehru died peacefully in his sleep in May 1964, Pakistan's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was murdered in October 1951.

The man Liaquat Ali Khan appointed to the post of the first Pakistani army commander, Major General Ayub Khan, later ousted the very person, Iskandar Khan, who recommended him to be the president of Pakistan in 1958. That was the beginning of the army coups in Pakistan against elected representatives. Musharraf followed in the footsteps of his Islamist predecessor, Gen Zia-ul-Haq, who grabbed power in 1977. Zia hung Pakistan prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1977 and was himself blown up in a plane crash eleven years later, after

ruling Pakistan with an iron hand. Musharraf ousted Sharif, but did not hang or murder him. He just didn't let Sharif's plane land in Pakistan. But later, among other things, Musharraf was accused of being responsible for the assassination of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's daughter, Benazir, in 2007 in a suicide attack. Benazir also twice served as the elected prime minister of Pakistan from 1993 to 1996 and 1988 to 1990. There were assassination attempts on Musharraf himself, not to mention his sentencing, in absentia, to death for treason by a Pakistani lower court in 2019.

Musharraf sabotaged the peace process with India several times, despite Atal Bihari Vajpayee's forgive and forget approach to Kargil. But the nation must be grateful to Vajpayee for recapturing the Kargil heights, even at great cost to us. Quite ironically, the gun that helped us win back our territory was the tainted Bofors Fálthaubits 77, the 155 mm Swedish howitzer, due to which Rajiv Gandhi allegedly lost his prime ministership and Swedish prime minister Olof Palme, his life.

10 myths of Indian history created by the Macaulayan-Leftist-Nehruvian historians

Nations are created on the basis of shared past experiences and common struggles. The most gluing emotion which binds a nation-state is its cherished historical past. It is said that the nation which forgets its true past is doomed for the future. Historical facts are narrated to the present generation with a view to weaving a feeling of commonness on the basis of past events. We are one, because we have a common past. Ironically, the true historical past of India has been concocted, doctored and distorted to suit a particular political and ideological leaning. In the pre-independence era, this work was done by a coterie of Evangelist-Macaulayan historians which was further evolved by the Nehruvian-Leftist historians who distorted the rich Indian history to suit their own prejudices in post-independence India. Since these historians were well-financed and supported by the then prevailing regime, they dominated the official versions of history, be it through NCERT or UGC or through standard history books. Let us examine what myths were propagated and served to the nation by these historians.

1. India was never a nation

The Nehruvian-Communist historian eco-system claims that India was not a nation ever. Instead, it was a geographical entity of different communities, sub-regions and sub-nationalities. India could not be a nation, they claim. There was no idea of 'India' prior to India emerging as a nation state. They contently eschew the fact that India might not be a nation-state by the modern standard. But the feeling of 'Rastra' was



inherent in Indian culture, be it signified by the 4 Dhams (sacred places) in 4 different directions of the country; be it the Shloka in Vishnu Puran of Uttre Yat Samudreshche (the land lies on the north of sea and south of the Himalayas), or the inherent unity of Hindu culture. They also conveniently bypass the fact that the word 'Rastra' (nation-state) was used by Kautilya in his Arthashastra.

2. India has always faced defeats at the hands of the invaders

Read the history plated by these historians, in which they have portrayed that India lost all its battles fought with the foreign invaders who invaded and defeated the kings. As Indians, we lost all the battles with the foreigners. Nothing is further from the facts. Had we lost all the battles, all the civilisational values of the country would have disappeared. India as a country would not have even existed. India would have been a complete Islamic nation as happened in Arab and other central Asian countries.

In 326 BC, the army of Alexander retreated from Hyphasis (modern Beas) after being chased away by the army of the Nanda Empire. They also underplayed the victories of Samduragupta. They hardly taught us the legendary Sikh general Hari Singh Nalwa, known as the "most feared Sikh warrior" and the only ruler in the world to subdue the unruly Afghans.

3. India is a patriarchal society

Indian society has been a patriarchal society where a woman is treated as an object and asset of a male who dominates her in all her spheres. This is a lie which is very well concocted by these historians. They forget Ghosha, Lopamudra, Maitreyi and Gargi and other great women who, with their education and intellect, were well versed with the religious culture of ancient India and even argue with their male counterparts on the issue of religion, philosophy and morality in those days of the Vedic-era.

4. Indian history is a conflict-driven history

As the leftist perspective makes us believe that there has been a conflict-based relationship between the rich and the poor, have and have-nots and so on. In India, it is between the upper caste and the lower castes. The history of India has been a history of exploitation of the lower caste by the rich through the use of religion. They tend to eschew the fact that Indian culture and people have been one of the most tolerant, absorbing and inclusive cultures in the world. Instead of conflict, it is cooperation which has the dominating ethos epitomised in Sarve Bhawantoo Sukhina (let all be happy).

Indian Air Force not flying over Pak while going to Turkey, Syria for relief ops

Indian Air Force planes are not flying over Pakistani air space while going to Turkey and Syria for relief operations as military aircraft don't fly over the neighbouring country as per standard operating procedure. Indian Air Force officials clarified that in line with the standard operating procedure, its aircraft have avoided flying over Pakistan. "Our aircraft don't fly over Pakistan as this is our standard operating procedure. Our planes take a longer route by flying from the Gujarat side to avoid Pakistani air space while going towards Europe or West Asia," an IAF official said.

The clarification was given after speculation began that Pakistan denied air space access to the



Indian Air Force for sending relief materials to Turkey and Syria. The two countries have suffered

massively due to earthquakes that have killed thousands and injured several more.

The first batch of Indian relief materials and personnel reached Turkey in an Indian Air Force

(IAF) C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft on February 7 while a C-17 is en route as part of the Humanitarian And Disaster Relief (HADR) to earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria. The Indian Army is mobilising a 30-bed Field Hospital along with 99 medical teams.

"Second C-17 with self-contained National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams including dog squads, Search and Rescue Equipment (SAR) equipment, extrication tools and vehicles leaves for Turkey," confirmed Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Twitter. "India continues to support the people of Turkey in their hour of need," he said.

Hinduism Must Become Missionary Again, If India wants to Win Silent Demographic Warfare

Veteran journalist and editor R Jagannathan has just come out with a book, *Dharmic Nation: Freeing Bharat, Remaking India*, a compilation of 17 chapters largely aimed at helping Hindus "rediscover the essential dharmic heritage of Bharat and close ranks to defend them". One chapter, 'Why Hinduism Must Become a Missionary Religion', is especially pertinent given the challenges the Sanatana Dharma is facing in the land of its birth.

While stating that the "universe is always expanding or contracting somewhere" and "life is about birthing more cells in the body than killing them", Jagannathan makes a convincing argument that Hinduism needs to regain its missionary nature if it wants to survive the challenges confronting it. "Religions are essentially ideas with physical, emotional and psychic dimensions. If they do not seek to expand, they will shrivel, even if this trend is not clearly visible in one's own lifetime. But when it comes to a tipping point, religions may die all of a sudden. If Hinduism wants to escape this dismal fate at some future date,

it has to act now to start growing," he writes.

He then calls upon Hindus to not rely on "bans on religious conversions" as the answer to Hinduism's steady demographic

decline in India. "There are already religious conversion bans in several states, but none of them has managed to stem the decline of people professing Hindu faiths," Jagannathan says as he brings up the case of China where Christianity has made a giant stride forward despite being looked at with derision by the communist regime there.



One must first look at Hinduism's missionary claim. Howsoever improbable it may seem today, the fact is Hinduism has always

been missionary in nature, though its missionary nature is starkly different from that of Abrahamic religions. One can gauge the idea of Sanatana Dharma's missionary approach from the way Buddhism propagated itself. Prof Arvind Sharma, who teaches comparative religion at McGill University, mentions in his 2014 book, *Hinduism as a Missionary Religion*, two points are worth attention in the case of Buddhism: "One, that adopting Buddhism does not necessarily mean abandoning the social rituals of one's earlier lifestyle, although they may be considerably modified; and two, one is free to leave the monastic order and to re-enter it."

Prof Sharma makes another interesting distinction between the missionary Hinduism and the Abrahamic religions. "Perhaps a distinction needs to be drawn here between religions seeking converts and religions accepting converts. It is the seeking of converts to its own fold that makes a proselytising one," he writes, explaining how Abrahamic religions seek converts and Hinduism doesn't! (Buddhism, in this case, can be a proselytising religion but unlike Abrahamic religions, it doesn't require neo-converts to shun their past allegiances and associations.) Hinduism, thus, illustrates how a religion could be missionary and yet tolerant. For, it's a religion's endeavour to proactively look for converts that bring in an innate sense of superiority among its followers. After all, if you are not superior, then why would you seek to convert others?

Hinduism, at its civilisational and cultural apogee, was a missionary religion par excellence - but with its own Indic characteristics. This explains why in ancient times Sanskrit culture flourished not just within India's traditional frontiers but outside too - from Central and West Asia to East and

Southeast Asia. Lokesh Chandra, a prominent Indologist, believes that the famous Silk Route, which connected China with the Mediterranean Sea, was hardly used to carry silk. For him, it was actually a 'Sutra Route'. "The Chinese used silk only as part of political diplomacy; to get horses, they supplied bales of silk," he would say, adding how monks and pilgrims journeyed on it carrying Sanskrit manuscripts and disseminating Hindu-Buddhist knowledge.

Centuries before the Christian Era, Central and West Asia were largely Sanskrit cultures. And it continued to flourish for thousands of centuries. So much so that Kumarajiva studied Buddhism in Kashmir, but for Vedas, he preferred to go to Kashgar! This also explains why most of the Central Asian invaders like Shakas, Kushanas and Hunas were already Hindus/ Buddhists even before they reached India. Manu called them degraded Kshatriyas. A degraded Kshatriya was eligible for reconversion to the Hindu fold. These are clear signs of a missionary religion, bereft of associated fundamentalism of Abrahamic religions.

Why Antony Blinken's West Asia Visit Is Marred by Violent Incidents

The year 2022 was quite turbulent for West Asia with the levels of violence being the highest in the last five years. At least 225 Palestinians and 15 Jews were killed in violent incidents, including innocent civilians and children. At the beginning of 2023, there was no respite in violent incidents and killings on both sides in the occupied West Bank. The deaths of 35 Palestinians and seven Jews took place in the month of January itself.

On 26 January, an Israeli Army operation, targeting alleged Islamic Jihad militants, resulted in the death of 10 people in the Jenin refugee camp. A Palestinian gunman on 27 January killed seven Jews outside a synagogue in occupied East Jerusalem. The very next day, a young teenage shooter injured three Jews. The houses of both assailants have been sealed off by the Israeli military and will be destroyed shortly.

The three-day visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, to West Asia, at the end of January, was aimed at reducing the tensions while attempting to find a permanent solution to the Palestinian homeland problem. Blinken also discussed the ongoing war in Ukraine and the strategic challenges to the region because of the Iranian nuclear programme. The visit started with



a meeting with Egypt's President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who had brokered peace between Palestinians and Israelis last year and remains a strategic partner of the US in bringing peace to the region.

Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered Saturday for a weekly demonstration against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. The protest is the fifth against the new government, a coalition of ultra-Orthodox and far-right nationalist parties that took office in December. The controversial visit of the ultra-Orthodox far-right leader Itamar Ben Gvir, the kingmaker of Israel, after swearing in as the Minister for National Security, to the Temple Mount in the Al-Aqsa

Mosque compound added fuel to fire. Ben Gvir lived up to his manifesto wherein he had stressed on Jews getting their freedom and right to pray at the Temple Mount and not restrict themselves to the outer boundary of the complex and pray only at the Western Wall (Wailing Wall).

Blinken's visit to West Asia was planned to take understanding from the newly elected Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to keep the levels of violence under threshold levels but the spurt in violence by both sides has made Blinken's task much more difficult. Netanyahu, in his two earlier tenures as PM, overlapping with the Obama Administration had shown defiance to the US peace overtures and had

continued with building new settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. As per the UN Resolution 181 (II) of 1947, the General Assembly decided to partition Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem placed under a special international regime. West Bank and Gaza were to go to Arabs and the rest of the

areas to the newly formed state of Israel. The two million refugees (now grown into six million) who had gone to neighbouring states of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon were to return to their homeland.

The Trump administration, through Trump's son-in-law and special envoy Jared Corey Kushner, an American Jew, had given tacit support to the Israelis in ensuring that the two-state theory was given a decent burial. US President Joe Biden has promised to restore diplomatic relations with the Palestinian Authority. It is unlikely for the two nations to have an understanding on the Palestinian issue after the return of Netanyahu and the democratic government headed by Biden, an erstwhile deputy of Barack Obama.

The formation of another Quad in West Asia, in the form of I2-U2 (India, Israel, USA, UAE), for enhancing strategic relationships between members in various fields including trade and sharing of technology, has further placed the Palestinian issue on the back burner. The block, besides addressing the strategic security concerns coming out of the Iranian nuclear programme and the sale of weapons by them to Russia, will also promote trade and commerce between the four partners, especially the UAE and Israel.

Blinken's visit to West Asia ended without any major breakthrough. However, the US Secretary of State was able to reaffirm the US President's belief in the two-state theory but was not able to affect or reduce the trend of new settlements by Jews in the occupied territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The timing of the pre-planned visit was of great significance as it was able to bring some respite in the levels of violence as concerns of both - the international community and the US administration - have been flagged in meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. For enduring peace, both sides need to commit themselves to the status quo at the Al Aqsa complex; with Arabs praying inside and the Israelis along the Western Wall.

Digvijaya Singh, Sachin Pilot, Anil Antony: Why Congress' Internal Democracy is so Fragile and Selective

The internal democracy of the Congress party is in tatters as the leaders of the grand old party walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in an effort to unite India under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi. A political party should practise at least some internal democracy to safeguard the democracy in India, but the Congress has instead been pursuing a collection of fragile egos and selective affection based on sycophancy. The party's perspective on three of its leaders, who have lately made news, can help explain the Congress' dubious stance on internal democracy and blatant hypocrisy. Anil Antony, Digvijaya Singh and Sachin Pilot are these leaders. A political party's internal

democracy is a concern for the party itself, but it also illustrates how that party functions. A number of accusations have been made against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by the opposing political parties, most notably the Congress, saying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had complete control over the organisation. It's up for dispute whether actions like toeing the party line and maintaining discipline are the results of some leaders' dictatorial methods. One thing is certain, though: The Congress cannot claim moral superiority and criticise other political parties for lacking internal democracy, because the grand old party engages in

selective internal democracy. The moral posture of the political party and its future leaders can only be harmed by such political speech. One of the most recent changes in the Congress involves normalising this intolerance. For instance, Sachin Pilot publicly rebelled against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot while he was the deputy chief minister of the state. Pilot has been defying Gehlot for more than four years, every single day. The state-wide solo padayatra campaign for Sachin Pilot was started today. Pilot is making a strong statement about his leadership, legacy, and significance in state politics in his colossal rallies across Rajasthan. The party would have taken serious action against Pilot if

there had been any internal democracy that treated every leader equally, but that never happened.

Meanwhile, the party's high command turned against Congressman Shashi Tharoor when he candidly ran for president of the party. Everyone was aware of Mallikarjun Kharge's intimate ties to the Gandhi family and their support for his campaign for Congress president. Shashi Tharoor received censure for this reason from each Pradesh Congress Committee in the states where he ran for office. In the same vein, the G-23 encountered resistance when it spoke out against the Gandhis. Senior party figures, including Ghulam Nabi Azad,

were forced to resign. Anand Sharma, formerly the deputy leader of the Congress party in the Rajya Sabha, is no longer active in Congress politics. The error continued, and it was disrespecting the Gandhis.

However, what happened to Digvijaya Singh and Anil Antony - two important leaders - demonstrates the chaotic state of the Congress' internal democracy. Singh requested documentation of the surgical strike on Balakot from the Indian Army during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Rahul Gandhi disagreed with Singh's remark, but the senior leader made no attempt to retract it. He was not coerced by the party to apologise or step down.



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'We can't live like this anymore...

you'll find four bodies when you get here': Haunting 911 call Louisiana father, 43, made before he killed himself, wife and two sons, 20 and 13, in 'murder-suicide'



special needs son, 13-year-old Timothy Ragas. Officials said they found a note and weapons and believe the group was killed in what appears to be a 'murder suicide,' according to WWL. In a press conference, Lopinto confirmed the group died from gunshot wounds.

The sheriff clarified, however, that it is unclear at this time if there was more than one shooter. 'Some of the information could make me believe that maybe they decided to do this together from the parents - the mother and father,' Lopinto said. 'But I'm going to let the coroner's office make that determination,' he continued. It's unclear why the message from the man went to an answering machine for the local agency. Lopinto also told local outlets the man at one point

worked as a law enforcement officer. He would not share where the man had been employed, only telling reporters it was not Jefferson Parish and that his employment was 'years ago.'

Jefferson Parish is a city located on the Bayou Rigolettes and is about 30 minutes outside of New Orleans. After the family's bodies were found, relatives came forward to offer up an explanation. They told WWL they believe it was a combination of depression, family medical issues and financial problems that may have led to this ending. 'He wasn't work-

ing the last, almost three years,' Ragas' sister-in-law said. 'He did get a job recently and he had to lose it because (Joanna) was having medical issues and they had an autistic son and (Tim) had to be here to take care of him because he wasn't socially where a lot of people could take care of him,' the family member continued. The man's family also said they were helping out but they didn't know just how bad the situation was. 'Depression, it's terrible,' said Ragas' sister-in-law. 'He couldn't pull himself out of the depression and medically she was going through things.'

Sherriff Lopinto said: 'It looks like financial problems and stuff have left a destitute situation, and they took it into their own hands unfortunately this morning.' WWL spoke with Dr. Reggie Parquet who works at Tulane's school of social work and he told the outlet anyone suffering from depression or severe financial pressure should seek immediate help.

(News Agency) A Louisiana sheriff says he received a disturbing message from a man who law enforcement officials later found dead along with the bodies of his wife and children. Jefferson Parish Sheriff Joe Lopinto said he received a call from Tim Ragas on the sheriff department's 911 message system early Thursday morning, warning him about a

grim scene ahead at the home. 'We can't continue to live like this,' Lopinto said, sharing the message. 'You'll find four bodies when you get here.' Upon their arrival at the Harvey, Louisiana home where the call came from, officers found the bodies of 43-year-old Tim Ragas, 45-year-old Joanna Ragas, her 20-year-old son Eric Thorneblom and their

This 9-year-old Indian-American is one of the 'world's brightest' students

(SAI Bureau) A nine-year-old Indian-American schoolgirl, Samedha Saxena, has been named as one of the 'world's brightest' students by the United States-based Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY).

The Grade 4 student at Battery Park City School in New York City was assessed in an above-grade-level exam,

used by CTY to identify advanced students across the world and analyse their academic abilities. According to the university's press release, Samedha took the 2021-22 test along with 15,300 students from 76 countries. Of the total children who participated, less than 27 percent bagged high or grand honours as per their scores.

The prodigy was recognised for her outstanding performance on the SAT (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test), ACT, School and College Ability Test, or similar assessment taken as part of the CTY Talent Search. She received

the honour after being one of the youngest to qualify for the program at the age of 8 in 2022.

CTY executive director, Dr Amy Shelton, extended congratulations by noting that the recognition is a 'salute to the students'

love for learning and all the knowledge they have accumulated in their young lives so far'. She added

that an exciting future awaits the kids, who will use their potential to follow their passions, achieve remarkable dreams and benefit the society. Meanwhile, another Indian-American schoolgirl, Natasha Perianayagam, was honoured as the 'world's brightest' for the second consecutive year by CTY. The 13-year-old student of Florence M Gaudineer Middle School in New Jersey attempted the test in 2021, when she was a grade 5 student. Natasha's parents, who hail from Chennai, said that the youngster enjoys doodling and reading JRR Tolkien's novels, PTI reported.



26 killed as Chile battles deadliest wildfires on record, heatwave to continue

(SAI Bureau) Chilean firefighters were battling to hold back forest fires on Monday as authorities said hot and dry weather would continue this week, potentially exacerbating what are already the deadliest blazes in the country's recent history. The fires, which have consumed 270,000 hectares (667,000 acres) of land, have killed 26 people so far in south-central Chile, and already made 2023 the second worst year in terms of hectares burned after the so-called "fire storm" that hit the country in 2017. The state National Forestry Corporation reported that as of Monday morning, there

were 275 active fires, of which 69 were currently in combat. "Unity to face the tragedy, unity to rebuild ourselves," President Gabriel Boric wrote on Twitter. Chile is in the grip of an over decade-long period of dry weather, which the World Meteorological Organization called a "mega drought" last year, adding it was the longest in a thousand years and marked a major water crisis. The heat wave and strong winds have caused a rapid spread of the flames during

the Southern Hemisphere summer season. The country's interior minister said on Monday that 11 people so far have been arrested for actions related to the fires, without providing details on the nature of the suspected crimes because of ongoing investigations. On Friday, Boric pointed to signs that some of the fires may have been started intentionally. Between Sunday and Monday, aid arrived in Chile from Argentina, Spain and Mexico, while the authorities said they expected to receive new support from Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal and Venezuela.

The fires have not affected the mining industry in the world's top copper-producing nation, with mines located mostly in the north of the country, but they have hit Chile's agricultural and major forestry sectors. The Chilean Wood Corporation, an industry association, told Reuters on Monday that its partners are currently focused on the emergency and do not yet have a preliminary assessment of the impact.





Syria earthquake:



20 inmates escape prison housing Islamic State terrorists

(SAI Bureau) The military police prison in the town of Rajo near the Turkish border holds about 2,000 inmates, with about 1,300 of them suspected to be IS fighters. Following a deadly earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria on Monday, at least 20 prisoners took advantage and escaped from a northwestern Syrian prison holding mostly Islamic State (IS) terrorists.

The military police prison in the town of Rajo near the Turkish border holds about 2,000 inmates, with about 1,300 of them suspected to be IS fighters, as reported by the news agency AFP. The 7.8-magnitude quake -- which was followed by dozens of aftershocks in the region -- caused damage to the prison, with walls and doors cracking. "After the earthquake struck, Rajo was affected and inmates started to mutiny and took control of parts

of the prison," said the official at Rajo jail.

The incident in Rajo comes on the heels of an IS attack in December on a security complex in their former de facto Syrian capital of Raqa, which aimed to free fellow jihadists from a prison there, AFP reported. The death toll in the earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria crossed 4,000 on Tuesday. An additional 14,483 people were injured even as rescue operations were underway to pull out more survivors from under the rubble.

Three quakes of magnitude 7.8, 7.6 and 6.0 struck one after the other, leaving thousands of collapsed buildings in its wake. A 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck the central Turkey region on Tuesday. More than 5,600 buildings were destroyed in Turkey alone and around 224 more in northwestern Syria.



New York police abused demonstrators at George Floyd protest: Report

China, Japan and India are Sri Lanka's biggest bilateral creditors and their financing assurances are critical to getting a \$2.9 billion package from the IMF; Japan also expected to send assurances soon

(SAI Bureau) An independent New York City police review board has recommended that the department punish dozens of officers for excessive use of force and other alleged misconduct during protests that followed the 2020 murder of George Floyd, according to a report released on Monday.

Among the complaints, officers were found to have used batons and pepper spray on peaceful protesters in 140 instances. Dozens of allegations of abuse of authority, including officers refusing to identify themselves, concealing their badges and making false or misleading statements, were also substantiated, the report by Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) said.

More than 600, or 43 per cent, of misconduct allegations, were closed after officers could not be identified, raising a big obstacle in the board's review, the report said. "This report shows why the



NYPD cannot continue to have a monopoly on discipline," Molly Biklen, deputy legal director at the New York Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement. "When New Yorkers took to the streets calling for racial justice in 2020, the NYPD responded with violence."

Thousands of protesters flooded New York streets for weeks in demonstrations against police brutality days after Floyd, a Black man accused of passing

a counterfeit \$20 bill, died when a white Minneapolis police officer pinned his neck to the ground with a knee for several minutes in May 2020. Smaller-scale protests continued into early fall. The New York Police Department (NYPD) objected to many of the report's findings, saying less than 15 per cent of all allegations were substantiated. In a statement, it accused the board of exaggerating the extent of any misconduct, saying it involved

less than 1 per cent of 22,000 officers deployed during the protests.

The less than 15 per cent substantiation rate of allegations against officers confirms "that the NYPD's response to the protests during the summer of 2020 was largely professional, commendable, and responsive to the unique circumstances that were present at the time," NYPD Acting Deputy Commissioner Carrie Talansky said in a

statement.

Hundreds of officers were injured, and the department had already implemented many of the 17 policy changes recommended by the board, NYPD said. "Protests against police brutality bred more instances of police misconduct," CCRB Interim Chair Arva Rice said in the report. "If this misconduct goes unaddressed, it will never be reformed."

Of the 146 officers cited by the report, 89 of them should face internal charges, which can result in termination. The board recommended discipline, which can include the loss of vacation days, for the other 57 officers.

The board, composed of 15 members appointed by the mayor, city council and police commissioner, has the power to conduct administrative prosecutions, but the commissioner has the final say over any discipline.



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Peshawar mosque attack: Conspiracy hatched in Afghanistan, says Pakistan's law enforcement officials

(By Staff Reporter) The Peshawar mosque suicide attack conspiracy was hatched in Afghanistan and funded by the intelligence agency based in Kabul, investigating officials said.

The plot to target a highly secure mosque here in the capital of Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was hatched in Afghanistan and funded by their intelligence agency, the country's law enforcement officials probing the suicide attack said on Tuesday.

On January 30, a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during the afternoon prayers in a Peshawar mosque, killing 101 people and injuring more than 200 others.

The bomber disguised himself in a police uniform to sneak into the high-security zone and was riding a motorcycle with a helmet and mask on, a top police official said previously.



The Peshawar mosque suicide attack conspiracy was hatched in Afghanistan and funded by the intelligence agency based in Kabul, investigating officials said. The motorcycle used in the blast was sold twice in Sarki Gate, Peshawar's bustling market,

officials said.

Police said they have arrested the sellers of the motorcycle.

Police sources said the security agencies have arrested 17 suspects involved in the devastating blast - the deadliest attack on the security personnel

in decades in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the Counter Terrorism Department Peshawar has announced a bounty of PKR 10 million for the facilitators of the suicide bomber.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Police Chief Moazzam Jah Ansari

said the suicide bomber's identity has been identified through his DNA samples.

The bomber left his helmet at the gate before entering the highly-secured mosque which was captured in the CCTV footage.

"The facilitators behind this heinous attack will be arrested soon," he said. Pakistan has been hit by a wave of terrorist attacks, mostly in the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, but also in Balochistan and Punjab. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

However, the outfit later distanced itself from the attack.

During the Apex Committee meeting held earlier this month, Pakistan's civil and military leadership decided to seek Afghan Taliban chief Haibuttallah Akhundzada's intervention to control the TTP.

Pakistan PM orders Wikipedia website unblocked after row over blasphemous content

(News Agency) Wikipedia" and hoped to see online traffic in Pakistan "resume soon." Last week, the PTA gave Wikipedia 48 hours to remove content deemed "blasphemous", before it ultimately blocked the website. An agency spokesman had said Saturday that Wikipedia would "remain blocked until they remove all the objectionable material", without specifying what content was at issue.

'UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES'

According to the order published Monday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had instructed a committee made up of three government ministers to examine the PTA's decision to block Wikipedia.

The committee found that the "unintended consequences of this blanket ban... outweigh its benefits", the document, signed by principal secretary to the prime minister Syed Tauqir Shah, said.

Another ministerial committee would be established to further

examine the issue, it added.

"The people of Pakistan rely on Wikipedia both as a knowledge resource and as a pathway to share their knowledge with others", a

to remove certain content.

It said in a previous statement that "the Wikimedia Foundation does not make decisions around what content is included on Wikipedia or how that content is maintained."

"We respect and support the editorial decisions made by the community of editors around the world," it added.

Free speech campaigners have highlighted what they say is a pattern of rising government censorship of Pakistan's printed

and electronic media.

Pakistan blocked YouTube from 2012 to 2016 after it carried a film about the Prophet Mohammed that led to violent protests across the Muslim world.

In recent years, the country has also blocked the wildly popular video-sharing app TikTok several times over "indecent" and "immoral" content.



Wikimedia spokesperson said.

"Lifting this ban means that the people of Pakistan can continue to benefit from and participate in its growth within a global movement that strives to spread and share knowledge that is verified, reliable and free."

The organisation did not immediately respond to an AFP query on if it had taken any action

Nepal plane crash that killed 72 caused by engine failure: Initial probe report



(News Agency)

Results of the preliminary investigation of the fateful Nepal's Yeti Airlines plane which crashed on January 15 have been made public. The outcome stated the crash landing occurred due to the non-availability of wings angle at the time of landing. A detailed inquiry will be conducted into whether the non-matching of the wings angle was the pilot's fault or a technical glitch. In a statement from the investigation team, the research and analysis of the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder has revealed that the accident occurred due to the failure of the propellers of both engines at the time of landing. For a common man's understanding, it means

that the balance of both the wings of the aircraft deteriorated at the time of landing. It can be understood that the plane crashed after the angles of the wings' blades failed to be fixed on the wings. Yeti Airlines ATR-72 aircraft crashed in the morning hours of January 15 while heading from Kathmandu to Pokhara. The crash claimed 72 lives, including five Indians who were onboard the aircraft. A total of 68 passengers and four crew members were on board the aircraft. The inquiry committee team returned to Kathmandu on Monday after examining the black box and data voice recorder of the crashed aircraft in Singapore. A statement was also issued today by the investigation team.

32 Bangladeshi nationals arrested for living illegally in Agra

Agra Police arrested 32 Bangladeshi nationals, including four children, living illegally in the country for over 12 years.

(News Agency) Agra Police on Tuesday arrested 32 Bangladeshi nationals living illegally in the country. The arrests came three days ahead of G20 guests' arrival. The district administration and police are busy decorating Agra with full enthusiasm to welcome the guests of G20 who will arrive on February 10 and stay till 12. Keeping the same in view, the teams of the Intelligence Department have also become active in Agra, as a result of which the Agra police arrested 32 suspected Bangladeshi infiltrators today.

Among them were 15 men and 13 women, as well as 4 children. While the adults have been sent to jail, the children have been kept in juvenile homes.

These Bangladeshi national had established a sizable settlement by making shanties in Sector 4 of Awas Vikas Colony, Agra. As many as 35 Aadhaar cards and one PAN card have been recovered from them. A case has been registered against all of them in Police Station Sikandra for possessing fake documents,



cheating, and under the Foreigners Act.

DCP Agra Vikas Kumar told India Today TV that the Intelligence Department team had received information regarding Bangladeshi nationals, based on which a raid was conducted in Sector 4 of Awas Vikas located in Police Station Sikandra area and from there 32 Bangladeshis were found living illegally, who were arrested and sent to jail for illegally living in India and fraudulently claiming Indian citizenship. When India Today spoke to Haleem, a Bangladeshi national, he told that he is a

resident of district Barorhat and has been living in Agra for 12 years. He told that he along with several companions had entered India through an agent in West Bengal and all of them started living in different states of the country.

Through brokers, he got the identity papers prepared. He said that they mostly work as rag pickers and also send money to their countries through hawala. According to information received by India Today, there is a river between a village in Bangladesh and the border of West Bengal. The touts active

in the border villages charge Rs 15,000 - 20,000 for crossing the river. They reach Sealdah and Howrah via the village route, then come by train to cities like Chennai, Delhi, Agra, etc. and start doing the scrap business. Haleem said that about Rs 1,000 are spent in preparing an Aadhaar card, PAN card, and fake documents. Many people have even got LIC policy done. Many such agents are also active in Agra.

DCP Vikas Kumar told India Today that the confiscated documents are being verified. Strict legal action will be taken

against whoever is found involved in this forgery. More Bangladeshis may still be arrested in Agra. The Intelligence Bureau has received information about the presence of more than 200 Bangladeshis in Agra.

Social worker Vijay Upadhyay said that this is not the first case in the Sikandra area. In Runakta, in 2019, the Bangladeshi nationals made an entire settlement in the vacant plot. It was from here that the police arrested a Bangladeshi named Saeed ul Hasan Ghazi. He had his big house built there, as well as bought a car, plot, etc.

A Bangladeshi woman named Fatima had also been arrested in the Etmadudaula area in 2017, who used to circulate fake currency in the guise of selling vegetables. NIA investigation revealed that she had come to India without a visa and had also married a man named Sher Ali here. She also revealed the names of many other Bangladeshi nationals living in other parts of the Agra Zone.

Bangladesh: How IMF loan shut down opposition's bankruptcy claims, disinformation campaign

(News Agency) The IMF recently signed off on a \$4.7 billion support loan package for Bangladesh. The loan has effectively shut down the disinformation campaign peddled by the opposition parties.

Bangladesh will go bankrupt: this was what the country's opposition alliance predicted soon after the country sought financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a similar vein to how David Bergman's offshore outlet, Netra News, peddled news of doom and gloom after coronavirus was found in the youngest nation of South Asia, the opposition had predicted bankruptcy after the Bangladesh government sought an IMF loan. While Netra News claimed "millions will die of Covid," "a complete breakdown in health system", "vaccines would never arrive" when the pandemic first broke out in the country, the opposition leaders had

said that Bangladesh would never be able to get IMF loans.

But, contrary to what the proponents of the disinformation campaign claimed, the Sheikh Hasina-led government emerged as a top performer in the Covid-19 management with the accomplishment of the WHO target. And now, the International Monetary Fund has cleared a \$4.5 billion loan for Bangladesh. 'TAKING ROLE OF SOOTHSAYER DEPLORABLE' Talking about the opposition parties' disinformation campaign, an eminent Bangladeshi journalist spoke about how, even if parties have political differences, they should not take on the role of soothsayer.

"One may have certain differences with a government, any government, but when one takes on oneself the role of soothsayer, it is a deplorable situation.

Bangladesh's political opposition and its supporters have only undermined themselves through comments which turned out to be meaningless," said Syed Badrul Ahsan, an eminent journalist and researcher.

"The naysayers and the doomsday prophets should have been careful with their projections. A responsible opposition must see beyond the ambition to gain power. It does itself little credit when it looks away from the good done by the government of the day," Syed Badrul Ahsan added. Notably, when the World Bank had pulled out from Padma Bridge funding over graft allegations, a charge that was later junked by a Canadian court, the Sheikh Hasina government had decided to build the bridge with the country's own resources. Even then, the opposition parties had attacked the government over

unsubstantiated corruption charges and said that the move to build the bridge with self-funding was a "pipe dream".

PM Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Padma Bridge in June last year. Reza Kibria, convenor of Bangladesh Gono Odhikar Parishad, a platform that teamed up with the BNP, had earlier predicted that the government would fail to get the IMF loan. His posts went viral on social media platforms.

"There is no chance this government would receive IMF funding...I can say it for certain," Kibria had said.

He had even ridiculed the country's finance minister, saying "It is not his mama bari (mother's home) as I understand, so he (finance minister) should stop peddling lies like their government may get an IMF loan."

But the reality proved to be far

different from what he had predicted.

"The government has done an admirable job of handling the Covid crisis, of ensuring that Bangladesh came nowhere near the Sri Lanka situation, and of coming by the IMF loan", said Badrul.

BANGLADESH OPPN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

When the Covid wave had started taking a toll on the country, the BNP-backed opposition and a cabal of doomsday forecasters had unleashed a barrage of disinformation campaigns, predicting that millions would die due to the pandemic

Their disinformation campaign did not end here. BNP stalwarts, including Mirza Fakhrul and Amanullah Aman, also led a wave of disinformation campaign, predicting a Sri Lanka-type collapse for Bangladesh, according to media reports.

Why did China's balloon over America raise alarms of spying?

The United States operates a military base and nuclear missile silos in Montana, a state bordering Idaho. The appearance of the Chinese balloon caused a political uproar in the United States and prompted the top US diplomat, Antony Blinken, to cancel a Feb. 5-6 trip to Beijing that both countries hoped would steady their rocky relations. President Joe Biden asked for military options on Tuesday to deal with the growing - but still undisclosed - crisis. Military officials developed a plan to shoot down the balloon on Wednesday as it flew over Montana.

Planning advanced to the point where Billings airport on Wednesday issued a ground stop to clear nearby airspace as the military mobilized F-22 fighter jets in case Biden ordered that the balloon be shot down.

"Even with those protective measures taken it was the judgment of our military commanders that we didn't drive the risk down low enough, so we didn't take the shot," a senior US defense official told reporters on Thursday.

Another US military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the debris would have fallen at least in a seven-mile (11-km) radius, posing a mortal risk to

Americans and potentially damaging infrastructure.

The best and safest option was instead to take the balloon down over water, officials concluded, a move that could also help US intelligence recover the Chinese equipment for study.

BALLOON MANEUVERS

The US government has declined to say which sites the Chinese balloon surveyed. It appeared to travel near sensitive U.S. bases including Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, which oversees 150 intercontinental ballistic missile silos, and Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, home to U.S. Strategic Command, which is in charge of nuclear forces. It also appeared to drift over Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, which operates the Air Force's B-2 bomber.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the balloon was able to linger in the winds over specific areas.

"We saw it do that. It loitered over certain sites. It went left, right. We saw it maneuver inside the jet stream. That's how it was operating," the official said, adding that the craft had propellers and rudders. China says the balloon was a civilian craft used for meteorological and

other purposes, and strayed into US airspace "completely accidentally."

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman met with senior officials from the embassy of China to convey "a strong set of messages," a senior administration official said.

Biden had already directed his team to protect sites from Chinese collection of sensitive information as NORAD tracked the balloon's movements across the continental United States.

The United States also started gathering information about the balloon itself, including how it operated. After sightings along the balloon's path, and public uproar swelled, Blinken decided on Thursday to officially postpone his trip to China, according to an administration official. On Friday, the Pentagon said it expected the balloon to keep flying over the United States for several more days. SHOOT DOWN PREPARED

But after those public remarks, the balloon gathered speed, heading toward South Carolina's coast. Officials said it wasn't clear how much of that acceleration was due to the jet stream or the use of the balloon's own steering. Biden approved a plan to shoot down the

balloon on Friday night while he was in Wilmington, Delaware, setting off round-the-clock military preparations to coordinate the mission.

NASA analyzed and assessed the debris field, based on the trajectory of the balloon, weather and estimated "payload" of sensors, and a US military operation unfolded at sea and in the skies.

Multiple fighter and refueling aircraft joined the mission to take down the Chinese balloon, but only one - an F-22 fighter jet from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia - took the shot at 2:39 p.m. (1939 GMT), using a single AIM-9X Sidewinder missile. It punctured the balloon as it hovered at between 60,000 and 65,000 feet (18-20 km), and the payload came crashing down to the sea. The debris field stretched for some seven miles (11 km), as predicted, but most landed in relatively shallow water, just 47 feet (14 metres) deep.

"That will make it fairly easy, actually," a military official said of the recovery operation in the Atlantic.

Once the mission was complete, the US government notified China while the State Department briefed American allies.

China condemned the action, saying America was "obviously overreacting."



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Twenty-Three Individuals Charged in \$61.5 Million Medicare Fraud Schemes

Court documents were unsealed this week charging 23 Michigan residents for their alleged involvement in two illegal schemes to defraud Medicare of more than \$61.5 million by paying kickbacks and bribes and billing Medicare for unnecessary medical services that were never provided.

"As alleged, the defendants and their co-conspirators repeatedly paid illegal bribes and kickbacks so they could submit claims for medically unnecessary home health services throughout the Detroit metropolitan area, exposing patients to needless physician services and drug testing and costing Medicare tens of millions of dollars," said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division. "As these actions demonstrate, we will work tirelessly to tackle complex, illegal schemes that take advantage of vulnerable populations and defraud federal programs of taxpayer dollars meant to provide health care to millions of Americans."

United States v. Jamil, et al.

According to court documents, Walid Jamil, 62, and Jalal Jamil, 69, both of Oakland County, owned and operated several home health agencies in the Detroit metropolitan area. They allegedly concealed their ownership interest in these agencies using straw owners – including family members and other associates – and submitted approximately \$50 million in fraudulent home health care claims to Medicare. Specifically, Walid and Jalal Jamil allegedly paid bribes to other co-conspirators to recruit patients in violation of the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute. These patients did not need home health care, did not qualify for home health care under Medicare rules, and in many instances were not actually provided the care for

which Medicare was billed. Walid and Jalal Jamil allegedly entered into quid pro quo relationships with physician clinics to receive the necessary information to fraudulently bill Medicare. Based on their fraudulent claims, Walid and Jalal Jamil received more than \$43 million from Medicare, which they misappropriated for their personal benefit.

"The alleged actions of these defendants is an astonishing abuse of our health care system," said U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison for the Eastern District of Michigan. "By allegedly submitting fraudulent claims and paying illegal kickbacks, these defendants looted Medicare in order to line their own pockets at great cost to taxpayers. My office is grateful for the continued work of the Health Care Fraud Strike Force to root out corrupt medical professionals."

Carol Ibrahim, 45, of Oakland County, and Delaine Jackson, 48, of Wayne County, were employed by one or more of the Jamil home health agencies and operated these agencies at the direction of Walid Jamil. They each allegedly made illegal payments to patient recruiters and submitted false claims to Medicare. Ibrahim was also allegedly a straw owner of one of the Jamil home health agencies.

Ibrahim Sammour, 62, of Wayne County, was a registered nurse employed by the Jamil home health agencies. Sammour is alleged to have fraudulently billed Medicare for home health

services he never provided and falsely certified patients as "homebound."

Mary Smelter-Bolton, 69, of Oakland County, and Cass Hawkins, 52, of Wayne County, were allegedly recruiters paid by various Jamil home health agencies to refer them Medicare beneficiaries for home health services that were then billed to Medicare, even though the claims were not eligible for reimbursement.

United States v. Malas, et al.

According to court documents, beginning in at least February 2015, Radwan Malas, 43, of Oakland County, operated Infinity Visiting Physician Services PLC (Infinity) as a home visiting physician company and allegedly ordered the physicians he employed to certify patients referred by Walid Jamil and Jalal Jamil for medically unnecessary home health services. He then allegedly billed Medicare for services that were never actually provided to these patients – including 60-minute complex patient visits – and for services that were not medically necessary – including B-12 and Toradol injections. Malas also allegedly demanded that physicians in his office order the highest-reimbursing urine drug test for patients, which was medically unnecessary, but for which Malas allegedly received a referral fee from the laboratory that processed the samples.

As part of this scheme, the defendants billed Medicare over \$11.5 million in fraudulent claims for which they were paid

nearly \$4 million, which they misappropriated for their personal benefit. Malas is also alleged to have laundered the misappropriated funds by conducting illegal financial transactions.

"At the FBI, we swear an oath to protect the American people," said Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division. "Fraudsters look to orchestrate their schemes at the cost of our health care systems, patients, and taxpayers. The FBI and our law enforcement partners remains dedicated to investigating and bringing to justice those who seek to exploit our U.S. healthcare system at the expense of its patients."

Alejandro Mataverde, 79, of Oakland County, Cornelius Oprisiu, 82, of Livingston County, both physicians, and Shafiq Rehman, 59, of Wayne County, a licensed nurse practitioner, were employed by Infinity. They allegedly provided medically unnecessary services to Medicare beneficiaries or submitted claims to Medicare for medical services that were not provided to the patients.

"Those who attempt to defraud Medicare often do so at the risk of compromising the integrity of federal health care programs and disregarding the health and wellbeing of patients," said Special Agent in Charge Mario Pinto of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG). "HHS-OIG is proud to work alongside our law enforcement partners to protect federal health care programs and hold

bad actors accountable for their actions."

Michael Molloy, 50, of Wayne County, was co-owner of Integra Lab Management LLC (Integra), which processed the high-reimbursing and allegedly medically unnecessary urine tests submitted by Infinity. Molloy and his co-owners allegedly paid the salary of Infinity employees and made monthly payments to Malas in exchange for the physician orders for the medically unnecessary urine drug testing. As a result of the illegal kickbacks, Integra submitted approximately \$2.8 million in fraudulent claims to Medicare and was paid more than \$730,000.

Montaha Hogeige, 39, of Wayne County, was a medical assistant employed by Infinity who allegedly agreed to receive her salary from Integra as an illegal kickback to Infinity in exchange for physician orders for high-reimbursing urine drug testing. "Medicare is designed to provide vital government funded services to our people. It is not a slush fund for thieves and fraudsters," said Acting Special Agent in Charge Charles Miller of the IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) Detroit Field Office. "IRS-CI will work tirelessly with our law enforcement partners to investigate those who illegally target our Medicare program for personal financial gain." The charges alleged in the indictments against these defendants for their alleged participation in these schemes are described in the following table:

Indian Man Arrested For Killing Fellow Countryman In US

Houston: An Indian national has been arrested and charged with manslaughter in connection with the death of a compatriot in the US state of Alabama, police said. Montgomery police officers charged Raviteja Goli, 23, with manslaughter in the death of 25-year-old Akhil Sai Mahankali who died on

Monday. Police and fire medics found Mahankali with a life-threatening gunshot wound at about 9:30 pm on Sunday in the 3200 block of Eastern Boulevard. They took him to the hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead, the Montgomery Advertiser newspaper reported. Both Mahankali and

the accused are from Montgomery, the capital city of Alabama, it said, adding that Goli is now in the Montgomery jail. Mahankali, who is reportedly from Telangana, arrived in the US about 13 months ago. He was studying at a university and also doing a part-time job at a gas station.

Why PM Modi may want to bring Uddhav's Sena back into BJP fold ahead of 2024 polls

(Contd from page 10)

Fadnavis was asked by Modi and Shah to join the Shinde-led government to ensure that two power centres don't spring up and the alliance government is not destabilised. The destabilisation is happening anyway as Fadnavis has cornered all the plum portfolios such as finance and home and law. Recently, Mumbai witnessed a farcical situation

when it had two commissioners of police appointed separately by the CM and his deputy Fadnavis. Fadnavis hails from Nagpur, which is also the headquarters of the RSS and recently, in the MLC elections, the MVA won three seats and the BJP won only one with another going to an independent. Fadnavis's detractors in the BJP immediately advised him to focus on his home turf to avoid further

political embarrassment. Fadnavis exercises strong control over the Maharashtra BJP and makes sure to push rivals out. Eknath Khadse, a senior leader, said he was leaving the BJP after 40 years because of Fadnavis.

The central BJP is not very appreciative of the high profile maintained by Fadnavis and is itching to cut him to size. An alliance with the Sena's Thackeray

faction will also ensure that Fadnavis's dream job as CM will be out of bounds. Both Fadnavis and Shinde were embarrassed by a slew of multibillion projects, such as Foxconn Vedanta and the Tata Airbus, going to poll-bound Gujarat instead of Maharashtra, which is India's second most industrialised state. PM Modi wants to ensure no wrinkles in his historic run for his third term.

A world in which your boss spies on your brainwaves? That future is near

The reptilian annual World Economic Forum at Davos, where the masters of the universe meet to congratulate themselves on their benevolent dictatorship, is home to many sinister ideas. Sharing the latest sinister ideas with business leaders is, in essence, why the event exists. This year, one of the creepiest discussions of all was delivered under the guise of progress and productivity. Nita Farahany, a Duke University professor and futurist, gave a presentation at Davos about neurotechnology that is creating "brain transparency", something I previously associated more with a bullet to the head. The new technologies, which Farahany says are being deployed in workplaces around the world, may prove to be nearly as destructive. They include a variety of wearable sensors that read the brain's electrical impulses and can show how fatigued you are, whether you're focused on the task at hand or if your attention is wandering. According to Farahany, thousands of companies have hooked workers ranging from train drivers to miners up to these devices already, in the name of workplace safety. But what we are really discussing is workplace surveillance. Farahany paints a picture of a near future in which every office worker could be fitted with a small wearable that would constantly record brain activity, creating an omnipotent record of your thoughts, attention and energy that the boss could study at leisure. No longer would it be enough to look like you're work-

ing hard: your own brainwaves could reveal that you were slacking off. Farahany acknowledges that there could be drawbacks here: "Done poorly, it could become the most oppressive technology we've ever introduced on a wide scale." Yet, she seems more enthusiastic about the technology's promise for corporations, saying rather sanctimoniously that the workplace surveillance "bossware" that exists today tends to make employees upset "even when it makes their lives better". She also displayed a slide showing that nine out of 10 employees say they waste time at work every day, and opined that perhaps there was "good reason" for employers to want to keep tabs on everyone, after all. This is the sort of logic that makes sense to people whose jobs consist of flying to Switzerland for international conferences rather than, say, working at a gas station. Farahany is a very smart person. But her professional milieu may have lulled her into falsely believing that corporations will not do the most unspeakable acts imaginable in order to make an extra dollar of profit. She argues that these technologies offer promising benefits for people to improve their own experiences at work, and that as long as we "make a choice to use it well", and operate from a starting principle of "cognitive liberty" to protect individual choice, the future of workplace surveillance can be one in which workers and businesses alike are made stronger by the slow evolution of our brains

into cybernetic, connected, measured mechanisms. It is that fundamental sense of optimism that is, I'm afraid, screamingly naive. One need not be a futurist to divine how this will go. "Bossware" is common today, in the form of less flashy but equally invasive technologies of all sorts: what workers type, what they look at, how long they are "inactive" on their keyboards, how they drive, where they stop, when they apply the brakes, how direct the route they take is. A Coworker.org database of bossware found that more than 550 products are already in use in workplaces. Everywhere you look, workers are being tracked, watched, measured, scored, analyzed and penalized by software, human overseers and artificial intelligence, with the aim of wringing every last cent's worth of productivity out of the flawed and fragile flesh-and-blood units of labor who must, regrettably, be used as employees until the robots get a little bit more manual dexterity. The crowning insult of it all is that in most cases, the people enduring the surveillance are paid much less than those who are inflicting it. All of this raises the question: what exactly is your employer buying when they give you a paycheck? For bosses, the answer is simple: "Everything." It is a bedrock principle of capitalism that the employer owns the employee. The past several hundred years of human progress can be read as a very slow battle of humanity to pull free of this nightmarish entitlement. For centuries, of course, em-

ployers actually owned people. Even after they were forced to give up slavery, they tried to maintain the greatest possible degree of control. Coal companies owned the houses their workers lived in. The Chamber of Commerce owns local politicians who create the public policy that governs the towns where workers live. And it was long considered routine to fire and blacklist any workers who did troublesome things in their free time, like "talk about communism" or "organize a union". The sum total of the entire past century's civil rights laws, labor rights laws and corporate regulations have not been enough to eradicate the firm conviction of business that, when they give you a salary, they are buying your whole life. In this light, it becomes clear that granting companies the ability to monitor our brainwaves is not a slippery slope so much as it is a one-way superhighway to the panopticon. Even if we set aside the obvious opportunities this provides companies to improperly depress wages and build pretextual cases to fire labor activists, the normalization of this technology represents a shrinkage of humans' space and a growth of the space for capital. The time in our day that belongs to us rather than to commerce declines further. The area in which you get to be a person rather than an economic unit gets smaller. What companies never discuss is the fact that, once we allow them to claim this time and space and data as theirs, they will never, ever want to cede it back to us again.

Dental Practice Owners Charged with Fraud and RICO Conspiracy

Multiple dental practice owners and co-conspirators were charged in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for allegedly engaging in a multifaceted racketeering conspiracy through a multi-state network of dental practices and related dental businesses.

On Jan. 18, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging 12 individuals with operating and participating in a series of dental practices and related companies (the Savani Group) that engaged in visa fraud, health care fraud, wire fraud involving federal tax evasion, and money laundering. Six of the defendants were charged with being part of a racketeer influenced corrupt organization (RICO) conspiracy based on their roles in the Savani Group, and three defendants were also charged with obstruction of justice.

According to court documents, the defendants were allegedly part of a wide-ranging scheme to defraud Medicaid, U.S. Immigration authorities, the IRS, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and to launder the fraud proceeds. Bhaskar Savani, 57, and Niranjana Savani, 51, both of Maple Glenn, Pennsylvania and both licensed dentists, owned and controlled the Savani Group dental practices. Arun Savani, 55, of Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, owned and managed the Savani Group companies and was responsible for the Savani Group's financial affairs. The three brothers – Bhaskar, Niranjana, and Arun – allegedly conspired to recruit foreign workers for U.S. work visas while concealing the workers' true job titles and responsibilities.

Sunil Philip, 57, of Newton,

Pennsylvania, was an outside accountant for the Savani Group and personal accountant of Bhaskar, Arun, and Niranjana Savani. Philip, along with Bhaskar, Arun, and Niranjana Savani, allegedly engaged in a wire fraud scheme to evade federal taxes. Amen Dhyllon, 44, of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, was a licensed dentist for the Savani Group. Aleksandra Radomiak, 45, of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, was an employee and dental practice manager of the Savani Group. Dhyllon and Radomiak, along with Bhaskar, Arun, and Niranjana Savani, allegedly executed a scheme to use nominee owners of "on paper" dental practices to obtain and continue to profit from Medicaid contracts after managed care companies terminated the Savani Group dental practices' Pennsylvania Medicaid contracts. Jon

Julian, 70, of South Carolina, was a licensed dentist for the Savani Group. Along with Bhaskar and Niranjana Savani, Julian allegedly conspired to place adulterated and misbranded dental devices in U.S. commerce. Vivek Savani, 35, Bhaskar Kumar Parasana, 55, and Hitesh Kumar Goyani, 39, all of North Wales, Pennsylvania; and Piyusha Patel, 41, of Ankeny, Iowa, were employed under the H1B visa program under the pretense of serving in specialty occupations for the Savani Group but actually performed office support roles for the Savani Group's dental practices. Susan Malpartida, 27, of Passaic, New Jersey, served in an office support function and allegedly obstructed the investigation when she made false statements about a Savani Group employee's job function.



Anger grows in Turkey as earthquake death toll passes 20,000 and rescue hopes dwindle

Thousands spent the night in the debris-encrusted streets of Adiyaman with little shelter and huddled around small fires.

ADIYAMAN, Turkey — As the temperatures plunged, anger started to rise in Turkey over the government's response to two massive earthquakes this week.

On Thursday, the number of those killed by the tremors in Turkey and neighboring Syria passed 20,000.

With their homes destroyed, thousands spent a freezing Wednesday night amid the debris in the streets of Adiyaman, huddled around small fires and with little shelter. Electricity and water were nonexistent in the southern city.

Fearful of another earthquake, some chose to stay out in the open, avoiding buildings that appeared intact, and to brave the subzero temperatures.

Some grieved silently, while others shouted their despair as the quakes continued to claim more victims. One man burst into an aid organization center and demanded loudly that officials rescue his family.

Perihan Sayar, 60, said she had lost her 10-year-old granddaughter, Ulku, as well as her home.

"I lived alone, in a one-room house," she said. "Now my house is also gone."

Others in Adiyaman said they were furious at what they claim is a slow response from the government, and said rescue teams had arrived in the city with the wrong equipment to dig through the rubble. NBC News could not independently confirm this assertion.

"Nobody was here to help us, I have complaints about all the authorities here," said Nursen Guler on Wednesday, adding that she had one son in the hospital and another who was still trapped under the rubble.

"There are no teams here, everyone is waiting for rescue teams," she said.

Guler added that people in Adiyaman had supported Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has served as either Turkey's prime minister or its president for the past 20 years, "but now we don't see him by our side."

The government's response has been questioned too in several other cities, where residents also have been forced to sleep in the open, in tents or in temporary accommodation. "Where is the state? Where have they been for two days? We are begging them. Let us do it, we can get them out," Sabiha

Alinak told Reuters amid the rubble in the city of Malatya on Wednesday.

But the sheer scale of the disaster appeared to overwhelm authorities.

The first of Monday's devastating quakes struck Turkey and neighboring Syria in the early hours, and registered at magnitude-7.8. It qualified as "major" on the official magnitude scale. Hours later, a second quake, registering at 7.6-magnitude, struck nearby.

More than 17,130 people have died in Turkey, according to the country's disaster management agency. In Syria, over 3,800 people have been killed, according to officials there. Osman Y?ld?r?m, a civil engineer, said that after the last major earthquake hit Turkey in 1999, a torrent of new regulations were introduced to make buildings more resistant, but the government didn't go far enough.

"This could have been prevented with the right steps starting 25 years ago," said Y?ld?r?m, 55, adding that unregistered construction work, corruption and poor enforcement of regulations had put people in danger.

"The government didn't take necessary steps to minimize risks through urban planning, low-rise buildings, construction codes and strict control," he said, adding that as a result "new buildings and old buildings collapsed." Faced with mounting criticism, President Erdogan said on a visit to the disaster zone on Wednesday that operations were now working normally and promised no one would be left homeless. Opposition leaders and some social media users also blasted his government's decision to block access to Twitter for about 12 hours, from Wednesday afternoon to early Thursday, as people scrambled to find loved ones and share information on arriving aid and the location

of those still trapped in rubble. Turkish authorities said they were targeting disinformation and, on Thursday, Erdogan, who has come under scrutiny amid a cost-of-living crisis ahead of a general election in May, hit back at critics saying "dishonorable people" were spreading "lies and slander" about the government's actions. Attempts to control the narrative "are likely to fail," according to Yaprak G?rsoy, a professor of European politics and chair of contemporary Turkish studies at the London School of Economics. "To assume that there will not be any socioeconomic and political consequences of this collective trauma is naive," she added.



BBC now faces protest back home over sympathetic documentary on 'jihadi bride'

Close on the heels of it facing severe criticism over a documentary on the 2002 Godhra riots, the BBC is facing a backlash at home over a programme seen to be "sympathetic" to 'jihadi bride' Shamima Begum. Viewers are threatening that they won't be renewing their subscriptions.



Shamima Begum was an anonymous teenager living in the United Kingdom till she took the decision to join the Islamic State back in 2015. She was only 15 at the time and her case certainly got worldwide attention, especially her fight to return home after her experiences disabused her of any fantasy about Syria and the terrorist outfit IS. And now, eight years later, the "jihadi bride", now 23, is back in the news. This time, thanks to the BBC's 'The Shamima Begum Story'. The BBC has released a 90-minute documentary on Shamima Begum. The documentary came after the BBC's 10-part podcast 'I'm Not a Monster' that 'retraces' Begum's journey, according to a report by The Daily Mail. The "sympathetic" depiction of the 'jihadi bride', who has been "remorseless" over her joining the IS terror group, has left viewers fuming in the UK. The trouble for the British broadcaster on its home soil comes close on the heels of it facing severe backlash in India over a documentary on the 2002 Godhra riots. Viewers in the UK are threatening that they won't renew their BBC subscriptions. "What is happening with the BBC? Are you kidding me? Won't ever pay my TV licence again... She's a terrorist with no remorse, she doesn't deserve

to have her story heard like she is a victim," tweeted a viewer.

A QUICK RECAP OF BEGUM'S STORY

For those not in the know, Shamima Begum, along with two of her friends, Kadiza Sultana and Amira Abase, fled the UK and travelled to Syria in February 2015. Begum's two friends are believed to have been killed, while she herself lived under IS rule for more than three years. Later, she became popular an "IS bride" because she was married to a Dutch IS fighter soon after reaching Syria. After she fled Britain, Begum, who was born in the UK to parents with Bangladeshi roots, was stripped of her UK citizenship on national security grounds in 2019. And for the past few years, Begum has been fighting to return to the UK. But while the issue awaits court judgment, the BBC has released podcasts and a 90-minute documentary on Shamima Begum.

BBC PODCAST, DOCUMENTARY ON BEGUM

The BBC claimed it would provide Begum's telling of "what really happened" when she became a jihadi bride. The broadcaster described the podcast as a "robust, public interest investigation" by a journalist who had been talking to Begum for a year. Begum, who now lives at the Al-Roj camp in northern Syria, told

the BBC that being stuck in a camp was "worse than being in a prison", adding, "At least with prison sentences you know that there will be an end but here you don't know if there's going to be an end."

When asked about the public anger towards her due to her IS links, Begum said, "I don't think it's actually towards me. I think it's towards ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)". IS is also known as ISIS.

"When they think of ISIS they think of me because I've been put on the media so much, but what was there to obsess over?" Begum said, adding, "We went to ISIS, that was it. It was over, it was over and done with."

But what the viewers certainly can't forget or let it be "over and done with", is how, in several interviews, Begum had showed absolutely no remorse over her decision to join IS.

In 2019, a BBC journalist reported that Shamima Begum "continued to espouse Islamic State philosophy" during an interview. When she spoke about the suicide bombing in Manchester in 2017, she admitted that innocents were killed, but retorted that the attack was justified because of civilian deaths caused by airstrikes in Syria.

VIEWERS SLAM CELEBRITIFICATION OF BEGUM

The documentary has not gone down well with viewers in the UK, who are bashing the public broadcaster for "parading Begum as if she is some sort of celebrity". The viewers slammed the BBC for trying to present the jihadi bride as a "vulnerable young girl".

"Please tell me why the BBC are giving Shamima Begum the time of day? That girl has zero remorse and I don't know why I have to see her on my TV? She had a choice - she made her choice. Vile," a critic was quoted as saying by The Daily Mail.

A viewer said it was "sickening" to watch the documentary, while another said, "What is happening with the BBC? Are you kidding me? Won't ever pay my TV licence again... She's a terrorist with no remorse, she doesn't deserve to have her story heard like she is a victim." The anger at "celebritification" of Begum prompted some viewers to vow that they would not renew their license, which

is the annual fee paid to watch BBC programmes. "Disgusting and utterly disgraceful," a critic said soon after the documentary aired. Viewers questioned why the BBC was giving airtime to "Shamima Begum, a terrorist by association".

The BBC documentary comes at a time when the UK government has reiterated that Islamist terrorism remains the "primary terrorist threat" to the country.

ANOTHER BBC DOCUMENTARY IN CONTROVERSY

This is the second BBC documentary in the past one month that has received severe public backlash. While the documentary on Begum is being slammed for broadcasters playing the pity card for the jihadi bride, a series on Prime Minister Narendra Modi was banned in India after the government accused it of being a "propaganda piece".

The BBC documentary India: The Modi Question, which was released last month, set off a massive row in the country. The broadcaster claimed it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when PM Modi was the chief minister of the state. However, the Ministry of External Affairs trashed the documentary as a "propaganda piece" that lacks objectivity and reflects a colonial mindset. The government directed social media platforms Twitter and YouTube to block links to the BBC documentary soon after its release.



What is next for Rahul Gandhi?

Rahul Gandhi now faces a barrage of political challenges that would not only define him and the Congress, but also result in a far-reaching impact on Indian politics.



Post arduous yet highly successful Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul Gandhi faces a barrage of political challenges that would not only define him, have a telling impact on the Grand Old Party but result in a far-reaching impact on the national polity for the next year and a half.

Paradoxical, as it may sound, the biggest trial for Rahul comes from within. The hype in the Congress and Team Rahul was perhaps articulated, rather inadvertently, by Partap Singh Bajwa, leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly. Bajwa, a former Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha member, was speaking at the Bharat Jodo Yatra in chaste Punjabi when he pleaded with Rahul not to let a 'proxy' run the office of the prime minister when the opportunity knocks again. Bajwa was not belittling Manmohan Singh but making a larger point about the political authority being represented by those who earn it. Rahul was attentive and quickly asked his associate to translate what Bajwa was saying. He did not look very pleased. But the weight of his silence was equally profound.

Prime ministerial candidature

There is no dearth of party leaders in the Congress at various levels of hierarchy, who, post the Bharat Jodo Yatra, would want Rahul's projection as a prime ministerial nominee.

This formulation or bravado is somewhat unacceptable for many outside the NDA. It is an open secret that the likes of Mamata Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav, Nitish Kumar, Arvind Kejriwal, and K

Chandrashekar Rao (the list is rather long) would prefer to remain 'neutral' than play second fiddle to Rahul. There is also a crucial aspect of numbers. The Congress, as India Today's recent 'Mood of the Nation' survey indicated, is poised to get 68 Lok Sabha seats if the general elections are held today. Logically, therefore Congress or Rahul would need to at least double the tally in order to be in 'driver's seat' or near to it provided the Narendra Modi-led NDA falls short of 272 figures. Rahul's own position on this issue is ambivalent, perhaps due to 'strategic' reasons. Just as he allowed Bajwa to get away at Punjab, Rahul faces a tricky position to rule himself out just at a time when the yatra has created a ring of promise and euphoria around him. As a leader of the Congress, he can not be seen as forgoing the party's cherished dream of occupying the central space in national politics, Parliament, and every-

thing that comes with it. At the same time, temperamentally, Rahul is neither ambitious nor a power wielder. Like his illustrious mother, Rahul secretly fancies himself as a trustee of power.

Old timers in Congress offer a solution to this delicate issue revisiting 1977 when a fragmented Opposition had fought against Indira Gandhi. Even as an assortment of socialists, Jan Sangh and other regional leaders got themselves out of jail, they kept aside their personal ambitions and one-upmanship just to achieve the singular objective -- to edge out Indira. It is a different matter that the rainbow Janata Party could not last its term and paved the way for Indira's return but the first part of the 1977 story has relevance in 2024. Can Rahul and perhaps Mallikarjun Kharge, the 88th president of the AICC, make a public declaration that the Congress would not necessarily be eager to lead an alternative government? This unilateral pronouncement is likely to pave the way for a purposeful endeavour against the Modi regime till the completion of the 2024 parliamentary polls.

Some may even wonder whether the Rajasthan leadership issue continues to bother the leadership at all. The Congress, in its preparatory list for the 85th plenary

to be held at Raipur, has made Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot a special invitee of the organising committee. It is a clear signal that Gehlot would stay on as chief minister till February 26 and beyond.

That leaves contender Sachin Pilot with fewer options. What hurts the Pilot camp most is the leadership's inability to clearly state that Gehlot would continue to occupy the office of the chief minister till November-December 2023 when the state Assembly polls would be held. Moreover, in Gehlot-run Rajasthan, there is very little or no role for Pilot. Rahul, (plus Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi) who is perceived to be sympathetic to Pilot's cause, seems utterly helpless and somewhat clueless about the Rajasthan imbroglio.

Organisational challenges – CWC polls at Raipur?

Rahul may not be holding a formal post in the AICC but post-Bharat Jodo Yatra, he is expected to act as an arbitrator, at least in ensuring a semblance of the inner party democracy. Would Raipur see a repeat of Tirupati (1992) and Calcutta (1997) when the Congress Working Committee polls were held? The dissenters and members of erstwhile G-23 feel Rahul and Kharge would fulfill their longstanding commitment to

allow some merit and fairness in CWC. As per the Congress constitution, the 24-member CWC needs to be a mix of 12 elected and 12 nominated members. The nominated category is supposed to ensure fair representation to Dalits, tribals, women, and minorities in the apex body.

Kharge question

Would Rahul also act as an influencer to let Kharge function as a full-fledged, hands-on party chief? Kharge is holding on to the post of the leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, a clear violation of the one-man, one-post norm. The AICC chief seems in no hurry or mood to quit as LoP when the dignity of the office of the Congress president demands exemplary conduct and unilateral action. Technically, Kharge's fate is in the hands of Sonia Gandhi who is the UPA chairperson and has the powers to appoint leaders in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

In fact, both Houses need new leaders. In the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury does not have the status of LoP but for months, he has been violating the one-man, one-post norm as Adhir is also heading the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee. At one level, such intentional oversights justify Gehlot's defiance and on the other point at the abject helplessness of the Gandhi trio. The Bharat Jodo success has little bearing, one wonders.



NO Canada! Migrants bused north from NYC for free are TURNING BACK

Migrants being bused to Canada are reportedly voicing concern over the cold weather seen in our neighbor to the north, with some even electing to turn back to the US - despite getting a free ride at the expense of taxpayers.

The asylum seekers hail from Latin America, but are being bused from New York City, which is currently experiencing an abnormal outflow of migrants from states such as Texas and Florida.

Originally welcomed into The Big Apple with open arms, the foreigners last month voiced discontent over an alternative shelter offered by Mayor Eric Adams, citing its bare-bones amenities - all after being put up for months in posh, luxury hotels, paid for by New York citizens. The criticisms spurred the mayor - who's struggled to address the abnormal outflow of travelers since assuming office last year - to announce last week that the city would buy bus tickets for newcomers who would prefer to live in Canada.

However, just days after reports surfaced that some of the travelers were fleeing New York because of 'drugs' and homelessness, several are having second thoughts - with some outright refusing the offer because the country has 'lots of snow.' Speaking to the CBC, Ilze Thielmann, the director of a New York nonprofit that has already helped transport the migrants from New York to Montreal, attempted to explain the phenomenon, saying many had arrived expecting better access to jobs and health care, while others were simply turned off by the frigid conditions.



'They think that there are all these jobs up there,' Thielmann, 56, told the Canadian broadcaster Tuesday of the realities currently being thrust on the foreigners, many of whom have been in the US for the better part of a year. She added that instead of braving the rest of the Canadian winter - set to persist for no more than another month - migrants, already fed-up with conditions, are opting to turn tail back to New York City. 'They think they're going to be able to get asylum very easily up there, and that's just not the case.'

Speaking to The New York Post, one migrant from Colombia, Jose Liandro, corroborated the charity worker's story, saying that after just one week he wanted to returned to Manhattan. When asked for a reason for his change-of-heart, the Spanish-speaking traveler simply replied, 'Mucha nieve' - which, in English, means, 'A lot of snow.'

Liandro is among the more than 43,000 asylum seekers that has been funneled into the Port Authority, after Adams

condemned Texas leaders for busing migrants from the southern border amid the state's own migrant woes.

In response to the relatively green politician's very public attack, officials in the Lone Star state added New York to its list of so-called 'sanctuary cities', and began carting illegal border crossers by the bus-load to the liberal locale. At first, Adams - a former New York police captain who campaigned on promises of cleaning up the city's crime and homeless epidemics - welcomed the migrants, but soon began to change his tune after his office found itself at a loss as to how to absorb the travelers into the already embattled city.

Following several failed ventures designed to address the flow of migrants - including a scrapped tent city in The Bronx and a proposed facility on Randall's Island that never materialized - Adams housed thousands of asylum seekers at trendy hotels in Manhattan.

Many of those illegal immigrants

had been staying at The Watson Hotel located on 57th and Tenth Avenue - in taxpayer-funded hotel rooms that cost as much as \$450 per night. That changed late last month, when Adams, in his latest pivot in addressing the crisis, announced that a then-planned shelter at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal would become the latest temporary home for at least 1,000 male migrants, including all of those staying at the Watson, which for the past few months served as a men's-only shelter.

Addressing New Yorkers fed-up with rampant crime and homelessness, Adams gave a deadline to those staying at the Watson for Monday, saying those migrants - all single men - would now be replaced by asylum-seeking families. That spurred several migrants to take up outside the building to protest the mayor's declaration - with many outright refusing to relocate, citing privacy concerns and non-optimal conditions at the pop-up facility, with some comparing it to a prison.

By Monday, as several found themselves locked out of their respective rooms at the Watson, the predominantly Latin American procession remained, setting up camp directly outside the luxury building in direct defiance of Adams' order. Photographs taken Monday morning show dozens of tents lining the sidewalk on 57th street directly outside the hotel, while some male asylum seekers were seen keeping warm by wrapping themselves in blankets and sleeping bags. They were reportedly removed from their rooms one by one, with others returning to their rooms Monday telling reporters they were not being allowed back into their rooms to retrieve their belongings. Speaking to DailyMail.com outside the Watson Monday, one of the migrants, 32-year-old Labrador, lamented his and others' situation but remained adamant that he would not relocate to the Brooklyn shelter, comparing it to jail. 'They want to take us to a place like a jail,' said Labrador, who is from Venezuela and served in the country's Special Forces.

'They don't show us the real pictures and video but I have them and will show everybody,' the migrant said, producing photos that have been circulating on social media showing the interior shelter. Once booted from the hotel, displaced asylum seekers protested their prospective transfer by painting a massive banner to be hung on the scaffolding outside the hotel - which is set on an affluent street known to locals as Billionaire's Row.



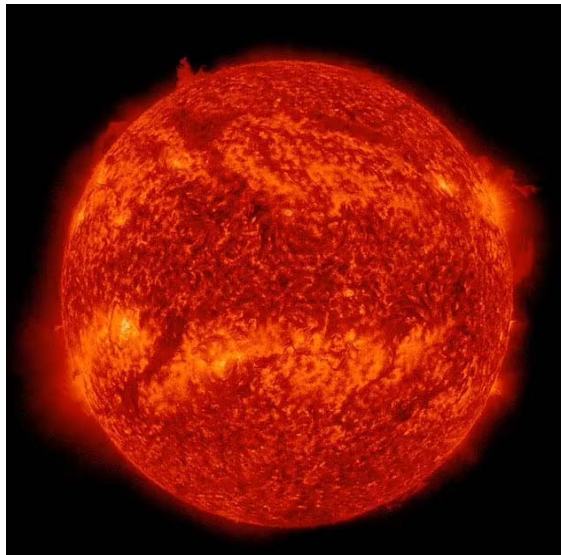
Unbelievable moment a piece of the sun BREAKS OFF baffles scientists

Video shows plasma filament is now swirling around the northern pole like a tornado

The moment a piece of the sun's northern pole breaks off has been captured by NASA in a never-before-seen event that has baffled scientists. A video shows a giant filament of plasma, or electrified gas, shooting out from the sun, separating and then circulating in a 'massive polar vortex.'

While astronomers are baffled, they speculate the prominence has something to do with the reversal of the sun's magnetic field that happens once every solar cycle. The video was shared on Twitter by space weather forecaster Tamitha Skov, who said the clip was taken by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.

'Talk about polar vortex! Material from a northern prominence just broke away from the main filament & is now circulating in a massive polar vortex around the north pole of our star,' Skov shared in the tweet. NASA describes solar filaments as clouds of charged particles that float above the sun, tethered to it by magnetic forces.



These appear as elongated, uneven strands that shoot out from the sun's surface.

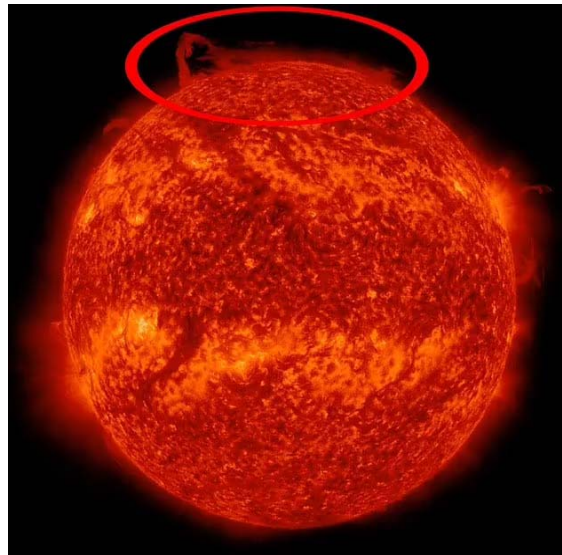
The prominence mentioned by Skov, appears precisely at the 55-degree latitude around the sun's polar crowns every 11 years. Solar physicist Scott McIntosh, the deputy director at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, told Space.com: 'Once every solar cycle, it forms at the 55-degree latitude and it starts to march up to the solar poles.

'It's very curious. There is a big

'why' question around it. Why does it only move toward the pole one time and then disappears and then comes back, magically, three or four years later in exactly the same region?'

While astronomers have previously observed filaments breaking away from the sun, this is the first time one has circulated the region in a whirlwind. One instance was in 2015 when two long threads of solar material broke free from the sun and erupted into space.

The upper one broke first, sending



dark plasma down toward an active region below it. An hour or two later, that lower filament erupted.

Scientists have yet to determine what caused the filament in the recent observation to swirl around the sun instead of jetting out into space. The recent increase in activity from the Sun results from it coming towards the most active phase in its 11-year solar cycle - hitting peak activity in 2024. Astronomers are observing intense solar radiation, more ejection of solar materials,

increased sunspots and more violent solar flares. Studies have shown that the current solar activity level is about the same as it was 11 years ago, during the same point in the last cycle. In August 2022, the European Space Agency's (ESA) Gaia spacecraft made a chilling prediction that our sun is almost halfway through its life span. When it reaches the end, it will swell and obliterate our planet - but data from the craft suggests this will not happen for at least another five billion years.

Gaia determined the sun is around 4.57 billion years old, and by identifying its mass and composition, the device estimated how the sun would evolve. The road to its demise begins around 10 to 11 billion years of age when it rapidly increases in size.

From here, the sun races to its death and finishes as a cool, dim white dwarf - the hot, dense core of a dead star.

Currently, the sun is deemed 'middle-aged' and stable as it fuses hydrogen into helium.

SC to hear pleas on Adani-Hindenburg report on Monday, suggests panel to protect investors

The Supreme Court will hear pleas seeking a probe into allegations by Hindenburg Research against Adani Group on Monday. The apex court has suggested forming a committee of domain experts and others to put in place robust regulatory practices to protect investors.

Expressing "concerns with regard to ensuring that regulatory mechanisms in India are duly strengthened to protect investors," the Supreme Court on Friday called for the Sebi (Securities and Exchange Board of India) and Finance Ministry to give suggestions on how to protect Indian investors. The Supreme Court has asked the government to consider a "threadbare assessment" of the current market scenario, including "an assessment of causes of disruption of stability of the Indian market, relevant causal factors, and the need for putting into place robust regulatory mechanisms." Suggestions in this regard will be considered by the Supreme Court on Monday. The observations came from the bench of CJI DY Chandrachud, Justice PS Narasimha, and Justice JB Pardiwala while hearing petitions seeking

an investigation into the short selling of shares of the Adani Group and the Hindenburg report, which recently led to a sharp fall in the Indian stock market. The US-based short-seller, in its report, had accused Gautam Adani's Adani Group of stock manipulation and other irregularities. The top court has suggested forming a committee of domain experts and others to put in place robust regulatory practices to protect investors. "We want to tread with great caution. Any word from this court could affect market confidence," noted the bench, which has asked the government and Sebi to suggest whether an expert panel can be created to analyse the current situation and suggest reforms. "In today's world of seamless capital movement, how do we ensure that the small investor is safe?" remarked the bench, adding that in

today's economic scenario, market investments are made not only by large firms but also by the common man. "They have no control; their investments are small... Today's news reports say that a loss of 10 lakh crores has occurred. How can we ensure that this lapse does not occur again?" asked the bench. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing on behalf of Sebi, assured the bench that the regulatory authority "is on top of the matter." The SG also pointed out that the current market fluctuations were due to a report that was published "outside the jurisdiction of the Indian authorities," but that it has greatly affected the Indian market. "What role is envisaged for SEBI?" asked the bench. "We don't want to cast any doubt about Sebi, but you have financial sector law reform committees that can take a call on

whether modification of the monitoring/regulatory mechanisms is required to make them more robust," remarked the CJI. The bench has suggested that "domain experts" from securities law, finance, banking, and markets could be included in the expert panel, which could also be headed by a retired Supreme Court judge as a "wise guiding force" to consider and analyse the current mechanisms and steps to "strengthen the existing regime." The bench also directed the Solicitor General to obtain instructions from the Sebi and the Finance Ministry by Monday. Following the Hindenburg report, panic selling over the past two weeks eroded \$100 billion from Adani Group's total market valuation. Adani Group stocks are still down significantly, but the total market loss has been reduced after the strong rally this week.

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What happens if you cut off sugar from your diet for a month?

Eliminating sugar from your diet for a month can result in significant changes in your body, shares an expert.

(SAI Bureau) In many ways, our diet is laden with sugar - be it in our desserts, beverages, carbonated drinks or even fruits. Although some types of sugar is necessary for the body, refined sugar in great amounts can lead to several health disorders.

"These hidden sugars increase the calorie of the food intake and cause various metabolic disorder like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease to name few. Dietary changes which cuts down on excess sugar has its own benefit," Dr Amrita Ghosh, Consultant, Fortis CDOC Hospital told indiatoday.in. But what happens

if you cut off sugar from your diet for a month? One of the most noticeable changes when cutting sugar from your diet is weight loss, said Dr Amrita Ghosh.

Sugar is high in calories and can quickly add up in the body, leading to weight gain. "When you eliminate sugar from your diet, you will likely find that you



are consuming fewer calories overall, which can lead to weight loss," added Dr Ghosh. The expert said that eating foods high in sugar content harms the blood sugar management in the body and may increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes since it could lead to elevated blood sugar and insulin levels.

"Cutting back on added sugar is a good way to reduce blood sugar and insulin levels," said Dr Ghosh. The health professional listed another benefit of cutting sugar for a month as it could improve energy levels.

"Sugar causes spikes and crashes in your blood sugar levels, leading to feelings of

fatigue and sluggishness. By eliminating sugar, your energy levels will become more stable, and you will feel more alert and awake throughout the day," she said.

The benefit of eliminating sugar could also improve your mood as it reduces inflammation and oxidative stress on the body. The

consumption of refined sugar could affect heart health as well. "Sugar is a major contributor to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other risk factors for heart disease. By reducing your sugar intake, you will be taking steps to improve your heart health and reduce your risk of heart disease," said Dr Ghosh.

Gut health is an important factor when it comes to having a healthy brain. Increased amounts of sugar intake leads inflammation in the gut and harms the beneficial bacteria in the gut, leading to digestive problems such as bloating, constipation and diarrhea.

Cutting sugar from your diet for a month can have a significant impact on your health and well-being. "If you are looking to make a positive change in your life, cutting sugar for a month is a great place to start, but the key is to be consistent even after one month," underscored Dr Ghosh.

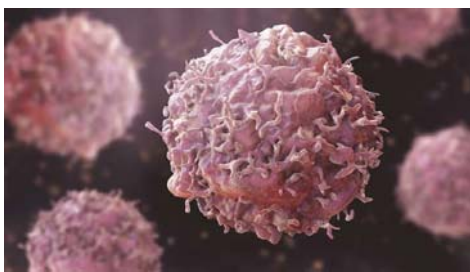
These are the most common types of cancers in Delhi

According to an ICMR cancer factsheet, breast cancer in women and lung cancer in men are the most common types of cancers being recorded in Delhi.

(SAI Bureau) In the last few years, India has seen a surge in cancer cases and the number doesn't seem to decline any soon. Recent data has shown that the number is likely to go up to 20 lakhs per year by 2026. In Delhi, breast cancer in women and lung cancer in men are the most common types of cancers being recorded, a recent report by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) stated. According to the ICMR cancer factsheet, based on

number of cases assessed wasn't revealed.

The hospitals that were studied under the assessment were Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital, Institute of Liver and Biliary



data collected over a period of 10 years, 27.8 per cent of female cancer patients had breast cancer and over 10.5 per cent of male cancer patients had lung cancer, reported indianexpress.com. The 10-year data, which ICMR collaborated with NCDIR (National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research), looked at seven hospitals in Delhi up till 2021. Although the researchers studied the Report of the National Cancer Registry Programme, which compiles data on all cases of the disease reported at various hospitals, the total

Sciences, Max Cancer Centre, Max Super Speciality Hospitals, Maulana Azad Medical College, and Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre. The data also showed that mouth and cervical cancer are the second-most common cancers among men and women, respectively. Mouth cancer was seen in around 7.5 per cent of male cancer patients and cervical cancer was witnessed in 10 per cent of female cancer patients. Besides this, tobacco contributed to 41.2 per cent of cancer cases in men and 12.4 per cent in women in Delhi.

5 herbs that can help with arthritis pain

There are certain herbs that can help ease joint pain and manage arthritis. Besides adding a little exercise, dietary changes can reduce inflammation

(SAI Bureau) In the cold months, arthritis patients could suffer immense pain in their joints. Affecting millions of people in India, arthritis is a chronic disease that is caused by inflammation, swelling or stiffness in the joints.

There are certain herbs that can help ease the pain and manage the disease. Nutritionist Lovneet Batra shared a post on Instagram about herbs that can relieve joint pain. "Arthritis is a chronic condition that affects more than 180 million people in India," she wrote in the caption. As per the nutritionist, osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are two major forms of arthritis associated with severe joint pain and reduced quality of life.

"Living with arthritis and bearing all the swelling and pain in the joints is not easy. The movement restriction and unbearable pain can make

everyday tasks difficult for arthritis patients. Fortunately, dietary changes can significantly reduce the inflammation and help in managing the disease," the expert shared, listing five herbs that could provide some comfort to an arthritis patient.

Aloe vera: It contains anti-inflammatory properties. The gel is packed with anthraquinones that help in relieving arthritis.

Turmeric (haldi): Its main ingredient, curcumin, has anti-inflammatory properties.

Thyme: It has anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties.

Ginger: Ginger has anti-inflammatory properties, including the ability to suppress inflammatory molecules called leukotrienes and to synthesize prostaglandins that cause pain and inflammation. Garlic: Garlic contains diallyl disulphide, an anti-inflammatory compound that decreases the effects of pro-inflammatory cytokines.

Speaking to indiatoday.in earlier, Dr Naval



Mendiratta, Senior Consultant-Rheumatology, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram said that people shouldn't have too many painkillers for relief as it could affect the kidneys.

"Biological injections are being used now for arthritis. This is an advanced treatment to help the joints from getting bent. The treatment should be done within 6 months of diagnosis," he had said.

Adani Enterprises breaks Hindenburg jinx with strong stock market rally

Adani Group finally seems to be gaining its footing on the stock market after being hammered for more than two weeks, following a damning report released by US short seller Hindenburg Research..



worth \$1.1 billion to release pledged shares of some group companies. The group finally seems to be gaining its footing on the stock market after being hammered for more than two weeks, following a damning report released by US short seller Hindenburg Research. The report, which raised concerns about the group's mounting debt, accounting fraud and stock manipulation, led to a total market loss of over \$100 billion for the conglomerate. Adani stocks rally Even as

benchmark stock market indices traded weaker, the conglomerate's flagship company, Adani Enterprises, was up over 15 per cent. Adani Wilmar also gained sharply by 5 per cent ahead of its Q3 results. Adani Transmission and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, which have already reported their third quarter results, were also trading in positive territory. Adani-owned cement firms, ACC and Ambuja Cement, were also trading higher, while NDTV was up nearly

1 per cent.

However, not all listed companies of the Adani Group have recovered, with Adani Green Energy, Adani Total Gas and Adani Power locked in their 5 per cent lower circuit. In addition to the quarterly results, prepaying \$1.11 billion of loans on shares ahead of their maturity in 2024 was the biggest factor behind the strong stock market rebound. Meanwhile, JP Morgan also said Adani Group companies were still eligible for inclusion in the bank's bond indexes.

(News Agency) Shares of several Adani Group listed companies have bounced back strongly on the stock market, a day after the Gautam Adani-owned conglomerate prepaid loans

Explained: Why govt provided tax relief to India's super rich in budget

(News Agency) The Union Budget 2023 proposed to reduce the tax surcharge rate on income above Rs 5 crore to 25 per cent, bringing down the maximum rate from 43 per cent to 39 per cent. While the move has raised a lot of eyebrows, here's why it makes sense. The Union Budget 2023 gave a massive boost to India's middle-class population by giving a fresh makeover to the new income tax regime. It was a much-needed break for the country's vast salaried class, who have been struggling to cope with sustained inflation and stagnant income growth. But there was another tax-related proposal in the budget that raised a lot of eyebrows: a reduction in the tax surcharge rate on income above Rs 5 crore to 25 per cent from 37 per cent, under the new income tax regime. "My fourth announcement in personal income tax is regarding the

highest tax rate which in our country is 42.74 per cent. This is among the highest in the world. I propose to reduce the highest surcharge rate from 37 per cent to 25 per cent in the new tax regime. This would result in reduction of the maximum tax rate to 39 per cent," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her recent budget speech. Providing tax relief to high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), who earn approximately 50 times more than the average salary of Indian middle class households, came as a surprise to many welfare economists. However, the finance minister's proposal to reduce taxes on the super rich has a totally different purpose, and probably, greater impact on the Indian economy.

Why reduce super rich taxes? The reduction in tax rate for HNIs with an annual income above Rs 5 crore is likely to encourage

more wealthy households and individuals to disclose their income, which will lead to better compliance and generate better revenue for the government. It will also lead to lower tax evasion and unethical use of tax havens – a common route taken by the HNIs.

Ever since the government increased the surcharge to nearly 43 per cent for HNIs, a majority of individuals started showing a larger chunk of their income under companies or businesses owned by them. This is because the corporate tax rates are comparatively lower than the highest tax surcharge rate.

By reducing it in the budget, the government has effectively ensured better revenue collection as more HNIs are likely to file their income tax under the personal category.

topping the Indian 'Richie Rich' exodus



The bigger reason that prompted the government to reduce the highest surcharge rate on income above Rs 5 crore was to stop the exodus of India's 'Richie Rich'. Data suggested that over 1.8 lakh citizens gave up Indian citizenship as of October 2022. A report by UK-based global citizenship and residence adviser Henley & Partners (H&P), estimated at least 8,000 HNIs to move out of India in 2022.

Moreover, at least 23,000 dollar-millionaires have left the country

between 2014 and 2018. Another Global Wealth Migration Review report revealed that nearly 5,000 millionaires left the country in 2020 alone.

The exodus of HNIs has been increasing with every passing year and has been linked to higher taxes on India's super rich. Experts have already pointed out that this could significantly hurt private investments, which have been declining in India and putting a major expenditure burden on the government. In fact, HNIs also contribute significantly to other important sectors like banking, real estate, consumer durables, electronics and even automobiles. While the volume of consumption among HNIs is miniscule in comparison to that of the middle class, the value is substantial. HNIs are also largely responsible for the strong valuation of the Indian equity markets. Therefore, the government's proposal to reduce taxes for HNIs seems to be a calculated move to drive private investment-led growth and keep the economy protected amid global turbulence in 2024.

Google unveils Bard, its ChatGPT rival: How does it work, where to access and more

Google says Bard draws on information from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses. At its core, Google's chatbot is powered by LaMDA.

(News Agency) Google has unveiled Bard, its ChatGPT rival that leverages LaMDA (Language Model for Dialogue Applications), Google's own language model. The announcement comes days after CEO Sundar Pichai revealed its development during an earnings call. Prior to the call, Google management called ChatGPT "code red" as the AI-powered platform received positive responses from users across the world. In a blog post, Google says that it is opening Bard up to "trusted testers" ahead of making it more widely available to the public in the coming weeks. ChatGPT, on the other hand, is available to test for free. It recently clocked 100 million users in just

two months. In simple words, Google Bard is an AI-powered chatbot that can offer answers to many queries in a conversational way — similar to ChatGPT.

Google says Bard draws on information from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses. At its core, Google's chatbot is powered by LaMDA, Google's language model built on Transformer, a neural network architecture. Interestingly, ChatGPT relies on GPT-3 language model, which is also built on Transformer. Google Research invented and open-sourced Transformer in 2017.

Currently, Google Bard is not available for testing to the public, but select users have

access. Google is releasing a "lightweight model version of LaMDA," which requires significantly less computing power. This will allow Google to receive more feedback.

The post reads, "We'll combine external feedback with our own internal testing to make sure Bard's responses meet a high bar for quality, safety and groundedness in real-world information."

Feedback for Google Bard, powered by LaMDA, is also crucial for the company. The software giant unveiled LaMDA in 2021. However, a former employee alleged that its language model offered racist and sexist responses. The employee also alleged that LaMDA is "sentient."

Manish Malhotra shares unmissable details of Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra's wedding outfits

Designer Manish Malhotra shared details of Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra's wedding outfits on Instagram. While Kiara stunned in a pink and golden lehenga set, Sidharth wore a golden bandhgala.



(SAI Bureau) Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra finally tied the knot in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan on Tuesday (February 7). The couple wore designer Manish Malhotra's outfits for their wedding day and shined in pink and golden hues.

Manish Malhotra shared details of the bride and groom's attire on Instagram. "We believe in the magic of fairytales as we celebrate the start of this momentous journey for Kiara Advani & Siddharth Malhotra," he said in the post. Decoding the pink lehenga set, the designer wrote, "Our alluring #ManishMalhotraBride Kiara stuns in a custom ombre #ManishMalhotraLehenga in hues of empress rose." The lehenga featured intricate embroidery detailing of "Roman architecture," inspired by the special love the newlyweds share for the city of domes, as per the couturier.

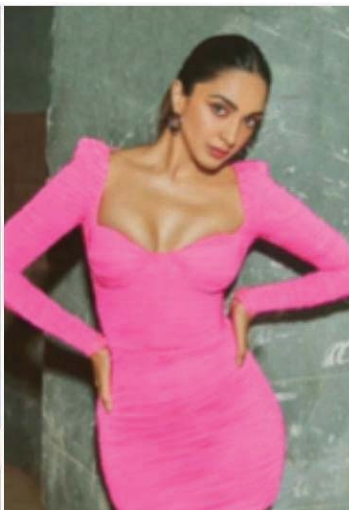
He added, "Real Swarovski crystals are embellished to embrace our signature sparkle. The captivating #ManishMalhotraBride glows in Manish Malhotra Bespoke Diamond Jewellery for her big day. The exclusive set features an

exquisite composition of ultra-fine handcut diamonds crafted with rare Zambian emeralds." Sidharth, who wore a golden and ivory bandhgala, teamed his outfit with a matching turban and a polki-studded kalangi. Our handsome #ManishMalhotraGroom Siddharth opts for the perfect amalgamation of whimsical and dreamy in a custom Manish Malhotra creation," wrote Manish Malhotra, adding that the groom exuded old-world charm.

"Siddharth wears a metallic gold sherwani with an exquisite royal lustre. The sherwani features our classic signatures, hints of ivory threadwork, gold zardozi and badla work, handcrafted with utmost finesse. The #ManishMalhotraGroom completes his look with our handcrafted Manish Malhotra Polki Jewellery by Raniwala 1881 studded with extremely fine uncut diamonds for the perfect regal look," he wrote. Kiara and Sidharth got married in a quaint affair in the presence of their family members and close friends at Suryagarh Palace.

VALENTINE'S DAY 2023

Super stylish celeb-approved outfit ideas



(SAI Bureau) Valentine's Day is right here! If you don't want to celebrate it in a quintessential red dress, here are some stylish alternatives to mark the day of love.

A red dress is one of the first things that pops up in the mind when one begins to wonder what to wear on Valentine's Day. While that quintessential red dress may resonate well with love and romance, the question is whether you want to be part of the cliché red clan or stand out in style.

If the latter option has piqued your interest already, allow us to sort your sartorial glam for this Valentine's Day. We scouted

some really stylish outfit ideas for Valentine's Day from the coveted closets of celeb divas. Scroll down to see our picks!

Ditch that dress! Yes, we said what we said. Because, a pair of rhinestone-embellished sheer pants is what we recommend you to swap that dress with! Perfect for a dinner date, this blazer and pants set is equal parts bold and powerful.

WHITE IS ALWAYS RIGHT

Yes, white is ALWAYS right! Whether you head out for a cosy date or dance the night away with your partner at a club, a white dress with some glitzy adornments will ensure a fashion-forward outing. Pro tip:

Take the style quotient up by a notch with a matching embellished blazer like that of Janhvi Kapoor. Style it with a neat hair updo and nude-hued makeup with brown lips and defined brows.

SULTRY SATIN DRESS

The oh-so-sexy satin could be your best fashion bet to celebrate the day of love in style. You may steal some inspiration from Shanaya Kapoor who rocked this oomph-exuding backless satin dress with some glimmering hints for a party. Let your hair loose in soft curls and get dolled up with dewy makeup, and you're ready for a special date!

PS: Satin dresses are so much



in vogue at the moment and can be easily purchased from local markets and online fashion portals as well.

BRIGHT COLOURS FOR THE WIN

If your Valentine's Day celebration is going to be all about spending the noon and evening together, we suggest embracing a splash of bright hues. You may consider slipping into a breezy dress, a casual yet

statement-making monotone set or even a figure-hugging dress in a vivid hue.

PINK PICKS

To satiate your feminine urge to wear something 'in theme' this Valentine's Day, here are some pink picks straight off new bride Kiara Advani's wardrobe. A top with cutesy ruffled details would complement the Valentine's Day vibe or a stylish dress with voguish accents would look good too.

Why Pathaan's success is good news for the South film industry

2023 was seen as the year of reckoning for Bollywood since Shah Rukh Khan's magnum opus Pathaan released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, in a record number of theatres worldwide.



(News Agency) Shah Rukh Khan's Pathaan collected Rs 634 crore gross worldwide in its first week of release. There is just no stopping the momentum that the Siddharth Anand-directed film has had at the box office and this is excellent news for the Hindi film industry. The South film industry, too, is celebrating the success of Pathaan and many may be wondering why, given that it's a Hindi film. When the Hindi film industry was going through a lull in 2021 and 2022, many producers in South India believed it was only a matter of time before it would bounce back. 2023 was seen as the year

of reckoning for Bollywood since Shah Rukh Khan's magnum opus Pathaan released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, in a record number of theatres worldwide. Pathaan released on January 25 and has broken numerous box office records, including those previously held by KGF and Dangal, in a span of a week. The Pathaan juggernaut is well on its way to creating box office history soon.

So far, the larger than life experience was provided by South films, like Baahubali, RRR and KGF, and SRK's Pathaan (which is on a similar line) has proved to the Hindi film industry

that this is what the audience is seeking in theatres. With its success, Pathaan has guaranteed a definite and large theatrical audience who will come for good content and this will translate into success not just for Hindi cinema in the future but South cinema too.

In South India, filmmakers and producers are in a very buoyant mood since the success of Pathaan shows that the audience is flooding back to theatres in the Hindi market. Why? The key to accessing a market across India for South cinema is dubbing. The Hindi heartland has been consuming such content in single screens for many years now and the South film industry banks on revenue from the dubbed market. If the Hindi audience does not flock to theatres to watch these films, then the revenue of South films also get affected.

Earlier, the South film industries made films for their own local markets and Hindi cinema had created a niche market for itself in South India.

Thanks to more people migrating from North India to South, Bollywood heroes are celebrated here too. But the scenario has changed today with South cinema making rapid inroads into the Hindi belt, be it multiplexes or single screens.

In 2007, Rajinikanth's film Sivaji became a success in Tamil and Telugu but it was released in Hindi only in 2010. The makers of Sivaji were clearly not confident if it would find success in the Hindi belt in 2007 since it featured a South hero. Cut to Enthiran / Robot in 2010, the movie was released simultaneously in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi and was a big box office hit across India. This proved that more than the hero, it was the content of the film that mattered to the Hindi audience. South filmmakers and films have now made solid inroads into the Hindi market and are keen on ensuring that this expands further. And this can only be aided by the success of Bollywood films. If the Hindi audience readily spends on Bollywood, then it will come

to watch a good dubbed movie as well, is the logic at work here. If you look at Hollywood films and the success they have had in India, it is clearly due to the dubbing of their films in local languages. On the day it released in theatres (December 16, 2022), Avatar: The Way of Water, did a reported business of Rs 11 crore in Hindi, Rs 22 crore in English, Rs 5 crore in Telugu, over Rs 2 crore in Tamil and Rs 30 lakh in Malayalam.

Even if you look at TV and OTT, dubbed Hollywood, South Indian films and other world content, have become extremely popular with audiences across India. A 2022 report, titled Tuning into Consumer, from Ernst and Young stated that box office collections contributed to 60 per cent of cinema revenues in 2019 but this is expected to reduce to 50 per cent in 2024. OTT and digital revenues are expected to rise from 10 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2024. And this means that dubbed content is key in the TV and digital space too.

Manoj Bajpayee's Family Man 3 Set for Holi Release; Actor Drops Video, Asks 'Swagat Nahi Karoge?'

(News Agency) Family Man 3's release date is finally out! Filmmakers Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's Manoj Bajpayee led The Family Man was released in 2019, and instantly became a favourite with the audience. Its second season, which was unveiled last year, also received an encouraging response, and since then the fans have been wanting to know about its third season. Now, Manoj Bajpayee has finally put an end to fans' curiosity and revealed the release date of the third season.

In a video posted on his official Instagram handle, Manoj Bajpayee is seen speaking about him coming back to the audience with his "family." The actor penned the caption as, "Family" ke saath aa raha hoon...swagat nahin karoge humara?" Soon after the video was dropped, scores of fans chimed into the comments section to express their excitement for the show. "Can't wait for season 3 ??," wrote one fan. Another commented, "master piece is coming." A third fan added, "Shree Kant Tiwari is coming." Previously, Raj & DK



opened up about The Family Man season 3 and stated that while they do have an idea and concept for the web series, they are currently taking feedback. Speaking about the same, Raj told Firstpost, "We are behind this time. We have the world in place, we have the concept, we have an idea, and

the foundation to some extent. But we're still developing the story. This time, we're actually seeing the feedback, and there's a deluge of it. We need to regroup, clear our heads, and sit and start writing it so that we're not too influenced but are still cognizant of what was great and what

was not". Meanwhile, Manoj Bajpayee, who plays the lead role in The Family Man 2, has been overwhelmed by the success of the series. During his interaction with Hindustan Times, the National Award Winning actor stated, "Yes, we knew, we had a very good product in hand, but even then, one can't imagine this kind of love, and reception. Social media reactions are a testimony to it, so it is not something we can be blamed for — there's no over hyping or exaggeration." Besides Bajpayee, The Family Man 1 and 2 had featured Sharib Hashmi, Priyamani, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, and Shreya Dhanwanthary among many others. Besides The Family Man 3, Raj and Krishna have three more shows in the works. They recently wrapped up a web series, which is headlined by Shahid Kapoor, Raashii Khanna and Vijay Sethupathi. They are presently shooting for their next, Guns and Gulaabs, which features Rajkummar Rao, Dulquer Salmaan and Adarsh Gourav. They also have Varun Dhawan and Samantha starrer Citadel in the pipeline.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui's Lawyer Makes Shocking Claims About Aaliya, Says She's 'Still Married to 1st Husband'

(News Agency) The controversy between Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui and his wife Aaliya is continuing to loom large with each passing day. It all started when Aaliya accused the actor and his family for harassing her at home, and now the actor's lawyer has made shocking claims against Aaliya. He said that Aaliya is still married to her first husband, Vinay Bhargav.

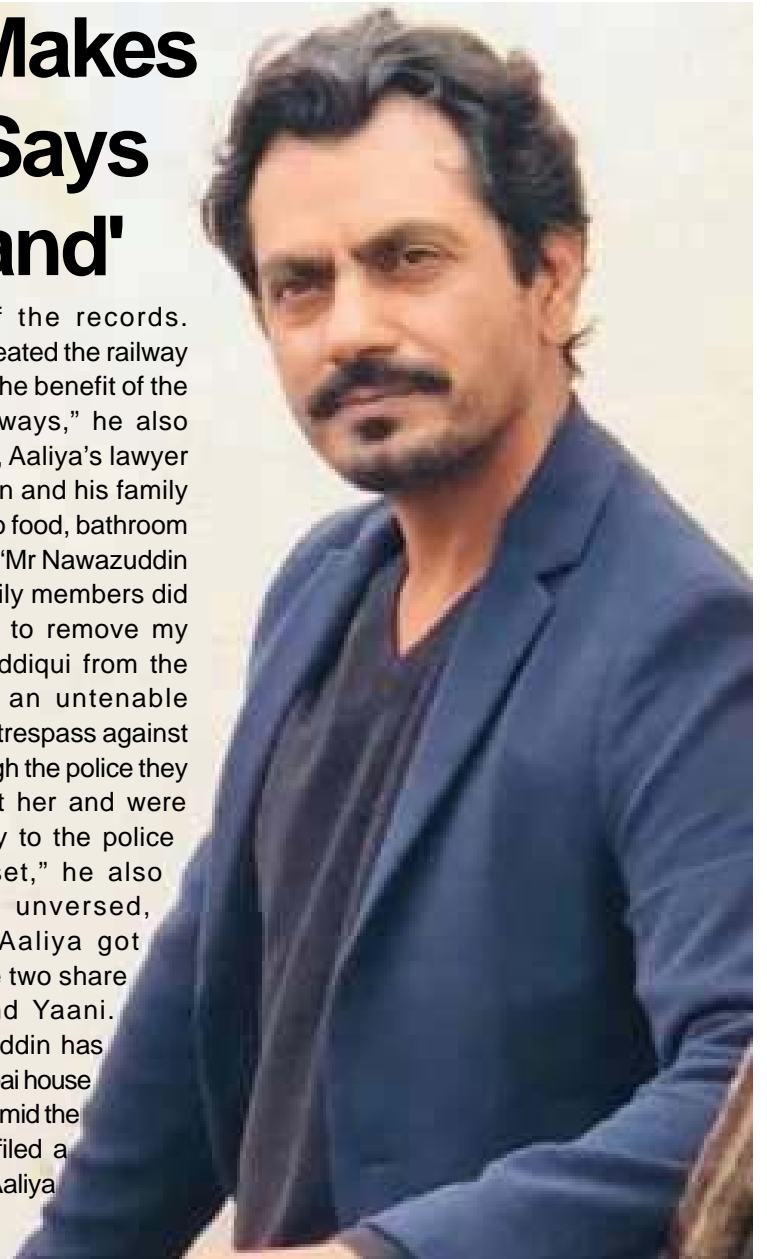
Nawazuddin Siddiqui's lawyer Nadeem Zafar Zaidi held a press meet in Delhi and talked about the ongoing dispute between him and his wife, Aaliya aka Zainab aka Anjana Kishor Pandey. He was joined by the National President of Rashtriya Hindu-Muslim Ekta Manch, Rihan Khan.

Now, in a new statement to media, India Today quoted the actor's lawyer saying, "In 2001, Aaliya aka Anjali Kumari, an 8th class fail, married Vinay Bhargav. Then she came to Mumbai and became Anjana Pandey, then Anjana Anand in 2010. Then she became Zainab and converted to

Islam. After that she married Nawazuddin and divorced him in 2011 with mutual consent. But when Nawazuddin's career skyrocketed, she again came into his life as Aaliya. In 2020 she sent him a divorce notice which makes no sense as the two had already separated."

He also said that Aaliya faked her date of birth, as it differs in her marksheet and passport. "Anjana had another love marriage with a man named Rahul in 2008-2009, and the two also lived together in a flat in Goregaon, Mumbai. Due to Anjana's ambition to become big, they formed a gang, which includes one of Anjana's sisters, Archana Pandey. Anjana Pandey was fulfilling her ambition by living in Mumbai, while in Jabalpur, Vinay Bhargav married Anjana's sister. Archana Bhargav is already the wife of Rajkumar Shukla and there was no divorce between the two. Vinay Bhargav also registered Anjana's name as his wife in the railway department which was found

during scrutiny of the records. Together, all three cheated the railway department and got the benefit of the facilities of the railways," he also claimed. Last month, Aaliya's lawyer said that Nawazuddin and his family members 'ensured no food, bathroom is given to my client.' "Mr Nawazuddin Siddiqui and his family members did everything possible to remove my client Mrs Aaliya Siddiqui from the house. They filed an untenable criminal complaint of trespass against her. Thereafter, through the police they threatened to arrest her and were calling her each day to the police station, after sunset," he also said. For the unversed, Nawazuddin and Aaliya got married in 2011. The two share two kids-Shora and Yaani. Reportedly, Nawazuddin has moved out of his Mumbai house and staying in a hotel amid the dispute. His mother filed a complaint against Aaliya over property dispute.



Rakhi Sawant's Husband Adil Khan Durrani Arrested; Everything You Need To Know

(News Agency) Rakhi Sawant's husband Adil Khan has been arrested by Oshiwara police in Mumbai. He was detained from the actress' residence on Tuesday morning and was arrested after hours of questioning. Reportedly, Adil has been arrested under IPC sections 406, 420 and 377. Earlier today, Rakhi Sawant issued a voice statement and claimed that Adil was at her place when the

Oshiwara Police arrived and arrested him. Rakhi also admitted that she had filed an FIR against Adil and accused him of thrashing her. "He got arrested because I filed an FIR against him," Rakhi said in the audio statement and added, "This is no drama. He spoiled my life. He thrashed me. He took away my money." Rakhi Sawant was also snapped at the Oshiwara Police station on Monday night when she lodged a complaint against Adil. She accused Adil of thrashing her as she broke down in front of the media. "I always used to ask Adil, 'Why do you beat me so much?' I



told him that I'll reveal this all to the media. He told me, 'Who will believe you?' I have proof against him," Rakhi told paps outside the police station. On Monday afternoon too, Rakhi spoke to paps when she blamed Adil for her mother's death and claimed that if her mother would have been given timely treatment, she would be among us today. "Mere maa ko tumne maara hai. Aaj mere maa ka time pe illaj ho gaya hota toh shayad woh nahi marti. (You killed my mother. If she was given treatment on time, she might not have died)," Rakhi told the paparazzi. For the unversed, the

trouble between Rakhi and Adil has been going on for quite some days now. The Bigg Boss fame recently accused Adil of being in an extramarital relationship. She even announced their separation on Monday afternoon when she said, "He is staying with that girl. Shame on that girl. Finally, Adil has left me. Now, I have shared everything with media." Rakhi Sawant and Adil Khan Durrani left everyone surprised in January this year when they announced her wedding. While pictures of their court marriage surfaced online, the Bigg Boss fame later revealed that the two had actually tied the knot in July last year.

Berlin teaser out. Money Heist spin-off series to release on Netflix in December

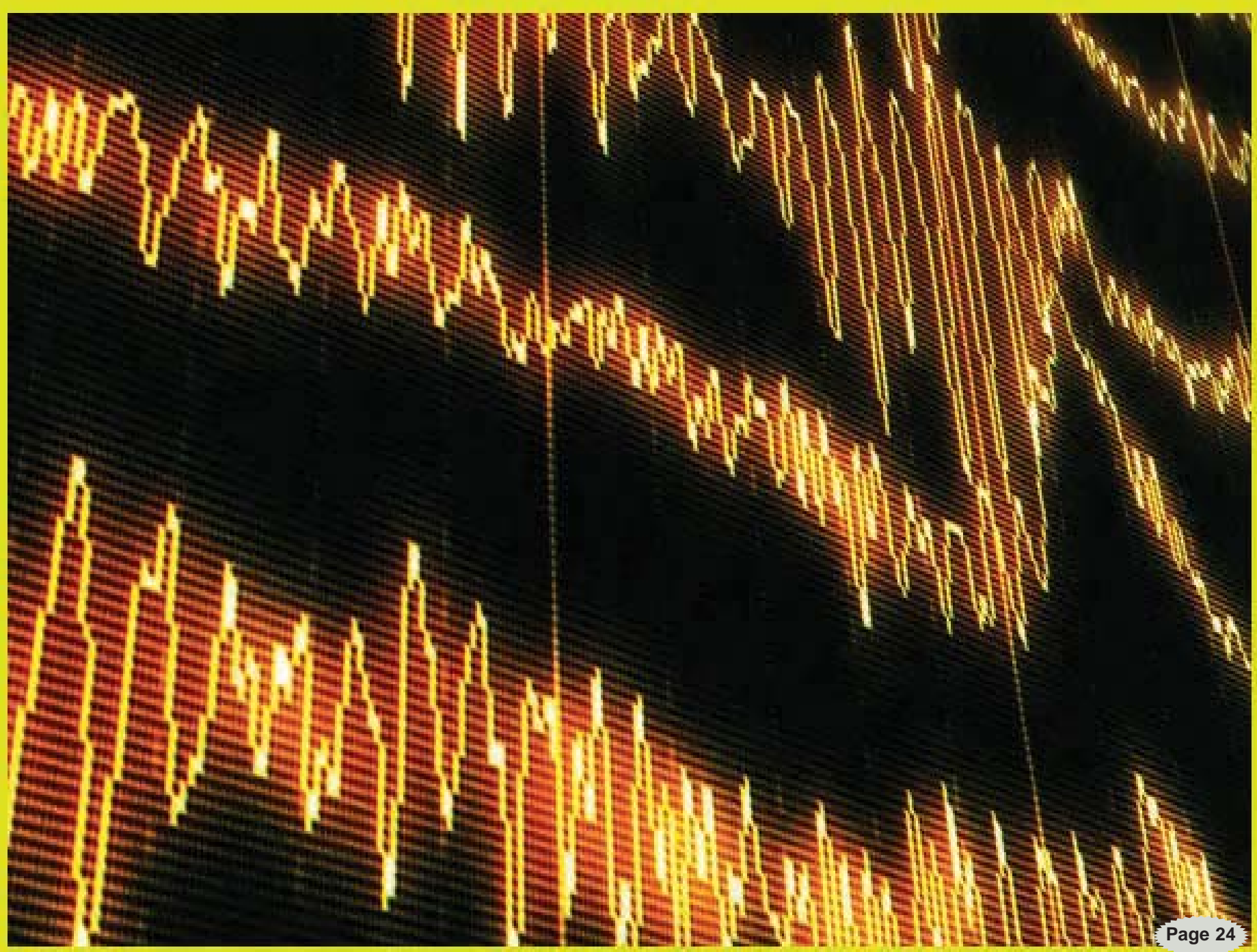
Netflix shared the official teaser of Berlin and announced that it will be released on the platform in December. The show is a Money Heist spin-off.

(News Agency) Money Heist is a highly popular series that enjoys a strong fan following across countries. It revolves around a mastermind, named Professor, and his gang as they try to carry out a massive heist. The series ran successfully for five seasons and became a part of popular culture. Its spin-off is now on its way. Berlin, as the show is called, will premiere on Netflix later this year. It revolves around the titular character, the Professor's brother. The

announcement teaser re-introduces us to Berlin (Pedro Alonso) as he gears up for an adventure. The video has a rich look and feel and features a catchy background score. Berlin is a prequel to Money Heist. It explores what happened in the titular character's life before he joined forces with the Professor for the grand robbery. The first season has eight episodes. It has been written by Esther Martinez Lobato and Alex Pina. Pina had earlier said that Berlin would highlight the golden period of the titular character's life.. He also revealed that the series would be full of humour. "It's a trip through the golden age of the character, when he robbed around Europe crazy in love.



A world in which your boss spies on your brainwaves? That future is near



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