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Why should Rahul Gandhi still apologize for OPERATION BLUE STAR?

Rahul Gandhi cannot be held accountable for all that happened during his childhood. But if he does choose to apologise for Operation Blue Star, his apology may demonstrate a genuine commitment to change.



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Brazilian judge orders arrest of Bolsonaro's ex-minister after Brasília rampage

After a brazen attack on government buildings in Brazil's capital on Sunday by former president Jair Bolsonaro supporters, a Supreme Court judge has now ordered the arrest of one of his ministers.



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Kanye West's new 'wife' Bianca Censori looks exactly like Kim Kardashian as he continues romancing mogul ex's clones



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Shankar Mishra, who urinated on co-flyer, denied bail by Delhi court



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Nassau GOP calls on Santos to resign

Local GOP leaders and a fellow Republican congressman told the New Yorker to resign, with some saying he had lied to them personally in endorsement interviews.



NEW YORK — Rep. George Santos refused to resign Wednesday despite a parade of Republican Nassau County officials demanding he step down. Officials from across Santos' Long Island district and beyond gathered at the headquarters of the Nassau County Republican Committee to offer biting critiques of the newly sworn-in Republican. (Contd. on page 23)

Murder Case Filed Against Amrapali Group Managing Director Anil Sharma



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Defendant Sentenced In Groundbreaking Cryptocurrency Insider Trading Case

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Nikhil Wahi Was Sentenced to 10 Months in Prison for Trading Using Misappropriated Information About Crypto Asset Listings on an Exchange Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that NIKHIL WAHI was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Loretta A. Preska to 10 months in prison for his participation in a scheme to commit insider trading in cryptocurrency assets by using confidential information from his

brother, a former product manager at Coinbase Global, Inc. ("Coinbase"), about which crypto assets were scheduled to be listed on Coinbase's exchanges. WAHI previously pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "At a time when the cryptocurrency markets have been plagued by fear, uncertainty, and doubt, insider trading creates the impression that everything is rigged and that only people with secret advantages can make a real buck.

Today's sentence makes clear that the cryptocurrency markets are not lawless. There are real consequences to illegal insider trading, wherever and whenever it occurs." According to the allegations in the Indictment and statements made in public court proceedings and filings: Beginning in approximately October 2020, NIKHIL WAHI obtained from his brother, an employee of Coinbase working on highly confidential crypto asset listings, secret tips about

which crypto assets would be listed on Coinbase. Using that insider information, NIKHIL WAHI used anonymous Ethereum blockchain wallets and accounts held under pseudonyms at centralized cryptocurrency exchanges to acquire those crypto assets shortly before Coinbase publicly announced that it was listing these crypto assets on its exchanges. On multiple occasions following Coinbase's public listing announcements, NIKHIL WAHI sold the crypto assets for a profit.

Former Executive Director of Long Island Charity Sentenced to Over Two Years in Prison for Embezzlement

Defendant and Co-Conspirators Used Multiple Schemes to Steal Over \$1 Million from Non-Profit Agency Devoted to Assisting Developmentally Disabled Youth, Spending the Funds on Luxury Items



(News Agency) Earlier today, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, Senior United States District Judge Edward R. Korman sentenced Wafa Abboud to a term of imprisonment of 33 months. As part of the sentence, Judge Korman also ordered Abboud to forfeit \$836,000 and pay \$1,415,000 in restitution to Human First, Inc. (Human First), the nonprofit agency that Abboud led for more than five years. Abboud was convicted following a two-week jury trial in July 2019 of theft from programs receiving federal funds, bank fraud, and conspiracies to commit those crimes. Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, announced the sentence.

"Stealing taxpayer money earmarked for developmentally disabled youth to pay for vacations, cosmetic surgery, and luxurious vacations is shameful," stated United States Attorney Peace. "Today, the defendant has been held accountable for betraying the most vulnerable among us whom she was entrusted to serve and treating the non-profit organization bank accounts as though they were her own." Mr. Peace thanked the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office, for its investigative work on the case. From January 2011 until her termination on May 27, 2016, Abboud was the Executive Director of Human

First, a non-profit corporation that provided services to individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. In that capacity, Abboud exercised nearly complete control over the charity's finances. During Abboud's tenure, Human First received tens of millions of dollars annually from the New York State

Office for People with Development Disabilities, which is funded in significant part by the Medicaid program. The money was disbursed to Human First to support its mission of providing residential, rehabilitative, and other services to developmentally disabled youth.

Abboud entered into an agreement with co-defendant Marcelle Bailey whereby Abboud caused Human First to pay Bailey's company MPB Management Services LLC (MPB) approximately \$16,000 per month in purported "consulting" fees. Bailey deposited approximately half of each monthly disbursement into bank accounts that were controlled by Abboud, who used the money to fund a lavish lifestyle, including expensive international vacations, visits to luxury spas and high-end beauty salons and restaurants, and elective cosmetic surgeries. Abboud also withdrew

approximately \$120,000 from the accounts in cash and wired tens of thousands of dollars in the account overseas. In total, Abboud stole approximately \$420,000 between May 2011 and February 2016 through the MPB embezzlement scheme. Abboud also conspired with co-defendant Rami Taha to steal over \$400,000 through a scheme in which Abboud deliberately issued overpayments to contractors performing work on Human First properties with the knowledge that the overpayment would be kicked back to her. The overpayments were disguised through the use of inflated invoices submitted to Human First, and the payments to Abboud were hidden by transferring the funds through a number of sham bank accounts before ultimately depositing them into accounts controlled by Abboud.

AAPAI Organizes HPV Vaccination Awareness Camp in Visakhapatnam to Prevent Cervical Cancer

(News Agency) (Visakhapatnam) American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPAI), in collaboration with the AAPAI India Foundation administered free HPV vaccines to over 100 low income young girls, chosen from several government schools in the region, during a special launch of HPV Vaccination awareness camp organized at the Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital, Visakhapatnam in India on Saturday, January 7th, 2023 with the objective of creating awareness and preventing cervical cancer, a leading cause of cancer deaths among women in India. "We at AAPAI, in keeping with our



efforts and initiatives to this life saving mission." The awareness camp was organized as part of AAPAI's 16th annual Global Healthcare Summit (GHS) 2023 and was inaugurated in person by Chief Guest at the Summit, Smt. Vidadala Rajini, Honorable Minister for Health, Family Welfare & Medical Education. In her address, the Minister, praised the efforts and the many initiatives of AAPAI in providing the best and efficient healthcare to the most vulnerable sections of the society. She urged AAPAI to work collaboratively with the government of Andhra Pradesh to make healthcare affordable and efficient for all.

educate, create awareness and provide support on disease prevention, are happy to be part of the HPV Vaccine Awareness Program," Dr. Ravi Kolli, President of AAPAI said. "It was truly an enriching experience to be present in person and meeting with the young women and be part of



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NYC Uber drivers strike outside Uber Office



Here are some photos from the 24-hour NYC Uber drivers strike on Thursday, Jan. 5.

Photo courtesy Adrian Childress @ AdrianChildress.com

Representatives Bera, Jayapal, Khanna, Krishnamoorthi, and Thanedar Celebrate Historic Indian American Representation in Congress

118th Congress includes most Indian American Members of Congress in United States history

(SAI Bureau) WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Representatives Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-06), Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), Ro Khanna (CA-17), Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08) and Shri Thanedar (MI-13) today celebrated the largest representation of Indian American Members of Congress in U.S. history.

"When I first took office in 2013, I was the only Indian American Member of Congress and the third ever in history," said Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. "Since that day, I have been committed to ensuring we grow our representation in Congress. In the past decade, I am proud to be joined by incredible Indian American colleagues from around the country - Representatives Jayapal, Khanna, and Krishnamoorthi. With the swearing-in of the 118th Congress, our coalition has grown to a record number with the election of Representative Thanedar. It's important that we reflect

on the historic progress our country is making. I look forward to welcoming even more Indian American Members of Congress in the future!"

"As we enter the most diverse Congress ever, I am reminded how much representation matters, for every community and culture across our country. I am a proud naturalized citizen, the first South Asian American woman elected to the House, and an immigrant woman of color. Serving in Congress is a distinct honor, not only because I am able to deliver for my constituents, but because I am able to show other South Asians that if I can make it into the halls of Congress, so can they," said Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal. "I am so grateful to serve with such an inspiring cohort of fellow Indian Americans and I look forward to seeing our numbers continue to grow!" "I'm so proud to serve

in this diverse Congress alongside a record number of Indian Americans. Representation is crucial to serving Indian American communities and working to strengthen America's defense and strategic partnership with India. I look forward to continuing our work together in the 118th Congress," said Congressman Ro Khanna.

"As the Indian-American community remains one of our nation's fastest

growing, with a population of more than four million, I am excited to see our representation expanding in Congress as well," said Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi. "I look forward to working with Reps. Bera, Jayapal, Khanna, and now Thanedar to continue to address the key issues facing our community, including high-skilled immigration reform and strengthening the partnership between the U.S. and India."

Senator LIU to Host Inaugural Lunar New Year Celebration

(SAI Bureau) Flushing, NY – In celebration of the Year of the Rabbit, Senator John Liu will host his inaugural Lunar New Year celebration at Tangram in Flushing. The event will take place on Friday, January 20, 2023. Attendees will be treated to free food from local restaurants, music and dance performances. Flyers for the Lunar New Year celebration are attached. Senator John Liu stated, "The Lunar New Year is a time for families and friends to come together to say goodbye to the past and take on the challenges of the new year with hopes




for peace, health and prosperity. These last years have been trying on many levels, from the COVID-19 pandemic to current economic hardships, so we look forward to an auspicious New Year with good tidings and lots of luck of the rabbit! All are welcome to join us to kick off this Lunar New Year, the Year of the Rabbit!"

Register by phone at 718-765-6675.


What: NYS Senator John Liu hosts Inaugural Lunar

New Year celebration. When: Friday, January 20, 2023 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Where: Tangram, 133-33 39th Ave., Flushing, NY



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Indian-American doc pays \$1,850,000 for performing unnecessary tests, surgeries

(SAI Bureau) New York : An Indian-American doctor has agreed to pay approximately \$1,850,000 for allegedly billing the government for cataract surgeries and diagnostic tests that were not medically required.

Aarti D. Pandya and her Pandya Practice Group violated the False Claims Act by also performing and billing for tests that were incomplete or of worthless value, and office visits that did not provide the level of service claimed.

"Physicians who perform procedures and tests without a legitimate medical need place profits ahead of patients and subject those patients to unnecessary risk," said US Attorney Ryan K Buchanan in a statement released on Monday. "This settlement represents our office's commitment to ensuring accountability for physicians who subject patients to unwarranted

medical care and waste taxpayer funds," Buchanan said. From January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2016, Pandya knowingly submitted false claims to federal healthcare programmes for medically unnecessary cataract extraction surgeries and YAG laser capsulotomies, according to a Justice Department release.

The prosecution alleged that Pandya performed these procedures on patients that did not qualify for the procedure under accepted standards of medical practice and, in some cases, caused injury to her patients.

Additionally, it accused Pandya of falsely diagnosing patients with



glaucoma to justify unnecessary diagnostic testing and treatment that was billed to Medicare.

The prosecution also said that many of the diagnostic tests that Pandya ordered were not properly performed, were performed on a broken machine, or were not interpreted in the medical record, as required by Medicare. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) imposed in 2019 a payment suspension on the Pandya Practice Group that precluded it from receiving any reimbursement from Medicare for Part B claims.

As part of the settlement of the government's claims in this case, the

Pandya Practice Group agreed to forfeit the suspension amount to the government.

The payment suspension will also be lifted as part of the settlement. To protect federal healthcare programmes and beneficiaries going forward, Pandya and the Pandya Practice Group have entered into a detailed, multi-year Integrity Agreement and Conditional Exclusion Release (IA) with the Office of Inspector General. "We must assure patients and taxpayers that healthcare is dictated by clinical needs, not fiscal greed," said Keri Farley, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. "This settlement should serve as a reminder that the FBI will not tolerate healthcare providers who engage in schemes that defraud the industry and put innocent patients at risk."

As international students flock back to Australia, they face even worse housing struggles than before COVID

By Alan Morris and Luke Ashton, University of Technology Sydney, and Shaun Wilson, Macquarie University



(SAI Bureau) Australia is welcoming back international students in much greater numbers this year. Some predict new enrolments in 2023 could even be higher than the pre-COVID record in 2019. Student visa applications in the second half of 2022 were up 40 per cent on the same period in 2019.

The downside is many of these students are likely to struggle to find affordable and adequate accommodation. They are facing record low private rental vacancy rates and higher rents than before the pandemic. Redfern Legal Centre's International Student Legal Service NSW has been assisting international students for over a decade. Its senior solicitor, Sean Stimson, told us: The tenancy situation facing international students in the second half of 2022 – including illegal evictions and illegal rent increases – is the worst I've seen. We are increasingly seeing international students who are occupying substandard, illegal accommodation, exposing themselves to dangerous environments.

To make matters worse, a number of universities have been selling off a proportion of their student housing in response to falls in revenue during the pandemic. For example, in 2021, University of Technology Sydney sold three buildings with 428 beds for AUD 95 million to Scape, the largest provider in Australia's AUD 20 billion purpose-built student housing sector. In some cases, this has made student accommodation more costly. Rents are typically equivalent to, or even higher, than rents in the wider private rental market.

Like any group, students' financial resources vary greatly. However, little was known about these inequalities and their impacts on international students' housing and everyday living.

Our recently published study, involving more than 7,000 international students, shows many were struggling financially even before the post-COVID rental crisis. They suffered great anxiety about finding the money to pay the rent and worried about becoming homeless.

We also found food insecurity was common among these students. More than one in five had gone without meals. Similar numbers were unable to heat or cool their home adequately.

What did the study look at?

To study students' experience of financial hardship or precarity,

we used a scale of seven financial stress indicators from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. We added a new item, "Could not afford to buy prescribed textbooks".

Our research project surveyed students who depended on private rental accommodation in

Sydney and Melbourne, two foundation course Australia's top destinations for international students, in late 2019.

The sample was drawn from all three post-secondary sectors. It included ten universities, 24 vocational colleges, seven English language colleges and

two foundation course institutions. We divided the 7,084 valid responses to the survey into four groups: secure (no financial stress indicators), moderately precarious (one to two indicators), highly precarious (three to five) and extremely precarious (six to eight).

AAPI's 17th Global Healthcare Summit Announced During Curtain Raiser in Delhi



(SAI Bureau) (New Delhi, India:) Organized under the leadership of Dr. Udaya Shivangi, Women's Forum Chair of AAPI, the 17th annual Global Healthcare Summit kickoff event and press conference was attended by nearly 50 journalists from the nation's capital and several leaders of AAPI, who had come all the way from the United States to be part of this important ceremony. Prominent

among those who attended the event included Dr. Seema Arora, past BOT Chair of AAPI, Dr. Raghu Lolabhattu, vice chair of AAPI BOT, Dr. Gautam Samadder, past president of AAPI, Dr. Sreeni Gangasani, Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, Dr. Raj Bhayani, and Dr. Joseph Chalil. Dr. Sampat Shivangi, Chair of AAPI's Legislative Chair joined the meeting through a message of felicitation sent to the media and AAPI leadership.

Indian-Origin Manpreet Monica Singh Becomes First Female Sikh Judge In US

There are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs in the US, with 20,000 Sikhs living in the Houston area

(SAI Bureau) Houston: Indian-origin Manpreet Monica Singh has been sworn in as a Harris county judge, becoming the first female Sikh judge in the US. Ms Singh was born and raised in Houston and now lives in Bellaire with her husband and two children. She was sworn in as a judge of the Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4 in Texas on Friday. Ms Singh's father immigrated to the US in the early 1970s. A trial lawyer for 20 years, she has been involved in numerous civil rights organizations at the local, state, and national levels.

"It means a lot to me because I represent H-town (a



nickname of Houston) the oath ceremony. Indian-judge, presided over the ceremony, which took place in a packed courtroom.

"It's a really big moment for the Sikh community," Mr Sandill said.

"When they see someone of color, someone a little different, they know that possibility is available to them. Manpreet is not only an ambassador for Sikhs, but she's an ambassador for all women of colour," he said. There are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs in the US, with 20,000 Sikhs living in the Houston area. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said: "It was a proud day for the Sikh Community, but also a proud day for all people of Colour who see the Diversity of the City of Houston in the Diversity of the Court."

Germany is looking to fill two million jobs



(SAI Bureau) In Germany, there are an estimated two million unfilled jobs across the country and businesses are struggling to fill these posts owing to the acute labour shortage. Businesses claim 'record figure' in vacancies caused a massive loss in potential value creation. And, late last year Labor Minister Hubertus Heil also admitted, "For many companies, the search for skilled workers is already an existential issue." Labour shortage has been a persistent problem in Germany. Over the last few years, sectors including industry, hospitality, health and construction have been seeing a major labour shortage primarily due to an aging population. However, the problem became acute due to the Covid pandemic. Skilled labour is particularly sought after, while 58% of companies in the industrial sector report a lack of manpower. Apart from that, two-

thirds of companies in two sectors - machine tools (67%) and the automobile industry (65%) - have also reported problems finding staff.

Achim Dercks, president of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), said in a press conference that the vacancies "resulted in a loss of 100 billion euros (\$108 billion) in potential value creation".

Easier recruitment policy needed foreign workers

To address this problem, DIHK pointed out that labour laws in the country need to be fixed, including easier recruitment of foreign workers, a reduction of bureaucracy, greater participation of older people in the labour market and better work-life balance to attract and retain employees.

"The energy crisis and supply chain problems are not the only risk factors for deindustrialisation

for Germany. Recruitment problems as well (are a factor)," Dercks to thenews agency AFP. The DIHK called for "facilitating labour-based immigration" for non-Europeans, particularly Ukrainians, who have recently arrived in Germany. The German

government, which in September estimated the shortage of skilled workers to be approximately 240,000, has laid out a plan to reform visa policies to attract foreign labour. In November, Germany's governing coalition agreed to pursue a points-based

system inspired by the model in place in Canada. As per the government, the country would need seven million skilled workers by 2035, while experts cite that there is a need for welcoming an extra 400,000 skilled immigrants a year.

Delay in business visa issuance discussed with US, says Piyush Goyal

(SAI Bureau) India discussed with the US the inordinate delays in issuance of business visas to the people from India, and there has been a good resonance of it by the Americans, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said India discussed with the US the inordinate delays in issuance of business visas to the people from India, and there has been a good resonance of it by the Americans, visiting Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush



Goyal said Wednesday. "We found very good resonance to our request that issuance of business visas which is taking a long time back home in India is an area which needs to be expedited so that business persons interested on both sides -- the US businesses and Indian businesses -- need to have faster processing of business reasons, so that trade and investment and business does not suffer," Goyal told reporters at the

conclusion of India-US Trade Policy Forum meeting that he co-chaired with the US Trade Representative Katherine Tai. India, Goyal said, has made the request to the US that they may speed up the issuance of regular business visas when people come in for short trips to pursue their trade and business interests. "We are delighted that the movement of professional and skilled workers, students, investors, business travellers, all are expanding between the

two countries. That has helped increase our bilateral relations," he noted. "We are grateful that the US was able to process the student visas on an expedited basis so that in the post COVID-19 scenario, our students could come to the US to pursue their studies in the fall of 2022 semester. We are now requesting them to see how we can resolve the movement of business persons on short term stays to the US," Goyal said.

Trump Organization fined maximum \$1.6 million for tax fraud

(News Agency) A Manhattan judge ordered former president Donald Trump's family business to pay \$1.6 million in fines Friday — the maximum allowable for the Trump Organization's conviction on 17 counts of fraud last month. Judge Juan Merchan imposed fines on two Trump Org subsidiaries — The Trump Corporation, fined \$810,000, and The Trump Payroll Corp., fined \$800,000. The fine is the maximum penalty for the convictions last month allowable under the law. The companies' conduct "can only be described as egregious," Assistant District Attorney Joshua Steinglass said.



He acknowledged a fine of under \$2 million "may have limited impact on a multibillion corporation," but argued "this court should nonetheless impose such fines." "To avoid detection, they simply falsified the records," he said of Trump Org execs. "A number of these actions were implicitly sanctioned from the top down." Prosecutors argued at trial that for 15 years, the Trump Org helped top execs dodge income taxes on off-book benefits including rent, high-end cars and private school tuition. Jurors heard from Trump Org CFO Allen Weisselberg, who took the stand in

the fall as part of a plea deal over his own tax woes. He admitted to accepting over \$1.7 million in "off the books" compensation from the company in order to avoid taxes — including a rent-free Manhattan apartment — and pleaded guilty to 15 tax evasion felonies. Attorneys for the Trump Org unsuccessfully argued that Weisselberg acted alone in his tax-skipping scheme. The former CFO was sentenced to five months in Rikers on Tuesday. Defense attorney Susan Necheles said the former president's companies will be appealing the conviction. "The DA, as usual, or

again, does not understand the tax law," she said. "And that was part of what was wrong in this case." In its own comment, the Trump Org called Weisselberg "a victim" — and slammed prosecutors. "He was threatened, intimidated and terrorized," the statement said. "He was given a choice of pleading guilty and serving the rest of his life in jail — all of this over a corporate car and standard employee benefits." The statement added both Weisselberg and the former president were targeted by "politically motivated prosecutors" on a "never ending witch-

hunt." The company asked for 30 days to pay the fine; the judge ordered it to pay in 14 days.

The company's fine will be barely a dent in the bottom line for an enterprise with a global portfolio of golf courses, hotels and development deals. It could face more trouble outside of court due to the reputational damage, such as difficulty finding new deals and business partners. The Trump Organization's conviction and sentencing don't end Trump's battle with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who has said a related investigation of Trump that began under his predecessor, Cyrus Vance Jr., is ongoing with a newly hired prosecutor. At the same time, New York Attorney General Letitia James is suing Trump and the Trump Organization, alleging they misled banks and others about the value of its many assets, a practice slammed as the "art of the steal." James is asking a court to ban Trump and his three eldest children from running any New York-based company and is seeking to fine them at least \$250 million. A judge has set an October trial date. As a preliminary measure, he appointed a monitor for the company while the case is pending.

Drug-addled Hunter Biden lived at Delaware home where classified docs were kept

(News Agency) WASHINGTON — Disgraced first son Hunter Biden lived off and on at the Delaware home where classified documents from Joe Biden's time as vice president were found last month — giving him unrestricted access to America's secrets while he was addicted to drugs, hammering out shady foreign business deals and under federal investigation. The now-52-year-old began listing the Wilmington home as his address following his 2017 divorce from ex-wife Kathleen Buhle — even falsely claiming he owned the property on a July 2018 background check form as part of a rental application.

Hunter also listed the home as the billing address for his personal credit card and Apple account in 2018 and 2019, respectively, Fox News Digital reported Friday after reviewing emails from his abandoned laptop.

During the same period, the now-first

son was in the grip of a crack cocaine addiction costing thousands of dollars. At one point in August 2018, Hunter was recorded begging his sister-in-law-turned-lover, Hallie Biden, to let him use his credit card points to pay for a stay in rehab. Another former girlfriend of Hunter's, Zoe Kestan, testified to a federal grand jury in February of last year that the couple stayed for a

month in 2018 at the notorious Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles, where — the younger Biden wrote in his 2021 memoir — he "learned how to cook crack" before being "blacklisted" from the property over complaints tied to his drug use.

Hunter also frequented prostitutes

during this time, dropping more than \$30,000 on sex workers between November 2018 and March 2019 alone — making him a possible target for

blackmail.

On Thursday, President Biden confirmed that sensitive papers had been found in the locked garage of the home, where he also keeps his vintage 1967 Corvette



Stingray.

My Corvette is in a locked garage, OK? So it's not like they're sitting out on the street," the defensive president told reporters when asked about the discovery. On Monday, the White House disclosed an initial batch of classified documents had been uncovered on Nov.

2 by the president's personal lawyers while clearing Biden's former office at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement in Washington.

It's unclear whether the documents found in Wilmington on Dec. 20 were shipped directly to Biden's home upon his leaving the vice presidency in January 2017 or if they were initially stored elsewhere rather than given to the National Archives as required by federal law. On May 13, 2017, weeks after Hunter's divorce was finalized, the now-first son was looped in on an email from business partner James Gilliar about a venture with Chinese state-backed energy firm CEFC China Energy. Gilliar's email said that he, Hunter, and two other business partners would get 20% shares in the new business, with 10% going to Hunter's uncle James Biden and the remaining 10% "held by H for the big guy."

Preliminary Budget Address

(By New York City Mayor Eric Adams)

Every year, the Mayor presents clean streets.

a budget to the people of New York City. This budget is about much more than what we are spending and what we are spending it on. It is a statement of values and a declaration of purpose: Creating a safer, more prosperous and equitable city for all.

This is the city that our responsible and focused Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget continues to make possible.

Since Day One, fiscal discipline has been the hallmark of this administration.

We are focused on governing efficiently and getting results.

Over the past year, we have made our city safer and continued our economic recovery. We have funded and will continue to support programs that benefit everyday New Yorkers — including public safety, affordable housing, and

It can be tempting to add a bunch of new spending, and certainly there are many who will call for us to spend beyond our means. But we can't put the future of our city at risk by overextending ourselves today. It will just force deeper cuts and greater pain down the line.

With lower tax revenues, rising health care costs, and the continuing crisis of asylum seekers being bused into New York City, we must proceed with caution and clarity.

And thanks to strong fiscal management, we were able to save \$3 billion over this fiscal year and the next. And we accomplished this without laying off a single employee or reducing services, especially when it comes to the NYPD and public safety. I am proud that, despite the many challenges I've mentioned, our

budget protects funding for the transformative programs we've rolled out over the past year, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, which directly benefits working families, the largest summer jobs program in City history, and violence prevention programs for communities most affected by the epidemic of gun violence.

And we're not waiting any longer to invest in the housing our city needs, starting in Willets Point, where we will transform the neighborhood with thousands of units of affordable housing and a world-class soccer stadium. In addition, we have continued to invest in our students and schools. This includes more resources for students with disabilities, literacy and dyslexia screenings, summer enrichment, healthy food, career pathways, and the

gifted and talented programs.

Even with federal stimulus money running out, we've kept per student funding at a higher level than before the pandemic, adding an additional \$80 million to that funding pool for Fiscal Year 2024. This keeps the total at \$160 million for another academic year. We were also able to increase the capital funding our city uses to build and maintain the infrastructure we all rely on, including affordable housing, health care facilities, parks and other public spaces. And as every New Yorker knows, it's important to be prepared for change. Whether it's new labor contracts, asylum seeker costs, or the next unexpected event—the bills will come due. That's why this Preliminary Budget maintains reserves at a record \$8.3 billion, an amount that will allow us to respond



effectively to any unforeseen events. Our disciplined and efficient budget keeps us safe and allows us to continue to provide the essential services New Yorkers rely on. This is just the beginning of a process, and we look forward to working with our communities and our Council colleagues on the final budget. There may be those who say that we should do things differently, that we should extend ourselves further, save less and spend more. But as mayor, the buck stops with me. It is my responsibility to keep our city strong and resilient, prepared for whatever lies ahead.

Resort company announces plans for multi-billion dollar casino on Long Island

(News Agency) NASSAU COUNTY, Long Island (WABC) -- The Las Vegas Sands announced plans Thursday to pursue the development of a multi-billion dollar casino and entertainment project on Long Island. The company has agreed to purchase the long-term lease of the

Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. It would allow the company to control about 80 acres in Nassau County. New York State opened up the application process for three downstate facilities with gaming



licenses. The casino would only be 10% of the project, according to developers. The casino development would include hotels, restaurants, a performance venue and convention space. It would also help provide thousands of union jobs both in construction and operations.

"We're gonna talk to the local academic institutions about training people, so that when they come in, it won't just be jobs, it will be the beginning of careers," said former New York Gov. David Paterson who helped pitch the proposal. The immediate result would be 12,000 construction jobs and 5,000 more in entertainment, but some local groups would prefer a different direction. "We have Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center here,

this is not the place for a casino," said Pearl Jacobs with Nostrand Gardens Civic Association. The Nassau County Executive says if the revenue is right and the community support is there, that he would be open-minded. "I think it would be governmental

malpractice not to listen," Bruce Blakeman said. The deal must still meet state approval. "Our company's track record of driving significant economic benefits to the communities in which

we operate and the meaningful relationships and partnerships we have created in each of those communities gives us a unique perspective on what it takes to develop transformative tourism destinations that positively impact the local community. Based on that experience, we strongly believe Long Island can be home to one of the region's great entertainment and hospitality developments" said CEO Robert G. Goldstein. "Our announcement today is only the first part of this journey. Our ability to put forward a compelling and competitive proposal will only succeed if we engage with the Long Island community and, in collaboration, develop a proposal that reflects the input of all those involved."

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SGPC, Akal Takht slam Army plan to get ballistic helmets for Sikh jawans-‘violates maryada’

Army plans to buy helmets for Sikh troopers under emergency procurement via fast track mode. Both SGPC, Akal Takht assert Sikhs will not tolerate attempt to suppress their identity.



operate between minus 20 degrees Celsius to 45 degree Celsius.

In a statement issued at Amritsar, Dharmi said the decision to implement a special helmet for Sikhs will not only “destroy the unique Sikh identity” but also violate the Sikh Maryada (code of conduct).

He said the turban is not merely a cloth, but it is also a symbol of Sikh identity besides having spiritual and temporal significance. “The commitment of Sikhs to the turban also reflects Sikh pride and adherence to the Guru’s command,” said Dharmi.

Ordering a Sikh soldier to take off his turban and wear a helmet just because it offers better protection to his head, reflects the ignorance of the Sikh’s psyche and a Sikh’s attachment to the turban, the SGPC president said.

The decision of forcing Sikh soldiers to wear helmets is

hurtful to the religious sentiments of the community, he added.

In his letter to the Defence Minister, Dharmi gave the examples of turbaned Sikh soldiers fighting wars including the battles with Mughals, the Battle of Saragarhi, the World Wars, and the wars fought by the Indian Army in the past.

“Even in the Indian Army, the Sikh soldiers serving in Sikh Regiment, Sikh Light Infantry, and Punjab Regiment, are performing their duties diligently to protect the country,” he wrote. India is a multi-religious country and the people of different communities have the right to serve for the nation while practicing their religion, the SGPC president said. “People of different faiths working in armed and paramilitary forces reflect the diversity and colours of our nation.”

In a video message, Akal Takht jathedar (chief) Giani Harpreet

Singh has also objected to the move of the Army. “A similar attempt was made by the British for the Sikh soldiers during the Second World War, which was then rejected by the Sikhs. A turban is not (only) a cloth of 5-7 metres on the head of a Sikh, but a crown given by our gurus. It is a symbol of our unique identity,” Singh said. “Any attempt to replace the turban with a helmet will be seen as an attempt to suppress our identity. The Sikh panth (community) will not tolerate this.” Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal has also objected to the move. “Turban is a symbol of our religious identity and has been placed on our heads by our great Guru Sahiban. Decision of the GOI to make Sikh soldiers wearing helmets mandatory is an attack on our religious identity. I urge the Govt of India to reconsider this decision,” the former Punjab deputy chief minister tweeted.

(News Agency) Chandigarh: The Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) as well as the Akal Takht, the highest temporal body of the Sikhs, has objected to the Army’s plans to procure specialised ballistic helmets for Sikh soldiers. SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dharmi Thursday wrote to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh urging him to withdraw the decision on the grounds that it violated the Sikh code of conduct, besides “destroying” the unique identity

of Sikhs in the defence services. This was after the Army’s Directorate General of Combat Engineers sought 12,730 ballistic helmets — 8,911 large and 3,819 extra-large — for Sikh troops under emergency procurement. As per the tender issued by the Army, the helmet should have a centre bulge design. The bolt-free helmet is required to give equal protection throughout the covered area against 9x19mm bullet fired from a range of about 400 metres. It should be able to

AI Urination Case: Shankar Mishra Says Woman Peed on Herself; Victim Calls It 'Completely False'

(News Agency) Shankar Mishra, the man accused of “urinating” on an elderly woman co-passenger on a New York-Delhi Air India flight, told a Delhi court on Friday that he didn’t commit the act and accused the victim of relieving on herself as “she suffers from a problem that most kathak dancers have.”

Mishra’s lawyer said that the woman’s “seat was blocked”. “It wasn’t possible for him to walk from there,” he said. The woman urinated on herself due to a problem that many kathak dancers have, and “when she realised what happened, she didn’t know what happened”, the defence advocate told the court.

The victim’s legal team issued a strong rebuttal to claims made by Mishra’s counsel. “It has been brought to our knowledge that defamatory allegations are being made on part of the accused,” the victim’s lawyers said in a statement exclusively to CNN-News18. The lawyers termed the allegations as “completely false” and said the claims were defamatory, concocted and in sharp contrast to events.

HERE’S A TIMELINE OF THE INCIDENT

Shankar Mishra, allegedly urinated on a woman co-passenger in an inebriated

condition in the business class of the Air India flight from New York to Delhi on November 26 last year.

Delhi Police registered an FIR against him on January 4 on a complaint given by the woman to Air India. According to the FIR, shortly after lunch was served and the lights were switched off onboard AI 102 on November 26, 2022, the inebriated male passenger seated in business class seat 8A walked to the elderly woman’s seat, unzipped his pants and urinated on her.

The case was filed under sections 294 (obscene act in public place), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 510 (misconduct in public by a drunken person) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) as well as under Aircraft Rules.

According to the FIR, the accused begged the woman not to lodge a complaint against him, saying he was

a family man and did not wish his wife and child to be affected by the incident. Delhi Police said Mishra switched off his phone and began tracking him. A lookout circular was issued against Mishra to prevent him from fleeing the country.



with. It said Air India’s conduct appeared to be “unprofessional”.

Mishra’s lawyers on January 6 stated that Mishra paid the complainant Rs 15,000 as compensation and got the complainant’s belongings cleaned. However, WhatsApp exchanges between the woman’s daughter and Mishra showed the family had returned the money.

Mishra’s father, Shyam Mishra said that his son is “innocent and that he cannot do such a thing to a woman his mother’s

age”.

Details of the FIR revealed the woman had informed the crew that she did not want to see her tormentor’s face and was “stunned” when the offender was brought before her and he “started crying and profusely apologising”.

US financial services company Wells Fargo, Mishra’s employer, terminated him, saying the allegations were “deeply disturbing”.

Delhi Police arrested Mishra from Bengaluru on January 7 after he was traced through technical surveillance. Bengaluru police had assisted Delhi police in arresting Mishra from Sanjay Nagar area in the city. He was staying at his relative’s in Bengaluru. His last location was found in Bangalore on January 3 after which he switched off his mobile phone, police said, adding Mishra was using a taxi to travel to Bangalore.

During interrogation, Mishra told police that he does not remember anything about the incident since he was sleepy. It was only when other passengers on the flight told him about his act, he apologised to the victim, officials had said on January 7. Mishra also admitted that he was under the influence of alcohol.

UP: Amid cold wave, Lucknow hospitals witness 50-60 pc surge in patients with respiratory problems



has been a sharp rise in the number of respiratory issue patients due to the harsh weather, said the health experts. Respiratory medicine doctor and Chest specialist BN Singh said that due to the extremely cold weather, people may face respiratory issues like breathing problems due to which there is a spike in the number of patients at the hospitals.

“Various symptoms like shortness of breath, coughing and other breathing issues have been observed with the patients. People who are already struggling with severe or critical disease should take care of themselves and have lukewarm water,” said the Civil hospital doctor.

Director of Civil hospital, Anand Ojha said, “Drop in temperature

is the reason for a 50-60 per cent jump in the number of respiratory patients at the hospital. In this weather, people use angithi (coal brazier), heater and blower in their house which causes there is lack of oxygen. Hence resulting in breathing problems. People are advised to protect themselves from the cold weather and consume hot beverages.”

The doctor suggested that people should consume lukewarm water regularly and should wear warm clothes before stepping out of the house so that they are protected from fog and pollution.

Delhi on the other hand also reported a rise in respiratory and cardiac patients due to the weather. Speaking to ANI, Dr SP Byotra, HOD medicine and vice president of Sir Gangaram

hospital, “The risk of respiratory diseases increases in winter, because there is fog in winter as well as pollution, which causes many diseases in which diseases like cold, cough, diarrhoea, fever and pneumonia increase. Along with this, other infections also start happening. The number of patients with these diseases has also increased in Gangaram hospital. Dr Byotra said that these days 70 to 80 per cent of the cases belong to those patients who already have respiratory diseases like asthma.

According to Dr Arun Mohanty, Senior cardiologist of Sir Gangaram hospital, people suffering from heart disease need to take care of their diet in winter because they are at risk of a heart attack.

(News Agency) Lucknow : With the cold wave prevailing over North India, government hospitals in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow are witnessing a surge in patients with respiratory problems. The KGMU, Lohia and Civil

hospital in Lucknow reported a 50-60 per cent increase in patients with respiratory problems on Thursday.

While many people have been suffering from serious health issues like heart attacks, there

President Murmu condoles demise of veteran politician Sharad Yadav

(News Agency) New Delhi : President Droupadi Murmu on Friday condoled the passing away of socialist leader Sharad Yadav, describing him as an important national voice of the dispossessed in Parliament. Yadav, a veteran politician and former JD(U) chief, died on Thursday at a private hospital in Gurugram. He was 75. “Saddened to know about the passing away of former Union Minister Shri Sharad Yadav. A student leader of seventies who fought for democratic values, Sharad ji was an important national voice of the dispossessed in Parliament. My deepest condolences to his family and admirers,” the president tweeted.

UP: Man posing as CRPF deputy commandant dupes youth, arrested



(News Agency) Bulandshahr (UP), Jan 13 (PTI) A man has been arrested for allegedly duping a youth in the name of providing him a job in the Army by posing as a CRPF deputy commandant, police said on Friday. Bhupendra Singh, who was sacked from CRPF in 2019, was arrested from the Dibai area here on Thursday, Circle Officer

Bhaskar Kumar Mishra said. Posing as a deputy commandant of CRPF, Singh allegedly took Rs 5 lakh from a youth promising him a job in Army and threatened him when he demanded his money back, the police official said. PTI CORRABN NSD NSD This report is auto-generated from PTI news service. ThePrint holds no responsibility for its content.

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Joshimath Sinking: Town Sank 5.4 cm in 12 Days, Show Satellite Images As Concerns Mount Amid Demolitions

(News Agency) Joshimath town in Uttarakhand sank at a rapid pace of 5.4 cm in just 12 days due to triggering by a possible subsidence event on January 2, satellite images released by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) revealed. A study by ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) said the land subsidence in Joshimath was slow between April and November 2022 during which the town sank by up to 8.9 centimetres. However, between December 27, 2022, and January 8, 2023, the intensity of land subsidence increased and the town sank by 5.4 cm in these 12 days, the preliminary study stated. Pictures taken from the Cartosat-2S satellite revealed the rapid surface displacement was taking place within a span of a few days and the areal extent of subsidence has also increased. But it is confined to the central part of Joshimath town, it noted. The subsidence zone resembling a generic landslide shape tapered top and fanning out at base was located with its crown near Joshimath-Auli road at a height of 2,180 metres. Prominent landmarks in the subsidence zone were Army Helipad and Narsingh Temple.

JOSHIMATH LAND SUBSIDENCE PREDICTED IN 2021

Meanwhile, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar said that its researchers had predicted large-scale subsidence in Joshimath in 2021.

The study predicted between 7.5 and 10 centimetres (cm) displacement for buildings in Joshimath, enough to cause

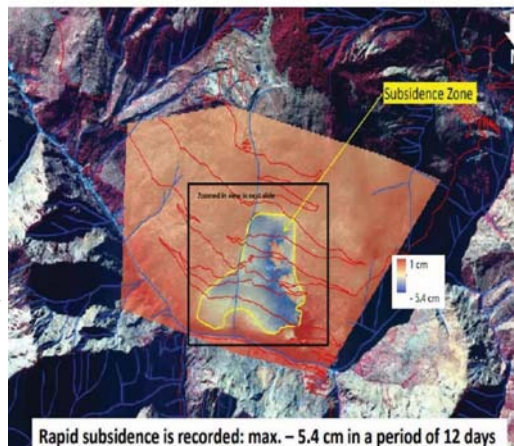
large-scale cracks in buildings. Remote sensing data using the Persistent Scatterer Synthetic Aperture Radar (PSInSAR) Interferometry technique was used to examine the sinking.

Explaining the process, Reet Kamal Tiwari, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, IIT-Ropar said, "a signal from an SAR satellite interacts with different targets and goes back to the sensor located in the satellite, based on which an image is created. In our study, Sentinel 1 SAR satellite data was used." Built-up structures such

as buildings act as persistent or permanent scatterers for active SAR sensors. Scatterers refers to a change in the direction of light because of its collision or interaction with another particle, including buildings. Changes in the images taken over a period of time help in accurate identification. "Since persistent scatterers are not usually expected to move, therefore, any movement, even on a scale of millimetres, arising from crustal deformations or seismic activity or even structural failure is captured precisely," Tiwari

said. Researchers had initially investigated the surface displacement of Tapovan, a tourist spot near Joshimath, as a result of the flash floods of February 2021 in Chamoli. It was observed Joshimath was recording a surface displacement of up to 8.5 centimetres which was on an upward trend.

Subsidence between 27 Dec 2022 and 8 Jan 2023



Joshimath, being only 15 kilometres away from Tapovan, was captured in the satellite images, enabling the scientists to go back in time up to January 2020 and look at all the data, this time to study the surface displacement of the town. Remote sensing data along with artificial intelligence (AI)

algorithms were then used to predict the land subsidence in Joshimath. The study in which 16 images received using the PSInSAR technique from January 2020 to April 2021 were ran through a machine learning model. The result predicted the displacement to go up to 8.5-10 centimetres in the near future, making the land subsidence enough to for cracks to develop in buildings. "Currently, the displacement figures may even be more and could be analysed in greater detail because every 12 days, more data is being added with successive satellite

passes and ground displacement happening steadily," said Tiwari.

25 FAMILIES EVACUATED, TALLY RISES TO 185

Twenty-five more families were evacuated from subsidence-hit houses, taking the total number of families affected by the land subsidence in the town to 185, according to the District Disaster Management Authority, Chamoli. The number of houses that have developed cracks stands at 760, out of which 147 have been marked unsafe, it said. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said the government's biggest priority is to provide quick relief to the affected people and evacuate them to safety. He chaired a cabinet meeting during which a slew of decisions, including a six-month waiver of water and electricity bills and a one-year moratorium on recovery of bank loans, were taken for the affected people. It also decided to conduct a study on the carrying capacity of all towns located in the hills. It also decided to increase from Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per month the amount being given by the state government to the affected families for payment of rent. In a relief, each affected family staying in temporary relief camps built in hotels and residential units will be paid Rs 950 per room per day for their accommodation besides Rs 450 per head per day for expenses. Besides, they will get Rs 80 per day to buy feed for big animals and Rs 45 for small ones. Interim assistance of Rs 1.5 lakh has been distributed to 42 affected families so far, Chamoli District Magistrate Himanshu Khurana said.

'Write-ups against PM Modi, Sexual Favours for Visa': Punjab Professor's Horrific Run-in with Pak Diplomats

(News Agency) Two Pakistan High Commission officials in Delhi have been accused by a woman from Punjab of harassing her mentally and asking for sexual favours in exchange for a quick visa to visit Pakistan. The woman, who is a senior professor at a state university in Punjab, wanted to visit Pakistan where she was invited as a speaker by a varsity. In an exclusive conversation with CNN-News18, the woman who did not wish to be named, revealed some shocking and bizarre details of her ordeal with two senior officials of the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi. In March 2022, the professor was invited by a university in Pakistan to deliver a lecture. "I wanted to visit the Gurudwara Sahib and the monuments there. I wanted to deliver a lecture there. I was told Imran Khan is facing a no-confidence motion and the government is not stable. I was told to come in May after Eid. I was at the security check near the gate. I met another official there who said I can easily get a visa. I told him that I was asked to come in May, but he said he would give me a visa. I asked him to process my application," the woman said. Everything looked normal till this point. However, the

meeting assuring an early approval of the visa soon drifted as the men allegedly sought favours from the woman. She was asked to wait for some time. "Half an hour later, I was taken to another room. I was asked general questions about my application. I am a government employee. I had taken an NOC

(no-objection certificate). I was told to wait for a visa officer, but the official continued the conversation. He asked me if I was married. I said I was not. He then asked me about my sex life. I found that uncomfortable. I thought he was a pervert and I ignored his questions. He then grabbed my hand. I stood up and told him to call the visa officer or let me go. He told me to wait," she said. The official continued unfazed and went on explaining to her about some Muslim sect

which allows a brief marriage just for sex,



said the woman. He asked her if extramarital relationships were allowed in her faith, and also boasted that he could marry as many women as he wanted. "I kept ignoring what he was saying. I just wanted my visa application processed. He held my hand again. I got up and told him I wanted to leave," said the woman. After these sexual overtures were rejected by the woman, the High Commission official started talking about Khalistan

and told her how "minorities are being oppressed in India". The woman said, "I told him we are happy in India; we are not oppressed. I told him we do not want Khalistan. He said Pakistan will form Khalistan before the Kashmir Resolution. He then got up and left. Then another official came. He asked me similar questions. His name is Tahir Abbas. The previous official's name is Asif. They said it was not right to live without a man. To this, I did not reply." One of the officials also insisted that the woman should change her sponsor's name for the visa and that he was willing to recommend her name for early approval of her visa application. "They told me that they could give me a visa, but they will have to sponsor me. I questioned them. I was being sponsored by a well-known Pakistani academic. They insisted that only their sponsorship could ensure a visa. I refused. They said the paperwork does not matter. I said I did not want to link my name to a Pakistani diplomat. They said it was not possible. After this, I left the embassy," she said.

Biden's 'Corvette' excuse won't cut it. Special counsel has a lot to do

Like a car, only better." That slogan for Corvette sold a lot of cars, but, until last week, it was never used with regard to classified documents. President Joe Biden responded to a question Thursday from Fox's Peter Doocy about the disclosure of additional classified documents found in his garage next to his corvette at his home in Delaware. The president responded "My Corvette is in a locked garage, OK? So, it's not like they're sitting out on the street."

Like his car, it sounded like classified documents are even better to house in a garage.

There is no question that Biden's 1967 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray is one hot car. Most of us would take the Stingray over an assortment of classified Ukraine briefing papers or memos. However, foreign intelligence may be more discerning. The fact is that the argument that you protected classified documents as carefully as your Corvette will not cut it with the criminal code. As the Justice Department stated in the Trump filings, their mishandling of classified material can be a criminal act. The Justice Department cited provisions included 18 U.S.C. 793 (Gathering or Transmitting Defense Information) and 18 U.S.C. 2071 (Concealment, Removal, or Mutilation Generally). Despite that history, many of experts assured the public, without any evidence but a couple leaks, that there was no criminal conduct involving Biden. Harvard Professor Laurence Tribe has previously run through the criminal code on what Donald Trump should be charged with, including witness tampering, obstruction of justice, criminal election violations, Logan Act violations, extortion, espionage, and treason by Trump or his family. Tribe even insisted that "without any doubt, beyond a reasonable doubt, beyond any doubt, and the crimes are obvious." Most recently, that included a charge of attempted murder of former Vice President Mike Pence. Yet, when Biden was accused of the same unlawful possession of classified information, Tribe needed no further evidence. He declared "One is criminal (Trump). And one is not criminal (Biden). Say it in plain English."

Mueller's top aide Andrew Weissmann added "It's not a crime to accidentally take and retain govt docs. If upon learning that you have docs, you return them, there is no crime." Clearly, the Justice Department did not agree. In order to appoint a special counsel, the Attorney General had to find "that criminal investigation of a person or matter is warranted." That does not mean that there is criminal conduct in this case, but the law prefers, at least for appearance's sake, to wait for a modicum of evidence before making final judgments.

Biden's counsel has insisted that this is merely "inadvertently misplaced." That statement is belied by a couple of facts. First, it seems that these documents were

likely moved more than once. Biden left office as vice president in 2017. He presumably took these documents at that time. However, they ended up in different places, including one document found separately from the "garage files" in the residence. Moreover, Biden had an office at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia after finishing his term in 2017. On February 8, 2018, the Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement says that it opened its doors in Washington, D.C. Biden could not have moved into the D.C. office until later that year. So those documents had to be moved from another location with moving trucks and personnel. They then sat in the office for years as other classified documents sat in his garage with his Corvette. At some point, some documents were sent to the office and some to the residence and garage. What explained this division if it was not based on what the then vice president was working on?

The "inadvertent" defense hardly fits neatly with these facts. Moreover, if Biden worked off any of these documents for his book (which dealt with some of the underlying subjects like Ukraine), the inadvertent defense is not only shattered but could be cited later as an effort to deceive the public. There are already concerns over the public statements from the president and his staff. The White House was already aware that there was not just one but three discoveries (the Penn Biden office, the garage, and the residence) of classified documents. However, the president indicated that only the Penn Biden office documents were at issue.

Finally, there is a question about the timeline. There seemed to be a general lack of urgency from the government despite finding documents classified at the high "Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information" (TS/SCI) level. However, it took two days for the archives to notify the Justice Department. It then took seven days after the discovery for the FBI to do a risk assessment. Most notably, after the discovery of classified material in two locations, it was private counsel who discovered the last classified document. That was December 20th. It is not clear if the FBI asked or was allowed to conduct its own search before December 20th given the repeated discoveries in different locations. While Garland finally made an appointment, he appears to have done so with one huge benefit to Biden. Unlike the sweeping mandate given the special counsel for Trump, the Biden mandate appears quite narrow. There was no reference to the alleged Biden influence peddling scandal, which long ago warranted a special counsel appointment. We may soon, however, see an extraordinary historical development where both leading candidates for the presidency will be campaigning with their own assigned special counsels.

In Its Haste To Hail Rahul Gandhi, Congress Must Not Ignore Bharat Jodo Yatra's Shortcomings

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is nearing its conclusion. Throughout the march, the Congress and its leaders have lavished praise on Rahul Gandhi while disregarding the numerous issues with the narratives he promoted. It is time for the Congress to question whether the concept and execution of the Bharat Jodo Yatra are identical. The Yatra was, without a doubt, one of the Congress party's first attempts to reach out to the masses in many years. Similarly, in a democracy as huge as India, there should be no problem with the Opposition attempting to construct and propagate an anti-BJP philosophy. However, it is essential to determine if Rahul Gandhi has anything new to say about the goals of the Congress.

Begin by recognising that the Yatra was about the Congress, its mass connection, revitalising the party, and offering an alternative narrative against the Bharatiya Janata Party. The reality, however, is that the Congress made the Yatra about Rahul Gandhi, his worldview, his economic knowledge, and his determination to unite all anti-BJP forces to oppose the ruling government. The ideology being preached by him during the march is also neither revolutionary nor fresh. The Bharat Jodo Yatra can be viewed as a one-of-a-kind attempt by the Congress, but it also demonstrates that Rahul Gandhi's Left-liberal leanings are now an intrinsic part of the party. During the Yatra, for instance, Rahul Gandhi hosted a number of renowned individuals, including primarily elites, left-liberal thinkers, ideologues, intellectuals and activists, among others. There is little doubt that the selection of guests is a prerogative of the organisation, but the projection of the Congress suggests that the party is attempting to send a message through these renowned individuals. While

it would be incorrect to imply that individuals such as Raghuram Rajan are partisan, the Congress cannot claim that their guests are inclusive.

The problem with these individuals and their views is that they consistently desire the status quo. If the Congress is interested in challenging the status quo and developing a fresh strategy to challenge the BJP, it should have abandoned the left-liberal narrative. The world today is questioning whether this ideology is inclusive or not. The Congress must also concur that the party requires a much more inclusive worldview. A few days ago, for instance, senior Congress leader AK Antony stated that it was necessary to engage the majority community and bring them along. The mere mention of this fact demonstrates that Rahul Gandhi's idea is poorly conceived. People's understanding of the comprehensive approach of the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the narrative that Rahul Gandhi wishes to promote is now largely complete. However, the time has come for the Congress to make the situation more realistic, where party members will discuss elections and electoral politics. The day will never arrive if the party is entirely diverted into a long-term plan to revitalise India's politics in order to celebrate Rahul's efforts. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss genuine political strategy. The Congress asserts that it is opposed to hatred, and Rahul asserts that his ideology is based on "mohabbat." Will the Congress now reach out to those who voted for the BJP and inform them that they voted for hatred? If this occurs, it will also convey a message of disdain. It is admirable to stand against hatred or divisiveness, but it could be politically risky to use moral or social superiority to demonise the opponent's voters as hate sympathisers.



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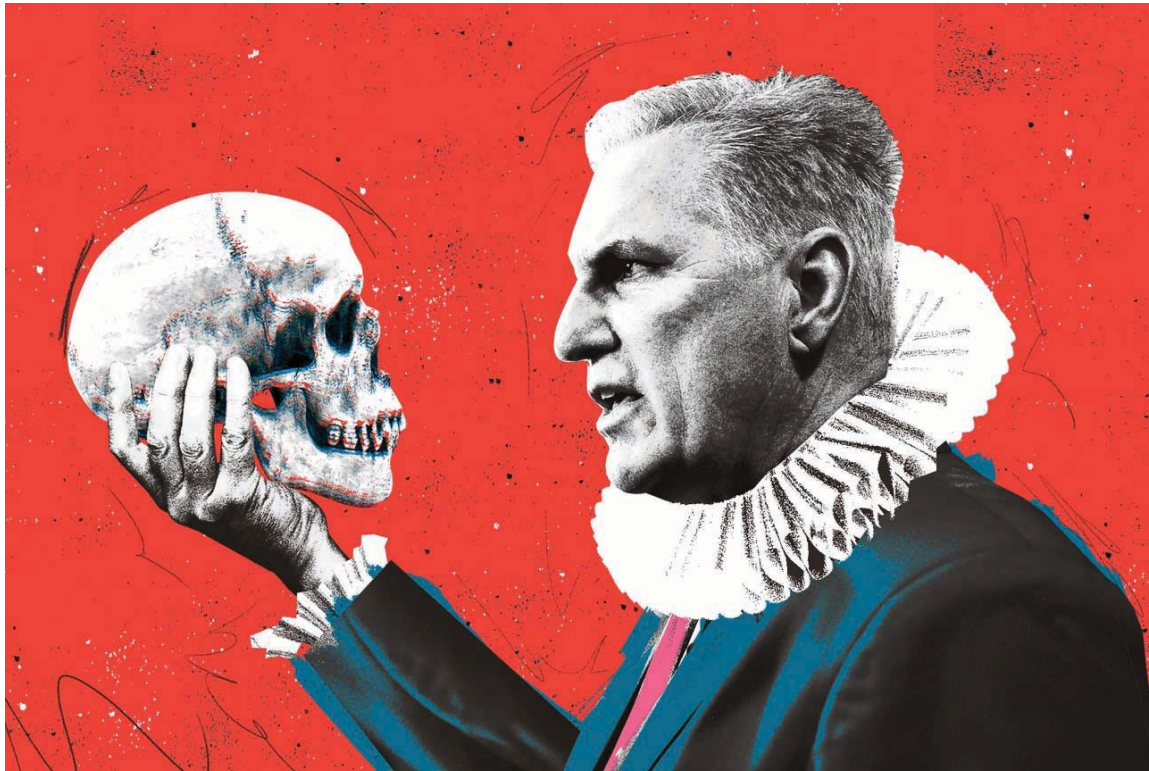
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The Shakespearean Tragedy of Kevin McCarthy, Prince of Washington

Warring factions, a man possessed by naked ambition, a tragic fall from grace. Where have we seen this play before?

To be or not to be Speaker of the House. To be it today, or tomorrow night, or next week, or not at all. That was doubtless the question gnawing at Kevin McCarthy's mind this week as the Republican Party he worked so hard to woo denied him the speaker's chair he believed he'd earned again and again and again. For eight terms, he'd waited, dutifully crafting a script that would allow him to seize power over the lower chamber, only for a rebellious band of Republicans to conveniently forget the lines he'd asked them to memorize. The performance turned chaotic, humiliating, positively Elizabethan. And that was just Act One.

So often in the universe of official Washington's backroom deals and slippery allegiances, fair is foul, and foul is fair. But the intraparty drama that unfolded here this week was near without precedent in modern history: A speaker election had not stretched on for this many ballots since 1859, when the nation careened into a civil war. To make sense of the nonsensical, Washington's chattering class — not to mention the thousands of Americans who turned to C-SPAN to follow the tragedy on the Hill — found themselves falling back on William Shakespeare's timeless works. "If I were McCarthy," tweeted Robin Young, the co-host of NPR's "Here and Now," "I'd check my tea for hemlock," a reference to the poisonous herb used to make the witch's brew that sets in motion Macbeth's tragic downfall. Added Ruth Marcus of the Washington Post: "Macbeth must kill and keep killing to slake his ambition. McCarthy must concede and concede even more to slake his own." Like the Scottish protagonist, McCarthy's preferred method of consolidating power was to keep the characters in his caucus happy. He did that by bowing to the pressures of its most boisterous members, even if their demands weren't exactly in the best interest of the party — or the country. Other Shakespearean parallels abound. Although Young and Marcus opted for Macbeth, it was also hard not to think of Julius Caesar, Shakespeare's recounting of the most famous betrayal of all time. We watched as the same 20 legislators (later down to six and then just one) stabbed a stoic McCarthy on the House floor, consumed by the



belief that a protracted, four-day vote was the only possible way to prevent the 57-year-old GOP leader from becoming a tyrant. We wondered whether a trusted right-hand man like Steve Scalise would suddenly provide a made-for-theater "et tu, Brute?" moment, announcing his own bid for the speakership. (Jim Jordan of Ohio did sing McCarthy's praises as he nominated him for speaker on the second ballot, only to become a contender for the gavel when Matt Gaetz nominated him in short order.) Then there was the comic relief — much like the tension breaker in Julius Caesar — of Democrats bringing out the popcorn machine as the hours and days yawned

on. As they lugged popcorn bags through the halls of Congress, they reminded the audience of that play's punny cobbler, that "mender of bad soles."

It may be an exercise in futility to attempt to find a one-to-one comparison between real life and the page. No one Shakespearean play can best capture the bedlam of this week. There is a bit of the Bard in all of it. Shakespeare's works may be most instructive because of his tragic heroes, figures possessed by naked ambition who, by the final act, have fallen from grace in more ways than one. Is McCarthy King Lear, who trusted the empty words of those who quickly turned their backs on

him, eventually leading to his untimely and lonely demise? Is he instead Hamlet, staring into the eyes of a skull at arm's length, trying to avenge the ghost of Donald Trump? Or do we return to Macbeth, the ambitious and charismatic court insider who couldn't see the daggers in men's smiles? Amid all these theatrics, it's easy to forget that offstage, the House's failure to elect a leader has real-life consequences. On it depends the swearing in of all 435 members of the House (without whom there is indeed no House of Representatives), the sharing of intelligence information between the White House and the speaker (who'd become president if Joe

Biden and Kamala Harris were incapacitated) and the steady flow of casework that Hill staffers manage for everyday constituents. No bills passed by the local D.C. Council can become law. "The rest of the world is looking" to see if we can "get our act together," Biden told reporters, calling the saga "embarrassing." But if Shakespeare's hard-to-decipher iambic pentameter has endured for more than 400 years, it's also because his words reckon with the one constant that has bedeviled humanity at every turn of history: power. And it was power that McCarthy wanted and power that a tenth of the House GOP caucus wanted to wrest from him. The 20 mutineers, who included some members of the Tea Party movement along with obstreperous newcomers, put forth very little discussion of policy issues, homing in on securing procedural maneuvers instead. Among the reported concessions: the rabble-rousers could trigger a no-confidence vote to dethrone McCarthy with the say-so of only one Republican; debt-ceiling hikes would have to be paired with austerity measures; and arch-conservatives would be guaranteed three seats on the powerful House Rules Committee. The compromises mean that McCarthy will begin his term having drunk from a poisoned chalice.

(Contd. on page 24)

Constitution bench decided legality of demonetisation

A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered its judgment on a bunch of petitions that challenged the validity of the Modi government's November 2016 decision to demonetise Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes. The top court upheld the government's decision and dismissed the petitions.

After the winter vacation, one of the constitution benches of the Supreme Court of India has delivered the verdict dealing with demonetisation pending since 2016. This verdict from the first working day of the new year is sufficient to initiate one of the hottest debates in such a cold winter due to the opposite views of the bench. Four of the five judges of the bench have endorsed demonetisation. However, the fifth judge of the quorum expressed her dissent. Here, Justice Nagarathna clearly expressed that demonetisation was a well-intentioned proposal of the central government while expressing her dissenting view.

(Contd. on page 27)



Is Varun Gandhi preparing to quit BJP and join Congress?

Varun, the Nehru-Gandhi scion in BJP, has been engaged in veiled salvos at his own party and Modi government policies, leading to a buzz about him joining the Congress soon.



ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its top leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And sure enough, it is no mean task to say in as many words that he was not against Nehru or the Congress at a time when Jawahar Lal Nehru was the biggest eyesore for the 'sangh parivar' that leaves no stone unturned to systematically condemn and bulldoze the very fundamentals of Nehruvian ethos and philosophy.

The first signs of Varun's dissent came to the fore after his mother Maneka Gandhi was not re-inducted into the Narendra Modi cabinet in 2019, when he was also denied his due. After all, there was a time when he was considered a probable candidate for the coveted position of Uttar Pradesh's chief minister before Yogi Adityanath suddenly appeared on the scene to don that mantle.

Since then, Varun has not missed a single opportunity to raise questions on vital issues of BJP's governance. His lead articles in prominent national

dailies candidly highlighted the pitfalls and failures of the Modi government in key areas like the country's rural economy, unemployment, education and health.

Yet, the criticism was never as sharp or so pointed as it has become now. Therefore, there is reason to believe that he was, at long last, making up his mind to march out of the party his mother had cultivated and been associated with after she walked out of what was better known as India's first political family, in which she was married to Sanjay Gandhi, who met an untimely end in an air crash in 1980. Stories of Maneka's belligerence against her mother-in-law Indira Gandhi, one of India's legendary prime ministers, hit the headlines in the years that followed. It was, therefore, quite natural for Varun, who grew up outside the shadow of the traditional Gandhi umbrella, to get ushered into the BJP and its policies. And he sprang no surprise when at one point in time he was accused of making

"hate" speeches, only to be later given a clean chit by the court. If his remarks then had evoked shock and dismay, his latest speech, which is already going viral, has not surprised many. Rather, it has given political analysts to believe that Varun now considers it time to take a final call on his political future. While there would be no dearth of political parties offering him a prominent place, it was unlikely that he could continue to cast a national profile for himself in any party other than the Congress. The reason is not far too sought. After all, parties, where he could evidently be welcomed with open arms, are Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC), or for that matter, Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP). And needless to say that each of these was a regional political outfit, which stands to gain with Varun's profile of an articulate and aggressive leader, bearing the 'Gandhi' tag.

(Contd. on page 24)

Nitish Kumar sparks row but what's behind India's population boom

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's comment blaming poor education levels among women has triggered controversy, with BJP lambasting him for his "indecent language". But why does India's population continue to surge?

"Had women been better educated or had they been aware, they would have known how to protect themselves from getting pregnant. Men are careless and as women are not properly educated, they are unable to put their foot down and stop the population growth," said Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during a public meeting in Vaishali on Saturday. "Mard log jis tarikey se roj-roj karte hi rehta hai, usko dhyaan mein hi nahin rehta ki bachcha paida nahin karana hai (Men keep doing it every day without realising population has to be controlled)," the CM said. His comment has sparked controversy and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lambasted him for his "indecent language". "The indecent words used by Chief Minister Mr Nitish Kumar are the height of insensitivity. By using such words, he is tarnishing the dignity of the post of Chief Minister," tweeted Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Legislative Council, Samrat Chaudhary.

BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand also hit out at Nitish while asking him to

take back his "sexist remark".

STATISTICS SPEAK

Amid the raging row, let us see what the statistics say. A total of 61% of girls are attending school in Bihar but only 28.8% of women with 10 years of schooling, National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), conducted from 2019-21, indicated. The literacy rate among women 15-49 years was 55% in Bihar, compared to 76.4% nationally, according to the survey. It corresponds to 71.5% for women and 84.4% for men in India.

There are five states which have failed to achieve a replacement-level fertility rate of 2.1 -- the rate at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, revealed the survey. These five states are Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.26) and Manipur (2.17).

India has recently made significant progress in population control measures with the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), an average number of children per woman, further declining from 2.2

to 2 at the national level between NFHS-4 and 5, the survey added.

The TFR among women in rural areas has declined from 3.7 in 1992-93 to 2.1 in 2019-21. The corresponding decline among women in urban areas was from 2.7 to 1.6, the study said. There are a host of factors that are spurring



the 21 NFHS survey. Similarly, the under-five mortality rate declined from 109 deaths per 1,000 live births to 42 deaths per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate plummeted by 56 per cent over a period of 28 years, according to the survey. The infant mortality rate is directly related to the age of women at marriage, which has

increased over the years.

The death rate has also come down. In 2022, the death rate for India was 9.1 per 1,000 people. It was 16.3 per 1,000 people in 1973 and over 27 per 1,000 people in 1951. According to the NFHS-5 survey, the TFR varies from 1.4 children per woman among Buddhists/Neo-Buddhists to 2.4 children per woman among Muslims. The TFR among the Hindu community stands at 1.94. There are certain sections of the population which refuse to use family planning methods. Religious beliefs shape their approach towards modern family planning measures. There is a lack of awareness or inadequate knowledge about family planning as well as poverty that drives the population graph.

DELAYED CENSUS

The last population Census of India was conducted during February 9-28, 2011 with a revisional round during March 1-5, 2011. In 2021, the next Census was due, but it was deferred due because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(Contd. on page 24)

The Party of One Becomes the Party of None

The GOP is shrugging off its subservience to Trump, but with no one left to fill the void.

"This is not a Republican Party anymore. It's a cult," former Republican Sen. Alan Simpson said last year. He was far from alone. Ever since Donald Trump blustered his way through the 2016 Republican primary and general election — trampling over long-cherished conservative principles, viciously mocking any less-than-perfectly-loyal party members and boasting he could commit murder in broad daylight without losing supporters — the Cult of Trump image has sullied the Grand Old Party.

Yet, in the speaker fight that consumed the House this past week, some Trump supporters put down their cups of Kool-Aid. The embattled Rep. Kevin McCarthy was endorsed by Trump, yet McCarthy's loudest holdouts were Trump supporters. One of them, Rep. Lauren Boebert, audaciously and publicly admonished Trump on the House floor to "tell Kevin McCarthy that, 'Sir, you do not have the votes and it's time to withdraw.'" Rep. Matt Gaetz, on Fox News Thursday night, while professing his "love" for Trump, said the former president "is



wrong to the extent that he supports Kevin McCarthy," cheekily noting that "H.R. wasn't always his strong suit." Trump's Wednesday endorsement failed to immediately flip any of the 20 Republicans who had previously rejected McCarthy (one additional Republican voted "present" soon after the endorsement). But that's only the most recent exhortation from Trump that was ignored by congressional Republicans. Two weeks earlier, Trump instructed "every single Republican" to "vote no on the ludicrous, unacceptable \$1.7

trillion omnibus spending bill. It's a disaster for our country, and it also happens to be a disaster for the Republican Party, because they could stop it." Yet 18 Senate Republicans, including Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, gave the package a filibuster-proof supermajority, smoothing its path to the president's desk. (McCarthy and nearly all House Republicans opposed it, but McCarthy's Republican critics claimed he didn't fight it hard enough). In other words, Trump's appeals have been ignored by both center-right senators and far-right House

members.

McConnell is a card-carrying member of the Republican establishment and has been shrugging off Trump's criticisms over the last two years. Hardliners like Boebert and Gaetz, on the other hand, have long been close to Trump substantively and stylistically. If they are no longer under Trump's spell, then nobody in Congress is.

And why should they be? Trump's fearsome powers are no more. He had enough intra-party power in 2022 to engineer primary victories for most of his

preferred candidates, and defeat several House Republicans who voted for impeachment. Yet he couldn't dislodge the Republican governor and secretary of state of Georgia after (falsely) accusing them of abetting a rigged 2020 election. And his slate failed in the general election to win back the Senate for the GOP. Republican voters appeared to have noticed his diminished standing; over the course of the year, Trump lost significant ground to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2024 presidential primary polls.

The end of Trump's vise grip on the Republican Party should be a healthy development, except for one problem: Instead being a Party of One, they are presently a Party of None. No leaders. No shared principles. No consensus on policy objectives. A temporary period of leaderless soul-searching is not unusual or unhealthy for a party that lost a presidential election. Subsequent presidential primaries are a fine way to resolve internal debates, allowing the next standard bearer to chart the party's course. **(Contd. on page 24)**

How heavy, unplanned construction and complex geology is sinking Joshimath

So far, 678 houses in Joshimath have developed cracks, and 81 families have been temporarily shifted to safer locations

At least 678 houses in Joshimath have so far developed major and minor cracks on their walls, ceilings, or floors. The foundations of several houses are impacted too as the land on which the town is set, continues to sink. An overburdened, ill-planned town Located at an altitude of 6,107 feet, Joshimath, with a population of about 23,000, is a hill town in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. It is a gateway to places including the Badrinath shrine revered by the Hindus, the Sikh pilgrimage site of Hemkund Sahib, Valley of Flowers which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, villages along the Indo-China border like Niti and Mana, the international skiing destination Auli, and various trekking



locations. This has resulted in the construction of hotels and marketplace that can cater to the high footfall in the town. Additionally, after the 1962

India-China war, Joshimath became an important place with regards to national security, thus becoming a station for institutions like the Indian

Army. In October 2021, residents of the town's Gandhinagar and Sunil wards started noticing cracks in their houses. By mid-2022, cracks

also appeared in the Ravigram ward. In September 2022, the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) published a report that mainly blamed ill-planned construction in the town as an important reason behind land sinking. The report also pointed out that the inadequate drainage and wastewater disposal systems had exacerbated the problem. Geologist Yaspal Sundriyal from the Srinagar Garhwal-based Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna (HNB) Garhwal University said, "Since there is no system in place in Joshimath to manage wastewater, most buildings have soak pits through which wastewater enters the ground.

(Contd. on page 25)

AAP's growing challenge in Punjab: Graft within and revolt by bureaucrats

Two tainted ministers have been dropped from the AAP government's Cabinet in Punjab. And some state and central bureaucrats are protesting, forcing CM Bhagwant Mann to issue an ultimatum. What's going on?



department.

"We have found substantial proof of his (Singla) involvement in corruption. I do not care if the Opposition parties want to use this to hit out at us, saying a minister removed on corruption charges within two months. The point is that we will not tolerate anyone indulging in such malpractices. Our party national convenor has made it clear that corruption will not be tolerated," Mann had said in a video message then.

BUREAUCRATS ON WARPATH

The resignation of tainted Sarari comes at a time when a section of the state bureaucracy has taken on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government after corruption cases were registered against IAS and PCS officers by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB). Many state and central bureaucrats went on a five-day mass leave on Monday to protest against the crackdown against

their colleagues. They allege that VB has taken action against the officers without the state government's nod. They contend that under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, the state's permission is mandatory to prosecute civil service officers. On January 6, Narinder Singh Dhaliwal, secretary of the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), was arrested for allegedly taking bribes from transporters. An RTI activist, Satnam Dhawan, had filed a complaint against Dhaliwal for being involved in alleged corruption in the Ludhiana RTA office. Neelima Singh, then MD of Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation (PSIDC), has also been booked for allegedly approving the proposal to bifurcate an industrial plot. Seven PSIDC officials and former Industries and Commerce minister Sundar Shyam Arora

have also been arrested.

In a press statement, the PCS association said Dhaliwal had been "arrested illegally, wrongfully and arbitrarily and without due procedure on the basis of a mere statement of a private individual. Even in the case of IAS officer Neelima being booked by the VB, sanction under Section 17A was not taken". The association pointed out that a complaint against the illegality by the bureau will be submitted to the police complaint authority for taking action against them in both cases. However, top VB officials said that prior government permission to book the officers under Section 17-A was not required, as the case related to tampering of official files. According to a report, the VB had been seeking documents related to the PSIEC land transfer case, but there was some delay in handing over the documents to the bureau.

(Contd. on page 25)

Painful memories, controversies: What awaits Rahul Gandhi as Bharat Jodo Yatra enters Punjab

There is a buzz that instead of dwelling on the past, Rahul Gandhi may call on party colleague Navjot Singh Sidhu to signal a new beginning in the Punjab unit of the Congress

As Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra enters Punjab, the painful memories of the turbulent period of separatism, insurgency, Operation Blue Star damaging the Akal Takht, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and anti-Sikh riots stage a noisy comeback on the political theatre.

There is a buzz that instead of dwelling on the past, Rahul may call on party colleague and cricketer-cum-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, currently in Patiala Jail, in order to signal a new beginning in the Punjab unit of the Congress. The Congress in Punjab has been inactive, plagued by factionalism and inertia following a humiliating electoral defeat in the state polls in March, 2022. There is an Arab proverb which says that you should write the bad things that happen to you in the sand, so that they can be easily erased



from your memory. But in politics, the past keeps haunting. The moment Rahul's yatra entered Punjab, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was quick to ask the people of Punjab to boycott the yatra, while the Shiromani Akali Dal

asked Rahul to clarify his stand on Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984.

Would Rahul take the challenge or move ahead without dwelling much on the past? In recent years, Rahul and the Congress have always been forthcoming

when it comes to Punjab. In August 2018, Rahul travelled to London as the Congress president and told UK parliamentarians and local leaders about the 1984 Delhi anti-Sikh riots: "I have no confusion in my mind about

that. It was a tragedy; it was a painful experience. You say that the Congress party was involved in that. I don't agree with that. Certainly, there was violence, certainly there was tragedy."

Admitting the violence and tragedy during the four-day violence against Sikhs in Delhi between October 31 and November 3, 1984, Rahul, then the Congress's vice president, had also admitted in a televised interview in January 2014 that some Congressmen were involved in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. As prime minister, when Manmohan Singh rose in the Rajya Sabha on August 11, 2005 to tender an unqualified apology over the 1984 Sikh killings, he said he was not standing on any 'false prestige' and bowed his head in shame.

(Contd on punjab 27)

Ex-Trump Org. CFO Allen Weisselberg sentenced to 5 months in jail for tax fraud

The judge said Weisselberg could have faced more time in jail had he not taken a plea deal.

(News Agency) NEW YORK — Former Trump Organization executive Allen Weisselberg was sentenced to five months in jail and five years of probation in Manhattan state court Tuesday after pleading guilty to tax fraud scheme. He has also repaid around \$2 million in taxes he owed as part of the agreement. The punishment ends a three-month trial at which Weisselberg, once chief financial officer for the real estate firm founded by former President Donald Trump, became the star witness in a separate case against the Trump Org. Before Weisselberg was sentenced, his lawyer appealed to the judge for leniency, citing his client's age, his cooperation with prosecutors and the publicity around the trial. Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan, however, said were it not for the plea deal the 75-year-old had struck, he would have imposed a harsher punishment. "I believe that a stiffer sentence would be appropriate, having heard the evidence," Merchan said Tuesday, citing what he referred to as the greed behind Weisselberg's actions. Weisselberg, who



sat in court wearing a mask and a dark green North Face fleece, struck a deal in August with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg. The DA agreed to recommend a lower sentence in exchange for Weisselberg's testimony in the case against the Trump Org. And testify he did.

Over three days on the stand in November, the executive detailed some of the accounting sleights of hand that

allowed the Trump Org. to avoid taxes by paying its employees lower salaries and instead compensating them with luxury cars, free lodging and tuition for family members. At one point, Assistant District Attorney Joshua Steinglass invoked Trump himself, who ran the firm at the time but was not charged in the case. "Donald Trump is explicitly sanctioning tax fraud," he said during closing arguments. Last

month, a jury found the Trump Org. guilty on all 17 counts in the tax fraud case. The firm is facing up to \$1.6 million in fines and is set to be sentenced Friday. After the Tuesday's sentencing, Bragg touted the convictions in both cases, which he said exposed the inner workings of the Trump Org. "In Manhattan, you have to play by the rules no matter who you are or who you work for," he said in a statement. During Tuesday's proceedings, Weisselberg remained silent, only chiming in to say that his thoughts and feelings were expressed by his attorney, Nicholas A. Gravante Jr. Outside the courthouse, Gravante Jr. said that Weisselberg — who was taken into custody immediately following the sentencing — expressed remorse for the pain he has caused his family. "Mr. Weisselberg also regrets the harm his actions have caused to the Trump Organization and members of the Trump family," Gravante Jr. added. "He is grateful to them for their continued support throughout this difficult chapter of his life."

US Special Counsel To Probe Biden's Handling Of Classified Documents

Joe Biden said a "small number" of documents with classified markings had been found in storage areas and his library and that the Justice Department was notified immediately.

(News Agency) Washington: The US attorney general named an independent prosecutor Thursday to investigate President Joe Biden's handling of classified documents after a furor over secret papers found at his former office exploded with the discovery of a second batch. The new find -- like the first, from Biden's time as vice president -- was uncovered in the garage of his home in Wilmington, Delaware, where he often spends weekends, the White House said.

Attorney general Merrick Garland said Robert Hur, an appointee of Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, would be given the title of special counsel and empowered to examine whether the cache violated any law.

"I strongly believe that the normal processes of this department can handle all investigations with integrity," Garland, who runs the Justice Department, said. "But under the regulations, the extraordinary circumstances here require the appointment of a special counsel." The appointment came hours after the White House acknowledged the second batch of papers but did not address their contents -- supercharging a growing scandal over a first batch of documents found at a Washington think tank where Biden had an office.

The disclosures have prompted comparisons to the special counsel investigation of Trump's hoarding of hundreds of classified materials at his Florida beachfront home and his alleged obstruction of government efforts to get them back.

"I take classified documents and classified material seriously. We're cooperating fully (and) completely with the Justice Department's review," Biden told reporters during a separate address.

"As part of that process, my lawyers reviewed other places where documents from my time as vice president were stored, and they finished the review last night."

The president said a "small number" of documents with classified markings had been found in storage areas and his library and that the Justice Department was notified immediately.

Biden declined to take shouted questions from the press, but a White House lawyer said later the documents had been "inadvertently misplaced."

Biden had told reporters in Mexico City on Tuesday he was surprised to learn of the original find on November 2, saying he

did not know that any documents had been taken there.

But House Speaker Kevin McCarthy joined a number of Republican senators in calling for a congressional investigation or is a former assistant US attorney who worked in the DOJ from 2007 until 2014 and



returned to public service under Trump as the principal associate deputy attorney general. He promised a swift investigation and pledging to be "fair, impartial and dispassionate."

'Congress has to investigate' - The first cache of Biden documents was discovered a week before last year's midterm elections but only acknowledged by the White House on Monday, prompting accusations from Republicans of a cover-up. "I think Congress has to investigate this," newly installed Speaker McCarthy told reporters

at his first news conference.

"Here's an individual... that was so concerned about President Trump's documents. 'Now we find... a vice president keeping it for years out in the open in different locations.' Trump, who is facing multiple criminal and civil probes, took to his Truth Social platform to call for an immediate end to his investigation 'because I did everything right.' Legal analysts have pointed to major differences between the cases, particularly over the size of the huge hoard of documents Trump had stored at his residence after leaving the White House in 2021. The FBI carted away some 11,000 papers after serving a search warrant in August, and Trump could face obstruction of justice charges after spending months resisting efforts to recover his trove. The White House, in contrast, says it has been 'fully cooperating with the National Archives and the Department of Justice.' After the first batch of Biden documents was discovered at his former office at the Penn Biden Center think tank last November, lawyers turned them over to the National Archives, which handles all such materials, the White House counsel's office said. Lawyers for Biden then scoured possible locations for any other stray documents.

“I Was The Shadow, The Plan B”: Prince Harry Says He Was Born To Offer Spare Organs To Prince William

In his memoir ‘Spare’, Prince Harry explained that the concept of “heir” and “spare” had been apparent his entire life.



released on Tuesday. “I was the shadow, the support, the Plan B. I was brought into the world in case something happened to Willy,” he added, as per the Post.

Further, the Duke of Sussex said that he understood his role was to be a “diversion” and “distraction” from his brother or to provide, “if necessary, a spare part” to him. “Kidney perhaps. Blood transfusion. Speck of bone marrow,” he added in his memoir.

According to New Zealand Herald, Prince Harry explained that the concept of “heir” and “spare” had been apparent his entire life. He revealed that it was made “abundantly clear” to him from an early age that he was born in case something happened to his brother. The

prince also noted that his father, King Charles III, could never be on a plane with Prince William “because there must be no chance of the first and second in line to the throne being wiped out.” “But no one gave a damn whom I travelled with; the spare could always be spared,” he claimed.

In his memoir, the Prince also recalled an anecdote from when he was 20 years old, hearing a story about his father’s “supposed words” to his mother Princess Diana on the day he was born. King Charles allegedly said to his wife, “Wonderful! You have already given me an heir and a spare; I have done my job.”

Elsewhere in his book, the Duke of Sussex reportedly

claimed that the Prince and Princess of Wales, William and Kate Middleton, encouraged him to wear the Nazi fancy dress uniform that sparked outrage in 2005. The former royal even acknowledged having killed 25 people during his military service in Afghanistan. Further, Prince Harry admitted to using cocaine on several occasions as a teenager, saying he was “willing to try almost everything to alter the pre-established order”. He also wrote that his brother, Prince William, physically attacked him during an argument in 2019.

Meanwhile, the British royal family has maintained silence as painful details from the book and a round of pre-publication TV interviews have piled up.

(News Agency) Prince Harry has opened up about his childhood and his relationship with his brother Prince William in his tell-all autobiography ‘Spare’. Writing in his memoir, the Duke of Sussex revealed that he grew up knowing that he was

there to give his older brother, the current heir to the throne, an organ donation if he needed it, New York Post reported.

“Two years older than me, Willy was the Heir, whereas I was the Spare,” Prince Harry wrote in his book, which was officially

Ukraine Can Win War In 2023 With Long-Range Missiles From West: Report

Long-range missiles would allow Ukraine to target Russian arms depots deep inside Ukrainian territory controlled by Moscow but currently out of range of the weapons in Kyiv's arsenal

(News Agency) Kyiv: Ukraine can win the war this year if Western powers increase weapons supplies, particularly long-range missile systems, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhaylo Podolyak told AFP Wednesday. “Only missiles with a range of more than 100 kilometres (60 miles) will allow us to significantly accelerate the de-occupation of our territories,” he told AFP in an interview. This scenario would end the war by autumn at the

latest, he added.

Long-range missiles would allow Ukraine to target Russian arms depots deep inside Ukrainian territory controlled by Moscow but currently out of range of the weapons in Kyiv's arsenal.

The United States last year supplied Ukraine with long-range missile systems that have a range of around 80 kilometres that were credited with turning the tide of the conflict in Kyiv's favour on several

fronts. Kyiv has also recently received similar French systems but it is putting pressure on Washington to deliver US ATACMS missiles, which boast a range of around 300 kilometres.

These systems would allow Ukrainian forces to “destroy all Russian military infrastructure in occupied territories, including in Donbas” in east Ukraine and in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014, said



Mr Podolyak. “We will not attack Russia,” the senior advisor said. “We are waging an exclusively defensive war.” But without deliveries of large-scale Western heavy weapons, the war was likely to grind on for “decades”, he warned. Heavy tanks needed

Ukraine also needed armour, in particular heavy tanks, such as German Leopards and artillery, said Mr Podolyak. “France is already delivering light tanks to us. That’s very good. But we still want to get 250 to 300 to 350 heavy tanks,” he added. Kyiv's other priority needs are more 155-millimetre calibre shells, combat drones capable of carrying out deep attacks inside occupied territories and anti-aircraft systems -- including German Cheetah anti-aircraft armoured vehicles, said Mr

Podolyak. Europe and the United States may soon speed up deliveries because they understand these supplies are key to ending the war, he added. “Our partners have clearly understood today that the transfer of arms to Ukraine in sufficient quantities will make it possible to limit this war to the occupied territories,” Mr Podolyak added. New anti-aircraft defence systems, like US Patriots or the French Crotale will soon be able to neutralise the threat posed by Russian bombing campaigns against Ukrainian energy installations, he said. “We will be able to close our skies in the space of a month,” he said. Ukraine would soon be able to shoot down 95 percent of missiles fired by Russia, instead of 75 percent currently, he said.

US air travel returns to normal after disruption due to computer outage

(SAI Bureau) US air travel returned mostly to normal Thursday, a day after a computer system that sends safety information to pilots broke down and grounded traffic from coast to coast. By midafternoon on the East Coast, about 150 flights had been canceled and more than 3,700 delayed — much lower figures than on Wednesday, when more than 1,300 flights were scrubbed and 11,000 delayed. Attention turned to the federal agency where the technology failure apparently started hours before it inconvenienced more than 1 million travelers. The Federal Aviation Administration said a damaged database file appeared to have caused the outage in the safety-alert system. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg promised a thorough examination to avoid another major failure. “Our immediate focus is technical — understanding exactly

how this happened, why the redundancies and the backups that were build into the system were not able to prevent the level of disruption that we saw,” Buttigieg told reporters. Buttigieg said there was no indication that the outage was caused by a cyberattack but that officials would not rule that out until they know more. The FAA did not immediately respond to questions. The massive disruption was the latest black eye for the agency, which has traded blame with airlines over who has inconvenienced passengers more. Critics, including airline and tourism leaders, say agency technology is underfunded. “Investment is going to be required, no doubt,” American Airlines CEO Robert Isom told CNBC. “It’s going to be billions of dollars, and it’s not something that is done overnight.”

Crematoriums full, long queue on streets': Satellite images show spike in Covid deaths in China

As China grapples with a sudden surge in Covid-19 cases, satellite images show crowds outside crematoriums after a huge number of deaths were reported

(SAI Bureau) The recent surge in Covid infections in China is faster than ever. The number of deaths at China's crematoriums and funeral homes accounts for a significant portion of global deaths from coronavirus.

Although Chinese authorities have censored most videos of mourners and long queues of crematoriums from social media, recent satellite images are substantial proof of the surge in deaths due to Covid. As the world completes almost three years of Covid, the virus continues to haunt scores of people and operations at airports, hospitals, and markets, affecting the global economy and people's minds. China recently scrapped its strict zero-Covid policy towards SARS-Cov-2, which sparked mass unrest after more than two years of strict control on its citizens. Beijing's zero-Covid policy in 2022 often faced the wrath of domestic protests and criticism from the international community for further hampering the world economy.



China's current wave of infections has been fueled by the lack of herd immunity in the population, most of which were not exposed to the coronavirus for years because of the country's strict controls. Likely, many elderly citizens have not yet received a full course of vaccines or booster shots.

China has reported only 5,200 Covid deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, and even fewer than 40 deaths were attributed to Covid since Beijing lifted Xi Jinping's strict zero-Covid policies. But the "projections made by international experts put the real death toll closer to

5,000 people per day, with several models predicting more than one million Covid deaths in China by the mid of the year 2023," reports The Washington Post.

SATELLITE IMAGES SHOW CROWDS AT CHINA'S CREMATORIUMS

The images – which were taken by Maxar in late December and early January and first reviewed, and reported by CNN – show "a funeral home on the outskirts of Beijing, which appears to have constructed a brand-new parking area, as well as lines of vehicles waiting outside of funeral homes in

Kunming, Nanjing, Chengdu, Tangshan, and Huzhou."

The satellite images are consistent with CNN's reporting and other witness accounts such as shared on his Twitter account of Damien Symon, a geospatial intelligence researcher, shared on his Twitter concerning overcrowding in funeral homes and crematoriums.

Damien Symon recently posted collated satellite imagery of mainland China, where a huge number of Covid-related funerals and vehicles were seen outside crematoriums of major cities captured by Maxar Technologies.

Satellite imagery of funeral

homes in cities such as Kunming, Yunnan Province, Nanjing, Jiangsu Chengdu, Sichuan Tangshan, Hebei, Huzhou, Zhejiang, and Tonggzhou shows a huge number of vehicles in a queue on the streets. These satellite images and media reports suggest that hospitals and funeral homes are overwhelmed due to a recent outbreak of Covid in Beijing. China has faced accusations from the WHO and the United States that it has not been sharing the actual ground situation of a sudden spike in Covid deaths due to the current outbreak.

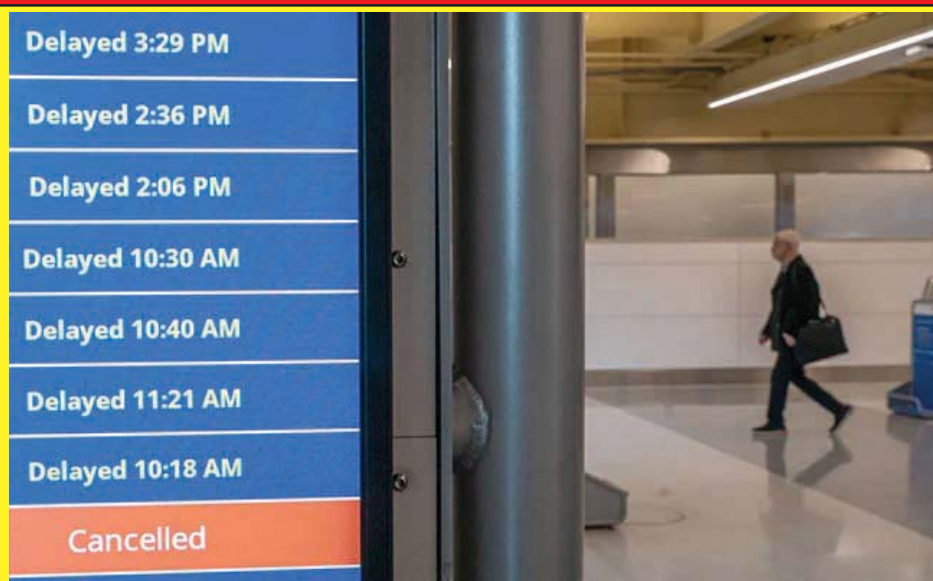
US Flight Glitch Caused By Personnel Who Damaged Data File

Unspecified "personnel" were responsible for corrupting the file, which led to the outage of an FAA computer system that sends safety notices to pilots, the agency said in a statement

(SAI Bureau) The computer failure that prompted a halt of all US flight departures was caused when a data file was damaged as a result of a failure to follow government procedures, the Federal Aviation Administration said Thursday.

Unspecified "personnel" were responsible for corrupting the file, which led to the outage of an FAA computer system that sends safety notices to pilots, the agency said in a statement. That triggered the FAA to order a halt to all US departing flights, causing thousands of delays and cancellations Wednesday.

"The system is functioning properly and cancellations today were below 1%," the agency said. The preliminary indications are that two people working for a contractor introduced errors into the core data used on the system known as Notice to Air Missions, or Notam,



according to a person familiar with the FAA review. The person asked not to be identified speaking about the sensitive, ongoing issue.

Notams are advisories to pilots on safety-critical conditions at airports and other areas aircraft might traverse, including everything

from warnings about bird activity to runway construction.

Like other computer systems that are critical to operating flights, the FAA has imposed procedures to ensure data aren't damaged by technicians working on them, said the person. The file or files were

altered in spite of rules that prohibit those kind of changes on a live system.

Agency officials are attempting to determine whether the two people made the changes accidentally or intentionally, and if there was any malicious intent, the person said.

When the system began having problems Tuesday night, technicians switched to a backup. But because the backup was attempting to access the same damaged data, it also didn't work, the person said. A complete shutdown was required to restore the system, leading the FAA to halt all flight departures for roughly 90 minutes Wednesday morning. The agency is attempting to create new protections to prevent such a failure in the future, the person said. Portions of the Notam computer system are as old as 30 years.

Pakistan's Passport Among World's Weakest. Most Powerful Are...

Singapore and South Korea retained their places in joint second on the ranking, followed by Germany and Spain, and then a slew of other European nations

(SAI Bureau) Japan starts 2023 with the world's most powerful passport, allowing visa-free entry to 193 global destinations, according to the latest Henley Passport Index, which the country tops for the fifth consecutive year. That doesn't mean the passport is widely used, even as travel rebounds from Covid. Only 24 million valid Japanese passports were in circulation at the end of 2021, according to the latest available figures from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That's down more than 3 million from the year before and means that less than 20% of the population held the travel document.

Singapore and South Korea retained their places in joint second on the ranking, followed by Germany and Spain, and then a slew of other European nations. The US was among the top 22, with visa-free access to 186 places, matching the likes of Switzerland, New Zealand and Norway.

China's allows access to 80, the same as Bolivia's. Russia's is better, providing hassle-free entry to 118 destinations,



while Afghanistan's remained the weakest, with access to just 27. The ranking, published by London-based immigration consultancy Henley & Partners, uses data from the International Air Transport Association to rank 199 passports' access to 227 travel destinations. The methodology differs from other passport indexes like one published by financial advisory Arton Capital, which put the

United Arab Emirates in pole position. Separately, a Morning Consult poll conducted in July showed that 35% of adult respondents in Japan indicated they didn't plan to ever travel for leisure again, a far higher percentage than the other 13 nations surveyed. South Korea was the next, with 15% saying the same. Nearly 2 million people traveled overseas from Japan in the first 10 months of last year, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization, a long way off the 20 million that did so in all of 2019, before the pandemic.

At Least 5 killed In Suicide Attack Near Afghan Ministry In Kabul: Report



Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran confirmed the explosion "which unfortunately resulted in casualties"

showed. Some injured people writhed on the ground, screaming for help, and a handful of onlookers scrambled to offer assistance. The ministry itself did not appear to be badly damaged. "There was supposed to be a Chinese delegation at the Foreign Ministry today, but we don't know if they were present at the time of the blast," deputy minister of information and culture Muhajer Farahi told AFP. At least five Chinese nationals were wounded last month when gunmen stormed a hotel popular with Chinese business people in Kabul. That raid was claimed by

IS, who also took responsibility for an attack on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul in December that Islamabad denounced as an "assassination attempt" against their ambassador. Four people were killed and 25 wounded in an attack on a mosque in the grounds of the interior ministry in Kabul in October, with survivors reporting it was a suicide bombing. And two Russian embassy staff members were killed in a suicide bombing outside their mission in September in another attack claimed by IS. Hundreds of people, including members of

Afghanistan's minority communities, have been killed and wounded in other attacks since the Taliban regained power. Afghanistan's regional chapter of the Islamic State group is known as Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), a historical term describing the vast territory they hope to rule spanning India, Iran and Central Asia. The Taliban and IS-K share an austere Sunni Islamist ideology but the latter are crusading to establish a global "caliphate" instead of the Taliban's more modest and inward-looking goal of ruling an independent Afghanistan.

(SAI Bureau) Kabul: A suicide bomber blew himself up near Afghanistan's foreign ministry where a Chinese delegation had been due to meet on Wednesday, causing more than 20 casualties, Taliban officials and witnesses said.

The Taliban claim to have improved security since storming back to power in 2021 but there have been scores of bomb blasts and attacks, many claimed by the local chapter of the Islamic State (IS) group. An AFP team was conducting an interview inside the information ministry next door when Wednesday's blast took place.

A company driver waiting outside saw a man with a backpack and rifle slung over his shoulder walk past before the man blew himself up. "He passed by my car and after a few seconds there was a loud blast," Jamshed Karimi said.

"I saw the man blowing himself up." Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran confirmed the blast "which unfortunately resulted in

casualties".

"Security teams have reached the area," he tweeted. In the aftermath, bodies lay strewn on the road outside the high-walled compound of the ministry, marked with the Taliban flag, a video verified by AFP

PM Shehbaz Sharif thanks Saudi Prince Salman for taking steps towards boosting Pakistan's economy

PM Shehbaz Sharif thanked Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman for taking steps towards boosting the economy of Pakistan

(SAI Bureau) Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude towards Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for supporting Resilient Pakistan (a step taken by the Pakistan government and the United Nations to bring together international donors to support the people and the Pakistan government after the devastating floods of 2022) and announcing one billion dollars for it. The Pakistan PM also thanked the Saudi



prince for his decision to consider increasing investment up to 10 billion dollars and depositing 5 billion dollars into the Pakistan central bank. "Pakistan sincerely thanks HRH Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman

for Saudi Arabia's generous announcement of \$1 billion @ Resilient Pakistan. We are immensely grateful for his decision to consider increasing Saudi investment up to \$10 billion & deposits with SBP to \$5

billion," wrote Shehbaz Sharif on Twitter. Saudi Arabia on Tuesday said it could increase its investments in the cash-strapped Pakistan economy to \$10 billion as well as increase the ceiling on deposits into the Pakistan central bank to \$5 billion, reported the news agency Reuters. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has directed a study to increase Saudi Arabian investments to \$10 billion, from the previous \$1 billion announced in August.

He has also asked the Saudi Development Fund (SDF) to consider raising the ceiling for Saudi deposits into the Pakistan central bank as part of measures to support the struggling economy.

'Hindu religious scriptures porn text': Bangladesh's oppn front latest attack on minorities

Launching an attack on minorities, Tarique Rahman, joint convener of Bangladesh Gono Odhikar Parishad and a top aide to Nurul Haque Nur, said that scriptures of the Hindu religion do not offer any moral teaching and are porn texts. Nurul Haque Nur has been leading the charge in the opposition party's effort to overthrow the government in Bangladesh.

(SAI Bureau) With the national election in Bangladesh looming ahead early next year, a band of ardent hardliners, backed by militant outfit Jamaat-E-Islami and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, mostly youths, have launched attacks targeting Hindus, alongside peddling smears against the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

Nurul Haque Nur, vehemently backed by militant outfit Jamaat-e-Islami, has been leading the charge in the opposition party's effort to overthrow the government without participating in the election. But some of his associates have unleashed a barrage of smears against Hindus and India, ostensibly for the secular stance led by Sheikh Hasina. "Scriptures of the Hindu religion do not offer any moral teaching — all the religious scriptures are porn scripts," Tarique Rahman, joint convener of Bangladesh Gono Odhikar Parishad and a top aide to Nurul Haque Nur, said in a Facebook live, expressing his strong abhorrence towards Hindus.



This video has been shared on Facebook by netizens with many comparing this statement with a similar call for "wiping out" Hindus by Jamaat leaders in their bid to prevent the birth of this country from Pakistan back in 1971. Nurul Haque Nur openly stressed 'backdoor political manipulations'

as the way to achieve power rather than face elections.

JOURNALISTS ARE SLAVES' Nurul, who reportedly conducted the Facebook Live from Saudi Arabia, also came down heavily on the free press, describing journalists as "slaves". In the same video, he warned

journalists not to raise questions over his 'mission'. "Yes, I have indulged in a conspiracy with foreign intelligence agencies, including Mossad .. In my bid to unseat the government, I held a meeting with Mendi N Safadi, a Mossad agent, to hatch a conspiracy to unseat this

government", Nurul can be heard boasting on the Facebook Live. From instigating and attacking minorities to doing Facebook live alleging India's external intelligence abducted him to defend war criminals, mostly from Jamaat, to demean war crimes committed by the Pakistan Army in 1971, Nurul, under the banner of his platform, along with his followers has hit many new lows to serve radical pro Pakistan agenda. During the grisly spate of attacks during Durga Puja in 2021 across the country carried out by fundamentalist forces, Nurul's platform in the port city reportedly swooped on minorities back then. Being backed by Jamaat and the BNP on field, this band of youth has resorted to extensive usage of social media, taking anti-Hindu slurs to a new low. Currently, Nurul is leading an opposition platform named 'Gono Odhikar Parishad' with Reza Kibria, another controversial figurehead with no solid public backing at the grassroots, leading the alliance.

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Why should Rahul Gandhi still apologize for Operation Blue Star?

Rahul Gandhi cannot be held accountable for all that happened during his childhood. But if he does choose to apologise for Operation Blue Star, his apology may demonstrate a genuine commitment to change. Empires, democracies and non-democracies do terrible things. Operation Blue Star is one among them. It may not be an election issue in the present-day Punjab though. Congress may have swept to power in the state twice since 2002. Under Sonia Gandhi, it may have given India its first Sikh prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh.

Under the de-facto leadership of Rahul Gandhi, out on a crowd-pulling nationwide Bharat Jodo Yatra, the same party may even have come a long way from what it was under the rule of his grandmother Indira Gandhi and father Rajiv Gandhi. Populist majoritarian sentiments of the time might well have rallied around the military attack on Sri Darbar Sahib 39 years ago.

Back then, the use of army may even have won the support of BJP stalwart L.K Advani, who in his autobiography, 'My Country, My Life', wrote that "the prime minister was ultimately forced to use the military to liberate the Golden Temple from its anti-national occupants."

HISTORY UNKIND TO CONGRESS ON OP BLUE STAR

But history will still continue to hold Congress to account for having presided over an act seen by many others as a move aimed not at insurgency but at a culture.

In a world without social media and a barrage of TV stations in India, the Sikh and non-Sikh intelligentsia rose in solidarity with the community alike when its soul was pounded by military tanks.

"The army went into (the) Darbar Sahib not to eliminate a political figure or a political movement but to suppress the culture of a people, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence," a 2013 piece in the HuffPost quoted anthropologist Joyce Pettigrew, an author and an expert on the Punjab trouble. Legendary writer Khushwant Singh returned his Padma Bhushan in protest against Operation Blue Star. "Only a minuscule proportion of Sikhs subscribed to Khalistan before the temple (Darbar Sahib) was stormed," he told the New York Times in 1984. "I wanted to find one and talk to one, but I couldn't." Columnist Rajinder Puri insisted Indira Gandhi ignored militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's offers of compromise. "Was an avoidable Operation Blue Star undertaken to serve national interest, or some foreign interest?" he asked in a 2007 piece in Outlook. "It was avoidable because this scribe, on Rajiv Gandhi's request, had obtained from Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale an acceptable compromise one month before the operation. The offer of compromise was ignored." For a Congress of 2023 and even for some members of the Sikh elite, Operation Blue Star could be water under the bridge so far as elections are concerned. As members of a minority community, many

Sikhs may continue to silently vote for Congress in the face of a belligerent majoritarian politics. But the new generations, at the same time, may feel uncomfortable to join its ranks formally more so when reminded of 1984.

That precisely what the Akalis and the BJP, the two estranged allies, did when Rahul Gandhi offered obeisance at Sri Darbar Sahib on Tuesday.

The two parties followed the political ritual when he visited the sacred Sikh site. DOUSED IN PERFECT SIKH IMAGERY

The 52-year-old scion was dressed up as a Sikh. Coming from a family with a troubled history with the community, the imagery around this visit was bound to touch many Sikh hearts. At the holiest of the Sikh shrines resonating with gurbani, he wore a neatly tied kesri turban, unlike actor Akshay Kumar's readymade wedding-style padgis in Singh is Kinng which had come across as eyesores to the discerning Sikh eye. Gandhi's blue "fifty" — the under-turban or a band visible as a triangle below the peak as called in Sikh jargon — was strikingly majestic. His unshorn and undyed salt-and-pepper beard was impressively appealing. "Wow," wrote a young Sikh woman when his picture from Sri Darbar Sahib popped up on an all-Sikh WhatsApp group.

HAUNTED BY HISTORY

But all this imagery cannot help Rahul Gandhi escape history, more so when Congress under his ideological guidance has taken a high stand on secularism. A

Sikh BJP spokesman went to the extent of suggesting he show up at the highest seat of the Sikh temporal authority, the Akal Takht, and atone for what all happened with the community during Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi's rule. Per tradition, no non-Sikh is required to appear at the Takht for reparation.

"There's no instance in recorded Sikh history of anyone held responsible for the mistakes committed by his/her parents or forefathers. Absolutely not," explained Dr. Khushhal Singh, a general secretary of the Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Chandigarh.

But the narrative the BJP and the Akalis chose to push over Rahul Gandhi goes beyond the realm of established customs. His opponents followed a script designed to bring a Congress calling itself secular face to face with a Congress going after the Sikhs three to four decades ago.

AN APOLOGY NOT OWED BUT HELPFUL

Rahul Gandhi is not in national power. He was a young child in 1984. Certainly, he cannot be held accountable for all that happened during his childhood. But if he does choose to apologise for Operation Blue Star, his apology may demonstrate a genuine commitment to change.

An apology over a mistake he never committed and over an issue that won't cost his party electorally either way will unambiguously show that Congress in its present avatar is willing to listen and take responsibility for historical wrongs in order to build a better future.

Brasilia rampage: Bolsonaro eyes return to Brazil, judge orders arrest of his minister

Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro, on Tuesday, said that he might return to the country earlier than originally scheduled. After a brazen attack on government buildings in Brazil's capital on Sunday by Bolsonaro supporters, the Joe Biden administration is under pressure to expel Bolsonaro from a post-presidential retreat in Florida, reported the Associated Press.

Bolsonaro was originally scheduled for a return to Brazil in late January. Talking to CNN's Portuguese-language affiliate in Brazil, he said, "I came to spend some time away with my family but these weren't calm days. First, there was this sad episode in Brazil and then my hospitalization." Bolsonaro arrived in Florida in late December. He skipped the January 1 swearing-in of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who became the first elected Brazilian president not to receive the presidential sash from his predecessor since democracy was restored in the 1980s, reported Associated Press.

His visit to Florida was suddenly noticed after Sunday's attack by thousands of die-hard supporters who had been camping for weeks outside a military base in Brasilia, refusing to accept Bolsonaro's narrow defeat in an

October runoff. Their invasion of Brazil's congress and presidential palace left behind shattered glass, smashed computers and slashed artwork.

Meanwhile, a Brazilian Supreme Court judge ordered the arrest of the capital's most recent public security chief on Tuesday after Bolsonaro supporters led a rampage through government buildings, reported Reuters. Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered the arrest of Anderson Torres, after protesters ransacked the Supreme Court, Congress and presidential offices on Sunday.

Torres was Bolsonaro's justice minister before taking over this month as the public security chief for Brasilia. Torres was not in Brasilia when the protesters vandalized the government buildings. On Tuesday, he said he would return to Brazil from Orlando and turn himself in to justice. He was on a vacation with his family when the riots happened. Justice Alexandre de Moraes also requested the arrest of Fabio Augusto Vieira, the head of Brasilia's military police, one of a number of officials responsible for protecting the key Brasilia government buildings. Vieira could not immediately be reached for comment, Reuters reported.

Murder Case Filed Against Amrapali Group Managing Director Anil Sharma

The CBI, which took over the investigation on the order of the Patna high court, said the motive was to take over the land and assets belonging to the educational institution. New Delhi: Anil Sharma, the managing director of the Amrapali Group, is among six persons accused of the murder of a man in Bihar that took place seven years ago. Dr Sharad Chandra, then a secretary of Balika Vidyapeeth in Lakhisarai, was shot dead at his home in the campus in August 2014.

The Central Bureau of Investigation — which took over the investigation on the order of the Patna high court — said the motive was to take over the land and assets belonging to the educational institution. Chandra was removed from his post after Anil Sharma, with the

help of some others, seized the land and assets of the institution.

"Anil Sharma, MD of Amrapali Group, had usurped the trust of Balika Vidyapeeth with the help of Rajendra Prasad Singhania, Dr. Praveen Kumar Sinha, Shyam Sunder Prasad and Shambhu Sharan Singh," the agency has alleged.

Chandra was shot while he was reading a newspaper in the balcony. The secretary, the CBI said, was targeted earlier too as he had raised questions about the way the school was being run. He was threatened, his house was damaged and he was shot at, the agency said. Last month, a single-judge bench of Justice Rajeev Ranjan Prasad, had ordered a CBI probe into the murder, following a petition from Sharad Chandra's wife.

Santos refuses to resign amid calls from local N.Y. GOP

Critically, they pledged to cut Santos' local support system off at the knees after he fabricated much of his resume and backstory during a successful Congressional campaign last year.

Santos "is a stain on the House of Representatives. He's a stain on the 3rd Congressional District," Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman said at a media briefing. He added that he told his staff that any constituent calls to Congress "will now be referred to Congressman Anthony D'Esposito."

D'Esposito, a Republican who represents a neighboring district, dialed into the press conference remotely to also call for Santos' ouster. And later in the day, outgoing state GOP chair Nick Langworthy, a newly elected House member, said too that Santos should go. "It's clear that he cannot be an effective representative and it would be in the best interest of the taxpayers to have new leadership," Langworthy said in a statement. While the briefing was nominally aimed at Santos, the Nassau County GOP also appeared to be worried that their association with the controversial first-term representative could hurt their chances at expanding on recent electoral gains. The 3rd Congressional District that Santos just



won, for example, was formerly held by Democrat Tom Suozzi. "This scandalous behavior does damage to all of our reputations because there is a part of our public that is cynical about politicians and public officials," said Richard Nicoletto, the presiding officer of the Nassau County Legislature. Speaker after speaker took to the microphone at the Westbury, N.Y., headquarters with unsparing criticism of Santos — and some expressed hurt that Santos had lied to them personally during endorsement interviews. "We got into it, started getting personal about the fact that he came from a poor background but that he was able to be very successful,"

Nassau County GOP Chair Joseph Cairo Jr. said. "He told me, I remember specifically, I'm into sports a little bit — that he was a star on the Baruch [College] volleyball team, that they won the league championship." Santos never attended Baruch. With so many speakers pledging to ice out Santos and deny him support for any reelection campaign, Wednesday's announcement cemented that any future bid by Santos to stay in the seat would be incredibly difficult.

Yet, Santos told reporters at the Capitol on Wednesday morning that he has no plans to resign. He also repeated that assertion in a tweet, adding that he

regrets "to hear that local officials refuse to work with my office." The same day, Speaker Kevin McCarthy told reporters he wouldn't sit Santos on any of the "A Committees" — including more powerful panels such as Judiciary, Ways and Means and Budget, which typically don't go to first-term lawmakers anyway. It's still unclear if Santos will be seated on committees at all, as some of his GOP colleagues have called to totally exclude him from panel spots. McCarthy still hasn't publicly signaled how he plans to handle Santos' fabrications internally. But other House Republicans stopped short of calling for Santos to resign, and instead are leaving it to the Ethics Committee to investigate.

"Well, I believe in due process, so let's let the process work itself through," said Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.). Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) echoed similar sentiments to POLITICO. Hudson, who sits on the House GOP Steering Committee that lays out committee assignments, says that Santos will still be receiving his. "You're innocent until proven guilty."

Santos has lied about everything from where he went to college to his Jewish ancestry. He's being investigated by local, state and federal authorities.

Man Headed To Saudi Arabia Pees At Delhi Airport At Flight Gate

The man urinated publicly at gate number-6 in the departure area of terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi

New Delhi: A 39-year-old was arrested after the Sunday evening incident, was later released the same day on a bail bond, they said. A senior police officer said they received information Sunday around 5.30 pm that a person urinated publicly at gate number-6 in the departure area of terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport. According to police, Mr Khan seemed to be in a drunken condition he created a



Shankar Mishra, who urinated on co-flyer, denied bail by Delhi court

Delhi's Patiala Court rejected Shankar Mishra's bail plea on Wednesday. He had been arrested for urinating on a co-passenger on board an Air India flight

Delhi's Patiala Court on Wednesday rejected the bail application filed by Shankar Mishra, who was arrested for urinating on a woman co-passenger onboard an Air India flight in November last year. Shankar Mishra was arrested last week by Delhi Police from Bengaluru after authorities traced his phone. Later, he was sent to 14-day judicial custody.

Shankar Mishra had filed a bail plea, citing that he has no criminal antecedents and is not in a position to influence witnesses. He further alleged that his arrest was illegal. In his bail plea, the accused said he willingly submitted to the Inquiry Committee despite facing the risk of being put on a no-fly list and having sought to settle the matter amicably with the lady. Shankar Mishra added

that he is unlikely to abscond or be a flight risk. **WHY WAS SHANKAR MISHRA ARRESTED?** Mishra is accused of urinating on a co-passenger who was an elderly woman onboard a New York-Delhi Air India flight on November 26. He was detained in Bengaluru on Friday after a Look Out Circular was issued in this regard. He had been absconding since the matter came to light and the affected party initiated action. The woman tabled her complaint and even flagged inaction on the part of the air carrier. Taking note of the 'urination' incident, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had issued a show cause notice to the Tata Group-owned Air India and claimed their handling of the incident was 'unprofessional'.

nuisance at a public place by screaming and abusing other people. He was scheduled to depart to Dammam in Saudi Arabia, they said. Mr Khan was examined at the Safdarjung Hospital and he was found to have consumed alcohol, Deputy Commissioner of Police (airport) Ravi Kumar Singh said. A case under sections 294 (obscene acts and songs) and 510 (misconduct in public by a drunken person) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at IGI Airport and

Khan was arrested. Earlier, a drunken man allegedly urinated on a woman co-passenger in an inebriated condition in the business class of the Air India flight from New York to Delhi on November 26 last year. The Delhi Police had registered an FIR against him on January 4 on a complaint given by the woman to Air India and arrested him from Bengaluru on Saturday. The accused was arrested from Bengaluru. A court later sent him to judicial remand for 14 days.

Is Varun Gandhi preparing to quit BJP and join Congress?

(Contd. from page 14)

The question that remains unanswered was why he was dilly-dallying with his decision, when his 'suffocation' in the ruling party had become more than evident, and his future in the BJP looked sealed. Analysts believe that perhaps he could be waiting for disciplinary action against himself by the party bigwigs so that he could walk out as a "martyr". However, those familiar with BJP

supremo Narendra Modi's inimitable ways, claim that he would prefer to tire out Varun by simply giving him a loose rope, rather than allowing him to become a "martyr".

Under the circumstances, the final step would have to be initiated by Varun himself. And if he was apparently looking for an opportune time to strike, the beginning in that direction had been made through his latest 'offensive'

remarks against his own party and its top leadership.

But what was even more important for him was that he should know his place in Congress, if he were actually inclined to go that way. While he is known to have been in contact with his cousin Priyanka Gandhi, who is believed to be charitable towards him, much would depend on Rahul Gandhi and more so on Sonia Gandhi, who would be taking

the ultimate call on the entry of another Gandhi scion into the main fold of the Gandhi home.

The modalities of such a reunion may have to be worked out, but it appears that a berth for Varun in the Congress is perhaps the safest bet for him. However, whether the Congress party would consider him an equally dynamic bet for Congress still remains a million-dollar question.

The Party of One Becomes the Party of None

(Contd. from page 25)

However, America today doesn't have the luxury of waiting for the Republican Party to get its act together. Voters just gave Republicans the keys to the House, and we need them — at minimum — to keep the government open, meet our debt obligations and avoid a global economic meltdown. Typically, these basic functions aren't hard asks. But they may be too much for a Party of None to manage.

While Trump may no longer be the heart of the GOP, his scar tissue remains. By constantly waging war on imperfectly loyal party members, Trump effectively repealed Ronald Reagan's 11th Commandment, "Thou shalt not speak ill of another Republican." By promoting a diplomatic thaw with Russia, Trump emboldened far-right neo-isolationists critical of the Ukrainian resistance, and threatened the year-long streak of bipartisan support for Ukraine aid. By recklessly instigating his own government shutdown as president, Trump whetted the appetite of Freedom Caucus members who appear eager to not only take the debt limit hostage but, for the first time, shoot it dead.

All of these marks that Trump left on the Republican Party drove the resistance to McCarthy. Gaetz and Boebert suggested the protracted speaker fight was stopping the flow of funds to Ukraine. Rep. Ralph Norman said Wednesday he wants the next speaker to be "willing to shut the government down rather than raising the debt ceiling"

(though the next day he partially walked the comment back and voted for McCarthy on Friday.) Most fundamentally, the right-wing dissidents — akin to the left-wing Occupy Wall Street protesters of 2011 — reject the basic concept of hierarchical leadership. Rep. Byron Donalds, who briefly ran against McCarthy, said individual House members should have the power to force floor votes that can fire a speaker, because he doesn't want "more power into the hands of the speakership." Boebert similarly told Fox News' Sean Hannity, "We need a check and a balance on the third [sic] in line to the presidency."

Late into the night on Friday, McCarty finally flipped enough of the holdouts to win — not because of Trump's endorsement, but because of a slew of concessions, including the rule change making it easier to oust the speaker. Gaetz boasted Thursday night that even if McCarthy managed to win, "he will have to live the entirety of his speakership in a straitjacket constructed by these rules that we're working on now." Just two years ago, House Republicans lived in fear of their party's president.

Today, they are building a House where the speaker must live in fear of his party's members.

Granted, the House Republican Conference has been unruly at times before Trump came along. Newt Gingrich's speakership was wounded by an aborted 1997 coup attempt, hatched mainly by frustrated conservatives, before being

put out of its misery after Republicans lost House seats in the 1998 midterm. In 2015, John Boehner, in defiance of Freedom Caucus demands, kept the government open mainly with Democratic votes. Then he quit before he could be fired.

But today's nihilistic Republicans, influenced by Trump's limitless capacity for conflict, are going to historic lengths to strip the speaker position of power before the first bang of the gavel in the 118th Congress. What had been a cult is rapidly transforming into a state of anarchy.

Of course, states of anarchy don't last. Power fills voids. The Freedom Caucus is making enormous strides in filling that void. Even though McCarthy survived, as Gaetz noted, a set of rules and committee assignments was negotiated by the Republican factions that would allow the far-right far greater influence over what the House produces. The skewed proposals are

unnerving some in the center-right. "I think they're a mistake for the conference. These handful of folks want a weak speaker with a four-vote majority. The public will not like what they see of the GOP, I fear," an unnamed House moderate told CNN. But reasonable Republicans were not obligated to be bystanders. They didn't have to remain passive while the Freedom Caucus grabbed power from McCarthy. As GOP Rep. Don Bacon at times threatened to pursue, they could have sidelined the far right, forged a bipartisan coalition with Democrats and elected a speaker committed to raising the debt limit and keeping the government open.

The partisan path Republicans took may seem the politically safer route, but can Republicans really rediscover their shared principles while the Freedom Caucus pressures the party to pursue politically dicey, scorched earth legislative tactics? House Republicans should look at the unity on

the Democratic side of the aisle and consider how that materialized after a rocky two-year stretch. When Democrats were intent on passing party-line legislation through the filibuster-proof budget reconciliation process, they ended up in a protracted struggle with their most moderate members, one of which in the House (Oregon's Kurt Schrader) was defeated in a primary and another in the Senate (Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema) became an independent. But in 2022 after Democrats passed a slew of bipartisan bills (and one party-line reconciliation bill, reduced in size by the moderate splinter faction), they were better positioned to run on a record of accomplishment, and against an conservative agenda.

The GOP couldn't be a Party of One forever, and it won't be a Party of None forever. Republicans will eventually find their way. But America needs them to find a way that doesn't first drag us all through an obstacle course of dumpster fires. And they are not off to a promising start.

Nitish Kumar sparks row but what's behind India's population boom

(Contd. from page 14)

Despite this, Bihar started its own caste census on Saturday after the Cabinet passed the decision in June last year. Nitish Kumar said the government aims to conduct the census properly so that there isn't any discrepancy. The caste-based census will be carried out across all 38 districts in two phases. In the first phase, from Saturday to January 21, the

number of all households in the state will be counted. The second phase will be conducted from April 1 to April 30. The data of all castes, sub-castes, socioeconomic conditions, etc, will be collected. The survey would be over by May 31. An estimated population of 12.70 crore will be covered under the census — including 2.58 crore households in 38 districts, which have 534 blocks and 261 urban

local bodies.

WHAT'S THE REMEDY What India needs today is to invest in spreading awareness about sexual and reproductive health in a very easy and informative way. The information should be backed with quality services and education at all hospitals, clinics and primary health centres. The population must be sensitised about family planning measures from a very early age.

How heavy, unplanned construction and complex geology is sinking Joshimath

(Contd. from page 15)

This wastewater then pushes down loose material into the ground, resulting in land sinking." Several places across the State have been facing a similar situation. In Chamoli district itself, after the 2013 floods villages under Khiron-Lambagar gram sabha, near Joshimath, had started sinking. However, Piyoosh Rautela, Executive Director, Uttarakhand Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre (DMMC), said that the situation at Joshimath was "different". "Sinking has been noted in villages across Uttarakhand, but it is the first time that an urban area has shown severe land sinking," he said. Locals blame dams and roads for sinking land

Joshimath is built on slopes that have deposits from an old landslide. While the deposits may have stabilised over time, rampant construction, especially of projects like roads and dams, that use explosives, drilling and extensive digging, have weakened the slopes. The construction of buildings in the town too has added to the problem.

However, the problem of land subsidence is neither new, nor sudden. It had emerged decades ago, after which a committee – the MC Mishra Committee – was formed to assess the reasons behind it. The Mishra Committee report of 1976, which is the oldest report exploring land subsidence in Joshimath, warned against excavating the slopes, and removing boulders by digging or using explosives. "Despite the warning, no heed was paid while undertaking works of road and dam construction in and around Joshimath," said Atul Sati, an activist from 'Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti', who, with other residents, has been protesting the construction of NTPC's 520 MW Tapovan Vishnugad

hydropower project since 2004. "The project," he said, "is the most important cause behind land sinking in Joshimath".

A 2010 study done by the Dehradun-based DMMC and the Garhwal University says that on December 24, 2009, a tunnel, which lies about a kilometre below Auli (near Joshimath) was being constructed for the Tapovan Vishnugad project. The tunnel boring machine (TBM) being used punctured an aquifer over 3 km from Selang village (Selang is about 5 km from Joshimath), resulting in water discharge at the rate of about 700-800 litres per second. It was "enough to sustain 2-3 million (20-30 lakh) people" per day, the report says. Puran Billangwal (43), a Joshimath resident, said, "Soon after the incident, groundwater sources in Joshimath started drying up.... 'Sunil Kund', which was a major freshwater source here, suddenly went dry." While the discharge reduced over time, it never stopped completely, Billangwal said.

Locals and few independent experts believe the water that has continued to release through the puncture may have added to land subsidence. However, lack of thorough scientific studies has made it difficult to establish a direct connection between the aquifer puncture incident, drying water sources in the town, and land subsidence. Considering which, the NTPC, through a press release, has denied any role of its tunnel in adding to land sinking.

Recently, muck-laden water began seeping into the town. Sati said, "We (the residents) believe that the water is from the February 7, 2021 flood in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers, which may have entered the Tapovan Vishnugad project's under-construction tunnel, and is oozing out in Joshimath."

The water has currently been sent for testing to establish the connections being claimed by the locals.

An under-construction 6-km-long Helang-Marwari bypass road, which is being built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and falls under the contentious 825 km Char Dham road expansion project in Uttarakhand, is yet another project that is believed to have exacerbated the problem, and may lead to worsening landslides and land subsidence in future.

Geologist Navin Juyal, who, as a member of the Supreme Court-appointed High Powered Committee (HPC), reviewed the Char Dham project, said, "A few of us (in the HPC) had suggested that the road must not be built unless a geotechnical feasibility study is done. However, our suggestion was completely ignored and the road was allowed for construction without the required scientific reports."

Explosives have been used for construction of the bypass, along with methods like drilling, locals said. According to Sundriyal, the road is impacting the very foundations on which Joshimath is built, and may worsen the town's proneness to landslides.

The Seismic Zonation Map of India places the town in Zone V (highest risk zone). Sundriyal said that the town's lower boundary is the Main Central Thrust (MCT), and its upper boundary is the Vaikrita Thrust (VT). "The constructions, whether they are buildings within the town, or dams and roads, have not been built in view of the town's location as a tectonically active terrain," he said.

Extreme rains and floods deepen disaster proneness

The town's slopes are impacted by extreme weather events. The DMMC data states that from 2015 to mid-2021

Uttarakhand witnessed 7,750 instances of cloudbursts and extreme rains. Such events have often resulted in floods too. The September 2022 USDMA report on Joshimath states that erosion in the area increased after the February 2021 and June 2013 flood. The report states that very heavy rains between October 17-19, 2021 further exacerbated land subsidence and proneness to landslides.

While the locals had approached the State's disaster management department in August 2022 to report the instances of cracks appearing in houses, no immediate action was taken by the department, said Sati. The situation worsened over the past 10 days when several houses suddenly developed cracks, after which the State and Central governments began taking action, especially with regards to setting up committees to study the problem, and temporarily shifting people to safer locations. By January 9 evening, 678 houses across all nine wards in Joshimath had developed major and minor cracks, and 81 families had been provided temporary rehabilitation in areas within Joshimath that are currently safe.

Following the sudden increase in land sinking, on January 5 the Chamoli administration temporarily halted the construction works on the Helang-Marwari bypass and the Tapovan Vishnugad project. The Joshimath-Auli ropeway was also instructed to stop operations. Sati said, "The order is only a temporary and doesn't give much hope." It is perhaps too little, too late, he added. Many houses are on the verge of collapsing, several are beyond repair. Joshimath cannot be saved now, Sati said.

AAP's growing challenge in Punjab: Graft within and revolt by bureaucrats

(Contd. from page 16)

The association is also demanding immediate action against VB officials who allegedly "framed" PCS officer Tarsem Chand in a false case and a proper standard operating procedure (SOP) in matters of enquiries and registration of FIRs. The VB had earlier booked and arrested Sanjay Popli, another IAS officer, over a corruption case. Besides this, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had raided the house of IAS officer Varun Roojam in the alleged excise scam, and grilled a senior IAS officer KAP Sinha, in the case.

GOVT RESPONSE

Initially, Mann appealed to the protesting employees, including

those from the revenue department, to call off the strike while maintaining that the government had zero tolerance against corrupt officials. Later, when the employees didn't relent, he declared their protest "illegal". Mann directed chief secretary VK Janjua to suspend all officers who do not join duty by 2pm on Wednesday.

"It has been brought to my notice that some officers are not attending duty in the garb of some strike. They are protesting against strong action taken by the government against corrupt officers. The government has zero tolerance to corruption and such a strike amounts to blackmailing and arm-twisting. It cannot be tolerated by

any responsible government," the strict orders from CM said.

Following a meeting with the IAS officers on Monday, Mann had asked the Punjab chief secretary to probe the allegations made against Dhaliwal and report to him. Regarding the cases related to PCS officers, the chief minister has set up a committee under the chairmanship of an IAS officer to delve into the issue. Leader of opposition Partap Singh Bajwa has blamed the 'discourteous' way of the AAP's functioning. He has also expressed concern over the growing tendency among the IAS officers to opt for central deputation.

AAP's state chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang said that the

AAP and its government have zero tolerance against corruption.

"Honest officers need not fear as the chief minister has already met their representatives and assured to address their concerns. People are facing harassment and the bureaucrats, as a responsible organ of the government, should take notice of it," said Kang. The impact of protest is beginning to show in several government offices at the state headquarters and the districts. And as tainted ministers are shown the Cabinet door and resentment of bureaucracy grows against the AAP-led government, Mann has a tough task to uphold the "corruption-free" image of his party and also to ensure that bureaucracy becomes a tool of good governance.

The Shakespearean Tragedy of Kevin McCarthy, Prince of Washington

(Contd from page 11)

As Henry IV knew, uneasy lies the head that wears a crown — or in this case, the hand that holds the gavel. Going into Jan. 3, when Congress was supposed to have resumed the business of governing, lengthy profiles of Kevin McCarthy in the national press variously described him as “outgoing and personable,” “affable” and broadcasting a “sunny disposition.” Equally well-liked was Macbeth, one of Shakespeare’s most-reprised protagonists, before he decided to murder King Duncan. These profiles also made the additional point that the 57-year-old former Young Gun would stop at nothing to fulfill his black and deep desires. “Stars,” Macbeth once said as he cowered in shame over his own zealous designs, “hide your fires.” At least that guy was self-aware. Since McCarthy’s arrival in the House in 2007, his Republican colleagues watched with a certain measure of astonishment as he shape-shifted. He used to be the adult in the room — someone who was willing to bow out of a race for speaker back in 2015 when it became clear that he had no path forward. He’d memorize the names of his colleagues’ children, ever the deft salesman. And he was a deal-maker who enjoyed a healthy flirt with the other side just enough to earn him the praise of some California Democrats.

Then came Trump, and McCarthy opted to travel a less bipartisan road on the way to the speaker’s gavel, courting the more boisterous, reactionary elements within his party instead. Soon enough, Trump was calling him “my Kevin” and presenting him

with only the best Starburst candy Air Force One had to offer. After Trump voted to overturn the results of the 2020 election on Jan. 6, 2021, McCarthy privately wanted him to resign, reportedly telling other Republican leaders, “I’ve had it with this guy.” On Jan. 28, though, he visited Mar-a-Lago to make amends. And he continued that dance last February, too, when he endorsed Harriet Hageman, Liz Cheney’s primary opponent in Wyoming, in a display of fealty to the former president.

The morning of Jan. 3, as the caucus sat in a closed-door meeting that preceded the first ballot, McCarthy grew more and more convinced that he was the rightful heir to the speakership, thundering, “I’ve earned this goddamn job!” But as he led his foot soldiers into battle, akin to many a Shakespearean commander, his once-loyal subjects broke rank. The House Freedom Caucus insurgents knew that as long as they could thrive in the anarchy of a House without rules, they could thwart McCarthy’s prospects.

“I don’t care if we go to plurality and elect Hakeem Jeffries,” Gaetz declared in the meeting, according to McCarthy. They then marched upstairs to the House floor, where another act was about to begin.

One wonders: Isn’t this all a bit reductive, to compare some suits voting from the comfort of their seats to literal soldiers waging war on a monarch? Some seasoned theater critics certainly think so, urging Washington’s commentators to turn the page on the Shakespeare references and quit stretching the metaphors. (In 2017,

when Shakespeare in the Park depicted Trump as Caesar the same week that Scalise was shot at a Virginia baseball field, conservative commentators and Donald Trump Jr. grouched that the liberal arts had gone too far.) But reader, lend me your ears. We turn to the whole of Shakespeare’s works so we can understand the themes that rhyme with each other, the blocks on which rulers stumble, and the tides in the affairs of men. (And women.) The Bardologists agree. Aaron Posner, a theater professor at American University, says that the plays occupy such a treasured place in our collective imagination because they hold broader lessons on power: “what will you do to get it, what will you do to hold it, and [how] the only bad thing is the losing of it.” There’s a bit of Romeo’s fawning balcony monologue in Elise Stefanik’s first nomination speech. “Seasoned legislator, an experienced leader, a friend to so many of us, a proud conservative with a tireless work ethic, Kevin McCarthy has earned the speakership of the People’s House,” she said, echoing his words.

There’s a bit of Julius Caesar in this saga, too, but not in the way you might expect, says Samantha Wyer Bello, the creative director of the D.C.-based Shakespeare Theatre Company. As we spoke, she broke out the script and read from a scene in which Caesar had just left the Senate and Casca and Brutus were each calculating whether the other was safe to conspire with.

It may have been Matt Gaetz, pulling his

colleague aside on the House floor, who said, “You pull’d me by the cloak; would you speak with me?”

It may have been Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, standing improbably next to him, who replied, “tell us what hath chanced to-day, that Caesar looks so sad.” (Ocasio-Cortez later revealed that she was reassuring Gaetz that Dem leaders weren’t plotting a side deal to buoy McCarthy.) Or are we really talking about Othello? Lauren Boebert’s behavior showed a dash of Iago, the thorn in Othello’s side. “I rise to cast my vote for a member not of the Freedom Caucus, but for Kevin,” she taunted during one of the votes on Thursday. Two members to her left shot incredulous looks.

“... Kevin Hern of Oklahoma,” she finished, as the House exploded into sound and fury and points of order.

Friday became Saturday, past the stroke of midnight, and all the House seemed a stage. Its players found their places, as Gaetz went along with a personal plea from McCarthy, in the well, to please, please stick to the script. At 12:37 a.m., after 15 intermissions and 1,482 minutes of acting and at least one moment of physical restraint to prevent possible fisticuffs, McCarthy became the 55th speaker of the House. But if one outcome is certain in Shakespeare’s tragedies, it’s that the tragic hero always meets his demise. Indeed, some insiders worry that McCarthy will be a “weaker speaker,” having relinquished so much procedural power — and his political principles — for a title.



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Painful memories, controversies: What awaits Rahul Gandhi as Bharat Jodo Yatra enters Punjab

(Contd. from page 16)

A somewhat emotional Manmohan also recalled how he had accompanied then Congress president Sonia Gandhi to Harminder Sahib in 1999 and remarked, "We prayed together to give us strength and show us the way that such things never again take place in our country." As human beings, we have the will-power and we have the ability to write a better future for all of us," he added.

There is a huge difference between state-sponsored violence and individual acts of killing. Some Congress leaders feel Rahul should also highlight party colleagues such as Manish Tiwari and Ajay Makan as victims of the Punjab insurgency. Tiwari's father, Dr VN Tiwari, a professor and author of over 40 books, was gunned down by militants in Chandigarh in 1984, while Makan's brother Lalit, parliamentarian and son-in-law of former president Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, was murdered in west Delhi in a daring attack on July 31, 1985.

There is also a narrative of over 30,000 innocent lives being lost during the long years of insurgency in Punjab, which does not form part of any political narrative. Modi's party colleague in the 1980s, Madanlal Khurana,

had developed a habit of sort of plastering Delhi walls with posters and slogans - "hum lashen ginte ginte thak gaye" (we are tired of counting corpses) - each time there was a massacre in Punjab or in parts of Haryana. In my book "Ballot - Ten Episodes that have shaped India's Democracy (Hachette)" I mentioned that the RSS was supporting then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's efforts to tame separatism in Punjab in the early 1980s. An article authored by veteran RSS ideologue Nanaji Deshmukh, published in the Hindi magazine Pratipaksh 'Moments of Soul searching' on November 25, 1984, had ended with a call to bless and cooperate with Rajiv Gandhi when general elections 1984-85 were less than a month away. Nanaji Deshmukh wrote: "â!Indira Gandhi ultimately did secure a permanent place at the doorstep of history as a great martyr. With her dynamism born out of her fearlessness and dexterity, she was able to take the country forward like a colossus for over a decade! she alone had the ability to run the decadent political system of our corrupt and divided society. Indira Gandhi had been bitterly opposed to the creation of a Punjab state on linguistic lines as she closely

identified with her minority Hindu supporters in the state. Barely six months before her assassination, the prime minister had sought to assure the majority community that "if there is injustice to them or if they did not get their rights, then it would be dangerous to the integrity of the country". (Cited by AG Noorani in the EPW on November 3, 1990.)

Indira Gandhi had just taken over as the prime minister for the first time in 1966 when a demand for the creation of a Punjabi suba was conceded. In her book, My Truth (Vision Books), published in 1980, she recalled her concerns about 1965 when she was minister for information and broadcasting in Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet and a committee under the then Lok Sabha Speaker, Sardar Hukum Singh, had favoured the creation of a Punjabi Suba. Indira wrote that she was opposed to the formation of Punjab on the basis of language as it had let down the Congress's Hindu supporters. "To concede the Akali demand would mean abandoning the position to which it (the Congress) was firmly committed and letting down its Hindu supporters in the projected Punjabi Suba... this startling reversal of Congress policy was

totally unexpected."

After the 1947 partition of Punjab, Sikhs had demanded the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state but the First Reorganisation of State Commission 1956 under Justice Fazal Ali had failed to address their concerns. Influential Akali leaders Fateh Singh and Tara Singh spearheaded a movement for a separate state in which Sikh religious, cultural and linguistic integrity could be preserved. When the 1961 census was conducted, the Akali leadership alleged that an overwhelming number of Hindus had listed Hindi as their mother tongue, just to stall the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state or prevent Sikhs, who formed 58 per cent of the population, from running the state. In 1966, Punjab was split into three states - Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

In this context, Indira's solicitude for Hindu sensitivity was significant. Even in 1980, when she was back as prime minister, her recollection of the "startling reversal of Congress policy" in letting down the party's Hindu supporters during the formation of a Punjabi suba reflected her deep concern for the Hindu community. Some of Indira's biographers, like Katherine Frank, SS Gill and

Pupul Jayakar, noticed that when she had returned to power in 1980, Indira turned a lot more sensitive towards the Hindu community than towards Muslims or Sikhs. By the time Indira returned to power in 1980 by exploiting the Janata Party's inherent contradictions, ideological divides and one-upmanship, her zeal to promote secularism and socialism, watchwords throughout the early 1970s, was missing. She sought to cultivate the majority community, accepting an invitation to launch the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's "Ekamata Yatra". This was the nascent VHP's first mass-contact programme, providing a sign that Hindu rituals and symbols could be effectively utilised for popular and political mobilisation. A clear indication came from her loyalist CM Stephen, who declared in 1983 that "the wave-length of Hindu culture and the Congress culture was the same". Barely six months before her assassination, Indira sought to assure the majority community that "the integrity of the country would be in peril if any injustice was done to them." Would these instances and narrative too become a part of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra? The next and final phase of the yatra is Jammu and Kashmir.

Constitution bench decided legality of demonetisation

(Contd from page 13)

As such, this decision is a huge relief for the Modi government. As such, the only unanimous point of this verdict is the pure intentions of the government that was already endorsed by the majority of India in the general elections of 2019. The series of turmoil initiated after that well-intentioned act before the end of 2016 created the ground to reverberate the 19th-century adage common among money masters i.e. Let us issue and control the currency of the nation, and we care not who makes its rules. Rows after rows were gathering before the banks and currency kiosks in every part of the country. Within a few weeks, more than 50 petitions reached the top court, and the three judges bench headed by the CJI (Chief Justice of India) referred to the larger bench comprising five judges for the authoritative pronouncement after framing the nine odd questions. In that verdict, the bench further issued the stay order on the cases entertained by the high courts and directed their petitioners to approach the proposed bench. Last year, the constitution bench comprising Justices S

Abdul Nazeer, BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian and BV Nagarathna, right before the sixth anniversary of demonetisation on November 8, started its hearings. Justice BR Gavai, the author of the majority view, reframed six questions out of those nine questions in the reference order. The RBI (Reserve Bank of India) and the government of India have produced their records before the apex court during its proceeding. Some of these details were never produced before the parliament. As such, the nation came to know a bit more about the last act of demonetisation in the history of India. The constitution bench passed the 4:1 verdict in favour of the central government and the RBI. It has almost ensured that the Union government has bent upon demonetisation of the currency notes with the value of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 while addressing the three serious issues of the economy. The first among them was an abundance of fake currency notes in circulation that was difficult to identify. And the other two objectives that the unaccounted wealth was in the form of high denomination bank notes and the use

of fake currency in subversive activities such as drug trafficking and terrorism are yet to be verified properly. After addressing the questions about the reference order, the court directed them to place it before that bench. Since that bench is no longer in existence, the administrative office of the top court will frame it sometime in the future. The apex court has addressed a couple of major disputes in this case and defined the difference between judgement and verdict. In this process, we analysed the last three instances from the history of 1946, 1978 and 2016 dealing with demonetisation. The bone of contention rests on different interpretations of the term "any" from sub-section (2) of section 26 of the RBI Act. After the new verdict, one can say that the Act has empowered the government to demonetise all currency notes of any series and denomination. The former union finance minister and senior advocate P Chidambaram has suggested that such an interpretation of the RBI Act amounts to conferring excessive delegation and is liable to

strike down. Justice Nagarathna in her dissenting view observed that the recommendation for the demonetisation did not originate from the RBI, but was obtained from them. Therefore, the impugned notification of November 8, 2016, is unlawful, and the act of demonetisation is vitiated. It has further been observed that the subsequent ordinance and the Act are also unlawful. These two different views reduced the idea of judgement to a mere verdict. The other major dispute deals with the power of a democratic government in order to issue and control money. In the two cases of 1946 and 1978, the State introduced an ordinance that was ratified by the legislature later. But in those cases, the central bank has opposed the proposal of demonetisation. As such, the government has no other means to demonetise the currency notes it has desired. The prevailing view of the verdict has accepted this response from the attorney general. Whereas the dissenting view indicated towards the union list of the seventh schedule of the Indian constitution that deals with the currency, coinage and legal tender.

Twitter Files' show today's censors continue to be terrible at their jobs

Censors in today's time, as we're learning from revelations contained in the 'Twitter Files,' are as incompetent as any in history

Imagine the scene in the FBI's San Francisco office last November 6.

"Boss! HQ just called. There's misinformation about the election on Twitter!"

"We're on it. Agent Chan, I need Billy Baldwin's location data, and I need it yesterday!" Twitter owner Elon Musk's ongoing release of the "Twitter Files" is exposing the horrifying and absurd level of government involvement—from intelligence agencies to legislators—in shaping narratives through censorship on social media around issues like elections and COVID-19. Most of the coverage rightly focuses on the moral (and possibly legal) scandal this represents.

Officials always demand the power to censor in the name of the greater good, and they always abuse it for their own gain. But it's also worth taking a moment to realize just how bad these censors are, and have always been, at the job they claim they are doing: making sure nobody reads or hears "harmful" or "inaccurate" information. History is replete with these failures: Socrates, Jesus, Galileo, and Mandela were killed or imprisoned for saying things the authorities of the time thought were false, harmful, or both. (And we never heard their ideas again. Oops.) Today's censors are at least as incompetent as those throughout history. As Twitter Files journalist

Matt Taibbi points out, of the list of 25 "misinformation"-spreading accounts that included the unfortunate Baldwin brother, many "were satirical in nature," and "nearly all—with the exceptions of Baldwin and @RSBNetwork—were relatively low engagement."

Even assuming you believe the feds should be cracking down on Twitter badthink, do you really think it's a priority two days before an election to try to prevent people from being misled by user @Ronsmit49336969? (Current followers:13.)

That said, Twitter probably appreciated the relative selectivity of that list. In May 2020, the State Department sent Twitter a list of 5,500 accounts as a sample of their larger database of 250,000 supposedly suspicious accounts that seemed "inorganic" and followed two or more Chinese diplomats, which included users from CNN and the Canadian military.

Closer to the 2020 election, the FBI overwhelmed Twitter with requests to examine accounts for policy violations, sending email after email attaching spreadsheets with supposed violators. Competent censors would have realized that sending so much information to the overburdened company was a recipe for paralysis from employees begging for guidance as to what to censor first. As

Twitter lawyer Stacia Cardille wrote about two weeks before the 2020 election, "Is there some way we can figure out an accommodation to prioritize the reports we escalate?"

It's not as though the 80 FBI agents tasked to police social media were burying Twitter in secret information from some INTERPOL database. As Cardille observed, "They have some folks in the Baltimore field office and at HQ that are just doing keyword searches for violations." Your tax dollars at work.

Were their decisions at least correct? Nope. On easy issues, like the date of Election Day, they might have been fairly reliable, but so is asking some guy off the street. And as has always been true with censors, jokes and satire escape them completely, as with this flagged tweet from @byrum_wade (6 followers): "Americans, Vote today. Democrats you vote Wednesday 9th."

COVID-19 was another hot spot of error. Early on, the Trump administration asked for Twitter's help quelling "misinformation" about panic buying at grocery stores, but as journalist David Zweig pointed out, there were runs on grocery stores. In August 2022, a reply tweet citing CDC data to prove that COVID was not the leading cause of death in children (it wasn't) was labeled misinformation,

with replies and likes disabled to prevent spread. The tweet to which it was replying, which actually was wrong, was left alone. Examples like this are legion. And to handle the demand, Twitter turned to overseas contractors to referee complicated medical discussions—with predictable results.

And then there's Hunter Biden's abandoned laptop. Reporting on this infamously got the New York Post banned from Twitter for the policy violation of reporting on "hacked materials"—but no hacking occurred.

We now know that Twitter "bought into a wild hack-and-dump story" that Biden's embarrassing data was stolen through hacking (probably by Russians), loaded onto a laptop, and then planted at a Delaware computer store.

This Rube Goldberg story was highly dubious even at the time. If you accept that the high-stakes decision to censor this story wasn't politically motivated, you have to accept that the censors got it incredibly wrong. Most Americans, thankfully, consider this kind of censorship to be morally wrong. Those who nevertheless continue to defend or embrace it, whether in Big Tech or government, owe it to the rest of us to explain why the people they get to do the dirty work always fail so miserably.

Pakistan's economic crisis continues to worsen

Pakistan is currently facing an economic crisis due to inflated energy import costs, huge debts, dwindling forex reserves, global inflation, political instability, and a sustained drop in GDP growth.



Pakistan's economy has crumbled alongside a simmering political crisis, with the rupee plummeting and inflation at decades-high levels. (Photo Credits: Getty Images)



Devastating floods and a global energy crisis have piled on further pressure. (Photo Credits: AFP)



A woman was seen carrying a sack of wheat flour on her head after purchasing it at government-controlled prices in Islamabad. (Photo Credits: AFP)



Some people were seen buying grocery items at a market amid the economic crisis. For the unversed, Pakistan's central bank forex reserves have plunged to an eight-year low of \$5.6 billion. (Photo Credits: AFP)



The economic crisis in Pakistan has posed a serious challenge for the country in financing imports. (Photo Credits: AFP)



Pakistan's economy has crumbled alongside a simmering political crisis, with the rupee plummeting and inflation at decades-high levels. (Photo Credits: Getty Images)

Dirty game: Untold story of Imran Khan and Gen Bajwa's love-hate relationship

Why is Imran Khan making stunning allegations against former Army Chief Gen (Rtd) Qamar Javed Bajwa? Will he survive disqualification and arrest by attacking the most powerful institution in Pakistan?

Imran Khan is not reading the writing on the wall. He is fighting a losing battle against former Army Chief Gen (Rtd) Qamar Javed Bajwa. He is competing with someone who has nothing to lose. Gen Bajwa is now a retired Army officer who cannot become Prime Minister of Pakistan. Khan is a politician and he can become Prime Minister again. Why is he making stunning allegations against a person who was blamed for manipulating 2018 elections in support of Khan? Is he trying to blackmail the new Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir by targeting Gen Bajwa? Will he survive disqualification and arrest by attacking the most powerful institution in Pakistan? I have known Imran Khan since 1989 when he was only a cricketer. He always used offence as the best defence in cricket. I advised him in 1995 not to enter politics and focus on social service. I wanted to see him as an undisputed cricket hero who won the 1992 World Cup for Pakistan. I feared that his playboy image and illegitimate children may become hurdles for his politics but he never listened to me. He joined politics and started bowling bouncers to his political opponents. Now he is using bouncers against the Pakistan Army.

Interestingly, Imran Khan defended Gen Bajwa many times when the former Army Chief was under fire from Nawaz Sharif. In 2020 Khan said that Nawaz Sharif was playing the game of Indian PM Narendra Modi by attacking the Pakistan Army. In October 2022, Imran Khan proposed to give another extension to Gen Bajwa till the new election but he took a U-turn and changed his stance within three months.

In a fresh attack on Gen Bajwa, the ousted Prime Minister of Pakistan has alleged that the former Army Chief wanted to get him killed and impose a state of emergency in the country. Before that he also accused Gen Bajwa of playing double games against his government and admitted that he committed a big mistake by



extending the tenure of then Army Chief in 2019.

Khan forgot that he himself rose to power by playing double games. It is not a secret that he was not elected but selected for the premiership of Pakistan by a group of Army Generals who hated Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari. Gen Bajwa himself admitted the unconstitutional role of Army in the Pakistani politics just few days before his retirement and assured that the Army will remain apolitical in the future. Imran Khan is not ready to believe Gen Bajwa and recently claimed that Gen Bajwa's setup is still active in the establishment. Imran Khan pointed his fingers towards some "black sheep" in the Army on January 5. He thinks these black sheep are involved in the planning of an assassination attempt on his life last November and they are also leaking his alleged sex chats on social media. Gen Bajwa recently leaked some information against Imran Khan through his friends in media and politics, trying to prove that the complaining tongue of Imran Khan is actually revealing an ungrateful heart. A close friend of the former Army Chief claimed a few days back that Gen Bajwa managed some Supreme Court verdicts in support of Imran Khan in the past. Gen Bajwa also leaked explosive information to one columnist and told him that he saved Imran Khan from disqualification in 2017.

I still remember my interview with Imran Khan just a few weeks before the 2018 election. Khan criticised Nawaz Sharif by saying that he was a product of the Pakistan Army. When this interview was aired I was called by Gen Bajwa. When I reached his residence in Rawalpindi, another journalist colleague

Saleem Safi was already present there. Saleem Safi was telling Gen Bajwa that 'you have decided to install Imran Khan in the office of Prime Minister but mark my words that he will not only ditch you, he will stab you in the back'. Gen. Bajwa was lecturing Safi about journalistic ethics and advised him to forget his personal differences with Imran Khan. I witnessed this conversation silently and never interfered.

When Safi left, Gen Bajwa told me that Imran Khan mentioned 'the past role of Army and ISI in support of Nawaz Sharif in an interview with you, please advise Khan not to speak about the Army because many people warned me after your show that Khan was in bad company and not to be trusted'. I respectfully made it clear to Gen Bajwa that I am a journalist, not an advisor of Imran Khan. He laughed and said I know you are his old friend so advise him in your personal capacity. He was taking advantage of my long relationship with him since he was a Brigadier. He said many people tell me that Hamid Mir is a traitor who always criticises the Army but I know you are not a traitor. He requested 'please help us as a patriot'.

Despite the full backing of Gen Bajwa and the ISI, Imran Khan failed to get a simple majority in the 2018 election. Finally, ISI managed the support of some independents and that's how Khan became Prime Minister. Gen Bajwa never treated Khan as his boss. He expressed displeasure over the appointment of chief ministers in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Gen Bajwa wanted his men as CMs but Khan refused to oblige him. I remember one meeting with

Gen Bajwa in 2019 when he told me that you must meet the Prime Minister and tell him to remove Chief Minister of Punjab Usman Buzdar. I once again offended him by saying, "I am only a journalist, it is not my job".

Gen Bajwa always wanted good relations with India. He once told me that he engaged India for the first time through a back channel in 2017 after getting permission from the then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. After the arrival of Imran Khan in the PM office he activated the back channel again.

A suicide attack in Pulwama in February 2019 followed by air strikes by the Indian Air Force in the Balakot mountains of Pakistan created a threat of war between the two countries. Release of captured Indian pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan averted the threat of war. India revoked article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir in August 2019 and Imran Khan started comparing Modi with Hitler. Within months of these unfortunate incidents, Imran Khan inaugurated the Kartarpur corridor in November 2019.

According to Gen Bajwa, Indian PM Narendra Modi agreed to visit Pakistan on April 9, 2021. Gen Bajwa claims that PM Modi wanted to join the annual four-day pilgrimage to the Hinglaj Mata Mandir in Lasbela, Balochistan. Indian and Pakistani officials discussed the possibility of opening Hinglaj corridor between the two countries by connecting Barmer to Hinglaj Mata Mandir. Gen Faiz Hameed reportedly met Indian National Security Advisor Ajeet

Doval in a Gulf country and agreed that both countries will open trade and cricket links with each other. A decision was taken in principle to open trade with India but this decision was turned down by the cabinet of Imran Khan. Gen Bajwa claims that both sides agreed to freeze the Kashmir dispute for 20 years.

Imran Khan definitely wanted to make good relations with India but he also suggested moving slowly. He aimed to win elections in Pakistan administered Kashmir in July 2019. Gen Bajwa thinks that actually Khan was misguided by his Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi who was scared of criticism in the media.

Days before his retirement, Gen Bajwa blasted Pakistani media for creating hurdles in a possible breakthrough between India and Pakistan. I was present in a closed door security workshop at National Defence University, Islamabad where Gen Bajwa said that whenever we try to improve relations with India, some people in the media blame the government for agreeing to sell Kashmir to the enemy. Gen Bajwa also wanted to engage Israel but Imran Khan was reluctant. Finally, the transfer of DG ISI became a big source for mistrust between the two men, and that's how the Army decided to stay away from politics. I have first-hand knowledge that when a no-confidence motion was tabled in parliament, Imran Khan forced Gen Bajwa to meet his opponents and tell them to withdraw the motion. Gen Bajwa met Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari many times and asked them to withdraw the motion but they refused. Finally Gen Bajwa sabotaged the game of Shehbaz Sharif in Punjab by asking their ally Pervez Elahi to join hands with Imran Khan. That's why Punjab CM Pervez Elahi is not happy with the anti-Bajwa statements of Imran Khan.

High rollers vie for New York casino in Times Square-or the Mets' parking lot

The political response to a Manhattan gambling complex has ranged from skeptical to hostile

NEW YORK — On one end of Manhattan, one of the nation's most prominent developers is billing his plans for a gaming complex as "the highest-end casino probably ever built."

Several blocks away, the builder of a 93-story skyscraper with an Instagrammable observation deck is promising a crowd pleaser of its own: A balcony-style bar overlooking Times Square adjoining New York City's very own Caesars Palace.

The heart of the nation's largest metropolis is now the stage for a contest to host the first casino in New York City — a competition that's drawn interest from Las Vegas-based Wynn Resorts and rap superstar Jay-Z.

But the real estate honchos promising pomp and circumstance — namely, Related Companies at Hudson Yards and SL Green in Times Square — have to overcome something their money can't buy: A handful of local politicians who not only don't care about the flashy proposals, but are turned off by Manhattan's years-long transformation into a playground for the rich. That tension — which is coming to a head as the public process to award a \$500 million-plus license gets underway — is opening the door for a gaming facility across the East River, where the owner of the Mets is angling to build a casino on the stadium parking lot in Queens. The expected proposal from hedge fund billionaire Steve Cohen would complement an overhaul of the area, which includes a professional soccer stadium on the rundown lots of auto shops and junkyards. Against that backdrop, a battle of the boroughs is now underway.

"No tourists are going to fly to New York to go to Queens," said Brett Herschenfeld, an executive vice president at SL Green, which is partnering with Caesars Entertainment and Jay-Z's Roc Nation for a Times Square casino. "They'll just go to Las Vegas... There's nothing unique about Queens."

"We'll get tourists, and we're gonna get affluent residents of



Manhattan and New Jersey, who will not go to Atlantic City anymore," he added. "That's a whole new consumer base that we get, because we didn't put it outside of Manhattan." Cohen declined to respond to the jab, but Queens politicians weren't hearing it.

"I could see no other place better than Queens for the city's comeback," Queens Borough President Donovan Richards said in an interview, referring to Cohen's pitch for Citi Field. "We have an opportunity to have an entertainment hub, soccer, baseball, all intertwined."

"Queens is the future," he added. "Manhattan? That was maybe 1983. We're in 2023 now."

Richards' counterpart in Manhattan is as skeptical as he is welcoming.

"There are unique hurdles in Manhattan," said Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine. "Any site here, there's an opportunity cost for what else could be built on that site. And because of the density here, there's just no avoiding a major impact on surrounding businesses and offices and residents."

The players

The state opened the bidding process on Jan. 3 for up to three New York City-area casino licenses, setting the stage for a fierce battle among gambling giants and some of the city's

premier real estate developers for a slice of the country's largest untapped gaming market.

The state Gaming Facility Location Board is likely to award licenses to two existing "racinos," according to several people familiar with the process — Genting's Resorts World in Queens and MGM's Empire City in Yonkers — leaving bidders furiously competing for the third opportunity to bring gaming to the nation's largest city. The high-stakes competition is launching as New York continues to pull itself out of a pandemic slump: A higher-than-national unemployment rate, increased office vacancies and depressed subway ridership headed into a global economic downturn.

In addition to the two proposals in Manhattan and Cohen's expected bid at Citi Field in Queens, Thor Equities is pitching a casino near the storied Coney Island boardwalk in Brooklyn, while gambling companies and developers including Las Vegas Sands Corp., Bally's Corp. and Vornado have also expressed interest.

SL Green and its partners have pitched a Times Square gaming complex as a boon for an area struggling with rising crime and reduced foot traffic amid continued remote work. Related, partnering with Wynn for a resort-casino on Manhattan's far West

Side, has framed its proposal as a way to boost the nearby Javits Center as it struggles to draw convention business after serving as a makeshift hospital during the height of the pandemic.

Both Manhattan bidders argue a casino in the borough would yield the maximum potential revenue for the state and attract a higher-end clientele, including tourists, that an outer borough casino wouldn't be able to match. And with Genting considered a frontrunner, some say a second casino in Queens would be imprudent.

Hostility from Manhattan officials But the political response to a Manhattan gambling complex has ranged from skeptical to hostile.

"A lot of Manhattanites feel like we don't need a casino," said state Sen. Brad Hoylman, whose district includes Hudson Yards. "Most of my constituents view casinos as having negative externalities so for them to be convinced is going to take a lot of work and I don't know if Manhattanites can be convinced."

State Sen. Liz Krueger, whose district includes Times Square, declined to weigh in on a specific proposal but was decidedly cool to a prospective gambling operation.

"I know that many kinds of gambling are now legal throughout our state. But,

speaking for myself, I am never excited about expansion of gambling activities," she said in a text. "They can be addictive, exploit those least able to afford to lose their money, and redirect people's disposable income away from other activities and toward the owners of the gambling concerns. As they say: 'The house always wins.'"

Hoylman and Krueger are among those who will have a key role in the process through six-person community advisory committees, which need to affirm sufficient support for casino applications before bidders can advance their proposals. These committees, set to evaluate submissions in the coming months, will include appointees of Mayor Eric Adams, Gov. Kathy Hochul, city and state lawmakers and the borough president. City Council members representing the area around proposed casinos would have additional sway in a future city land use review process that would likely apply to most of the sites.

The state board could issue licenses as soon as later this year, but its request for applications did not set deadlines for when the local advisory committees must vote or when applicants would need to secure zoning approvals.

The City Council member representing both Times Square and Hudson Yards, Erik Bottcher, echoed the concerns. "I think it's a very, very narrow path because of widespread opposition by a large swath of residents right out of the gate," Bottcher said in an interview.

A warm reception in Queens

The proposal at Citi Field, pitched as a way to create a comprehensive sports and entertainment district in an underdeveloped area, has met a warmer reception from some local politicians. Backers have framed it as part of a broader plan that would also bring expanded open space in the area and better access to the waterfront. The assembly member representing the area, Jeffrion Aubry, was bullish on the proposal for a casino on the site of a parking lot.

After firing thousands of employees, Meta is now withdrawing full-time job offers sent to new hires

Meta parted ways close to 11,000 employees. Now, the company is reportedly withdrawing full-time job offers amid fear of recession

(SAI Bureau) Mark Zuckerberg-led Meta has rescinded job offers sent to new hires. The new development comes in the wake of the mass layoffs conducted in the company in the month of November. In the biggest ever layoff conducted in the history of the Zuckerberg-led company, Meta parted ways close to 11,000 employees. Now, the company is reportedly withdrawing full-time job offers amid fear of recession. As per tech reporter Gergely Orosz, Meta has rescinded full time offers in London. Orosz tweeted, "Meta has rescinded full time offers in London, as I confirmed with devs impacted. New grads with offers due to start in February have been taken back in bulk. I know of about 20 people so far. This is the first

time I'm aware that Meta is taking back signed, FTE offers. Orosz had previously reported that the full time engineer offers were not at risk until a week ago. The company had previously rescinded offers for a large group of interns at its London office. The interns were due to start in January 2023 at the London office. He also reported that a software engineer with an outstanding offer got on the phone with a recruiter at Meta to find out if their

full-time position is safe, or it could also be rescinded. He was then informed that the full time job offers were not at stake. However, Meta seems to have taken a U-turn on its decision to not withdraw full time offers. As per reports, Meta is

also quietly laying off people across offices. The company is also planning to shut an office in New York. However, there is no truth to the rumours as the sources working at the office have denied the reports.

Mark Zuckerberg informed the employees about layoffs through an email. He took complete responsibility for the layoffs. He wrote, "I want to take accountability for these decisions and for how we got here. I know this is tough for everyone, and I'm especially sorry for those impacted."

After Meta and Twitter, Amazon also laid off thousands of employees recently. So more than 25,000 people were impacted in the latest round of layoffs which took place across big tech companies.



Jack Ma to give up control of Chinese fintech giant Ant Group



(SAI Bureau) Billionaire Jack Ma will give up control of Chinese fintech giant Ant Group following a series of adjustments agreed upon by shareholders on Saturday. Ant Group's founder Jack Ma will no longer control the Chinese fintech giant after the firm's shareholders agreed to implement a series of adjustments that will see him give up most of his voting rights, a report said.

"No shareholder, alone or jointly with other parties, will have control over Ant Group after the adjustment," the company said in a statement. The decision comes after a regulatory crackdown that scuppered Ant Group's 37 billion dollar IPO in late 2020 and led to a forced restructuring of the financial technology behemoth. The Chinese government had stopped an IPO of Ant Group after the billionaire criticised financial regulators and state-owned banks in October. He had criticised the regulators for "stifling innovation" and compared global banking rules to an "old man's club". Ma also criticised China for lacking a solid financial ecosystem and said Chinese banks are like "pawn shops". His criticism of the Chinese authorities cost him big at the time. Since then, Chinese officials have turned the heat against him.

Remittances from overseas Indians increased by 12% to USD 100 billion in 2022: Sitharaman

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the increase in the contribution of non-resident Indians and said remittances from overseas Indians increased by 12 per cent in one year, taking it to USD 100 billion for the year 2022

(SAI Bureau) Underlining the contribution of non-resident Indians, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said remittances sent to the country by overseas Indians were about USD 100 billion for the year 2022, an increase of 12 per cent in one year. Speaking at a session during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, she described NRIs as the "real ambassadors of India" and appealed to them to use made in India products and services as far as possible so that the country's individual brand can be promoted across the globe. Sitharaman also said that after the "China plus one" policy, the world is now talking about the "European Union (EU) plus one"

policy.

The government is strongly presenting India to multinational companies as a country where they can set up their factories apart from China and the EU, she said. Sitharaman said the Indian diaspora should also partner with small and big businessmen of the country so that the entrepreneurial skills of NRIs can be harnessed in the next 25 years during the 'Amrit Kaal' of independence. "I recognise that remittances, which come from abroad by Indians who migrated, are about 100 billion US dollars for the year 2022. This is one of the highest remittances which is coming," the finance minister said.

This has gone up by 12 per cent if compared to 2021, she said.

"Within a year which was post-pandemic, people thought Indian workers will not go back abroad again, they have not only gone back but more have gone for very useful employment and the remittance numbers have gone up by 12 pc within one year," she said.

Citing the dominance of Indian professionals in information technology, digital technology, automobiles, semiconductor designing, pharmaceutical manufacturing and other fields, she said the country is becoming a global hub of knowledge and progress.

"In the Amrit Kaal of independence, an aspirational India will focus on four 'I' which include infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusion," she said.

World Bank predicts India's economic growth to slow to 6.9% in FY23

(SAI Bureau) A World Bank report has projected India's economy to grow 6.9 per cent in FY23, much lower than the 8.7 per cent growth achieved by the country in the previous financial year. "Growth in India is projected to slow from 8.7 percent in FY2021/22 to 6.9 percent in FY2022/23, the latter revised 0.6 percentage point lower since June," said the World Bank in its latest Global Economic Prospects Report. India will be the fastest-growing economy among the seven largest emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs), the report added. While India remains economically stronger in comparison to all other countries in the South

Asian Region (SAR), the ongoing global financial slowdown could hit the nation's growth in FY24. Elevated inflation, rising fiscal and current account deficit (CAD), a slowdown in exports and low-income growth are some of the key challenges that India needs to tackle in the upcoming financial year. The World Bank noted that India's goods trade deficit has more than doubled since 2019, while CAD stands at a nine-year-high at 4.4 per cent of the GDP.

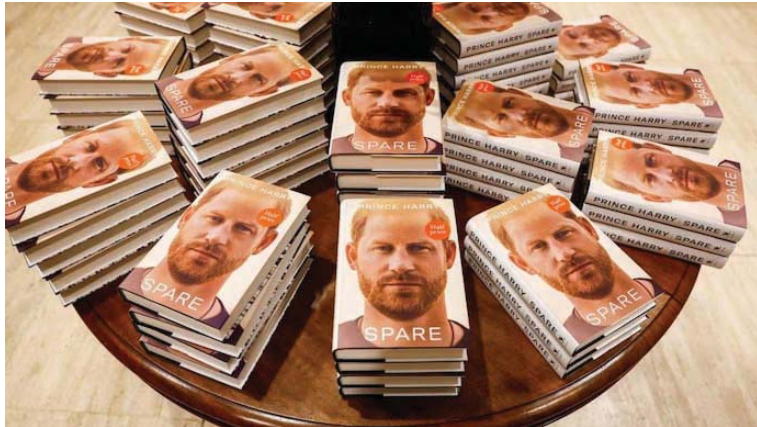
In view of the global challenges, the World Bank has projected India's FY24 GDP growth to slow to 6.6 per cent before "falling back toward its potential rate of just above six per

cent". Despite the challenges and possibility of a marginal slowdown in growth, India is much better placed to weather the economic crisis that has battered its neighbouring nations and triggered panic among western nations.

The World Bank expects global growth to decelerate sharply in 2023 to 1.7 per cent from the 3 per cent it predicted six months ago. The report further highlighted that policy tightening, high inflation, worsening financial conditions and continued disruptions from Russia's invasion of Ukraine have sharply dented global economic growth prospects.

Prince Harry's Spare becomes UK's fastest selling non-fiction book

Prince Harry's memoir, titled Spare, has become the UK's fastest selling non-fiction book



(SAI Bureau) Prince Harry's The Duke of Sussex's memoir, titled Spare, has become the UK's fastest selling non-fiction book ever. Publishers said on Tuesday

that they had sold 400,000 his life and his royal family members. The Royal family, however, has not commented. "We always knew this book on Harry's memoir. Several would fly but it is exceeding extracts from the book were even our most bullish leaked prior to the book's expectations," Transworld release after its Spanish Penguin Random House language edition mistakenly Managing Director Larry Finlay went on sale in some shops said in a statement. "As far as in Spain.

we know, the only books to Prince Harry, in his memoir, have sold more in their first has narrated a heated row with day are those starring the his brother Prince William. He other Harry (Potter)," he has also mentioned that he and added. In his book, Prince William begged their father Harry has made an array of not to marry Camilla. The bombshell revelations about Duke of Sussex has also

admitted to taking drugs and also opened up about Princess Diana's death. He has confessed that he believed for a very long time that his mother was faking her death. Sparing no details, Harry has even mentioned how he lost his virginity in his book.

The release of the book is followed by Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's Netflix documentary. The couple stepped down as senior members of the Royal family in January 2020 and then moved to California to forge a new life.

Lohri 2023: 8 traditional foods to enjoy on Lohri

Some of the traditional foods that are consumed on Lohri include sarson ka saag, makki ki roti, gajak, til-gur laddoos, gajrela, popcorns, peanuts, rewri, and gur. These foods are not only delicious but also have significance in the festival



As the festival of Lohri approaches, people all over India are gearing up to celebrate the harvest festival with traditional foods and festivities.



Some of the traditional foods that are consumed on Lohri include sarson ka saag, makki ki roti, gajak, til-gur laddoos, gajrela, popcorns, peanuts, rewri, and gur.



Sarson ka saag is a traditional Punjabi dish made with mustard leaves and spices. It is usually served with makki ki roti, which is made with corn flour



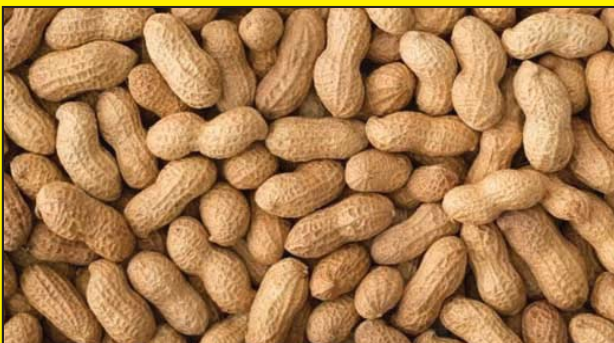
Til-gur laddoos are made with sesame seeds, jaggery, and peanuts.



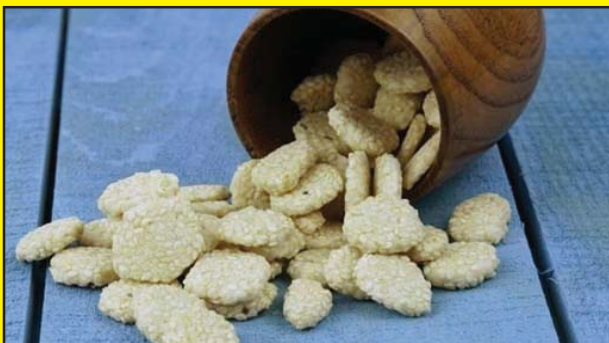
Gajrela is a sweet dish made with carrots, milk, and sugar.



Popcorns are a favorite snack of the festival and are served with a variety of toppings.



Peanuts are also a popular snack and are served roasted or boiled.

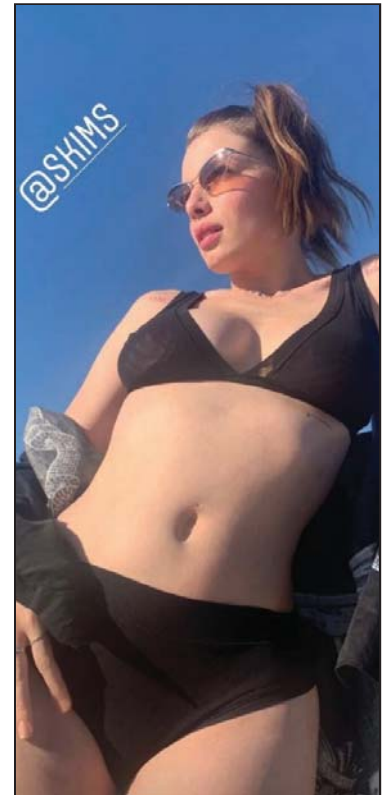


Rewri is a type of sweet made with jaggery and sesame seeds.



Gur, or jaggery, is an essential part of the celebrations and is served in various forms.

Kanye West's new 'wife' Bianca Censori looks exactly like Kim Kardashian as he continues romancing mogul ex's clones



months since their February 2021 split. Ye previously dated another look-alike, 24-year-old model Chaney Jones.

It's not clear exactly when Chaney and Kanye met, but rumors of a relationship between the two started circulating online after Kanye was spotted spending time with her at dinner and a party in Malibu on February 9, 2022. Chaney was one of the celebrities invited to Kanye's Donda 2 listening party.

The influencer, who strongly resembles Kim, rocked a curve-hugging black bodysuit to the party.

She also wore gloves, black-heeled boots, and blue designer glasses, while her dark wavy hair was worn down. The outfit looked like something straight out of the Kardashians star's closet.

But she's hardly the first person Kanye has dated who bares a striking resemblance to his ex. Just days after Julia Fox, 31, accused her husband Peter Artemiev of being a "deadbeat dad," she was spotted on a date with Kanye. Julia confirmed in an op-ed article that the two were dating in January of 2022, telling PageSix that she is excited about her future with him.

"I don't know where things are headed," she told the media

outlet.

"But if this is any indication of the future I'm loving the ride."

The two previously met in Miami while celebrating New Year's Eve, and later went on a second date where he surprised her with a photo shoot.

Model and Instagram influencer, Vinetria, allegedly dated Kanye towards the end of 2021.

Sources close to the pair reveal they had been "hooking up" for a while according to Page Six.

Vinetria was reportedly in Miami with Ye as he recorded his Drink Champs interview, and recently attended his Sunday Service in Los Angeles.

The two were spotted together in public for the first time at Donda Academy's debut basketball game in Minneapolis.

IRINIA SHAYK

In March of 2021, rumors began to circulate that Ye and Russian model Irina Shayk were dating. A source revealed in May that the two "met up one night and had chemistry and hit it off." The source continued: "It's very casual and they have only been in touch for about a month. Kanye has expressed he doesn't want anything serious but likes Irina's vibe." Another source

added at the time "Kanye has been flying in and out of New York to be with [Irina]." In June, the two were spotted together in France, appearing to be "an item". By August, however, the pair had reportedly called it quits. "Kanye has been busy working and spending time with his kids," said a source at the time. "This is his focus. He doesn't have time to date right now. He finds Irina amazing though. They remain friendly."

CHANEL IMAN Kanye was linked to former Victoria's Secret model Chanel Iman in 2010, but the pair never confirmed their relationship.

"Rumors are rumors. Kanye's a great artist. He's very talented," she told Us Magazine.

"I've always loved his music. He's an incredible performer."

MELODY THORNTON

The former Pussycat Doll used to be really good friends with Kim until she reportedly grew close to Kanye in 2010. Melody and Kanye's relationship arrived after his messy split from model Amber Rose. The pair were pictured together at a fashion event in Marc Jacobs' New York store with US sources claiming at the time they'd been "dating for about two weeks." Kanye and Melody's friendship swiftly ended and soon after he admitted he only had eyes for Kim.

(SAI Bureau) KANYE West has continued his trend of Kim Kardashian look-alikes with his shocking marriage to Bianca Censori.

The rapper, who was married to the reality star for seven years, certainly has a type when it comes to relationships. Kanye, 45, is believed to have tied the knot with Bianca two months after his divorce from Kim Kardashian, 42, was finalized.

However, the couple has yet to make their marriage legal by filing a marriage certificate, sources told TMZ.

Bianca, who is from Melbourne, Australia, is said to be a jewelry designer and architectural designer who has

been working at Yeezy since November 2020.

The architect naturally bears an uncanny resemblance to the rapper's ex Kim but recently chopped her long brunette locks into a short blonde bob to switch up her look. The pair were spotted wearing what appear to be wedding bands while having lunch in Beverly Hills on Monday in photos obtained by DailyMail.com.

Sources told TMZ that the ring symbolizes his commitment to her following their ceremony. Meanwhile, Kim and Kanye finally settled their divorce in November.

Kanye's new relationship follows his trend of Kim Kardashian clones in the

Simi Garewal defends Shaleen Bhanot in Bigg Boss 16 promo, says 'don't be hard on him'; Tina Datta reacts.

Bigg Boss 16: Simi Garewal shared a glimpse of her appearance on the show, where she defended Shalin Bhanot after he answered a question related to Tina Datta

(SAI Bureau) Simi Garewal will be seen on Bigg Boss 16. The veteran actor and celebrity chat show host, known for her show Rendezvous with Simi Garewal, shared a promo video on Thursday. Simi took to Instagram Reels and shared the video of her meeting Bigg Boss 16 contestants inside the Bigg Boss house. Simi was seen wearing her signature all-white look as she chatted with Shalin Bhanot, Priyanka Chahar Choudhary and others. In the short clip she posted, Simi could be seen defending Shalin. In the clip, as the contestants entered a room decorated in white, inspired by the set of Rendezvous with Simi Garewal, a voiceover played in Hindi, "For the first time in 16 years, there will be rendezvous with Simi Garewal..." In the video, she asked Priyanka to choose between two options, "Aapke samne doh plate hain, ek mein hai stardom, doosri plate main hain unconditional love (you have two plates to choose from, one has stardom, while the other has unconditional love)." Priyanka chose love. Simi then moved on to Shalin,

and asked him to choose between two options. While her complete question was not shared in the clip, Simi had said, "Ek (plate) mein Tina hai..." To which, Shalin had responded, "Doosri plate mein kuch bhi aur hoga, mein woh doosri plate chununga (whatever is in the other plate, I will choose that)." Reacting to his response, Tina and others looked on in surprise. Simi was then heard defending Shalin, and said jokingly, "Don't be so hard on

him." Tina was seen laughing at Simi's remark. In an earlier episode, Shalin had defended Tina as actor-host Salman Khan scolded her and questioned her relationship with Shalin. He had asked Salman to not be 'so hard' on Tina, which had angered the host.

Sharing the video of her Bigg Boss 16 episode, Simi wrote in the caption, "In Big Boss house tonight! On



ColorsTV!" Many fans took to the comments section of Simi's Instagram Reels, and said they were looking forward to the episode. "Phew!! Not the comeback I expected, but at least there is hope now," read a comment. "Can't wait to see this episode. Missing Rendezvous with Simi Garewal," wrote a fan. Another one wrote, "So good to see you back on TV." A fan also commented on Simi's look, and wrote, "You haven't changed a bit."

Rohit Shetty reacts to Cirkus failure, shares emotional post about his accident on Indian Police Force set: 'We fall...'



(SAI Bureau) Rohit Shetty took to Instagram and shared his picture as he filmed the last schedule of his upcoming web series, Indian Police Force. He resumed work after suffering an accident on the set, and penned an emotional post about the failure of his last film Cirkus, starring Ranveer Singh. Director Rohit Shetty took to Instagram and shared a picture of himself from the sets of Indian Police Force as he shot the last schedule. He resumed the shooting for the web series in Hyderabad after suffering an accident, due to which, he received stitches on two fingers. In the post, Rohit shared how him and his team have been coping with the tragedy. He also reflected on the box office failure of Cirkus, his last film featuring Ranveer Singh. Along with fans, celebs like Sidharth Malhotra, Raveena Tandon and Shilpa Shetty reacted to the post. In the candid picture, Rohit smiled as he looked back. He wore a blue shirt with dark sunglasses, along with an arm sling to give support to his injured arm. The background was blurred with cars in upside down motion on the sets.



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Golden Globe Awards: RRR Wins Best Original Song, No Win In Best Non-English Language Film Category

(SAI Bureau) RRR came, saw and conquered at the Golden Globes. SS Rajamouli's blockbuster won Best Original Song for Naatu Naatu, one of the two categories it was nominated in. It missed out in the Best Non-English Language Film which was won by Argentina, 1985 from Argentina. Other nominees in the category include All Quiet on the Western Front (Germany), Close (Belgium), Decision to Leave, (South Korea). RR is being represented at the Golden Globe Awards by its director and stars - SS Rajamouli, Jr NTR and Ram Charan who is accompanied by wife Upasana Kamineni. Jr NTR and Ram Charan play freedom fighters Komaram Bheem and Alluri Seetharamaraju in the period drama, set in the British-occupied



India of the 1920s. The cast includes Alia Bhatt and Ajay Devgn as well as British actors Ray Stevenson, Alison Doody and Olivia Morris. RRR, which made over 1,200 crore globally, has already

won a slew of international honours including Best Director for Rajamouli at the New York Film Critics Circle awards. RRR has submitted itself for consideration in various Oscar categories as well and is expected to be nominated in at least one category if not more. The Golden Globes are being held in Los Angeles with comedian Jerrod Carmichael as host. The awards return to the Hollywood mainstream after making internal reforms following criticism of its allegedly racist and sexist voting practices. Last year's Golden Globes were boycotted by NBC, which broadcasts the show, and many of Hollywood's big stars led by Tom Cruise who returned his three Globes.

Diljit Dosanjh to perform alongside BLACKPINK, Frank Ocean, Bad Bunny at Coachella 2023

The annual Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival is all set to begin from April 14 to 23. The organisers, on Wednesday, released the lineup for the festival and one of the artists on it is Punjabi singer-rapper Diljit Dosanjh.



The Coachella, the largest all non-White headliners for Post. Last year's Coachella of the three major music the first time since it started lineup included Harry Styles, festivals including Bonnaroo in 1999, according to a Billie Eilish, The Weeknd, and Boston Calling, features report by The Washington Karol G and Doja Cat.

GANDHI GODSE – EK YUDH

(SAI Bureau) What if Gandhi had survived? Director Rajkumar Santoshi (The Legend of Bhagat Singh) delivers the powerful new historical drama GANDHI GODSE – EK YUDH which releases in cinemas across North America on Thursday, January 26, for Republic Day. With new music from Oscar winner A.R. Rahman, the film revolves around the fictional world where Mahatma Gandhi survives the attack and later meets Nathuram Godse in prison, the conversation leads to a fiery debate between them.

Uprooted during partition thousands of Hindus & Sikhs, from Pakistan are refugees in Delhi. The Indian Government struggles to provide for them. Godse holds Gandhi responsible for the partition and misery of Hindus. He shoots Gandhi on 30th January 1948. But Gandhi is miraculously saved. He pardons Godse. Gandhi suggests congress leaders that congress party should be dissolved. But the suggestion gets rejected by the congress committee. Gandhi breaks

his ties with congress, he begins his Gram Swaraj Movement to inspire and organize villages towards self-reliance. Forest conservation, eradication of cast, and fair farming practices are on his agenda. Meanwhile, the system highlights Godse's writing and manipulates public sentiment against Gandhi whose interference has created ruckus within the government. This leads to Gandhi's arrest. Gandhi insists on serving his sentence with Godse. They have multiple debates and arguments, even confrontations on issues of Akhand Bharat & Hindutva,

Muslims Appeasement & Partition, Geeta and Non-Violence. Through dialogue they both evolve and resolve their differences.

Release Date: January 26

Director: Rajkumar Santoshi

Cast: Deepak Antani, Chinmay Mandlekar, Tanisha Santoshi

Producers: Manila Santoshi, Ram Santoshi

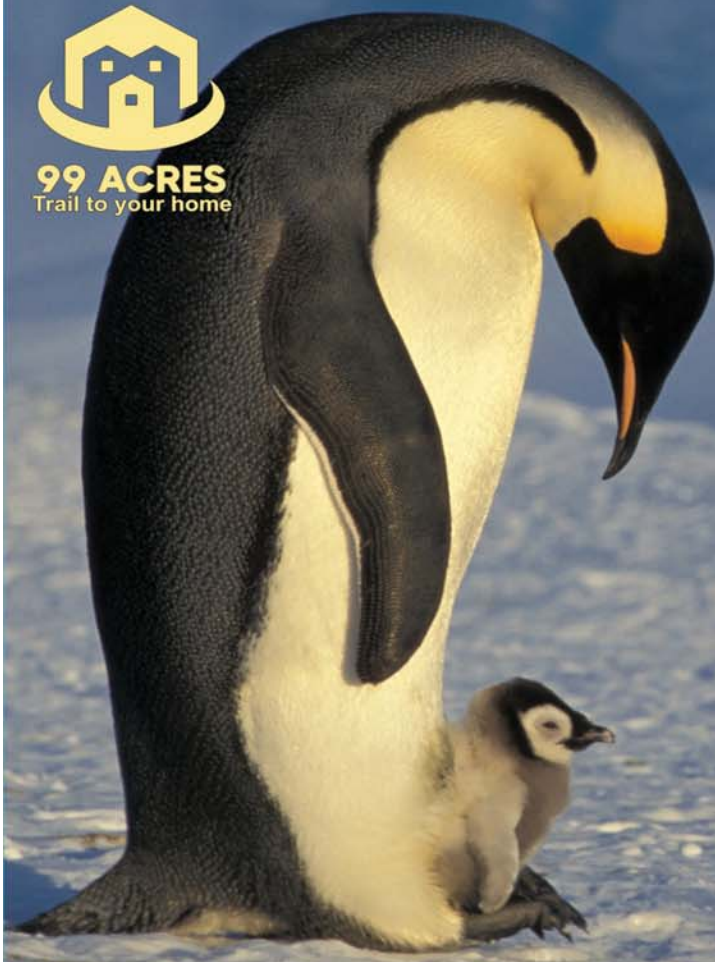
Music: A.R. Rahman

Distributor: Reliance Entertainment



(SAI Bureau) Coachella's Wednesday 1/11 at 11am official Instagram post PT. To access the Loyalty featured the celebrity list Presale, register with the starting from April 14, which same email that purchased shows Diljit Dosanjh or registered a wristband headlining the event on last year."

April 15 and 22 alongside artists BLACKPINK, Kid Laroi, Charli XCX, Labrinth and Underworld. The caption on the post read, "Ugh was stuck in drafts. Register now for access to passes at coachella.com. Presale begins Friday, 1/13 at 11am PT. Very limited Weekend 1 passes remain. For your best chance at Coachella, which will be held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California, in the Coachella Valley in the Colorado desert, is one of the biggest music festivals in the world. Other headliners at the festival are Frank Ocean, Bad Bunny, Jai Paul, Burna Boy and Calvin Harris. Diljit shared the artist lineup on his Instagram Story and tagged it with a smiling emoji.



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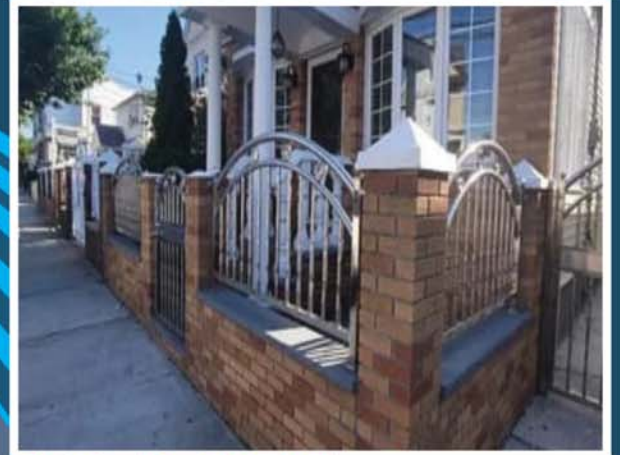
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