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Vol. 21

Issue 43

Friday December 16, to December 22, 2022

\$1

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

"Diwali Stamp Power of One Awards"



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Such An Arrogant Prick: New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern caught on hot mic

The 42-year-old has been New Zealand's prime minister for five years, and won favour worldwide for her management of crises and down-to-earth approach to politics



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Didn't Cede An Inch of Land

Amit Shah on India-China clash at Arunachal LAC

Indian soldiers showed immense bravery during the skirmish and within no time gave a befitting reply to Chinese troops, Home Minister Amit Shah said.



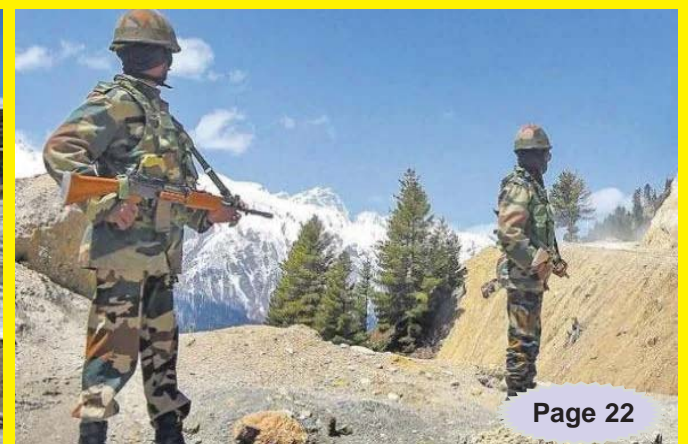
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So What Triggered The Clashes at LAC?

India Stops China Attempt At Land Grab In Arunachal 10 Points On Clash

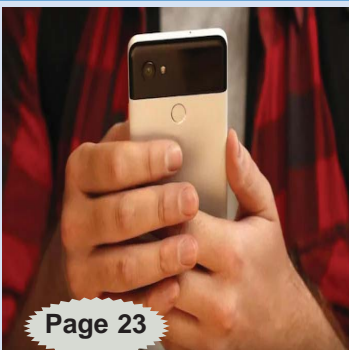


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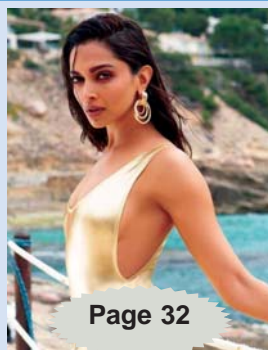
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Mumbai man looking for massage service online finds wife, sister's pics on escort site



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Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's best fashion moments from Pathaan song Besharam Rang



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"Unable To Compete, So...": Nora Fatehi Sues Jacqueline Fernandez



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"Diwali Stamp-Power of One Awards" held at The United Nations Headquarters

Four veteran diplomats and a US lawmaker honored with an award for their efforts in working towards a peaceful and secure world



(By Sharanjit Thind) The United Nations General Assembly recognized the significance of Diwali in its resolution 69/250 in 2014. Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights celebrated every year, and it also represents the victory of "Good" over "Evil," and "Light" over "Darkness." It is an official holiday in many countries. Thereafter, Diwali Foundation USA Inc. was established in 2017 to promote a peaceful and consensus-based process to achieve societal "Good," as befits the high hopes and ideals of humanity enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The Foundation established "Diwali Stamp - The Power of One" Award to celebrate and highlight the important work done in a peaceful manner, especially at the United Nations. The award, which is also known as the 'Oscars of Diplomacy', is presented

to former top diplomats of the United Nations or a member state for their effort to help form a more perfect, peaceful and secure world for all." The 2022 award ceremony was co-organised by Diwali Foundation USA and the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, and the Permanent Missions of Chile, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Morocco, Oman and Sri Lanka to the United Nations. Due to

the Covid-19 pandemic, the awards were suspended in 2020 and 2021. Notably: Previous honourees of the award include former Deputy Executive Director of UN Women Lakshmi Puri, former UK Ambassador to the UN Matthew Rycroft, Ukraine's former UN envoy Yuriy Sergeyev and Vietnam's former Permanent Representative to the UN Nguyen Phuong Ngai.

Award Winners 2022:

Former Permanent Representative of Georgia to the UN Kaha Imnadze, Former Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN Keisha McGuire, Former Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Former Permanent Representative of Benin to the UN Jean-Claude do Rego, Former Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives Eliot Lance Engel. India's Permanent Representative to the UN and President of the Security Council for the month of December, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, said Diwali signifies the



"Diwali Stamp-Power of One Awards" held at The United Nations Headquarters

triumph of good over evil and the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya. "It is a time to not just celebrate but to also pause and reflect...Above all, a celebration of the eternal values that are so relevant to what we do here at the United Nations – goodness, caring and compassion," Kamboj said. She addressed a gathering that included ambassadors, diplomats, UN leaders and members of the Indian-American diaspora. Chair of Diwali Foundation USA Ranju Batra, who spearheaded efforts for over seven years to get a commemorative 'Forever Diwali' stamp issued by the US Postal Service in 2016, said at the award ceremony that Diwali Stamp's celebration is not of a religion or of a nation, but of the spirit

of harmonious inclusiveness and cross-cultural understanding that all religions deserve. "While my journey took seven years, Diwali Stamp is here forever. It will be a matter of pride for generations to come because it was done with help of every faith – because we all are entitled to a better and peaceful tomorrow, no matter where we were born, and no matter how we pray!" she said.

Batra had sent tens of thousands of paper petitions to Citizens Advisory Committee, which William Givker, director of United States Postal Service (USPS) Stamp Development, said: "was the biggest push".

Eminent Indian-American attorney and Chair of

the National Advisory Council South Asian Affairs Ravi Batra said the UN is "humanity's Vatican of Hope". "The diplomats are the Arch-Angels, who when doing good, can stop a war from starting, or even stop one that's raging, do a 'Black Sea Grain Deal' as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres did with Turkey, Russia and Ukraine to save 50 million men, women and children from starvation," he said. "Diplomacy then tilts between life or death, good and evil," Batra said, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that "this is not an era of war. So, we must all help make an Era of Peace". He said the ideals of Diwali are the ideals of the UN Charter.



"People of Gujarat have Voted Sensibly, They have Voted for Development, Development, Development"

(South Asian Insider Bureau) New York- Addressing a huge gathering at Royal Albert Palace New Jersey, the first celebrations outside India Jagdish Sewhani , President of The American India Public Affairs Committee said that this is a historical Win for BJP , seventh consecutive win for BJP that shows people of Gujarat have full faith in BJP and Leadership of Shri Narendrabhai Modi ji .This is a vote for development and Performance.People of Gujarat are smart they totally rejected Revdi Culture the culture of freebies , they firmly believes if the country has to Prosper every individual has do there bit that's Sabh Ka Prayas .

Mr Sewhani Further said that normally in elections people vote for anti incumbency , but this is the first time that people of Gujarat have voted for pro incumbency and reelected BJP Government for seventh consecutive time a record in the history of Indian Elections.



Jagdish Sewhani addressing the Historical BJP Victory Celebrations

This is because people have faith in Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi who campaigned tirelessly and addressed 31 rallies and three Roadshows , including the 50 Km road show in Amdavad. Mr Sewhani Thanked people of Gujarat for bringing back BJP to Power for seventh consecutive time. As we are entering Amrit Kal , the India will be top three



BJP victory celebrations

Economies in the world in year 2047 when India will be celebrating its 100th year of Independence, said Mr Sewhani , the foundation of which is lead by our dynamic Visionary Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi. Mr Sewhani said that this is the beginning of celebrations and many more events will be organized and held around the

United States . Every town in United States should celebrate this historical victory . Dr Vithal Dhaduk said that Prime Minister Modi ji as dedicated, Hard working Leader and thanked People of Gujarat for bringing back BJP to Power and reinstalling Bhupendrabhai Patel as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

The Tulsi Gabbard Show YouTube Premiere: Tucker Carlson on Life, Death, Power, the CIA + The End of Journalism

(SAI Bureau) Honolulu, HI — In The Tulsi Gabbard Show YouTube Premiere streaming Tuesday, December 13th at 9:00 am EST, Tulsi Gabbard talks with America's most-watched cable news host, Tucker Carlson. Subscribers to The Tulsi Gabbard Show on YouTube can chat with Tulsi live during the premiere and share their reaction to the candid, eye-opening exchange between Tulsi and Tucker.

Tulsi and Tucker share their thoughts on the state of the mainstream media, the powerful influence of the national security state, and the dangers of politicizing agencies like the FBI and CIA to go after fellow Americans. They get deep into conversation about the temporary nature of life, the reality of death, and finding peace in God's love,

sharing a side of Tucker Carlson that few people ever see. Former Congresswoman and 2020 Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard is a combat veteran with three deployments to the Middle East and Africa. She currently serves as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves working as a Civil Affairs Officer.

Tulsi first served in elected office in the Hawaii State House of Representatives

when she was 21 years old. Due to the attacks on 9/11, she enlisted in the



Army National Guard. In 2004, she gave up an easy re-election campaign and volunteered to deploy to Iraq with the 29th Brigade Combat Team where she served

in a medical unit. After returning home in 2006, Tulsi worked in the U.S. Senate as a legislative aide to the late Senator Danny Akaka, who was Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. She volunteered for a second Middle East deployment as a Platoon Leader. Having experienced firsthand the true cost of war, Tulsi ran for United States Congress at age 31, vowing to honor the lives and sacrifice of her brothers and sisters in uniform. She prevailed in a difficult election and went on to serve in Congress for eight years as a member of the Armed Services, Homeland Security, and Foreign Affairs Committees. Foregoing a run for re-election to Congress, she ran for President in the Democratic Primary in 2020.

Society of Indo-American Engineers and Architects (SIAEA) Celebrated its 40th Annual Gala in New York City

Recognizes honorees for their contribution in the architectural, engineering, planning and construction fields and provides scholarships



Current President Ketan Shah



President Ketan Shah, Honoree Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan, Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte (Photo Courtesy – Ketan Shah)

(SAI Bureau) New York, NY – The Society of Indo-American Engineers and Architects hosted their 40th Annual Gala on Saturday, November 12, 2022, which was attended by over 600 members and

their guests. The theme of the Gala was the "Power of Diversity and Inclusion". This theme reflects upon the diversity of groups and celebrates its uniqueness. It's about helping people feel that they belong

much is changing all around us. This theme is represented tonight not only in words, but in our special guests, honorees, and all the attendees in the audience too. Each person brings a wealth of knowledge,

and that their contribution matters. Ketan shah, SIAEA President addressed that Our theme for the gala this year is 'Power of Diversity and Inclusion', and this theme could not have come at a better time, when so

experience, and a strong sense of hard work, resilience, and future endeavors. A key part of the Gala is to recognize and award professionals who have contributed to the architectural, engineering and construction industry and to provide scholarships to a select group of current students who may need financial assistance. The SIAEA President, Ketan Shah, said "The Gala is our biggest event of the year. My Executive Committee and I have worked diligently for months to create an event that is fun and honors individuals that have excelled in their professions. It's a night of music, food, and friends".

Physician and Office Manager Agree to Pay Over \$420,000 to Settle Kickback Allegations Involving New Jersey, Texas and South Carolina Laboratories



(South Asian Insider Bureau) Vijesh Patel, M.D. and his office manager and wife Laju Patel, both of Port Neches, Texas, have agreed to pay \$422,789 to resolve False Claims Act allegations that they received illegal kickbacks in violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute in return for referring patients for laboratory testing, and both have agreed to cooperate with the Department of Justice's investigations of, and litigation against, other participants in the alleged schemes. "Kickbacks can undermine a physician's medical judgment, result in unnecessary testing, and increase health care costs borne by taxpayers," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian M. Boynton, head of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "We will continue to pursue physicians, laboratories, and others responsible for schemes that violate rules intended to safeguard the integrity of federal health care programs." The Anti-Kickback Statute prohibits offering, paying, soliciting, or receiving remuneration to induce referrals of items or services covered by Medicare, Medicaid and other

federally funded healthcare programs. The Anti-Kickback Statute is intended to ensure that medical providers' judgments are not compromised by improper financial incentives and are instead based on the best interests of their patients. The settlement announced today resolves allegations that Dr. and Mrs. Patel received kickbacks in violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute in return for Dr. Patel's referrals to three laboratories: Texas Laboratory. From December 2016 to July 2018, Dr. Patel allegedly received thousands of dollars in payments from a purported management service organization

(MSO) named Indus MG LLC (Indus) in return for ordering laboratory tests from True Health Diagnostics LLC (True Health), a clinical laboratory in Frisco, Texas. The Indus MSO's payments to Dr. Patel allegedly were disguised as investment returns but in fact were based on, and offered in exchange for, his referrals to True Health. New Jersey Laboratory. From August 2018 to August 2021, Dr. Patel allegedly received thousands of dollars in kickbacks disguised as investment returns from a purported MSO named Avior Group LLC (Avior) in return for ordering laboratory tests from RDx Bioscience, Inc.

(RDx), a clinical laboratory in Kenilworth, New Jersey. RDx allegedly funded remuneration to Dr. Patel in the form of volume-based commissions paid to an independent contractor recruiter, Corum Group LLC, which used an associated company, Avior, to pay kickbacks to Dr. Patel and other physicians in return for their referrals. In addition, from December 2018 to August 2022, Mrs. Patel allegedly received kickbacks from RDx in the form of commercially unreasonable fees to purportedly collect urine specimens for testing that Dr. Patel referred to RDx.

Lab Owner Convicted in \$463 Million Genetic Testing Scheme to Defraud Medicare

(South Asian Insider Bureau) A federal jury in the Southern District of Florida convicted a Georgia man today for his role in a scheme to defraud Medicare by submitting over \$463 million in genetic and other laboratory tests that patients did not need and that were procured through the payment of kickbacks. According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Minal Patel, 44, of Atlanta, owned LabSolutions LLC (LabSolutions), a lab enrolled with Medicare that performed sophisticated genetic tests. Patel conspired with patient brokers, telemedicine companies, and call centers to target Medicare beneficiaries with telemarketing calls falsely stating that Medicare covered expensive cancer genetic tests. After the Medicare beneficiaries agreed to take a test, Patel paid kickbacks and bribes to patient brokers to obtain signed doctors' orders authorizing the tests from telemedicine companies. To conceal the kickbacks, Patel required patient brokers to sign contracts that falsely stated that they were performing legitimate advertising services for LabSolutions. The telemedicine doctors approved the expensive testing even though they were not treating the beneficiaries and often did not even speak with them. From July 2016 through August 2019, LabSolutions submitted more than \$463 million in claims to Medicare, including for medically

unnecessary genetic tests, of which Medicare paid over \$187 million. In that timeframe, Patel personally received over \$21 million in Medicare proceeds. Patel was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and wire fraud, three counts of health care fraud, one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States and to pay and receive illegal health care kickbacks, four counts of paying illegal health care kickbacks, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. He is scheduled to be sentenced on March 7, 2023, and faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on the first conspiracy count, 10 years on each health care fraud count, five years on the second conspiracy count, 10 years on each kickback count, and 20 years on the third conspiracy count. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI Criminal Investigative Division; Special Agent in Charge Robert M. DeWitt of the FBI Miami Field Office; and Special Agent in Charge Omar Pérez Aybar of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) Miami Regional Office made the announcement.

AAPI Share the Warmth Program Brings Comfort to the Needy across the USA



several years, AAPI at the national level and various local chapters at the state level have been jointly leading efforts to bring warmth and cheer into the lives of the needy across the United States. This program was started in 2019 and it has now become an annual tradition of giving by AAPI to local communities. AAPI's "Share the Warmth" project has donated thousands of blankets to the poor and the needy in several homeless shelters across the nation. "I am very happy to inform you that AAPI with local chapters Share a Blanket program going extremely well and I am proud to say that more than 30 Chapters have come ahead to join the program, said Dr. Raghu Lolabhattu, Vice Chair AAPI Board of Trustees and Chair, Share A Blanket program.

(South Asian Insider Bureau) American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI). "Therefore, we are renewing the tradition under the 'Share the Warmth AAPI 2022 Blanket Drive' and request your support to make this initiative a success and impactful." For

Nirav Modi exhausts all legal remedies to stay in UK, political asylum now last hope

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: India despite court orders. Modi Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, one of the accused in the Rs 11,000-crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case, Thursday lost a bid to move the UK Supreme Court against his extradition to India, technically exhausting all his legal remedies to stay in Britain. However, he still has a political asylum request pending with the UK authorities, which is his last hope to evade extradition. In case he is granted asylum, he would not be extradited to the UK. This is a big victory for us and he should be sent back to India for a further probe after this," a government source said. "He, however, still has a request for political asylum pending with the UK authorities, which is a separate procedure.



SC judge Bela Trivedi recuses from hearing Bilkis Bano's plea challenging release of rape convicts

Supreme Court judge Bela M Trivedi recused herself from hearing a plea filed by Bilkis Bano challenging the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the rape-murder case

(News Agency) Supreme Court judge Justice Bela Trivedi on Tuesday recused herself from hearing a plea filed by Bilkis Bano challenging the early release of 11 men convicted for the offence of rape and murder. The writ petition filed by Bilkis Bano was listed for the first time before a bench of Justice Ajay Rastogi and Justice Bela Trivedi. When the matter was called out, the bench directed the case to be listed before another bench that Justice Trivedi is not a part of. Advocate Shobha Gupta appearing for Bilkis Bano, however, said that their predicament is that the Supreme Court is due for winter vacations. To this, the bench said that the court has already taken cognisance of the case and counter affidavit has also been filed. The bench was referring to a batch of pleas which are already pending before the SC and are being heard by a

bench headed by Justice Ajay Rastogi. The court had issued notice on the first petition on August 25 this year when a bench led by former CJI NV Ramana had heard the case. It's in these petitions that the Gujarat government had filed an affidavit informing the SC that these 11 convicts were released after they completed a 14 year sentence on good behaviour and with the Central government's approval. Bilkis Bano has also filed a review petition seeking review of Supreme Court's May 2022 order. That case was also listed today before Justice Ajay Rastogi and Justice Vikram Nath in chambers.



What's challenged in the review? Even though the crime in the present case was committed in the State of Gujarat, the Supreme Court in 2004 directed the transfer of the trial from Ahmedabad to a competent court in Mumbai. One of the convicts in the case had filed a writ petition before the Supreme Court of India seeking

directions to the State of Gujarat to consider his application for pre-mature release under the policy dated July 9, 1992, which existed at the time of his conviction. A bench headed by Justice Ajay Rastogi in May 2022 held that once the crime was committed in Gujarat after the trial was concluded and the judgement of conviction came to be passed, all further proceedings, including remission or pre-mature release, have to be considered in terms of the policy which is applicable in the State of Gujarat. The Supreme Court had therefore directed the Gujarat government to consider the application of that convict for premature release in terms of its policy dated July 9, 1992, which is applicable on the date of conviction and to be decided within two months.

"We Will Be Lucky If We Get 5% Growth Next Year," Says Raghuram Rajan

"India's inflation problem is more about commodities inflation problem, vegetables' inflation problem. That is also going to be negative for the growth," Ex-RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said

(News Agency) New Delhi: Former Governor of Reserve Bank of India Raghuram Rajan has said he believes the country will be lucky if it achieves 5 per cent growth next year.

The former governor also said next year is going to be more difficult than this one. "Of course, this one had a lot of difficulties with the war and all that. Growth is going to slow in the world.

People are raising interest rates that bring down growth," he said.

While talking with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the former governor of the Reserve Bank of India said, "India is also going to be hit. India's interest rates have



also gone up but Indian exports have been slowing quite a bit."

"India's inflation problem is more about commodities inflation problem, vegetables' inflation problem. That is also going to be negative for the growth," he said on Wednesday in a candid talk with Rahul Gandhi. The economist said, "I think we will be lucky if we do 5 per cent next year."


The problem with the growth numbers is that you have to understand what you are measuring with respect to, he said. "We had a terrible quarter last year. And,

you measure with respect to that you look very good. So ideally what you do is look before the pandemic in 2019 and look at now."


He said, "If you look at 2022 vis-a-vis 2019, it's about 2 per cent a year. It's too low for us." While being asked what he attributes this to by Rahul Gandhi, he said, "Pandemic was part of the problem but we were slowing before the pandemic. We had gone from 9 to 5. And, we haven't really generated reforms which will generate growth."

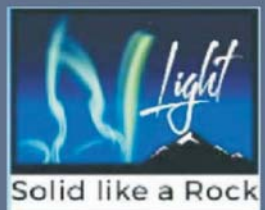
Rahul Gandhi had asked him: "There is one thing happening, 4-5 persons are getting rich and they could go into any businesses

and the rest of the people have remained backward. Farmers, the poor have formed a new Bharat. These 4-5 persons' dreams are fulfilled while those of the rest are dashed. What should we do with this inequality?" "This is a big problem. This is not about industries," the economist said, adding, "The upper middle class have gained because they could work during the pandemic whereas the poor would have to go to factories and the factories were closed during the pandemic," he said. "This divide has grown during the pandemic," he said further.




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This December, 'Dilli ki sardi' is missing. Know why

For the last two days, the temperature during the daytime in Delhi has been 4-5 degrees Celsius above normal. Here's why

(News Agency) Winters in Delhi are well-known for being spine-chilling. Despite the fact that half of December has almost passed, the bitter cold is yet to be felt. People are wondering why the daytime temperature is higher than normal and why it is not getting cold yet. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) estimated that the wind speed in Delhi would increase from Tuesday. They also stated that a drop in temperature was expected after December 13. Winters in Delhi are well-known for being spine-chilling. Despite the fact that half of December has almost passed, the bitter cold is yet to be felt. People are wondering why the daytime temperature is higher than normal and why it is not getting cold yet.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD)



increase from Tuesday. They also stated that a drop in temperature was expected after December

13. "When the western disturbance is active over the mountains, the wind speed decreases in the plains. When the speed of the winds is low, then there is an increase in the temperature. Similar weather is being felt in Delhi and surrounding areas for the last two-three days," said Mahesh Palawat, Vice-President of Skymet. While the national capital's maximum temperature has risen, the minimum temperature has remained unchanged. According to RK Jeenamani, senior scientist at the IMD, "It is possible to see such fluctuations in the weather. Since November, the minimum temperature was less than 10 degrees, so it feels like there is not much winter in December. But, the minimum temperature is near normal."

Protests ended, but Shaheen Bagh's young Muslim women have been launching daily mutinies

Shaheen Bagh's long sit-in gave the women a voice against CAA. But they didn't stop at it, now they are questioning everything

(SAI Bureau) When 25 women from Shaheen Bagh went to protest the hijab ban in Karnataka colleges earlier this year, the police were ready with a deployment three times the size of the demonstrators. They kept a tight watch on the women. That's the alarm that just the name of Shaheen Bagh sets off even today. The landmark anti-CAA protests by Shaheen Bagh ended almost three years ago. But what has largely gone unnoticed is how the protests fueled a new energy among young Muslim women in the neighbourhood, sparking a million small mutinies every day – from hijab to menstruation to resisting bulldozers. These mini-revolutions have flown under the radar of headlines mostly focused on Shaheen Bagh

leaders arrested on UAPA charges. The long sit-ins and nightlong vigils during the CAA protests have thrown open the public sphere for young teens here. After shouting 'kagaz nahin dikhayenge' (We won't show the NRC papers) slogans, they have now found their voice. "The Shaheen Bagh movement is not over yet. It is still going on and is alive in us. Raising our voice against wrong is Shaheen Bagh," said Taiyyaba Razique, a 30-year-old doctor, with pride. She is part of a group of 10 residents of Shaheen Bagh who are fighting for better civic amenities, educating young girls on menstrual hygiene, and holding skill development workshops for the youth. They keep abreast of national events

and mobilise quickly to lend their voice, like in the case of the hijab protest. The women and their families are shunned and stigmatised. Most are denied job opportunities, and others are facing financial ruin. And the police

are always watching. "The administration thinks that we will not get up if we sit," said Shagufta, a 47-year-old former teacher, bursting into laughter. Her anger is tempered with humour.

Facebook Parent Meta Sees Another Big Exit In India: 4th In Nearly 2 Months

Vinay Choletti shared an update on exiting WhatsApp on LinkedIn

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: WhatsApp Pay's India Vinay Choletti has resigned just after four months he was elevated to the position, according to his details on a professional social media platform. Vinay Choletti's resignation is the fourth high-profile exit in about one and half months from Meta in



company last month. Vinay Choletti shared an update on exiting WhatsApp on LinkedIn. "Today was my last day at WhatsApp Pay and as I sign off, I can proudly say that watching the scale and the influence of WhatsApp in India has been a humbling experience," Vinay Choletti said on Wednesday. He joined WhatsApp from Amazon in October 2021 to head Merchant Payments vertical WhatsApp Pay. An email query sent to WhatsApp elicited no immediate reply.

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Rajiv Gandhi Foundation took grants from China, Zakir Naik: Amit Shah

Home Minister Amit Shah said that the registration of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation was cancelled as it took grants from the Chinese Embassy and Zakir Naik

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) had got grants from the Chinese Embassy and Islamic preacher Zakir Naik and hence its registration was cancelled. Shah also said the Congress had raised the border issue in Parliament to avoid questions on the RGF's FCRA [Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act] cancellation. Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Amit Shah said that the opposition, especially Congress, disrupted the Question Hour in Lok Sabha. "The Congress unfortunately disrupted Question Hour even after being told that the Defence Minister (Rajnath Singh) will give a statement on the issue. I saw the Question Hour list and, after seeing question number 5, I understood the anxiety (of Congress)," the home minister said.

The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF), he alleged, had got Rs 1.35 crore from the Chinese Embassy. Its registration was cancelled as this was not according to FCRA rules, he said.

"Congress should answer what did the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation do with the Rs 1.35 crore received from

the Chinese Embassy during the year 2005-07? Congress should tell the country why Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust took Rs 50 lakh from Zakir Naik's



organization in FCRA account in July 2011 without permission?," Amit Shah said, hitting out at the grand old party. "India's permanent seat in the UN Security Council was sacrificed because of Nehru's love for China," Shah said. Two months ago, the Ministry of Home Affairs cancelled the FCRA licence of the Foundation. RGF is a social organisation named after the former PM and chaired by his wife and Congress

leader Sonia Gandhi.

ON INDIA-CHINA CLASH

Amit Shah also spoke on India-China clash that happened on December 9 along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang. No one can capture one inch of land till the Narendra Modi government is in power, he said. His statement came as the opposition demanded a discussion on clashes between Indian and Chinese forces along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. He applauded Indian soldiers for their valour. "I want to say it clearly... till the time the BJP government led by Prime Minister Modi is in power, no one can capture an inch of our land," Shah said. "On December 9, PLA troops contacted the LAC in Tawang Sector which was contested by own (Indian) troops in a firm and resolute manner. This face-off led to minor injuries to few personnel from both sides," the Indian Army said in a statement. Both sides immediately disengaged from the area. As a follow up of the incident, own (Indian) commander in the area held a flag meeting with his counterpart to discuss the issue in accordance with structured mechanisms to restore peace and tranquillity," it said.



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Congress Leader Arrested For "Be Ready To Kill Modi" Remark

Mr Pateria triggered outrage on Monday when a video of him surfaced in which he was heard goading a group of people to "kill" PM Modi in order to "save" the Constitution



(South Asian Insider Bureau) Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Congress leader Raja Pateria was arrested today for his controversial "be ready to kill" Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarks. Mr Pateria triggered

outrage on Monday when a video of him surfaced in which he was heard goading a group of people to "kill" PM Modi in order to "save" the Constitution. In the viral video, Mr Pateria, at a gathering of party workers, said, "Modi will end elections, Modi will divide on the basis of religion, caste, language; the lives of Dalits, tribals, and minorities are in danger. If the constitution is to be saved, then be ready to kill Modi." Following his remarks, the Madhya Pradesh government ordered a police case against Mr Pateria, a former state minister. A case was registered against Mr Pateria Monday afternoon at Pawai police station in Panna. Mr Pateria was arrested from his residence in Hata town of the state's Damoh district. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan condemned the comments and even targetted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

by saying: "The real face of those pretending to do a Bharat Jodo Yatra is coming out." "Congress people are not able to compete with PM Narendra Modi in the field, that's why a Congress leader is talking about killing him. This is the height of hatred. True feelings of Congress are being revealed. The law will take its course," the Chief Minister said in a statement. In the same video, Mr Pateria claimed that the word "murder" in his speech meant "defeat". The Congress leader said that he is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of non-violence and defeating PM Modi in elections is necessary to protect the rights of minorities. The Congress,

meanwhile, expressed its dismay over the "reprehensible" comments made by Mr Pateria. "Absolutely reprehensible! No such words should be used against the prime minister or against anyone. The Congress party denounces, condemns such statements," Congress leader Pawan Khera said, as quoted by news agency PTI. "There is no excuse to use any such language against anyone including and especially the prime minister," Mr Khera said. Mr Pateria will be in jail till at least December 26 after failing to secure bail. Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Congress has issued him a show cause notice and sought a response within three days.

Karnataka: Pro-Hindu group demands ban on 'Halal certificates'

The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS) has demanded the implementation of the "Halal Certificate Prohibition Act", a bill that will be inducted in the next Karnataka Winter Session

(South Asian Insider Bureau) The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS) on Tuesday handed over a memorandum to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national secretary CT Ravi seeking a ban on Halal certificates and the formation of an 'anti-Love Jihad' police force in Karnataka. The memorandum was also submitted to MLAs of the state to enact an anti-Halal law in the upcoming Winter Session. The pro-Hindu group has demanded to bring the "Halal Certificate Prohibition Act". A bill will be inducted in the next Karnataka

Winter Session. The HJS has also submitted the memorandum to ban the halal certificate to Karnataka Health minister K Sudhakar. Earlier in October, HJS demanded that the government should immediately stop the system of issuing halal certificates in the country. The party's national spokesperson had said that the halal certificate, which was earlier restricted to meat, has now been extended to the sale of residential apartments, fashion industry, cosmetics and food products.



5G on iPhones: When will Indian iPhone users get to use 5G on their phones?

The Cupertino-based tech giant Apple just released the beta version of iOS 16.2 that comes with many features and updates, including 5G

- **Airtel and Reliance Jio have started rolling out 5G services.**
- **Apple just released the beta version of iOS 16.2 that comes with 5G support.**
- **The stable iOS 16.2 update is said to release soon.**

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Telecom operators Airtel and Reliance Jio have started rolling out 5G services across the country. In total, the telecom giants have pushed their 5G service in almost 50 cities and towns. Jio is said to push its 5G across the country by the end of 2023, while Airtel said its 5G service will reach all parts of the country by March 2024. While most Android phone users have started receiving 5G update from their OEMs, iPhone users

are still waiting to use 5G. Apple previously confirmed that iPhone users in India will get 5G support with the upcoming iOS 16.2 update. The company just released the beta version of iOS 16.2 which comes with many features and updates, including 5G. Since the update is available in beta, only beta program subscribers will be able to get access to the latest iOS 16.2 update. Now, this also means not all eligible iPhone users will be able to

get access to 5G support yet. However, it is assured that a stable release will happen very soon. Once the iOS 16.2 update is released for stable build users, eligible iPhone users will be able to use 5G on their devices. Now, which are the eligible iPhone models? Check out the list Since the iOS 16.2 beta update has been released, we believe the stable build will be released very soon, possibly in the

days to come. Once the update is released, head over to the Settings menu > software update > check for an update and then install it on your iPhone. Ensure to connect the phone to a stable WiFi network before installing the iOS 16.2 stable update. Now, if you can't wait for the stable release, install the beta update, but note that it comes with multiple bugs and fixes.



Angry Nitish in the House-Bihar CM's rage over hooch deaths is latest in spate of flare-ups

CM lashed out at BJP MLAs Wednesday when they raised Saran tragedy in Assembly. Once called a 'role model for MLAs', Nitish has been losing his cool in public more & more.

(SAI Bureau) Patna: On Wednesday, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar lost his cool when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs tried to corner his government over the Chhapra hooch deaths inside the Bihar assembly. "Tum log ko kya hogaya? Tum log bhi sath thhe. Ab tum log bhi sharabi ho gaye. Nahi bardast karne. Bahar nikalo inko (What has happened? You people were also there [when anti-liquor laws were enforced in 2016]. You all have become alcoholics. I will not tolerate this. Throw them out)," Nitish shouted at the BJP MLAs who tramped inside the well of the House. Leader of Opposition, Vijay Kumar Sinha, demanded an apology from Nitish for using offensive language inside the House. When the CM refused to concede, the BJP boycotted the proceedings and later demonstrated outside the Assembly against the "nexus" of the police and illicit liquor traders for the hooch deaths. Incidentally, Sinha himself had faced the CM's wrath in March for "interfering" with the probe in the Lakhisarai case wherein two persons were jailed for violating Covid protocol. The CM had accused Sinha, then

Bihar assembly speaker, of "violating the Constitution". Nitish's Janata Dal (United) and the BJP were back then sharing power in the state. In the present case, the JD(U) chief's outburst left even members of his ally, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), stunned. "It was an unfortunate event. It's the role of the opposition to raise a matter of public concern," RJD MLA Sudhakar Singh told ThePrint. Opposition MLA Arun Kumar was less charitable in his observation. "The language used by CM Nitish Kumar is a result of his frustration about losing the electoral battle and also having to play second fiddle to Tejashwi Yadav," the BJP legislator told ThePrint. Outbursts not new his is not the first time that Nitish was caught not in the best of his moods while tackling his rivals both inside and outside the assembly.

On 27 November, 2020, the Bihar chief minister was furious when then

leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav attacked him for the second day in a row in the assembly. "Yeh khali jhooth bolta rahta hai (He only speaks lies)," Nitish shouted in the assembly. "I keep listening because he (Tejashwi) is the son of a friend



who's like a brother to me. I don't say anything. Who made his father the leader of the legislative

party? Who made him Deputy CM?" In March, Nitish attacked RJD MLC Sunil Singh, the chairman of a cooperative body, when he contested the government's response on procurement of foodgrains from farmers. "I know about you and your deeds. I will expose it," the CM said. Later, RJD MLA Mukesh Roshan had entered the assembly with a stethoscope in hand, saying that he wanted to check up on the CM as he was worried about his "blood pressure".

Two years ago, while campaigning for Chandrika Rai at a rally, Nitish stopped his speech midway when he heard slogans of 'Lalu Zindabad'. "Kya bol rahe ho, kya bol rahe ho, kya bol rahe ho (What are you saying, what are you saying, what are you saying)," Nitish thundered.

The spate of flare-ups over the recent years is a departure from the image of Nitish — a politician who stuck to decent language and, more importantly, who never lost his temper in public. In 2006, then Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee described Nitish as a role model for MLAs on how to conduct themselves inside the House.

"But that was 2005 when Nitish was the senior ally in the NDA. Even in 2010, he joined hands with the BJP despite having 115 MLAs against 91 of BJP. The insecurity began in 2015 when the JD(U) won just 71 and the RJD emerged as the senior partner (in the Grand Alliance) with 80 MLAs. In 2020, his party came third with just 43 MLAs while BJP got 75. Even today, his party has 45 MLAs against RJD's 79," former Bihar deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi told ThePrint.



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Tawang Clash: India Should Prepare For War, If It Wants Peace At China Borders

Common sense says China would not make the mistake of attacking India, a rising power with a military that is among the best in the world. It also has an army that's been tested time and again across different frontiers, whether along the Line of Control with Pakistan or while dealing with insurgencies in the Northeast. The People's Liberation Army, in sharp contrast, has not left the barracks for decades. The last time it left, it came back with a bloody nose from Vietnam in 1979. And the last time India and China exchanged fire, it was the PLA that suffered military reverses. In 1967, four years after the humiliating defeat at the hands of Mao's troops, India turned the table to win decisively against China in the heights of Cho La and Nathu La at the Sikkim border.

On Monday, as reports of Indian and Chinese troops clashing near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh on 9 December 2022, became public, the tension between the two nuclear neighbours scales new, dangerous heights. As per sources quoted by ANI, the Chinese had come with around 300 soldiers but didn't expect the Indian side to be prepared too. The fact, however, is that the situation along the LAC has never been normalised since the June 2020 Galwan clashes that led to the death of at least 20 Indian soldiers; the Chinese side too suffered "proportionate casualties" but refused to provide exact numbers. Since then the armies of the two countries remain in a standoff mode at the LAC, despite more than a dozen rounds of talks between them. In fact, if one looks closely at the infrastructural development pursued by China in the last decade, and especially since 2020, it becomes obvious that Xi Jinping has a bigger and more ambitious Himalayan agenda: He wants to go one step above Mao Zedong and teach India the ultimate lesson. Is the PLA, besides improving military infrastructure near the LAC, conditioning its troops for high-altitude warfare?

Former Ambassador Rajiv Dogra, in his just released and extremely pertinent book, *War Time: The World in Danger*, explains why India should be wary of Xi Jinping's imperialistic designs. "Both (India and China) aspire for the peak position on a mountain called Asia, but China is in no mood to share that space with India," he writes. India's China policy, if there is one, has traditionally been ostrich-like. China has used this Indian vacillation to further strengthen its position. But now under Narendra Modi, as Delhi regains some sort of defence and diplomatic mojo, Beijing thinks it's now or never. And then of course, there's an internal Chinese dynamic at play.

"It may be reasonable to say that China has reached its economic plateau. The favourable demographics that allowed it to become the world's

factory are declining. Since China's economy is slowing and heavily in debt, its leaders might see now as the best time to use a victory in war as a diversion and, thereby, displace America's power in the region. If they calculate that war with the US carries unacceptable risks, then they might opt for a winnable confrontation with India."

Dogra has a point when he states that India faces greater Chinese threats than Taiwan. For, any Chinese action on Taiwan, howsoever tempting it may appear, shall invite swift and immediate action not just from the US but also its allies in the region, such as Japan and Australia. "Therefore, however much Xi is urged by the PLA to sort out the Taiwan problem, he knows that an invasion would immediately trigger an all-out Taiwanese response. More than half of any Chinese invasion fleet could be sunk by concentrations of shore-based Harpoon cruise missiles supported by a host of Taiwanese air- and sea-launched land attack and anti-ship cruise missiles... Clearly then, the forcible seizure of Taiwan would impede, not advance China's goal of regional hegemony."

In contrast, Xi might be tempted to believe that India could take longer in getting help. First and foremost, the very presence of Joe Biden in the White House can be reassuring to the Mandarins. Biden, after all, "is more likely to mull over the issue till it is late". Xi knows that he won't get a better person occupying the White House. Then of course, there are logistic issues: Any attempt to move American troops and equipment to the Himalayas and acclimatising the troops to those heights, won't be an easy, swift affair.

To add to it all is the perception that India is currently "the lonely gun", especially after the Ukraine war, where the Modi government chose to walk the fine diplomatic line rather than blindly following the US-led West. So, the West will have its own grudges with India, even as Russia may refuse to side with a "friend" (India) against its "brother" (China), and Pakistan is raring to open the second front against India! In the given scenario, Xi may be tempted to believe that a military action in the Himalayas would be a safer, more productive bet.

Finally, it's the nature of the Xi Jinping dispensation that should worry India. Xi is today more dangerous than Mao at his lunatic peak. The latter, for instance, had Zhou En-lai to sober him and his hawkish international diplomacy, so had others after him. Xi has none. He is an emperor without any adviser. As Jude Blanchette and Evan S Medeiros write in *The Washington Quarterly*, former Presidents "Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao had strong partnerships with their respective premiers (Zhu Rongji and Wen Jiabao), thus giving the State Council significant authority over setting economic policy.

Our horrific border crisis demands that we keep Title 42's powers in place. Here's how we do it

The largest migrant caravan to ever enter the U.S. just crossed the southern border. What is President Biden's response? To ask for more money just so border agents can process and release those illegal immigrants into American communities more efficiently. The message to would-be migrants and the cartels that control their passage is clear — America's border is wide open, come on across! And with that open border comes human traffickers and drug smugglers. In 2021, fentanyl smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico killed roughly 70,000 American residents, and that number will only be higher for 2022. This is beyond a crisis — it's a full-scale catastrophe. But as bad as things are now, they're about to get much, much worse. Because on December 21, U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan's insane decision to block Title 42 enforcement will go into effect. For almost three years, border patrol agents have relied on Title 42 powers to quickly remove illegal immigrants. It started under the Trump administration as an arrangement to restrict the spread of the coronavirus and limit the strain on America's already-stressed public health infrastructure. For President Joe Biden to keep that arrangement in place would have been common sense, as border crossings soared to record-setting levels under his watch. That is why even Democrats blasted Biden's attempt to end Title 42 enforcement earlier this year. Senator Joe Manchin, D-W.V., called it a "frightening decision." Senators Mark Kelly, D-Ariz, and Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., made similar comments. And Rep. Jared Golden, D-ME, introduced a bill to uphold Title 42 because its closure "would be dangerous for both migrants coming to America and Americans

themselves."

Meanwhile, I worked with Senate Republicans to create our own proposal, which would extend Title 42 authority through February 2025, so no renegade judge or radical Biden bureaucrat could remove this vital tool from border agents.

Ultimately, growing political pressure and a rapidly rising number of border crossings — approaching a record two million in one year — forced Biden to go back on his campaign promise and keep Title 42 in place. Judge Sullivan's ruling, however, changes things. It declares Title 42 enforcement illegal and demands that the administration end it by December 21. A Republican president would have appealed the decision, but President Biden doesn't dare to draw fire from fanatical immigration activist groups. As a result, Biden officials are preparing to comply, despite having no plan to manage what will follow.

The legacy media will cry foul, as will some Democrats. But this is the same media that ignored the border crisis for years, and these are the same Democrats looking to strike a lame-duck amnesty deal. They are part of the problem — obstructionists standing in the way of doing what is right.

Fortunately, maintaining Title 42 expulsion powers has been a bipartisan priority. Common-sense Democrats in the House and Senate should join forces with Republicans to protect our national security by extending those powers in the year-end funding bill. Without them, cartels and traffickers will trick even more vulnerable people into making the dangerous journey across our border. As the current flood turns into a tsunami, more people will slip across undetected, including terrorists.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

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A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

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State Elections Offer Big Lessons On How To Counter BJP

By Keshava Guha

Since 2014, the BJP's intellectual and political opponents have, too often, chosen to comfort themselves after each BJP win with a series of consoling fantasies. The BJP wins because of EVM-tampering. The BJP wins purely on money power. The BJP wins because of Hindutva. The BJP wins because voters don't know what's good for them; if they did, they would vote for Rahul Gandhi (there is more than a whiff here of Bertolt Brecht's satirical call "to dissolve the people and elect another"). The BJP won in Gujarat because AAP divided the anti-BJP vote.

There is truth, sometimes a lot of truth, to many of these claims. An asymmetric access to corporate money power (now legalised in the form of electoral bonds) is a large factor in the BJP's dominance (as it once was in Congress dominance); the entry of AAP did divide the anti-BJP vote in Gujarat; Hindu majoritarianism has, on several occasions, helped win elections; the normalisation of that majoritarianism says as much about the electorate as its representatives.

The trouble is that each claim is taken to an absurd extreme, and other facts or phenomena are simply wished away. The net result is a refusal to properly confront the reality of BJP dominance, and thus to be capable of actually challenging it. The truly salient story of this Gujarat election is not Opposition division, but BJP hegemony. After 27 years of incumbency, the BJP won not just its highest ever vote-share in Gujarat, but its highest in any state election anywhere. A united Opposition will not defeat an incumbent that wins 52.5% of votes cast. The BJP's vote-share was comparable to that of the Left Front in West Bengal at its 1980s peak.

The Congress won 17 seats in Gujarat. If we were to take the seats in which they finished second, and give them every single AAP, or for that matter AIMIM, vote, their tally would rise to 33, and the BJP's would fall to 140. It would still be by some distance the Congress' worst-ever performance in the state. While Narendra Modi is PM, Gujarat is the closest thing India has to a one-party state, even more than Andhra Pradesh or Odisha. The fusion of Hindutva,



Gujarati sub-nationalism, favourite-son-as-PM and charismatic authority that Modi embodies in Gujarat is without obvious precedent in Indian history. So too is the extent to which Hindutva now dominates Gujarati Hindu society. Much analysis of the election has claimed that the BJP won "despite widespread discontent". Too little attention was paid to the manner in which the BJP had preemptively addressed that discontent. In September 2021, the party high command dismissed not only Vijay Rupani but his entire Cabinet. It was the non-violent equivalent of the purges one associates with one-party regimes. The message was that there is only one true ruler - Modi - and as long as voters keep faith with him, he will ensure accountability. If, before the Gujarat election, the question on most lips was who will come second, after the election, the trickiest question may be how to assess AAP's performance. Judged against the party's stated ambitions, a result of five seats and 13% of the vote is a failure that all but justifies the BJP's repeated assertions that AAP was a non-factor except in the Delhi media.

But those numbers require a little unpacking. AAP's returns show a party that, for now, is confined to a few areas of Gujarat. The vast majority of the 40 or so seats in which AAP came first or second came from a handful of urban or semi-urban districts (Surat, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Rajkot) or from the tribal belt. Conversely, there are large parts of Gujarat where the party barely exists. There were 51 seats where it won less than 5% of the vote, and 19 seats where it won less than 2%. AAP's results are those of a party making its effective debut in a

large state. It does not yet have a pan-Gujarat organisation. One way of interpreting Arvind Kejriwal's pre-election predictions of victory is delusion; a more plausible one is simple ambition. Another way of looking at AAP's performance is that it was more impressive than anything the BJP has yet managed in four of the five southern states, or for that matter Punjab. On this view, the time to judge AAP in Gujarat is 2027. In both Delhi and Punjab, the party has been prematurely written off before. Its ambition and staying power cannot be questioned. Yet there are reasons to be skeptical of how high its ceiling might be in Gujarat. One is the extent of BJP hegemony, at least as long as Modi is around. Another is the self-defeating and at times risible manner in which the party tried to prove its Hindutva credentials, as sadly exemplified by Arvind Kejriwal's proposal for placing deities on currency notes.

AAP is attempting to grow, state by state, as the Jan Sangh/BJP once did, except at 3x speed, and without a coherent ideological programme or the resources of a social movement. Its core message of developmental populism will have limited returns in the many states where voters are broadly satisfied with the incumbent government. Its current approach also carries too great a risk of over-promising. Over-promising, in the form of the politically fruitful but fiscally reckless Old Pension Scheme, was also a factor in the Congress' win in Himachal. The importance of this win is not to be underestimated. It came at a time when many within the party - forget about its critics - no longer believed it capable of winning anything. Himachal had a record of anti-incumbency, and an

unpopular Chief Minister - but both those things were also true of Uttarakhand.

If Uttarakhand spoke to a party adept at missing open goals, Himachal shows how and where the Congress still can win. We have known since 2014 that in state elections, the BJP is far from invincible. Since the start of 2015, its strike rate in assembly elections (excluding those states in which it was not a viable contender for power) is under 50%. That strike rate rises against the Congress, because the latter is often organisationally dysfunctional and because it is easier to nationalise a state election when the opponent is a fellow national party.

Himachal saw an organizationally-resilient Congress that kept infighting in check (at least until results day), focused its resources on winnable seats (unusually, the Congress was much more "efficient" than the BJP in turning votes into seats) and, above all, kept the election local, a referendum on the Chief Minister rather than the Prime Minister. The Karnataka Congress would profit from each of these lessons. On Twitter, the familiar vidwans of chamchagiri were quick to credit the Congress' victory to Priyanka Gandhi. But with the party High Command focused on Bharat Jodo Yatra, victory in Himachal was a

local phenomenon.

Intriguingly, Supriya Shrinate, the Congress' combative head of social media, who has consistently sought to separate the Yatra from these elections, said on results day that, come 2023, we could judge the success of the Yatra in electoral terms - the terms being the Congress' performance in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The contrast between Gujarat and Himachal lies not merely in the identity of the winning party, but in what each says about the political salience of BJP Chief Ministers. The elevation of Bhupendra Patel, a little-known first-time MLA, seemed to take to the extreme a policy that the BJP High Command had developed in states such as Haryana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Himachal and Karnataka - choosing a Chief Minister without a political base of their own, in a manner reminiscent of the Indira-era Congress. Gujarat might seem a vindication of this strategy, Himachal a repudiation; but the lessons of Himachal are ultimately more generalisable. It is too easily dismissed as a mere "small hill state". Nowhere does the identity of a BJP Chief Minister matter less than in Gujarat, where voters place Modi at the head of the ticket whatever it actually says on the nomination form.

Indian politics remain competitive at the state level. The total identification of the BJP with Narendra Modi benefits the party in Gujarat and in Lok Sabha elections. In most state elections, however, the BJP High Command's penchant for the pliant and uncharismatic is more liability than strength. It is no accident that the one state where the BJP has decisively departed from this strategy is the one in which it has done best, electorally - Uttar Pradesh.



US Tech Layoffs Cruel For Indians on H-1B Visas

The tech industry has long relied on skilled foreign workers to fill IT and engineering jobs. The majority are employed through the H-1B visa programmes

A wave of layoffs at US technology companies has forced scores of skilled immigrants on temporary visas to find new jobs within 60 days or leave the country. Their predicament underscores how a flawed system is jeopardizing America's ability to attract and retain the foreign-born talent it needs.

The tech industry has long relied on skilled foreign workers to fill IT and engineering jobs. The majority are employed through the H-1B visa program, which brings 85,000 workers to the US each year. The visas last a maximum of six years, during which time workers can apply for legal permanent residence, if sponsored by their employer. Of the estimated 580,000 current H-1B holders, more than half have had an employer petition for them to get a green card. Due to the system's arbitrariness and inefficiency, however, the process for actually obtaining one lasts years; many immigrants from India - which contributes the largest share of applicants - can expect to wait for decades.

This backlog leaves H-1B holders vulnerable to corporate downsizing - as tens of thousands have recently learned the hard way, including those at Twitter

Inc. and Meta Platforms Inc. Under rules put in place during President Barack Obama's administration, workers who lose their jobs have 60 days to find a new employer to sponsor them or they will have their visas cancelled.

At Meta and Twitter alone, at least 350 laid-off visa holders are now racing to secure new jobs before the grace period expires. Even those who do find work may have to relocate their families, sell their homes or settle for less desirable work just to stay in the country. Forcing skilled immigrants to endure such upheaval is not only cruel but self-defeating. Among America's greatest strengths is its ability to lure and assimilate such talent, thereby boosting growth, entrepreneurship and innovation. H-1B workers also create opportunities for US citizens, by enabling companies

to invest in domestic operations instead of sending jobs overseas.

Yet rather than expanding the pipeline for skilled foreign workers, the US's onerous policies are increasingly pushing them away, with pro-immigration countries like Canada and Australia becoming more attractive destinations for global talent. The number of US noncitizen residents

moving to Canada annually has increased 128% from 2017 to 2019, due partly to a program there that expedites employment visas and allows some skilled workers to obtain permanent residence within six months.

The US should take notice. As a start, President Joe Biden should extend the 60-day grace period for unemployed H-1B visa holders to six months, giving them a fair opportunity to find new jobs, and allow their spouses to continue to work legally in the

meantime. Those who've applied for green cards should also maintain their place in the queue, rather than having to convince a new employer to sponsor them.

Over the long term, broader reform is required to bring in more skilled workers. Congress should increase the overall number of employment-based green cards issued each year and eliminate per-country caps, as a bipartisan bill in the House aims to do. Even better would be to prioritize immigrants with high-value skills rather than those with family ties and establish a points-based system, similar to Canada's, that gives workers with specific abilities and professional experiences a fast track to permanent legal residence. For the moment, such reform appears unlikely, with Republicans focused on securing the southern border and Democrats prioritizing legislation to protect undocumented immigrants. Yet by making the US more welcoming to talent from around the world, a skills-based system would help employers fill critical roles, spark innovation, boost US competitiveness and benefit the economy as a whole. That's a cause both parties should embrace.



Violence is returning to Punjab and India can't afford it. AAP can't forget poll promise

The Punjabi spirit has been dampened by signs of revival of extremist elements, which is a matter of grave concern

By JAIVEER SHERGILL

Thomas Sowell, noted American economist had once said, "Deception is one of the quickest ways to gain little things and lose big things" — this aptly sums up the reality of the Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab governance so far. AAP fought the 2022 Punjab assembly election with the promise to transform the winter of discontent into a glorious summer but instead the state is witnessing a naked dance of lawlessness, terror attacks, crime and death. The recent 'rocket attack' on Sarhali Police station in the Tarn Taran district and the brazenness with which a declared radical outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) is claiming responsibility, cocking a snook at administrators, has posed a valid question in the mind of every Punjabi — is Punjab headed for dark times again? The chronology of incidents of terror has stirred a sense of fear and paranoia in the people of Punjab.

Violence making a comeback

The first 21 days of AAP's rule witnessed 19 murders, including two famous kabaddi players (Sandeep Singh 'Nangal Ambian' and Dharminder Singh). The state also saw a violent takeover of truck unions that involved leaders associated with the new government. Recovery of

explosive device near the Burail jail in Chandigarh; clashes in Patiala among two groups; RPG attack on Punjab intelligence headquarters; recovery of RDX in Tarn Taran; and brutal gunning down of Sidhu Moose Wala have all happened since the AAP took over.

The ebullient Punjabi spirit has been dampened by signs of revival of extremist elements, a matter of

grave concern as neither Punjab nor India can afford resurgence of terror in another border state. These events clearly show that the AAP government has butter fingers when it comes to law and order situation in the state. Crime is rampant because of the loose command control and misplaced priorities of the decision makers, particularly Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Understand Punjab

For the sake of peace and prosperity of Punjab, immediate course correction is required. To begin with, Mann should realise that he is the chief minister of the state and not some 'Prachar Mantri' ('campaign minister') of Kejriwal. The well-founded perception that Punjab is being run by Delhi is hurting the Punjabi

pride and shaking the faith of the electorate. Instead of dodging accountability, the AAP government needs to come out of its propaganda cocoon of 'accusing others of what you are guilty of' and face the reality and deliver the governance it promised.

Rather than focusing on generating headlines by withdrawing / curtailing security of

424 people (whether on basis of political audit or threat audit remains unknown) and deputing police personnel with AAP brigade, the administrators must concentrate on managing Punjab with the understanding of its geography, history, politics, culture and not superimpose the failed 'Delhi Model'. Most importantly, Mann should not allow the resources of Punjab to be diverted to achieve the political dreams of Arvind Kejriwal.

Apart from concerns and welfare of three crore people of the state, one must not forget that Punjab is also key to India's security strategy vis a vis Pakistan. The state shares a 425-km-long border with Pakistan. There have been consistent efforts from the other side of the border

to create disturbances by infiltrating terrorists, sending weapons by drones and targeting the youth through narco-terrorism. The changing political dynamics in Pakistan (coupled with the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan) and its economic turmoil are also notes of caution for the government of Punjab to strengthen institutions of security and establish trust in the state.

Punjab is too important a state to be dealt in a casual manner or exhibiting fault lines that can be exploited by our adversary. The geo-politics of Punjab demands a strong government and cessation of peace will be a big setback for all stakeholders.

The social and cultural foundations of Punjab are strong enough to counter any kind of insurgency. The state government needs to realise these strengths and act decisively to prevent the state from going back on the path of terrorism. The violence and sacrifices in the history of Punjab should not come back as the state cannot afford another era of misadventures and darkness. Bhagwant Mann should remember that voters gave "ek mauka (one chance)" to AAP. This favour should not be returned by giving "many jhatkas"—many shocks—to the law-and-order situation in the state.



A Safer New York



(By Mayor Eric Adams)

While I was on the campaign trail, I met many New Yorkers who expressed their desire for a safer city. New Yorkers want to feel safe in their neighborhoods, at their places of worship, in the subway and on the streets. I vowed to make public safety my

top priority, and under the bold leadership of NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell, our efforts are paying off. We have a lot more work to do, but I want to be clear to New Yorkers: we are making progress.

For the first time this year, we saw a drop of 1.2% in overall index crimes in November compared to November of 2021. What does that mean? It means that in November of 2022 compared to November of 2021, we saw a 32.8% decrease in shootings, a 14.1% decrease in rapes, a 6% decrease in burglary, and a 5.5% in grand larceny. We have also removed more than 6750 guns from our streets so far this year. Gun arrests are at a 27-year high. And we've seen a decrease in murders and shootings. This is not a coincidence. It shows that our laser focus on public safety

is working. We created an anti-gun unit that has been effective at removing illegal firearms, and we've added more checks to detect illegal guns before they enter New York City. We've also had success in our fight against "Ghost Guns"—these are guns that can be ordered online and assembled at home; they do not have serial numbers and are untraceable, which makes stopping them from entering our city even more urgent. We have more officers on patrol in key neighborhoods, and newly-created Neighborhood Safety Teams are focusing on the 30 precincts where a majority of violence occurs. We are working hard and working smart to make the most of our resources and to make our city safer. As part of our Subway Safety Plan, we are sending mobile crisis teams and

outreach workers into the system to connect with homeless New Yorkers and help them get the assistance they need. We've also introduced a surge of 1200 additional police officers patrolling subway platforms and trains each day. As a result, in just over a month, we have seen a 12.8% reduction in major crime in transit stations compared to the same period last year. We're addressing the problem of "Ghost Cars"—cars with illegal paper or obscured license plates that don't follow our traffic rules. And we're pursuing targeted bail reform in Albany. Just as important, we have achieved historic diversity in hiring. We want our NYPD academy classes to resemble the neighborhoods they serve so they can better understand our diverse communities' needs and

form closer connections. So our most recent hires to the NYPD are on average 41% Hispanic, 23% white, 19% black and 15% Asian. And on average, this group is 29% female. There is much more work that remains to be done. Crime is still substantially higher than it was in 2107, and New Yorkers deserve to be safer than they are right now. We will not rest until New Yorkers both ARE safe and FEEL safe. Public safety is the key to prosperity. It is the only way we can achieve a just and equitable New York in which everyone—no matter what language you speak, or where you come from—can thrive. I promised I would make a difference on public safety during my campaign, and as mayor, I am proud to say that we are well on our way to a safer New York.

Newsom says California about to 'break' amid flood of illegal migrants when Title 42 expires

Newsom said illegal immigration policies 'not working' and US government must take 'responsibility and ownership'

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom of California warned Monday that President Biden's plan to reverse former President Donald Trump's border policies could "break" his state. The Biden administration is planning to lift the Trump-era Title 42 policy, which allows police and border officers to expedite the expulsion of illegal immigrants. Newsom, speaking to ABC News on Monday, said, "The fact is, what we've got right now is not working and is about to break in a post-42 world unless we take some responsibility and ownership." "I'm saying that as a father," the governor added. "I'm saying that as someone that feels responsible for being part of the solution and I'm trying to do my best here." Newsom claimed the U.S. government is sending "more and more" migrants to California because the state is "taking care of folks." "The more



we do, the burden is placed disproportionate on us," he said. "We're already at capacity at nine of our sites," Newsom continued. "We can't continue to fund all of these sites because of the budgetary pressures now being placed on this state and the offsetting issues that I have to address.... The reality is,

unless we're doing what we're doing, people will end up on the streets." Newsom's comments come as a surprise after years of championing policies to accommodate and expand protections to illegal migrants entering California. About 22% of California's nearly 11 million immigrants are in the

U.S. illegally, according to the Public Policy Institute of California.

In September, Newsom signed a bill allowing illegal immigrants to obtain state ID, saying, "We're a state of refuge — a majority-minority state, where 27% of us are immigrants." In January, Newsom unveiled his 2022-23 California budget plan, which included universal health care benefits for all low-income residents, including illegal migrants. The Biden administration is requesting billions in additional funding for the border as it predicts an enormous spike in migrant encounters when the Title 42 authority to quickly expel migrants due to the COVID-19 pandemic ends later this month. A court ordered the administration to stop using the authority — which has been used since March 2020 to quickly return migrants to Mexico — after finding it to be unlawful.

Lessons From Delhi, Gujarat & Himachal: Congress Needs Strong Organisation, Not Gandhis And Their Sycophants

In the recent elections in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, the Congress could perform well in the Himalayan state alone. At the time of these elections, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi was leading the Bharat Jodo Yatra across numerous states. The success of the Congress in Himachal demonstrates the importance of a strong grassroots organisation in the state, something the party has lacked in most states for a long time. Congress can win elections without the Gandhis or sycophants surrounding them, a fact that the party will likely refuse to acknowledge.

The Congress' excessive dependence on the Gandhi family is becoming counterproductive.

This time, the Gujarat election was the most important, but the Congress party put its entire energies on the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Rahul Gandhi held just a few rallies, and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge was present for a short time. In the Gujarat Assembly elections in 2012, Congress received approximately 38 percent of the votes, followed by 41 percent in 2017 — in 2022, it received 27 percent votes. In the 2012 Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) received 47 percent votes, followed by 49 percent in 2017 and 52 percent in 2022. Significantly, in the Gujarat elections of 2022, Congress did not lose votes to the BJP, but rather to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). This demonstrates that Congress' poor strategy has the greatest impact on the party in the states.

Jignesh Mevani, a young Dalit Congress leader from Gujarat, stated in an interview with The Indian Express, "Congress did not use me enough; I do not know why." This demonstrates what is wrong with the Congress party's strategy. The party, under the leadership of the Gandhi family,

has been eroding state-by-state local leadership. This has led to the party's current deplorable condition. Hardik Patel, the leader of the Young Patidars, and Alpesh Thakor, the leader of the Other Backward Classes, who joined the Congress party before the 2017 elections and helped it reach the top electoral position in the state, were neglected by the Congress. Both leaders eventually left the Congress and joined the BJP.

The question now arises as to what the Congress was awaiting. The answer is quite simple: the party expected Rahul Gandhi to perform a miracle.

Taking over PoK is war with China and Pakistan

While there is no doubt that New Delhi has made a resolve that the entire Jammu and Kashmir is part of India, be it Pakistan-occupied Kashmir or China-held Aksai Chin, a more nuanced narrative is required to understand what are the repercussions of getting back PoK

By Abhishek Bhalla

Now that elections are over, we may hear less of 'India is ready to take over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir', but wait for the next round of polls. This might make a comeback. While there is no doubt that New Delhi has made a resolve that the entire Jammu and Kashmir is part of India, be it Pakistan-occupied Kashmir or China-held Aksai Chin, a more nuanced narrative is required to understand what are the repercussions of getting back PoK. There is a Parliamentary resolution of 1994 passed in both houses that says the entire Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are an integral part of India. The map of India also shows the entire region within the geographical boundaries of the country.

However, things are different on the ground, with both China and Pakistan in possession of these areas. It's time we cut the hyperbole and let the citizens know the actual ground situation. To put it simply, India faces the threat of China and Pakistan coming together in a scenario like this. India's action in PoK will likely prompt a Chinese intervention.

China's economic and strategic interests in PoK have almost turned parts of the region into a Chinese colony. This is even more significant in the wake of the statement made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "This is not an era of war." Pakistan ceded Shaksgam Valley which is north of the Siachen Glacier, held by India in 1963, which paved the way for the Karakoram Highway by Pakistan and China. To the west of Siachen Glacier is the Gilgit-Baltistan region or the northern areas under Pakistani control. To the west of India's J&K is what Pakistan refers to as Azad Kashmir.

In the current context, there is too much at stake for China as it looks to expand the China Pakistan Economic Corridor which cuts through areas occupied by Kashmir. CPEC is a bilateral project between China and Pakistan with a large network of roads, railways and pipelines spanning across 3000 km that will facilitate trade between China, Pakistan and other countries in the region. The project aims to enhance infrastructure in



Pakistan and also connect China's Xinjiang province to ports like Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan, giving a fillip to trade between the two countries. Pictures of Chinese PLA soldiers have emerged guarding CPEC projects.

Xinjiang borders India's Ladakh and CPEC cuts through the strategic Karakoram Range going into Pakistan. The 1300 km long Karakoram Highway connects China and Pakistan across the Karakoram mountains, making it the highest paved international road in the world. The Karakoram Pass is

north of Ladakh and is strategic for India and China as it falls on the boundary between the Indian Territory of Ladakh and China's Xinjiang autonomous region in Tibet. The all-critical Siachen Glacier under Indian control falls in the Eastern Karakoram Range. Other countries bordering Xinjiang are Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia to the northeast. The official launch of CPEC took place on April 20, 2015, when Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping signed 51 agreements and Memorandums of

Understanding with a combined value of \$46 billion. China has been eyeing to extend the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which is the flagship project of CPEC. BRI is the new name for the earlier OBOR, One Belt One Road CPEC and another five corridors which deliver infrastructure development in more than 65 countries, accounting for 60% of the world's population and 40% of global GDP, according to the CPEC website. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan and takeover by the Taliban has prompted China to push forward its cherished dream of extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Kabul. Former Indian Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria, when in service while speaking at an event in 2020, said, Pakistan is becoming a pawn in Chinese policy and could use the country to enter Afghanistan after the exit of US forces.

"The US exit from Afghanistan has opened options for China in the region,

both direct and through Pakistan, allowing it entry into Central Asia, a region they have been eyeing for long," he said. India is closely tracking China's response to developments in Afghanistan and sources say Beijing is looking at opportunities to exploit Pakistan for enhancing its reach in the war-torn country. According to reviews by the security establishment in India, China has once again proposed the construction of the Peshawar-Kabul motorway as an extension of CPEC in Afghanistan. With this kind of foothold in the PoK, it's unlikely that the Chinese will sit back and see a military operation in the region. Chinese aggression in eastern Ladakh is part of its ploy to deny India any chance of dominating the Karakoram Highway, among others. The developments in Eastern Ladakh since May 2020 are a clear indication of Chinese intentions and it is certainly not limited to Aksai Chin.

Minister-ji, Who Is The 'Asli Besharam'?

By Shobhaa De

I guess I belong to those with a "contaminated mentality" since I thoroughly enjoyed watching two supremely fit Bollywood superstars dancing energetically to the just-released track 'Besharam Rang' from a potential blockbuster called 'Pathaan', due for release next month. Now I am wondering what to do about the "contamination" - how do I rid myself of the toxic material? The mind is a little more complex than, say, a bowl of contaminated noodles. But I doubt my bewilderment is of the slightest interest to Dr. Narottam Mishra (62) who is spluttering with rage over the picturization of the hit track featuring the leads - Deepika Padukone and Shah Rukh Khan. The Minister-ji, who holds the Home Affairs portfolio in the Madhya Pradesh government, has issued a stern warning to the producers: "Fix the costumes or else..." His anger is not over just the 'costume' (bikini), he also sees a sinister plot in the choice of its colour - a sunny tangerine to most viewers, but unequivocally saffron to the minister whose PhD thesis is titled The Role of an MLA in the progress of Indian Democracy. Shabaash, Sir-ji, since you have the democracy roadmap in place, why not take a fresh look at what the word 'democracy' means? Are threats to film-makers and actors a part of the democratic process? You Sir-ji, see 'saffron', viewers see orange. You imply conspiracy, viewers see entertainment.

The suggestion that a 'Muslim man' (SRK), dressed in a green shirt (looks black in the trailer), groping a Hindu woman (Deepika Padukone), clad in a "saffron" bikini, is a deliberate act designed to offend national sentiments is ludicrous at best and dangerous at worst. Already, those misplaced comments made to reporters in Mhow District have triggered a violent backlash with activists of some Veer Shivaji group burning effigies of the stars. Sir-ji, please socho a little before saying you want the colours to be "rectified" and certain scenes "corrected". You've also demanded the lyrics and title of the song be altered. Why? Is this the first orange bikini song in Bollywood? Remember Dimple Kapadia in 'Bobby' (1973)? You were 13 at the time, and perhaps more open, less brain-washed in your thinking. The 'contamination' complex may have come later. 16-year-old Dimple was shown happily cavorting in an orange (saffron?) bikini with lovelorn hero Rishi Kapoor gazing longingly at her. Can't recall the colour of his shirt - was it green? No effigies were burnt, nor any 'rectification' demanded. Riots did not rock India. The movie became a blockbuster and continues to attract viewers 49 years later. You have accused Shah Rukh Khan of "Bringing bikini ladies in films". Sir-ji, what is your problem with bikinis? You've said SRK had no business to go to Vaishno Devi to seek blessings for the success of 'Pathaan' and then be seen dancing on

screen with "bikini ladies". A quick question to the Minister-saab: would his comments have been any different had Deepika worn a blue bikini, and SRK, a red shirt? Is it the bikini? Or the colour? Does 'besharam' in the song apply to one particular 'rang'? If Mishra-ji only sees saffron wherever he looks, perhaps he needs to see an optician. And colour-correct his own vision.

His attack didn't stop with SRK, he went on to describe Deepika Padukone as a part of the 'Tukde-Tukde' gang - a reference to the JNU protests in 2016. When a senior member of the ruling party makes such explosive allegations on a public platform, the repercussions can be lethal. Apart from damaging the commercial success of a film by instigating protests, it can endanger the lives of the actors and cause irreparable harm to their reputations.

In today's weird environment, it's possible to twist and turn just about anything and generate a controversy. Shri Mishra is no stranger to controversies going by his adventurous track record. The latest one involves a beachside song featuring two huge stars coming together on screen after the mega success of their past four collaborations, including 'Chennai Express'. As for me, I'm looking for a good laundromat in my neighbourhood. Want to send my contaminated mind for a thorough bleach job to remove any remnants of saffron and green that may be impairing my vision.

CBO Reports \$248 Billion Deficit for November

(News Agency) The United States has borrowed \$335 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, including \$248 billion in November, according to the latest Monthly Budget Review from the Congressional Budget Office. The following is a statement from Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget: Today's deficit figures remind us that federal borrowing remains out of control, with the U.S. already borrowing \$6 billion per day in the first two months of the fiscal year. That trend may get even worse if Washington has its way by the end of the year. A 10-percent-plus boost in appropriations coupled with who knows how much other tax cuts and spending increases would only add more borrowing and more fuel to the inflation fire the Federal Reserve is working to contain. Rather than haggling over how they can run up the nation's credit card even further, policymakers should instead work step-by-step to put us on a sounder fiscal footing. The smallest step of all: agreeing not to add any new debt for the rest of the year. That's three weeks we're asking our elected leaders to avoid an end-of-year blowout on new spending, tax breaks, and unpaid-for policy extensions and responsibly keep the government's lights on rather than trading spending increases for further spending increases. Ultimately, we will need to bring Washington's borrowing habits under control with a plan for long-term debt reduction and solvency for our major trust funds. If we can make it to New Year's without adding more to our fiscal burdens, we will know policymakers are serious about trying.

Holiday Tree Lighting and Carolers at Brooklyn Borough Hall

Brooklyn BP Antonio Reynoso, Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Marty Maher, and Carolers from Brooklyn's Opera on Tap Joined to Ring in the Holiday Season and Light Up 30-Foot Tree at Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza

(News Agency) Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso was joined by Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Marty Maher and carolers from Brooklyn's Opera on Tap for a public holiday tree lighting at Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza. The 30-foot tree, holiday decorations, and accompanying performance is supported by National Grid, Uber, Target, Ponce Bank, and Urbanspace.



Immigrant Advocates Blast POTUS for Appealing Court Ruling That Would End Title 42

(News Agency) New York, NY— On Dec 7 2022, the Biden administration announced that it would appeal the court ruling that invalidated the Trump-era Title 42 border restrictions that have been keeping people from exercising their legal right to apply for asylum in the United States. The Title 42 program is currently slated to expire on December 21, 2022. Murad Awawdeh, Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition said: "Today's announcement from the Biden administration is the worst kind of political football. After defending Title 42 for a year, the administration tried to end the program this spring. Now that the court has found the use of the program to block access to asylum unlawful, the Biden administration is attempting to make an end-run around our humanitarian obligations. Americans looked forward to turning the page on our anti-immigrant past when they voted President Biden into office and showed up to the polls during the midterm elections to continue to fight for all marginalized communities. But instead of offering hope, our federal government is turning its back on vulnerable people who want nothing more than safety for their families. The United States must uphold an asylum system that is fair, humane, and just for all people. It is time for the Biden Administration to make good on its promises and return America to being a beacon of hope and refuge."

The Masterwork Chorus Performs Handel's Messiah at Carnegie Hall, December 23rd, 2022

Messiah is a great work, and under the leadership of gifted music directors, the singers have come to understand its greatness on both an emotional and intellectual level.

(By Staff Reporter) New York, NY - Handel's Messiah and the holidays are perfect together. There is no better way to enjoy the Holiday season than hearing The Masterwork Chorus' presentation of Handel's Messiah at Carnegie Hall in New York City. When combined with the window displays on 5th Ave., the tree at Rockefeller Center, and dinner with family and friends, it is a wonderful experience for the entire family. Masterwork's Messiah features professional baroque orchestra and soloists, Malcolm J. Merriweather Baritone, Louise Fauteux Soprano, Alyson Harvey Mezzo-soprano, and Jack Anthony Pott Tenor, in the in the legendary acoustic of Stern Auditorium on the Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall. The glorious sound of the chorus singing the beauty of Christ's birth, passion, and resurrection on



Friday, December 23, at 7:30pm. Tickets are available through Carnegie Hall's website, www.carnegiehall.org, through CarnegieCharge 212-247-7800, and at the Carnegie Hall box office at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue. Learn more <https://www.masterwork.org> Founded in 1955 and based in Morristown, NJ, The Masterwork Chorus has a performance history that includes not only the traditional masterworks, but also masterpieces spanning a variety of musical periods and styles, all of which deserve to be heard.

OCM Outlines Delivery Guidance Enabling New York State's First Adult-Use Retail Dispensary Licensees To Jumpstart Sales Guidance Allows Delivery by Bicycle, Scooters in Addition to Vehicles

(News Agency) Today, the Office of Cannabis Management shared guidance for Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary (CAURD) Licensees interested in making sales by delivery. CAURD Licensees will be able to receive approval from the Office of Cannabis Management to begin delivery to customers, jumpstarting sales of New York cannabis products with a model that will help them compete while providing options to licensee-entrepreneurs as they build new adult-use cannabis businesses. Retail licensees to secure a warehouse from which to fulfill delivery orders while building permanent dispensary locations for up to one year. Customers to place online/phone orders only; no in-person sales or pick-up from the warehouse location. Customers to make online pre-payments only; no cash payments from cannabis

consumer to delivery employee Delivery to be made by bicycles, scooters or other similar methods of transportation as well as motor-vehicles Delivery to consumers 21+ in New York, with ID verification upon sale and delivery Up to (25) delivery staff per business, per requirements in the New York Cannabis law The temporary delivery authorization will: Apply to all retail dispensary licensees Require adherence to all public health and safety regulations New York's first legal adult-use cannabis sales will be conducted by individuals impacted by the enforcement of the prohibition of cannabis and non-profits whose services include support for the formerly incarcerated. CAURD licensees will make the first legal adult-use sales with cannabis products grown by family farmers in New York as part of the Seeding Opportunity Initiative.

Coalition of Bipartisan U.S. Mayors, DACA Recipient to Host Press Call Urging Congress to Enact Permanent Protections for Dreamers

Mayors Brainard (R-IN) of Carmel and Schember of Erie (D-PA), Along With DACA Recipient and NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Say: "It's Now or Never for Dreamers. Congress Must Act."

(News Agency) WASHINGTON, DC – On Wednesday, December 7th, Cities for Action, the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and a bipartisan group of U.S. Mayors joined a DACA recipient to call upon Congress to enact permanent protections for Dreamers during the lame duck session. It's imperative that leaders of both parties come together on a deal during this crucial time. DACA is an immensely popular program in the U.S., with a strong majority of voters (65%) saying that Congress should act to protect Dreamers if a federal court overturns the DACA program, along with 78%

of Latino voters. The end of DACA will have dire and insurmountable ripple effects across communities and local economies. An average of 1,000 Dreamers will lose their jobs each week — in labor market sectors already experiencing shortages, such as healthcare, education, service industries, food production and more.

This press call comes a week after Mayors Brainard and Schember joined over 70 mayors from across the country to release a public letter calling on the U.S. Senate to strike a bipartisan deal to pass protections for Dreamers before the end of this year.

NYSOFA Shares Resource Guide for Older Driver Safety Awareness Week

(By Staff Reporter) During Older Driver Safety Awareness Week (December 5 to 9), the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) encourages older drivers and their families to utilize several resources that can help avoid safety risks behind the wheel, including NYSOFA's guide Are You Concerned about an Older Driver?

NYSOFA Director Greg Olsen said: "There are many factors affecting driver safety for older adults. But age alone is not a predictor of risk. In fact, research shows that older adults, as a group, successfully adjust for age-related changes that otherwise affect safe-driving practices." He added: "There are several factors that can lead to unsafe driving conditions for older adults, including medical issues that increase susceptibility to injury, as well as impairment caused by prescription medication. Many resources are available to help individuals adapt to these new realities in their lives or find alternatives to driving, when necessary."

"Keeping New Yorkers safe on the roads is one of our top priorities," said Mark J.F. Schroeder, Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles and Chair of

the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. "Getting older does not mean you have to stop driving, but you do need to be aware of anything that might impact your safety and the safety of others and take action. We are happy to partner with the Office for the Aging to help raise awareness of this important topic."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drivers aged 55 and older are involved in fewer crashes than other groups. However, they are also more likely to be killed or injured in traffic crashes due to conditions like fragile bones, prescription medication use, visual impairments, and chronic medical issues that often accompany the aging process.

Caregivers are a vital set of eyes and ears as well as a trusted source for family conversations or interventions that can resolve unsafe driving situations. If you are a caregiver or a concerned family member, please see NYSOFA's guide Are You Concerned about an Older Driver? It offers

background about safety risks, how to assess these risks, conversation starters for helping a loved one accept or cope with changes in their driving status, adaptive



vehicle equipment, educational resources, and more.

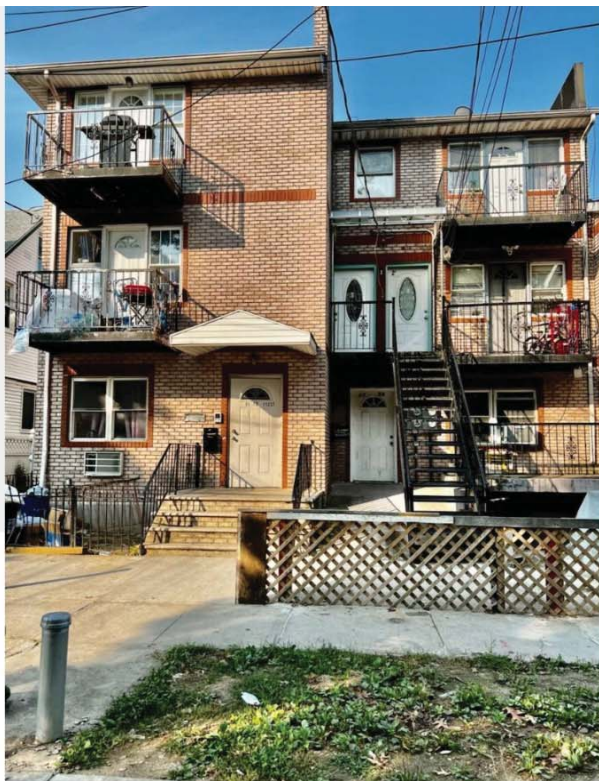
Other Resources

In 2015, NYSOFA and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee launched the Safe Driving Tips for Older New Yorkers website to promote older driver safety. The site encourages online and in-person safety training and car safety check programs; provides information to help older drivers understand options for roadway safety; and offers a user-friendly guide about preventing adverse drug interactions that can affect

one's ability to drive.

Offices for the Aging and their community partners are also a resource to help older drivers, including safety assistance or alternative transportation options. To reach local assistance, call the NY Connects helpline at 1-800-342-9871; or use the online directory here.

Throughout Older Driver Safety Awareness Week, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) also brings attention to a different aspect of older driver safety, including tips on anticipating changes that can affect driving, family conversations, screening and evaluations, and interventions that can empower older drivers and help them remain engaged in their communities. The Department of Motor Vehicles' Older Driver Resources webpage provides information about driving skills and programs, health tips, license FAQs, vehicle safety tips, and more. CarFit is an educational program that provides older adults the opportunity to check how well their personal vehicles 'fit' them, as well as information and materials on community-specific resources.



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EU Parliament 'under attack' as Qatar corruption scandal grows

Belgian police raid more offices and seize a suitcase full of cash

(News Agency) Police launched a fresh wave of raids on political figures in Brussels over alleged corruption involving Qatari interests Monday, in a scandal that threatens to trash European Union democracy.

"The European Parliament," said its president, Roberta Metsola, at a session in Strasbourg on Monday, "is under attack."

The focal point for that attack, for now, is the Parliament's Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. In Brussels, police raided the parliamentary office of Greek MEP Eva Kaili, who is currently in a jail cell as she awaits a court appearance, slated for Wednesday. Meanwhile, her colleagues in Strasbourg expelled her from the S&D group as her MEP colleagues prepared to strip her of her vice president title. Several other S&D members — not directly implicated but under scrutiny for their connections to those charged and their advocacy on

behalf of Qatar — also agreed to step away from key assignments, including MEP Marie Arena as chair of the Parliament's human rights subcommittee. Several other S&D

members — not directly implicated but under scrutiny for their connections to those charged and their advocacy on behalf of Qatar — also agreed to step away from key assignments, including MEP Marie Arena as chair of the Parliament's human rights subcommittee. For watchdogs, however, the threat to Europe's credibility has always been clear. The scandal is not an attack but "self inflicted damage," tweeted The Good Lobby founder Alberto



Alemanno in response to Metsola's speech. "The EU Parliament and most of its members have historically resisted stricter integrity rules and effective

enforcement system." The EU's transparency register is full of loopholes and voluntary elements: The Parliament's subcommittee on human rights, for example, hosted Panzeri's NGO, Fight Impunity, to deliver reports, even though it was not listed in the transparency register. Based on its activities, Fight Impunity should have been entered in the database, said the register's secretariat in an email. But since they're not legally obligated to register, there's no way to punish them for breaching the register's code of conduct. Similarly, a proposal for an independent EU ethics

panel has been stalled in the Commission. Vice President for Transparency Vera Jourová has cited legal hurdles and lack of interest in an ethics body that would apply to all the institutions and actually have enforcement power. On Monday, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed fresh determination to create an overarching watchdog body. "It is very critical to have not only strong rules but the same rules covering all the EU institutions and not to allow for any exemptions," she told reporters. But for all the talk of protecting trust and promoting transparency in EU institutions, top officials resisted early opportunities to put it into practice. Commission spokesperson Dana Spinant quickly shut down questions when journalists tried to press von der Leyen about tweets by Margaritis Schinas, a Commission vice president, in which he had praised Qatar's labor reforms ahead of the World Cup.

How the plan to pass a weed package went awry

Opposition from key Republicans, most notably Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, derailed hopes of attaching cannabis provisions to a must-pass defense spending bill

(By Staff Reporter) Democrats almost had a weed deal — for real this time. For weeks, a bipartisan group of senators worked to negotiate a historic package in the office of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. The ideologically diverse crew included Sens. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.). The bargain they ultimately reached represents the broad spectrum of cannabis issues: banking, guns and criminal record expungements. The package gave progressives, libertarians

and conservatives all something to be happy about. But in the final days of negotiations over the National Defense Authorization Act, which they hoped would serve as a must-pass vehicle for the cannabis package, enthusiasm evaporated. The unraveling of the plan was sparked by top Republicans attacking cannabis banking legislation that was the centerpiece of the deal.

The failed attempt is just the latest setback for the burgeoning cannabis industry on Capitol Hill. The number of states that allow legal

recreational marijuana use has nearly doubled in the last three years. Almost half of Americans now live in states where anyone at least 21 years old can legally possess weed, and Missouri and Maryland became the latest states to legalize adult use marijuana via ballot referendums in November. Despite that momentum, the only legislative win cannabis advocates can point to is a bill signed by President Joe Biden earlier this month that's designed to expand medical marijuana research. With Republicans poised to take control of the House, this

may have been the last chance to make significant federal legislative changes for the foreseeable future. "The Senate has once again dodged its responsibilities," House Cannabis Caucus co-chair Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) said on Wednesday. "But it's not over until the final minutes of this session." The SAFE Banking Act, which the cannabis package revolves around, would allow banks to offer financial services to the weed industry. The amount of cash on hand at weed dispensaries has made them a target for thieves.

2 rookie cops among 6 shot dead in Australia's Queensland

Six people, including two police officers, were killed in a gunfight in Australia's Queensland state on Monday

(By Staff Reporter) At least six people, including two police officers, were killed in a shooting in Australia's Queensland state on Monday. According to the authorities, police visited the place to investigate reports of a missing person. The incident took place in Wieambilla - 270km (168 miles) west of Brisbane, Queensland, reported the BBC. According to the officials, three suspects were fatally shot by police in a lengthy siege. However, the motive behind opening fire remains unclear. The police officers were shot by two armed offenders on Monday when they approached the property after a

request from New South Wales police. Constables Matthew Arnold,



26, and Rachel McCrow, 29, were shot dead as they approached. The two had only recently started their

policing careers. Another officer suffered a bullet injury while the fourth officer escaped the property. "As soon as they entered the property, they were inundated with gunfire and they never had a chance," said Queensland Police Union president Ian Leavers, as quoted by news agency AFP. "Two police officers were executed in cold blood," he said. A civilian, neighbor, was also killed by the suspects during the siege. Queensland Police

Commissioner Katarina Carroll described it as an "unimaginable tragedy" and largest loss of life the state police suffered in recent times. She said a group of 16 local officers had tried to rescue the cops before specialist police arrived and took over the operation. The siege continued for hours, before the suspects, two men and one woman, were shot, reported BBC. With investigations ongoing, Carroll said she couldn't say if police were lured to the property, or comment on a possible motive. She said "many weapons" were used during the incident. Circumstances surrounding the incident, including the deaths, will be investigated.

Qatar scandal: What just happened at the European Parliament?

POLITICO answers all your questions about the influence scandal rocking Brussels.

(News Agency) Watchdogs say it could be the “most serious,” “most shocking,” “most egregious” corruption scandal to hit Brussels in years. A series of at least 16 raids by the Belgian federal police Friday netted five people they said had committed “alleged offenses of criminal organization, corruption and money laundering.” The morning searches yielded •600,000 in cash, plus phones and computers.

Initially, the culprits weren’t major names by Brussels standards: A former member of the European Parliament, a few parliamentary assistants, and a trade union boss, all allegedly on the take for World Cup host Qatar. But to what end, really? Some questioned whether — if the charges were true — Doha had really made a smart investment.

By the evening, however, it was clear this wasn’t just a story of some has-beens and wannabes lining their pockets. Eva Kaili, a vice president of the European Parliament and vocal defender of Doha, landed in police custody, according to the Belgian federal police. The case also centers around an NGO that, until recently, counted some of the biggest luminaries in left-wing politics among its board members.

“The State of Qatar categorically rejects any attempts to associate it with accusations of misconduct,” said a Qatari official in a statement e-mailed Sunday morning.

As this potentially superlative scandal continues to unfold, POLITICO answers all your questions about the controversy roiling the EU capital.

Q: Who is Eva Kaili?

As one of Parliament’s 14 vice presidents, Kaili is one of the institution’s most powerful players — and as a former news presenter with celebrity status in her native Greece, one of Brussels’ most glamorous figures.

But Kaili has also emerged as one of the most vocal defenders of Qatar. She recently called the country a “frontrunner in labor rights” after meeting with the country’s labor minister, despite deep international concerns about conditions for stadium construction workers. A member of the center-left Socialist &



Democrat (S&D) party, her portfolio includes special responsibilities related to the Middle East. Kaili’s partner and co-parent, Francesco Giorgi, has also been detained, according to police and people with direct knowledge. He’s an adviser on the Middle East and North Africa region in the European Parliament — and a founder of an NGO called Fight Impunity, which aims to promote “accountability as a central pillar of the architecture of international justice.”

Crucially, Fight Impunity’s president is Pier Antonio Panzeri, a central figure in the case.

Q: Who else is involved?

Panzeri, an Italian ex-MEP also from the S&D, was among those arrested Friday morning. By the evening, his wife and daughter were also nabbed by Italian

police. A warrant for their arrest, seen by POLITICO, accused Panzeri of “intervening politically with members working at the European Parliament for the benefit of Qatar and Morocco.” Former parliamentary aides, especially those with ties to Fight Impunity, are also falling under scrutiny. In addition to arresting Giorgi, police also sealed the office of another parliamentary assistant who used to work for Fight Impunity, currently serving as an aide to Belgian S&D MEP Marie Arena. Arena, who inherited the chairmanship of the human rights subcommittee from Panzeri and works closely with Fight Impunity, confirmed that her aide’s office was under seal. Arena said she herself has not been questioned by police.

According to Italian newswire Ansa, Niccolò Figà-Talamanca has also been detained. He’s the director general of another NGO, No Peace Without Justice. Focused on international criminal justice, human rights and promoting democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, the organization is officially based in Rome and Brussels, and has the same Brussels address as Fight Impunity, at 41 Rue Ducale.

Emma Bonino, a former liberal MEP and foreign affairs minister for Italy, founded No Peace Without Justice. She is listed as an honorary board member of Fight Impunity. She and Figà-Talamanca did not immediately respond to requests for comment through Peace Without Justice. In a sign of Panzeri’s connections, former French

Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, former European Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos, former EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and former MEP Cecilia Wikström are also listed as honorary board members.

Mogherini resigned from the board on Saturday morning, according to a spokesperson for the College of Europe, where Mogherini is now rector. Avramopoulos said in an email Sunday morning that he, Cazeneuve and Wikström had also resigned “immediately when we were informed back on Friday.”

The list of staff at Fight Impunity has apparently been deleted; however, web archives show Giorgi and other current parliamentary assistants holding key roles in January.

Q: Is this limited to the European Parliament?

Nope. Also detained: Luca Visentini, who just last month became secretary general of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Before that, he was the longtime chief of the European Trade Union Confederation. (He didn’t have to move for the new role: Both the global and the European organizations are based at the same address in Brussels, on Rue Albert II.)

FTX founder charged in scheme to defraud crypto investors

(By Staff Reporter) NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. government charged Samuel Bankman-Fried, the founder and former CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX, with a host of financial crimes on Tuesday, alleging he intentionally deceived customers and investors to enrich himself and others, while playing a central role in the company’s multibillion-dollar collapse. Federal prosecutors said Bankman-Fried devised “a scheme and artifice to defraud” FTX’s customers and investors beginning in 2019, the year it was founded. He illegally diverted their money to cover expenses, debts and risky trades at the crypto hedge fund he started in 2017, Alameda Research, and to make lavish real estate purchases and large political donations, prosecutors said in a 13-page indictment.

Bankman-Fried, 30, was arrested Monday in the Bahamas at the request of the U.S. government, and remains in custody after being denied bail. He has been charged with eight criminal violations, ranging from wire fraud to money laundering to conspiracy to commit fraud. If convicted of all the charges, Bankman-Fried — referred

to by crypto enthusiasts as “SBF” — could face decades in jail.

At a news conference on Tuesday, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams in New York called it “one of the biggest frauds in American history,” and said the investigation is ongoing and fast-moving.



Bankman-Fried has fallen hard and fast from the top of the cryptocurrency industry he helped to evangelize. FTX filed for bankruptcy on Nov. 11, when it ran out of money after the cryptocurrency equivalent of a bank run. Before the bankruptcy, he was considered

by many in Washington and on Wall Street as a wunderkind of digital currencies, someone who could help take them mainstream, in part by working with policymakers to bring more oversight and trust to the industry. Bankman-Fried had been worth tens of billions of dollars — at least on

paper — and was able to attract celebrities like Tom Brady or former politicians like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton to his conferences at luxury resorts in the Bahamas. One prominent Silicon Valley firm, Sequoia Capital, invested hundreds of millions of dollars in FTX. Sporting shorts and t-shirts to contrast himself with the buttoned-down world of Wall Street, he was the subject of fawning media profiles, a vocal advocate for a type of

charitable giving known as “effective altruism,” and garnered millions of Twitter followers. But since FTX’s implosion, Bankman-Fried and his company have been likened to other disgraced financiers and companies, such as Bernie Madoff and Enron.

US imposes sanctions on Sri Lanka military officer for Int'l Human Rights Day



and the Sri Lankan military official is a number of people around the world who face similar sanctions.

In 2021, the US State Department listed two Sri Lankan soldiers, Navy officer Chandana Hettiarachchi and Sri Lanka Army staff sergeant Sunil Ratnayake in a similar list of people facing sanctions. The previous year the State Department imposed sanctions on then Sri Lanka Army Commander and incumbent Chief of Defence Staff General Shavendra Silva.

Journalist Keith Noyahr was abducted and tortured in May 2008 when war was raging in the country's north and east between government forces and the separatist Tamil Tigers. Noyahr was deputy editor and defence correspondent at the Nation weekly English newspaper.

Noyahr was abducted by a group of armed men in a white van,

according to testimony provided by the journalist. The otherwise inconspicuous white van was a dreaded sight at the time in the streets of Sri Lanka, linked as it were to a number of abductions involving journalists and others. The fresh US sanctions come at a time when the superpower has announced its intention to assist Sri Lanka through its prevailing currency crisis. In a meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Ali Sabry and US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung discussed ways in which the United States can continue to support Sri Lanka going forward.

Minister Sabry was recently in Washington D.C. where he US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

A foreign ministry statement said the two officials held productive discussions at the Department of State on December 02 on further elevating bilateral

relations in diverse spheres, including the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations which will be marked in 2023.

Incidentally, Sri Lanka also celebrates the 75th anniversary of its independence from the British in 2023, and President Ranil Wickremesinghe has given himself and all parties that represent parliament a deadline to find a permanent solution to Sri Lanka's decades-long ethnic issue.

The US has been vocal about Sri Lanka addressing concerns about its human rights record since the end of the civil war in 2009 and was a sponsor of the latest resolution on Sri Lanka passed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Unlike previous resolutions, this year's iteration makes specific reference to the country's prevailing currency crisis and calls for investigations on corruption allegations.

(By Staff Reporter) The United States has imposed sanctions on another Sri Lankan military officer for alleged human rights abuses. In a statement issued on Friday December 09 marking International Human Rights Day, the US State Department announced that sanctions would be imposed on Prabath Bulathwatte, former head of a clandestine Sri Lankan Army platoon known as the "Tripoli Platoon". "Pursuant to section 7031(c) the Department of State is designating Bulathwatte for his involvement in a gross violation of human rights, namely torture and/or cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of Sri Lankan journalist, Keith Noyahr in May 2008," the statement said. The State Department said the sanctions were imposed to promote accountability for corruption and human rights abuse around the world. The sanctions include financial sanctions and visa restrictions,

Chaos and confusion after Taliban orders exams for Afghan girls kept out of school

Confusion prevails in Afghanistan after Taliban ordered school girls, who have been kept out of power for several months, were suddenly asked to take graduation exams

(News Agency) Taliban Ministry of Education has allowed girls to take their high school graduation exam this week even though they have been kept out of classrooms since last year. Chaos and confusion prevailed as school girls, banned from attending classes, were suddenly asked to take their tests.

The decision applies to 31 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces where the winter school break starts in late December, AP reported. According to The Independent, girl students of a school in Kabul were asked to take their graduation exams on Wednesday, months after Taliban closed school gates on them and their futures when they took over the reins of the country.

"These girls have been fighting for months to attend school and this is a moment of shock even for them," a school official was quoted as saying by The Independent.

It is still not clear how many teenage girls would be able to take the exam. The three provinces — Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz —



where this decision does not apply have a different timetable for the school year and high school graduation exams typically take place there later. "This is ridiculous. We spent a whole year under tension and stress and haven't read

a single page of our textbooks," 18-year-old Najela was quoted as saying by the AP.

Taliban overran Afghanistan in

August 2021 as US and Nato forces were in the final weeks of their pullout from the country after 20 years of war. Despite initially promising more moderate rule and women's and minority rights, they have restricted rights and freedoms

and widely implemented their harsh interpretation of Islamic law or Sharia. They have banned girls from middle school and high school, restricted women from most employment, and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks, gyms, and funfairs.

Women have not been denied access from universities under the Taliban and the implication of the latest development is that Afghan girls who obtain a high school diploma after Wednesday's exam would be able to apply for universities. Girls who cannot attend or who fail Wednesday's exam would be allowed to retake the test in mid-March, after the winter vacation. The Taliban treatment of women and girls

in Afghanistan has come under heavy criticism. Earlier this month, a team of UN experts said it may amount to a crime against humanity and should be investigated and prosecuted under international law, an allegation rejected by Taliban.

Afghanistan-Pakistan border shelling kills civilians

(SAI Bureau) Afghan Taliban forces killed six civilians in Pakistan and injured at least 17 others in an "unprovoked" bombing and gunfire attack on a border town on Sunday, Pakistan says. The attack at Chaman was condemned by Pakistan's military who said the Afghan side launched "indiscriminate fire". Pakistan forces retaliated. One Afghan soldier was killed. It's unclear exactly what sparked the clash at the crossing over the border, which the two sides dispute.

However, it comes amid a rise in tensions between the neighbouring countries over security issues, since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan last year. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the Afghanistan action "deserve[d] the strongest condemnation". The border dividing the two nations was drawn arbitrarily by the British in 1893 and is



called the Durand Line. It is disputed by Afghanistan and millions of ethnic Pashtuns living on either side of it.

Afghan security sources, cited by Reuters news agency, said the incident happened after Pakistan demanded Afghan border forces stop

building a checkpoint on their side of the border. Meanwhile AFP news agency quoted anonymous Afghan government officials saying tensions flared up after Afghan forces tried to cut part of a fence on the border. Since 2017, Pakistan has been building a massive fence along the

border - something objected to by both the Taliban, who took power last year, and the previous Afghan government. Pictures from the border town on Sunday showed people wounded by artillery shelling and the fiery remains of hit vehicles and damaged roads. "A mortar shell landed and caused a huge fireball. After that, I lost consciousness and don't know what happened," one hospitalised victim told Al Jazeera news organisation. The Kandahar governor confirmed a Taliban member had been killed and 10 people were wounded. The crossing was closed after the shooting, but authorities said it re-opened later on Sunday after representatives from both sides met. There have been previous clashes along the Chaman crossing - one of the major transit checkpoints between Afghanistan and Pakistan and used by thousands of people each day.

Kabul hotel attack ends as 3 gunmen killed, ISIS claims responsibility

Three armed men involved in the attack at a hotel in Afghanistan's Kabul were gunned down by security forces. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.

(SAI Bureau) A day after Afghanistan's Kabul was rocked by an echo of gunfire in a hotel catering to foreign visitors, three armed men involved in the attack are reported to have been killed by security forces, putting an end to the arbitrary assassination attempt. Meanwhile, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a hotel in Kabul. The group said two of its personnel "attacked a big hotel frequented by Chinese diplomats

and businessmen in Kabul, where they detonated two explosive devices hidden inside two bags," one of them targeting a party for Chinese guests and the other targeting the reception hall, reported AFP. One of the two fighters threw hand grenades at Taliban officers who were trying to stop them, while the other began detonating explosive devices he had stuck on the hotel room doors and firing at hotel guests, IS said in a statement. In

the attack, two foreigners were injured in an apparent bid to escape by jumping from the hotel's balcony. Kabul's Emergency Hospital, run by an Italian non-profit near the attacked hotel in the Shahr-e-Naw area, reported receiving 21 casualties - 18 injured and three dead on arrival, reported Reuters. According to the Taliban-run administration, the attack was carried out at the Longan Hotel, where foreigners, including Chinese, generally



stay. Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the attack lasted several hours. He said a "clean-up" operation was ongoing. Incidentally, the attack came a

day after China's ambassador met the Afghan deputy foreign minister to discuss security-related matters and sought more attention on the protection of its embassy.

Another major Chinese firm linked to Uyghur genocide remains shrouded in secrecy, devoid of sanctions

Unsanctioned Chinese company called Tiandy has raised the eyebrows of human rights activists over its racial detection features and 'tiger chairs'

(News Agency) Tiandy, PRC's fourth largest CCTV company responsible for crackdowns on Uyghurs, managed to stay far from the public eye for so long, as per a report by FDD.

With surveillance companies like Dahua and Hikvision facing sanctions by countries like the US and UK for promoting human rights violations in the Xinjiang region, yet another unsanctioned Chinese company called Tiandy has raised the eyebrows of human rights activists over its racial detection features and 'tiger chairs'. A recent statement from the Iranian government over the implementation of automated facial detection technology against the dissenters has solidified

further that Tiandy could be one of the operators in the quest in days to come. Until recently, known Chinese closed-circuit television (CCTV) manufacturers were being targeted by some key nations across the world, including the UK, where PM Rishi Sunak banned the presence of Chinese surveillance cameras around "sensitive regions" just a few weeks prior. Biden followed the same by banning the sale and import of products from several Chinese surveillance companies in the US, including Huawei.

Still and all, China's fourth largest CCTV company, Tiandy, continued to thrive unfettered all this time, according to a freshly published report by the

Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), which is a Washington, DC-based non-partisan national security and foreign policy research institute established two decades back. Online search results show that Tiandy's equipment is also available for sale in India. Founded in 1998, Tiandy boasts itself as having posited seventh in the surveillance field. Its equipment is in use in 60 countries as of now. Intel Corp., a well-known US-based semiconductor firm, lists the company as a partner in the sector of safety and security, also having received accolades for its 'innovative' work by the American company. Of

what are called Intelligent Video Analytics (IVA) in the technical terminology, some of Tiandy's advanced surveillance cameras come equipped with such behaviour analysis features as people counting, crowd detection, missing object detection and even racial detection, one of the pivotal features being used in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China by the officials in charge.

As per a 2021 report published by the Uyghur Tribunal on the Uyghur Face Detection (UFD) feature present in popular Chinese CCTV cameras, a Tiandy SDK dated July 2020 included racial detection as one of the detection capabilities of their cameras.

So What Triggered The Clashes at LAC?

Indian soldiers showed immense bravery during the skirmish and within no time gave a befitting reply to Chinese troops, Home Minister Amit Shah said.

(SAI Bureau) The clashes at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were triggered after Chinese PLA troops tried to change a set trend on the intervening night of December 8 and 9, News18 has learnt. Sources said that Indian troops were intercepted by Chinese personnel and asked to leave the area. The Chinese troops tried to prevent Indian soldiers from patrolling in the area but the Indian Army stopped them from changing the trend, they added. Sources said that as per the set trend, troops from both countries patrol up to certain lines as per their respective claims in some areas but clashes were triggered when Chinese troops tried to change this.

Sources also said that the clashes that started during the intervening night of December 8-9 ended on December 9. When Indian Army soldiers confronted them about changing the status quo, a

large number of PLA troops tried to overpower the Indian side. Sources said that the clashes started with a verbal altercation between the two sides over the area of patrol. Chinese troops gathered in large numbers, around 300-400, and tried to force the Indian Army troops to leave the area, but Indian soldiers overpowered them with reinforcements. Chinese personnel tried to push the Indian Army troops, which was retaliated to by the Indian side. After an hours-long clash, when they failed to implement their motive, the Chinese troops left the area and went back to their base. The Indian army troops also moved from the clash site, said sources. They also said that Chinese troops were carrying unconventional weapons and arms.

On December 11, a flag meeting was also held in Bumla where Indian army officers

raised the issue of changing of status quo by China. The situation is under control and the message has been conveyed to China in strong words, sources said.

"I would like to brief this august House about an incident on our border in Tawang Sector of Arunachal Pradesh on 09 December 2022. On 09 December 2022, PLA troops tried to transgress the LAC in the Yangtse area of Tawang Sector and unilaterally change the status quo. The Chinese attempt was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner," the minister told Parliament. "The ensuing face off led to a physical scuffle in which the Indian Army bravely prevented the PLA from transgressing into our territory and compelled them to return to their posts. The scuffle led to injuries to a few personnel on both sides. I wish to share with this House that there are no fatalities or serious casualties on our side."

The minister also said that due to timely intervention of Indian military commanders, PLA soldiers went back to their locations. As a follow-up to the incident, the local commander in the area held a flag meeting with his counterpart on December 11 to discuss the issue in accordance with established mechanisms. The Chinese side was asked to refrain from such actions and maintain peace and tranquillity along the border. The issue has also been taken up with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels. I would like to assure this House that our Forces are committed to protecting our territorial integrity and will continue to thwart any attempt made on it. I am confident that this entire House will stand united in supporting our soldiers in their brave effort," Rajnath Singh said.

India Stops China Attempt At Land Grab In Arunachal: 10 Points On Clash

Proceedings in parliament were adjourned soon after they began today as the Opposition kept insisting that the border clash issued by discussed at once

New Delhi: Indian soldiers repulsed an attempt by Chinese forces to "unilaterally change the status quo" in Arunachal Pradesh by transgressing the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tawang last week, the government said in parliament today.

Here are the 10 latest developments in this big story:

No soldier was killed or seriously injured in the clash between Indian and Chinese troops on December 9, said Mr Singh. The government, he said, had spoken to China through diplomatic channels soon after the border clash. "Our forces are ready to meet any challenge on the border," he stressed.

Ahead of the meeting, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met the military and diplomatic leadership. He also met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior ministers to discuss the centre's response in Parliament.

The minister said the Army had "bravely prevented" the PLA from transgressing into our territory and "compelled them to return to their posts". "The scuffle led to injuries to a few personnel on both sides. I wish to share with this House that there are no fatalities or serious casualties on our side," he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah accused the Congress of disrupting proceedings as a question on Rajiv Gandhi Foundation was listed for today.

In a statement in both houses, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the Indian soldiers prevented the Chinese from making a landgrab in Arunachal Pradesh and "compelled the Chinese troops to return to their posts".

The Congress has launched an all-out attack on the government. Party president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "We are one with the nation on the issues of national security and would not like to politicise it. But the Modi government should be honest about the Chinese transgressions and the construction at all points near the LAC since April 2020."

Ties between India and China nosedived following a fierce clash at Galwan Valley in Ladakh in 2020 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead. China has acknowledged that five Chinese military officers and soldiers were killed, but it is widely believed that the death count was higher.

Rajnath Singh's statement did not silence the opposition parties, who walked out in protest. The Opposition said it was not satisfied with just a statement and wanted a discussion on the crucial border issue. Congress MP Shaktisinh Gohil told NDTV that the "attitude" of the government to avoid a discussion is not right.

Many parties demanded that all other parliament business be on hold for a threadbare discussion on the India-China border issue. Speaking to NDTV, RJD's Manoj Jha said the government's diplomacy is in "denial mode". AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he is "scared" over the China issue, and accused the government of lying.

China has said the situation was "stable". "As far as we understand, the China-India border situation is stable overall," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said, adding that the two sides "maintained unobstructed dialogue on the border issue through diplomatic and military channels."

Didn't cede an inch of land

(SAI Bureau) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that not even one inch of India's land has been captured during the face-off between Chinese and Indian troops in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

"Not even one inch of India's land has been captured. Indian soldiers showed immense bravery during the skirmish and within no time gave a befitting reply to Chinese troops," the home minister said, adding that no one could capture an inch of land under the Modi government. He made the remarks while talking to reporters outside the

Parliament building.

He applauded Indian soldiers for their valour. "I want to say it clearly... till the time the BJP government led by Prime Minister Modi is in power, no one can capture an inch of our land," Shah said.

RGF RECEIVED FUNDS FROM CHINA, ZAKIR NAIR'

The senior BJP leader also fired potshots at the Congress and alleged that a huge amount of money was transferred into the bank accounts of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) by the Chinese embassy in 2005, 2006 and 2007. In October, the Ministry of Home

Affairs (MHA) cancelled the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence of RGF and Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT) - two NGOs headed by Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, for allegedly violating the foreign funding law. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation is a non-government organisation associated with the Gandhi family. "I saw the question hour list and after seeing question number 5, I understood the anxiety (of Congress). The question was regarding the cancellation of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence of the

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF)," he said. He added, "Rajiv Gandhi Foundation got Rs 1.35 cr from the Chinese Embassy. The registration was cancelled as this was not according to FCRA rules." "RGF had registered for social welfare but the funds of it were used in research on relations between India and China. India's permanent seat in the UN Security Council was sacrificed because of Nehru's love for China," Shah said. He further mentioned that on 7 July 2011, the RGF received Rs 50 lakh rupees from Zakar Naik, a controversial Islamic preacher.

"Unable To Compete, So...": Nora Fatehi Sues Jacqueline Fernandez

The remark in question are linked to the rs200 crore extortion case being probed by central agencies, where conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar is the main accused.

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: Bollywood actor Nora Fatehi on Monday filed a case against fellow actor Jacqueline Fernandez, and 15 media houses, for alleged defamatory remarks made by her. She accused the media organisations of "carrying forward and circulating" Ms Fernandez's remarks. Ms Fatehi further claimed that her rival actor and the media organisations "were acting in connivance with each other".

"A conspiracy by the accused No. 1 (Jacqueline Fernandez) to ensure the financial, social, and personal downfall of the complainant was hatched, and enacted by the said action," she has said in the petition filed

through her lawyer.

"Her rapidly progressing career quite obviously has threatened her rivals who are unable to compete with her on a fair footing," the petition says.

"It has started to become evident that the aforementioned rivals being unable to compete with the complainant fairly in the industry have started to try and tarnish her reputation which would cause her loss of work and hence would open up greener pastures for her rivals in the industry," it adds.

The remark in question are linked to the ? 200 crore extortion case being probed by central agencies, where conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar is the main accused. Both the actors have been summoned by probe

agencies, and Ms Fernandez is named as an accused in the case after it was revealed that she received expensive gifts from the conman. Ms Fatehi has also received gifts from Sukesh.

On December 2, emerging from the Enforcement Directorate office after recording her statement, she had denied receiving any gifts from Sukesh. Jacqueline Fernandez had earlier in a plea before the Appellate Authority of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, or PMLA, clearly stated that it is surprising that like her some other celebrities, notably, Norah Fatehi, were also conned by Sukesh Chandrashekhar in the case, but while Nora Fatehi and other celebrities who received gifts from Sukesh Chandrashekhar are made witnesses, she is

sought to be dragged as an accused. The ED in its supplementary chargesheet filed in the extortion case against conman Sukesh in a Delhi Court has mentioned Jacqueline Fernandez's name as an accused.

ED's earlier chargesheet did not mention her name as an accused, but provided details of the statement recorded by Jacqueline Fernandez and Nora Fatehi in the matter. According to the ED, Sukesh was confronted with Ms Fernandez on October 20, 2021 where she revealed that he had arranged private jet trips and her hotel stay many times. Statements of Nora Fatehi were recorded September 13, 2021 and October 14, 2021, where she said that she got a booking for a charity event and

during the event, she was gifted a Gucci Bag and one iPhone by Sukesh's wife Leena Paulose, the probe agency had said. Nora Fatehi had further said that Leena Paulose had called her along with her husband and put the phone on the speaker, where he thanked her and said that they were her fans. She then announced that they were going to gift her a brand-new BMW car as a token of love. The reputation of any person in the Film Industry is an asset and any denting in the same would cause a huge and irreparable damage to their career. All the Accused herein are acutely aware of this and this establishes that the defamation done by them is with mala fide intentions," Nora Fatehi's defamation petition says.

Such an arrogant prick: New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern caught on hot mic

(South Asian Insider Bureau) New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who is facing a drop in public support, was caught in a gaffe as her remarks on the leader of an opposition party were picked up by parliament microphones during a debate. As the prime minister sat down after an impassioned reply to the leader's question, she muttered: "Such an arrogant prick." However, Jacinda Ardern's comment was picked up by the microphones. Ardern later apologized, reported news agency AFP.

The leader of an opposition party asked Jacinda Ardern to give an example of when she had made a mistake, apologised and fixed it. David

Seymour, the leader of New Zealand's ACT party, objected to the remark and petitioned the speaker of the House of Representatives to have it withdrawn. The 42-year-old has been New Zealand's prime minister for five years, and won favour worldwide for her management of crises and down-to-earth approach to politics, reported the news agency. Jacinda Ardern was one of the first prime ministers to become a mother while in office and enjoyed sky-high approval ratings for most of her two-term tenure. But with the country expected to go to the polls late next year and the cost of living surging, she is facing increasing political pressure.

Mumbai man looking for massage service online finds wife, sister's pics on escort site

After finding their photos on the escort website, the man spoke to his wife and sister, who said that the pictures were four years old and posted on their social media accounts

(South Asian Insider Bureau) A Mumbai-based man was in for a shocker after he came across photographs of his wife and sister on an escort website. The police have arrested a woman in connection with the case who allegedly used to post photos of women from social media on escort and massage websites.

The 31-year-old man from Khar was searching for a masseur online and found images of his wife and sister posted on the escort website. After finding their photos on the escort website, the man spoke to his wife and sister, who said that the pictures were taken four years ago and posted on their social media accounts. A Mumbai-based man was in for a shocker after he came across photographs of his wife and sister on an escort website. The police have arrested a woman in connection with the case

who allegedly used to post photos of women from social media on escort and massage websites. The 31-year-old man from Khar was searching for a masseur online and found images of his wife and sister posted on the escort website. After finding their photos on the escort website, the man spoke to his wife and sister, who said that the pictures were taken four years ago and posted on their social media accounts. A case was registered against Reshma Yadav and later she was produced before a court that remanded her in judicial custody. The police are looking for all the people who are involved with Reshma Yadav. Additionally, the police have also appealed to people to be careful while uploading their pictures on social media. They must keep their profile locked so that no one can misuse it, it added.



What's behind chaos, mess at India's airports

More and more people are flying after most of the countries lifted Covid-19 caps on domestic as well as international air travel. The passenger flux has mounted pressure on the existing infrastructure at the airports and on the airlines

'Welcome to Hell...Abandon hope all ye who enter here'. This caustic remark came from one of the passengers at Delhi Airport's T3 on December 12. A tweet compared the overcrowding with a 'fish market', while another equated it with the famous 'Sarojini Market' crowd in Delhi. There was a post which read: Public service announcement: If you're taking a flight from T3 in Delhi, leave at least 5 hours early. Social media not just reflected the plight of the flyers, but also brought to fore the deplorable picture of the national capital's messy airport.

Serpentine queues, long waiting hours, luggage lying all over, no trolleys, flight delays, congestion, no staff support and security check system gone haywire. There has been total chaos out there at the Delhi airport.

The videos and posts shared by passengers on social media prompted Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to pay a surprise visit to Delhi airport and take stock of the situation. Scindia spoke to airport staff and passengers about the problems they are facing at Delhi airport.

The problem is not restricted to Delhi Airport. On December 2, it was nothing short of a nightmare when passengers at Mumbai Airport's Terminal 2 had to struggle for over two hours to complete the check-in process for their flights after the Internet server at the facility crashed. The airlines were forced to issue manual boarding passes even as the queues swelled everywhere - at the baggage drop and security checks.

A flyer tweeted: "Sitting in the plane for close to an hour now!! Still no clue when we will take off. Crazy chaos at Mumbai airport." On October 8 last year, all

morning domestic flights got delayed from Mumbai due to inadequate measures to handle the overcrowding due to the weekend rush and festive season.

"T2 AT CSMIA (Mumbai Airport) is a shambles. Literally feels like we're in the dark ages. Endless milling crowds, machines breaking down, tempers frayed, chaos everywhere. Who runs this absolute shitshow?," a passenger had tweeted then.

LONDON AND PARIS TOO

In July this year, many airports across Europe saw similar chaos because of the passenger overload during summer after Covid-19 restrictions were eased after two long years. London's Heathrow Airport witnessed long lines for security, delays, reduced mobility, unclaimed baggage piling up and luggage going missing or arriving late. The chaotic scenes were attributed to staff shortages, which led to flight disruptions as well. The airport came out with an apology, while also issuing a warning that it might ask airlines to slash more flights from their summer schedules to tackle the growing strain. In July, some flights were grounded while many were delayed due to a strike at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport. The strike was called by a trade union to demand necessary pay increases along with other benefits against the backdrop of spiralling inflation. Amsterdam, Rome, and Frankfurt airports also reeled under flight cancellations due to workers' strikes for better working conditions and higher wages this summer.

CORE ISSUES

More and more people are flying after most of the countries lifted Covid-19 caps on domestic as well as international air travel. The passenger flux has mounted

pressure on the existing infrastructure at the airports and on the airlines.

Apart from the wage and workplace issues, many airports are facing the problem of overcrowding and congestion because their expansion plans came to a standstill during the pandemic. It will take time to put those plans back on track.

In March, Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) got a capacity study carried out by UK-based air traffic management firm NATS. It suggested that Indira Gandhi International Airport's four runways can fly in and out 14 crore passengers annually before 2030 - which is double of 6.9 crore international-cum-domestic flyers seen in 2019. So, this is undoubtedly a huge potential that will take time to be tapped fully.

Mumbai airport also plans a three-fold increase in the airport's commercial area, building multiplexes and shifting one of the top airlines to Navi Mumbai airport to decongest the second busiest airport in the country. The Navi Mumbai airport will become operational by December 2024 and has a capacity of 2 crore passengers. However, this deadline sounds too stiff after the pandemic. Staff shortage is another pain point. The recent chaos at Delhi Airport is due to limited Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) staffers deployed there, which causes long waiting time. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), the aviation security regulator, has abolished 3,049 CISF aviation security posts to be replaced by 1,924 private security personnel and a parallel introduction of smart surveillance technology like CCTV cameras and baggage scanners. Is this personnel strength enough to manage such a

sprawling airport when many of the technology tools go out of order frequently?

THE WAY OUT

We need deployment of additional systems and manpower at our airports. Besides, technology upgrade is the need of the hour.

Everything from ticketing to baggage to billing to boarding should be made seamless with state-of-the-art technology infrastructure - including 5G. Scanning at security checks will be AI-driven in the future. But for now, it must be ensured that scanning machines function without snags. Mandatory web check-ins will work only when there is a seamless internet connection. More counters can also ease the burden on the airline staff and the passengers. One of the reasons behind traffic congestion is 'bunching' of flights during peak hours. The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has cut the number of flights for decongestion - from 22 flights per hour (pre-Covid) to 19 flights per hour (November 2022). After Scindia's visit to Delhi Airport, a 4-point action plan has been chalked out to resolve the situation urgently. It includes debunching of flights that could help reduce the peak hour departures to 14 flights. The plan also spells out enhancing the number of X-Ray screening systems from 14 to 16 at the airport. An addition of one Automatic Tray Retrieval System (ATRS) machine has also been planned. Further, two entry points - Gate 1A and Gate 8B - will be converted for passenger usage. Landing cards will be distributed on board and filled up prior to arrival, so as to minimise queues at immigration counters. All plans have to focus on enhancing the passenger experience to make air travel a breeze...

Tawang was no Galwan. Satellite pics show

High Resolution satellite pictures show the intruding PLA party was likely met with a sizeable Indian presence in the area spread over multiple forward locations

In June 2020, when brutal hand-to-hand combat took place between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh's Galwan valley, one thing was clear, Indian men were outnumbered owing to an ongoing de-escalation on the day and location of the conflict. Come December 2022 in Arunachal Pradesh, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) men were in for a surprise. High Resolution satellite pictures, exclusively captured on the day of the clashes, tell a different story, where the intruding PLA party was likely met with a sizeable Indian presence in the area spread over multiple forward locations. Pictures exclusively sourced by India Today captured by space firm Planet Labs PBC satellites passing over the LAC near the Yangtse area in Tawang on December 9 show the buildup near the possible location of the clashes in which both sides sustained injuries. Defence minister Rajnath Singh clarified before the parliament today that



no Indian soldier was seriously injured in the physical brawl as they successfully chased away the Chinese soldiers.

"On 9 December 2022, PLA troops tried to transgress the LAC in the Yangtse area of Tawang sector and unilaterally change the status quo. The Chinese attempt was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner," Singh said in a statement. In the vicinity towards the east are the snowcapped strategic high peaks that go as high as 17,000 ft that many

believe the PLA wants to take control of. These uninhabited high points provide a vantage point to monitor the developments towards the Tawang side of India. China has been expanding its military village north of the LAC and continues to be upgraded constantly. A new wider road leading towards the LAC and ending with a post-like location near Thang La can be seen but did not show a Galwan-like overwhelming presence of Chinese military vehicles and encampments seen

in June 2020. While India continues to have a permanent position near this location, new forward deployments, likely anticipating PLA intrusions, can also be seen in the available imagery. The government said that the timely intervention of Indian military commanders made sure that PLA soldiers went back to their locations. "As a follow-up of the incident, the local commander in the area held a Flag Meeting with his counterpart on 11 December, 2022 to discuss the issue in accordance with established mechanisms. The Chinese side was asked to refrain from such actions and maintain peace and tranquility along the border. The issue has also been taken up with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels," the defence minister added.

It is yet to be seen if there will be a larger build up by the PLA in coming days in the area.



Why the India-Pakistan Rivalry Endures

A recent book emphasizes domestic politics in the conflict but doesn't account for the depth of the impasse

India and Pakistan have mostly been at odds since 1947, when both emerged as independent countries after decades of British rule. The two states fought a war in that year—and three more in the years since, in 1965, 1971, and 1999. (Their fleeting cooperation was largely confined to the 1950s.) The most recent crisis between New Delhi and Islamabad took place three years ago, following a terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir; India followed with an aerial attack in Pakistan, leading to retaliation from Islamabad.

As that crisis underscored, the India-Pakistan relationship has deteriorated significantly in the last decade, especially following the election of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014. This decline stems in part from Pakistan's continued dalliance with anti-Indian terrorist organizations, an unstated component of its national security strategy. In response, the Modi government has adopted an unyielding stance. India's decision in 2019 to unilaterally rescind the special autonomous status of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir further undermined bilateral ties. Any recent progress in the relationship—such as India's humanitarian gestures in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan this year—has been largely cosmetic.

A new book by Indian scholar Surinder Mohan takes a multilayered approach to the India-Pakistan relationship, eschewing well-worn explanations—

including those based in the tradition of realism, which emphasizes material power. Complex Rivalry: The Dynamics of India-Pakistan Conflict argues that the enmity between the two countries traces to a unique jumble of factors, beginning with the shock of the Partition of India; tensions have been further intensified by ideology, a shared border, and disputed territory. However, the book has a few shortcomings that limit its insights into the future of the India-Pakistan rivalry, most notably its failure to directly acknowledge the primacy of the Pakistani military establishment in the country's politics. Mohan acknowledges that India and Pakistan each embraced power politics, accepting the utility of force—or the threat of force—to settle their bilateral relations as independent states. However, unlike realist scholars, who focus almost exclusively on power asymmetries, he argues that domestic politics also contributed to the start of the rivalry—and have sustained it. The terrible fallout of Partition, with more than 1 million people dead and 10 million displaced, became closely intertwined with the domestic politics of both India and Pakistan. Because the status of Kashmir remains unreconciled for both parties, political leaders fixated on the territorial dispute. Early on, the Pakistani leadership's obsession with the Kashmir dispute led it to draw in the United States to balance India's power. In 1954, the Eisenhower administration gave in to these entreaties and signed a defense pact

with Pakistan. Emboldened by these new military capabilities acquired from the United States, Pakistan initiated a war with India in 1965. During these years, the dispute over Kashmir and the involvement of great powers deepened the rivalry—which became more salient in domestic politics, culminating in another war in 1971. Here, Mohan doesn't offer much new analysis, covering familiar ground for regional specialists. Mohan's discussions of the role of both internal and external shocks in sustaining the India-Pakistan rivalry are more illuminating. After the 1971 war, India's preponderant military role in the subcontinent contributed to ragged regional stability: No Pakistani regime considered provoking India for nearly two decades, largely due to asymmetries of power. However, Mohan argues that India's attempts to meddle in Kashmir's internal politics contributed to an insurgency in Indian-administered Kashmir in 1989—a shock that gave Pakistan a window of opportunity. As Islamabad entered the fray through covert backing for the rebels, the insurgency was transformed from a domestic uprising into a civil war with religious inspiration and external support. From this perspective, Pakistan's ongoing political and economic crisis might have some effect on the rivalry with India. In April, the ouster of Prime Minister Imran Khan threw the country's politics into turmoil, making a renewal of dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad even more unlikely.

The Making Of A Murderer: Is There A Murderer In Us All?

Does nature or nurture make a killer? Does the outdated yet still overused category 'psychopath' hold any water at all?

The year was 1981. A young Assistant Superintendent of Prison (ASP) at Tihar Jail, Sunil Gupta, was facing suspension, after a surprise visit of the then Home Minister, Giani Zail Singh. Charles Sobhraj, a notorious serial killer came up to him and asked, "Do you need money?" Gupta declined, gently. It was an apparently kind gesture, unusual for a serial killer, Gupta tells Outlook. Years later, Sobhraj wrote in his book about Gupta's honesty, that there was only one officer he could not buy with money. Sobhraj, during his time in Tihar, built cordial relations with several officers, inmates, lawyers and journalists. When Sobhraj offered Gupta money after he was briefly suspended, was it out of empathy or a classic act of manipulation? "He wanted to exploit my vulnerability and gain my trust," Gupta said, "because he knew it was an opportunity for him to use me." Sobhraj had meticulously cultivated his sphere of influence inside the jail, luring and manipulating guards and prison officials. He, says Gupta, had a hypnotic charm. Sobhraj would, with his conversational skills, win over the trust of the prison guards and would secretly record their candid conversations using a tape recorder. Later, he would use those tapes to blackmail them, threatening to expose their corruption in court. Once, he used the tapes to gain the authority to run the prison canteen and ended up using them to his advantage. "He was given the prison canteen to run," Richard Neville, the author of *The Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj*, once said in an interview, "[it] sounds like small beer. It isn't. That gives him a lot of power because he gets a rake-off of every deal that goes on in jail to do with food. So he's in a position of absolute power... he's running Tihar jail." The police would at times smuggle whiskey for him. He would mostly read books regarding jurisprudence and the Constitution from the prison library and would retire to Sydney Sheldon's thrillers. "Woh Law ka master tha (He was an expert in law)," Gupta tells Outlook, "and he would help inmates with legal advice and petitions." When Gupta saw



Sobhraj for the first time inside a jail, to him he didn't pass as a prisoner. Sobhraj wore a neat suit, and perfectly knotted tie and walked with a confidence that "did not appear cosmetic at all". Gupta had thought the man was an official or some inmate's lawyer. Sobhraj was described as having an anti-social personality disorder (ASPD)—the so-called medical disorder wherein a person shows no regard for right and wrong and has no remorse for any wrongdoing. But are these labels, like the one of 'psychopath,' of any use?

The cold-blooded murder of Shraddha Walkar, allegedly by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawalla has led many to draw the conclusion that this 28-year-old man, suffers from a psychopathological disorder. Although, to date, we remain in the dark about vital aspects of the case, especially the psychological ones.

Delhi-based criminal psychologist and author Rajat Kanti Mitra believes that the details of the case appear gruesome, but "it may not be gruesome for Aftab". Aftab kept Walkar's dismembered body in his fridge and disposed of it over a period of weeks. Mitra believes that Aftab "is likely to have some personality disorder." "But," he says, "one can't be sure until some tests are done to gauge his psychopathological

tendencies."

Police sources tell Outlook that Aftab loved to have everything around him in perfect order. "He told us, he would have altercations with Shraddha even on having too many altercations," a source from Delhi police says. From his social media account, we know that he presented himself as a liberal progressive. He would talk about animal rights, the environment and the rights of the LGBTQ communities.

At the same time, he was involved in a brutal murder. "He carries a charm and talks very confidently, smartly," the source says, adding, "even though the murder and the way of disposing of the body were gruesome, till now we have not been able to establish the murder as a psychopathic one."

The killing recalls the infamous 'Tandoor Murder' case, in which former Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress president Sushil Sharma killed his wife Naina Sahni and disposed of her body in the tandoor of a restaurant. Both cases have gruesome details, but one can't conclude whether any of these murders are psychopathological or were simply done in a fit of rage and then the men frantically acted to cover them up.

However, there have been several murderers termed 'psychopathic' killers. For instance, 'Cyanide Mohan', a school teacher who

raped and murdered at least 20 girls. He would target young girls, from poor families, befriend them, and, on the pretext of marriage, have sex with them. Later, he would offer his victims a 'cyanide pill' claiming it was a contraceptive pill. People who knew him found it hard to believe that a school teacher could become a serial killer.

Another such case was what came to be known as the Nithari kaand'. In a Noida village, Nithari, a businessman, Moninder Singh Pandher, an ex-Stephanian, along with his domestic help, Surender Koli, were accused of 16 murders. The case was noticed when eight skeletons were found in a drain by Pandher's house. There were rumours of cannibalism and necrophilia. Apart from leaving a chilling effect, these cases suggested the possibility of psychopathological disorders in the perpetrators.

In the cosmos of crime, criminal psychology assumes the centre stage of investigation as it treads into the territory of the criminal probe, carefully delving into the minds of the perpetrators to find the link between the act and the psychological state that facilitates it.

Most of the crimes, especially homicides, that border on the heinous side, are 'crimes of passion'—committed on impulse when a perpetrator is driven to kill his victim overridden by

emotions such as anger. However, what mostly constitute the subject matter of the psychological probe are crimes that are planned and carefully premeditated.

In cities like Delhi, premeditated crimes are very few, and the ones wherein the psychopathic tendencies of the perpetrator surface even fewer," Sagar Sing Khalsi, Delhi's Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) tells Outlook. Khalsi's observation comes from his policing experience of serving across several regions of the country. Nonetheless, these psychological probes have a dangerous history, wrapped as they are in eugenics, forensics, nephrology and other deeply dubious 'scientific' practices. Interestingly, in India, the law does not recognise psychopathology in unambiguous terms. There is no particular law to convict serial killers. Often, Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is invoked for convicting offenders. The only provision of the Indian law that addresses offences committed by the people who have an unsound mind is Section 84 of the IPC. It says, "Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law."

Tawang to AIIMS, Chinese intrusion has a pattern-to keep India in a reactive mode

After every diplomatic engagement with India, China seems to read the tea leaves far better than New Delhi does



A deadly cyberattack that worked as a test mule, then a physical lunge across high-altitude icy features are part of China's strategy to constantly keep India in a reactive mode. First, it was the cyberattack on 23 November, which paralysed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. And now, it is the unilateral actions across the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district. New Delhi's unwillingness, or inability, to take the initiative has allowed Beijing to run amok with changing rules of engagement as and where it deems fit. This pattern is likely to continue, given the fondness to adopt the ostrich posture at the highest level in India.

This is in stark contrast to other Asian neighbours of China or even those who identify Beijing as the principal national security threat globally. India's continued timidity vis-a-vis China emboldens Beijing policymakers to keep pushing the red lines of acceptable behaviour. So, despite incontrovertible evidence of elements in China hacking into AIIMS Delhi servers, India's unwillingness to officially pin a name on the culprit further motivates the country to meddle with the undeclared boundary line in western Arunachal Pradesh. There is nothing unusual about the intrusion attempt in Tawang other than that it happened in December.

Beijing tracks New Delhi's moves

What makes little sense is that the first official acknowledgement about an altercation in Tawang was made on 9 December, when the terrain would have required many more days for preparation and execution. The basic sense of high-altitude mobilisation and logistics suggests China was embarking on this provocative adventure as India was focused on its latest series of state assembly elections. Given India's penchant for electoral fortunes over policy, China timed its attempted assault to maximise benefits. Beijing analyses

India's obsession with elections as a critical flaw in its ability to pursue policies. It seems to know New Delhi better than India does.

This is part of China's strategy to keep India engaged in a diplomatic dialogue while honing its own military skills and infrastructure. The talks buy time by giving news-hungry India tidbits of information about being busy with diplomatic progress. Even if it hasn't amounted to much in the end, as more than 15 rounds of China-India talks suggest over Ladakh, Beijing hasn't moved positions on the ground to accommodate India. It has only further consolidated control over its acquired territory since April 2020. Where India gained from a military perspective, it, unfortunately, gave away diplomatically. After every diplomatic engagement with India, China seems to read the tea leaves far better than New Delhi does. It has clearly concluded that India is not ready for a fight as it simply doesn't have the money. That it doesn't have a stomach is given from the silence at the highest level. Indian policymakers have declared their inability to fight because of financial constraints, which is not lost on China. For nothing else explains the compulsions of the armed forces to implement a recruitment scheme—Agnipath—that only exacerbates the deep shortages in troop numbers.

At the same time, India dithers over sanctioning a third aircraft carrier after INS Vikrant, even as analysts and geography declare that it is the best bet to keep a check on Chinese expansionism. The reluctance to sanction the third aircraft carrier—INS Vishal—project flies in the face of India's indigenisation programme, where it was supposed to have embarked on a journey of self-sufficiency. This third carrier is supposed to be India's safety bet, both in terms of training opportunities as well as operational deployment. But India is unwilling, or unable, to sanction

the project, even as the country continues to engage China diplomatically and economically.

China knows India's weak spots

The fact that India continues to engage China economically and that the relationship grows at an astronomical pace is not lost on Chinese

policymakers. They understand that India seeks economic substance over political or military progress. Nothing else explains the simple arithmetic of India's trade figures with China, even when it is known to have reneged on agreements, intruded into Indian territory and defied international norms of military-diplomatic exchanges.

The latest Tawang crisis should be read as a part of China's pattern of probing Indian preparedness, provoking a reaction, and then consolidating its position. China may or may not have gained any territory in this skirmish, but it is a tactic frequently employed with India. And that has been repeated ad nauseum only because Beijing knows India's room for manoeuvre is limited, largely by its own timidity. It makes little sense for the External Affairs Minister to constantly repeat the same position when no other institution of the State is willing to bell the cat, or unable to, or as in the case of the Army, not allowed.

Manvendra Singh is a Congress leader, Editor-in-Chief of Defence & Security Alert and Chairman, Soldier Welfare Advisory Committee, Rajasthan. He tweets @ManvendraJasol. Views are personal.

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

Since April 2005

Editor : Sharanjit Singh Thind

PUNJABI DUNIYA

Vol. 17 Issue 35

FRIDAY, 02 DECEMBER TO 08 DECEMBER, 2022

WWW.PUNJABIDUNIYA.COM

Published Weekly from New York

ਕੀ ਸੱਚਮੁੱਚ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ?

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੀਡੀਆ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਪਰ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਮੀਡੀਆ ਨੇ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਚੁੱਪ ਕਿਉਂ ?

ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਕਤਲ ਕਾਂਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸੁਰਖੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ



ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਗਿਰਫਤਾਰ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਸ਼ਰਫਨਾ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਭਗਵੰਤ ਮਾਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਕੀ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚਮੁੱਚ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਹਾਲੇ ਤੱਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਤ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਧ ਏਜੰਸੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਜੋਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਮਾਰੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੱਚਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਕਤਲ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧੀ ਨੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਚ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਵਰਲੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਥੇ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੀ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਸਾਚ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਅਨੁਸਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਸੁਰਤ ਕੀ ਕੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ?

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ 'ਚ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ

ਇਹ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੇ ਸੀਨੀਅਰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ, ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਕੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਇਰ ਚਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਟ ਅਤੇ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਰੀ ਫੈਡ ਕਾਰਨਰ ਨੋਟਿਸ 'ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਹੈ। ਬੀਬੀਸੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ (ਅਸਲੀ ਨਾਂ ਸਤਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਗਾਇਕ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸੁਰਖੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਦਾ ਕਤਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਭਰਾ ਦੇਰ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਸੋਲਨ ਮੀਡੀਆ ਉੱਤੇ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਨੇ ਕਤਲਕਾਂਡ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਜਾਜ਼ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਿਥਾਈ ਲਈ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੇ ਸੁਰਤ ਮੁਰਾਬਕ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੇ ਲਗਭਗ 10 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਰਾਧ ਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ 'ਤੇ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 2020 ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ। ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੇ ਗਿਰਫਤਾਰ ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਬਰਾੜ ਦਾ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਕਬਿਰ ਤੋਰ 'ਤੇ ਬੰਬੀਚਾ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਕਤਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੁਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਾਥਕ ਸੁਭਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਧੂ ਮੂਸੇਵਾਲਾ ਕਤਲ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਪੱਖ ਮੁਲਜ਼ਮ ਲਾਇਸ ਬਿਨੇਦੀ ਵੀ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਸੀ। ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਰਾਬਕ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੇ ਰਿਕੋਰਡ ਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਗਦੇ ਭਰਾ ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਬਰਾੜ ਕਤਲ ਦਾ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਰਾਬਕ ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਬਰਾੜ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੇਸ ਸੀ। ਕਬਿਰ ਤੋਰ 'ਤੇ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਨੇ ਬਲੀਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਲਾਇਸ ਬਿਨੇਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਸਾਜ਼ੀਸ਼ ਰੱਖੀ।



ਕੋਰੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਾਲਵਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਆਇਆ। ਪੁਲਿਸ ਸੁਰਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬਵਾਨ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗੋਲਡੀ ਬਰਾੜ ਨੇ ਬਲੀਦੇਣ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਕਤਾਬ ਸਾਥਿਕ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਤੋਰ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕੋਰਡ ਲਈ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ।

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Taliban stands divided. Why it has implications for the world and India

From the Kabul hotel blast to ex-president Hamid Karzai's UAE trip, what Taliban power struggle means for the world



A suicide bomber in Kabul Monday blew himself up at a hotel popular among visiting Chinese nationals, giving rise to speculation that the Taliban was losing control over its suicide squads. The Kabul hotel attack came one day after clashes between the Taliban security forces and the Pakistani military across the Durand Line, between Spin Boldak and Chaman, in which seven Pakistanis lost their lives. The Pakistan embassy in Kabul was attacked only a fortnight ago, and a senior Pakistani diplomat was targeted. At about the same time, former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, under house arrest in Kabul since the Taliban seized power on 15 August last year, was finally allowed to leave for a visit to the UAE and Germany with his close aide and confidante, Omar Zakhilwal.

So, what's going on in Afghanistan? Why are the Taliban, said to be proteges of the Pakistan military establishment, turning on their masters? Why, indeed, is Karzai being allowed to fly out to Germany after meeting with the US Special envoy to Afghanistan, Thomas West, in the UAE?

Internal differences out in the open

Clearly, the long-speculated rift between the senior Taliban leadership seems to be finally out in the open. Afghan analysts who spoke to ThePrint on the condition of anonymity said that differences of opinion on leading the country are surfacing between Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Mullah Yaqoob, acting defence minister and son of Mullah Omar, the powerful founder of the terror group.

The analyst said that Mullah

Yaqoob—who had fancied himself as a contender for the post when the previous Taliban Amir, Mullah Mansoor, was killed in a US drone strike in 2016—was beaten to the game when Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian-born close confidante of Osama bin Laden, threw his weight behind Haibatullah.

Now it seems both have clear differences on the future of Afghanistan. While Haibatullah favours a seriously conservative, puritanical approach to the Sharia, Yaqoob says that the pursuit of Sharia should coexist with basic norms followed by the international community: meaning Afghanistan cannot regress into its earlier incarnation but must learn to

rejoin the world.

The Kabul hotel blast—in which two foreigners were injured but none killed—and Karzai's journey to Germany are two manifestations of this struggle for power in the heart of the Taliban today.

Karzai's travels abroad are most significant. His wife and three daughters were recently allowed to go to Tehran and Istanbul for a short holiday, but Karzai was not allowed to leave. The fact that he is now using his passport is a good sign. It is said that Yaqoob pushed for Karzai to go abroad—like he had insisted last year that Abdullah Abdullah, CEO and second only to Karzai in political importance, be allowed to fly to Delhi occasionally. A tense power

tussle

Could this constitute an ice-breaker between Afghanistan and the US-led Western nations, which have so far resisted opening a dialogue with the Taliban? The fact that Thomas West happened to be in the UAE when Karzai landed and that he met with other Taliban leaders is undoubtedly significant.

Haibatullah, on the other hand, is believed to strongly support the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, which has said that girls should not be allowed to study after Class 6, or more recently, that women cannot use public parks and playgrounds. The flogging of three women in Logar province, an hour outside of Kabul, is also said to have been done to please the ultraconservative head of the Taliban.

The struggle for power in Afghanistan is evidently heating up. Another way of looking at this power struggle is through the involvement of the Pakistani military establishment, which is said to have supported Haibatullah for the last several years. It is claimed that he was in Pakistani custody when Kabul fell in August 2021. It is also said that he had been talking to the Pakistani military since his escape to Quetta when the

Soviets invaded in 1979.

Certainly, Mullah Yaqoob is an interesting figure. He travelled to the UAE when Karzai was there in early December, meeting UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Speculation is rife that he was behind Karzai's effort to travel abroad and meet Western leaders.

Whichever way this alleged rift between Haibatullah and Yaqoob turns out will be significant—not just for the region but for Afghans and the world at large. If Yaqoob wins, Afghanistan is sure to follow a less conservative course. If girls are allowed to return to school and women encouraged to become more equal, the world may be prompted to lift its sanctions on Afghanistan and restart much-needed funding for the country. How will this impact India? Certainly, India's refusal to give student visas to Afghans and to resume their medical treatment has put a big brake on the Narendra Modi government's efforts to expand its influence in Kabul. India may be left playing catch-up in the next few weeks and months if it refuses to adjust to the emerging ground realities in its neighbourhood.

Tawang Clash: How India Can Deal With Land-Hungry China

The attempted intrusion in Yangtze in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh by a large, well-prepared and armed with handheld weapons Chinese PLA group, late in the night of 9-10 December 2022, was a coordinated action, intending to exploit adverse weather conditions to grab crucial Indian territory. The aim was to alter the status quo of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) by taking control of a peak which could provide it with observation into depth areas and also deny Indians observation into China. Yangtze is one of the 25 recognised disputed points between the two countries, though China has been claiming complete Arunachal Pradesh as a part of southern Tibet. These regions have been identified through either working group dialogues, the exchange of maps or Chinese PLA actions. Yangtze, located 25 km from Tawang, has remained a major friction point between the two nations.

The Chinese build-up, exploiting its border villages in the vicinity, was observed by Indian troops who moved reserves close to the location to counter any possible misadventure, keeping them hidden from Chinese observation. When Chinese troops

crossed the LAC and attempted to assault Indian sentries, Indian reserves quickly mobilised and counter-attacked the Chinese. Hand-to-hand combat ensued and the Chinese were forced back with large numbers of physical casualties. Indian troops also suffered a few injuries which, as per the defence minister, were 'not serious.' While Indian figures are available, China, as expected, continues to hide its casualty figures. It would, a month or two down the line, mention one or two injured. It has been the Chinese norm to downplay its losses, solely to protect the image of the PLA. The next day there was a 'flag meeting' between the two commanders and normalcy was restored. It was another planned Chinese assault failing. This was the first serious physical clash after Galwan. Yangtze is an important height held by India and it provides good observation into the Chinese bowl. In case occupied by China, it would open observation onto the Indian side. There is also a spring on the Chinese side of the LAC, which is sacred to Buddhists and has been closed to all, Indian and Chinese citizens, for the past few years.

Every year, China attempts to invade the region to stake its claim, exploiting differing perceptions of the LAC. There was a standoff in October 2021, when a Chinese patrol similarly crossed the LAC. It was diffused within a few hours. The Chinese strength then was around 100 but was 300 this time and better armed. The last physical clash in this region was in 2016. In winters, India reduces its deployment in the region due to maintenance issues, which the Chinese attempted to take advantage of. However, it was not to be. Not only were the Chinese pushed back but Indian soldiers followed the Chinese into their territory, causing panic. While the Indian media broke the news on 12 December, three days after the incident, the Chinese media maintained silence. It was only after a statement was issued by the defence minister in both houses of Parliament were the Chinese forced to react. The Chinese military spokesperson stated, 'PLA was carrying out a regular patrol in Dongzhong area and was blocked by Indian Army illegally crossing the LAC.' The Chinese foreign office spokesperson added that the 'situation has stabilised'.

How Saudi Arabia is using China to grow its influence, hedge the US

For China, the current squabble between the US and Saudi Arabia is an opportunity

As China's President landed in Riyadh this past week amidst much fanfare, Saudi Arabia announced a bumper budget surplus owing to high oil prices, putting the kingdom forward as the fastest-growing G20 economy, and giving a boost to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's (MBS) grand plans to re-design the region's economy for the future. To achieve this, Saudi Arabia is not only going through an economic renaissance but also a geopolitical one as well. Riyadh's traditional geopolitical posture has predominantly had a western compass, with close ties between the House of Saud and Washington over decades. Both the internal and external security of Saudi Arabia has been critical for a long time for the United States (US) for its and the West's energy security. This strategy has had two major parts to it: First, consistent and uninterrupted supply of oil and gas; second, influence over energy pricing, especially with regard to, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—the producers' cartel. The former is now challenged by a climate change-pushed global energy transition towards renewables; however, the latter, remains critical with the said transition being politically volatile, as being witnessed currently in Europe on the sidelines of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The other driving aspect of increasing change in posture is an expected coming of great power competition between the US and China, one that countries in the Gulf are looking to sidestep and not get embroiled in. Riyadh's decision to expand its influence on oil pricing by developing the OPEC+ mechanism, which includes Moscow, has added further layers of tension between the US and the Saudis. During these critical geopolitical moments that are currently unfurling, MBS is looking to implement some of the most drastic political and societal changes in the kingdom's history. These include opening the economy, attempting to move away from oil, adopting a more moderate take on Islam, and so on. While a widely supported initiative globally, the risks attached to it remain significant, despite a view that the country's young population backs MBS and his initiatives.

For China, the current squabble between the US and Saudi



Arabia is an opportunity. While Beijing would know that Riyadh would in all probability not align fully with its interests, pulling them more towards a central, and "independent" line of thinking would be sufficient. For the US, recent attempts by President Joe Biden to pacify MBS and make attempts to apply a band-aid to the frayed bilateral seem to have not gone according to plan. For Biden, the fact that MBS teamed up with Moscow and cut oil production before the US midterm elections leading to volatile inflation left a bad taste in the mouth. Biden, who had called Saudi a pariah state earlier, and the US being slow institutionally to mount a response when refineries in the

country were attacked by drones operated by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, has fallen out of favour with the Crown Prince who believes a Republican White House is more aligned with their interests. The botched US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 has only added to the anxieties in capitals such as Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

The 2019 attack against the oil facilities in Saudi Arabia is perhaps an underplayed event in how Riyadh calculates security today, and the perception of Beijing being a 'replacement' big power in place of the US in the region is an overplayed one. China's outreach to the Arab states is not a zero-sum game for Xi Jinping. A significant reason behind the depression in US-Saudi ties is the

issue of Iran, a country with whom China signed a 25-year-long strategic cooperation partnership in March 2021, which by some estimates is placed at around US\$400 billion. This deal, perhaps automatically, to a large extent, nullifies any argument that China is the country that will come to the aid of the Arab world militarily. While there is a palpable feeling of a waning US influence in the region, Washington is still expected to remain a critical external kinetic operator.

However, the above does not mean China is not in the fray. Beijing's increasing influence is real, and something to watch out for. While it may be limited

in its strategic presence, China's predominant use of its economic muscle to make space for itself is noteworthy. Technology is one of the frontlines where multiple states are increasingly taking a hard stance against Beijing. A part of the US\$30-billion worth of agreements between Riyadh and Beijing is a significant component going to Huawei, giving China deeper access to critical tech in the region, specifically the development of 5G infrastructure, raising unease in Washington over the proximity of Chinese tech to American military tech stationed across the region. While the US has managed to use its leverage with Israel to push it away from getting too close to Beijing, not much success has been achieved with the Gulf states. China's inroads in the region also offer a fundamental challenge for new 'minilaterals' such as the I2U2 grouping (India-Israel-US-UAE). While a country such as India that has more extensive and expansive joint military exercises programme with the region than China, the geoeconomics component of geopolitics today is significant. For example, within the I2U2, while India has banned dozens of Chinese apps and keeps the likes of Huawei at a distance, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) embraces it.



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Russia remains biggest oil supplier to India for second month in a row

For the second month in a row, Russia remained India's top oil supplier in November, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa. The imports in November were made ahead of a price cap agreed by the EU on Russian seaborne oil

(News Agency) Russia has for the second month in a row remained India's top oil supplier in November, surpassing traditional sellers Iraq and Saudi Arabia, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

Russia, which made up for just 0.2 per cent of all oil imported by India in the year to March 31, 2022, supplied 9,09,403 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil to India in November. It now makes up for more than a fifth of India's oil supplies.

According to Vortexa, an energy intelligence firm, India imported 8,61,461 bpd of oil from Iraq in November and 5,70,922 bpd from Saudi Arabia. The United States was India's fourth largest supplier at 4,05,525 bpd. India's imports from Russia in November were lower than the volumes bought in October. India's appetite for Russian oil swelled ever since it started trading on discounts as the West shunned it to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

As per Vortexa, India imported just 36,255 barrels per day of crude oil from Russia in December 2021, compared to 1.05 million bpd from Iraq and

9,52,625 bpd from Saudi Arabia.

There were no imports from Russia in the following two months, but they resumed in March, soon after the Ukraine war broke out in late February. India imported 68,600 bpd of Russian oil in March, while it increased to 2,66,617 bpd in the following month and peaked at 9,42,694 bpd in June. But in June, Iraq was India's top supplier with 1.04 million bpd of oil. Russia, in that month, became India's second-biggest supplier.

Imports dipped marginally in the following two months. They stood at 8,76,396 bpd in September before rising to a record 9,35,556 bpd in October, according to Vortexa.

The Indian government has been vehemently defending its trade with Russia, saying it has to source oil from where it is the cheapest. The imports

in November were made ahead of a price cap agreed by the EU on Russian seaborne oil.

But, the government has indicated that



oil companies will continue to buy oil from Russia outside the price cap. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on December 7 told the Rajya Sabha that Indian refiners will continue to look for the best deals in the interest of the country.

"We do not ask our companies to buy Russian oil. We ask our companies to buy oil (based on) what is the best option that they can get. Now, it depends on what the market throws

up," he had said while replying to clarifications sought by MPs on his suo moto statement on foreign policy. The companies will go after sources that are more competitive, Jaishankar added.

"Please do understand it's not just we buy oil from one country. We buy oil from multiple sources, but it is a sensible policy to go where we get the best deal in the interests of the Indian people, and that is exactly what we are trying to do," he said.

The executive body of the European Union has asked its 27 member countries to cap the price of Russian oil at USD 60 a barrel as part of the West's attempt to squeeze Moscow's oil revenues and limit its ability to wage war in Ukraine while keeping global prices and supplies steady.

From December 5, western shipping and insurance companies are prohibited from handling Russian oil sold above the price cap. However, ships loaded with Russian oil before December 5 and unloaded at their destination before January 19, will not be subject to the price cap.

Experts cheer Paytm buyback, say it shows firm's ability for growth without burning cash

The management of Paytm believes that a buyback could be beneficial for shareholders given the company's current financial position and liquidity.

(News Agency) Even as the markets await the details of the proposed buyback of digital payments and financial services giant Paytm, investors and analysts have cheered the move. The stock is up 22% in the past 3 weeks and 6% since Thursday, when it informed the exchanges about the proposed buyback.

The board meeting to consider the buyback of shares is slated for December 13. Paytm's management believes that a buyback could be beneficial for shareholders given the company's current financial position and liquidity. A buyback, also known as a share repurchase, is a way for a company to reduce the number of outstanding shares on the market. By buying back its own shares, a company can increase the value of its remaining shares and enhance shareholder returns. Commenting on the buyback, Dipan Mehta, Director of Elixir Equities, said in a TV interview, "I think it's a smart move on part of the Paytm management.. buyback certainly gives an outlook as to what the kind of cash position is and the confidence the management has that they

will be able to turn around the operations and that they do not need to burn so much of cash." "At least on the fundamentals side, quarterly numbers are coming through on a positive basis so maybe you know Paytm has turned a corner over here and you could look to at least market-linked performance over the next few months and quarters," Mehta added.

Meanwhile, Emkay Global Financial Services MD Krishna Kumar Karwa said in a media interview, "Generally, buybacks are conducted when corporates feel that their stock is undervalued. Apart from that, it is a tax-efficient way of returning money to shareholders. If a newly-listed platform company is considering buybacks even as they work towards profitability, it's a function of its confidence in its business prospects. It's also a question of whether

they may not need to burn further cash and they believe that buying back shares at the current valuation could be more attractive." Dolat Capital, which has a 'buy'



rating on Paytm with a target price of Rs 1,400, said the buyback announcement will take away investor concerns surrounding the profitability and cash generation roadmap of the business.

The buyback will not only boost confidence in the company's management and their ability to allocate capital optimally, but it could also lead to further earnings accretion in the future

through this route, Dolat Capital added. "Buyback at current valuation makes lots of sense given declining need for organic capital allocation and very compelling valuation for the Paytm business. We view this move to be very positive and would enhance business confidence," Dolat analysts wrote.

In another note earlier this month, Dolat said upgraded disclosures by Paytm, detailed business growth plans along with Free Cash Flow focus "raise confidence to profitability path".

Kunal Shah of ICICI Securities wrote, "The management was confident about becoming an FCF-generating company (net of capital expenditure) in the next 12-18 months, driven collectively by improved profitability across payment and financial services distribution, cloud, etc. So it seems to be ahead of time and will be a surprise to the market." In its recent analyst meeting, Paytm said it remains ahead of the guided timeline to achieve operating profitability i.e EBITDA before ESOP cost.

5 features WhatsApp must add in 2023: Schedule messages, call recording and more

WhatsApp introduced a bunch of features in 2022, but it is still missing some crucial tools. Come 2023, here are five features we hope the platform adds

(NewsAgency) WhatsApp remains the top free-to-use messenger in India despite facing stiff competition from Telegram and Signal. However, it is also the slowest among its rivals to roll out new features. Telegram regularly introduces a variety of upgrades each month to improve the user experience, while WhatsApp takes its time to add new features. Moreover, some crucial tools are still unavailable on the platform. As 2022 is over, it is very unlikely that we will see WhatsApp adding new features. However, we hope that some new (and crucial) features are rolled out next year.

Here are five top features that the Meta-owned messenger should consider introducing in the coming year.

Scheduling messages: WhatsApp lets users auto-delete messages, but there's no option to schedule messages yet. The feature would be highly useful for users who use the platform for work. In a way, it will allow

managers and workers to schedule messages for the next morning if they want to respect others' privacy.

Edit message:

WhatsApp allows users to auto-delete messages and even delete texts after sending them, but there is currently no option to edit a message like the one that

Apple recently rolled out with iMessage. The feature will essentially allow users to edit a text after sending, rather than having to delete it and resend the correct version. For security reasons, WhatsApp may want to consider limiting the window to edit a text after sending it.

Unsend: Similar to the Edit message option, WhatsApp users cannot unsend a message. Again, the delete



message option helps to an extent, but it leaves a tacky label in the chat. It shouldn't be difficult for WhatsApp to introduce this option, as it already exists on Instagram DM - another platform owned by its parent company, Facebook.

Vanish mode: Another feature that

WhatsApp could borrow from its sister platforms, like Instagram and Facebook Messenger, is Vanish mode. This mode lets users create and join temporary chat threads that are automatically erased when the chat ends. Since many journalists use the platform to share sensitive information, a Vanish mode could be highly useful. WhatsApp does offer a disappearing messages feature, but a dedicated Vanish mode could be more seamless and convenient. **Call recording:** Personally, I do not want WhatsApp to introduce call recording, but I know many users want to see this feature. A native WhatsApp call recording could be useful, but it will also introduce new challenges. If this were to happen, WhatsApp could go above its rivals and offer an option to restrict call recordings, just as it does with last seen and online status. This would give users the option to choose whether or not they want their calls recorded.

Verified Twitter users to lose Blue Checks soon, Elon Musk says they were given out in a corrupt way

More than 400,000 Twitter accounts have a blue check beside their names on the micro-blogging site. The verification badge marked them as an authentic source

(NewsAgency) Twitter users may soon lose the blue check mark beside their profile name as Elon Musk is not happy about the way they were given out. Ever since Musk took over, he has been coming up with different ways to take away the exclusivity that comes with the blue tick or the verification badge. Musk introduced the Blue subscription, which has been relaunched once again. The subscription grants blue tick to anyone who has paid for it. Previously, the blue tick was associated with prominent people such as journalists working in notable

Twitter accounts have a blue check beside their names on the micro-blogging site. The verification badge

tick to individuals irrespective of their social status. They can get one beside their profile if they agree to pay

rolled out the Blue subscription, this time with different colour badges. "Starting today, we're re-enabling Twitter Blue sign ups on iOS and web. Twitter Blue subscribers will get access to subscriber-only features* such as Edit Tweet, 1080p video uploads and reader mode. Subscribers will also receive a blue checkmark after their accounts are reviewed to ensure they meet all of our requirements, including our rules against impersonation. Accounts found to be breaking our rules may be suspended without a refund," Twitter said in a blog post.

The subscription plan is priced at \$8/month on web, and \$11/month for those who sign up on iOS. Existing Twitter Blue subscribers will be able to upgrade, cancel, or auto-renew their subscription at



organisations, political figures, celebrities and more. Replying to a tweet calling Musk "ruthless", Musk said, "In a few months, we will remove all legacy blue checks. The way in which they were given out was corrupt and nonsensical." More than 400,000

marked them as an authentic source and are usually granted to accounts belonging to journalists, celebrities, government departments and companies.

Musk had said that the new subscription services will grant blue

for the subscription plan. When Twitter had briefly rolled out the Blue subscription plan, users took the opportunity to impersonate celebrities and companies to mislead the followers. The feature was soon rolled back. However, once again Twitter has

the new price. Prices may vary by region. We plan to offer subscriptions on Android soon. Twitter Blue is now available in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The feature will be rolled out in more countries soon.

Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's best fashion moments from Pathaan song Besharam Rang

Besharam Rang, the first song from the film Pathaan, is out. Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone look stylish as ever in the music video



(News Agency) The first song from Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's anticipated film Pathaan is finally out. The filmmakers released the music video of the song Besharam Rang that, we must add, has taken over the internet and how. Right from SRK and Deepika's sizzling hot chemistry to their bold dance moves in scenic Spain, fans can't stop gushing over it all. And, the fashion enthusiast in us is certainly not going to get over both Deepika and Shah Rukh's oh-so-glam avatar. Throughout the song's video, we see Deepika making back-to-back oomph-exuding appearances in risque ensembles and SRK flaunting his chiseled abs while also rocking some stunning outfits. Besharam Rang's video begins with Deepika flaunting her enviable frame in a striking yellow bikini and setting the screen on fire. Replete with daring cutouts and held together with metallic hoops, the backless swimsuit was a bold choice but the diva rocked it with effortless ease.

Shah Rukh Khan's style game is top notch in Besharam Rang and the very first glimpse of him in the song is a testament. Dressed in a printed green shirt boasting of traditional paisley motifs, SRK looked nothing less than a fashion icon. His look was further enhanced with a slew of chain necklaces, undone buttons, sunnies and

the hair bun. Stunning is the word for Deepika clad in this metallic golden bodysuit! The outfit came with a plunging neckline and elongated armholes, taking the oomph quotient up by a notch. Her look was completed with a pair of contemporary hoop earrings, smokey eyes and nude-mauve lips. No wonder, her photo in this outfit was chosen by filmmakers to announce the song's release date. Her golden outfit, let us tell you, also reminded many fans of Priyanka Chopra's iconic Dostana moment too.

THE SHIMMERING SKIRT

There's also a dash of dazzling accents in Deepika's Besharam Rang wardrobe. Her appearance in a lilac bralette with a sequined asymmetrical skirt is what we are talking about. Yet again, her outfit is complemented with a pair of chunky and impossible-to-ignore earrings.

SRK's LAYERED NECK JEWELLERY

Apart from his drool-worthy long hair look and abs, SRK's neck jewellery game is also impressive in Pathaan's Besharam Rang video. Whether the superstar is clad in a shirt or is seen flaunting his chiseled frame in a shirtless avatar, his layered neck chains were a stylish addition to his look.

A RIOT OF COLOURS

Deepika Padukone also steals the show in a one-shoulder colourful bralette. She rocked it with black bottoms adorned with metallic tassels etched to the hem. She looked nothing less than a smokeshow as she danced with SRK clad in this ensemble.

THE ULTRA-STYLISH END

The Besharam Rang video ends on an ultra-hot and stylish note. We see Deepika setting the screens on fire in her monotone orange beachwear and SRK setting fashion goals in a rose-printed shirt, beige trousers, sunglasses and hair bun.



Harnaaz Sandhu writes long note to mark 1 year of Miss Universe win

Harnaaz Sandhu shared a throwback video and penned a long note to mark one year of her Miss Universe win

(News Agency) It was a proud moment for the entire nation when Harnaaz Sandhu was crowned Miss Universe 2021 on December 13 last year. The diva won the coveted title for India after almost 2 decades. To mark one year of her historic win, the diva took to Instagram and shared a video of her Miss Universe pageant journey.

The clip also featured the moment when Harnaaz was crowned by her successor Miss Universe 2020 Andrea Meza of Mexico. Revisiting her journey, she also penned a long note and shared it along with the video. "While being on stage I prayed every moment to make my country proud in the best way possible I can. I don't look back



when I recall these memories. But I look forward to create more and couldn't have asked to start my dreams than this way with all of you loving and supporting me," she

not going to be easy. But for now, Thank you Universe," she concluded her note.

Since being shared, her Instagram post has garnered over 45k likes and over 2.5 lakh views. Indian-American Shree Saini, who was announced first runner-up of Miss World 2021, too dropped a sweet comment on her video. "Huge congratulations on your incredible year as @missuniverse! You are a beacon of hope and voice of love, for millions of people. Your impact is truly immeasurable," she wrote in the comments. In December 2021, Punjab-based Harnaaz Sandhu became the third Indian to win Miss Universe title after Lara Dutta (2000) and Sushmita Sen (1994).

What happens when you sleep on your stomach

Health experts explain how sleeping on your stomach affects your respiratory system and what is the ideal position to sleep in

(News Agency) Most people have often wondered if sleeping on your stomach has any health effects. Although there are benefits to sleeping on the stomach - as in, it can help with snoring and reduce sleep apnea - it can be detrimental to your back and neck.

India Today spoke to Dr Arun Chowdary Kotaru, Consultant, Respiratory/ Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine, Artemis Hospital, Gurgaon about the complex idea of a sleeping position and its relation to health. "Sleep is a complex condition for the respiratory muscles which involves both the primary muscles and accessory muscles to work fine. So, in simple terms, for a person to breathe, you require primary muscles like the diaphragm and the ante cursory muscles, but while sleeping, a person uses accessory muscles more. Lungs will not get adequate space to expand, which may result in hypoplasia. Eventually, a person may end up having respiratory issues," said Dr Kotaru.

Accessory muscles include the abdominal muscles and the neck muscles which function when a person is sleeping on their stomach.

"If you ask a person to lay down on their stomach, you are restricting the movement of the abdominal muscles and other accessory muscles which are used as accessory muscles. Even the diaphragm, which is the primary muscle for respiration, is hampered because these muscles will not have any flexible movement over the stomach," he added. According to Dr Asmita Mehta, Professor, Respiratory Medicine, Amrita Hospital, Kochi, if you're lying on your stomach, it puts strain on your back and the spine. "Because your weight is in the middle of your body, the pressure is on your back. Back pain or neck pain can increase during the daytime. This means that your back and neck muscles are neither getting rest in the daytime or during the night," said Dr Mehta.

She added that sleeping on your back, on the other hand, evenly distributes the body weight. But besides lying on the

back, lying on the left side seems to be the ideal position for sleeping.

Dr Kotaru explained that the only health benefit of lying on your stomach is when

you want to avoid snoring.

"The common passage in the throat, where the air and the food meet called the pharynx, gets compromised when lying down

supine (as in, on your back). There is a gravitational pull from the neck area. The chin, which is the only bone movable in the skull, moves slightly back and exerts pressure on the windpipe, leading to some amount of respiratory compromise. This is one of the reasons why people snore," he said.

WHAT IS THE BEST POSITION TO SLEEP IN?

Once you sleep on the left lateral, the gravitational pull on the chin and the windpipe is taken off. "The right lung has a major role in respiration, which is why keeping it on the top part while sleeping

on the left is great for the respiratory system," said Dr Kotaru, adding that on the right side could add pressure on the right lung and even cause acid reflux.

Dr Mehta added that lying on the left side, especially in a foetal position, could also be an ideal position to sleep in. Besides this, pregnant women can find lying on the side the best way to get sound sleep. "During pregnancy, you should lie on the side when you're sleeping by adding a pillow under the belly because lying on your back will be painful," said Dr Mehta. A 2012 medical study suggests that "sleeping on your left side when you're pregnant can increase healthy blood flow and provide the optimum oxygen levels for you and your baby."

If you have a sinus problem, too, lying down on the back could be an issue. Therefore, lying on the side is preferable. Dr Mehta said that the benefits of sleeping on the back, however, relaxes the spleen, a tiny organ that filters the blood. She added that when a person sleeps on their back, one should use a pillow with a small width. When sleeping on the side, one should use a pillow with a bigger width.



5 immunity boosting winter foods to add to your diet

In winters, it is important to fuel our body with immunity boosting foods that can help increase our white blood cells and fight against various illnesses

(News Agency) As winters approach, our food preferences also tend to change. Instead of juices, salads, shakes, we start to crave more for warm soups, stews and soothing herbal teas. Our body has to do additional work of generating heat to keep warm during the cold months and this is the reason our chances of having deep-fried, junk food, and sugary food also increase. Winters are also the time when our body becomes less efficient in fighting viruses and bacteria which is why we have higher chances of catching flu, Covid-19, respiratory infections among others. It is important to fuel your body with the right nutrients so that we can protect it from a series of winter illnesses. A combination of some winter herbs and spices, citrus fruits and protein-rich foods can help shield from many diseases during the weather.

Meanwhile, here are foods suggested by Marian that you must include in your winter diet to pack a nutritional punch:

Black pepper

Black pepper is the richest spice which has many health benefits. Its also known as "black gold" because it not only adds flavour to the food but also acts as a preservative adding heat to the human body. Black pepper boosts the immune system by improving the white blood cells in the body. This pungent spice contains many compounds and one is

piperine which not only protect the cells but also boost the digestive health.

Lemongrass

Lemongrass is a long-stranded plant which usually used in the aromatherapy to relieve pain and spasms. But its herbal quality if used in dietary preparations, provides antioxidants, reduces cough or sore throat or fever by preventing the growth of bacteria and yeast thus boosting the immunity.

Ginger and garlic

Combination of these two, not only enhances the flavours of the dish but also enhances the gut health with their super anti-inflammatory and antioxidative properties. Since winter season comes with many viruses and bacteria, the antiviral and antimicrobial properties of ginger-garlic help in promoting a healthy immune response.

Citrus fruits

All the fruits are good to boost our immunity because they are loaded with vitamin C, fibres, antioxidants, minerals and enzymes which produces white blood cells making

necessary to fight infections. It enhances the gut health which usually get affected in the winter season thus promoting better



digestion. Consumption of citrus fruits also improves the skin texture from being dry and scaly to be more nourished and smoother.

Fish and poultry

These protein sources are also loaded with vitamin B, (B6 and B12), zinc and omega-3 fatty acids which enhance the production of RBCs and WBCs in the body which act as a protective agent and attacks the foreign bodies entering the human body thus maintaining a high metabolism.

Role of hydration in immunity

Water is the best and the easiest source to overcome the dryness in winters. It helps maintain the

healthy mucous membranes. Due to the moisture in the environment, it becomes difficult to recognise the thirst and we end up having less water. This affects our digestion correlating the immune system to go weak. Water also helps in regulating our body temperature, releases out the toxins from the body and carries oxygen to cells thus nourishing the entire body and supporting the immune system.

Combination of herbs and spices

Lastly, a good combination of all the herbs, spices, proteins, vitamins and minerals along with sufficient hydration, it becomes very easy to keep our immunity well boosted. There is hardly any need to emphasise more on specific foods if we manage to maintain a balanced diet at proper timings, required physical mobility and essentially a stress-free lifestyle.

Additional tips

Having herbal tea with ginger, pepper and lemongrass early in the morning could keep us warm in the cold weather. Also having the three major meals - breakfast, lunch and dinner on time with required quantities including the protein and other micro-macronutrients would help maintain the nutrient requirements to stay active and healthy. Keep in mind to restrict intake of oily, spicy and junk food so as to not worsen the digestion.

Shah Rukh Khan's pic wearing red teeka surfaces from Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu

Shah Rukh Khan visited Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu after performing Umrah at Mecca earlier this month. A new photo of the actor wearing red teeka is going viral

(South Asian Insider Bureau) On December 12, several videos of Shah Rukh Khan visiting Vaishno Devi Temple in Jammu went viral. Later that day, the actor was spotted arriving at Mumbai post darshan. A day later, on December 13, a new photo of SRK wearing a teeka, reportedly from Vaishno Devi Temple surfaced online.

SRK WEARS TEEKA IN NEW PIC FROM VAISHNO DEVI TEMPLE

Shah Rukh Khan visited the Vaishno Devi Temple in Jammu on December 12. Photos and videos of the superstar arriving and then returning from the temple went viral. And now, photos of SRK wearing a red teeka, reportedly from Vaishno Devi temple, is going viral. The



actor was seen posing with his fans, who too wore similar teekas on their foreheads.

SRK VISITS VAISHNO DEVI TEMPLE

Days after performing Umrah rounds on the Internet. One in Mecca, several videos of video that is going viral is a Shah Rukh Khan from CCTV camera footage of the Vaishno Devi Temple in actor keeping low-key as he Jammu have been doing visited the temple. Another

video was of the actor heading towards his car, probably after darshan.

SHAH RUKH KHAN PERFORMS UMRAH AT MECCA

Shah Rukh Shot for Rajkumar Hirani's Dunki in Saudi Arabia. A journalist from Saudi Arabia shared pictures of Shah Rukh Khan in Mecca performing Umrah. "Bollywood Actor Shah Rukh Khan @iamsrk performed Umrah in #Mecca today. May Allah swt accept his umrah, Ameen. #ShahRukhKhan (sic)," read his tweet. Umrah is a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. It can be undertaken at any time of the year, while Hajj is an annual pilgrimage performed around Eid-Al-Adha. Work-wise, Shah Rukh Khan will be next seen in Pathaan, Jawan and Dunki.



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Is Besharam Rang from Pathaan a copy of Jain's Makeba? Is it inspired by African Amapiano genre?

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Besharam Rang, the new track from the upcoming SRK-starrer Pathaan has amassed 2 crore views ever since it dropped on YouTube yesterday.

But ever since its release, listeners have been finding Vishal-Sheykhar's (Shekhar is now Sheykhhar apparently) music to be eerily similar to the 2015 dancepop hit Makeba by French singer-songwriter Jain. Makeba, which many would have heard on a popular Levi's commercial, is produced by French beatmaker Yodelice and largely draws upon the African music subgenre known as Amapiano. In fact, the very title of the song is a reference to

legendary South African vocalist and activist Miriam Makeba, who is largely associated with Afropop and jazz music. Amapiano which translates as "pianos" in Zulu,

emerged as a style of electronic house music that can be traced back to South Africa in 2012. Synths and percussion-driven basslines



characterise such songs with music critics largely calling it a hybrid of deep house and jazz music. So, even though the late Miriam Makeba might not have contributed to new-age

Amapiano music, her earlier attempts at blending jazzy and electronic influences did leave an impact on the genre, an influence that even reached

overseas as can be seen from Jain's mainstream popularity.

The funky house beats and basslines in Besharam Rang sound so similar to Makeba's electro-influenced

Amapiano style that Twitter is calling this yet another attempt by Bollywood to plagiarise global music. Be it the disgraced Anu Malik stealing the

Israeli national anthem and even the Birthday song to Pritam using a Korean track for Race's Pehli Nazar Mein, the Hindi film industry has been a repeat offender in this regard. However, to join the other side of the debate, the alleged "plagiarism" doesn't seem that obvious as some of Besharam Rang's elements might come off as generic electronic tropes. There's also a Spanish intro and outro sung by Vishal Dadlani for some reason which can distract the listener from the Makeba-like beats, along with a touch of vintage

Bollywood-like violins in between. Vishal-Sheykhar has not come out with a response even though Twitter is busy grilling the music composer duo, asking for Jain to be credited.

Amitabh Bachchan wraps KBC 14 shoot, hopes to return soon: 'We shall all be together again'

(South Asian Insider Bureau) from me .. a moment of Amitabh Bachchan has wrapped DEEWAR .. and the emotions." the shoot of Kaun Banega The actor tweeted about Crorepati season 14 and he completing the latest season of shared a bunch of pictures from his last day on the sets. He also recalled a moment from his iconic film Deewar. Amitabh also wrote about it in his blog and revealed his return gift for his fans. "The last day of the show and the greetings



from them that work so hard to attempt is about to end with make KBC what it is .. a farewell the hope that one more or a bye to be back hopefully next achievement will be secured and year again .. and the return gift give way for another beginning).

Alia Bhatt's LOL Guess About Title Of Shraddha Kapoor's Film With Ranbir Kapoor

The title of the film will be shared on Wednesday

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Luv Ranjan's untitled film starring Ranbir Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor is trending big time. Why, you ask? Well, the makers teased the fans with the initials of the film's title on Tuesday and asked them to guess the name based on that. The poster simply read: "Shraddha Ranbir TJMM - A Luv Ranjan film. Title releasing tomorrow." Sharing the poster, Shraddha Kapoor wrote in her caption: "And the title is...Guess Karo." Alia Bhatt tried to guess the title of the film and she wrote this sharing Shraddha Kapoor's post on her Instagram story: "Tingle Jingle mingle mingle." We'll have to wait till



Wednesday to see if Alia Bhatt's guess was right. Meanwhile, Ranbir Kapoor, during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah earlier this month, said that Luv Ranjan's film might be his last film in the romcom genre. "I don't know it is probably going to be one of the last romantic comedies I do because I am getting older," said the actor. Luv

Ranjan is best-known for directing the Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA series. He also directed the 2018 film Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety which emerged as a hit at the box office. He also produced Ajay Devgn's De De Pyaar De.

Elon Musk booted nonstop at event in San Francisco, Twitter tries to delete videos posted online

Musk was recently invited to the Dave Chappelle Show in San Francisco on Sunday, where he was loudly booed by a crowd as soon as he got on the stage.

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Twitter's new chief, Elon Musk, may have a huge fan following on social media, but people in real life do not seem to approve of his ways. Musk was recently invited to the Dave Chappelle Show in San Francisco on Sunday, where he was loudly booed by a crowd as soon as he got on the stage. The comedian even joked that some of the people booing could be the Twitter employees, whom Musk fired unceremoniously in the latest round of layoffs conducted at Twitter. Interestingly, now Musk is trying to remove the video from Twitter but some users have saved it. "Ladies and gentlemen, make some noise for the

richest man in the world," comedian Dave Chappelle said as he welcomed Musk on the stage. As soon as Musk went up the stage, the crowd cheered and booed but the boos clearly won out, the footage posted on Twitter revealed. Gizmodo reported that the video was deleted from Twitter. However, the publication shared a link to the video. As Musk started pacing on the stage, the booing got louder. "It sounds like some of the people you fired are in the audience," Chappelle joked. "All these people who are booing, and I'm just pointing out the obvious, you have terrible seats,"

Chappelle tried to save Musk from the embarrassment caused by the crowd.



As per Gizmodo, the audience was not allowed to carry phones inside the event, but some people secretly carried the phones and captured the footage where Musk was ruthlessly mocked by

the audience. Musk thanked Chappelle for inviting him to the show, but everytime he tried to speak, the crowd started booing loudly. Visually flustered by the booing, Musk then asked Chappelle what he should say. Musk has been in the eye of the storm ever since he took over Twitter. He laid off the top executives on his second day, including the Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal, Vijay Gadde, and Nel Segal. A couple of days into his new role, Musk fired close to 75 per cent of its workforce. Reports suggest that Musk has now hired some of his family members and even brought in some of the engineers from Tesla and The Boring Company to work at Twitter.

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