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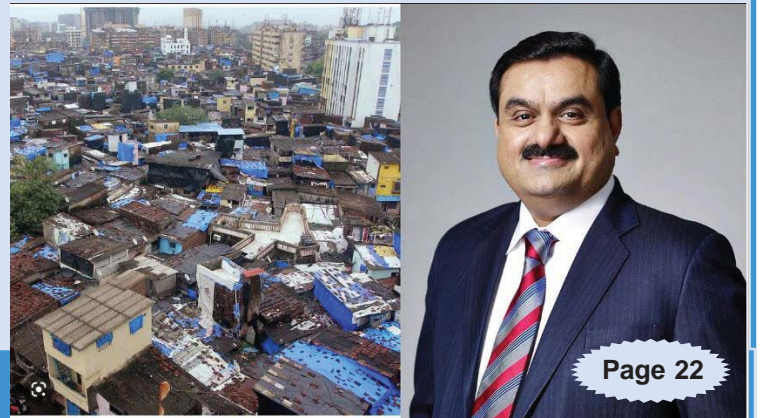


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India's Adani Group Wins Mumbai's Dharavi Slum Redevelopment Project

The Adani Group had lost a bid for the project in January 2019



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Leading Media Outlets Urge U.S. to End Prosecution of Julian Assange



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Scientists Revive 48,500-Year-Old 'Zombie Virus' Buried In Ice

Scientists have long warned that the thawing of permafrost due to atmospheric warming will worsen climate change by freeing previously trapped greenhouse gases like methane.



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Mexican Asylum Seekers Set Their Sights North-on Canada



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Infowars Host Alex Jones Files For Personal Bankruptcy



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Rapper Kanye West Suspended by Twitter Over Swastika Post



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WORKING CAPITAL R' US



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Indian Americans demonstrate in front of Pakistani Consulate in New York



(South Asian Insider Bureau) Indian Americans launched a blitzkrieg of high-voltage protests on Saturday in New York, highlighting Pakistan's role in the deadly 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Despite very cold weather large number of Indian American Diaspora demonstrated in front of the Pakistani consulate in New York. Mr Sewhani President of The American India Public Affairs committee said that Terrorism is not only the problem of India, but it is the problem of the whole world. We all should come together and fight this menace of Terrorism. Pakistan is epicenter of terrorism and State Sponsor of Terrorism. The

Culprits of 26/11 are still moving freely in Pakistan, they must be brought to Justice. Mr Sewhani also paid tribute to security forces and people who lost their lives in this deadliest terrorist attack in the history of independence India. He said that We are proud of Our security forces. In one of the most brutal cross-border attacks perpetrated on India, 10 Pakistani terrorists of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) entered Mumbai on 26 November 2008 and attacked five landmarks in India's financial capital. In nearly four days of gun and grenade attacks, they killed 166 people and injured around 300 including the city's Jewish community.

20-year-old Indian student dies after being hit, dragged by truck in Canada

A 20-year-old Indian student, who was from Haryana, died after being hit and dragged by a truck in Canada

(South Asian Insider Bureau) An Indian student, who was crossing the road on a cycle, died after being hit and dragged by a pickup truck in Canada, reported news agency PTI, quoting media reports. The fatal crash happened after the student, 20, was struck and was dragged by a pickup town in Toronto, police said. Despite emergency services trying their level best to free and revive the cyclist, he was pronounced dead. The collision happened at the intersection of Yonge Street and St Clair Avenue at about 4:30 pm on Wednesday evening, police said.

Missing from @torontopolice's PR about a cyclist killed by a right turning driver was that right turns were not permitted. Now, beside #KarikSaini's memorial another truck parked in the bike lane w impunity. What rules of the road? A larger problem lurks. @C a n a d a R o b i n pic.twitter.com/kwhvs0V2Q — The Biking Lawyer (Dave Shellnutt) (@TheBikingLawyer) November 25, 2022 According to a report published in news website cbc.ca, the victim's cousin has identified him as Kartik Saini who came to Canada from India in 2021. The reports suggest that Kartik was a student of Sheridan College. "Our

community is deeply saddened by the sudden death of Kartik. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, peers and professors," the college said in an email on Friday.

Kartik's cousin stated that he was speaking from Karnal in Haryana and said that Kartik's body will be sent to India as soon as possible for proper burial. Constable Laura Brabant, spokesperson for the Toronto Police Service, told PTI, "The investigation into the collision is on. The determination on whether charges are laid or not takes time as the investigators have to



conduct a full investigation first. This takes time and is not a rushed process." (sic) In September this year, an Indian student Satwinder Singh died as he sustained bullet injuries in shooting rampage in Canada's Ontario province. Satwinder Singh, who obtained an MBA in marketing in India, was a student

at Conestoga College. In April, a 21-year-old student Kartik Vasudev, a resident of Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, died after being allegedly shot at the Glen Road entrance to Sherbourne TTC station in St James Town. He was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Australia declined 50% of Student visa application from India in 2022

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Student from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka have had their request for student visa for Australia's vocational to higher education declined. The international visa for vocational students in India, Nepal and Pakistan has dropped to less than one in four. The Australian visa authorities are concerned about these applicants' bona fides, as per various reports. Visa grant rates for vocational education students have been below 50 per cent for most of 2022. Only 3.8 per cent, that is 34 out of more than 900 student applications in vocational study were approved. As of July 2022, 96,000 Indian students were studying in Australia, forming the second largest group of foreign students after China. Australian immigration authorities have traditionally subjected offshore VET

applicants to a high degree of scrutiny and hence there has been a high refusal rate. In higher education too, success rate declined to 56 per cent for Indian students, 57 per cent for Pakistani students. Meanwhile, Nepali students received only 33 per cent of visas in higher education and 15 per cent of visas in vocational education.

Australia's Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil has recently called immigration system 'clunky, expensive, and is just not working.' She has announced that former treasury secretary Martin Parkinson, lawyer Joanna Howe and consultant John Azarias would lead a

"comprehensive review" of Australia's migration system. A registered migration agent based in Melbourne, Vishal



Sharma who has clients from India and Nepal said that a significant number of visas which are refused on basis of non-genuine entrant "There has been a significant number of visas which are refused on basis of non-genuine entrant

without even properly considering the circumstances of genuine students who were planning to study in Australia," said Sharma to The Australia Today

However, he agreed that there has been a Mafia of dodgy agents operating in the Indian subcontinent which has been trying to arrange visas on basis of fake documents. The Australian government has attempted to redress visa processing delays by recruiting more new staff and also redistributing the processing workload. Further, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Australian higher education regulator, has also warned Australian institutions to monitor the activities of their education agents and the international students they enroll.

Religious worker can get R-1 Visa to travel, live in US All you need to know



(South Asian Insider Bureau) The United States government offers R-1 visa for religious workers seeking to work and live in US for non-profit religious organization in US. This specific type of visa allows the holders to stay in the US for a period of 5 years. The organisation that the visa seeker is tied to should be registered as a non-profit organization in the US, tied to any religious denomination in the US,

or a religious organisation that has a group tax exemption There is also no cap on the number of R-1 visas that can be issued Here is everything you need to know about the R-1 visa
Criterion for seeking R-1 visa The person who is applying for the R-1 visa must fulfill the following conditions:-Be a member of a religion for the past two years
-The religion must have a non-profit organization in the US

- Find a job in the non-profit religious organization, or an organization affiliated with the religion
- The applicant must be a minister or a person working directly in the religious occupation
- The applicant must commit to working at least 20 hours per week (part-time)
- The applicant must not work in other positions except in their religious capacity
- As for the non-profit organization, it must be either one of the registered organizations in the US.
- A non-profit religious organization with its own Internal Revenue Service letter of 501(c)(3)
- A non-profit religious organization with a group tax exemption
- A non-profit organization affiliated with a religion which has tax exemptions under 501(c)(3) rules or other IRS codes that does not make it a religious organization

by definition

Benefits for R-1 visa holders

-R-1 visa holders can live and work within the US for the duration of the visa.

-They will be allowed to open back accounts, get a driver's license

-They can study in US educational institutions. They are allowed to enroll in any course, either part time or full time

-They can also travel in and out of the US, and the time that they are outside the country does not count as part of their total visa time.

-R1 visa holders who will work part time in the US in religious positions can also work in other countries

-R-1 visa holders are not required to stay in the US for the whole time

People ineligible for R 1 visa

Not all religious workers are allowed to work in the US under the R1 visa. It only applies to ministers and those who are

directly tied to religious work. Administrative and clerical workers or any support personnel cannot apply for the R-1 visa and must go through applying for other applicable visas.

Process of getting R-1 visa

If both the applicant and the organization hiring the person fulfill the criteria, then the application process can begin.

According to the US government, a religion, or religious denomination is formed by a community of people who believe and are governed by rules of an ecclesiastical government. They also have these characteristics:

-Worship similarly

-Have a shared faith amongst their members

-Perform similar rituals, services, and ceremonies

-Have a shared code of discipline and doctrine Have organizations that are religious

-Have a shared place of worship

Unlimited Number Of Flights Between India, Canada Soon: Justin Trudeau

Justin Trudeau, who took part in the Business 20 event here ahead of the G20 Summit, said faster and easier movement of goods and people between the two countries will facilitate mutual trade and investment

(South Asian Insider Bureau) Bali: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday announced an agreement with India that will allow an unlimited number of flights between the two countries. Trudeau, who took part in the Business 20 event here ahead of the G20 Summit, said faster and easier movement of goods and people between the two countries will facilitate mutual trade and investment. "Today, we are announcing an agreement between Canada and India, that will allow an unlimited number of flights between our two countries," he said. "By making the movements of goods and people faster and easier, will facilitate trade and investment between Canada and India and help our businesses grow and succeed," he added.

Trudeau said Canada is making major investments in the Indo-Pacific that will strengthen its engagement in the long term.

"For example, we are investing in new Canadian Trade Gateway in Southeast Asia that will help Canadian businesses expand into new markets linking them to business networks in this dynamic region. Canada and Indo-Pacific region also share strong ties between our people and we will make these ties even

stronger," he said.

Trudeau said global businesses and commerce need the predictability and reliability that the international rules-based order establishes and Canada will always

stand up for it. The Canadian Prime Minister said he had arrived in Bali from Cambodia where it was announced that Canada is elevating its relationship with



upcoming Indo-Pacific strategy. We are deepening our existing friendship in the region, seeking new allies and promoting stability. We know that business leaders

ASEAN to a strategic partnership. "This is a strong demonstration of our engagement in the region and as part of our plan to expand our economic ties in a big way. Last week, we announced Canada's

like you are key to our individual and collective success. We also know that global businesses and commerce need the predictability and reliability that the international rules-based order establishes," he said. "This is something that Canada will always stand up for. Canada's message is clear - We have the values that make us a solid, reliable partner. We have the raw materials and trade access and we have a skilled, educated, ambitious and diverse workforce like no other," he added.

BRAHMIN SOCIETY OF NEW YORK CELEBRATED DIWALI



President Ruta Dave, Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan, Labu Upadhyaya, Bharati Joshi, Rekha Trivedi, Tejal Ravel and other committee members.

(South Asian Insider Bureau)- Brahmin Society of New York, established in 1987 recently held a Gala Diwali Dinner in New York. Society recognized their longtime member and esteemed guest Deputy commissioner for Trade, investment and innovation for Mayor Eric Adams Office for International affairs, Mr. Dilip Chauhan. Brahmin Society of NY believes in helping those in need, in the past the organization has donated in several calamities, institutes. This year, President Ms. Ruta Dave announced the donation to charity, "The INN" which provides a broad variety of essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty.

Sikh students allowed to wear kirpan on campus of US university

(South Asian Insider Bureau) A prominent US university, University of North Carolina, in a statement has announced that it would allow Sikh students to wear a kirpan on campus, a religious article in Sikhism. New York A prominent US university has announced that it would allow Sikh students to wear a kirpan on campus, a religious article in Sikhism. The change comes about two months after a video was posted online showing a student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was handcuffed for carrying a kirpan. The University of North Carolina, in a statement on

Thursday, said that the school's policy will allow students to wear kirpans on campus as long as the blade length is under 3 inches and is "worn close to the body in a sheath at all times." The statement released was signed by chancellor Sharon L Gaber and chief diversity officer Brandon L Wolfe said the ruling was effective immediately. "The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with support from Institutional Integrity, also conducted additional awareness training this week with our police department and will continue its work to expand our cultural education and training opportunities for all of

campus," the statement said. The university also said other religious accommodations, including a request to wear a larger kirpan, can be made to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX and evaluated on a case-by-case basis, it said. "Over the past several weeks, we have engaged in dialogue with representatives from the local and global Sikh communities about how we could modify University policies to honour the tenets of religious freedom while protecting the safety of our campus," the statement said. The university thanked Sikh leaders, including nonprofit organisations The

Sikh Coalition and the Global Sikh Council, who provided expertise and perspective to help with the policy change. In September, a video of the student being handcuffed went viral on social media. The video was uploaded on Twitter and said that the police had handcuffed him for refusing to let the officer remove his kirpan. "I wasn't going to post this, but I don't think I will receive any support from @unccharlotte. I was told someone called 911 and reported me, and I got cuffed for 'resisting' because I refused to let the officer take my kirpan out of the miyaan," the student tweeted.

Canada to introduce new language test for immigration



(South Asian Insider Bureau) For those applying for immigration under the economic class, the IRCC has approved a new language test. By early to mid-2023, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) expects to have the test in place. Currently, there are just four designated organisations: TEF and TCF for French, IELTS and CELPIP for English.

The majority of Canada's economic class immigration programmes require candidates to pass an English or French language test in order to be admitted. A person's ability to integrate into Canadian society and the economy is largely determined by their language skills, according to research conducted by the Canadian government.

Since they are granted entry into Canada for social and humanitarian reasons, immigrants in the family and refugee classes are exempt from taking a language exam. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 54 must prove their proficiency in either English or French when seeking Canadian citizenship. They can verify their language skills in other methods that have been authorised by IRCC or by submitting the results of a language test. Despite some initial difficulties during the

pandemic, IRCC thinks the number of certified testing organisations continues to be sufficient to meet the demand of immigrants and citizens. The IRCC must, however, seek changes due to the rising number of organisations requesting

accreditation as language test providers. Currently, the designation process for an organisation is drawn out, difficult, and "insufficiently transparent".

In the upcoming 12 months, the IRCC will look for prospective initiatives and enhancements, according to a memo. These improvements are anticipated to increase the number of organisations interested in designation if they are put into effect. IRCC is currently free to enter into as many contract agreements and possible language testing providers as it wants. The departmental tasks and responsibilities associated with language exams are not yet clearly defined and have ramifications for both policy and operations. The Immigration Branch's language designation team at IRCC must balance file administration tasks

with pursuing the new policy priorities. Since some people believe the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) is excessively specific for testing purposes when compared to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), IRCC is actively investigating it. Participants in the CEFR test receive their scores on an alphabetic scale instead of a one-to-seven scale: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. In order to guarantee that all approved language test constructs are equal in terms of degree of difficulty and test objective, the letter states that additional research on the CLB levels is necessary.

The memo predicts increased pressure on French designated institutions to expand their testing capabilities as well as increased interest from new French testing businesses seeking designation.

Qatar World Cup chief says between 400 and 500 migrant workers have died in projects connected to the tournament

(South Asian Insider Bureau) World Cup chief Hassan Al-Thawadi said that between 400 and 500 migrant workers have died as a result of work done on projects connected to the tournament – a greater figure than Qatari officials have cited previously. In an interview with Piers Morgan which aired on TalkTV on Monday, Al-Thawadi was asked about the number of fatalities to migrant workers as a result of the work done in the tournament and said: "The estimate is around 400, between 400 and 500."

"I don't have the exact number, that's something that's been discussed. One death is too many, it's as simple as that."

Al-Thawadi added: "I think every year the health and safety standards on the sites are improving, at least on

our sites, the World Cup sites, the ones that we're responsible for, most definitely."

In November 2022, a government official told CNN there had been three work-related deaths on World Cup stadiums and 37 non-work-related deaths.

Those figures were reiterated by a spokesperson for Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) on Tuesday. In a statement, the spokesperson added: "Separate quotes regarding figures refer to national statistics covering the period of 2014-2020 for all work-related fatalities (414) nationwide in Qatar, covering all sectors and nationalities." The Guardian, meanwhile, reported last year that 6,500 South Asian migrant workers have died in Qatar since the country

was awarded the World Cup in 2010, most of whom were involved in low-wage, dangerous labor, often undertaken in extreme heat.

The report did not connect all 6,500 deaths with World Cup infrastructure projects and has not been independently verified by CNN. However, last year Al Thawadi – the man in charge of leading Qatar's preparations – disputed that figure and told CNN's Becky Anderson that the Guardian's figure was a "sensational headline" which was misleading and that the report lacked context.

Meanwhile, a Qatari government official told CNN last month: "The 6,500 figure takes the number of all foreign worker deaths in the country over a 10-year period and attributes it to the World Cup."



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Amazon To Wind Down Parts Of Indian Operations, Sack Hundreds: Report

Job losses in the country are likely to be in the low hundreds, the person said, or just a fraction of Amazon's India e-commerce workforce of over 10,000

(SAI Bureau) Amazon.com Inc. will wind down parts of its Indian operations, showing that even the crucial growth market with 1.4 billion consumers isn't immune to Chief Executive Officer Andy Jassy's cost-reduction campaign. The company said it is exiting meal deliveries as well as a service providing bulk doorstep deliveries of packaged consumer goods to small businesses. The exits will involve layoffs of just several hundred out of a workforce of thousands, leaving Amazon relying on its core offerings such as online retail in the country, according to a person familiar with the matter. Jassy is reducing expenses and jobs around the world amid slowing growth in several areas of Amazon's business.

In India, the pullback underscores Amazon's struggles in one of the world's fastest growing e-commerce markets, where it's facing regulatory heat and competition from homegrown conglomerates Reliance Industries Ltd. and Tata Group as well as Walmart Inc.'s Flipkart. After plowing billions of dollars in everything from grocery delivery to payments in India during the past decade, the company has failed to achieve the sort of dominance it enjoys in markets such as the US. Several projects in beta testing are



also likely to be shelved, said the person, who asked not to be named discussing internal deliberations. Amazon has announced that its Amazon Academy learning platform, which offers online test prep resources for students competing to enter India's medical and engineering schools, will shut down in the coming months. Job losses in the country are likely to be in the low hundreds, the person said, or just a fraction of Amazon's India e-commerce workforce of over 10,000. Overall, Amazon employs more than 100,000 people full time in the country for its worldwide operations. The company has attracted the wrath of a labor union assembling tech workers for making what it calls "voluntary separation" offers and giving employees limited time -- only until Dec. 6 -- to decide. Amazon itself doesn't have a labor union.

Globally, Amazon plans to cut about 10,000 jobs, its largest ever

headcount reduction, people familiar with the matter have said. It has projected the smallest revenue increase ever for its holiday quarter, and Jassy had put in place a hiring freeze on some corporate roles and shut down several experimental and smaller programs. Amazon launched Amazon Food, the meal delivery service it's now shuttering, in India in 2020. It offers food from restaurants and other providers serving everything from paratha stuffed bread to McDonald's burgers and fries. Amazon's business-customer unit will continue to provide small retailers and bulk buyers with goods such as groceries and medical supplies but will no longer offer door delivery of packaged consumer goods. "We are discontinuing these programs in a phased manner to take care of current customers and partners," the company said in an emailed statement. "We remain committed to India and will continue to invest across those areas where we can bring value to

our customers." Amazon.com Inc. will wind down parts of its Indian operations, showing that even the crucial growth market with 1.4 billion consumers isn't immune to Chief Executive Officer Andy Jassy's cost-reduction campaign.

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Let's go to explore a magical place

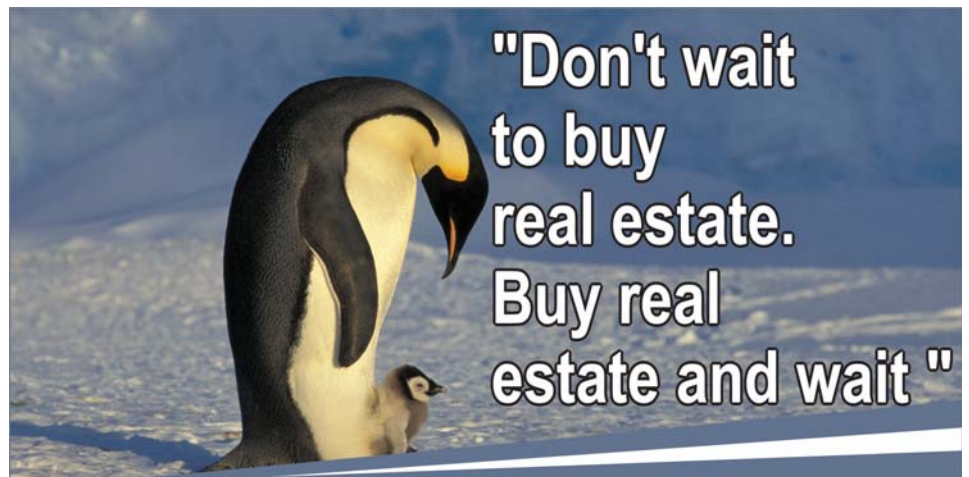
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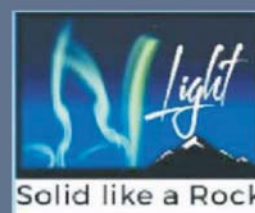
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"Right To Freedom Of Religion Doesn't Include...": Centre To Supreme Court

Centre filed an affidavit on a PIL claiming that fraudulent and deceitful religious conversion is rampant across the country

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: The Central government on Monday told the Supreme Court that the right to freedom of religion does not include a fundamental right to convert other people to a particular religion. It is "cognizant of the gravity and the seriousness" of the issue, said the Centre in its affidavit filed on a PIL claiming that fraudulent and deceitful religious conversion is rampant across the country.

Such issue of conversion shall be "taken up in all seriousness by the Union of India and appropriate steps shall be taken as the Central government is cognizant of the menace", the Centre said in its affidavit.

"The right to freedom of religion certainly does not include the right to convert an individual through fraud, deception, coercion, allurement or other such means," it said.

The central government further said that nine States over the course of the years passed enactments seeking to curb this practice. Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Haryana are the States which already have legislation in place on conversion, the affidavit added.

The affidavit stated that "such enactments



are necessary for protecting cherished rights of vulnerable sections of the society including women and economically and socially backward classes."

The right to freedom of religion, and more importantly, the right to the consciousness of all citizens of the country is an extremely cherished and valuable right which ought to be protected by the executive and the legislature, it said.

As the matter came up for hearing, a bench

headed by Justice MR Shah said the issue of forced religious conversion is "very serious" and asked the Centre to file a detailed affidavit to make its stand clear.

It asked the Centre to file an affidavit with instructions from the State governments. The bench has now posted the matter for hearing on December 5.

Earlier, the top court had remarked that forced religious conversion is a "very serious issue" and may affect the "security of the

country" along with the freedom of conscience of citizens as far as religion is concerned. It had said, "It is a very dangerous thing. Everyone has freedom of religion. What is this forceful conversion?"

The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay claiming that fraudulent and deceitful religious conversion is rampant across the country, and that the Central government has failed to control its menace.

The plea sought directions to the Law Commission of India to prepare a report and a Bill to control "deceitful religious conversion". It further sought a declaration from the Court that fraudulent religious conversion and conversion by intimidation, threatening and through gifts and monetary benefits offends Articles 14, 21 and 25 of the Indian Constitution.

The PIL said, "There is not even one district which is free of religious conversion by hook and cook and the carrot and the stick."

"If such conversions were not checked, Hindus would soon become a minority in India. Thus, the Centre was obligated to enact a country-wide law for the same," it added.

Earlier, the top court had dismissed a similar petition filed by Upadhyay.



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Protesters, police clash over Adani port in India's Kerala; over 80 hurt

(By Staff Reporter) KOCHI, India Nov 28 (Reuters) - More than 80 people were wounded in India as villagers protesting to halt construction of the \$900-million Vizhinjam port project by India's Adani Group clashed with police in Kerala state, the latest escalation in a months-long strike.

The protests, by a mostly Christian fishing community against the project led by billionaire Gautam Adani's \$23-billion ports business, have forced the latter to stop work on the port, seen as a potential and lucrative rival to those in Dubai, Singapore and Sri Lanka. Building has been halted for more than three months after villagers blamed the port's development for coastal erosion and depriving them of their livelihoods. They have blocked the entrance to the site by erecting a 1,200-square-foot shelter. Over the weekend, police arrested some protesters who blocked Adani's construction vehicles from entering the port, despite a court order for work to resume.

The arrests prompted hundreds of protesters, led by Catholic priests, to march on the police station late on Sunday night, leading to clashes with

personnel and leaving police vehicles damaged, according to a police document and footage on local television. Joseph Johnson, one of the protest



leaders, said at least 46 protesters were hurt. Senior local police official M R Ajith Kumar told Reuters 36 officers were wounded in the clashes. Another police official who did not wish to be named said security was being beefed up after the incident, with more than 600 officers deployed across Vizhinjam.

Located on the southern tip of India, the port seeks to plug into lucrative East-West

trade routes, adding to the global reach of the business led by Adani, Asia's wealthiest man and the world's third-richest. The Adani Group did not respond

to a request for comment on the protests over the weekend. The company has said that the port complies with all laws and cited studies that show it is not linked to shoreline erosion. The state government has also said that any erosion was due to natural causes.

In the latest clashes, the police's case document said the protesters "came with lethal weapons and barged into the station and held the police hostage,

threatening that if people in custody were not released they would set the station on fire." Eugene H. Pereira, the vicar general of the archdiocese and a protest leader, said police pelted the protesters with stones.

The port protests recall the backlash Adani faced in Australia over his Carmichael coal mine. There, activists concerned about carbon emissions and damage to the Great Barrier Reef forced Adani to downsize production targets and delayed the mine's first coal shipment by six years. The Indian protests have continued despite repeated orders by Kerala state's top court to allow construction to restart. Police have largely been unwilling to take action, fearful that doing so will set off social and religious tensions, Reuters has previously reported. On Monday, the court heard Adani's concerns again and asked the state administration why its order of ensuring that port construction continues was not being enforced. The judge asked state officials to file a response by Friday. The Adani conglomerate is shouldering a third of the project's cost with the rest borne by the state and federal governments. It has a 40-year agreement to build and operate the port.

4 Gangsters Linked To Lawrence Bishnoi Gang Arrested In Punjab

The Punjab police also recovered three pistols and 22 live cartridges from gangsters



(By Staff Reporter) Chandigarh: Four associates of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang were arrested in Punjab's Rupnagar district, a senior police official said on Monday. Three pistols and 22 live cartridges were recovered from their possession, Senior Superintendent of Police (Rupnagar) Vivek Sheel Soni said. Acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Superintendent of Police (Detective) Manwinderbir Singh arrested Kuldeep Singh Karry,

Kulwinder Singh Tinka, Satvir Singh Shammi and Beant Singh on Saturday, he said. The SSP said all four accused were associated with the Bishnoi gang. Karry, Tinka and Shammi were booked in an attempt to murder case in Ludhiana last month, police said. A case under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Arms Act has been registered against the accused at a police station in Morinda, Soni said, adding further investigation is underway.

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Photograph taken April 2015

DESCRIPTION

Alias: Bhadreshkumar C. Patel	
Date(s) of Birth Used: May 15, 1990	Place of Birth: Kantrodi Ta Viramgam, Gujarat, India
Hair: Brown	Eyes: Brown
Height: 5'9"	Weight: 165 pounds
Sex: Male	Occupation: Employee of donut shop
Nationality: Indian	

REWARD

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel.

REMARKS

Patel was last known to be in the Newark, New Jersey, area.

CAUTION

Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel is wanted for allegedly killing his wife by striking her multiple times with an object while they were both working at a donut shop in Hanover, Maryland, on April 12, 2015. A local arrest warrant was issued in the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County on April 13, 2015, and Patel was charged with first degree murder, second degree murder, first degree assault, second degree assault, and dangerous weapon with intent to injure. A federal arrest warrant was issued in the United States District Court, District of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland, on April 20, 2015, after Patel was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

If you have any information concerning this person, please contact your local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

Field Office: Baltimore

Delhi: Hackers demand Rs 200 crore in cryptocurrency from AIIMS as server remains down for sixth day

Sources told PTI that internet services are blocked on computers at the hospital on the recommendations of the investigating agencies. The AIIMS server has stored data of several VIPs, including former prime ministers, ministers, bureaucrats and judges



managed manually as the server remained down, the sources said. The India Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN), Delhi Police and representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs are investigating the ransomware attack.

A case of extortion and cyber terrorism was registered by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police on November 25.

Official sources said internet services are blocked on computers at the hospital on the recommendations of the investigating agencies.

The AIIMS server has stored data

of several VIPs, including former prime ministers, ministers, bureaucrats and judges.

"Hackers have allegedly demanded around Rs 200 crore in cryptocurrency," one of the sources told PTI. Meanwhile, the NIC e-hospital database and application servers for e-hospital have been restored. The NIC team is scanning and cleaning infection from other e-hospital servers located at AIIMS which are required for delivery of hospital services, an official source said. Four physical servers arranged for restoring e-hospital services have been scanned and prepared for the databases and applications.

Also, the AIIMS network sanitisation is in progress. Antivirus solutions have been organised for servers and computers. It has been installed on nearly 1,200 out of 5,000 computers. Twenty out of 50 servers have been scanned and this activity is ongoing 24x7, the source said. "The full sanitisation of the network is likely to continue for five more days. Thereafter, e-hospital services can be rolled out in a phased manner. Patient care services including emergency, outpatient, inpatient, laboratory etc services are being continued on manual mode," the source said.

(By Staff Reporter) New Delhi: Hackers have allegedly demanded an estimated Rs 200 crore in cryptocurrency from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi as its server remained out of order for the sixth consecutive day, official sources said on Monday. It is feared that data of around 3-4 crore patients could have been compromised due to the breach detected Wednesday morning. Patient care services in emergency, outpatient, inpatient and laboratory wings are being

PM Modi calls for fundamental mindset shift

India assumes G20 chair to also head UNSC for 1 month

(By Staff Reporter) New Delhi : hosted by India, according to the India formally assumed the G20 Prime Minister's Office presidency on Thursday with both (PMO). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the key element would be taking G20 closer to the public and making it truly a people's G20. "It is a memorable day. We've formally assumed the presidency today. A key element of our presidency will be taking G20 closer to the public and trying to make our presidency truly a people's G20. We will look for Jan Bhagidari events throughout the year," said MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi.



Numerous activities have been planned under the umbrella of the G20 chairmanship and some of them have already taken place. Earlier in the day, a university event was held which virtually brought together students from 75 universities across the country. "As today is the first day of our presidency, to mark this numerous activities have been planned...some of them have already taken place.... As you know, earlier in the day we had a university connect event which virtually brought together students from 75 universities from across the country," he said.

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China's 'zero-COVID' policy could be Xi's undoing

China hasn't seen protests like these since 1989's pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square

If China's dictator Xi Jinping had thought he could begin his third term with firm control of the nation, he is facing a rude awakening. Protests against his cruelty-enforced "zero Covid" policy erupted in several Chinese cities last week and have now spread nationwide, with some protestors openly demanding Xi resign.

The canary in the coal mine was a fire in a high-rise apartment in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang and home to millions of Uyghur Muslims and minorities, killing at least ten people and injuring nine. Many people blamed the barriers erected by the local authorities to confine residents inside the apartment, which hindered residents' escape and fire-fighters' rescue efforts, leading to unnecessary deaths. Heartbreaking videos of fire victims desperately crying for help went viral on China's social media before censors took them down.

The Chinese public was outraged by what they saw and couldn't help wondering if a similar tragedy would happen to them and their loved ones. After all, it is common practice for local authorities to seal the front entrance of an entire apartment building or use metal barriers to confine residents inside their homes.

Most Chinese initially supported Beijing's "Zero Covid" policy, believing that lockdowns, daily mass PCR testing, and mandatory quarantines were necessary to keep Covid infections under control. Xi Jinping declared China had won the "people's war" against Covid in March 2020 and claimed the victory as irrefutable evidence of the superiority of China's political system.

Yet, the government's policy failed as China continues to experience Covid outbreaks due to more infectious Covid-19 variants. Since last fall, the Chinese government has imposed lockdowns on 46 cities and 343 million residents. But as recently as last week, China reported another record number of Covid infections. Yet, the more Xi's "zero Covid" policy appears to be failing, the more his underlings have tried to enforce it with a degree of cruelty and zealotry, reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). For instance, in Xi'an, an eight-month pregnant woman lost her baby after local hospitals refused to treat her because her Covid test was too long.

The lockdowns in Shanghai have drawn much domestic and international attention because Shanghai is China's most prosperous city. Yet, during the lockdowns, residents reported widespread hunger. Individuals with chronic illnesses or medical emergencies missed treatment, and

some died. Adults were taken from their homes and forced to spend weeks in poorly run mass quarantine camps, and young children were taken away from their parents. Even the most obedient Chinese citizens began to ask questions such as "When will this misery end?"

Besides causing human suffering, Xi's "Zero Covid" policy has hurt China's economy. Analysts cut China's GDP forecast for 2022 to 2.8%, much lower than Beijing's official target of 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate for young Chinese aged 16 to 24 reached almost 18 percent. Yet, Xi worsened China's economic woes by cracking down on private businesses, which had been the engine of China's three-decade economic growth. His heavy-handed approach has caused a real estate crisis in China, which impaired consumer confidence since most Chinese households' wealth is tied to the property market.

Chinese citizens also became alarmed when authorities in Zhengzhou, a city in central China, reportedly used a health code system designed for Covid-19 surveillance to prevent depositors of local banks from staging a protest outside the bank that froze their deposits. Many Chinese regarded this incident as a confirmation that the Chinese government has turned the Covid health code into another surveillance tool.

Any hope of Xi easing his "Zero Covid" restrictions evaporated after the Communist Party's 20th Congress in October. Xi double-downed his commitment to the "Zero Covid" policy by elevating Li Qiang, the Communist Party secretary of Shanghai who was responsible for Shanghai's catastrophic lockdowns, to the second most powerful position in the nation. Li's promotion signals that Xi's "Zero Covid" policy is here to stay. The party congress also marked the beginning of Xi's breaking the two-five-year term limit of his position as the head of the state and set to rule China for the rest of his life like an emperor. Xi must have thought his rule would be secure after spending the last decades consolidating power, eliminating political challengers, and cracking down on dissents. But he misread the public mood. There is an unwritten social contract between the CCP and the Chinese people, in which the Chinese people accepted less political freedom in exchange for rising standards of living, employment, and economic growth. But Xi's ruinous "Zero Covid" policy and its devastating tolls on people's lives and the economy are now seen by many as a breach of the social contract.

(Contd. on page 21)

From the Amazon to Australia, why is your money funding Earth's destruction?

The world's most destructive industries are fiercely protected by governments. The three sectors that appear to be most responsible for the collapse of ecosystems and erasure of wildlife are fossil fuels, fisheries and farming. In 2021, governments directly subsidised oil and gas production to the tune of \$64bn (£53bn), and spent a further \$531bn (£443bn) on keeping fossil fuel prices low. The latest figures for fisheries, from 2018, suggest that global subsidies for the sector amount to \$35bn a year, over 80% of which go to large-scale industrial fishing. Most are paid to "enhance capacity": in other words to help the industry, as marine ecosystems collapse, catch more fish.

Every year, governments spend \$500bn on farm subsidies, the great majority of which pay no regard to environmental protection. Even the payments that claim to do so often inflict more harm than good. For example, many of the European Union's pillar two "green" subsidies sustain livestock farming on land that would be better used for ecological restoration. Over half the European farm budget is spent on propping up animal farming, which is arguably the world's most ecologically destructive industry. Pasture-fed meat production destroys five times as much forest as palm oil does. It now threatens some of the richest habitats on Earth, among which are forests in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Australia and Myanmar. Meat production could swallow 3m square kilometres of the world's most biodiverse places in 35 years.

That's almost the size of India. In Australia, 94% of the deforestation in the catchment area of the Great Barrier Reef – a major cause of coral loss – is associated with beef production. Yet most of these catastrophes are delivered with the help of public money.

The more destructive the business, the more likely it is to enjoy political protection. A study published this month claims that chicken factories being built in Herefordshire and Shropshire are likely to destroy far more jobs than they create, wrecking tourism through the river pollution, air pollution, smell and scenic blight they cause. But none of the planning applications for these factories has been obliged to provide an economic impact analysis. Planning officers, the paper found, are highly dismissive of the hospitality industry, treating it as "non-serious and trivial". By comparison, the paper found, "attitudes to farming were very different; described as serious, 'proper' (male) work". The "tough", "masculine" industries driving Earth systems towards collapse are pampered and protected by governments, while less destructive sectors must fend for themselves.

While there is no shortage of public money for the destruction of life on Earth, budgets for its protection always fall short. According to the UN, \$536bn a year will be needed to protect the living world – far less than the amount being paid to destroy it – yet almost all this funding is missing. Some has been promised, scarcely any has materialised. So much for public money for public goods. (Contd. on page 20)



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How Bharat Jodo Yatra is building Brand Rahul but taking a heavy toll on Congress

Nothing seems to be moving an inch due to Rahul's preoccupation with the yatra. The political challenges that face Rajasthan are being buried under the carpet. Similarly, all crucial appointments in the AICC secretariat are put on hold

The real take home of Rahul Gandhi led mammoth Bharat Jodo Yatra, so far, has been a marginal increase in his personal popularity but would it enhance the Congress' electoral prospects?

As Rahul's determined foot-march enters the Hindi heartland and a decisive phase, the substantive aspects of the former AICC president's yatra needs to be taken in account. A big question relates to the Congress vote share. In 2014, the Congress polled 19.3 per cent. It went up marginally to 19.5 in 2019 but the BJP's vote share during the same period marked a whopping increase from 31 to 38 per cent. In this context, can the Congress increase its vote share by at least five percent in 2024? Not even the most optimistic and enthusiastic Congress person is confident about it.

It seems Team Rahul is trying to bridge a crucial difference that exists between the Congress vote share and the former Congress president's own popular ratings. As per a recent survey conducted by C voters, Rahul

stands at 31 per cent approval as compared to 60 per cent popular rating of prime minister Narendra Modi. Before the yatra, C Voters claimed Rahul stood at 29 per cent against Modi's 59 percent. C Voter founder director Yashwant Deshmukh finds it bit glaring that Rahul often does not get approval ratings that match with the votes polled by the Congress in 2014 and 2019 general elections. Would Rahul's approval ratings improve by the time Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra concludes in Srinagar in February 2023?

On the political plane, the ongoing yatra is taking a heavy toll on the Congress organisation. Nothing seems to be moving an inch due to Rahul's preoccupation with the yatra. The political challenges that face Rajasthan are being constantly buried under the carpet. Similarly, all crucial appointments in the AICC secretariat are put on hold.

Newly elected Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, a seasoned Congress leader does not want to act as per his political whims and fancies

even though the Gandhi trio – Sonia, Priyanka and Rahul — seems to have given him a 'free hand.' Kharge, it seems, is deeply touched by the faith and confidence given by Gandhis but unsure of the machinations of those who draw strength from the same source, i.e. Gandhis. It may sound paradoxical but the Congress' palace intrigues are real and have a legacy of their own.

Even in the winter session of parliament, the Congress is likely to have a muted presence due to Yatra. There is no word whether Mallikarjun Kharge would continue to be a leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha in spite of having indicated his intention to step down after becoming the Congress president. Here comes the proverbial 'who bells the cat' syndrome. For those unfamiliar with the Congress' functioning in their conventional wisdom may think that Kharge should take a call himself or the weighty office of the 88th president empowers him to appoint his successor.

Alas, that's not true. as per an

amendment made in 1999, Sonia Gandhi is empowered to appoint leaders in both houses of parliament, i.e. Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Theoretically speaking, if she continues to be CPP chairperson till 2024 and the Congress miraculously performs well in the Lok Sabha or succeeds in UPA-like experiment in stitching a coalition, Sonia would have the mandate and power to appoint the party's prime ministerial nominee too, not Kharge.

On a lesser materialistic term, Kharge has perks of a union minister in his continuation as leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha. It is a different matter that aspirants Digvijaya Singh, Mukul Wasnik, P Chidambaram, Abhishek Manu Singhvi etc have a very different take and look at Sonia Gandhi with a prayer, plea and petition on the lips. Sonia Gandhi, it seems oblivious of personal ambitions and enjoying fruits of her political retirement that she was craving for, at least since 2016 when she had turned 70.

(Contd. on page 21)



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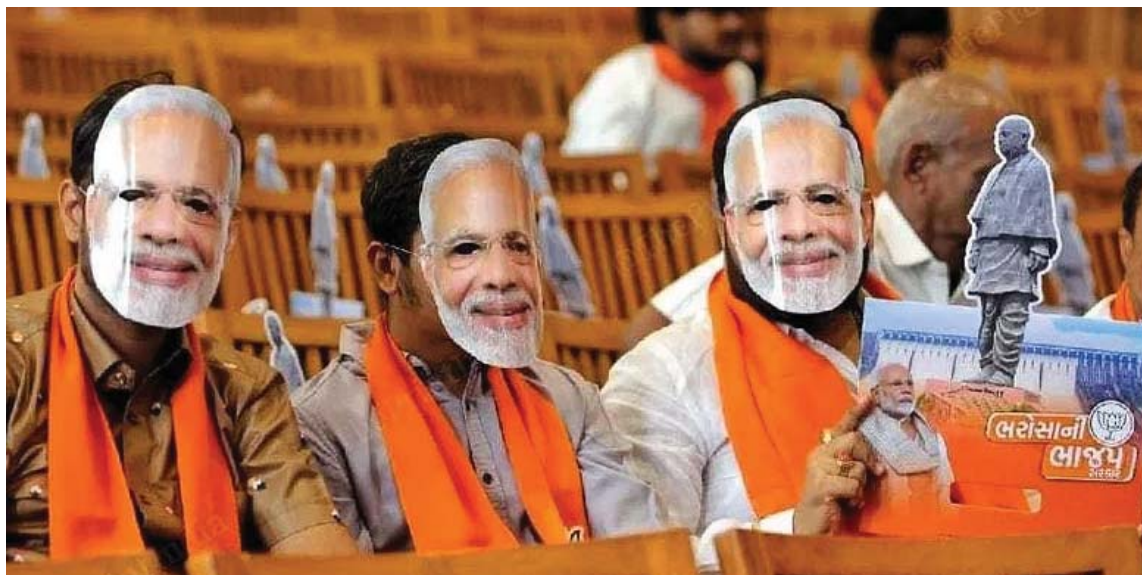
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In Gujarat, voters want BJP's alternative but not of Modi

After ruling Gujarat for 27 years, BJP knows how to shield election outcomes from ground realities such as people's hardships, leaderless govt and corrupt bureaucracy

Amitabh Bachchan had famously sold 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' in an advertisement promoted by the state tourism department. Today, in the poll-bound state, one can find people wishing for both change and consistency. It may seem like a contradictory demand but only until you realise what Khushboo Gujarat Ki entails.

In the ongoing campaign season, the most visible and vocal are leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have held 35 and 30 rallies so far. On Monday alone, Modi addressed four rallies. The BJP is sweating it out to ensure that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) doesn't cut into its urban votes. On 26 November, some 19 helicopters were parked at the airport of a sleepy town of Bhavangar. Most belonged to BJP leaders, one belonged to Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, and another belonged to Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel. Most Congress candidates are fighting individual battles, heroically, making the BJP nervous in many crucial seats of Saurashtra and North



Gujarat while the AAP is set to open its innings in Gujarat even if it loses badly in terms of seats. And it's not just the BJP which has rich candidates. Ahmedabad district's 21 seats have 15 millionaires in the fray – eight from Congress, five from BJP and two from AAP. Saurashtra's 48 seats are witnessing a fascinating dance of democracy when compared to the 2017 Gujarat election. Nine Congress MLAs from the region joined the BJP in the last five years. The 2017 election took place when Hardik Patel led the Patidar quota agitation and the farmers' discontent was at its peak.

BJP won only 19 of those 48 seats but it's claiming to do better this time because it has "managed to improve the economy" of the mandis (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) of Saurashtra with Gondal mandi alone registering a turnover of Rs 23,000 crore this year, claims its board member Alpesh Dholaria. But the not-so-silently fought caste battles are a worry for the candidates. In Ahmedabad, BJP leaders are talking of a clean sweep—winning 120 seats or more in the 182-member assembly—a possibility only if AAP cuts into Congress' Muslim and Dalit

votes but not into BJP's urban votes. Without AAP's help, the BJP can't sweep the 2022 Gujarat election. If the BJP wins a staggering number of seats, it will be due to its "default position" in the Indian electoral system. But if it gets anything around its 2017 tally of 99 seats, then we should see it as an amazing fact that none is able to defeat BJP, not even the BJP's own weaknesses. The reason is clear. The 2022 election will be remembered as a completely caste-driven poll. The issue of Hindu identity is now more online and in the WhatsApp world of voters than

offline. This election is not the 2002 election where a surge in "Hindu sentiments" was the dominant factor. Though late but not entirely unexpectedly, Amit Shah has started talking of "punishing the rioters of 2002" and evoking the sentiments of 'Hindu identity' in the Muslim-dominated constituencies but the caste fault line remains the biggest challenge for the BJP and Congress. Congress remains at a disadvantage in this debate because Modi's strong position in New Delhi and in driving the contemporary national political history and Gujarat's national importance in contemporary India are "feel good" factors for all Gujarati voters.

A 2017-like fight is missing
Ahead of the first phase of polling on 1 December, a neutral assessment shows the BJP is comfortably placed on 75 of the 182 seats while the Congress is leading in 45 seats as their candidates have credibility and caste suitability. But in the rest of the seats, it's "kaante ki takkar (cut-throat competition)" with the BJP having higher hopes due to AAP's presence.

(Contd. on page 21)

Indian military leaders must speak with caution, media twisting Army's PoK remark

Lt General Upendra Dwivedi's 22 November remark to Indian media on the PoK issue has been twisted to imply that the Army is ready to take back PoK



India regaining Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir is a topic that makes periodic appearances in India's domestic and foreign policy discourses. On 22 November, Northern Army Commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi, while answering a question about the Army's position on defence minister Rajnath Singh's statements on reclaiming PoK, said this: "As you are aware, a parliamentary resolution exists on the subject and therefore it is nothing new. As far as the Indian Army is concerned, it will carry out any order given by the government of India, and whenever such

orders are given, we will always be ready for it." Indian media soon distorted the statement to imply that the "Army is ready and waiting to take back PoK". The shift in meaning was subtle but important. Heated media debates followed and focused enhanced attention on the topic of PoK, which has been leveraged by the ruling dispensation to project muscularity in dealing with Pakistan. Retaliation for Pakistan's transgressions has been housed in the defence minister's oft-repeated 'eent ka jawab patthar se denge (we will answer bricks with stones)' statements on the PoK issue.

The same political statement was repeated by Lt Gen Dwivedi during the media interaction on 22 November—probably for the first time by a military leader—in the context of describing the Army's reaction to Pakistan's violation of the 2021 Cease Fire Agreement. Pakistan Army's official Twitter handle was not far behind in its reaction. It was aimed at the

Indian military, and ended the diatribe by stating: "In the interest of peace for the region, the Indian military would do well to abstain from irresponsible rhetoric and vitriolic communication to shore up electoral support for their political masters' regressive ideology," it said. The accusation was about India's military leadership being a party to the anti-Pakistan agenda utilised for electoral gains by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). For an Army that is often described as having a nation, instead of the nation having an Army, it was definitely more than tongue-in-cheek advice.

PoK in the Indian political landscape

As India moves toward a round of elections that will culminate in the 2024 Parliamentary elections, more such 'PoK will be recovered' episodes and their variations could animate India's domestic politics and shape relations with Pakistan. All of them could involve spewing hatred and hostility towards Pakistan due to perfidies in different

forms, which are an integral part of Pakistan's diplomatic and strategic conduct with India. Domestically, such emotions often tend to morph into a Hindu-Muslim antagonistic framework that serves the purpose of consolidating Hindu votes for a supposed electoral advantage. In all probability, such electoral machinations would be undertaken under the shadow of increasing challenges to India's national security due to global and regional geopolitical frictions emanating from the larger struggle between the US and China. A struggle that is likely to draw in India and may serve to further increase tensions with China and Pakistan. It is a no-brainer that India needs to focus on dealing with China and deploy its instruments of statecraft in terms of political, military, economic, diplomatic, intelligence, technological and information power.

(Contd. on page 21)

How India Can Leverage Its Gain from China's Loss, and Will It Be Part of US' Friendshoring Plan?



Among all the factors that made this possible, one is vital and oft-neglected: Economic Diplomacy. India's diplomats have told the world how the land of seven rivers is politically stable and full of opportunities. Whether pitching New India in Dubai Expo 2020 or Indian embassies' programmes for Make In India, New Delhi has pushed the limits to attract foreign investment; in some ways, it has become victorious too. A couple of decades ago, India was purely identified as a consumer market, which has changed to some extent, with India being identified with high-quality IT and pharma professionals and the nation with a demographic dividend. The impression of India and India Inc. is not just to attract investment but also to help the poorer countries. Back in 1964, India, then an economically poor country, established the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation to assist and cooperate with the poorer nations. The Success of India Inc. in Africa is another example. Even when Sri Lanka was in political and economic turmoil, India extended the Line of Credit to let the island nation

buy Urea and Petroleum.

Considering the above two points, India's economic diplomacy should be laid out widely, with far-reaching efforts. India's goal is not only to bring investment back home but also to invest in an unexplored territory as a business and strategic interest. India is on track, and wants to speed up the process.

First, the more agreements and more access to markets. The companies coming to India should have a broader market access, not just India. The ongoing discussions regarding the trade agreements should continue, but with more vigour. That also requires more inter-ministerial coordination and meetings, hiring more people and extra contractual and lateral entries in embassies and ministries. To engage with francophone and lusophone countries, we need people who excel in those languages. Second, the technology and the people. India's IT and pharma success stories are well-known worldwide. The age is of semiconductors, data science and machine learning, and electric vehicles. India's

population is young and can be proven as a demographic dividend. Having more technically trained people at home will obviously turn out to be a hotspot for the investment. India's youth already has aspirations; it needs good technical education and more technology-oriented courses. Third, bureaucracy and polity. Competitive and cooperative federalism can come to the saviour here. More and more regional leaders are engaging with the companies, and inviting them to the states would be fruitful. Also, bureaucratic red tape can be removed by incentivising promotions based on the investment record in the area. Both of these steps have been implemented by Beijing, and have yielded promising results on the eastern coast of China.

'Will India be an alternative to China?' is not the question now. The questions are: How much can we leverage our gain from China's loss? In how many sectors can India be proven as an alternative? Apart from IT services, which industry can have a hub in India? Which role will the startup ecosystem play?

China's economy is growing in touch new highs. Two, the state the low single digits, Japan's secretary of Treasury, Janet currency is depreciated by more Yellen, mentioned the than 17% this year, Britain has 'friendshoring' and India in the a staggering 11% inflation, and the same statement, proving the the economy of the USA, the elephant as a viable alternative less the said, the better. Amidst to the dragon in the 'China Plus all these global economic clues One' strategy. Three, an and some cluelessness, if you intermediate Free Trade filter out the major economies, Agreement between India and with the first filter being the Australia. growth in higher single digits, To the uninitiated, friendshoring the second being the inflation in is a strategy to relocate the single digits, the third being the supply chains to countries with least currency depreciation, then low chances of disruption. The the only option remains India. USA, irritated by the supply In November, it got reflexed in chain disruption caused by several economic events: One, Covid-19 and the Russia- the Sensex, an index of the Ukraine war after that, doesn't Indian stock market, hit fresh want to put all eggs in one highs, making this year the basket. And India is naturally consecutively the seventh to another basket in that case.

We should be skeptical of billionaires who pledge to share their wealth

In the United States, we are now treated to regular announcements about benevolent billionaires pledging to share their wealth. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, for instance, recently told CNN that he would be giving away the majority of his \$124 billion fortune in his lifetime. Further back in 2015, Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced he would give away what he makes from 99% of his Facebook shares. At this point, we should assume a skeptical posture. The truth is, pledges like these may take years, decades or even generations to reach their nonprofit destinations – if ever. That's why we need more public scrutiny of billionaire philanthropy – and much clearer rules to make sure donations actually support real, working charities.

Consider the Giving Pledge, an initiative founded by Warren Buffett, Melinda French Gates and Bill Gates to increase charitable giving by the extremely wealthy. As of today, more than 230 billionaires from 28 countries have taken the pledge to give away the majority of their wealth.

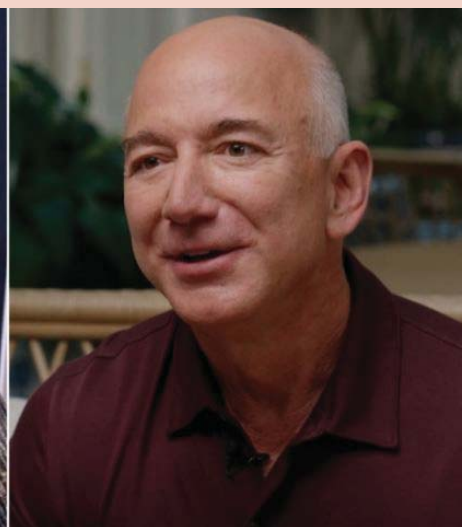
Presumably, this means we would see declining billionaire fortunes. But on the 10th anniversary of the pledge in 2020, my colleagues at the Institute for Policy Studies and I found that the total net worth of the 62 living initial pledgers



hadn't diminished at all. In fact, it had nearly doubled, when adjusted for inflation.

Part of the challenge is that billionaire wealth is simply rising so fast – US billionaires have seen their total wealth

increase by \$1.5 trillion since the beginning of the pandemic, according to an IPS analysis based on Forbes' billionaire database. As our economy becomes ever more tilted toward the rich, even committed philanthropists are



making money faster than they can give it away. The increasingly top-heavy nature of today's giving landscape – and the growing dominance of lightly regulated funds often controlled by donors themselves – is an even bigger

problem.

While billionaires do of course still donate to charities, grand philanthropic pledges are often fulfilled by dumping funds into family foundations or donor-advised funds (DAFs) that could exist in perpetuity. Some 30% of charitable donations now flow through intermediaries like these, outpacing direct donations to many traditional charities.

Billionaires may claim enormous tax deductions – not to mention starry-eyed headlines – for parking funds in these intermediaries. But there's little to no guarantee that money will ever make it to working charities. Foundations are only required to pay out 5% of their assets each year, and most dole out just slightly more than this minimum. DAFs face no annual payout requirement at all. Lax reporting requirements make it difficult to assess their activity, but recent reports suggest that median DAF payouts are shockingly low.

(Contd. on page 21)

Elon Musk knows what he's doing at Twitter, and it's making activist journalists panic

When it comes to coverage of the Elon Musk Twitter era, the headlines have ranged from hysterical to unhinged.

The New York Times: Chaos on Twitter Leads a Group of Journalists to Start an Alternative; Journa.host promises to be a new "reliable home for journalists."

Politico: Elon Musk's clever plan to destroy Twitter and save us all

There are dozens of other examples, but you get the point: Many "journalists" are not happy that Musk has decided to overhaul the dysfunctional hellscape that is Twitter. The progressive playground for years is no more, with Musk embracing this totally-foreign concept of free speech and not subscribing to the totalitarian tactics of the old Twitter, which resulted in censorship and suppression and the banning of accounts that is the norm in places like China and North Korea.

The most egregious example of this by a country mile, of course, was the Hunter Biden laptop bombshell via the New York Post that hit just weeks before the 2020 election. You know what happened from there: Twitter locked out any account that shared the story, including those of the Trump campaign. Hungate was also immediately dubbed Russian disinformation, thanks to "reporters" who

toed the line for the Biden campaign.

Joe Biden himself called the report "garbage" and a "Russian plant." Fifty-one former intelligence officers also penned a letter pushing the Russia angle, all without one actually having access to the evidence. And almost everyone in the political media bought it hook, line and sinker. One would think that journalists would look at this dark moment for the industry and condemn Twitter's actions in the strongest terms. But instead, given news organizations from the New York Times to CNN to CBS News to the Washington Post all suddenly found the time many, many months later to magically verify the laptop's contents after Biden was safely in office, the plan now is to pretend the cover-up and false portrayals never actually happened in October 2020. And here's where things get positively amusing, and sad: These same journalists who embraced the way the Hunter laptop censorship went down are now posting dire warnings that the Elon Musk version of Twitter will be a place where disinformation will run rampant. "Twitter decimated the teams primarily responsible for keeping it free of election misinformation, potentially hobbling the company's capabilities four days before Tuesday's election," reads an NBC News report that somehow needed

three reporters on it. No follow-up report came showing that "election misinformation" was not prevalent on Twitter when compared to recent elections...



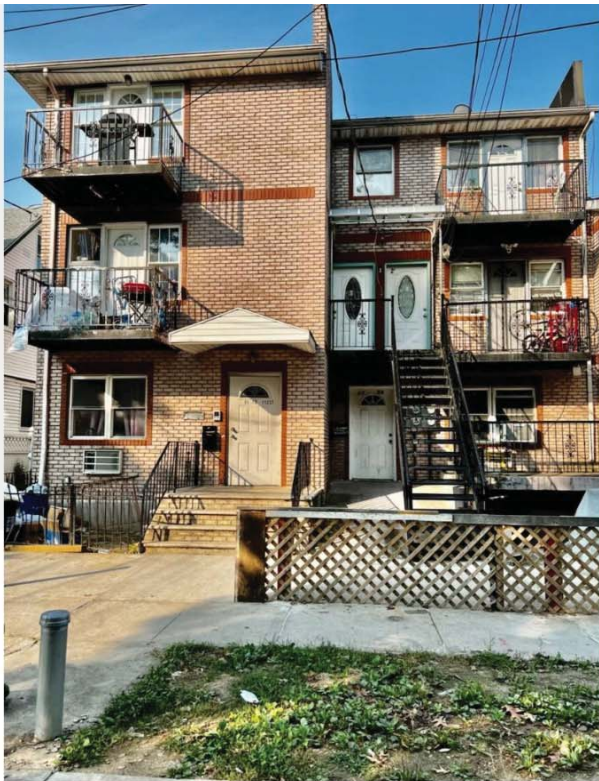
because following up would mean to step on a predetermined narrative marinated in fearmongering.

'Musk's major changes, including his overhaul of the verification system, have already sent people fleeing the site for other social media platforms," NPR also recently reported. But who, exactly, is fleeing? Musk shared last week that the company just hit another all-time high in usage. The site looks and feels the same. There have been no major or even minor outages, as so many blue checks warned. But most importantly, Twitter jail is as open as the U.S. border. The Babylon Bee is free to

make folks laugh again. Kathy Griffin is back, for whatever that's worth. And former President Trump has been reinstated, but he'll likely stay on Truth Social for contractual reasons.

Musk has made Twitter what it always should have been: Free.

But he also has to make it profitable, something it has struggled to achieve for years. So just like we've seen with Amazon (10,000 layoffs) and Meta (11,000 layoffs), the layoffs have begun across Big Tech. That's unfortunate, but it's a common way of doing business after a takeover. What Musk is doing now is working off the 10/90 rule, which says 10 percent of the workforce does 90 percent of the work. The new owner is attempting to determine who falls into which category, and when the process is complete, rebuild the company around the competent, loyal 10 percent. The resume is beyond impressive: Tesla, SpaceX. Elon Musk isn't perfect. He'll make some mistakes along the way in fixing Twitter. So did Steve Jobs at Apple, who even got fired from the very company he helped create, only to later save it. Musk knows what he's doing. And the fact that so many journalists are doubting that just because they lost their safe space is all the evidence one needs that it's absolutely the truth.



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Elon Musk reveals Apple is the latest company to desert Twitter



Monday that the firm had 'mostly stopped' advertising on the platform. The mass exodus largely stems over ethical concerns regarding the company's new direction under Musk, 51, who has aired plans to increase revenue through subscriptions and offer users increased 'free speech.' Musk's plans - which has already seen previously banned accounts, like the one owned by former president Donald Trump, restored - have proved polarizing not only in terms of morals, but have put it at odds with companies like Apple. 'Apple has mostly stopped advertising on Twitter,' the South African mogul wrote Monday.

'Do they hate free speech in America?' Musk went on to add, a day after the exec reportedly called CEOs at many of the aforementioned

companies to complain of the mass pullout since he acquired the platform at the end of October for \$44 billion. Musk recently complained in a tweet about exorbitant app store fees charged by Apple and its competitor Google on companies like Twitter, which can be as high as 30 percent from purchases made inside apps. 'Apple has mostly stopped advertising on Twitter,' the South African mogul wrote Monday. 'Do they hate free speech in America?' Musk went on to add, a day after the exec reportedly called CEOs at many of the aforementioned

Twitter, which can be as high as 30 percent from purchases made inside apps. Over the weekend, industry insiders told the Financial Times that Twitter's current ad situation - which has seen it lose over \$750 million in advertising in 2022 alone, according to Media Matters' report - has worsened in recent weeks, as agencies have seen decreased communication with Twitter's ads business team due to so few staff being left following mass layoffs. Musk fired roughly 50 percent of the original 7,500-strong workforce after taking control of the company in October - and has since received resignations from more than 1,200 others. The mass walkouts came after Musk told staffers earlier this month that they must commit to working 'long hours at high intensity' or else leave the company.

(News Agency) Apple is the latest company to desert Twitter following Elon Musk's multibillion-dollar acquisition of the company last month, the new CEO has announced - as a new report reveals that half of the firm's top advertisers have pulled their partnerships with the site in recent weeks. According to nonprofit watchdog group Media Matters, 50 of the platform's top 100 advertisers, which have accounted for about \$2 billion in spending since the start of 2020, have paused ads - some seemingly for good. High-profile companies to issue statements to announced halted advertising on the site include Chevrolet, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Ford, and Jeep. A flippant tweet from Musk suggests Apple now has joined that list - with the mogul writing

Distressed crypto firm BlockFi files for bankruptcy as fallout of FTX spreads

Cryptocurrency lender BlockFi has filed for bankruptcy - blaming the 'shocking events surrounding' the collapse of FTX

(News Agency) A filing said the company has more than 100,000 creditors and liabilities of up to \$10 billion. The company's website was still live on Monday morning but included a message about the bankruptcy case.

The statement from BlockFi said: 'This action follows the shocking events surrounding FTX and associated corporate entities ('FTX') and the difficult but necessary decision we made as a result to pause most activities on our platform.

'Since the pause, our team has explored every strategic option and alternative available to us, and has remained laser-focused on our primary objective of doing the best we can for our clients.

'These Chapter 11 cases will enable BlockFi to stabilize the business and provide BlockFi with the opportunity to consummate a reorganization plan that maximizes value for all stakeholders, including our valued clients.'

The company added: 'We apologize that communication with our clients has not been as frequent as you have come to expect from us.' We look forward to transparency through our reorganization, and will work to keep

clients and stakeholders informed as we make progress.' In a court filing, New Jersey-based BlockFi said it owes money to more than 100,000 creditors. It listed FTX as its second-largest creditor, with \$275 million owed on a loan extended earlier this year.



The company's largest creditor is Ankura Trust, a company that represents creditors in stressed situations, and is owed \$729 million. BlockFi's products included wallets to store cryptocurrencies, a platform to trade them and also crypto-backed loans. BlockFi has \$256.9 million in cash on hand, which it expects will provide enough cushion to support some operations during the restructuring. FTX filed for bankruptcy on November 11. The distressed crypto trading platform had struggled to raise

billions to stave off collapse as traders rushed to withdraw \$6 billion from the platform in just 72 hours and rival exchange Binance abandoned a proposed rescue deal. In July, FTX had signed a deal with BlockFi to provide the firm with a \$400 million revolving credit facility and an option to buy it for up to \$240 million after the crypto lender was hit by a collapse in prices earlier in the year. Reports first emerged on November 15 that BlockFi was preparing to file for bankruptcy.

The company had paused withdrawals and acknowledged it had 'significant exposure' to FTX. In 2021, the company held between \$14 billion and \$20 billion in customer deposits, the Wall Street Journal reported. BlockFi's website says its 'primary custodian' is Gemini Trust Company, LLC. Gemini was founded by Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, the billionaire twins best known for their protracted legal battle with fellow billionaire Mark Zuckerberg, seen in The Social Network movie. Shocking details have emerged about the management and finances of FTX since its collapse.

UN panel accuses regional South Sudan officials of overseeing gang rapes, beheadings

(By Staff Reporter) NAIROBI - South Sudan should investigate officials accused of overseeing systematic gang rapes, some of whose victims were girls as young as nine, UN rights experts said on Monday in a statement the government dismissed as a fabrication. Investigators say sexual abuse has been used as a weapon by all sides in South Sudan's civil conflict, which erupted in 2013 and triggered Africa's biggest refugee crisis since the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said it had reasonable grounds to believe a county commissioner in the northern oil-rich state of Unity orchestrated gang rapes at a military camp. The documented abuses also involved beheadings, with rape victims being forced to carry the severed heads, victims being burnt alive, and days of brutal sexual assaults, the UN experts said in a statement.

"Conflict-related rape and sexual violence in Unity State has become so systematic and is a direct result of impunity," said commission member Barney Afako. Multiple witnesses said the Unity official planned and ordered the attacks, which were led by his deputy and followed strikingly similar patterns in different areas, according to the statement. Michael Makuei, South Sudan's information minister and government spokesperson, dismissed the commission's statement as a fabrication. "They come and sit in hotels here in Juba and fabricate these false reports on South Sudan to make a living ... I am saying these are false reports fabricated against the government," he told Reuters.

Burkina Faso's vanishing gold boom puts livelihoods at risk



(By Staff Reporter) **OUAGADOUGOU** - A gold mining boom in Burkina Faso over the last decade propelled Boukary Diallo from being a vendor on a market stall to running a meat business supplying a mine near Ouahigouya, his home town in the north of the country.

But as the West African country loses territory to Islamist militants and lurches from coup to coup, threatening to turn the boom to bust, Diallo is concerned he will be unable to retain all of his ten employees. "Things are getting tight," Diallo, 42, told Reuters by phone. "If the mine

doesn't start up again in December, I will have to let some people go." Karma mine, which Diallo supplies, was closed in June after a militant attack that left one worker and one soldier dead.

Acquired by Burkina-based firm Néré Mining from Endeavour Mining (EDV.L) in March, Karma is one of at least four gold mines that halted production this year because of security risks. Russia's Nordgold in April stopped mining at Taparko, saying the lives of its staff were in danger.

The economy is also at risk.

Gold is Burkina Faso's main

export, accounting for 37% of total exports in 2020, and mining is a leading source of jobs.

For each person directly employed by a mine, there are three or four contractor and services workers, the national association of mining contractors estimates. Diallo's business, which had revenues of 100 million CFA francs (\$151,399) in 2019, has been making barely 4 million CFA francs a month since the Karma mine shut, he said. The conflict has also stoked inflation, making livestock more expensive.

PRODUCTION SINKS

The decline in Diallo's fortunes is reflected at the national level. At current rates, Burkina Faso is set to produce 13% less gold this year than in 2021, in part because of mine closures, government statistics show.

The start of production at Orezone's Bomboré gold mine in late September was an exception to the trend.

In the nine months to end-

September - the most recent period for which data is available - the country produced 43.651 tonnes of gold, down from 50.126 tonnes over the same period last year. "We see the gold industry declining in Burkina over the next five to ten years," Richard Hyde, executive chairman and CEO of West African Resources (WAF.AX) told Reuters.

Security risks mean little exploration is happening, he added, saying West African Resources was one of the few companies to be exploring and planning a new mine.

The Burkina Faso mines ministry did not respond to Reuters' questions.

This year is on track to be the deadliest for the country since the Sahel crisis began more than a decade ago, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

The Al Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) carried out more than 400 attacks across ten of Burkina

Faso's 13 regions in the first half of the year.

The conflict has also triggered political crises in the country, with two military coups this year. Despite the instability, miners have managed to get people and supplies in and out of the country, said Sean Fieler, chief investment officer at Equinox Partners Investment Management LLC, who visited mines in Burkina Faso in July. However, he said, "two coups within 12 months is not a good thing, I don't think anyone would argue otherwise". Equinox Partners, through its funds, holds a 4.4% stake in West African Resources, a 0.2% stake in Endeavour Mining, and also invests in Orezone. Sebastien de Montessus, CEO of Endeavour, Burkina Faso's biggest gold producer, said: "We remain committed to the country and ensuring our presence continues to provide economic benefits to our employees, contractors, suppliers and host communities".

Fentanyl's scourge plainly visible on streets of Los Angeles



(By Staff Reporter) **LOS ANGELES** — In a filthy alley behind a Los Angeles doughnut shop, Ryan Smith convulsed in the grips of a fentanyl high — lurching from moments of slumber to bouts of violent shivering on a warm summer day. When Brandice Josey, another homeless addict, bent down and blew a puff of fentanyl smoke his way in an act of charity, Smith sat up and slowly opened his lip to inhale the vapor as if it was the cure to his problems.

Smith, wearing a grimy yellow T-shirt that said "Good Vibes Only," reclined on his backpack and dozed the rest of the afternoon on the asphalt, unperturbed by the stench of rotting food and human waste that permeated the air. For too many people strung out on the drug, the sleep that follows a fentanyl hit is permanent. The highly addictive and potentially lethal drug has become a scourge across America and is taking a toll on the growing number of people

living on the streets of Los Angeles. Nearly 2,000 homeless people died in the city from April 2020 to March 2021, a 56% increase from the previous year, according to a report released by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Overdose was the leading cause of death, killing more than 700.

Fentanyl was developed to treat intense pain from ailments like cancer. Use of fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that is cheap to produce and is often sold as is or laced in other drugs, has exploded. Because it's 50 times more potent than heroin, even a small dose can be fatal. It has quickly become the deadliest drug in the nation, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. Two-thirds of the 107,000 overdose deaths in 2021 were attributed to synthetic opioids like fentanyl, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The drug's toll spreads far beyond the streets. Jennifer Catano,

27, has the names of two children tattooed on her wrists, but she hasn't seen them for several years. They live with her mother.

"My mom doesn't think it's a good idea because she thinks it's gonna hurt the kids because I'm not ready to get rehabilitated," Catano said. She has overdosed three times and been through rehab seven or eight times. "It's scary to get off of it," she said. "The withdrawals are really bad." Drug abuse can be a cause or symptom of homelessness. Both can also intersect with mental illness. A 2019 report by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority found about a quarter of all homeless adults in Los Angeles County had mental illnesses and 14% had a substance use disorder. That analysis only counted people who had a permanent or long-term severe condition. Taking a broader interpretation of the same data, the Los Angeles Times

found about 51% had mental illnesses and 46% had substance use disorders. Billions of dollars are being spent to alleviate homelessness in California but treatment is not always funded. A controversial bill signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom could improve that by forcing people suffering from severe mental illness into treatment. But they need to be diagnosed with a certain disorder such as schizophrenia and addiction alone doesn't qualify.

Help is available but it is outpaced by the magnitude of misery on the streets. Rita Richardson, a field supervisor with LA Door, a city addiction-prevention program that works with people convicted of misdemeanors, hands out socks, water, condoms, snacks, clean needles and flyers at the same hotspots Monday through Friday. She hopes the consistency of her visits will encourage people to get help. "Then hopefully the light bulb comes on."

Balenciaga claims it had no control over the props in photoshoot where SCOTUS child porn documents were hidden behind handbag as it sues production company

Balenciaga has apologized for the teddy bear ads and removed them from its site. It however is seeking to blame the SCOTUS printout on North Six and set producer Nicholas Des Jardins. As a result of Defendants' misconduct, members of the public, including the news media, have falsely and horrifically associated Balenciaga with the repulsive and deeply disturbing subject of the court decision,' court documents reveal.

'Defendants are liable to Balenciaga for all harm resulting from this false association.'

The lawsuit has not yet been filed. An attorney for the brand told DailyMail.com that they had no comment on the planned legal action.

The 2008 Supreme Court ruling *United States v Williams* examined if laws against the promotion of child pornography were in violation of the first amendment. It was seized on by critics last week after the controversial teddy bear ads sparked fury online.

We should be skeptical of billionaires who pledge to share their wealth

What's more, billionaire charity is our tax dollars at work. For every dollar a billionaire gives to charity, we the taxpayers chip in up to 74 cents of that dollar in lost federal tax revenue as donors claim deductions in their income, estate and capital gains taxes, among others. That makes it even more outrageous that much of this money may never reach a real, on-the-ground charity. Because our tax dollars subsidize this system, charity needs to be more transparent, with clear disclosures of when donations reach their recipients. Payout requirements should be increased, with more oversight to ensure that philanthropic money reaches real working charities. Components of these reforms are included in the Accelerate Charitable Effectiveness (ACE) Act, which has bipartisan backing in the Senate, although a vote has yet to be called since it was introduced in 2021.

There are refreshing exceptions to the troubling trend of billionaires warehousing charitable contributions in private foundations and DAFs. For example, MacKenzie Scott recently announced almost \$2 billion in direct gifts to recipient charities, increasing her direct giving to more than \$14 billion since 2019. That is news.

In the end, philanthropy will never be an adequate substitute for an effective tax system where billionaires pay their fair share and democratically elected governments make decisions about investment priorities, not billionaires.

The ruling determined that offering or requesting to transfer, sell, deliver, or trade child pornography did not violate the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, even if a person charged under the code did not in fact possess child pornography with which to trade.

The late Justice Antonin Scalia noted specifically that offers to engage in illegal transactions are categorically excluded from First Amendment protection.

On Tuesday, Balenciaga publicly apologized and announced that it will be removing the ad from all of its social media profiles.

'We sincerely apologize for any offense our holiday campaign may have caused. Our plush bear bags should not have been

featured with children in this campaign.

'We have immediately removed the campaign from all platforms,' the high-end luxury house shared on Instagram. Earlier this month, the Paris-based company said that its controversial ad 'iterates on the artist's series Toy Stories, an exploration of what people collect and receive as gifts,' according to a press release.

It went on to say that it would feature 'dozens of new products ranging from homeware, pet wear and scent, from everyday items to limited-edition collectibles and bespoke furniture.'

Some of the pictures were shot by Italian photographer Gabriele Galimberti, who is perhaps best known for his work with National Geographic.

On his Instagram page, Galimberti issued a statement saying that he was not in creative control of the shoot and merely was in charge of lighting.

He said: 'I am not in a position to comment [on] Balenciaga's choices, but I must stress that I was not entitled in whatsoever manner to neither chose (sic) the products, nor the models, nor the combination of the same.' Galimberti continued: 'As a photographer, I was only and solely requested to lit (sic) the given scene, and take the shots according to my signature style.'

'As usual, the direction of the campaign and of the shooting are not on the hands of the photographer.'

10 pieces, 2 murder weapons, 1 illicit affair: Story behind another murder that shook Delhi

According to police, Poonam and her son Deepak killed Anjan Das over an illicit affair. The victim was first given sleeping pills and later murdered, they added. The woman and her son then allegedly cut up his body, stored the pieces in a fridge and scattered them across Pandav Nagar and nearby areas. The police officers have recovered six pieces, but the torso is still missing, sources said.

Amit Goel, DCP Crime said, "Poonam married Anjan Das in 2017 after her husband Kallu passed away in 2016. Kallu was Deepak's father. Deceased Anjan was married in Bihar too and had eight children there. He wasn't earning and often use to fight." He added, "The mother-son made Anjan drink liquor and mixed sleeping pills in it. Then they

slit his throat and left the body in the home for a day for the blood to drain out completely. Then they chopped the body into 10 pieces and six pieces have been recovered."

The body was chopped up using a knife and another sharp weapon. Both were kept in the freezer, Delhi Police sources added. The sharp weapon has been recovered and a search is on to find the knife used in the murder. The mother-son duo painted the house after storing the body parts in the fridge to avoid the obnoxious smell, sources added.

The police have accessed CCTV footage that shows Deepak walking with a bag in his hand late at night, during one of his trips to throw away the pieces, police said.

From the Amazon to Australia, why is your money funding Earth's destruction?

The political protection of destructive industries is woven into the fabric of politics, not least because of the pollution paradox ("the more damaging the commercial enterprise, the more money it must spend on politics to ensure it's not regulated out of existence. As a result, politics comes to be dominated by the most damaging commercial enterprises.") Earth systems, by contrast, are treated as an afterthought, an ornament: nice to have, but dispensable when their protection conflicts with the necessity of extraction. In reality, the irreducible essential is a habitable planet.

In 2010, at a biodiversity summit in Nagoya, Japan, governments set themselves 20 goals, to be met by 2020. None has been achieved. As they prepare for the biodiversity Cop15 summit in Montreal next week, governments are investing not in the defence of the living world but in greenwash.

The headline objective is to protect 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030. But what governments mean by protection often bears little resemblance to what ecologists mean.

Take the UK, for example. On paper, it has one of the highest proportions of protected land in the rich world, at 28%. It could easily raise this proportion to 30% and claim to have fulfilled its obligations. But it is also one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. How can this be? Because most of our "protected" areas are nothing of the kind.

One analysis suggests that only 5% of our land meets the international definition of a protected area. Even these scraps are at risk, as scarcely anyone is left to enforce the law: the regulators have been stripped to the bone and beyond. At sea, most of our marine protected areas are nothing but lines on

the map: trawlers still rip them apart.

All this is likely to become much worse. If the retained EU law bill goes ahead, the entire basis of legal protection in the UK could be torn down. Even by the standards of this government, the mindless vandalism involved is gobsmacking. To prove that Brexit means Brexit, 570 environmental laws must be deleted or replaced by the end of next year. There will be no public consultation, no scope for presenting evidence and, in all likelihood, no opportunity for parliamentary debate. It is logistically impossible to replace so much legislation in such a short period, so the most likely outcome is deletion. If so, it's game over for rivers, soil, air quality, groundwater, wildlife and habitats in the UK, and game on for cheats and con artists. The whole country will, in effect, become a freeport.

Never underestimate the destructive instincts of the Conservative party, prepared to ruin everything for the sake of an idea. Never underestimate its appetite for chaos and dysfunction.

The protected industries driving us towards destruction will take everything if they are not checked. We face a brutal contest for control over land and sea: between those who seek to convert our life support systems into profit, and those who seek to defend, restore and, where possible, return them to the indigenous people dispossessed by capitalism's fire front. These are never just technical or scientific issues. They cannot be resolved by management alone. They are deeply political. We can protect the living world or we can protect the companies destroying it. We cannot do both.

(By George Monbiot, a Guardian columnist)

In Gujarat, voters want BJP's alternative but not of Modi

The BJP is concentrating on seats where the victory margin could be 10,000 votes or less with NOTA votes and AAP playing a crucial role. Also, former Congress leaders contesting the election are struggling because of the dent in their loyal caste voter-base even as BJP's local leaders see them as outsiders. In many seats, the fight is four-cornered – BJP, Congress, AAP and a strong independent candidate. However, if the BJP wins Gujarat once more, it will mean that the second generation of Gujarat is ready to lap up the Modi phenomenon that started in 2001, when Modi articulated that 'development of India' and 'Hindu cultural nationalism' can go hand in hand. It would mean that the young generation of Gujarat that desires change—visible in new trends of Gujarati literature, films, and theatre—is not looking for a dramatic change. BJP leaders are totally focused on this

evolution within the Gujarati society. Modi and Shah are hammering on about the Congress' rule of the 1980s. Imagine how profound and powerful the politics of bad memories are. Also, in urban areas, the issue of caste-identity and arrogance and corruption in the BJP government are not overriding Gujaratis' desire for political stability and "security of family." In urban Gujarat, "law and order" issue has a communal undertone. It remains so in this election. There is no other convincing explanation to understand why, after 27 long years of BJP rule, the Gujarati voters are not tired of the incumbent party. In constituency after constituency, one can find enough of the urban middle-class BJP voters who are unmoved by issues of inflation, corruption in governance, and income inequality. They compare other state governments' performance, sensex touching the Rs 60,000 mark, Modi's "clarity in thinking" and a weakened world

economy to underplay BJP's weaknesses. They continue to back the BJP because the party's ideology hasn't weakened for them.

Voters want change but not entirely One can't underplay the way BJP's mammoth machinery and Modi's strong identification with Gujarati asmita (pride) have been functioning to woo the next generation through this election. This election campaign shows that whatever be the result, the BJP will remain firmly at the centrepiece in the "future of Gujarat" and its politics because no party or candidate has taken a stand on ideological issues at variance from the BJP. The weaving of victory by the BJP in the midst of anti-incumbency and a caste-ridden election will have a national fallout. This election will show how the BJP has mastered its blue book of election campaigning. BJP knows best how to shield election outcomes from

getting overshadowed by ground realities such as people's hardships in health and education, leaderless government and completely corrupt bureaucracy. Gujarat is at the cusp of change, but it is less political. If we talk to voters, it can be surmised that they want BJP's alternative in the state but not of Modi. More importantly, the alternative must not be drastically different from the BJP. That explains why Modi harshly asked former CM Vijay Rupani and his cabinet to step down overnight. The rude decision, which can backfire too, helped curb anti-incumbency to some extent. This is the first election where the state's old BJP leaders look tired and divided along caste lines and still many Congress and AAP voters claim "jitshe to BJP j. (BJP will win, of course)." The reason is anti-BJP Gujaratis know that for BJP voters, their party is much more than a political outfit. It's a family.

Indian military leaders must speak with caution, media twisting Army's PoK remark

Pakistan, in contrast, should not be allowed to become an unavoidable distraction due to the nature of India's domestic politics. This can be achieved only if narrow party politics are superseded by national interests. A prospect that seems unlikely, given the record of domestic politics and events in the last decade.

Maybe, there is ground for optimism, if the BJP accepts that it may not need to leverage hatred toward Pakistan to win elections anymore, considering its prevailing popularity and disarray in the opposition camp. Clear of being used by the political leadership to strengthen anti-Pakistan moves for electoral gains. The choice could be exercised along two different axes. First, the spoken and the written word, along with actions undertaken and publicised, are the means that are in theory, expected to build and protect the Army's image. In the world of information overload, this is a necessity. What perhaps is unnecessary and something that requires

to be minimised is the proclivity of senior military leaders to readily participate in interactions with the media. Instead, let official spokespersons—who are present at all levels—be the main interlocutors. The senior leadership will thus reduce the chances of their utterances being misinterpreted, and of being drawn into avoidable controversies. Overall, considering the trajectory of domestic politics, the policy should be that of letting the military's actions speak for itself. Silence by senior military leadership on politically loaded matters should be the preferred route. Second, there is a need for the military leadership to be sensitive and not give the impression that it is supporting domestic political narratives, which are shaped to show political opponents in poor light. One such narrative that has gained ground is illustrative. It wishes to portray the notion that India's progressive streak began largely in 2014, a year that coincides with the advent of the Narendra Modi government. Military leaders should be

particularly careful that they are not seen to be a party to such narratives in their utterances. It jeopardises and betrays the Army's apolitical stance. In the years ahead, India's developmental progress is likely to face stronger headwinds. Domestic political interactions and contestations conducted within the Indian

democratic framework are the soul of its ability to face challenges and seize opportunities. The military risks losing its capacity for independent advice because it has been unwittingly or deliberately incorporated in ideological schemes that do not cohere with its unambiguous constitutional values.

How Bharat Jodo Yatra is building Brand Rahul but taking a heavy toll on Congress

There is another growing concern in the Congress. Much like Sonia Gandhi, Rahul has taken a shine to the members of the civil society such as Yogendra Yadav, Medha Patkar and others. There are over 150 civil society organisations drawn from 21 states which are part of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra.

It is worth remembering and recalling that during 2014-2004, UPA chairperson and Congress head, Sonia spent most of her time intervening in crises and doing firefighting. As head of the National Advisory Council (NAC), she tried catering to rural and urban aspirations by blending the experience of NGOs with that of professionals at the NAC. But the limited success that NAC had, was negated by a telling commentary on the efficacy of traditional Congress leaders. The absence of Congress's intellectual capability to influence government and bureaucracy weakened the party. The Congress, at present, is in such disarray that even a suggestion that it is a philosopher [party] guiding the king [politician] would become a subject of ridicule.

Decades ago, Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who lost

the Congress president's contest narrowly to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1939, with a poet's flair, had equated the Congress ideology closely with the Indian nation and establishing 'philosopher and the politician' equation. He told AICC delegates at the Jaipur plenary in 1948:

"The Congress is the service station of life-giving the ideology of the nation. The life-sustaining doctrines are pumped through the arteries of the government of the nation, where they become somewhat sullied in implementation and are returned to the Congress for purification. The ideology constantly discussed by the populace and constantly renovated as public opinion, is once again canalised by the Congress through the government in a renovated form, that is how the Congress and the government act and react upon each other... The Congress is really the philosopher, while the government is the politician. The latter has power and the former has influence."

Also, in the present-day Congress, the lofty relationship between the philosopher and the politician is nowhere in sight in the party ruled states. But that is another subject to dwell upon.

China's 'zero-COVID' policy could be Xi's undoing

The fire incident in Urumqi has sparked nationwide protests, including in China's capital Beijing, and financial harbor, Shanghai. Many protesters were seen holding blank paper as a way to object to the government's censorship. Some shouted slogans such as "Xi Jinping, step down!" and "We want freedom and democracy, no more lockdowns." China hasn't seen such large-scale protests and bold slogans against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the 1989 pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square because the CCP has a long history of violently suppressing dissent. But now it seems that the Chinese people are so desperate

for change that they are not afraid anymore.

Xi likely will respond to this widespread unrest with brutal force and remain in power. Still, this crisis demonstrates that his rule is not as secure as he had believed. History is sometimes full of irony. Xi values personal loyalty and social stability more than anything. But his insistence on forging ahead with a failed policy to deal with a virus that originated from China and likely escaped from a government-funded lab may eventually cost him loyalty and social stability, becoming the beginning of his own undoing.

(By Helen Raleigh, Fox News)

India's Adani Group Wins Mumbai's Dharavi Slum Redevelopment Project

In the heart of Mumbai lies Dharavi, Asia's largest slum hosting thousands of small businesses and hundreds of thousands of people over more than 600 acres. The Maharashtra government has struggled for decades to rebuild Dharavi as a planned mixed-use development with homes, offices and small industries. On Monday, the Adani group emerged as top bidder in a global tender to redevelop the massive slum, adjacent to the business hub of Bandra-Kurla Complex and the Mumbai airport. Dharavi holds the promise to be rebuilt like how Shanghai redeveloped Lujiazui. For the Adani group, it's an opportunity to signal its execution prowess to the world, like similar to how the Ambanis built the Jamnagar refinery.

Will Dharavi be another commercial hub in Mumbai?

Adani group, the energy and infrastructure giant which has topped the bid, will resettle slum dwellers on railway land, opening up prime land for redevelopment. New commercial complexes could come up, creating a third business district in Mumbai, beyond Nariman Point in downtown Mumbai and almost an extension of the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) in the suburbs. From housing offices of diverse

industries to reserving space for the small industries already located in Dharavi, to even emerging as a financial services destination for the world, it opens up a world of possibilities for Mumbai, and India. Adani bid ₹5,069 crore for the ₹23,000 crore Integrated Dharavi Redevelopment Project. A committee of secretaries is expected to give a formal go-ahead to the project soon. A special purpose vehicle (SPV) will be created with Adani holding majority stake. The rehabilitation process should end in seven years, and the project should finish in 17 years.

Will there be a slum-free Mumbai?

Dharavi redevelopment is part of a larger goal to eventually make Mumbai slum-free. That would be an uphill task. Almost half of the city's population lives in densely-populated slums, according to the World Bank. Many of these slums are located along railway tracks and pavements, and deeply embedded in the city's fabric. Providing free or affordable housing for all is an enormous task. Mumbai's authorities have tried just about every option over the years, from on-site rehousing, to relocating them to distant suburbs, to building market-rate housing on slum areas, to cross-

subsidizing replacement housing. Multilateral bodies like World Bank have often been consulted for the exercise. Still, the progress has been painfully slow, with the sheer numbers overwhelming the system.

Dharavi's small businesses will stay

Many slums have almost become a permanent feature of

Mumbai's landscape, spawning mini business ecosystems. Dharavi has many informal small-scale industries, from medicines to footwear, clothes and leather. All the commercial and industrial units will find space in the redeveloped Dharavi. Over the years, standards of living in Mumbai's slums have risen. The United Nations Development

Programme's (UNDP) Multidimensional Poverty Index pegged India's urban poverty levels at 5.5% in its recent report. The World Bank in 2018 estimated that 35% of India's urban population lived in slums. Clearly, a large chunk of the urban population living in slums is not seen to be in multidimensional poverty.

Adani Group Bags Mumbai's Dharavi Redevelopment Project With Rs 5,069 Crore Bid

Mumbai: The Adani Group has emerged as the highest bidder for the 259-hectare Dharavi Redevelopment Project, a top official said on Tuesday. The group has put in a ₹5,069 crore bid for the redevelopment of one of the largest slum sprawls in the world, outbidding DLF, which had quoted ₹2,025 crore, chief executive officer of the project S V R Srinivas said. "We will now be sending the details to the government, which will consider and give final approval," he told PTI, adding that the Eknath Shinde government will approve it in a couple of weeks. The bid is for the entire ₹20,000-crore project, and the total timeline for the project is seven years to rehabilitate the 6.5 lakh slum dwellers who are spread over a 2.5 sq km area right now, he said. The project, which will help the winning bidder to book high revenues by selling lakhs of square feet of residential and commercial space in central Mumbai, has been in limbo for many years now because of its complexities. Eight

bidders, including entities from South Korea and the UAE, had attended a pre-bid meeting held in October and three of them actually bid for the project. Naman Group, a city-based developer, was the third whose bid did not qualify. The government has sought a consolidated net worth of a minimum of ₹20,000 crore to choose the winning bid and is likely to evaluate both technical and financial eligibility before awarding the project to the highest bidder. The winning bidder is required to form a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for executing the project, and a staggered timeline of investments has also been stipulated by the government. The developer has to take care of rehabilitation, renewal, amenities, and infrastructure components. Mr Adani already has a realty arm in the country, which has already executed or is in the process of executing projects in the financial capital, including one in suburban Ghatkopar and another in central Mumbai's Byculla.

Leading media outlets urge U.S. to end prosecution of Julian Assange

WASHINGTON - The United States should end its prosecution of Julian Assange, leading media outlets from the United States and Europe that had collaborated with the WikiLeaks founder said on Monday, citing press freedom concerns. "This indictment sets a dangerous precedent, and threatens to undermine America's First Amendment and the freedom of the press," editors and publishers of the Guardian, the New York Times, Le Monde, Der Spiegel, and El País said in an open letter. Assange is wanted by U.S. authorities on 18 counts, including a spying charge, related to WikiLeaks' release of confidential U.S. military records and diplomatic cables. His supporters say he is an anti-establishment hero who has been

victimized because he exposed U.S. wrongdoing, including in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Monday marked twelve years since those media outlets collaborated to release excerpts from over 250,000 documents obtained by Assange in the so-called "Cablegate" leak. The material was leaked to WikiLeaks by the then American soldier Chelsea Manning and revealed the inner workings of U.S. diplomacy around the globe. The documents exposed "corruption, diplomatic scandals and spy affairs on an international scale," the letter said. In August, a group of journalists and lawyers sued the CIA and its former director Mike Pompeo over allegations the intelligence agency spied on them when they visited Assange during his

stay in Ecuador's embassy in London. Assange spent seven years in the embassy before being dragged out and jailed in 2019 for breaching bail conditions. He has remained

in prison in London while his extradition case is decided. If extradited to the United States, he faces a sentence of up to 175 years in an American maximum security prison. His legal team has

appealed to the High Court in London to block his extradition in a legal battle that has dragged on for more than a decade. "Publishing is not a crime," the media outlets said in their letter on Monday.

Infowars host Alex Jones files for personal bankruptcy

Infowars host Alex Jones filed for personal bankruptcy protection in Texas on Friday as he faces nearly \$1.5 billion in court judgments over conspiracy theories he spread about the Sandy Hook school massacre. Jones filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in bankruptcy court in Houston. His filing lists \$1 billion to \$10 billion in liabilities owed to 50 to 99 creditors and \$1 million to \$10 million in assets. The bankruptcy filing comes as Jones faces court orders to pay nearly \$1.5 billion in damages to relatives of victims of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting for calling the massacre a hoax. An attorney representing Jones in the bankruptcy case did not immediately return a message seeking comment.



Scientists Revive 48,500-Year-Old 'Zombie Virus' Buried In Ice

The thawing of ancient permafrost due to climate change may pose a new threat to humans, according to researchers who revived nearly two dozen viruses - including one frozen under a lake more than 48,500 years ago.

European researchers examined ancient samples collected from permafrost in the Siberia region of Russia. They revived and characterized 13 new pathogens, what they termed "zombie viruses," and found that they remained

infectious despite spending many millennia trapped in the frozen ground.

Scientists have long warned that the thawing of permafrost due to atmospheric warming will worsen climate change by freeing previously trapped greenhouse gases like methane. But its effect on dormant pathogens is less well understood.

The team of researchers from Russia, Germany, and France said the biological risk of reanimating

the viruses they studied was "totally negligible" due to the strains they targeted, mainly those capable of infecting amoeba microbes. The potential revival of a virus that could infect animals or humans is much more problematic, they said, warning that their work can be extrapolated to show the danger is real.

"It is thus likely that ancient permafrost will release these unknown viruses upon thawing," they wrote in an article posted to

the preprint repository bioRxiv that hasn't yet been peer-reviewed. "How long these viruses could remain infectious once exposed to outdoor conditions, and how likely they will be to encounter and infect a suitable host in the interval, is yet impossible to estimate." But the risk is bound to increase in the context of global warming when permafrost thawing will keep accelerating, and more people will be populating the Arctic in the wake of industrial ventures," they said.

Rapper Kanye West Suspended by Twitter over swastika post



(South Asian Insider Bureau) New York-Twitter has suspended rapper Ye after he tweeted a picture of a swastika merged with the Star of David. It is the second time this year that Ye has been suspended from the platform over antisemitic posts. Twitter CEO Elon Musk confirmed the suspension by replying to Ye's post of an unflattering photo of Musk. Ye called it his "final tweet." "I tried my best. Despite that, he again violated our rule against incitement to violence. Account will be suspended," Musk tweeted. Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, has made a series of antisemitic comments in recent weeks. On Thursday, Ye praised Hitler in an interview with

conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.

Ye's remarks have led to his suspension from social media platforms, his talent agency dropping him and companies like Adidas cutting ties with him. The sportswear manufacturer has also launched an investigation into his conduct. Ye was suspended from Twitter in early October after saying in a post that he was going to go "death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE." His account was reinstated by the end of the month just as Musk took control of the company, but the billionaire tweeted that "Ye's account was restored by Twitter before the acquisition. They did not consult with or inform me."

Mexican asylum seekers set their sights north-on Canada

MONTREAL — Pedro Meraz says living in Colima, Mexico, was like living in a war zone, with shootings, burning cars and dismembered bodies being left outside of schools. When his wife Rocio Gonzalez, a 28-year-old lawyer who worked with abused women, began receiving death threats from a cartel and the local authorities ignored her pleas for assistance, they knew they had to leave. "They knew where we lived and what car we drove," said Meraz, 41, who taught at The University of Colima, near the Pacific Coast and about 300 miles (485 kilometers) west of Mexico City. "Feeling that you are going to lose your life, or one of your daughters, I don't mind starting from scratch."

The family is part of a surge in the number of Mexicans who have requested asylum in Canada this year. Due to the relative ease of obtaining asylum in Canada compared to the U.S., visa-free travel between Mexico and Canada, and the threat of violence back home, more than 8,000 Mexican nationals have sought refugee status in 2022. That's almost five times as many as last year and more than twice as many as in 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions that accompanied it. The vast majority of them are flying in to Montreal, which has many direct flights to and from Mexico. Among them is Viviana Tapia Gonzalez, a human rights activist and mother of four from

Aguascalientes, about 265 miles (425 kilometers) northwest of Mexico City, who said she left Mexico in January after being attacked by the military. She said her work with the families of missing and murdered women and girls made her a target. "Death threats were constant," she said. "I thought it was the last option I had to be safe. I work for many causes and help many people. I did not want to stop helping, but I must also protect (and) take care of myself." Tapia Gonzalez has been living in a Montreal women's shelter while awaiting a decision on her asylum claim, which she fears might get rejected. If her claim is turned down, she wouldn't be alone.

In the first nine months of 2022, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, an independent tribunal that investigates and decides asylum cases, finalized more than 2,700 claims by Mexican asylum seekers. Of those, 1,032 were accepted, 1,256 were rejected; and the remaining 400-plus were either abandoned, withdrawn, or had other outcomes, said Christian Tessier, an IRB spokesperson. In Canada, claimants must meet the United Nations' definition of a "convention refugee," meaning they are outside of their home countries and have a well-founded fear that they would be persecuted if they returned based on their race, religion, political opinions, nationality or affiliation with a social group. Otherwise, they must prove

that they need protection and can't safely return to their home countries without risking torture, cruel or unusual punishment, or death. Despite the risk of rejection, though, the surge in Mexicans seeking refugee status in Canada persists. The Welcome Collective, a Montreal-based charitable organization that provides essential goods to new asylum seekers, said half of the group's current clients came from Mexico — a 300% increase compared with earlier this year. "They had to run away because of violence and other humanitarian reasons. To find a better place for their children," said Flavia Leiva, the group's volunteer and social outreach coordinator. As for what is causing the increase in applicants, Leiva suggested that social media is playing a role. "There have been YouTubers and some videos on TikTok talking about how easy it is to come to Canada," she said.

At least one YouTube video that was published 10 months ago and made for a Mexican audience explains the Canadian immigration process in Spanish and has more than 4 million views. It has been harder for Mexicans to seek asylum in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic. A U.S. public health rule that suspends the right to seek asylum on the grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19 has fallen disproportionately hard on Mexicans.

Title 42 authority has been used to expel migrants more than 2.4 million times since it was introduced in March 2020. Further adding to Canada's allure is that Mexicans haven't needed a visa to travel to the country since the Canadian government lifted the requirement in late 2016. Leiva also suggested that more Mexicans might be choosing to come to Canada instead of the United States because they think it's safer. "In the U.S., they are put in cages, the conditions are not as good," Leiva said. "People do not feel safe or protected." Meraz said he and his family decided that Canada would offer them the best chance to start over. "My wife investigated the existence of international treaties to protect people who are at risk," he said. He referenced Canadian policies and regulations protecting women and children in addition to the country's comparatively low crime rate. "The U.S. was never in our minds, since there is a lot of violence ... attacks where many innocent people die," said Meraz. "Canada, statistically, has a very low rate of violence and its quality of life is much better than the USA." He said his family chose Montreal instead of some other Canadian city because of logistics, though he's having second thoughts.

What Is Digital Rupee? How Is It Different From Cryptocurrency?

The Reserve Bank of India is set to launch the pilot of its central bank digital currency (CBDC), which it categorizes as legal tender in a digital form. Commonly known as the digital rupee, it will be exchangeable at par with existing currencies and will be considered acceptable for payments and a safe store of value.

Also being called the e¹ or the digital rupee, CBDC issued by the RBI is aimed at creating an additional option to use money and isn't very different from the currently-issued banknotes; only the digital rupee is expected to be transacted digitally and facilitate ease of use.

The digital rupee is the RBI's accepted version of cryptocurrencies, which the central bank has dismissed repeatedly and called a serious challenge to the stability of the financial system of the country.

Being an electronic form of sovereign currency, the CBDC is being touted as safer than private cryptocurrencies and here's how the both will differ.

What is Cryptocurrency?

In simple terms, cryptocurrency is decentralized money, free from any government or central bank's chains. It relies on blockchain technology and uses cryptography to secure transactions done by people making it impossible to counterfeit.

However in August 2010, a hacker found a loophole in the Bitcoin protocol. The hacker exploited the vulnerability and created an infinite amount of Bitcoins by making multiple transactions before logging them into the blockchain.

The user created 184 billion Bitcoins in a few hours, but his plot was discovered, and the transactions were invalidated. To date, this has been the only threat to the Bitcoin network.

The purpose behind the creation of Bitcoin was to help people send money over the internet. It is a digital currency, an alternate payment system free from any control that works exactly like traditional currencies.

To better understand cryptocurrency, you must know about the three terminologies: blockchain, decentralization and cryptography.

Blockchain in cryptocurrency is the showrunner. It is a digital ledger whose access is distributed between authorized users and records transactions.

The information and access are shared among the registered users. So, anything the blockchain records is transparent and immutable—the information cannot be tampered with or hacked. Not even by the administrator.

Decentralization in cryptocurrency means that the asset is free from governing bodies like central banks. This mechanism makes cryptocurrencies independent. At the same time, the



centralized money we use is monitored and managed by the RBI.

Cryptography in cryptocurrency means secret writing, which means the recipient can only read messages. It takes care of the transactions, protects operational autonomy, and fortifies the entire chain.

How Does Cryptocurrency Work?

All cryptocurrencies are generated through a rigorous process called mining. The miners use computers with high-end GPUs to solve various complex mathematical problems and puzzles to get cryptocurrencies as a reward. It takes days and even months to mine crypto. People can also buy cryptocurrencies from currency owners and exchange platforms, and they can even sell them to other individuals, too. The cryptocurrencies are stored in digital wallets, which are either hot or cold. A hot wallet is connected to the internet. In contrast, cold storage keeps your holdings offline.

Cryptocurrencies can be transacted or transferred using your smartphone – just like a UPI transaction. Users can also convert their crypto holdings to cash using their bank accounts or P2P transactions.

Of course, while Bitcoin remains the popular choice for miners and investors, it did start a digital currency revolution that led to the birth of many popular currencies like Ethereum, Tether, XRP etc.

Cryptocurrencies are immune to any central authority or government interference. However, their relationship with the Indian government has been quite uncomfortable. April 2018 – People were warned that virtual currencies are not legal tender in India. The finance ministry appointed a committee to frame a bill for cryptocurrencies in India. But the ministry overruled the ban. In 2019 – A bill forbade mining, holding, selling, issuing, transferring and using cryptocurrencies. If found violating the law, people would pay a hefty fine or face imprisonment of up to 10 years. March 2020 – The ban was removed by the Supreme Court of India. November 2021 – Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised the topic of

cryptocurrency in the Rajya Sabha. She said the government hadn't taken concrete steps to ban cryptocurrency advertisements in India, but it'll spread awareness through the RBI and SEBI.

Union Budget 2022-23 – The government of India recognized cryptocurrencies and decided to tax 30% of any virtual asset. The FM also announced the launch of a CBDC called the digital rupee. But is digital rupee cryptocurrency? Here's some context.

Cryptocurrency Vs Digital Rupee

According to the RBI, "a CBDC is a legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency. Only its form is different." But a CBDC can't be exactly compared to cryptocurrencies.

"Unlike cryptocurrencies, a CBDC isn't a commodity or claims on commodities or digital assets. Cryptocurrencies have no issuer. They are not money (certainly not currency) as the word has come to be understood historically," as said in the announcement made by RBI.

The CBDC is the digital avatar of paper currency issued by central banks like RBI and should be exchangeable with cash. The commonly-known digital rupee is a currency that the RBI issues and the digital rupee will have the same function, but it won't be a decentralised asset like cryptocurrencies. Digital rupee will be a currency issued by central banks responsible for governing and managing the asset.

The digital rupee will be a legal tender, which means you can use it to buy what you want. For example, digital wallets, NEFT and IMPS are examples of digital rupees. So, when the RBI starts circulating the digital rupee, all citizens of India can use it.

Countries that are Considering CBDC

With the recent popularity of a cashless or digital financial framework, world governments and central banks are exploring (some of them have also implemented) the possibilities of digital currency.

The Bahamas, Nigeria, Dominica, Montserrat, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint

Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines have already launched their digital currency.

Russia – the Digital Ruble has completed the initial trials—full cycle of transactions as announced by the central bank of Russia.

China – plans to launch the eCNY or digital Yuan by 2022.

Do We Need the Digital Rupee?

The most important reason for launching a digital rupee by the RBI is to push India forward in the virtual currency race. And, of course, due to the growing importance of cryptocurrency.

With blockchain technology, the digital rupee will increase efficiency and transparency.

Blockchain will also enable real-time tracking and ledger maintenance.

The payment system will be available to wholesale and retail customers 24/7.

Indian buyers can pay without a middle man.

Lower transaction cost.

Real-time account settlements.

You don't have to open a bank account to transact with a digital rupee.

Fast cross-border transactions.

No risk of volatility, as the RBI, will back it.

Compared to currency notes, the digital rupee will be mobile forever.

But with a behemoth payment system like UPI around, can CBDCs up the game?

According to a survey by the RBI, cash remains the preferred mode of payment for receiving money for regular expenses. Cash is used predominantly for small value transactions (amounts up to INR 500).

Does the New 30% Tax on Cryptocurrencies Include Digital Rupee? All cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin etc., won't be exempt from taxation.

Only RBI's digital rupee will be free from tax regulations.

Bottom Line

By introducing the digital rupee, the RBI expects to address problems associated with existing physical currencies and cross-border transactions.

Cross-border money transfer and converting the money into foreign currency is tedious and expensive. With the launch of the digital rupee, the instant cross-border money transfer is set to make bank cash management and operations more seamless.

In India, cash placement and tracking the same is a challenge. CBDC can address anonymity and resolve it in a non-intimidatory way and reduce the demand for cash. The government will save operational, printing, distributing and storing costs—empowering the government's vision toward a cashless economy.

What is digital Rupee or e-Rupee?

Digital Rupee coming on Dec 1, here is everything to know about it

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced the launch of the first pilot for retail digital Rupee or e-rupee or eâ,¹-R on December 1. To start with, the RBI has partnered with four banks including State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank in Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar. Initially, RBI said, the pilot would cover only the closed user group (CUG) comprising participating customers and merchants.

As the RBI explained, the e-Rupee is a form of digital token that represents legal tender. Unlike cryptocurrencies, the digital Rupee is issued in the same denominations as paper currency and coins.

How will digital Rupee work?

The RBI explained that digital Rupee or

e-Rupee will be distributed through intermediaries like banks to customers and merchants. Users will be able to transact with e-Rupee through a digital wallet offered by the eligible banks and stored on mobile phones or devices.

The central bank also confirmed that the transaction in digital Rupee can happen between Person to Person (P2P) and Person to Merchant (P2M). Users will be able to make payments through e-Rupee using QR codes displayed at merchant locations, just like online transactions are done. "The eâ,¹-R would offer features of physical cash like trust, safety and settlement finality. As in the case of cash, it will not earn any interest and can be converted to other forms of money, like deposits with banks," the official RBI release stated.

RBI also revealed that the pilot will test the "robustness of the entire process of digital rupee creation, distribution, and retail usage in real-time. Different features and applications of the eâ,¹-R token and architecture will be tested in future pilots, based on the learning from this pilot."

List of eligible banks and cities?

The central bank revealed that the rollout of digital Rupee will happen in a phased manner. To start with, in the first phase the pilot will begin with four banks — State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank and IDFC First Bank across only four cities. These cities include — Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar. Going forward, RBI revealed, four more banks will join the pilot including — Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Later, the facility will be extended across many more Indian cities including Ahmedabad, Gangtok, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna, and Shimla. Eventually, the facility will roll out to other parts of the country. The timeline of the official rollout hasn't been revealed yet. "The scope of pilot may be expanded gradually to include more banks, users, and locations as needed," RBI said.

The RBI has been talking about introducing the digital Rupee for a long time and starting Dec 1 some users will be able to use e-Rupee to make transactions. With the digital Rupee, the broader wish of the central bank is to execute a full-fledged launch of the CBDC (central bank digital currency) in the near future.

Digital rupee pilot project launching on December 1: what is it, and how will it work?

Initially four banks — State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank — in four cities — Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Bhubaneswar — will issue digital tokens in the same denominations as paper currency, which can be used to make and receive payments.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the launch of India's much-awaited Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), a sort of official cryptocurrency, for retail users from Thursday (December 1).

Who can use the retail CBDC?

What will be launched on December 1 is the first phase of a pilot project that will cover select locations and banks in a closed user group (CUG) comprising participating customers and merchants, the RBI has said.

The pilot will initially cover the four cities of Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar, where customers and merchants will be able to use the digital rupee (e¹ -R), or e-rupee. Four banks will be involved in the controlled launch of the digital currency in these four cities: State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank.

The service will be subsequently extended to the cities of Ahmedabad, Gangtok, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna, and Shimla. Four more banks — Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, HDFC Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank — will join the pilot, the RBI said.

The scope of the pilot may be expanded gradually to include more banks, users and locations as needed, it said.

What will the retail digital rupee be?



In effect, the retail e-rupee will be an electronic version of cash, and will be primarily meant for retail transactions. It will be potentially available for use by all — the private sector, non-financial consumers and businesses — and will be able to provide access to safe money for payment and settlement, as it will be the direct liability of the central bank.

The RBI had said earlier: "CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency. Only its form is different."

And how will the retail digital rupee work?

The Rs would be in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender. It will be issued in the same denominations as paper currency and coins, and will be distributed through intermediaries, i.e., banks.

Users will be able to transact with e¹ -R through a digital wallet offered by the participating banks and stored on

mobile phones and devices, according to the RBI.

Transactions can be both person to person (P2P) and person to merchant (P2M). Payments to merchants can be made using QR codes displayed at merchant locations. "The e¹ -R would offer features of physical cash like trust, safety and settlement finality. As in the case of cash, it will not earn any interest and can be converted to other forms of money, like deposits with banks," the RBI said.

And what is the other kind of digital rupee?

Based on the usage and the functions performed by the digital rupee and considering the different levels of accessibility, RBI has demarcated the digital rupee into two broad categories: general purpose (retail) and wholesale. On November 1, the RBI launched the digital rupee for the wholesale segment to settle secondary market transactions in government securities. Wholesale CBDC is designed for restricted access to select financial

institutions. It has the potential to transform the settlement systems for financial transactions undertaken by banks in the government securities (G-Sec) segment, inter-bank market and capital market more efficient and secure in terms of operational costs, use of collateral and liquidity management.

So why do we need a pilot launch for the retail e-rupee?

According to the central bank, the pilot will test the robustness of the entire process of digital rupee creation, distribution and retail usage in real time.

"Different features and applications of the e¹ -R token and architecture will be tested in future pilots, based on the learnings from this pilot," it said.

What are the advantages of the e-rupee?

The RBI had earlier said the key motivations for exploring the issuance of CBDC in India among others include reduction in operational costs involved in physical cash management, fostering financial inclusion, bringing resilience, efficiency and innovation in the payments system.

It will add efficiency to the settlement system and boost innovation in cross-border payments space and provide the public with uses that any private virtual currencies can provide, without the associated risks.

The RBI has repeatedly flagged concerns over money laundering, terror financing, tax evasion, etc with private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, Ether, etc. Introducing its own CBDC has been seen as a way to bridge the advantages and risks of digital currency.

In 1991, tiny Vanuatu already nailed the climate conversation

In 1991, the small island nation of Vanuatu raised a question on the global stage that rich nations have been avoiding ever since: Who should pay for climate catastrophe?

At the time, Vanuatu — on behalf of an alliance of small-island states — argued quite reasonably that polluters should pay for the costs of their pollution. It was an urgent question — with remarkable foresight. Vanuatu is in a low-lying archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, and its territory is threatened as global temperature increases contribute to rising sea levels worldwide. There should be an “insurance pool ... used to compensate the most vulnerable small island and low-lying coastal developing countries for loss and damage resulting from sea level rise,” Vanuatu’s ambassador, Robert Van Lierop, proposed to United Nations climate negotiators, according to a 2019 article in the journal “Climate Policy.” More than 30 years later, this issue of irreversible “loss and damage” from the climate crisis is set to be one of the central issues as diplomats and world leaders convene in Egypt for the COP27 climate negotiations.

After decades of deflection, it’s overdue for high-polluting countries like the United States to take this question seriously. It’s clear that polluters should be held accountable for these losses to territory, culture, life and property. Yes, it is also absolutely critical that the world abandons fossil fuels as quickly as possible. That is another central discussion point at COP27, and the world is well behind on its goal of holding warming to 1.5 or at most 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial averages. (We’re on track for about 2.7 degrees of warming, based on current policies; recent climate bills passed by the US Congress are a step forward, but are not enough).

The less carbon we put into the atmosphere, the less risk we put into the climate system — with important consequences for sea levels, storms, drought, biodiversity and so-on.

Still, there can be no justice without action on loss and damages. Arguments against action have taken many forms over the decades. The most laughable, in retrospect, is that this was a problem for the future rather than the present.

We now see clearly that the climate crisis is supercharging extreme weather worldwide. Look

no farther than the deadly floods in Pakistan this summer or Hurricane Ian in Florida this September. Disasters are getting more expensive because they’re becoming more intense as humans continue to burn fossil fuels and swamp the atmosphere with heat-trapping gasses.

That may feel like a new phenomenon, but it’s been decades in the making. Scientists linked a deadly 2003 heat wave in Europe, for example, to human-caused warming. That heat wave killed an estimated 20,000 people. The onslaught of ever-worsening heat waves, droughts, wildfires and storms can feel both urgent and numbing. The truth is that as long as humans have been burning fossil fuels, we’ve been making the planet more dangerous. The onslaught of ever-worsening heat waves, droughts, wildfires and storms can feel both urgent and numbing. The truth is that as long as humans have been burning fossil fuels, we’ve been making the planet more dangerous. Other arguments against loss-and-damage payments should be

seen plainly for what they are: excuses and stall tactics. The harm is undeniable at this point, as is the cause. Oxfam estimates these climate losses will total \$1 trillion per year by 2050. What’s trickier is sorting out the mechanism for payment.

The UN’s Secretary General called in September for a tax on fossil fuel profits. “The fossil fuel industry is feasting on hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies and windfall profits while household budgets shrink and our planet burns,” António Guterres said. “I am calling on all developed economies to tax the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies. Those funds should be redirected in two ways: to countries suffering loss and damage caused by the climate crisis; and to people struggling with rising food and energy prices,” he added. The oil and gas industry has raked in \$2.8 billion per day in profits over the last 50 years, according to a recent analysis. That includes more than \$31.3 trillion in profit for fossil fuel companies between the year 2000 and

2019, according to a recent report, “The Cost of Delay,” released by the Loss and Damage Collaboration and supported by two dozen organizations. That \$31 trillion in profits is about 60 times what would have been needed to cover economic losses from climate disasters in the world’s most vulnerable countries over that same period, according to the report. Those profits should be seen as immoral given what we know — and have known for decades now — about the harm burning fossil fuels cases globally. Last year’s COP26 in Scotland resulted in promises to continue discussing the issue of “loss and damage” but there was no real action. Vanuatu and other vulnerable nations shouldn’t be put on hold for further years or decades. It’s clear that this bill is substantially overdue. Short of international efforts to fund a loss-and-damage process, countries and individuals are turning to the courts. A Peruvian farmer, for example, is suing a German fossil fuel company over a melting glacier that threatens his home and farm. The suit, filed in

2015, according to news reports, claims the German company, RWE, should be liable for its proportion of the damages, in line with the proportion of global fossil fuel pollution it has created. (RWE is contesting the lawsuit and says it should not be held responsible for the damage.)

And in 2021, Tuvalu and other countries formed the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law. The aim is to explore claims in international courts. “Litigation is the only way we will be taken seriously while the leaders of big countries are dillydallying,” Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, said last year, according to The New York Times. “We want to force them to respond in a court of law.” Those efforts should be supported, but the fair and proactive thing is for rich countries to impose taxes on fossil fuel profits. That can be done as part of UN climate negotiations.

It won’t fix the crisis, but it would help establish a sense of climate justice.



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What chance did he have?

Baby-faced former foster child aged just NINETEEN is hooked on fentanyl after being moved to San Francisco halfway house next to open-air drug den

A 19-year-old former foster child is caught in the grip of a fentanyl addiction after being moved to a San Francisco halfway-house beside an open-air drug camp. The baby-faced teenager, who gave his name as Noah Santana-Cobain, found a ready and available supply of the powerful synthetic opioid after being assigned to the city's Larkin Center, on the edge of its notorious Tenderloin District. The Larkin Center is supposed to offer housing and support for young adults aged between 18 and 24 who are too old to remain in foster homes. But addicts smoke fentanyl and other drugs just feet away from its door unimpeded, providing Noah with immediate access to the ultra-powerful painkiller he says he is desperate to quit. Local citizen journalist JJ Smith highlighted Noah's plight in a series of heart-breaking videos he shared with DailyMail.com.

San Francisco Fire Department's verified Twitter account has since thanked Smith for drawing their attention to Noah, who paramedics hope to help. Noah is originally from Iowa Township in South Dakota, but moved to San Francisco to be with his grandmother. He says he ended up in the care of social services after she suffered a fentanyl overdose. Asked about his drug habit by local citizen journalist JJ Smith, the soft-spoken teenager said: 'I usually smoke fentanyl or weed.' 'My grandma

overdosed once, I have never.' 'I've been to treatment a long time ago. I went to this treatment called Our Home For Youth. It's a very hard place to be at I guess.' The liberal California city recently closed its infamous open-air drug market, the Tenderloin Linkage Center.

It opened just 10 months ago, cost \$22 million of taxpayer cash, and was accused of exacerbating the very issue it had been set up to treat by turning the piazza next to San Francisco City Hall into a huge narcotic free-for-all. Despite its closure, open use is still a common sight on the city's streets, with vulnerable youngsters like Noah representing easy pickings for dealers and criminals who wish to exploit their addiction. In the first of the clips Noah, wears a gray hoodie that makes him look even younger than his 19 years. Speaking in a soft voice, Noah explains how his drug of choice is fentanyl. Smith said on Twitter after posting his first interview with Noah that the teen was dealing with the effects of physical, mental and emotional abuse.

Heartbreakingly, Noah tells Smith he would be open to help to try and get him weaned off fentanyl-but only if he can be sure that the people 'won't hurt him.' Smith showed a video of Noah's current home, the Larkin Center, which comes equipped with a fentanyl market just steps from the front door. Another im-

age shows Noah passed out on the street, with red scabs on his legs visible. A third video, shared earlier this week, shows Noah hobbling across the street to chat to JJ after being struck by a car. The circumstances of that accident are unknown. Noah, wearing a torn t-shirt, says: 'I've been doing real rough.' When Noah is asked if he went to the hospital about his injury, he replies: 'No, I'm afraid of the hospital.'

He goes on to say that he has been doing 'lousy' in tackling his drug problem and describes spending \$10 to \$15 per day on his 'fetty' habit. Noah says that he doesn't think he could possibly overdose, despite even the tiniest dose of fentanyl potentially proving fatal. When asked if he wanted to stop using drugs, Noah is dismissive and says: 'I'm just tired of my leg hurting.' The teen proceeds to show Smith the swelling on his leg from the accident. Then, Smith tells Noah: 'I've found some people that's really ready to help you out.' Sounding optimistic, Noah asks: 'Really?' He then says that he would be willing to look into getting help. In the latest video, posted Friday, Noah appears in a haze, saying that he was attempting to find some way of making money but was unable to. He says while appearing to lose consciousness: 'I'm just kinda bored.' One of Smith's videos got the attention of the San Francisco Police Department who retweeted the

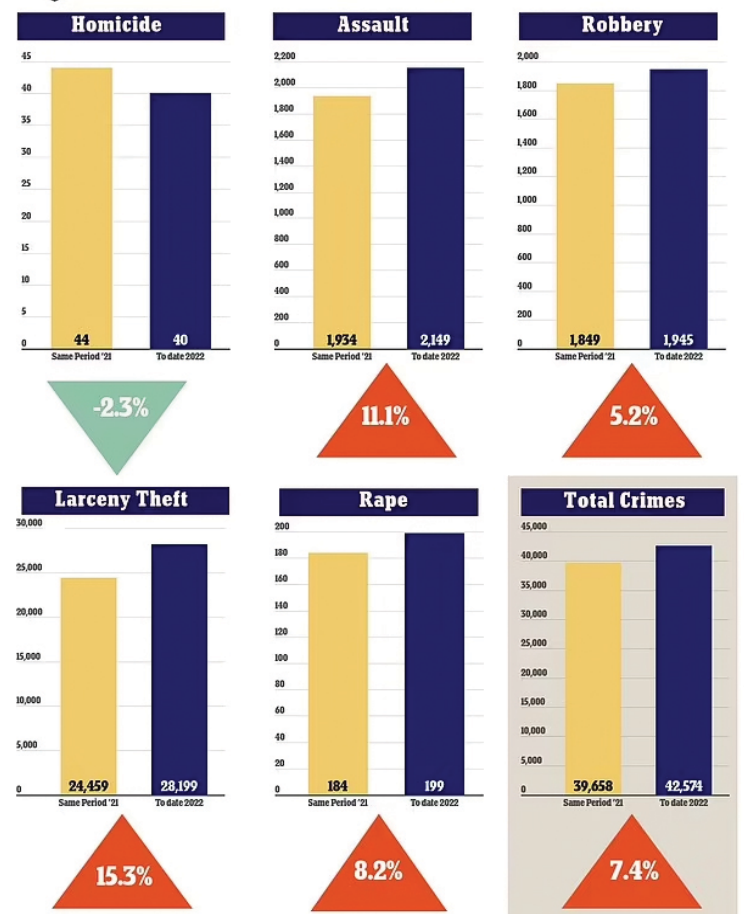
video showing Noah with a leg injury. The department had a paramedic aid his wounded leg. Smith told DailyMail.com: 'He was hooked on Fentanyl before the camp was outside his door, but here in San Francisco the area he lives in the drug is very accessible so he can walk to the corner from his house to the

middle of the block and buy it from anyone.' He says the permissive attitude of San Francisco is partly to blame for Noah's woes. The RISE drug sobering center opened in June in the city with the help of Democratic San Francisco Mayor London Breed, who characterized it as a safe haven for addicts looking to get back on their feet.



Crime in San Francisco

Through 10/23/2022



Source: San Francisco Police Department

WNBA star Brittney Griner is 'facing homophobia, racism and 16-HOUR working days' at 'hellish' Mordovia penal colony



As efforts for a prisoner swap to bring WNBA star Brittney Griner home continue, her prison sentence will begin at one of the worst prisons in Russia. According to a report from The Nation (via TMZ), the conditions Griner will be facing at the penal colony in Yavas - about 270 miles southeast of Moscow in the federal subject of Mordovia - will be almost inhumane. Conditions there have been referred to as 'slavery-like' by those who have served time there before - with medical care almost non-existent and 16-hour work days. Even when she's away from the constant work, it's not clear if there will be a bed that can support the six-foot-eight basketball player. One infamous women's facility in Mordovia, IK-14, is located just seven minutes from Yavas. The notorious penal colony is known as a rat-infested sweatshop for prisoners, some of whom have lost fingers during long hours at their sewing machines. To deal with the rat population, the guards enlisted stray cats, which were later discarded into furnaces to keep their numbers down, according to a 2019 Radio Free Europe report. Veronika Krass, one former IK-14 prisoner, told Radio Free Europe that a sign reading 'welcome to hell' greets new inmates at the penal colony. Accounts from those who've survived the camp do not paint a good picture. Musician and activist Nadya Tolokonnikova - founder of the band Pussy Riot - remembers that 'beatings and torture are common' after spending two years there. 'As the inmates say, "If you haven't done time in Mordovia, you haven't done time,"' Tolokonnikova wrote in a letter

published in 2013.

She described IK-14 as having 'slavery-like conditions,' where she worked in a sewing shop for '16 to 17 hours a day' while getting 'four hours of sleep a night.' Tolokonnikova's description of IK-14 was characterized as 'correct' by Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) director, Valery Maksimenko. In December of 2019, Maksimenko requested prosecutors open an investigation into slave-labor accusations at the facility in Mordovia. Ultimately IK-14 director, Yury Kupriyanov, was dismissed, along with other

officials. 'When the girls find out that they're going to Mordovia, they cut their wrists, do everything possible: get sick, swallow nails, just so they don't have to go there. Its reputation is known, especially after the letter by Nadia Tolokonnikova,' said Gelena Alekseyeva, a former deputy minister who was sentenced in 2013 to 3 1/2 years in prison for abetting commercial bribery. In addition to the work, these prisons are known among Russians as being home to extremely violent racism and homophobia, according to a report



published in the Moscow Times. Griner's nationality will also leave her susceptible to attacks, with one prisoner rights activist saying the US is seen as a 'mortal enemy'. That same report shows how some Russians are shocked that Griner was sent here, with one ex-convict saying the prison is filled with 'detainees deemed 'particularly dangerous''. He added that he was 'surprised' a famous athlete would be sent to 'such a dump.' In spite of this, those in Griner's camp say she is trying to stay brave amid the horrors awaiting her. 'Despite the fact she is alone and now nearing her ninth month in detention separated from her loved ones, she is trying to stay

strong,' representatives said. Griner was sentenced in August following her February arrest at an airport in Moscow, when Russian authorities say she was caught entering the country with vape cartridges containing cannabis oil. She had been at a detention center near Moscow until November 4, when she was moved to an undisclosed prison. Founded for the Soviet gulag system in 1931, Yavas remains one of the largest hubs in the Russian network of prisons and penal colonies. It currently has three institutions, including a women's colony, a men's colony, and a co-ed colony.

Balenciaga claims it had no control over the props in photoshoot where SCOTUS child porn documents were hidden behind handbag as it sues production company

Balenciaga issued a lengthy statement on Monday claiming it had no control over the props used in its Spring '23 ad campaign where a printout of a SCOTUS ruling on child porn was photographed behind a handbag, after filing a notice that it planned to sue the production company responsible. The fashion house from Spain is suing ad production company North Six Inc., as well as set designer Nicholas Des Jardins and his own brand for including images of legal documents on the US Supreme Court's decision on child pornography laws in the ad campaign. Uproar over the campaign came days after the brand was called out over a separate ad campaign that was entirely its own doing, which showed young children posing with bondage-clad teddy bears.

In an Instagram statement on Monday, Balenciaga once again doubled down on the claim that it had nothing to do with the SCOTUS ruling making it into the shot that ended up on its website. 'All the items included in this shooting were provided by third parties that confirmed in writing these props were fake...they turned out to be real most likely coming from the filming of a television drama. The inclusion of these unapproved documents was the result of reckless negligence for which Balenciaga has filed a complaint,' it said. The statement went on: 'We take full accountability for our lack of oversight and control of the documents in the background and we could have done things differently.' North Six did not produce the teddy bear ads, but it came into the frame with the SCOTUS printout after the teddy bear bag controversy erupted. Because



both were produced independently, as different campaigns at different times of the year, many

critics say they point to a disturbing pattern within the brand.

(Contd. on page 20)



Women using Instagram to cope with miscarriage distress

The findings are based on a qualitative research study on 200 posts of text and pictures shared by Instagram users.

(By Staff Reporter) Despite its common occurrence, there is still a lot of stigma surrounding miscarriage and many women find that their emotional and psychological needs are unmet as they go through a devastating grieving process. But for some, Instagram has emerged as a tool to cope with such distress, a study says.

The study, published in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*,

found that the content posted by Instagram users included rich descriptions of the medical and physical experiences of miscarriage, and the emotional spectrum of having a miscarriage and coping with those emotions, the social aspect, and family identity.

"I find it endlessly fascinating that women are opening up to essentially strangers about things that they hadn't even told

their partners or families," says Dr. Riley. "But this is how powerful this community is," said Amy Henderson Riley, Assistant Professor at the Jefferson College of Population Health, Thomas Jefferson University, US.

The findings are based on a qualitative research study on 200 posts of text and pictures shared by Instagram users. "What surprised me the most

was how many women and their partners identified as parents after their miscarriage and how the miscarriage lasted into their family identity after a successful pregnancy," said Rebecca Mercier, Assistant Professor at Thomas Jefferson University.

"The extent to which this loss affects women and their families, and the longevity of their grief is a blind spot for

clinicians," Mercier said. These personal accounts also provided insight into patients' perspectives of typically defined experiences.

For example, in the clinic, the typical definition of recurrent pregnancy loss is after three pregnancies. However, the researchers found that many patients who had had two or more miscarriages identified with having recurrent pregnancy loss. "I'm hoping that this study will encourage clinicians to point patients to social media as a potential coping tool, as well as to approach this subject with bereaved and expecting parents with more respect and empathy," Mercier said.

Social media is becoming a common avenue for patient testimonials. For example, the short video-sharing platform TikTok has recently become a home for some users to make videos sharing their personal health struggles.

"As far as we know, this is the first study to look at the intersection of Instagram and miscarriage," Riley said.

"But this is a drop in the bucket. Social media platforms are evolving rapidly and a theoretically grounded research must follow," she added.

Our ancestors learnt to smile so that they can have sex



(By Staff Reporter) Believe it or not but our forefathers were way smarter than us when it came to wooing the opposite sex for mating. According to a new study, Neanderthals learnt how to smile and make expressive faces in order to attract less-aggressive mates.

Researchers from the University of Milan focused on genetic samples from Neanderthals, which showed that gene mutations might have led humans to "self-select less aggressive mating partners". This behaviour finally led to the "self-domestication" of ancient humans.

The study suggests that modern humans domesticated themselves after they split from their extinct relatives - Neanderthals and Denisovans - approximately 600,000 years ago, reported sciencemag.org citing the study that was published in the journal *Science Advances*.

Giuseppe Testa, a molecular biologist at University of Milan in Italy, and colleagues knew that one gene, BAZ1B, plays an important role in orchestrating the movements of neural crest cells.

Most people carry two copies of this gene. Significantly, one copy

Our forefathers were way smarter than us when it came to wooing the opposite sex for mating.



of BAZ1B is missing in people with Williams-Beuren syndrome, a disorder linked to cognitive impairments and extreme friendliness.

Genetic data was gathered from human stem cells taken from the remains of two Neanderthals and one Denisovan.

These two groups of prehistoric ancestors lived around the same time and there is even evidence to suggest they interbred.

"BAZ1B" is the gene which allows dogs to make their eyes expressive in a way wolves cannot, reports NYPost.

"It is thought that selected breeding patterns of some Neanderthals led to the BAZ1B gene and could have contributed to Homo sapiens developing distinctively expressive faces".

When the researchers looked at hundreds of BAZ1B-sensitive

genes, they found that in modern humans, those genes had accumulated loads of regulatory mutations of their own.

This suggests natural selection was shaping them.

According to The Sun, Williams-Beuren syndrome causes humans to have what some people perceive as a welcoming expression with a wide mouth and a small nose.

Kiara Advani To Begin Shooting For a Heist-Thriller After Wedding With Sidharth Malhotra?

(By Staff Reporter) Kiara Advani is rolling with back-to-back successful films like Bhool Bhulaiya 2, Jugg Jugg Jeeyo and the actress is in no mood to stop any time soon. Additionally, the Shershah actress has been quite busy shooting for SatyaPrem Ki Katha with Kartik Aaryan and RC-15 with the RRR star Ram Charan. And now according to a recent report, Kiara is all set to star in a Vijay Lalwani's film who has previously helmed Farhan Akhtar's 2010 psychological drama Karthik Calling Karthik.

As per a report by PeepingMoon, Kiara Advani and Vijay Lalwani would be collaborating for a heist thriller that is tentatively titled Lamb. Even though the details about the plot and the characters remain a secret, the report asserted that Kiara would be playing a character totally different from all the previous roles in her career trajectory. Reportedly, the film would also feature a slew of other notable actors in supporting roles. Besides this,

the report also claimed that Kiara would only start shooting for the project around February next year as she would be occupied with the wedding celebrations with Siddharth Malhotra prior to that. Meanwhile, Vijay Lalwani has been also busy working on his other film, a nail-biting thriller titled Empire that would highlight the story of a father-daughter relationship. It stars Taapsee Pannu, Arvind Swami, Kumud Mishra, and Govind Namdev in the lead. Talking about Kiara Advani, she is currently gearing up for the release of Govinda Naam Mera alongside Vicky Kaushal and Bhumi Pednekar. She also has Satyaprem Ki Kahani and RC15 in her pipeline. On the personal front, Kiara Advani's wedding rumours along with Sidharth Malhotra have also been making headlines for a long time now. Reportedly, the two actors have locked a January 2023 date and have also decided a place in Chandigarh to tie the knot. However, there is no official confirmation so far.



Cirkus Teaser: Take A Ride To The 1960s With Two Ranveer Singhs, Pooja Hegde And Jacqueline Fernandez

Ranveer Singh will be seen in the film opposite Jacqueline Fernandez and Pooja Hegde

(News Agency) Ranveer Singh and Rohit Shetty have proved that they make a great team with their 2018 hit Simmba. Now, they are back with another fun offering, Cirkus, which features Ranveer in a double role. Ahead of the trailer release of the film this week, the team has shared a teaser of the comedy that features Ranveer in a double role. The teaser features the hero – two heroes to be precise – seated with other characters speaking about the “good old days”. For instance, Sanjay Mishra and Johnny



Lever take us back to the 1960s with analogies such as children asking their grandparents to help and not Google. There are also mentions of days that saw “news” and “not breaking news”. The love of parents was more important than social media likes, one character mentions. Ranveer Singh and Rohit Shetty have proved that they make a great team with their 2018 hit Simmba. Now, they are back with another fun offering, Cirkus, which features Ranveer in a double role. Ahead of the trailer release of the film this week, the team has shared a teaser of the comedy that features Ranveer in a double role. The teaser features the hero – two heroes to be precise – seated with other characters speaking about the

“good old days”. For instance, Sanjay Mishra and Johnny Lever take us back to the 1960s with analogies such as children asking their grandparents to help and not Google. There are also mentions of days that saw “news” and “not breaking news”. The love of parents was more important than social media likes, one character

mentions. Over the weekend, Ranveer Singh shared an image with Rohit Shetty, Varun Sharma, Pooja Hegde and Jacqueline Fernandez. In the caption, he said, “Let the madness begin.” Earlier this month, Ranveer Singh announced the wrap of

the film and said, “Shooting khatam, Promotion ki planning shuru! Mass-ter filmmaker ke Mass-ter plans!!! Buahahahaha! #CirkusThisChristmas.” In the photo, Ranveer is sitting with Rohit Shetty and Varun Sharma and sharing a laugh, with vintage cars and a board with “Cirkus” written on it behind them.

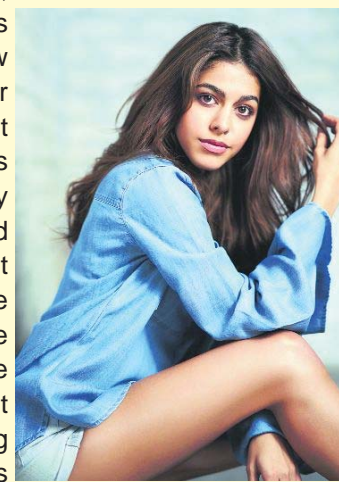
Varun Sharma reacted to the post by saying, “Full Powerrrrr,” with heart and fire emoticons. Cirkus is jointly produced by Rohit Shetty Picturez, Reliance Entertainment and T-Series. It will release in theatres on December 23. In addition to Cirkus, Ranveer Singh will also be seen in Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani with Alia Bhatt.

Alaya F wants to ‘avoid’ playing it safe with film choices

She awaits the release of her upcoming film ‘Freddy’ with Kartik Aaryan

(News Agency) Actor Alaya F, like I have so much to prove. who currently awaits the I just want to do really good, release of her upcoming honest work. I'll always

film 'Freddy', feels that it is a whole new journey for her and says that she has consistently tried to avoid “playing it safe”. “The last three years for me have been just about working on projects



and wrapping them up. And playing it safe.” She said: now that they have been “I'm just grateful I get to act shot, I am really excited for my way into people's lives through films again and I'm I feel like a whole new even more grateful that it's journey for me is beginning through a special film like and it feels so fresh, I'm full ‘Freddy’.” Produced by Balaji of nerves and full of Telefilms Limited, NH Studioz excitement. I feel the same and Northern Lights Films, way I felt before my first directed by Shashanka film was released,” she Ghosh and starring Kartik Aaryan and Alaya F, the film

Alaya added: “I want to jump will release on December 2 at every opportunity and I feel on Disney+ Hotstar.

Actor Prashantt Guptha lands his first endorsement!

(South Asian Insider Bureau) 'I have found my Solm8,' smirks the Aashram and Tashkent Files actor from his home in New York. After having kept Mumbai as his primary base for 15 years, the actor recently moved to the US in light of better education prospects for his children, career opportunities for his wife and having signed with a Hollywood manager post the success of his movie A NEW CHRISTMAS. With a new Hindi feature film and national television commercial soon releasing in India, and new film prospects in the US, the actor is gearing up to make major international strides. Recent years have placed popular and hit projects in his repertoire, from Neerja, The Tashkent Files, Special Ops to the recent Aashram 3 in which he played the wicked and grey-shaded cop DIG Sinha. The shoe endorsement is the first of such deals in his career. Solm8 is a California based shoe brand launched by a designer couple, Jasmine & Bhupinder. Whilst Bhupinder went on to showcase his passion for footwear by diving in-depth into footwear design, tech and production for the last 25 years now, Jasmine on the other hand took up the brand development and communications. They successfully created their first brand Jazba (sports performance footwear) back in 2016, and following a corporate conflict thereafter, they restarted in 2020 from scratch and launched SOLM8 which is primarily a Cricket shoe considering



the growing popularity of the sport across the US. Though designed for cricket, these are turf shoes that athletes have alternately used for trekking, biking or just being outdoors where they felt they needed a shoe with some grip.

Says Jasmine about the association with Prashantt, 'he is connected with Cricket through his son who plays for the Queens United Cricket Academy (QUCA). It was from there that Coach George Samuel introduced us to the Bollywood actor. Whilst not a Cricketer himself, we felt Prashantt was a good match for SOLM8 as he also started from an unconventional background like we did. He broke through the prevalent film families and connections as an outsider purely based on his passion, dedication and hardwork. Similarly, SOLM8, is created by us as disruptors, who are not the typical business people but want to create a lasting relationship between our shoes and the players community.' As Solm8 is still expanding, it isn't uncommon to find young cricketers and sports shops across the US & West Indies carry this brand with its many fancy styles. The shoes can be bought from solm8.online. Future plans are to expand the range to include cricket accessories and other sports.



Malaika Arora raises oomph with Ayushmann Khurrana in An Action Hero's Aap Jaisa Koi song

Malaika Arora sets the dance floor on fire with An Action Hero's new song, Aap Jaisa Koi. The diva is shaking a leg with lead actor Ayushmann in the song that released on November 26

(South Asian Insider Bureau) T-Series and Colour Yellow Production have dropped another song from their upcoming film, An Action Hero. Called Aap Jaisa Koi, and the remix of the popular song featuring Zeenat Aman, this one has Malaika Arora returning to the dance floors. And man, she definitely knows how to raise the oomph!

AYUSHMANN DANCES WITH MALAIKA ARORA IN AAP JAISA KOI

Aap Jaisa Koi is a foot-tapping number. The remix of the song with the same name which features Zeenat Aman, this one has Malaika Arora setting the dance floor on fire with her jalwa. Her pairing with Ayushmann Khurrana is interesting! The lyrics of the song is by Indeevar & Tanishk



Bagchi, with its music by Zahrah S Khan and Ganguly. composed by Tanishk Bagchi Altamash Faridi, and and Biddu. It has been sung choreographed by Vijay

Talking about being a part of Aap Jaisa Koi, Malaika said, "Aap Jaisa Koi has a very groovy vibe. Not once did we feel like we were shooting or rehearsing for the song, but just enjoying our time with it. Ayushmann and I enjoyed it to the core. He has got some great moves. I am excited to see how fans will react to the song." Ayushmann Khurrana said, "Aap Jaisa Koi is a foot-tapping track and I am sure it is going to be a chart buster this party season. I thoroughly enjoyed shaking a leg with Malaika and learnt some grooves. I'm sure it'll have a connect." Directed by Anirudh Iyer and produced by Aanand L Rai, Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar, An Action Hero is slated to hit the big screen on December 2.

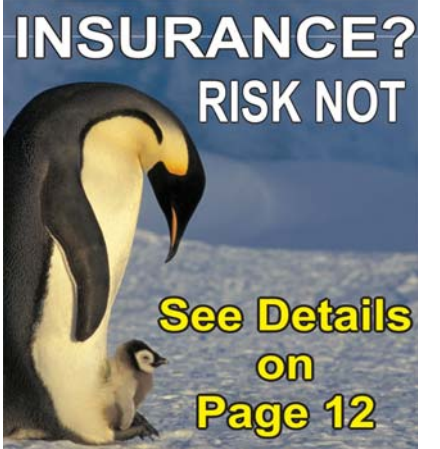
MALAIKA ARORA ON BEING A PART OF THE SONG



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