

## Why army and paramilitary forces are fighting in Sudan

Fighting in Sudan continued for the second day on Sunday. The clashes between the armed forces and the paramilitary RSF, which started on Saturday, left 59 dead, including three UN workers, and injured over 500 people.



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## AI's pandemonium leaves global leaders scrambling

As officials from Washington to Brussels to Beijing scramble to put new checks on the technology, getting them aligned is emerging as its own big challenge.



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## The Clarence Thomas Scandal Is About More Than Corruption



(Page 24)

## Atiq Ahmed ran crime syndicate from jail, used mobile and extorted Rs 80L from builder

Gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed used to run his syndicate from Sabarmati jail using a mobile phone. WhatsApp and audio messages reveal how he got a builder to pay his son Asad Rs 80 lakh. The money, say sources, was used to carry out the murder of Umesh Pal in February.



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UK PM Rishi Sunak faces parliamentary probe over wife Akshata's business interest



(Page 25)



## 'Tum Ab Chup Raho': Interrogating the Enforced Silences of the Modi Government

The interview with Satya Pal Malik gives a fair idea of what Malik was being asked to be silent about, but what is of great concern is who asked him to stay silent and what could be the implications of his staying silent and not staying silent. The concern arises because the implications could be very wide, ranging from national security to the state of our democracy

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# NIA Takes Over Case of Attack on Indian High Commission in London by Khalistani Protesters



place on March 19. The case was earlier registered with the Special Cell of the Delhi Police. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had earlier given a nod to transfer the case to NIA. An FIR in connection with the protest staged by pro-Khalistani activists, was registered at the Special Cell of Delhi Police. The case was registered after the Home Ministry asked Delhi Police to take legal action, an IANS report said. It was filed under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and an investigation has been initiated in the case.

The British Deputy High

Commissioner was also summoned by the Centre, demanding an explanation over the complete absence of security during the protest. The British High Commissioner to India, Alex Ellis had described the incident as "disgraceful" and "totally unacceptable". A tricolour flying atop the Indian High Commission in London was grabbed at by a group of protesters waving separatist Khalistani flags and chanting pro-Khalistani slogan on March 19, an ANI report said. The national flag was pulled down during the protest by pro-Khalistani elements.

The incident came against the backdrop of the

police crackdown on Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh and his aides. Singh, a self-styled radical preacher, has been on the run since the Punjab Police launched a massive crackdown on Saturday and arrested 78 members of his outfit, 'Waris Punjab De'. Videos of the incident had shown several protesters carrying the yellow and black Khalistan flag and calling for radical Sikh preacher and Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh to be "freed". After the incident, the MEA had issued a statement asking for an "explanation" for the "complete absence of the British security that allowed these elements to enter the High Commission premises.

(South Asian Insider Bureau)- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has now taken over the case of the national flag at the Indian high commission in London being pulled down during a protest by pro-Khalistan activists. The development comes nearly a month after the incident that took

## California gurdwara shootings: 17 men arrested; AK-47, machine gun seized

(South Asian Insider Bureau)-Police in California conducted searches at more than 20 locations and seized weapons including an AK-47, one machine gun and handguns. Seventeen people have been arrested by police in the US state of California in connection with shootings in gurdwaras at Sacramento, Stockton and other locations, according to the State



Attorney General.

Police conducted a series of raids at more than 20 places in northern California on Sunday and seized weapons such as an AK-47, one machine gun and handguns. The 17 arrests made were mostly members of the local Sikh community, California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Yuba City Police Chief Brian Baker, and Sutter County District Attorney Jennifer Dupré said at a press conference. Two of the 17 people arrested belonged to the mafia and are wanted in many murder cases in India.

The arrested accused belong to rival criminal syndicates who are allegedly responsible for several violent crimes and shootings, including five attempted murder incidents in Sutter, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Yolo, and Merced counties, the California Attorney General said.

Members of these

criminal syndicates allegedly had a hand in a mass shooting at a Stockton Sikh temple on August 27, 2022 and, another shooting at a Sacramento Sikh temple on March 23 this year.

A press release stated that police were able to thwart the possibility of two additional shootings. "Today, California is safer thanks to collaboration, determination, and swift action by DOJ agents and our law enforcement partners in Sutter County," Bonta said. "No family should ever have to worry about drive-by shootings or other forms of gun violence in the neighbourhoods where their children live and play. As a result of this joint law enforcement effort, we're taking guns off the street and putting suspected gang members and their associates behind bars," he said. Dupre said, "An investigation of this magnitude requires a tremendous amount of time and effort, and especially a lot of personnel."

## Fresh advisory to Indian nationals in Sudan amid looting, violence

**The Indian embassy in Sudan has issued a fresh advisory to Indian nationals amid instances of looting in violence-hit parts of Sudan. According to the official data, the number of Indians in Sudan is around 4,000.**

(South Asian Insider Bureau)-In a fresh advisory, the Indian embassy in Sudan has asked Indian nationals to stay at home and ration supplies amid instances of looting and large-scale violence in Sudan.

"We have come across many instances of looting. All Indian nationals are advised please not to venture out. Please ration your supplies. Please stay at home and remain safe," the embassy said in its latest advisory.

Indian nationals have also been asked to take help from neighbours and not venture out as the situation may continue for a few more days. Sudan woke up to explosions and gunfire on Saturday against the backdrop of escalating tension between a paramilitary force and Sudan's Army. The large-scale violence in capital Khartoum and other areas has continued since.

The two generals - Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who is the chief of Sudan's army, and

Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - are former allies. The two forces worked together during the 2021 military coup.

The clashes follow rising tensions over the

RSF's integration into the military. The disagreement has delayed the signing of an internationally backed agreement with political parties on a transition to democracy. According to the official data, the

number of Indians in Sudan is around 4,000, including 1,200 who settled down in the country decades ago. On Sunday, the embassy said an Indian national died in Khartoum after sustaining bullet injuries.

The external affairs ministry has set up a 24X7 control room to provide information and assistance in view of the current situation in Sudan. The helpline numbers are 1800118797, +91-11-23012113, +91-11-23014104, +91-11-23017905, +91 9968291988.





# Former Theranos COO Ramesh 'Sunny' Balwani reports to prison, attorney says

(South Asian Insider Bureau)-Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani, the former chief operating officer of failed startup Theranos and ex-boyfriend of founder Elizabeth Holmes, has reported to prison, according to his attorney.

"Mr Balwani turned himself in... smoothly without incident," Jeffrey Coopersmith, Balwani's attorney, said in an email to CNN on Thursday. "We will continue to fight for him because we do not believe that he received a fair trial."

Balwani's arrival into custody marks an end to a years-long saga which saw him go from serving as a top executive at a high-flying Silicon Valley company to being one of the rare tech executives convicted for



fraud.

First indicted nearly five years ago alongside Holmes, Balwani was found guilty last July on all 12 charges he faced, which included ten counts of federal wire fraud and two counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. He was sentenced to nearly 13

years in prison last December.

Balwani's request to remain out of prison while he appeals his conviction was previously denied.

Holmes was also convicted on multiple counts of defrauding investors and has been ordered to turn herself in on April 27. The

company began to unravel after a Wall Street Journal investigation in 2015 reported that Theranos had only ever performed roughly a dozen of the hundreds of tests it offered using its proprietary technology, and with questionable accuracy.

Balwani, nearly 20 years older than Holmes, first met her in 2002 before she dropped out of Stanford. He served as an informal adviser to Holmes in Theranos' earliest days and the two became romantically involved. Balwani guaranteed a "multimillion-dollar loan" to the startup in 2009, court filings show, and took on a formal role as president and chief operating officer.

Although Holmes and Balwani were indicted together, their trials

were severed after Holmes indicated she intended to accuse Balwani of sexually, emotionally and psychologically abusing her throughout their decade-long relationship, which coincided with her time running the company. (Balwani's attorneys have denied her claims.)

During her trial, Holmes claimed Balwani tried to control nearly every aspect of her life — including disciplining her eating, her voice and image, and isolating her from others.

Holmes testified that while he didn't control her interactions with investors, business partners and others, "he impacted everything about who I was, and I don't fully understand that."

## Pakistan's Punjab elections to go ahead as court confirms ruling

Supreme court stands by decision to order elections next month in move that seemingly pits judiciary against government



provincial governments where his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), remained in power, and the supreme court stepped in and directed the elections commission and government to make arrangements for elections on 14 May. Salahuddin Ahmed, a former president of the Sindh high court bar association, said there was now "a serious risk of martial law" if no side backed down. "Historically, whenever there has been a constitutional and political deadlock in Pakistan, the military acted

opportunistically," he said. Michael Kugelman, a director at the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, said that in defying the defence ministry and, by extension, the powerful military, the judiciary was showing how determined it was to hold firm on its position. "But the other side, referring to the military, isn't backing down either. So it's become a game of chicken, with no end in sight," Kugelman said. The chief justice, Umar Ata Bandial, ordered the government in an earlier hearing on Wednesday to find a consensus

with the Khan-led opposition party for a later date if they wanted a delay, but the head of the ruling's coalition's Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), Maulana Fazlur Rehman, criticised the judges, saying: "We don't accept the tyranny of the judiciary." Ahmed said it was a "lose-lose situation" for the supreme court. "The bench is faced with an adamant government and military. But if they back-down now, especially after meeting top military officials, the bench will be faced with allegations that they were cowed down by the military," he said.

The chief justice of Pakistan's supreme court has stood by its decision to order elections next month in its most populous province, a move that seemingly pits the judiciary against the country's government and the military establishment. The court has announced elections in Punjab for 14 May after declaring a delay to the vote unconstitutional and rejecting a petition from the defence ministry to instead hold elections simultaneously across the country later, amid deteriorating security and economic conditions. Pakistan has drifted into polarisation and one crisis after another since the former prime minister Imran Khan was ousted in a constitutional vote of no confidence in April last year. Khan has been holding protest rallies across the country to demand a snap election, at one of which he was shot and wounded, but his successor as prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, has rejected

Khan's demands. Khan responded by dissolving the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, the

## Confident army can deal with any contingency along China border: Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday expressed confidence in the Indian Army to handle any contingency along the country's border with China even as he said talks would continue for a peaceful resolution of the lingering row in the Ladakh sector, and that disengagement and de-escalation were the best way forward. Singh's comments come at a time when the border row between India and China in eastern Ladakh is set to enter its fourth year in early May. Despite four rounds of disengagement from Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, Gogra (PP-17A) and Hot Springs (PP-15), the Indian and Chinese armies still have more than 60,000 troops each and advanced weaponry deployed in the Ladakh theatre. The Indian and Chinese armies

have held 17 rounds of talks so far, but problems at Depsang in the Daulet Beg Oldi



sector and Charding Nullah Junction (CNJ) in the Demchok sector are still on the negotiating table. "It is our whole-of-government approach to ensure availability of best weapons, equipment and clothing to our troops braving extreme weather and

hostile forces to defend our territorial integrity," Singh said in his address to the army brass at the ongoing Army Commanders' Conference. "War preparedness should be a continuous phenomenon and we should always be ready for unpredictables and uncertain events that may crop up at any time. We should always be honing our fighting skills and weapons technologies to act effectively whenever required," he said. The army has built infrastructure at a rapid pace in eastern Ladakh with a focus on better living experience and improved facilities for soldiers, conservation of modern weapons and equipment deployed there, and supporting the faster movement of men and material to deal with any contingency.



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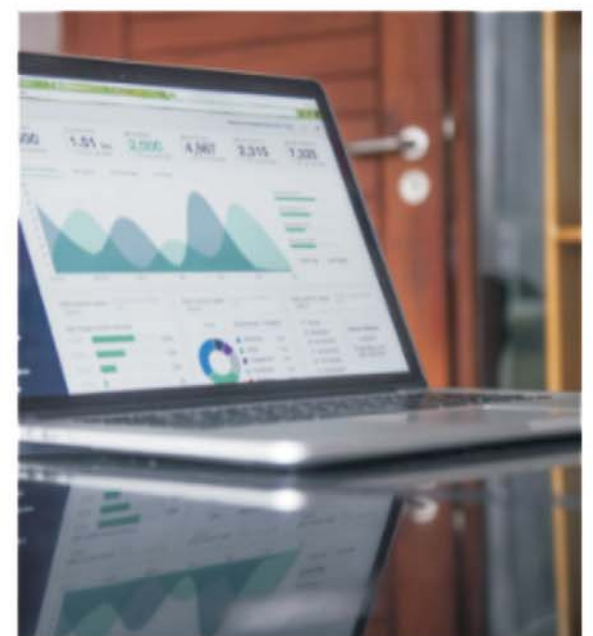
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# Congress's carrot and stick policy to deal with AAP amid Opposition unity call

A top Punjab Congress leader told India Today TV that the party's state unit will not dilute its attacks on the AAP amid the ongoing efforts to stitch up opposition unity.

(News Agency)- After Delhi, the Punjab Congress has now decided to go full throttle against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) even as efforts by the grand old party are underway to cobble up opposition unity ahead of the 2024 elections.

A top Punjab Congress leader told India Today TV that the party's state unit will not dilute its attacks on Kejriwal and the AAP amid the ongoing efforts

to stitch up opposition unity. "The AAP ended Congress in Punjab and we cannot be seen going soft on them."

There is a sense in the Punjab Congress that people should see the party as an alternative to the AAP and for that, it must continue attacking the AAP to create a narrative of its own.

## PUNJAB UNIT DUBS AAP CORRUPT

Arvind Kejriwal deserves no mercy when it comes to his make-believe fight against corruption, Punjab's Leader of Opposition

in the assembly and Congress leader Pratap Singh Bajwa tweeted on Monday. "To date, the people of Delhi and Punjab have failed to see the Lokpal Bill being introduced and implemented in letter and spirit to fight corruption," he added.

The Congress leader demanded that the Central Bureau of Investigation, or the CBI, should probe the Punjab liquor scam and claimed that the AAP is the BJP's B-team and it proves that in every election.

## AJAY MAKEN, DELHI CONGRESS BLAME AAP FOR WIPING OFF CONGRESS

Pratap Singh Bajwa echoed the same sentiment earlier exhibited by the Delhi Congress leader and former minister, Ajay Maken. Maken had urged his party leaders to not show any sympathy towards Arvind Kejriwal and the AAP, who, he alleged, are facing grave graft charges.



# Covid-19: In Less Than 3 Weeks, Delhi Sees Spike of Over 430% in Active Cases



(News Agency)- Active Covid-19 cases in Delhi have witnessed a jump of over 430 per cent in just three weeks with daily infection cases going from 932 to more than 4,000 in less than 20 days, the official data showed Delhi recorded 932 cases on March 30 while on April 17, the daily Covid tally touched 4,976. The active case count was, in fact, higher on Sunday at 5,297. However, authorities said that there was no need to worry regarding the recent spike in Covid cases as hospitalisation and fatalities remained low. Meanwhile, health experts have constantly maintained that there is no need

to panic but urged citizens to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and get their booster dose of vaccines. Going by the numbers, Delhi on Monday logged 1,017 Covid-19 cases, while the positivity rate jumped to 32.25 per cent, the highest in 15 months, according to data shared by the health department. Last week, LNJP Hospital's Medical Director Suresh Kumar warned that coronavirus cases in the national capital will peak in the next couple of weeks. In the period between March 30 and April 17, more than 30 fatalities have been recorded, including five deaths on April 15.

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# Bathinda military station killing: Attacker used 19 bullets to kill 4 jawans, misfired just once, say police

**Gunner Mohan Desai killed four of his colleagues last week in an early-morning attack inside the Bathinda military station. He stole eight rounds of light machine guns, an INSAS rifle and a magazine with 20 rounds from a colleague who was asleep, the police said.**



had a personal rivalry with the four jawans, he mercilessly killed," Khurana said. Busting the theory that there were two attackers, Khurana said: "There is only one accused in the case. The two-masked-men theory was concocted by the jawan to mislead the police and the Army." He

confessed during interrogation, police said.

"Eight bullets were used to kill the first two jawans, while it took Mohan 11 to kill the other two, who were sleeping in a different room. He kept the misfired bullet shell in his pocket and left the 19 used shells in the rooms," Khurana

said. Mohan later dumped the eight live light machine gun rounds and a shell of the misfired INSAS bullet in a sewage pit, the police said, adding that they have recovered the shell of the misfired bullet and six live LMG rounds, but two bullets are missing.

(News Agency)- The Army jawan who killed four of his colleagues at Bathinda Military Station last Wednesday fired 19 bullets and misfired one, the police said. The accused allegedly stole the weapons and bullets from a colleague when he was sleeping, Bathinda's Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Gulneet Singh Khurana said on Monday.

The day the four jawans were killed in the early-morning firing incident, it also came to light that an INSAS rifle and some ammunition had gone missing from the military station a couple of days ago. The accused, Gunner Desai Mohan, stole eight rounds of light machine gun (LMG) ammunition, an INSAS rifle and a magazine with 20 rounds from a colleague when he was sleeping, Khurana said.

"The rifle and 28 rounds went missing on April 9. The accused hid the weapon and bullets in the military area. He

(News Agency)- Gopal Italia was booked by the Surat police last September for his allegedly defamatory comments about minister Harsh Sanghavi and Gujarat BJP chief CR Paatil. The former chief of the Aam Admi Party's Gujarat unit, Gopal Italia, was arrested by the Surat Police and taken to the Crime Branch office over certain derogatory statements against a state minister and the BJP's state chief. He has now been released on bail.

Italia was booked by the Surat police last September for his allegedly defamatory comments about the state Home Minister, Harsh Sanghavi, and Gujarat BJP chief CR

Paatil. The complaint was filed by a BJP worker, Pratap Chodwadia.

Italia allegedly addressed Sanghavi as "Drugs Sanghvi" and Paatil as an ex-bootlegger in a viral video.

Last year, Italia was detained and was taken to the Sarita Vihar police station by the Delhi Police for allegedly making derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP's IT cell in-charge Amit Malviya shared a video of Italia, where he was heard calling PM Modi a "neech aadmi (a lowly person)". The video was reportedly from 2019 and from during the run-up to the general elections.

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# 'Those who weren't capable of carrying my slippers..': Varun Gandhi's latest swipe

**Varun Gandhi, who has been strongly critical of the government's stand on a host of recent issues, criticised BJP leaders during an event in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit.**



expressed his while some have been less than slavery. When disappointment with the granted accommodation in elections come, they cast current state of politics in three-storey houses, the their votes by getting the country, stating that rest of the needy are still swayed by the feelings of people are being robbed by waiting due to the corrupt caste and religion. They those who were voted into practices of government [politicians] are robbing power. He pointed out that officials. "All this is nothing your pockets," the MP said.

## Cloth left in Telangana woman's body during C-section, removed 16 months later

**Doctors have removed a cloth from a woman which was left inside her body when she underwent a cesarean delivery at a government hospital in Telangana.**

(News Agency)- BJP MPs. I am a three-time MP. MP Varun Gandhi during a Jan Samvad programme in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit raised the issue of corruption and criticised state leaders. The Pilibhit MP said leaders who do not have the 'aukat' to even carry his slippers are traveling in a convoy of five vehicles.

Varun Gandhi said, "We have been doing politics in Pilibhit for the last 35 years. My mother [Maneka Gandhi] is one of the top


MPs. I am a three-time MP. Have I ever cut a colony? Do we have a big home?" "Those who weren't capable of carrying my slippers are now traveling in a 5-vehicle convoy. All these ministers used to beg in front of us to promote them. Requested us to make them ministers. They did not have the audacity to talk in front of us," he added.

Varun Gandhi, who has been strongly critical of the government's stand on a host of recent issues, also

(News Agency)- Doctors at a private hospital in Telangana's Jagtial town removed a piece of cloth from a woman's abdomen when she underwent a cesarean delivery at a government hospital. According to sources, the woman, Navya Sri, who underwent cesarean delivery at a government hospital in December 2021, complained of severe abdominal pain a few days ago. When she went for a check-up at a private hospital, doctors found a tumour-



like growth in her abdomen. and not a tumour. They carefully During surgery, doctors realised pulled out the large piece of cloth, that it was a huge piece of cloth saving the woman's life.



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# Supersonic punch, hypersonic killer boost India's cruise missile capability

India's cruise missile capability has evolved as a credible conventional level deterrence since the turn of the new millennium. The ramjet powered BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with a proven range of up to 280 km has been serving as the primary heavy-strike weapon of the Indian Army and the Indian Navy for the last two decades.



(News Agency) The last century was a transformative and transitional period in the history of contemporary warfare as a new generation of kinetic strike weapons took to the skies after the Second World War. Starting right from the first Gulf War in 1990 and ending with the Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria campaigns in the first two decades of the 21st century, and now as visible in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine

War, the world has witnessed the usage of game-changing aerial weapons which tipped the balance in the aggressor's favour in the opening hours of the war. Such weapons play a very pivotal role not just in maintaining conventional-level deterrence, but also in executing tactical-level nuclear strikes on the enemy's ground-based infantry battalions and armoured mobile formations in case of an escalation. The

emergence of turbofan engine-powered terrain-hugging cruise missiles which can fly at lower altitudes (below hostile radar coverage) and at treetop heights, are some of the most formidable and destructive weapons on the conventional battlefield. A heavy barrage of air-launched, ship-launched, submarine-launched and ground-launched cruise missiles during wars can take out the enemy's airfields, dams, bridges, railheads, army garrisons, anti-aircraft positions, heavy-artillery bases, underground nuclear weapon storage facilities and other important strategic installations in the opening hours of the war thus clearing the way for an aerial kinetic bombardment campaign and simultaneous ground incursion inside hostile territory.

Unlike heavyweight ballistic

missiles which have a larger Circular Error Probability (CEP) and can be used for devastating nuclear strikes on enemy cities, cruise missiles are lightweight, tremendously maneuverable and highly accurate. Such weapons are jet-propelled flying bombs raining surprise death on the enemy. Whereas some cruise missiles with larger RCS (Radar Cross Section) can be engaged with ground-based Surface-to-Air Air-Defence (AD) missile units, the task becomes almost impossible if the incoming missile is flying at supersonic speeds.

At lower altitudes and at subsonic speeds, such deadly flying weapons can be engaged Within Visual Range (WVR) with the help of high-calibre anti-aircraft machine guns like the CIWS, L-60 and L-70 systems through Line of Sight (LOS) automatic fire

target engagement. But a supersonic missile flying at speeds of Mach 2.8 (almost 3500 km an hour) will give very little reaction-time to the enemy for a counterattack and counter-engagement of the projectile in mid-course flight. Moreover, if the weapon is launched in an air-launched configuration from a fighter jet or a bomber aircraft, the high-velocity release of the missile and increased range provides extra kinetic energy to the package for long range Beyond Visual Range (BVR) target engagements from aerial platforms.

So, it can be confidently stated that an air-launched supersonic cruise missile is the enemy's worst nightmare in the 21st century tactical level conventional battlefield, as the enemy will be dead even before they come to know what actually hit them.

## If you made certain promises...: Sachin Pilot renews attack on Ashok Gehlot

Sachin Pilot and Ashok Gehlot have been at loggerheads since 2020, when Pilot led an open rebellion, pushing his own government to the brink of collapse.

(News Agency)- Politicians should follow through with the promises made while seeking votes, Sachin Pilot said in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu, an attack on his own government and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The two have been at loggerheads since 2020 when Pilot, then Gehlot's deputy, led an open rebellion against the state government, pushing it to the brink of collapse.

"When people form governments, they should follow what they promised. If you made certain promises before coming to power, you should follow them when you come to power," Pilot said. The Congress leader is miffed with the chief minister for taking no action despite charges of corruption against the previous BJP government in the state and former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje. Speaking exclusively to India Today TV, Pilot said: "I did not commit any anti-party activity by observing anshan (hunger strike). I had gone on fast against the cases of corruption raised during Vasundhara Raje's regime. I have put my viewpoint (before KC

Venugopal and Kamal Nath). I am not the only one to raise those allegations. I only demanded investigations into the cases." "If the BJP thinks they can scare me by making false accusations, I am neither going to be scared nor will I backtrack," he said, adding, "If anyone has fought against the BJP in the past and fights against the BJP today, it is me." Pilot today skipped a key one-on-one meeting held by Ashok Gehlot, party in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, and Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasra with MLAs. "My programmes in Shahpura and Jhunjhunu were planned weeks in advance. The party decided to hold one-on-one meetings with party MLAs the day before yesterday. I have put forth my views before the party in the past and I will do so again if required," Pilot said about skipping the meeting. Last week, Pilot sat on a hunger strike against his government in Rajasthan and claimed that his letters to Gehlot over the scams during Vasundhara Raje's rule had gone unanswered. The Congress leadership said the

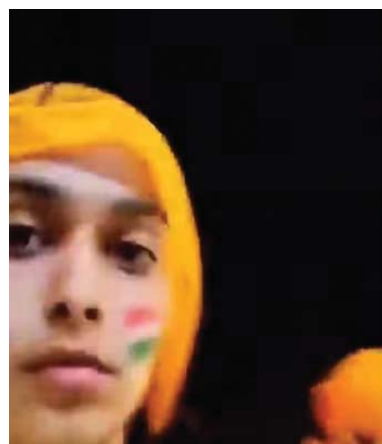
day-long fast was "against the party" and called it an "anti-party activity". "I wrote to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the state government, seeking action on all the scams that happened under Vasundhara Raje's rule. Generally, the

chief minister responds to letters. But I have not got any response to my letter. We have to go to the people in the coming months and seek their votes. How will we face them? I requested (for action to be taken) a year ago. But now just six-seven months

are left for the election," he said after ending his fast. Earlier, in yet another searing attack on Gehlot, Pilot accused the chief minister of being hand-in-glove with Vasundhara Raje since he hadn't taken any action against her in the corruption cases.

## Wasn't Tricolour: Gurdwara panel on girl with flag painted on face denied entry to Golden Temple

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee General Secretary Gurcharan Singh Grewal apologised for any misbehaviour and said the flag painted on the woman's face wasn't the Tricolour.



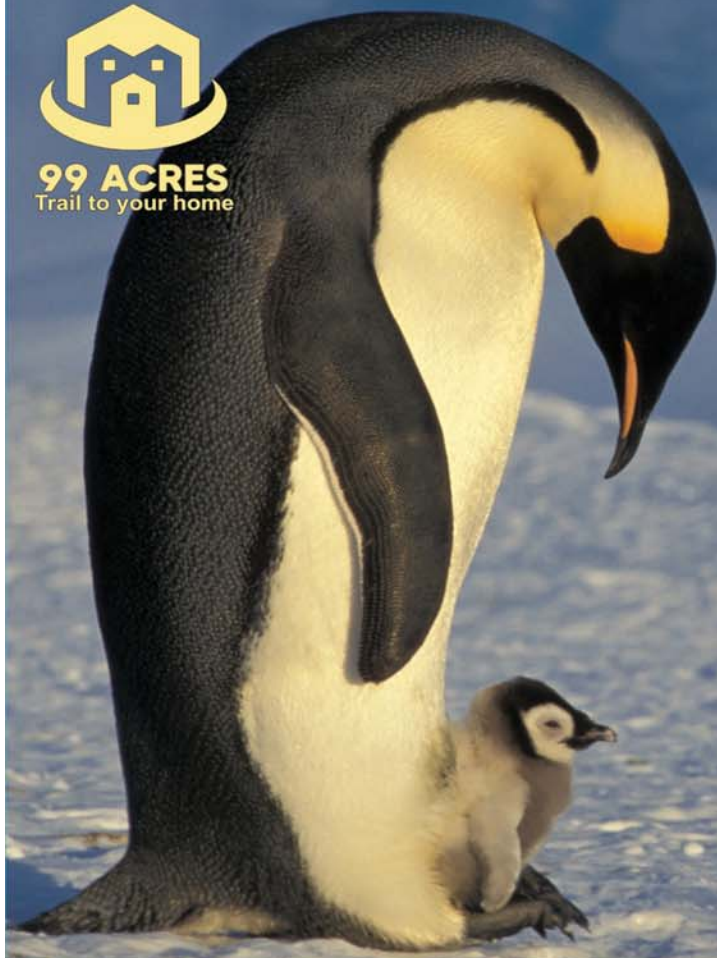
(News Agency)- After a video of a girl being denied entry into Amritsar's Golden Temple for having the Tricolour painted on her face went viral, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) General Secretary Gurcharan



Singh Grewal apologised for any misbehaviour and said the flag painted on the girl's face wasn't the Tricolour. "This is a Sikh shrine. Every religious place has its own decorum...We welcome everyone...We apologise if an official

misbehaved... The flag on her face was not our national flag as it didn't have Ashoka Chakra. It could have been a political flag," Grewal said. Gurcharan Singh Grewal said that it is a matter of great shame that people are tweeting about it. All the devotees who come from different parts of the country and abroad to Sri Harmandir Sahib respect them. Sikhs played an important role in the freedom of the country, but every time it is Sikhs who are targeted," he added. His reaction came after a video showing a girl being denied entry into the Golden Temple went viral. In the video, the Golden Temple staffer, who denied entry to the girl, is heard saying, "it isn't India, it is Punjab".





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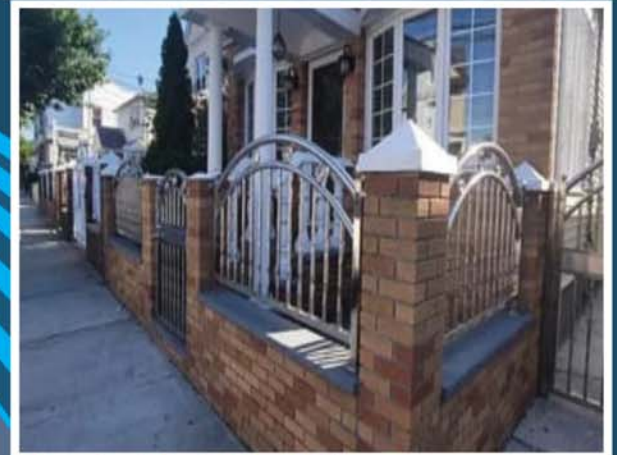
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# The 2024 Elections Will Be Make or Break for the Opposition, and for India

**Building a coalition is the first step but what the opposition need to do is push a new social contract with the voters that lists precisely how it will fulfil its political and economic promises to them.**

**By Prem Shankar Jha**

The 2024 elections are still a year away, but there can no longer be any doubt that the battle for power has begun in earnest. Narendra Modi and his coterie clearly intend for him to remain in power – as prime minister or, as the chatter goes, president – for the rest of his life. To make sure of this, he has unleashed a campaign of strong-arming civil society, the media and leaders of national and state parties, and tolerated sustained, murderous attacks by self-styled “gau rakshaks” upon Muslims and Dalits, to endear himself to the Hindu lumpen proletariat. And he has done all this with a disregard for the Constitution that has no parallel in any country that prides itself on being a democracy today.

But being a student of Entire Politics and not of Indian History, he does not seem to have understood what Ata Bihari Vajpayee did when he was prime minister – that the road he is determined to take the country down leads not to a ‘Hindu Rashtra’ but to India’s certain disintegration. As the 2024 elections have drawn near, Modi has thrown caution to the winds and embarked upon a no-holds-barred bid to return to power again. Amit Shah has boasted that the BJP will return to power with more than 300 seats once again. But in using the Enforcement Directorate and a re-jigged Prevention of the Money Laundering Act to destroy the opposition in state after state, he has at last gone too far and created his own nemesis.

By the end of 2022 all major regional parties, with the exception of the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha, had decided to fight the BJP together without any precondition on who would lead the party. The only holdout was the Congress which too wanted a coalition, but one ‘based on the UPA model’, i.e. with the Congress as its pre-determined leader.

This remained the party’s stated position right till the Raipur meeting of the AICC in February this year. At its inaugural session, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge stated unambiguously that the party would like opposition unity, but that it should be based on the UPA model. He also gently admonished the regional parties to not create a ‘Third Front’. But when Prime Minister Modi launched his unbridled attack on Rahul Gandhi, took advantage of the

frailties of Indian legal system to get a Gujarat court to convict him of criminal defamation and sentence him to 2 years’ imprisonment, and used this to get him expelled from parliament, the Congress finally came face to face with reality: Modi would stop at nothing to destroy Indian democracy and turn India into a one-party state.

Kharge’s next major statement reflected this change of perception. At the Indian Express’s ‘Ideas Exchange’ on April 7, he stated without a shred of ambiguity that he had been talking to all the leaders of the opposition parties to bring them together on a common agenda (to) fight the BJP together. ‘We (the opposition) will come together and have a common agenda to fight the BJP... because all parties are united on the issue that (we should) protect democracy and the institutions, particularly the Constitution’. He made no mention of a UPA model, or of the leadership issue. Even more significant than his unqualified endorsement of a coalition without preconditions was his statement that the battle would have to be fought not through seat adjustments, but around a common agenda. This was a tacit, but much overdue admission that Modi had not won the last two elections solely through media theatre and by fomenting communal hate and displaying nationalistic bravado, but by giving the youth of India the hope of a better, more secure, future. To unseat him, the opposition would have to do one better. The importance of this belated understanding cannot be overstressed. For the rapid growth that the Vajpayee government laid the foundations for, and the Manmohan Singh government nursed, had given India ten golden years before the global recession, and the Reserve Bank’s savage interest rate hikes in response to it, killed employment growth in 2012. With his true predator’s instinct, Modi had seized on the resulting disillusionment among the youth, and rekindled hope among them by promising to create 20 million jobs a year. When he failed completely, and then compounded his failure with a bungled demonetisation that halved migrant workers’ annual earnings by forcing them to return prematurely to their villages, complacency settled into the secular parties once more.

(Contd. on page 22)

# Why are Americans being shot for knocking on the wrong door?

**By Francine Prose**

In the past week, two people have been shot, in separate incidents, for making an innocent mistake. In Kansas City, Missouri, Ralph Yarl, 16, was shot in the head and critically wounded by 84-year-old Andrew Lester, whose door Yarl knocked on, in error. Yarl had come to pick up his younger brothers, who turned out to have been with friends at another house with a similar address. In rural upstate New York, 20-year-old Kaylin Gillis was shot and killed when she and her friends, having lost their way, drove up Kevin Monahan’s driveway. The car was turning around to leave when Monahan, 65, fired two bullets through the car window.

I live in the country. It’s easy to lose your way. Mailbox numbers flake off. Satellite signals vanish. Our packages have been delivered to the raccoons in the empty house down the road. I can’t count the times we’ve gotten lost en route to a friend’s, taken the wrong turns, stayed on the wrong dirt road until we could turn around. What would have happened if one of those driveways had belonged to Kevin Monahan, who, according to neighbors, had a “short fuse” and was enraged about trespassers? Once, 15 years ago, a young man driving to work at five in the morning swerved off the road, tore up our lawn, demolished two lilac trees and smashed into a corner of my husband’s studio. We’d been asleep. We ran outside. It never occurred to me that he was a terrorist or a criminal fleeing the cops. It couldn’t have been more obvious: He’d fallen asleep at the wheel and missed the curve. Dazed but apparently unhurt, he lowered his window, handed us his phone, and asked us to call his brother.

The differences between that upsetting but not fatal experience and

the recent shootings in Missouri and upstate New York are a measure of what has changed in a decade and a half. It’s hard to pinpoint the reasons why things have taken such a dire turn. The increase in gun violence has put us all on edge. An uptick in impulsive, explosive, trigger-happy rage ramps up the fear and paranoia that has us warily eyeing our fellow passengers and shoppers.

Race may well have determined a white octogenarian’s decision to shoot the Black child who’d come to the wrong address, but we can’t assume that without knowing more about the shooter. Age might have played a part, too. There’s no indication that drugs or alcohol factored in either of these two cases, but these substances can fuel the paranoia that might inspire a driveway or a front-porch shooting – road rage without leaving the house.

Everything we hear, read and observe for ourselves about the deep divisions in our country comes with a more or less veiled threat: the other side is out to get us. While the right confronts the specter of Ruby Ridge, of Randy Weaver’s wife and child killed by FBI agents, the left is haunted by racially motivated murders and random mass homicides. Anyone could start shooting at any moment as we remain locked in a series of struggles: red v blue, white v Black, men v women.

Obviously, we can scale down the violence and death by limiting access to guns, but there will always be guns. So how do we change the belief that it’s a good idea to shoot first and ask questions later? How do we repair this broken chromosome in our nation’s cowboy DNA?

Given that Breaking Bad, The Wire and The Sopranos are among my all-time favorite TV series, I hesitate to advocate dialing down the violence in our entertainment. On the other hand, we might want to consider the fact that Yarl’s shooting was headline



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**Editor in Chief & Publisher :**

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**Managing Editor :**

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**Editor (Political Affairs-India) : Aruna Singh**

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**Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind**

**Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh**

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**Phone: 917 612 3158**

**editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com**

**www.thesouthasianinsider.com**

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# The Form of Corruption that Makes a Banana Republic

In our day, instances of graft are sought to be deployed to camouflage a far more consequential systemic corruption – one that carries the potential of transforming the realm into a banana republic.

By Badri Raina

Come the season of hustings, it is clear now what ammunition the ruling BJP means to hurl at the opposition: cult and corruption, even as relentless communal polarisation will continue to be pressed into service to deflect attention from common miseries of the masses – and from the Adani affair.

Indeed, the prime minister has publicly urged the Central Bureau of Investigation to go hammer and tongs at the corrupt, sparing “no one”.

That last flourish – “spare no one” – is of course most intriguing; one imagines that had Jawaharlal Nehru used those words, he would have added – “not even me”, something he used to tell the cartoonist, Shankar.

These, however, are not the days for either self-flagellation or the ease of caricature.

And thereby hangs an unlovely tale.

## Corruption

A joint parliamentary committee



was demanded by the then political opposition – the rulers of today. The demand was granted. At the end, the courts ended up acquitting those accused, including a minister who spent a long time in jail.

But to this day, the so-called “2G scam” continues to be alive in popular memory, thanks to a relentless campaign of vilification. Having tasted blood in 2013-14, the trick is sought to be replicated now.

The point to note, however, is that in our day, instances of graft are

sought to be deployed to camouflage a far more consequential systemic corruption – one that carries the potential of transforming the realm into a banana republic.

## Adding cult to the “corruption” agenda

The renewed hullabaloo about corruption – which as you know happens only among those in the political opposition; the clever ones who switch to the ruling party are at once washed clean with an unfailing saffron detergent – is,

crucially, sought to be peddled with the stamp and seal of the Dear Leader. Having become an unquestionable cult, he is to be understood never to be disingenuous, and always to be followed without demur by private and public entities alike, just as the devout follow the gospel.

As Shakespeare wrote, “When Caesar says do this, it is done” so with our own oracular leader. As to cases on the books against many who switched to the ruling BJP, including stalwarts, these will remain on the books, as knives hang on walls, ready to be called into play should any such satrap have a change of heart.

Indeed, nothing illustrates the dark comedy of this new political and administrative culture better than the case of Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party. Having become an unquestionable cult, he is to be understood never to be disingenuous, and always to be followed without demur by private and public entities alike, just as the devout follow the gospel.

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Indeed, nothing illustrates the dark comedy of this new political and administrative culture better than the case of Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party. A strikingly emblematic expression of this form of corruption – one that goes beyond the quotidian notion of merely personal aggrandisement – comes from the outlandish story of the so-called con-man, Kiran Patel. Briefly, for six long months, over four visits to the valley, Patel, a Gujarati, with connections within the Gujarat chief minister’s office, succeeded in befooling the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir from end to end of the power structure. Did you ask

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But being a student of Entire Politics and not of Indian History, he does not seem to have understood what Atal Bihari Vajpayee did when he was prime minister – that the road he is determined to take the country



down leads not to a ‘Hindu Rashtra’ but to India’s certain disintegration. But when Prime Minister Modi launched his unbridled attack on Rahul Gandhi, took advantage of the frailties of Indian legal system to get a Gujarat court to convict him of criminal defamation and sentence him to 2 years’ imprisonment, and used this to get him expelled from parliament, the Congress finally came face to face with reality: Modi would stop at nothing to destroy Indian democracy and turn India into a

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interest rate hikes in response to it, killed employment growth in 2012. With his true predator’s instinct, Modi had seized on the resulting disillusionment among the youth, and rekindled hope among them by promising to create 20 million jobs a year. When he failed completely, and then compounded his failure with a bungled demonetisation that halved migrant workers’ annual earnings by forcing them to return prematurely to their villages, complacency settled into the secular parties once more. So when, instead of falling the BJP’s vote shot up by almost six percent in 2019, it was not only the Congress but all of the opposition, and civil society, that went into shock.

The challenge before the opposition goes further – Four years later, the secular parties and civil society members have still not found an explanation. To this writer’s knowledge, the first person to give one was the French political scientist, Christophe Jaffrelot.

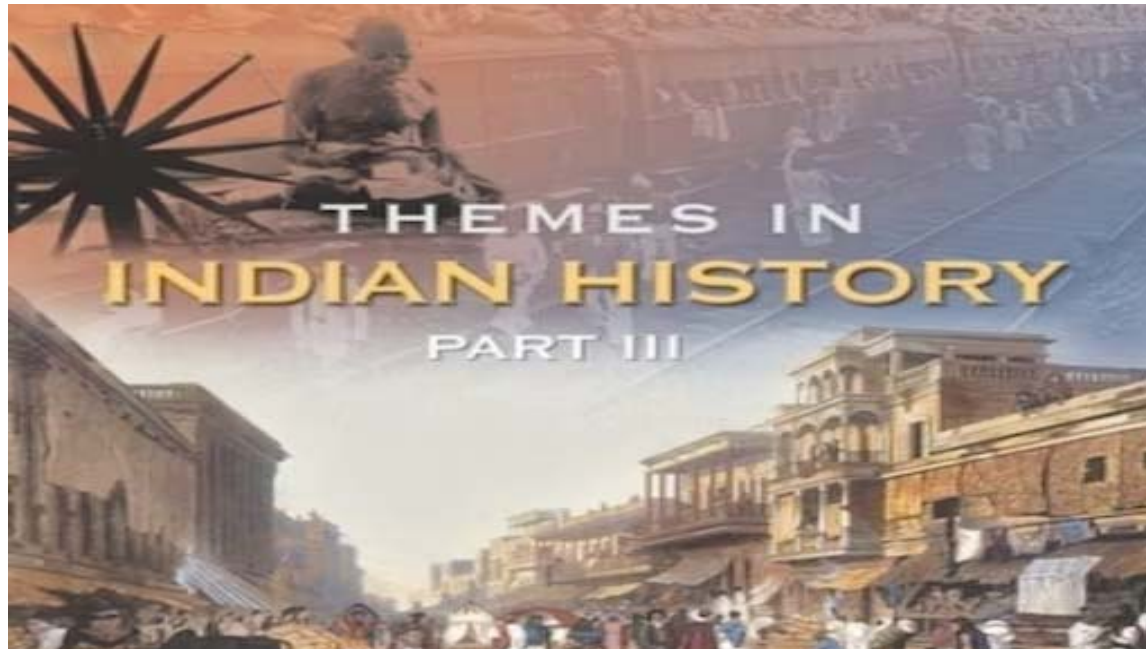


# Indian History and its Course Correction That Cannot Be Delayed Any Further

By: Monidipa Bose Dey

Recently, there has been a lot of misinformation regarding changes in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Class 12 syllabus being maliciously spread on Twitter by regular mischief makers and fake information spreaders, about how the next generation will not know about the Mughals and various such pseudo-emotional bytes, aimed not only at misguiding people but also at instigating them into creating pressure against the course correction being made by the government. Have the Mughals been totally removed? The answer is a big NO.

SO WHAT ARE THE CHANGES? Chapter 8, both before and after the changes, still has the Mughals and they remain the same without any changes. What has been deleted is chapter 9 (from old 2022-23 syllabus) – “Kings and Chronicles – The Mogul Courts (c. 16th-17th Century).” This chapter dealt with court chronicles, the poets who wrote these chronicles and their eulogies about the rulers, court paintings, etc. Not really an important topic, nor it is needed



as a chapter for Class 12 history students. If one insists on keeping this chapter, then the question that needs to be asked here is: why only the Mughals? There should be such detailed court chronicle studies about the other dynasties too, such as the Chola, Pallavas, Palas, Rashtrakutas, Satavahanas, etc. After all, India is not only about the Mughals (who were decidedly of foreign origin and in power for some odd 200-300 years), and the students should know more about their own

Indic rulers, than learning about foreign invading dynasties. What is surprising here is that two other chapters have also been removed — Chapter 12: “Colonial Cities,” and Chapter 14: “Understanding Partition” — but not a single voice has been raised in protest. The focus and social media outrage is limited to the so-called ‘removal of Mughals’. Mughals or the Timurid dynasty is a foreign invading dynasty and they do not have a record of good administration or benign governance over the

common people (while Aurangzeb is known to all as religious bigot, it is also a historically documented fact that under Shah Jahan, the horrific policy of enslavement of Hindus for taxes, which started during the Sultanate rule, worsened). So this special favour shown towards the Mughals reflects nothing but the severe bias in the minds of the so-called ‘academicians’ who wrote these propaganda narratives in the form of school textbooks, simply to brainwash students into thinking

the Mughals were a good lot. Some aspects of Indian history that need to be part of the history textbooks from classes 6-12 as part of course correction are as follows:

Delhi’s history - As Delhi is the capital of India, its history in school textbooks needs greater focus and a complete revision. Delhi’s history does not start with foreign Islamic rule. B.B. Lal, in his book *Indraprastha*, has given a timeline of found periods in the excavations at the Purana Qila mound, which could be followed to prepare a timeline of Delhi’s history. Instead of a brief mention of the Rajput rule period and then promptly moving on to the invading Islamic rulers, school children must learn of the archaeological excavations by B.B. Lal (1954-55), B.K. Thapar and M.C. Joshi (1969-1973), and V.K. Swarnkar and Vishnu Kant (2013-14, 2017-18, recent 2023 dig) of the mound in the Purana Qila. Here is the cultural sequencing or dating of the trenches from the bottom upwards (as given by B.B. Lal in his book which could be made as a reference of Delhi’s historical time frame) – **Contd. (Page 23 )**

## Narendra Modi’s Policy Changes Begin to Show Results for India Amid Global Doom

By: Abhijit Majumder

Nouriel Roubini is a gifted pragmatist who unfairly got the dark moniker, Dr Doom, for foreseeing the 2008 subprime crisis. If others had listened to him then, the massacre of the American and the world economy could perhaps have been averted. Last week, Professor Emeritus at the Stern School of Business again predicted troubled times for most leading economies. Except one. And that is India’s.

Besides citing demographic edge, democracy, and pent-up growth potential, Turkish-born Roubini pointed to a slew of measures that India has taken which are directly and indirectly yielding results.

He praised India for building public digital infrastructure such as the UPI, Aadhaar and BHIM. “Your tech stack allows lots of different apps and tools to provide a variety of financial services, public services, and e-commerce. I think that the Indian model is better



than the Chinese where the government controls all the data, or the US where a bunch of oligopolistic big tech firms control the data,” he has been quoted saying. If economists like Roubini and agencies like IMF have been optimistic about India’s unfolding economic story, massive policy fixing by the government in the backdrop has quietly led up to this. On March 31, for instance, the Narendra Modi government released its new foreign trade

policy with the aim of growing India’s exports to \$2 trillion by 2030. The policy takes the bold leap of backing international trade using rupee. It raises the limit of exports through courier to Rs 10 lakh per consignment. It has also built an amnesty scheme for failing to fulfil export obligations. Policy changes and the will to implement them have led the nation to previously unthought-of places. When PM Narendra Modi started speaking about Make in India, he

was mocked by his opponents. In 2022-23, India’s defence exports reached an all-time high of Rs 15,920 crore, a 10-fold rise since 2016-17. The defence ministry wants to take India’s annual defence exports to \$5 billion (Rs 41,000 crore by current value) by 2024-’25. Buyers of India’s defence technology and arms include Italy, Sri Lanka, Russia, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, France, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Israel, Bhutan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Philippines, Poland, Spain and Chile. The PM was also demonised for demonetisation. India now leads the world in digital payments, way ahead of the US and China at second and third place.

With a push for MSMEs and schemes like Start Up India, the nation has had more than 90,000 new startups in the last nine years. Global investment bank Morgan Stanley seems to agree with the likes of Professor

Roubini. Four global trends — demographics, digitalisation, decarbonisation and deglobalisation — are favouring the ‘New India’, it says. In a report titled, ‘Why This Is India’s Decade’, it says India’s per-capita income would rise from \$2,278 now to \$5,242 in 2031, setting the stage for a discretionary spending boom. Households earning more than \$35,000 a year are likely to rise five-fold in the coming decade to over 25 million. As a result, India’s GDP is likely to more than double to \$7.5 trillion by 2031, it says, adding that India would drive a fifth of global growth through the end of this decade. This is not happening because of a Keynesian approach but a Kautilyan model, in which the State plays a limited but strong role, argue those preparing the economic potion in the government. That in itself is a civilisational victory, apart from the purely material gains it has started gleaming.



# Atiq Ahmed Murder: Ask Why, Not Whodunnit

**By: Surajit Dasgupta**

The killing of criminal-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf has three angles. One, he was allegedly killed by antisocial elements, probably affiliated with the Samajwadi Party (SP), who feared the duo would spill the beans under the pressure of police interrogation. Two, a bunch of youths, whose families were tormented by the duo exacted revenge. Three, the assailants were Hindutva activists because they allegedly chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' while shooting the victims. Your angle depends on your ideological position. But, all three angles reflect poorly on Uttar Pradesh Police. Regardless of which of the three possibilities is true, the men in khaki should have been able to protect the former gangsters who would probably have been convicted and sentenced, also giving away vital information about their racket, which would lead to an unravelling of their evil empire. But if the third is true, the state — the legislature, the executive and the judiciary — have a lot to worry about and get its act together in delivering justice to one and all.

In 1979, when he was 17, Atiq Ahmed was accused in a case of murder in Prayagraj. Soon, he started running a network comprising dozens of goons in the state. His dominance gradually spread to the surrounding areas — Phulpur and Kaushambi. In 1989, when his archrival, Shaukat Elahi, was killed in a police encounter, Ahmed became the undisputed honcho of Uttar Pradesh's underworld.

The same year, the recently killed former hoodlum contested and won his first election from the Allahabad West Assembly seat as an independent candidate. He won the Vidhan Sabha seat five times in a row from 1989 to 2002, on the first three occasions as an independent and then on the ticket of the SP and finally as an Apna Dal candidate. A year after his last win as an MLA, Ahmed went back to the SP and won the Phulpur Lok Sabha seat in 2004. He had to vacate the Allahabad West Assembly constituency, which led to a chain of events leading to the murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA, Raju Pal, in 2005. On February 24, this year, one of the main witnesses in the incident,

Umesh Pal, was murdered.

Atiq Ahmed was arrested in 2005 for the murder of Raju Pal. He got bail after three years. Whether in or out of jail, he maintained his sway over the underworld of Uttar Pradesh. He ensured that his associates of the netherworld were protected. In 2007, while he was in jail, Ahmed was accused of shielding his men who were allegedly involved in the gang rape of some girl students of a madrasa. This sparked outrage and the Samajwadi Party expelled him. Atiq Ahmed then lost the 2009 parliamentary election as an Apna Dal candidate from Pratapgarh, but the electoral defeat did not mean that his clout had waned. In the 2012 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, once again, he lost the election to Pooja Pal, the wife of Raju Pal. He then contested the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from Shravasti as a Samajwadi Party candidate but lost again.

Meanwhile, the Allahabad High Court reprimanded UP Police for not arresting Ahmed. He was then arrested; and since then, was in jail. On December 14, 2016, Atiq Ahmed and his henchmen allegedly assaulted the employees



of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) for taking disciplinary action against two students who were caught cheating. The institution's authority had debarred them from taking examinations any further. The video of Ahmed beating a teacher of SHUATS and its employees had gone viral that year on social media. On February 10, 2017, the Allahabad High Court went through the criminal history of Ahmed and directed the Superintendent of Police of Allahabad to arrest all the suspects in the case. The police arrested Ahmed on February 11, after which he was remanded to

14-day judicial custody.

In March 2017, when Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister of UP, he promised to launch a crackdown on the 'empire of criminals.' Atiq Ahmed was taken from his bastion Allahabad to Deoria Jail. He, however, continued to run his network of hooligans from jail. His henchmen are said to have kidnapped a businessman, Mohit Jaiswal, and brought him to jail. He was made to sign some property papers and was also beaten mercilessly. After the incident, Ahmed was taken to Bareilly Jail where the jail superintendent was reportedly too intimidated by his presence.

**Contd. (Page 23 )**

## Dalai Lama's 'Tongue' and the Curse of the Modern Mind

**By: Utpal Kumar**

Dalai Lama's 'Tongue' and the Curse of the Modern Mind

The so-called modern mind is cursed with faithlessness. Ironically, it takes pride in it. It thinks faith is an antithesis to rationality. To add to it, it is also afflicted with a judgmental and know-it-all trait. Even the greatest of the souls can be judged, abused, and called names in no time.

It happened last week with the 87-year-old Dalai Lama. A monk par excellence, the Tibetan leader has lived all his life preaching and practising love, compassion and non-violence. But that hasn't stopped the 'modern', 'rational' mind from judging him. Why? Because he kissed a boy and asked him to "suck his tongue"! That very evening, I heard one of my colleagues in journalism saying, "What's wrong with the Dalai Lama? I have stopped believing in these babas." A few others sitting with her nodded their



heads in vindication

Faithless... judgemental... know it all!

Even before one does a psycho-cultural analysis of the Dalai Lama's act, the 'modern', 'rational' mind should have at least done the basic homework. The event, which took place in late February at the Dalai Lama's monastery in Dharamshala, was attended by about 100 young students. In a video that has gone viral, a child requested His Holiness: "Can I hug you?"

Hearing this, the Dalai Lama asked the boy to come up to the platform where he was seated. Touching his cheek, he said, "first here", after which the child kissed him and gave him a hug. The Tibetan leader held him lovingly in his arms and said, "I think here also" — and he planted a kiss on his lips. And then he asked the boy to "suck my tongue", sticking out his tongue. Forehead to forehead with the Dalai Lama, the boy quickly stuck out his tongue. What was missing in this

carefully edited video was how the Dalai Lama laughed and pulled the boy in for another hug. What was cut out was how the entire incident was duly photographed and hailed by those present there. What was also deliberately kept out was that the boy's mother was present at the event, sitting near the Dalai Lama. When I saw the unedited video of the event, rewinding it again and again, all I could sense was a grandfatherly banter. It evoked the memory of my late grandfather. Of course, he would not ask me to "suck his tongue"! He was not a Tibetan, after all! But I felt the warmth, the tenderness and the unassuming simplicity of my grandfather. He would often pull my shirt and aggressively kiss the stomach. His freshly grown up beard would create sensation and I would laugh no end. At a time when faithlessness looms large, it seems there is no space for grandfatherly banter. Everyone is a suspect, till proven

otherwise.

This takes us to the third aspect of this episode: The know-it-all phenomenon. Modern mind seems to believe that it knows everything, even when all it knows is its own cultural mores — and that too quite scarcely. There's also a tendency to uniformise global diversity. So, 'hello' and 'hi' have become a normal way to greet people. What if someone greets you with his tongue out? You may be offended, may even resort to violence. But that's how Tibetans greet. In Tibet, sticking out your tongue has been a traditional way of saying hello. It is also a sign of respect and — as a Tibetan friend of this author said — "an elderly person's unconditional love for a young one". The practice had its origins in the 9th century when a tyrant king with a black tongue died. The Tibetans believe in reincarnation, and by sticking their tongues out, they prove they aren't the tyrant reborn.



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# The terrorist-drug nexus:

## Why drug trafficking is a serious security issue

**Quick and more money attracts organised gangs to such activities. It is easier for terrorist groups to use the ready-made networks**

**By Rakesh Asthana**

The narcotics trade is assuming dangerous proportions all over the world. It is a social problem that harms youth and families and the money it generates is diverted for disruptive activities that have bearings on national security. The issue has kept security agencies and law enforcement agencies on the tenterhooks. India is no exception.

Traditionally India has been seen as sandwiched between the Death (Golden) Crescent and Death (Golden) Triangle. The country is being flooded with drugs, especially heroin and methamphetamine, from these two regions by drug lords indirectly supported by intelligence setups. Nearly 90 per cent of the world's demand for these drugs is being met from

these two regions. India is both a big market and a transit route for other countries.

Money generated in this illicit trade is phenomenal. There are indications that parts of Pakistan adjoining Afghanistan are also used by Pakistani drug traffickers to convert Afghan opium to heroin. The Shan and Kachin provinces of Myanmar bordering China also pose challenges. These heroin and methamphetamine-producing areas have porous borders and are, reportedly, under the control of rebel groups, indirectly supported by the Chinese. Illicit arms are manufactured here and supplied to underground groups active in India. The maritime route has also become very active after the recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir. The use of drones to supply drugs and weapons across the border in

Punjab is a new phenomenon and law enforcement agencies are working out strategies to neutralise this. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG), in conjunction with the intelligence agencies, has been making big seizures frequently. ICG has developed a good synergy not only with the security agencies but also with the coast guards of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. It seized 2,160 kgs of meth in two different instances recently near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The drugs were destined for Thailand from Myanmar. Investigations have indicated the connection of drug traffickers from across borders with terrorist organisations like Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen. The illegal money is used for terror activities sponsored by the ISI.

India has surprisingly also

become a hot destination for cocaine, the supply of which is controlled by South American drug cartels. Recent investigations have revealed the connection of these cartels with NRIs based in Canada, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and several European countries along with local drug lords and gangsters in India, who have links with Khalistani terrorists and the ISI in Pakistan. The role of the fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim and his gang has been under scanner.

Studies reveal that 62 per cent of the darknet is being used for illicit drug trafficking. Darknet markets are disrupting traditional drug markets because of their anonymity and low risks.

Cryptocurrency payments and doorstep deliveries, through courier services, have made darknet transactions attractive.

Concerted and coordinated efforts of all the agencies will be required to tackle this growing threat. The success rate in catching traffickers using the darknet has been very low the world over. However, in January-February, the Narcotics Control Bureau busted an organised racket of darknet vendors and arrested several Indian nationals.

Their international counterparts were exposed for the first time. Technical surveillance followed by basic policing methods led to the seizure of large consignments of drugs and the arrest of the gang. The operation exposed various international connections. Drug cartels all over the world are networked and are using the darknet in a big way for trafficking narcotics, especially pharmaceutical opioids/synthetic drugs made in labs using deadly chemical precursors. A new trend has emerged wherein organised gangs, which primarily used to carry out extortion activities in their local areas, are getting hooked to this network, and are being used for drug trafficking and gun running. Quick, and more, money attracts them to such activities, but knowingly or unknowingly they are getting into the trap of ISI and Khalistani elements settled abroad, especially in Canada, Germany, the UK, USA. It is easier for these terrorist groups to use these networks because they get ready-made logistics to carry out their activities. The nexus between terrorists and organised gangs/underworld is a new and disturbing trend, which has to be tackled effectively by security agencies.

## What are the Ideological Projects Progressive Indians Stand for?

**By Pushparaj Deshpande**

Not a day goes by without a litany of new villainies, whether it is attacks on the media, minorities, protests, or India's institutions. Engulfing India's religious, caste, regional, linguistic and ideological identities, these villainies systematically keep pushing political culture and public discourse even further rightward. But dire as their impact on people's lives are, they are also manufactured diversions. They seek to distract progressive forces from the century-old war between two diagrammatically opposed political projects in India - on what was, what is and most of all, about what should be. This



war didn't start today, nor did it start in 2014. It started with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS's) birth in 1925. In conjunction with the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), the RSS strives to win this war in time for their centenary in 2025. Winning the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is just an essential

prerequisite to actualising the RSS-BJP's political project - which is to remodel India into a mono-faith, mono-lingual and mono-cultural nation. If they are successful, India's national project (the constitutional idea of India) would be summarily assigned to the dustbin of history. Understanding the Sangh's political

projects

If the champions of India's national project are serious about mounting an effective challenge to the RSS-BJP (the Sangh parivar), they need to first understand their modus operandi.

Unfortunately, progressive forces are hobbled by a stunted understanding of the Sangh. A careful analysis of the Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabhas (the RSS's apex body that meets annually) and the Sangh's programmes over the past decade reveals that they are consistently changing goalposts and pushing programmatic boundaries. Yes, they are misusing the governing apparatus of the state to re-engineer India's democracy today. But equally importantly, the Sangh is deploying

a vast network of non-state social, cultural and religious organisations to re-engineer society. That is where the real battle is being fought.

Unlike progressives (who are almost exclusively focused on macro-level electoral and policy issues), the Sangh's non-state organisations are subterraneously pursuing an overt and covert war against the constitutional idea of India. These non-state organisations consistently strive to further the RSS-BJP's ideological goals, hack mass emotions and cement the BJP in the process. While most of these projects are implemented by non-state actors, some are pursued through the state itself.

**Contd. (Page 22)**





# As Opposition Aims for Unity,

## Parties Must Be Wary of BJP's Ability to Drive a Wedge

By P. Raman

The opposition in India is encountering extraordinary challenges from a well-entrenched adversary with a tight hold over every aspect of political life. The BJP's proclivity to resort to audacious cloak-and-dagger operations has never been in doubt.

We have 11 months left for the Lok Sabha polls, but the political confrontation has already reached a feverish pitch. And for the first time in eight years, opposition parties now have newfound synergy to work out an alliance. They are in offensive mode. There is no other explanation for the sudden surge in protracted attacks on the Narendra Modi regime by state-specific opposition groups. It comes from Mamata Banerjee in the east, Uddhav Thackeray in the west, K. Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR) in the south, and Delhi's own Arvind Kejriwal. The prime minister is right when he said the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had brought the opposition parties together. That is precisely what is happening now. During a protest in Kolkata, Mamata Banerjee said, "In the next elections, it will be Nandalal vs entire opposition... You bulldozed, and demolished the constitution." The next day she burst out, "You sold the LIC [Life Insurance



Corporation] for Adani, Nandalal (BJP). If you say anything against the BJP, you are thrown out of the House. If you speak out against them, they send the ED and the CBI after you. They act as if they are the model of honesty. They are acting like feudal lords." On behalf of the Trinamool Congress, party MP Derek O'Brien asked Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik and Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to join the united fight against Modi and the BJP. From Hyderabad, Telangana chief minister KCR joined the opposition chorus and attacked Modi for his silence on the allegations linking him to Gautam Adani. KCR ridiculed the prime minister's bluff on achieving a \$5 trillion economy by 2022. Uddhav Thackeray said if the BJP contested the next elections in Maharashtra in Modi's name (without invoking Bal Thackeray),

it will be routed. He asked, "Why a fine of Rs 25,000 was imposed on Kejriwal for asking for the PM's degree?" Thackeray slammed Modi alleging that the latter is trying to control the judiciary. AAP, the most virulent in anti-Modi outbursts Among the opposition, only the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has put in place a structured mechanism to react to the day-to-day political developments and has become the most virulent in its anti-Modi outbursts. With its two ministers languishing in jail and regular run-ins with the lieutenant governor, AAP has been the worst victim of the BJP-led Union government's vindictiveness. Its spokesperson Sanjay Singh never misses an opportunity to take on the Modi government and the BJP. Arvind Kejriwal, for his part, by far, has been the most ferocious Modi baiter and

surprisingly gets away with it. Take Modi's involvement with Adani. Rahul Gandhi has been extremely careful when he raised the source of Adani's Rs 20,000 crore investment. While he put it in the form of a few queries, Kejriwal, however, has been blunt and merciless: "Adani is just the front and the real investor behind him is Narendra Modi." Kejriwal said it on the floor of the Delhi legislative assembly on March 28. He repeated it again: "The money invested in the Adani group belongs to Modi. Adani is just the manager." "Modi has taken the ports, airports, and so many resources that belonged to the country. Modi in past nine years looted 10 times the amount the Congress did since independence... He is the most corrupt PM India ever had," Kejriwal said. He narrated how Modi prevailed on the governments of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and

Israel in favour of Adani. The next day, Kejriwal told the assembly that fear of ED and CBI made all corrupt people take refuge in the BJP. He alleged AAP MLAs were being offered Rs 25 crore if they defected to the BJP.

The opposition parties should thank Kejriwal for waging war on two other fronts. By way of sheer defiance, he has established that words like 'Modi hatao, desh bachao (Dislodge Modi to save the country)' are no more blasphemy. When AAP put up 2,000 posters in Delhi, police removed these, filed 44 first information reports (FIRs), arrested four, and harassed the owners of the printing press.

In retaliation for FIRs, the AAP printed Modi hatao posters in 22 languages and put them up all over the country. Up until the AAP put them up, the Modi hatao posters were seen as a crime. The BJP hit back by putting up 'Kejriwal hatao, Dilli bachao (Dislodge Kejriwal to save Delhi)' posters.

Prime Minister Modi rattled?

The budget session of parliament ended on April 6 with an unusual show of opposition solidarity. As many as 20 opposition parties, including Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Bharat Rashtra Samithi, and Samajwadi Party, joined the Tiranga rally where leaders slammed the Modi regime and emphasised the need for unity.



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# Man trying to smuggle gold biscuits worth Rs 36 lakh from Bangladesh nabbed in WB's Dobila

The Border Security Force (BSF) troops posted near Dobila arrested a smuggler with five gold biscuits worth Rs 36 lakh near the international border in West Bengal on April 17, 2023.

(News Agency)-Troops stationed at the Dobila border outpost, part of the 153 Battalion under the South Bengal Frontier, successfully thwarted a gold smuggling attempt near the international border. The incident occurred on April 17, 2023, when jawans received a tip-off regarding a possible smuggling operation from Bangladesh into

India.

## ACCUSED NABBED

Acting upon the tip, the jawans launched a special operation and spotted a motorcycle rider heading towards Dobila from the village of Amudia. Upon stopping the rider, he attempted to flee but was apprehended by the jawans, who discovered five gold biscuits tied to his thigh with cello tape.

The police seized gold weighing 581.27 grams, valued at Rs 36 lakh.

## DELIVERY OF GOLD BISCUITS

During interrogation, the accused, named Devashish Devnath, revealed that he received a call via WhatsApp from a Bangladeshi resident named Gogan Mandal, 15 days ago. Mandal instructed him to



deliver the gold biscuits to a person named Nayan of Sayesta Nagar, for which he would be paid Rs. 2,000.

The apprehended smuggler and seized gold biscuits were handed over to the Customs Department in Tentulia for further legal action.

# Ahmadi worship place in Pakistan's Punjab attacked, demolished by extremists



(News Agency)-The incident occurred on Sunday at the 118-year-old Ahmadi worship place in the Sargodha district of the province. The Ahmadi worship place was built like a mosque, an official said. Members of the minority community present had to scale walls to save their lives, the official said. Radical Islamists in Pakistan allegedly attacked and demolished an over 100-year-old worship place of the minority Ahmadi community in the Punjab province, police said on Monday. The incident occurred on Sunday at the 118-year-old Ahmadi worship place in the Sargodha district of the province.

"A good number of workers of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) on Sunday gathered outside the worship place of the Ahmadi community in Ghooghiat in Sargodha district, some 200 kilometres from Lahore," a police official told PTI on Monday. "They chanted slogans against Ahmadis, venting out their anger for building minarets at their worship place," he added.

According to the TLP, the Ahmadi worship place was built like a mosque, the official said. Members of the minority community present had to scale walls to save their lives, the official said.

The Pakistani government does not consider Ahmadis to be Muslims, and the Ahmadis are not allowed to call themselves Muslims in Pakistan by a law passed in 1974. "Attacking and demolishing Ahmadi worship places by mobs and government officials is a blatant violation of Pakistan's Constitution and Supreme Court's decision of 2014," he said, adding that the persecution of the Ahmadi community has been on a high in different areas of Pakistan.

The Punjab province has been the centre of it, and the extent of these activities is such that the Ahmadi community is not left alone even in the holy month of Ramadan, Mahmood added. Last month Police in Punjab province demolished minarets of a 70-year-old worship place of the minority Ahmadi

community allegedly under the pressure of radical clerics, according to a spokesman for the minority community. A recent fact-finding mission led by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) underscored an alarming uptick in the persecution of members of the minority Ahmadi community in

the province. Minorities, especially Ahmadis, are vulnerable in Pakistan and are often targeted by religious extremists. In Pakistan, around 10 million out of the 220 million population are non-Muslims. According to the 2017 census, Hindus constitute the largest religious minority (5 million) in

Pakistan. Christians make up the second-largest religious minority, with almost the same number (4.5 million), and their concentration is mostly in urban Sindh, Punjab and parts of Balochistan. The Ahmadis, Sikhs and Parsi are also among the notable religious minorities in Pakistan.

## Chinese engineer arrested in Pakistan on 'blasphemy' charges

A Chinese national was taken into custody in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province after he allegedly made blasphemous remarks. The Chinese national was working on a dam project.

(News Agency)-A Chinese national working on a dam in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan was taken into custody by local police on charges of blasphemy on Sunday evening.

The man, who is an engineer with China Gezhouba Group Company, had a heated argument with local staff over long breaks for prayers and the slow pace of work during Ramzan, according to local media reports. The

police were called after an angry mob gathered at the site to attack the Chinese national for allegedly making "blasphemous remarks" at the workplace. He was deployed at a camp at the Dasu hydropower project, about 350 kilometres north of Islamabad. According to reports, the man is being detained at a police station in the remote Kohistan region of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. Security for Chinese nationals working

on the World Bank-financed Dasu hydropower project had been tightened after nine Chinese nationals were killed in a July 2021 suicide bombing.

This is not the first time that a foreign national has been accused of blasphemy

in Pakistan. In December 2021, Sri Lankan national Priyantha Diyawadanage (48), a factory manager in the city of Sialkot, was beaten to death and his body set on fire over allegations of blasphemy.

Diyawadanage was killed by workers at a sports equipment factory in Pakistan's eastern Sialkot district where he was a manager. A tribal council meeting will be called on Monday to decide on whether to register a blasphemy complaint against the Chinese man or not, according to media reports. For now, he is in protective custody to avoid any mishapening that could become a diplomatic incident between Pakistan and China, reports said.





# Putin's Regime Is Descending Into Stalinism

(News Agency)-“The entire world sees what [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's regime is doing to Ukraine,” Kara-Murza told members of Arizona's state legislature. “It bombs civilian areas, hospitals and schools.” In the months that followed his arrest, the Kremlin piled on. He was also charged with using the funds of an “undesirable organization” — the Washington, D.C. -based NGO “Free Russia Foundation” — to convene a conference in support of Russian political prisoners in Moscow in October 2021. Simultaneously, he was accused of “high treason” because he testified before the Helsinki Commission and the NATO Parliamentary assembly, and for allegedly “consulting foreign special services” for \$30,000 a month. On Monday, Kara-Murza was sentenced to 25 years in a “strict regime” prison colony. This is likely the longest sentence ever meted out for political activity in post-



Soviet Russia, where the maximum term for murder is 15 years and the punishment for rape is the same. His sentence combines penalties for all these “crimes”: seven years for the first, three for the second, and 15 years (apparently “reduced” from eighteen) for the third. This punishment is much harsher than the ones to which the regime's vengeance has lately subjected members of the opposition. The two other leading opponents of the

Kremlin, Alexei Navalny and Ilya Yashin, were sentenced to nine years and eight-and-a-half years respectively. Heightened repression is always a sign of fear. Could Kara-Murza's punishment have had something to do with the fact that Navalny was sentenced a year ago and Yashin last December, when the war in Ukraine may not have looked to the Kremlin as much of an endless bloody slog as it appears today? And also when

its prosecution of the war, while dealing with harsh Western sanctions, was not as much fraught with the possibility of popular discontent over gradual impoverishment and casualties in the hundreds of thousands? It seems that the reason the sentence is so harsh is to scare civil society and preclude any chance of organized resistance. Even in the post-Stalin Soviet Union, the authorities generally avoided charging dissidents with crimes like “high treason,” most often espionage. (The 1977 case of the Jewish refusenik Anatoly Sharansky was an exception.) As Kara-Murza, whom the Kremlin almost certainly tried to poison twice before, pointed out to the kangaroo court this week, his sentence harkens back not just to Soviet times but to the 1930s Stalinist purges of “enemies of the people.” Kara-Murza is a Cambridge-trained historian, and he was right. Putin's regime is descending into Stalinism.

Sustained by indiscriminate ruthlessness, such regimes do not “evolve”— witness North Korea or Cuba. They can only be destroyed either by an invasion, like Pol Pot's Cambodia or Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or exploded from within by a miraculous leader like Mikhail Gorbachev. Neither outcome is likely in Russia so long as Putin lives. And so the struggle is very personal now between the two Vladimirs, Putin and Kara-Murza, even biological: Only Putin's death can free my friend Vladimir. Putin is 70, Kara-Murza is 41. But the effective age gap will narrow steadily as Kara-Murza's jailers will undoubtedly begin grinding him down from day one. Yet Kara-Murza was defiant and hopeful even as his sentence came down. “I know that the day will come when the darkness over our country will be gone,” he said in his final statement before the court.



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# Hungary Passes Bill That Allows Locals to Report Same-Sex Families to Authorities



recognized role of marriage and the family" and those who contest children's rights "to an identity appropriate to their sex at birth", news agency Bloomberg said in a report. The eastern European nation's constitution defines marriage as an institution which is a formation "between one man and one woman" and specifically says "the mother is a woman, the father a man," according to the report by Bloomberg.

Human right organisations and several NGOs across Europe have lashed out at Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government's stance on the rights of the country's LGBTQIA+ community.

Orban has barred LGBTQIA+ couples from adopting children and this led to European Union cutting funding for Hungary. A law was passed by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and the National Assembly in June 2021, forbade the depiction or promotion of LGBTQIA+-related material to people under 18 years old. The law included a ban on TV shows and films featuring gay characters, educational programs, and visual material such as rainbow flags and also prohibited gay people from appearing in school educational materials or TV shows meant for under-18s. Many perceived this law as anti-LGBTQIA+ and claimed that it

dehumanized people identifying as LGBTQIA+. His government has been accused of curbing the rights of the country's LGBTQ community. The European Commission brought a lawsuit in 2022 before the European Court of Justice against Hungary for the 2021 law and a majority of EU members have joined the lawsuit, taking the commission's side. Orban and his right-leaning Fidesz party which won the elections on a wave of populism has said that it will fight the lawsuit and defend "traditional values" to ensure that 'godless European Union' does not break the Hungarian society.

(News Agency)- Lawmakers in Hungary passed a bill that allows citizens to report to authorities anonymously on same-sex couples who have been raising children. The bill was passed earlier this month allowing people to report those who contest the "constitutionally

## North Korea seethes at 'nuclear blackmail' as South holds war games with US, Japan

**South Korea, the United States and Japan staged joint naval missile defence exercises on Monday, prompting a sharp reaction from North Korea, which accused Washington of ramping up "nuclear blackmail".**

(News Agency)-South Korea, the United States and Japan staged joint naval missile defence exercises on Monday to improve responses to North Korean threats, as Pyongyang accused Washington of ramping up "nuclear blackmail" with military drills. The three nations agreed at talks in Washington on Friday to hold regular missile defence and anti-submarine exercises in their efforts to boost diplomatic and military cooperation. North Korea tested a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on Friday that experts say would ease the way for missile launches with little warning, part of an increase in its military activities in recent weeks.

Hours after the trilateral exercises, Ri Pyong Chol, vice president of the North Korean ruling party's Central Military Commission, issued a statement criticising the US for calling a UN Security Council meeting over its ICBM test. The North's weapons development was a self-defensive measure of defence against the US, Ri said. He accused Washington of raising regional tensions "to the brink of explosion" with military drills simulating a "pre-emptive nuclear strike and an all-out war" against the North. The recent deployment of US strategic bombers was "clear evidence that the US nuclear threat and blackmail

against us has reached a level that cannot be overlooked", Ri said. If the US ignores our repeated warnings and continues actions that endanger the security environment of the Korean peninsula, we will take necessary action so that it feels a clearer security crisis and insurmountable threat," he added. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council at Monday's meeting: "Let me be clear, our

lawful efforts to defend against the DPRK's repeated escalatory actions do not in any way justify the DPRK's unlawful behaviour." North Korea - formally known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) - has been under UN sanctions for its missile and nuclear programs since 2006.

### EADLOCK

After years of unity, the 15-member UN Security Council is now deadlocked on how to deal with Pyongyang. The United

States and several other members want the council to toughen sanctions on Pyongyang, but veto-powers Russia and China are opposed. Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia described the meeting on Monday as "unnecessary," adding that it would "simply make the situation worse." China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun said the situation on the Korean Peninsula was at a crossroads. "The United States

and its allies should stop provocative military exercises," Zhang told Reuters. "The other thing, which is also very much urgent, is the resumption of dialogue." Monday's drills in international waters between Korea and Japan bring together South Korea's 7,600-tonne Aegis destroyer Yulgok Yi I, the U.S. guided-missile destroyer Benfold, and Japan's Atago destroyer, also equipped with Aegis radar systems.

## Emmanuel Macron signs much-contested pension law despite months-long protests, unions say won't back off

**On Saturday, Emmanuel Macron signed new legislation to raise the age for state pension after France's Constitutional Council approved the pension-age increase in a ruling on Friday.**

(News Agency)-French President Emmanuel Macron signed the much-contested pension law which has faced severe backlash and months of mass protests among trade unions in Paris and other parts of the country. On Saturday, Macron signed the new legislation to raise the state pension after France's Constitutional Council approved the pension-age increase in a ruling on Friday.

The latest legislation will raise the age for drawing a state pension to 64 from 62 and it will come into effect from September 1, 2023. The law was allowed in the French Parliament without a voting session in

March and critics were expecting it would be given a green signal by the Council.



### FRENCH PENSION LAWS ANGER UNIONS

The proclamation of the latest French

pension law angered unions who had been urging the Macron-led administration to revoke the law. As the law was allowed in France, unions called for marches, protests and demonstrations on Labour Day on May 1. In fact, on Friday, after the Council approved the raise in the pension age, union members and protestors marched through Paris with burning trash bins. As per reports, in the northwestern city of Rennes, an entrance to a police station was set ablaze. Also, Opposition parties have tabled another bid for a citizens' referendum on the reform after the Constitutional Council rejected the first proposal.



# He Musk be furious!

**Elon's wealth nosedives by \$13 BILLION in a day after SpaceX rocket blows up, Tesla earning's plummet 20%, and disastrous Twitter blue check mark revamp**

(News Agency)-Elon Musk's wealth dramatically nosedived by \$13 billion in just 24 hours after the entrepreneur suffered a series of business blunders.

On the same day the SpaceX founder's blockbuster rocket launch ended in a disastrous fireball, his electric car company, Tesla, reported disappointing first quarter results, with shares dropping by 9.75 percent and earnings plummeting by over 20 percent. Musk's failure to launch also extended to his recent acquisition of Twitter, as he sparked backlash after finally following through with his threat to remove 'legacy' verified blue

ticks.

The billionaire's plummeting net worth was hardest hit, however, by Tesla's poor returns, and his \$13 billion drop was his biggest loss of the year so far. Despite his disastrous day, Musk still has a net worth totaling \$164 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index. His fortune ranks him second in the worldwide rich list, only behind French luxury brand mogul Bernard Arnault.

According to an internal email seen by the outlet, Musk told his Space X employees that he is optimistic about the venture, despite his high-profile rocket launch going up in flames.

The largest rocket to ever take

off, the 395-foot behemoth was comprised of a Super Heavy booster and Starship.

But just four minutes after takeoff at 9:33 ET, the rocket dramatically exploded, abruptly ending its first orbital launch.

Space X has claimed that it purposefully activated the flight termination system to obliterate the rocket after the Super Heavy craft failed to separate, which began causing an uncontrollable death spin before it was exploded.

Despite the unideal optics of exploding the rocket as thousands of people watched on from the ground in south Texas, NASA, Musk and SpaceX have hailed the launch as a success



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after achieving their main objective of lifting the Starship off the launchpad. While most of his net worth decline is reportedly tied up in his giant stake in Tesla, Musk experienced further setbacks in his latest unpopular decision with Twitter. Ever since acquiring the company a year ago, the billionaire has threatened to remove blue tick verification.

And after receiving a muted reaction to his 'Twitter Blue' rollout, Musk eventually followed through Thursday and rid the site of 'legacy' ticks. The decision was widely panned online, especially by those who lost their verification, with megastars including Oprah Winfrey, Justin Bieber and Kim Kardashian now finding themselves without their prized blue ticks.

## Neighbor who shot at six-year-old girl in the face when basketball rolled into his yard is arrested after manhunt

**- as it's revealed he previously attacked his ex-girlfriend with a SLEDGEHAMMER**

(News Agency)-The man accused of shooting a six-year-old girl and her parents after her ball rolled into his front yard has been arrested after it emerged he was previously cited for attacking his girlfriend with a mini-sledgehammer.

Police and law enforcement officials in North Carolina say Robert Louis Singletary, 24, opened fire on Kinsley White, 6, and her parents Tuesday night in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Singletary turned himself in to investigators in Tampa, Florida late Thursday evening, according to police. Tampa is located roughly 600 miles from Gastonia. In a news release from the domestic violence incident which took place in December, police said Singletary did not allow the victim to leave for several hours, despite her feeling 'dizzy' after being struck.

'The victim further stated that Singletary told her that she could not leave until she had cleaned up all the evidence from the assault,' the release states. According to the Gaston County Police, Singletary turned himself

in to officials around 4.45pm at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in Tampa, Florida.

At the time he was arrested, Singletary did not have identification on him.

His identity was confirmed with Tampa law enforcement and processed just before 7pm Eastern Standard Time Thursday. The shooting suspect is next scheduled to appear in court Friday, April 21, in Hillsborough County, Gaston Police said in a post. His court appearance will address his extradition to Gaston County, North Carolina.

While speaking with WSOC, Kinsley's mother Ashley Hilderbrand, asked the suspect to turn himself in after it was reported that he went on the run.

'Just please turn yourself in,' she said. 'There was no sense in what you did.'

As local residents continue to try to understand why the horrific shooting took place, details of his arrest in December have since reemerged.

A release from December states that Singletary attacked his 21-year-old girlfriend at his apartment



in Gastonia.

Police reported to a local hospital around 9.30am to speak with the woman who had called 911 after the assault in which she was hit in the back of the head with a mini-sledgehammer.

'The victim said that after being struck, she immediately felt dizzy and disoriented and that she was bleeding profusely from the back of her head,' a release stated.

The woman complied and was held inside the apartment for two hours.

While searching the apartment, officers located evidence from the assault including the mini-

sledgehammer believed to have been used to assault the woman. An arrest warrant was later issued and Singletary was charged with assault with intent to inflict serious injury, kidnapping, and communicating threats.

Singletary was held on a \$250,000 which he later made. In Tuesday's shooting, Kinsley and her father, William White, were both injured.

Hilderbrand said that at the time of the shooting, William was attempting to distract the neighbor so that other children could get away.

William was struck in the back by a bullet and remains in the hospital at this time.

Kinsley's mother told WSOC she was outside and said she heard Singletary make a threat to her family members.

'He looked at my husband and my daughter and told them, "I'm going to kill you," Hilderbrand said.

She said the neighbor then chased them while shooting. He allegedly kept firing until his gun had run out of bullets.

'I believe he would have got me and my husband too,' said Carolyn Hilderbrand, Kinsley's grandmother. 'He just run out of bullets.'

'We don't even know the man,' Kinsley told WSOC. The young girl spoke with the local news station just hours after the incident and with bullet fragments still lodged in her cheek.

As she talked with reporters, she held her grandfather's hand and fought back tears.

Kinsley also repeatedly voiced her concern for her father's health. 'Why did you shoot my daddy and me? Why did you shoot a kid's dad?' Kinsley asked.



# The 2024 Elections Will Be Make or Break for the Opposition, and for India

So when, instead of falling the BJP's vote shot up by almost six percent in 2019, it was not only the Congress but all of the opposition, and civil society, that went into shock.

## The challenge before the opposition goes further

Four years later, the secular parties and civil society members have still not found an explanation. To this writer's knowledge, the first person to give one was the French political scientist, Christophe Jaffrelot. It was that while Modi's grand promises of economic revival had failed to re-kindle hope in the youth, his social welfare programmes had created a sense of entitlement among the poor of all ages that they were unwilling to risk losing.

Smriti Irani, Modi's minister for minority affairs, confirmed this at the India Today conclave in Delhi last month and hinted that it would be the BJP's main electoral plank in 2024. In a session titled "Hindutva and the New India," she said the BJP would portray its members once again as "sewaks" (servants) of the people of India, and Modi not as their pradhan mantri, but their pradhan sewak. In crisp sentences, she set out what the pradhan sewak had done for the poor of India. In the past nine years, she said, he had given 480 million Indians bank accounts through the Jan Dhan Yojana; built 110 million toilets to provide security and privacy to women in the villages through his Swachha Bharat Abhiyan programme, and provided medical insurance of up to Rs 5 lakhs to a hundred-and-something million families against 1300 diseases, in 26,000 hospitals across the country through his Ayushman Bharat scheme.

She could have also added that the pradhan sewak's aggressive digitisation of government services had not merely simplified and speeded up the peoples' interaction with the state, but eliminated most of the delays, stress and corruption that had accompanied it. This was a boon not to be underestimated.

These claims have been made by the BJP's spokespersons on several occasions and been accepted by the public because they have gone completely unchallenged by the Congress. That must not be allowed to continue. For all of the programmes for which Irani gave the entire credit to Modi were born out of earlier initiatives not only of the UPA and Vajpayee governments, but of the United Front government in the mid-1990s.

The Jan Dhan Yojana is old wine in a new bottle, for it is a reincarnation of the Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account (BSBDA) scheme that was begun by the Reserve Bank of India under the UF government in 1997. By May 2014, when Modi came to power, the RBI had already registered 250 million accounts under it. The Swachha Bharat Abhiyan is also the

continuation of an earlier programme, the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, that was started by the Vajpayee government in 1999. Finally, the Ayushman Bharat scheme is still in its infancy, for a recent study has shown that even awareness of its existence is limited to about half of the eligible population. The statistics Irani cited, therefore, describe its potential and not its achievement.

Another programme, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima (crop insurance) Yojana too had been preceded by scores of trade and occupation-centred insurance programmes that had been launched by state governments over the previous several decades. Finally Modi's Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana for rural electrification is also a new name for the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana, which had almost completed the electrification of all villages (defined, as it is even now, as the provision of power lines to 10 percent of the households in a village) before Modi came to power.

Neither the Jan Dhan Yojana nor the Swachha Bharat Abhiyan have been an unqualified success. 93 million of 462 million accounts allegedly opened under the former were still inoperative in August 2022. Subtract these and the accounts opened earlier under the BSBDA, and it means that the JDY had added 120 million operative bank accounts during Modi's first eight-and-a-half years in power. This is good but not especially impressive. In fact, given the far greater access to computers, mobile telephony and Wi-Fi today than in the 1990s and it is almost certain that any other government would have given similar or better results.

What has been impressive is the presentation of these programmes as Modi's, not even the BJP's, and the appropriation of all the credit for them by the pradhan sewak. Equally impressive, but for the opposite reason, has been the Congress party's tomb-like silence. For throughout the past nine years, its leaders did not reach out to the scores of civil society activists who have been

defending Indian democracy in the media day and night at their peril, to give them the ammunition they needed. Could this have been because in that entire organisation there was no one who remembered these facts, or thought of doing the two hours of research that it took me to unearth them?

## The need for a new social contract

Setting the record straight is only the first task that the future coalition must undertake. Its second task will be to etch out the political and economic future that it will strive to create in order to restore communal peace – and the pride in India's pluralism and diversity – that were the envy of the world before Modi set out to destroy it.

But after so many general elections, and so many promises forgotten immediately after the voting had ended, the coalition will have to convince the electorate that it will not repeat history yet again. To do this, it will need to push a new social contract with the voters that lists precisely how it will fulfil its political and economic promises to them. This article has neither the purpose, nor indeed the space, to launch into a detailed discussion of what such a social contract needs to contain. But the broad issues it must address are listed below:

First and foremost, a future coalition government must end the root cause of the corruption and criminalisation of Indian politics that Modi is now exploiting. This is the absence of a legal, and fully audited, system of election finance.

Second, it must find and offer remedies for the deepening agricultural distress that has been making one farmer commit suicide every 40 to 45 minutes.

Third, it must reform the education system to end the stress that is making one student commit suicide every 35 to 40 minutes.

Fourth it must reform the judicial system to give the poor immediate and cost-free access to justice. Of these, the first is by far the most urgently needed.

India copied its constitution from the Government of India Act of 1935, and

the unwritten constitution of Great Britain. But while doing so, the constituent assembly somehow overlooked the fact that the average size of the British parliamentary constituency is 369 square kms, while that of the Lok Sabha constituency is 6,000 square kms.

## The money will follow

Whereas the 1935 Act suffrage had been limited by a property qualification to only 6 percent of the adult population – even of a rich state like undivided Punjab – the CA opted for universal suffrage. Having rightly done this, however, they failed – in fact, explicitly rejected – proposals to create a state funding system to meet the cost of universal suffrage.

Till 1967, this need was met by a growing private sector. But in 1967, by when a sizable proportion of these donations were going to the Swatantra party and the Jana Sangh, Indira Gandhi decided to ban company donations to political parties altogether. That began the criminalisation of politics which Modi is using to destroy his opposition in state after state today.

With characteristic decisiveness, Modi has resolved the problem of electoral finance by creating anonymous, tax free electoral bonds and an opaque tax free and not-subject-to-RTI PM Cares fund. And he assumed when creating the bonds conduit, that most of the donations by Big Business would come to the BJP.

His assumption has proved correct so far, for according to the Association for Democratic Rights, more than 70 percent of the electoral bonds purchased have been for the BJP. But as happened after the Emergency, and in the late '80s, if a stable and credible opposition coalition emerges, it could turn into his Achilles' heel in the coming months. It is therefore not only the credibility, but also the financial viability of the opposition's coalition that will depend upon the economic, social and constitutional reforms that it espouses and the credibility of the details of these that it reveals to the electorate.

## What are the Ideological Projects Progressive Indians Stand for?

Most importantly, even though they are headed by the Sangh's 'evangelicals', each of these organisations are supported (financially and organisationally) by BJP Union and state governments, by individual legislators, as well as by businesses and organisations aligned to the Sangh. Collectively, they form a complex matrix, explained below. Need for course-correction for progressive forces In stark contrast, progressive forces are calcified in time, clinging to dogmatic tactics that address only the symbolic: a token protest, a petition/open letter, a conference/seminar in familiar haunts, posts on social media, a walkout in

legislatures or sporadic rallies. These undoubtedly keep the flock together, but the effect of such "spectacle politics" is limited to PLU (People-Like-Us). None of these interventions save the next victim of state-sponsored terrorism, or convert the silent majority. Nor do they matter to the ruling dispensation, who are secure in the knowledge that the Sangh's political projects will continue to do the heavy lifting for them, no matter what their governance or developmental track record is like. The bitter reality is that even though these calibrated events are cathartic for progressives (humne kuch kiya), they do nothing to structurally check the machine

uprooting India's constitutional edifice. What progressives really need to do is spearhead political projects of our own, and thereby disrupt the status quo. The Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) was the first step in this endeavour. Apart from the sheer grit and dedication it displayed, it also served as a clarion call to likeminded forces. Even though some of the momentum generated by the BJY has been frittered, there is still a window of opportunity. Progressive parties need to prod aligned stakeholders to re-invent their operational methodologies, and collaboratively champion diverse ideological projects.



# Indian History and its Course Correction That Cannot Be Delayed Any Further

Period 1: Associated with Painted Grey Ware, circa 10th century to 8th century BCE.

Period 2: Northern Black polished ware, circa 8th c. BCE to 200 BCE.

Period 3: Sunga period, circa 200 BCE to start of CE (Common Era).

Period 4: Saka-Kushan period, 1st c. CE to 3rd c. CE.

Period 5: Gupta Period, 4th-6th c. CE.

Period 6: Post-Gupta period or pre-Rajput period, 7th-9th c. CE.

Period 7: Rajput period, 10th-12th c. CE.

Period 8: Islamic period, Sultanate and Mughal eras, 13th to 19th c. CE.

Period 9: British period, 19th to mid-20th century CE.

As clear from the given periods, there is much more to Delhi's history than just the 13th-19th century era Islamic rule.

A complete debunking of the Aryan Invasion/Migration Theory based on recent archaeological and other scientific findings is an absolute necessity now. Just presenting the facts (as for example: arguments from both sides) is not enough, here the AIT/AMT must be shown to be as myths and completely debunked, so that these fake

propaganda theories are removed from the next generation's mind, and they do not keep appearing in future articles and books.

A chapter on the Saraswati River with various literary evidences and scientific findings of its course must be written in a simple manner for school level history studies, along with explanations as to why the Harappan culture should be termed as the Saraswati-Sindhu Civilisation instead of Indus Valley Civilisation. Michel Danino's book on the Saraswati River can be made a reference point for writing this chapter. It is essential to do this so that in future, the Saraswati River is not turned into a mythical river again.

Besides the Saraswati Sindhu Civilisation, there must also be a chapter on the recent archaeological findings from various excavations that are directly or indirectly associated with the SSVC, for example, the Rakhigarhi site findings, the Sinauli excavation, etc. Presenting a chapter on the cultural, religious, and social continuity of ancient traditions and practices starting from the pre-historic, to the proto-historic,

moving on to the historic and modern times is a necessity to burst the popular Leftist myth that after the Harappan era, India went through a dark period, of which nothing much is known historically. Examples of swastika, yoga, ornaments, various motifs, matrika/mother-goddess and linga worship, wearing of sindoor, etc., all show the cultural and religious continuity in Hinduism and other Indic religions starting from pre-proto historic times.

A chapter that would present a basic study of the Hindu temple architecture is very important so that students know about their Indic structural heritage. A brief study of some of the more commonly seen sculptures on temple walls is also essential to instill a preliminary level of knowledge of Indian art and iconography among schoolchildren.

A greater focus with more chapters devoted to the various Indic dynasties (Satavahanas, Pallavas, Pandyas, Chola, Palas, Senas, Ganga, Ahoms, Rashtrakutas, Pratiharas, Kakatiyas, etc.) along with the Mauryas, Kushanas, Sakas, and Guptas should be the first focus or objective of the

curriculum creators. Islamic dynasties and the British Empire were foreign invading rulers, with foreign religious and cultural connotations, and the focus on them should be less.

It is also important to discuss, as part of school historical studies, the massive destruction of temples that the Islamic rulers had carried out across the length and breadth of India, without any attempts to whitewash these historical crimes/atrocities. Slavery (selling Hindus after conversion to Middle East nations for huge profits), which rose to gargantuan proportions under Islamic rule was institutionalised and made legal during the rule of Alauddin Khilji, which increased even further under the Mughals. This must also be made a part of history studies as there are enough historical records of Hindu slaves under Islamic dominance to write a chapter on this.

History must be presented truthfully, closest to how the events had unfolded, based on archaeological and literary evidence. Any attempts at writing false historical information, distorting facts, whitewashing atrocities, or watering down narratives to make them appear

less unpleasant should be immediately resisted and stamped out. India is perhaps the only nation in the world that has distorted its history to such an extent that its own native/ indigenous religions and cultures are mocked and derided, while the brutal foreign invasions are glorified and the atrocities of the invaders are completely whitewashed to make them appear as benign beings.

All protests by so-called "historians" who had once distorted Indian history to suit their Marxist agendas should be completely ignored while doing the course correction. Changes and course correction are essential in Indian history at school level studies to remove all propaganda narratives, and the Government of India must go ahead with this with an iron hand to set things right. As for the outraging academicians of yore, they can keep showing their anger. All their opinions and outburst must be sidelined and ignored, just like they had once viciously sidelined all stalwart historians (R.C. Majumdar, etc.) who had refused to toe their line and peddle their propaganda narratives.

## Atiq Ahmed Murder: Ask Why, Not Whodunnit

In April 2019, under the strict protection of the police, the Yogi government moved Ahmed to Naini Jail in Prayagraj. By this time, the Supreme Court had given its verdict in the Deoria Jail case and ordered Ahmed to be moved to Sabarmati Jail in Gujarat.

Atiq Ahmed had more than 100 cases registered against him, including extortion, kidnapping and murder. It's a terrible commentary on the state of justice delivery mechanism of the country that, after all those cases piling up over many years, his first conviction came in March this year for kidnapping Umesh Pal, a witness to Raju Pal's murder. The sentence was pronounced a month after the murder of Umesh Pal, the key witness in the case of MLA Raju Pal's murder in 2005, in 2023.

Atiq Ahmed's men had also shot dead two police security guards outside their Dhumanganj residence on February 24, an act that was caught on camera. On

February 25, a case was registered against Ahmed, Ashraf, Ahmed's wife Shaista Parveen, two sons, Guddu Muslim and Ghulam, and nine others, based on a complaint lodged by Umesh Pal's wife Jaya Pal. Ahmed and his brother Ashraf were brought to Prayagraj for trial in connection with the 2005 Raju Pal murder case. A team of UP Police brought Atiq and Ashraf from the high-security Sabarmati Central Jail in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to Prayagraj on March 26 to produce them before a court in the case of the kidnapping of Umesh Pal.

Ahmed and two others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Before three young men — identified as Luvlesh Tiwari, Sunny and Arun Maurya — shot Atiq and his brother Ashraf dead in the hospital premises on the night of April 15, Atiq had expressed his apprehension that he could be killed, but he did not expect it would happen within 72 hours after his son Asad was 'encountered'.

A scrutiny of the footage of killing the duo shows nobody was shouting 'Jai Shri Ram' at the time of firing the shots. When the visibly panicked policemen who had dispersed regained their composure and rushed to grab the assailants, that was when the chant was heard. Interestingly, the camera of a news agency lost focus when the shots were fired while a media house followed the attackers. Yet, the media house in its subsequent report claimed misleadingly that Luvlesh Tiwari, Sunny and Arun Maurya were screaming 'Jai Shri Ram' even as they were firing.

The difference between the timings of the sloganeering could establish the attackers' political motivation and hence, is critical. Were they instructed to project the Yogi government or Hindus in poor light, an order from their handlers that they had forgotten at the spur of the moment?

The slogan might have otherwise been an afterthought to garner

sympathy of the majority community. Given the plethora of anti-Hindu laws enacted since Jawaharlal Nehru's era up to the 10 years of the UPA government, which even the Narendra Modi government is reluctant to fiddle with, and given the posse of judicial interventions only in Hindu ways of worship — from Sabarimala to Mahakaleshwar — this hypothesis has many takers. If they did it to make a statement of Hindutva, then one would be impelled to observe that at least a handful of Hindus have given up on the state and turned law unto themselves. The state's callous regard for the truths of cases, the community's sensitivities and human and religious rights invited this situation. But if the attackers' enmity with Atiq Ahmed and his brother was vengeance, even then supporters of vigilante justice would have a soft corner for them.

Finally, if there is a tacit order for the policemen to let the malcontents be eliminated by

design, the courts must note this could be an aftermath of the brazen moral support they extended to rioters while condemning the government of the province in cases related to the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) riots in the recent years. When the executive realises the judiciary will only hand it down a raw deal, it does have the means to pre-empt the hostile black coats. And even the best lawyer of the Leftist cabal will struggle to establish the extra-constitutional elimination of hardened criminals is deliberate. The era of fighting a wrong with another to get things right has begun. Whodunnit is secondary. Chasing and catching a vigilante does not get rid of the reason that created the maverick justice seeker. Why the ilk of Atiq Ahmed is falling by dozens in Uttar Pradesh is the question the state must ponder over and address its record of injustices that led to this mess. Lest more provinces get 'inspired' and India should prove a failed state.



# The Clarence Thomas Scandal Is About More Than Corruption

**As soon as the story broke that Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas had, for decades, been taking expensive vacations on the dime of billionaire Harlan Crow, liberal critics and conservative defenders huddled around the same question: Had Thomas sold his votes on the court to the highest bidder?**

Sen. Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat, led off with a tweet that Crow funds a conservative outfit that has filed briefs in eight different Supreme Court cases. Each time, Thomas sided with Crow's group. This wasn't quite the gotcha liberals were looking for, though. Four of those decisions and judgments were unanimous, and in the other four, Thomas joined with some, sometimes all, the court's conservative justices. Conservative legal scholar Ilya Shapiro took the opposite tack, daring anyone to question "the sincerity of any justice." A justice wouldn't change his vote simply on the basis of an undisclosed gift or the company he keeps. This, too, wasn't quite the conversation ender Shapiro and the right imagined it to be. As New York Times columnist Jamelle Bouie pointed out, "Corruption is much more than a cartoonish quid pro quo." When money talks, the words need not take the form of "Do this, and I'll give you that." Money buys a lifetime of conversation between men of power. In that fraternity of words and wealth, stories are swapped, trust is gained, respect is earned, ideas are shared and preferences become policy. As a description of the problem of Clarence Thomas, however, corruption too has its limits. Morally, corruption rotates on the same axis as sincerity — forever testing the purity or impurity, the tainted genealogy, of someone's beliefs. But money hasn't paved the way to Thomas' positions. On the contrary, Thomas' positions have paved the way for money. A close look at his jurisprudence makes clear that Thomas is openly, proudly committed to helping people like Crow use their wealth to exercise power. That's not just the problem of Clarence Thomas. It's the problem of the court and contemporary America.

In 1987, four years before he joined the Supreme Court, Thomas gave a speech at the

Pacific Research Institute, a San Francisco think tank that traces its roots to the economic philosophy of Milton Friedman and is dedicated to "advancing free-market policy solutions." The target of Thomas' speech was the midcentury liberal — economists like John Kenneth Galbraith who held money and markets in bad odor and whose attacks on rich businessmen defined the common sense of the New Deal. Thomas' view of liberalism may seem unrecognizable today, when many Democrats are as enamored of bankers and entrepreneurs as those bankers and entrepreneurs are of themselves. But the midcentury liberal was a different animal. Thomas complained that liberals saw money and economic activity as "venal and dirty," as a grubby means to a grubbier end. Far nobler, in the liberal view, was the "idealistic professions" of journalism, the academy and the law, where people "make their living by producing words."

In Thomas' speech, we can hear the primal cadence of the original culture war between the right and the left. Long before they reached the battlefields of abortion or trans rights, liberals and conservatives were fighting over the meaning and status of wealth. No mere war of economic positions, this was a civilizational struggle over who in our society deserves the highest form of recognition and respect: the man of money or the man of words? Hewlett-Packard or Hollywood, IBM or the Ivy League, Wall Street or NPR? It doesn't take much to see how this apparent conflict is badly posed: Where, after all, do knowledge workers and bankers get their degrees if not at elite schools? From whom does Harvard, Hollywood or NPR get its funding if not wealthy elites? Even so, conservatives choose their false dichotomies wisely. Not only are these divides culturally resonant; they are also constitutionally salient. For liberals of the

1960s and 1970s, when Thomas was coming of age, the most sacred provision of the Constitution was freedom of speech. Like sexual intimacy or gender identity today, words were thought to be an expression of who we are, a disclosure of our deepest sense of self. That's why liberals sought to surround them with a constitutional fence of rights and protect them from the state.

Along with a small group of far-sighted conservatives, Thomas realized that if the activity of the businessman and the banker could be redescribed as words, as speech worthy of the First Amendment's protections, it too could achieve the status of a constitutional right. That activity included everything from advertising to campaign contributions to the language of contracts. Like regulation of speech, any policies and laws regulating those activities could be subject to the highest levels of judicial scrutiny. Under this approach, the constitutional — and civilizational — order of the New Deal could be overturned. On the Supreme Court, Thomas has pursued this project with great vigor — and great success. Championing the power of business in the economic sphere, he has helped strike down economic policies that impinge upon what is called "commercial speech." Championing the power of business in the political sphere, he has taken on campaign finance laws and regulations. He has chipped away at the court's claim, in the landmark case *Buckley v. Valeo*, that limitations on campaign contributions are a legitimate means of eliminating "the reality or appearance of corruption in the electoral process."

It is here, in the realm of campaigns and corruption, that Thomas has left his most permanent mark on the First Amendment — and a lengthy paper trail leading back to Harlan Crow. Money "is a kind of poetry," wrote Wallace

Stevens. Thomas agrees. More than an aid to speech or speech in the metaphorical sense, money is speech. Not only do our donations to campaigns and candidates "generate essential political speech," Thomas writes in a 2000 dissent, but we also "speak through contributions" to those campaigns and candidates. He's not wrong. When my wife and I gave money to the campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, we were doing more than aiding their candidacies. We were voicing our political values and advocating our policy preferences, just as we did when we showed up at their rallies and canvassed for them, door to door.

In today's world, citizens don't simply speak into the air as they did in the Greek polis. They speak through mediums designed to amplify their message. Those mediums cost money. To speak on social media, I have to buy a computer and pay for the internet. If you speak at a rally, you'll need a bullhorn or a sound system. If both of us are going to leaflet a farmer's market, we'll need to pay for photocopies, pens, clipboards and the like. Whenever we speak politically, we're speaking through something, hoping that something will help our words reach more people than they would if we were simply standing in a corner and talking to passersby.

The same is true of campaigns and candidates. As Thomas writes in a 1996 case, a campaign or candidate is a "go between that facilitates the dissemination" of our beliefs. These are not merely abstract or general beliefs; they are specific beliefs that we expect to "affect government policy." When we make a political donation, we are exercising our "right to speak through the candidate" with the expectation that our "views on policy and politics are articulated," and, should the candidate win office, she will attempt to enact those views

into law. The candidate is the donor's mouthpiece. Thomas doesn't pull back from the plutocratic implications of his argument. He approvingly cites a passage from a 1972 treatise on money and politics: "Some views are heard only if interested individuals are willing to support financially the candidate or committee voicing the position. To be widely heard, mass communications may be necessary, and they are costly." Costly communications require big donations. Big donations mean big donors. "The only effect" that "'immense aggregations' of wealth" will have on an election, Thomas writes in yet another case from 2003, is that "they might be used to fund communications to convince voters" and that "corporations ... will be able to convince voters of the correctness of their ideas."

Influence and access are what all citizens seek. Influence peddling is not a perversion of politics; it is politics. Thomas is neither soft nor shy about that fact. He believes that liberals should stop "casting aspersions on 'politicians too compliant with the wishes of large contributors'" and accept the materiality of modern speech. Speech needs a substrate, substrates cost money, money entails donors, donors are wealthy. Like the rest of us, they seek to have their beliefs and positions instantiated in the law.

Thomas' approach to money in politics obviously focuses on elected officials, not appointed judges, but the throughline is clear. Thomas' positions have been felt across the Supreme Court's First Amendment rulings. Where businesses used to win First Amendment cases at a much lower rate than individuals, they now win those cases at roughly the same rate as individuals.



# Atiq Ahmed ran crime syndicate from jail, used mobile and extorted Rs 80L from builder

**Gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed used to run his syndicate from Sabarmati jail using a mobile phone. WhatsApp and audio messages reveal how he got a builder to pay his son Asad Rs 80 lakh. The money, say sources, was used to carry out the murder of Umesh Pal in February.**

Gangster-politician Atiq Ahmed fearlessly ran his crime syndicate using a mobile phone from inside Sabarmati Jail. India Today has accessed WhatsApp and audio messages which reveal Atiq Ahmed's free run from inside prison.

Atiq Ahmed was shot dead at point-blank range by three people in Prayagraj on Saturday. Atiq's brother Ashraf was also killed on the spot. The messages show how Atiq operated from jail. In January, Atiq Ahmed threatened a builder, Mohammad Muslim, and demanded Rs 5 crore from him. The builder ended up paying Rs 80 lakhs to Atiq Ahmed's son Asad.

Asad, along with an aide, was killed in a police encounter in Jhansi on Thursday.

It is being said that the Rs 80 lakh was used to plan Umesh Pal's murder, which took place in February.

**ATIQU AND HIS PINK SLIPS**

Apart from this, it has also come to the fore that Atiq Ahmed always used to charge 'gunda tax' from big builders and businessmen to contest elections. Two types of slips were issued to the businessmen and builders who used to pay the 'gunda tax' to him. Those who paid between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 5 lakh were issued pink slips while those who coughed up over Rs 5 lakh were given white slips.

**HOW ATIQU THREATENED BUILDER**

As per sources, Atiq Ahmed's son Asad had first called Mohammad Muslim on January 9 but the builder did not receive the call. Later, Atiq Ahmed sent a threat message to Mohammad Muslim.

"I am telling you for the last time, you are playing ED-ED with my son. The ED (Enforcement Directorate) has not seized your money yet, it is better that our son Umar has his account. And the money given to Asad, we need it for the election so we don't have any enmity with you..." read the threat message.

Atiq Ahmed further told the builder, "You have earned your

house with luck and intelligence, but give us the money... It will be of great use to us at this time... Understand more in less words... I am not going to die, inshaAllah... it is better that you meet us." According to sources, the builder used to live in Prayagraj but out of Atiq's fear, he left for Lucknow in 2007. Atiq Ahmed had been harassing Mohammad Muslim since January this year for money. After receiving Atiq Ahmed's threat message, Mohammad Muslim paid Rs 80 lakh to Asad, which was used to pay the shooters and arrange for the weapon used in the Umesh Pal murder case. In fact, the gun with which the accused,

Sabir, shot Umesh Pal outside his residence in Prayagraj in February belonged to Atiq Ahmed. These revelation came even as a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe the murder of Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf, who were shot dead while they were being escorted by the police after undergoing medical tests. The SIT team has taken a copy of the FIR from Shahganj police station and has also got hold of the CCTV cameras and DVRs installed in Colvin Hospital and nearby houses. The SIT will be recording the statements of the police personnel who were taking Atiq Ahmed and Ashraf to court on the day they were shot dead.

## UK PM Rishi Sunak faces parliamentary probe over wife Akshata's business interest

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing a watchdog inquiry under his parliamentary declaration of interest obligations related to a Budget policy that could benefit his wife, Akshata Murty, through her business interest in a childcare firm, it emerged on Monday.

The inquiry has been opened by the UK's Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, an independent officer of the House of Commons in charge of looking at evidence if individual British members of Parliament are feared to have broken a rule under the 'Code of Conduct'. The active inquiries on the watchdog's list include one opened on Sunak, 42, last Thursday under Paragraph 6 of the rules of conduct, as Downing Street said ministerial interests were "transparently declared". "Members must always be open and frank in declaring any relevant interest in any proceeding of the House or its Committees, and in any communications with Ministers, Members, public officials or public office holders," states Paragraph 6. According to the

BBC, the inquiry relates to the British Indian leader's wife's interest in Koru Kids Ltd, which is likely to benefit from a new pilot scheme announced in the Spring Budget last month to incentivise people to become childminders.

Akshata Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, is listed on the UK's

Companies House register as a shareholder in Koru Kids – one of six childminder agencies in England listed on the government's website with contact details.

The Opposition had flagged this fact last month and called for further explanations at a hearing of the Liaison Committee – made up of all House of

Commons committee chairs. Labour MP Catherine McKinnell had asked Sunak if he had any interest to declare in relation to the new childcare policy.

"No, all my disclosures are declared in the normal way," he said at the time. Now the parliamentary watchdog's investigation will decide if there has been any breach of the

code, which can then be put before MPs sitting on the Committee on Standards – which is responsible for deciding any sanctions.

"We are happy to assist the Commissioner to clarify how this has been transparently declared as a ministerial interest," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

## Why army and paramilitary forces are fighting in Sudan

Fighting in Sudan continued for the second day on Sunday. The clashes between the armed forces and the paramilitary RSF, which started on Saturday, left 59 dead, including three UN workers, and injured over 500 people. Fierce fighting between Sudan's armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continued for the second day on Sunday in its capital Khartoum. The clashes, which started on Saturday, left 59 dead, including three UN workers, and injured over 500 people. Clashes that started on Saturday between the armed forces and the paramilitary RSF sparked an international outcry and regional concern, including border closures by neighbours.

**WHY ARMY AND PARAMILITARY FORCES ARE FIGHTING**

The fighting erupted on Saturday following weeks of power struggles between army units loyal to General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of Sudan's transitional governing Sovereign Council, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, who is deputy head of the council, news agency Reuters reported. It was the first such outbreak since both joined forces to remove Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and was sparked by a disagreement over the integration of the RSF into the military as part of a transition

towards civilian rule, Al Jazeera reported on Sunday. The disagreement over the proposed integration of the RSF into the military has delayed the signing of an internationally backed agreement with political parties on a transition to democracy. Both Burhan and Hemedti accused each other of starting the fight.

**WHO HAS THE UPPER HAND** Sudan's army appeared to gain the upper hand, pounding paramilitary bases with air strikes. As per Reuters, Sudan's military launched air strikes on a paramilitary force's base near the capital in a bid to reassert control over the country and threatened efforts to transition to civilian rule. At the end of the day

of heavy fighting, the army struck a base belonging to the government's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the city of Omdurman, which adjoins the capital Khartoum, eyewitnesses were quoted by Reuters as saying. **HOW NEIGHBOURS REACTED TO THE POWER TUSSE**

The fierce clashes sparked an international outcry and regional concern, including border closures by neighbours Egypt and Chad. The United States, Russia, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UN Security Council, European Union and African Union have appealed for a quick end to the clashes that threaten to exacerbate instability in an already volatile wider region.



# 'Tum Ab Chup Raho': Interrogating the Enforced Silences of the Modi Government

The interview with Satya Pal Malik gives a fair idea of what Malik was being asked to be silent about, but what is of great concern is who asked him to stay silent and what could be the implications of his staying silent and not staying silent. The concern arises because the implications could be very wide, ranging from national security to the state of our democracy

The power of silence came to mind while watching Karan Thapar interviewing Satya Pal Malik. It was not so much what Malik was silent about but more about what he was told to be silent about! While speaking about the ghastly incident at Pulwama in February 2019, Malik says that when he told the prime minister that the incident had happened due to failure on our (the home ministry's) decision not to provide the CRPF aircraft to ferry their people, he was told by the prime minister, "... (Don't say all this, this is something else, let us speak)." Returning to the Mahabharata, the situation, briefly, is that during the epic war, the Pandavas were finding it difficult to counter Dronacharya who was fighting on the side of the Kauravas. It was strategised that if he were told that his son, Ashwatthama, had died, he (Drona) will lose heart and give up fighting. Killing Ashwatthama was not easy, so Bhima killed an elephant named Ashwatthama and it was conveyed to Drona that Ashwatthama had died. Not believing this and having faith only in Yudhishtira (who never would tell a lie) Drona asked

Yudhishtira if Ashwatthama had died. This is when Yudhishtira is supposed to have responded with this celebrated statement "Ashwatthama Hata:ha Iti, Narova Kunjarova?" The legend has it that when he said "Narova Kunjarova", Krishna blew his conch loudly so Drona could not hear the last part of Yudhishtira's statement, and thinking it was his son who has died, threw his weapons down and was killed.

As compared to the above, rather old, instance of the power of silence, a very recent one is found in a Supreme Court judgment of March 2, 2023, in what has come to be called the Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners case (Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India, WP(C) 104 of 2015). The Supreme Court, in paragraphs 211 and 212 of the judgement, enunciates the "Principle of constitutional silence or abeyance". The following quote captures the essence of the principle, "What remains unwritten and indeterminate can be just as much responsible for the operational character and restraining

quality of a Constitution as its more tangible and codified components" (Paragraph 212). Substitute the words "unwritten and indeterminate" with the "spoken word", it is possible to paraphrase this quote to mean "silence speaks". What is left unsaid may sometimes be more important than what is said. Listening to the interview gives a fair idea of what Malik was being asked to be silent about, but what is of great concern is who asked him to stay silent and what could be the implications of his staying silent and not staying silent. The concern arises because the sweep of implications could be very wide, ranging from national security and the state of democracy in the country, though these must, out of necessity, stay in the realm of speculation. Corruption and silence

Another major issue that arises out of the bid to enforce a silence is that of corruption. While responding to questions relating to corruption during his tenure as governor of Goa, (I can safely say that the Prime Minister does not hate (or dislike) corruption too much)." Malik gave examples

from his tenures as governor in J&K and Goa to substantiate his statement, including mentioning names of specific persons whom he said were very close to the prime minister. He went on to say that the result of his bringing out the corruption in Goa was that he was transferred from there within a week of sharing information. He says that though there were no flights from Goa, a special almost broken-down Indian Air Force Avro was sent to move him out, which took the whole day to reach from Goa to Gauhati. The propensity for silence on corruption brought out by Malik has had earlier manifestations. The most prominent one is electoral bonds. The entire system is silent about who gets how much money from whom except one agency, the State Bank of India. And the State Bank of India can, and does remain, silent for everyone except one entity, the Government of India which, in real terms, means the party in power at the Centre! It is the power of silence that keeps the electoral bonds scheme going.

Another manifestation is in the form of PM-CARES Fund.

The address of its website is <https://www.pmcared.gov.in/>. The inclusion of "gov.in" in the address is under normal circumstances a dead giveaway about its status, and the website says "Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund." Despite all this, the Government of India says in a sworn affidavit in the Delhi high court that the fund does not come under the purview of the Right to Information Act. Not giving information under the RTI Act is another form of trying to enforce a silence. Malik also comments on the silence of the prime minister on the Adani affair and says that this silence is not helping the prime minister in any way. According to Wikipedia, Malik was born in a village in western Uttar Pradesh, and began his political career in 1968-69 as the president of the students' union of the Meerut College, Meerut, from where he obtained his B.Sc. and LL.B. degrees. The first public office he was elected to was as a member of the UP

## AI's pandemonium leaves global leaders scrambling

As officials from Washington to Brussels to Beijing scramble to put new checks on the technology, getting them aligned is emerging as its own big challenge.

The lightning-fast arrival of chatbots and other eerily human AI tools is triggering a sudden, anxious call for new rules to rein in a technology that's freaking a lot of people out.

Right on cue, these proposals — many of which span national borders — are arriving. But they are also raising a big global question: Can any of them work together? This week, European politicians called for new rules for so-called generative AI — the technology behind the likes of ChatGPT and Google's Bard — and also urged President Joe Biden and Ursula von der Leyen, his European Commission counterpart, to set up a global summit to develop global standards.

In the U.S. Senate, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced plans last week to create a so-called "AI Framework" to boost oversight over the fast-evolving technology

— all while giving companies the freedom to keep innovating.

They're joining a cavalcade of existing AI rulebooks that range from UNESCO's Ethics of AI agreement to the Council of Europe's Convention of AI to more focused proposals like last year's White House "Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights," as well as the European Union's AI Act.

There are now more national AI strategies than you can shake a stick at, including China's burgeoning AI rulebook. And the voluntary AI Principles from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are now almost five years old — a lifetime in terms of how artificial intelligence is developing.

Not to be outdone, American and European officials, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and EU Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager, will gather next month to promote shared guardrails for so-called "trustworthy AI," or an acknowledgement that Western

democracies must work together when defining how this technology should be used. The policymakers behind this effort are trying to sound reassuring that some kind of global, or at least Western, harmony on artificial intelligence rules will prevail.

"Companies on both sides of the Atlantic can use these tools to ensure that they can comply with requirements on both sides," Alejandro Cainzos, a senior aide to Vestager, Europe's digital chief, said in an interview soon after U.S. and EU officials met in Washington late last year to discuss the AI rules. "We have different systems, but the underlying principles will be well-aligned." "You've got people still fighting around the edges" But as quickly as such proposals are published, doubts are arising about whether any kind of international standard for AI is even possible. The answer is important — and will likely define the geopolitics engulfing technology in the decade to come. Artificial intelligence, like many new technologies, crosses borders as easily as the internet does, and is already

embedded across society in ways that were unthinkable years, if not months, ago.

Yet countries' laws and rulebooks aren't so jet-setting. That's leading to increased tension in how leaders grapple with the rise of AI that is playing out — in real time — in efforts to create a global consensus about what rules are needed to calm everyone's nerves. "I'm just really afraid that the OECD countries need to get past arguing about small things and look at the bigger picture," said Audrey Plonk, head of the OECD's digital economy policy division, whose team developed the group's AI Principles, arguably the most comprehensive Western playbook for how to approach the technology.

Many countries, the OECD official told POLITICO, have different views on how to regulate AI, and such friction — some want immediate government intervention before the technology is rolled out, others want to see how the market develops before stepping in — is slowing down coordination on what should be done now.





# CEO Tim Cook says India is at the tipping point, Apple is bullish about AI

**In an exclusive interview with India Today, Apple CEO Tim Cook talks about the company's future plans in India.**

Apple CEO Tim Cook is optimistic about the Indian market, stating that India is at a tipping point and that Apple is poised to have some good growth in the country. In an exclusive interview with India Today, Cook expressed excitement about Apple's plans in India, including local manufacturing, online and offline stores.

"India is at a tipping point and it feels great to be here. You can feel the vibrancy, dynamism. The feeling that anything here is possible," Cook told India Today in Mumbai. Hours earlier, the Apple CEO opened the doors of Apple's first offline store in

India, and welcomed customers who had queued up at the store since early morning.

Cook gave a nod to Apple fans in his talk with India Today. "There is a huge Apple community in India," he said. "We brought the online store a few years ago, a retail store, and expanded the retail presence on Thursday in Delhi. We have manufacturing here. We have an extraordinary developer community in India." On Apple's future plans in India, Cook didn't discuss the specifics. But he said that India was important for Apple. "India has its own journey and culture. We really need to

understand the local culture to do well in a country like India. So we are trying to bring our best in India," said Cook.

Apple on Tuesday opened its first retail store in Mumbai, and is set to open another store in Delhi on Thursday. Cook received a warm welcome from fans at the Apple Store inauguration in Mumbai and hopes for a similar experience in Delhi on April 20.

In the coming months and years, Apple is hoping to explore different ways to expand its presence across the country. This includes local manufacturing of iPhone models, with plans to assemble Pro models in India

in addition to the base models. There are also reports that AirPods will be manufactured locally in India. It is also said Apple's partner Foxconn has plans to invest \$700 million on a new plant in India to ramp up local manufacturing of iPhones.

Cook's visit to India and Apple's focus on the Indian market signify the company's efforts to tap into the country's growing consumer base and further establish its presence. In addition to local manufacturing, Cook emphasised that Apple was bullish about artificial intelligence (AI), a key technology in many of Apple's

products. He mentioned features such as ECG and fall detection in the Apple Watch that utilize AI. Cook stated that Apple would continue to be at the forefront of artificial intelligence.

Cook acknowledged the growing competition in the AI space, with companies like Google and Microsoft already launching AI-powered chatbots such as Bard and Bing AI. Even Elon Musk has announced his work on an AI tool called TruthGPT. However, Cook's confidence in Apple's position in the AI landscape was evident as he expressed Apple's commitment to staying ahead in this field.

## Meet Dhingra Brothers: Who Bought Vijay Mallya Company And Made It Rs 56,000 Cr Business

One gets to hear the stories of success and struggle of many veteran billionaire businessmen of the country. Today, we are going to tell you the story of two such brothers who started their business from a small shop and currently they are the owners of a company worth more than 55,000 crores. The success of Dhingra Brothers of Punjab is no less than a film story.

Kuldeep Singh Dhingra and Gurbachan Singh Dhingra are the owners of Berger Paints, India's leading paint company. Kuldeep Singh Dhingra is the chairman of Berger Paints while Gurbachan Singh

Dhingra is the vice chairman of the company.

In the 90s, the country's smallest paint manufacturer

largest paint company in the country. Let us know in detail how the journey of their success was.



was bought from Vijay Mallya's UB Group. On the strength of hard work, they made this small company the second

Kuldeep and Gurbachan belonged to a business family which has their roots in Punjab. Their grandfather had

started a shop in Amritsar in 1898. Both brothers graduated from Delhi University and then started their business career as shopkeepers in Amritsar. By the 1970s, the annual turnover was Rs 10 lakh. But through hard work and dedication, as the business grew, they became the largest paint exporter to the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The net worth of Dhingra Brothers, who come in the list of successful businessmen of the country, is more than Rs 55,000 crores. Paint company bought from Vijay Mallya in a meeting Kuldeep Singh Dhingra, who climbed the ladder of success,

started expanding the business rapidly. Then he set his sights on becoming the owner of a multinational company from a shopkeeper. Actually the target was to acquire Berger Paints, which was then a company of Vijay Mallya's UB Group. Through his friend, he completed the deal with Vijay Mallya and bought Berger Paints. Today, Berger Paints has operations not only in India but also in several countries including Russia, Poland, Nepal and Bangladesh. The Dhingra Brothers are one of the richest families in India.





## Right Word

## Anti-RSS Diaries

# How Dubious Outfits in the West Target RSS with 'Fictional' Reports

For several decades, there has been a concerted effort to malign the image of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindutva in Western academia and public discourse. These efforts have increased manifold in recent years. In the third part of the multi-part series, we take a look at how some dubious outfits in the Western world release baseless and malicious reports against the RSS.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the World Sikh Organization (WSO) recently released a report entitled 'Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Network in Canada'. The report peddles unsubstantiated and wild allegations against the RSS not providing any evidence to support these assertions.

The report starts with a picture which has sketch of a Muslim man lynched and then it goes on to assert, "The image above of visibly Muslim men being lynched is a tweet posted on an RSS official account." The fact is that the RSS never posted any such picture on its official Twitter account. The report could have taken the screenshot of the RSS' official twitter account with this alleged post but it fails to produce any such screenshot because this post never existed on the official twitter handle of the RSS.

The report further states, "This exclusionary vision is grounded in ideological frameworks propagated by founding RSS figures such as Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and Madhavrao Sadashivrao Golwalkar, whose works cite Nazi Germany as an aspirational example."

The report writers have got their basic facts wrong here. The founder of the RSS was Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Golwalkar was the second Sarsanghchalak who joined the RSS almost a decade after it

was founded. And Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was the founder of Hindu Mahasabha. He was an inspirational figure for not only Dr Hedgewar but several generations of revolutionaries and his impact was profound on the Indian revolutionary movement. Dr Hedgewar was not the only one who was inspired by him, those who looked up to him included revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh amongst others. It is also absolutely incorrect to say that their works cite Nazi Germany as an aspirational example. In Fact, this lie has been propounded and promoted over the years that the RSS leadership was inspired by Nazism and Fascism. Golwalkar, who is often cited in this context, had in fact expressed deep concern over the persecution of Jews in the book, We or our Nationhood Defined. This book was translated by him from Marathi, he had not written it. And even within this book there is no

praise for Nazism or Fascism. But this false bogey has been created, perpetuated and promoted over the years.

The report says that RSS has been targeting Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Dalits in India and its work in countries like Canada has also resulted in such incidents there. These are baseless allegations and have nothing to do with facts. Not even a single law enforcement agency has ever named RSS in any communal incident. There are many Sikhs who are part of the RSS. In fact, during Partition, the pro-Pakistan hooligans which were part of the Muslim League had tried to attack one of the holiest shrines of Sikhs - Golden Temple - twice and RSS volunteers saved it by fighting with the attackers on the streets of Amritsar. As far as Muslims are concerned, a large number of Muslim leaders are part of an RSS inspired nationwide organisation called Muslim Rashtriya Manch. Several

Muslim leaders, including the religious ones, have been meeting with the RSS leadership. In recent times, a number of Muslim leaders have been sharing dais with the current Sarsanghchalak (Chief Mentor of the RSS), Mohan Bhagwat.

As far as Dalits are concerned, they have been the biggest beneficiary of the RSS' movement to unite Hindus. RSS' official stand is very clear that has been reflected in several of its resolutions that caste discrimination must be done away with and the reservations for Dalits should continue as an affirmative welfare measure till they themselves want to do away with it. RSS inspired organisations like Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Sewa Bharati, Ekal Vidyalaya specifically work for the marginalised sections of the society including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There are more than 2 lakh welfare

projects run by the RSS volunteers in various fields. The beneficiaries include millions of Indians cutting across religion, caste, creed, gender, age.

Another factual blunder made in this report is that it alleged that the RSS has a huge network in Canada. The RSS works only in India. It has no affiliates. However, there are many volunteers who, inspired by the RSS' goal of service to the society, do some social welfare related activities in other countries when they live there. The purpose is to serve the society. The report tries to create a scare by putting out fiction as facts as it says, "Various Sangh (RSS-related) organizations are operational in countries across the world, including Canada. Chief among this effort are educational chapters, or shakhas, that prepare both youth and adults through ideological training, ceremony, and religious instruction - all linked to the supremacist ideas of the RSS's founders and ideologues."

Now let us also try to take a look at the credentials of the organisations which released this report. A Delhi-based think tank Centre for Integrated and Holistic Research (CIHS) dug deeper into the background of these organisations and came out with some startling facts about both this report and its perpetrators. According to CIHS, the report has been widely criticised for its institutional bias against Hindus, India, and the RSS, as well as its malicious agenda, misinformation, rhetoric, and opinion-based claims. NCCM was founded in 2013 as a rebranding of the Canadian chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), an organisation that has been accused of ties to extremist groups like Muslim Brotherhood and terrorist groups like Hamas.



# Punjab Heading Towards Turmoil

## Is History Repeating Itself?

Punjab, during the period of 'Green Revolution', was the most prosperous state of India. The state, which went through almost 15 years of a painful insurgency from 1980, is once again facing unsurmountable challenges which emanate from political, economic, social and strategic reasons. If not handled maturely, they have the potential to take the state to another bout of chaos and turmoil. Having experienced the previous period of violence and turmoil in the 80s and 90s, one shivers at the thought of history repeating itself so soon. I recollect a few incidents of the late 70s and early 80s when I was a young officer who followed events in Punjab closely, even when I was posted to places as far away as Arunachal Pradesh, because I hailed from Punjab. The first incident relates to, when I had once come home on leave. I saw a big poster on a wall reading "Sikh Homeland Lai Ke Renge" which meant "We will take Sikh Homeland". I laughed at the idea, thinking in my mind that no right-thinking Sikh of Punjab would ever buy such a bizarre idea. I thought the people of Punjab were too busy in their economic activities to pay heed to such ideas. By 1984, I realised how wrong I was. Besides the internal political games played by politicians, propaganda supported by external forces inimical to India could sway young minds and create havoc in a sensitive border state like Punjab. Rest is a painful part of history.

The second occurrence was an open letter written to Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, by the famous journalist Khushwant Singh, which I read in a national newspaper. The letter requested her and her party not to play with fire or take those developments in a border state like Punjab lightly. I don't think the political leadership of the time took that open letter of

Khushwant Singh seriously or else the state would not have gone through the cycle of violence and bloodshed.

As per official estimates, 20,000 people were killed during the Punjab conflict, including 11,690 civilians, 1714 policemen and 7,946 militants. Many more are still missing, suspected to be victims of enforced disappearances perpetrated by the police. The biggest loser was the common man of Punjab, irrespective of his/her religion or caste. The negative economic impact of that period is still being felt by the people of the state. Whatever industry existed in the border state, shifted out to the neighbouring states or NCR, which took the jobs along leaving the youth dependent primarily on agriculture in an era of shrinking land holdings. Having witnessed the entire saga as it unfolded from the late 70s to the restoration of normalcy in the mid-90s, it is strongly felt that the whole episode is unfolding in a similar manner once again. Unfortunately, history appears to be repeating itself too soon and the stakeholders don't seem to have learnt their lessons. The political fault lines are reappearing and the state is being used as a

playground to play political games. Recent incidents of violence and subsequent poor performance of the police highlight an all-round failure of the leadership and the administration. These incidents could not have been planned and executed overnight. An alert police and the administration could have easily anticipated and prevented such incidents. Someone in the executive must shoulder responsibility for the serious unacceptable lapses. Blaming the ISI of Pakistan is a fair judgement, but we would be too naive not to expect our adversaries to take advantage of our fault lines, especially if we offer them on a platter. The solution lies in putting our own house in order and not just blaming the adversaries. The current national security environment is far too volatile and challenging due to enhanced threat levels on our Northern borders and active collusion between China and Pakistan in every sphere possible, to threaten India. At this juncture, the country can ill afford another challenge in a sensitive strategically pivotal border state like Punjab. A peaceful security environment is a prerequisite for India's economic growth to realise the



dream of a five trillion-dollar economy. It needs to be remembered that the restoration of peace in the 90s was the result of resolute political leadership of that time and the people of Punjab who supported the security forces and the administration. In fact, the people of Punjab decided to stand up against the militants helping the security forces in successfully executing operations in those days.

It is time to take the current threat seriously and take all possible steps to nip the problem in the bud before things get out of hand. The way forward, therefore, is - Firstly, the security apparatus must be beefed up to produce the highest quality of specific intelligence and targeted police operations to ensure an incident-free environment. There needs to be better

coordination between the Central and state intelligence and security agencies. Secondly, steps must be taken to prevent the ill effects of Narco-terrorism due to the nexus between criminals and potential terrorists. Drug abuse by the youth needs to be checked by involving all stakeholders. Thirdly, the state needs investments and economic activity to create jobs and improve the quality of life of the citizens by reducing their dependence on agriculture. Last, but not the least, it is imperative that all political parties shed their differences to put up a united front against the nefarious designs of the potential terrorists and adversaries of the country so that the state does not slip into that dark phase once again. The time to act is NOW.







# Socialists and 'Sanghis':

## A Decades-Long Love-Hate relationship

**Satya Pal Malik's decision to reveal the "truth" about the Pulwama attack will be examined elsewhere, but his decision to part ways with Modi is part of an old socialist ethos of immense ideological fluidity.**

Karan Thapar's interview with Satya Pal Malik for The Wire has fittingly left large sections of Indians bemused by its contents and angered by the government's silence on the former Jammu and Kashmir governor's accusations on key issues, including national security. The interview also provides us an opportunity to turn the gaze on the role of India's socialist groups, and leaders, over almost nine decades of their existence. In the first half of the 20th century socialist leaders worked with Jawaharlal Nehru, but later turned against him to create a platform of anti-Congressism. Today's remaining socialist leaders may be doing something similar to Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. Satya Pal Malik, although a BJP vice-president when appointed governor of Bihar in September 2017, embarked on a political career in 1966 as president of Meerut College Students Union by joining the Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha - the youth wing of the Samyukta Socialist Party led by Rammanohar Lohia. It is a different matter that in the "tradition" set by leaders from various socialist factions, Malik, too, swung across the entire political spectrum.

India's social democrats first coalesced under the banner of the Congress Socialist Party

(CSP) in 1934; they remained within the Indian National Congress (INC) despite having a separate constitution. Dual membership was customary then; numerous Congress leaders were associated with the Hindu Mahasabha. (Likewise, structural "fluidity" existed between the Rashtriya



Swayamsevak Sangh and the Mahasabha.) Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan were president and secretary, respectively, of the CSP's constitution-drafting committee. The party's foundation conference in May 1934 was attended by several bigwigs, including Minoo Masani, Sampurnanand, Lohia and N.G. Ranga.

Although socialist factions played a pivotal role in politically legitimising Hindu rightwing forces from the late 1950s

onward, the parting of ways between CSP leaders and the INC was over the "softness" of Congress leaders, led by the then UP chief minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, towards the Hindu nationalist viewpoint as articulated by Nehru's ideological opponent Purushottam Das Tandon. Narendra Dev was the

Congress legislator from Ayodhya but resigned - in an era preceding the anti-defection law - on moral grounds as his group decided to establish the CSP as a separate political party.

Pant fielded a Hindu priest known for his sectarian views and an associate of Hanuman Prasad Poddar, promoter of the Gorakhpur-based Gita Press, pioneers in the publication of religious and Hindu nationalistic books and periodicals. Poddar, in turn, was a confidant of Mahant Digvijaynath - Yogi

Adityanath's predecessor's predecessor as the head of the Gorakhnath math and part of the plan being hatched to seize control of the Babri masjid. Pant's plan worked and Narendra Dev lost the byelection.

This resolute opposition to communal forces was forgotten by the socialists swiftly. In the first Lok Sabha polls, Lohia backed the Mahasabha candidate against Nehru and the socialists engaged with the newly formed Jana Sangh and the Mahasabha. Contrary to the political consensus in India, the socialists backed Israel and supported Zionism. Several socialist stalwarts, including J.P. Narayan, J.B. Kripalani and Asoka Mehta, visited the country.

A decade later, after the poor electoral performance of the two socialist parties - the Praja Socialist Party and the Socialist Party - Lohia started forging an opposition platform based solely on anti-Congressism. In May 1963, byelections for four Lok Sabha seats - three in UP and one in Gujarat - were held and Lohia convinced Deendayal Upadhyaya and others to field a single opposition candidate for each seat. Consequently, Minoo Masani stood as a Swatantra Party candidate from Rajkot, Kripalani as an independent from Amroha, Lohia as a Socialist

Party nominee from Farrukhabad and Upadhyaya as a Jana Sangh candidate from Jaunpur.

It was the first instance of a joint strategy to field single opposition candidates against the nominees of the Congress, which was reeling from the reverses of the 1962 war with China. The initiative for the joint strategy was largely Lohia's and although Upadhyaya lost, this was the first time that the Jana Sangh was not treated like a political untouchable. Lohia continued his partnership with the Jana Sangh - in April 1964 he issued a joint statement with Upadhyaya opposing the Congress's stand on nuclear disarmament.

The 1967 elections yielded fragmented verdicts in several states. Lohia's health was declining, but other socialist leaders got the Jana Sangh on board for the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal governments, the first coordinated coalition effort across several states.

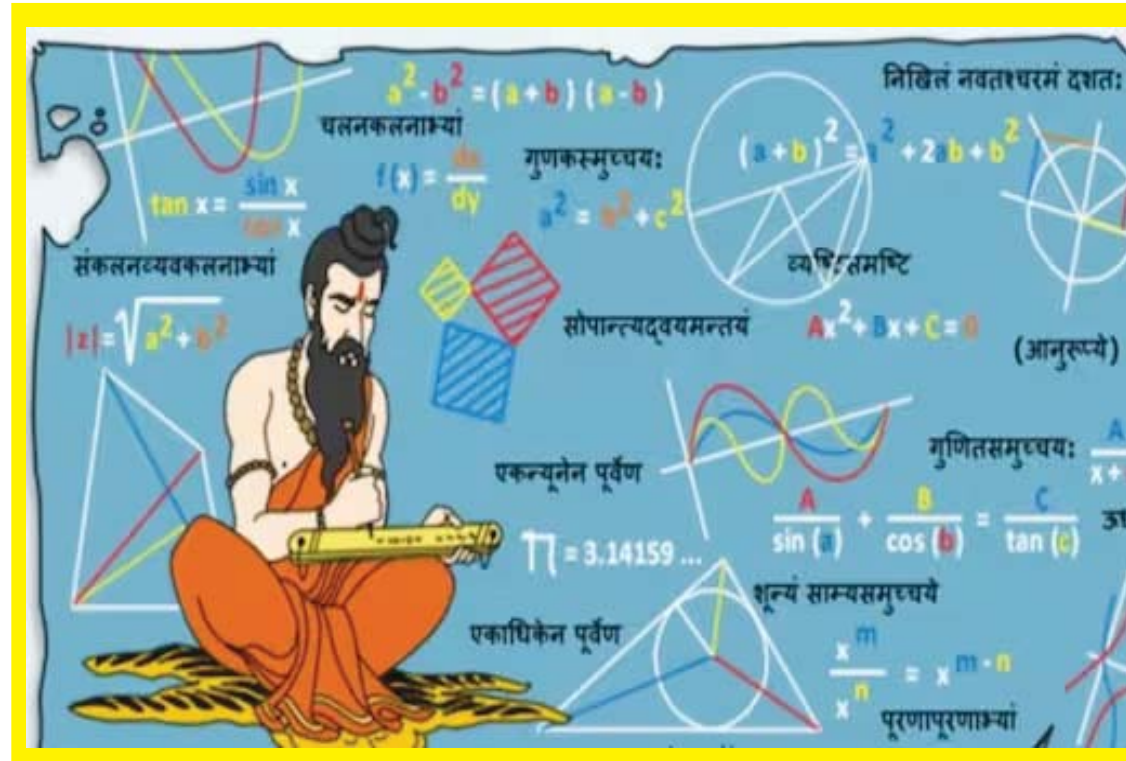
A greater push for the Sangh Parivar's political legitimisation was given in the run-up to the imposition of the Emergency. A key role was played by JP, who was approached by two important RSS workers of that time - K.N. Govindacharya and Sushil Modi. By then, the Navnirman Movement in Gujarat, backed solidly by the RSS, was hugely successful.



# India, Not Mesopotamia, Was the Mother of World Civilisations: How Vedic Maths Can Salvage Indian History

On Monday, the Value Addition Courses Committee of the University of Delhi organised a three-day workshop on Vedic mathematics. Organised under the leadership of Prof Niranjana Kumar, I was invited along with Atul Kothari, national secretary, Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas, an RSS-affiliated organisation that has been taking up the cause of Vedic maths books to be included in school and college curriculums, to give a talk on Vedic mathematics. While Kothari talked about the role and relevance of Vedic mathematics in turning new India into a mathematical powerhouse, the truth is Vedic Mathematics is also a powerful tool to explore India's real history - the past that has been officially suppressed and ideologically distorted for reasons other than history.

India gained Independence more than seven decades ago, on 15 August 1947, but it still has not got its history right. Even the Modi government, currently in the fag-end of its second term, has failed to put in place any comprehensive change. It's a valid criticism. After all, the history of India continues to be primarily about its foreign invaders and plunders. It is still a Delhi-centric narrative, where some of the biggest empires are left unattended. The Ahoms, for instance, ruled the Eastern and Northeastern parts of India for over 600 years and had the distinction of defeating the Mughals at the height of their power under Aurangzeb. But they remained largely ignored. Even the Chola and the Vijayanagara empires failed to get the attention they deserved. But the biggest fraud committed on this civilisational state was to divest this landmass of its indigenous population. We were told that this fertile landmass was actually bereft of people. So Aryans came and displaced Dravidians, pushing them down south. This narrative is still going strong despite the fact that the word 'Aryan' isn't a racial term.



So, were Dravidians the original inhabitants of India? No, our eminent historians say that they too entered India from outside and forcibly displaced the Adivasis. Some historians even wonder if Adivasis had come from outside. The narrative, therefore, was that India was like a railway platform where different people boarded at different points in time. This means this territory was as much of the Aryans and Dravidians as it was of latter-day Muslims and Europeans. It belongs to them all, or to none of them.

Given the popularity of this theory, one may assume that there must be hundreds of pieces of evidence - literary, archaeological, astronomy-related or even genetic - to prove such migrations into India, especially the arrival of the Aryans. The truth is there is not a single credible evidence to back this theory. In fact, if there's any evidence it's about out-of-India migration. The Puranas, the Mahabharata - they all talk about people moving out of India. This was countered by maligning the Puranas, questioning their veracity and projecting them as a product of Brahmanical imagination.

As for the archaeological evidence, it suggests that the

Saraswati river, the most praised river in the Rig Veda, dried up around 1900 BC, at the same time the so-called Harappan civilisation collapsed. Initially, we were told that the Harappans were vanquished by Aryans. Some of our well-known historians, now mostly out of favour, would invoke poor Indra for his role in destroying Harappan forts! Here too there was no archaeological evidence to back this grandiose claim. But when it became difficult to justify the "invasion", they quietly moved to "migration". Now these hordes of people were not projected as invaders; they came to India quietly and their numbers were very minuscule too.

The migration theory was even more ludicrous than the invasion one. Despite being largely illiterate and overwhelmingly pastoral people, and despite the fact that they came in small numbers, these Aryans managed to supplant an urban civilisation that was numerically superior, economically prosperous, and technologically more advanced. The Harappans even disowned their own language to adopt Sanskrit. The reality is that culture and language are very sticky in nature; they are hard to supersede even when the entire country is converted into another

religion. Khomeini's Iran and Islamist Pakistan are apt examples.

This is where the role of Vedic mathematics becomes important: It can help expose the distortions in Indian history, besides bringing out India's contribution to the making of the world civilisation per se.

A closer, unbiased study of Vedic mathematics has shown that the commonly held view of Mesopotamia being the cradle of civilisation may not be true. The late American mathematician, Dr A Seidenberg, in his paper, 'The Origin of Mathematics', writes about the existence of two distinct traditions in ancient mathematics: The algebraic or the computational, and the geometric or the constructive. "If it could be shown that each of these has a single source - and there are many rather familiar facts that suggest this is so - and if, moreover, in both cases, the sources turn out to be the same, it would be plausible to claim we have found the unique origin of mathematics," he writes.

The common source, as per Seidenberg, was Vedic Mathematics - the mother of all ancient mathematics. Given its connections with Egyptian and Babylonian civilisations, he pushed Vedic mathematics

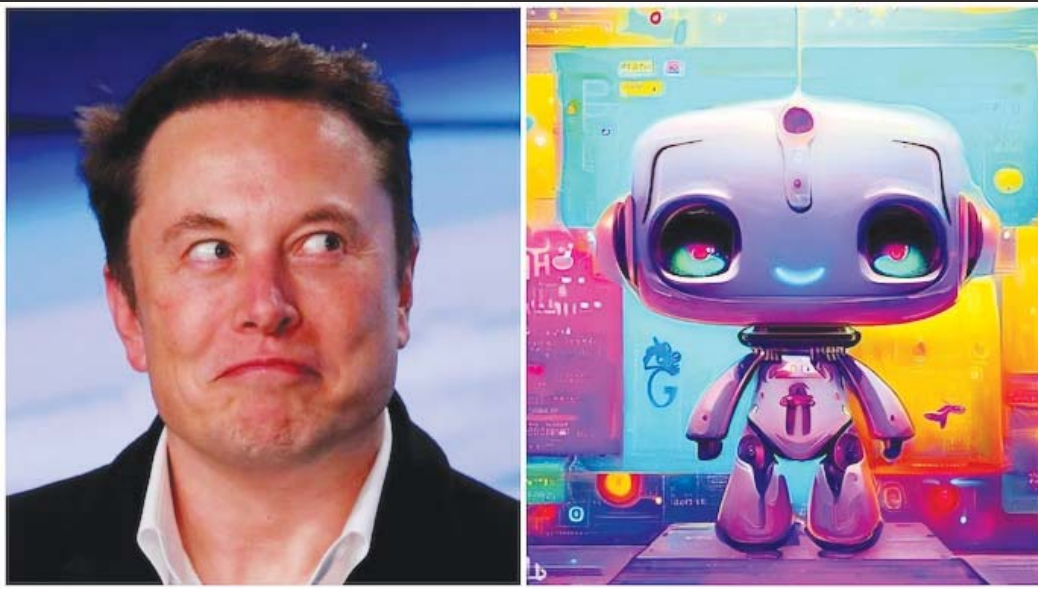
(Sulbasutras) as far back as 1700 BCE. But facing intense protests from Sanskrit scholars of that era, he began searching for "an older mathematics very much like it". He even went on an elusive trip to Iran looking for such a text. It's unfortunate that Seidenberg died without realising the full importance of his own work.

Today, when the Aryan Invasion/Migration Theory is busted, and new scientific and archaeological discoveries are pushing the antiquity of the Indic civilisation by thousands of years, Seidenberg's assessment seems to be true: That the sciences, including mathematics, were nurtured in India long before Mesopotamia and Egypt. The two civilisations, in fact, borrowed from India. Navaratna Rajaram and David Frawley write in their book, Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilisation, "The evidence of the Sulbas, notably the fact that Old-Babylonia and Egypt both derive their mathematics from them, places the early Sutra literature firmly before 2000 BCE, the date of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom."

Interestingly, astronomical references in the work of Asvalayana push this date for the Sulbasutras even further - to around 3100-2600 BCE. This received additional support from other astronomical observations, including one mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana. This is very much in line with the Indian tradition, write Rajaram and Frawley, which "places Asvalayana about five generations removed from the Mahabharata war. Baudhayana also belonged to the same period, perhaps a generation earlier". So, Vedic mathematics and ancient astronomy both vindicate the traditional date given for the Mahabharata war, which is 3102 BCE.

As mentioned earlier, the archaeological evidence being thrown at us currently suggests that the Saraswati river dried up around 1900 BCE.





## Elon Musk says he will create TruthGPT, an AI focused on understanding the universe

Elon Musk says that he will create an AI focused on understanding the nature of the universe and will call it TruthGPT. The Twitter owner thinks this to be the best 'path to safety'.

(News Agency)-Who could have thought that the best possible way to understand the secrets of the nature of the universe would be to create an AI programme wholly focused on it? The answer you are looking for is- Elon Musk. The billionaire has recently announced that he is planning to create an AI called 'TruthGPT' (the name rings a bell?). Musk feels that creating this AI is the only 'path to safety' as, since the AI's primary focus will be to find out more about the universe, it will refrain from trying to get rid of humans because we are also a 'beautiful part of the universe'. In a conversation with Fox News' Tucker Carlson, Musk shared his plans to create 'TruthGPT'. It was recently reported that Musk will be creating his own Artificial Intelligence company. His statement in the Fox News interview is a confirmation of these reports.

Elon Musk said, "I'm going to start something which I call 'TruthGPT,' or a maximum truth-seeking AI that tries to understand the nature of the universe."

Talking about how this will be a safer option, he added, "And I think this might be the best path to safety, in the sense that an AI that cares about understanding the universe, it is unlikely to annihilate humans because we are an interesting part of the universe." When Musk hinted at TruthGPT If the name 'TruthGPT' rings a bell in your mind, you are not alone. Musk had earlier dropped a not-so-subtle hint about his plans and had said in a tweet in February that what we all need is, well, TruthGPT. Musk's criticism of OpenAI On a related note, Musk has often criticised ChatGPT and its parent company OpenAI for he had left the company in various reasons. At first he had a problem with ChatGPT being 'too woke' and was concerned over the dangers of artificial intelligence. Then he started targeting OpenAI and said that Microsoft had turned it into a profit-making machine while the company was never supposed to be that. He had also called out OpenAI's decision to turn into a for-profit company and wondered if it was 'legal'. It is worth mentioning that Musk was, in fact, one of the founders of OpenAI when it was established in 2015. However, Musk quit OpenAI for he had left the company in 2018 and had also given up all his stake in it.

Earlier, reports had claimed that Musk OpenAI due to a conflict of interest situation as his other companies, Tesla and Space X, were also working on AI technologies at the time. However, a Semafor report recently revealed says that there was more to this story and Musk wanted to run OpenAI and entered into a conflict with other co-founders about the same. When a mutual agreement wasn't reached, Musk quit OpenAI.

## Explained: Why Zomato-owned Blinkit shut down some dark stores in Delhi-NCR

**Nearly 100 dark stores were shut down by quick commerce platform Blinkit in the past few days across Delhi-NCR, leading to temporary disruption in services. Here is all you need to know about the matter.**

(News Agency)-Zomato-owned quick-commerce platform Blinkit shut down nearly 100 dark stores across Delhi-NCR in the past few days. A dark store is basically a retail facility that is designed and operated like a traditional retail store, but it is not open to the public for browsing and shopping. Instead, it is used as a centre of fulfillment for online orders. The closure of some Blinkit dark stores comes days after a strike was announced by its delivery executives, who demanded the company to reinstate their payout structure after a sudden reduction.

Why are Blinkit executives on strike? Blinkit executives have been protesting over the past few days over the payouts they receive for deliveries. This after the amount was suddenly reduced by the company from Rs 25-30 to Rs 15-10.

It may be noted that this is not the first time that the payout on deliveries was reduced by Blinkit; earlier it was reduced from Rs 50 to Rs 25 per delivery. Today, hundreds of Blinkit delivery executives met the Gurugram labour commissioner and demanded the minimum payout per delivery to be reinstated to at least Rs 25. The disruption has rendered Blinkit services unavailable across many parts of Delhi-NCR, including Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Noida and Greater Noida. Customers in these regions can see the message 'temporarily unavailable' on the Blinkit app. However, it seems that the pay issue is being resolved and delivery services are gradually opening up. Blinkit services were unavailable for almost a week, and reports indicated that the disruption benefited Blinkit's rivals such as Swiggy Instamart, Zepto, Dunzo and BigBasket, who saw higher order volumes.

Not the first time Such strikes have occurred in the past, earlier faced by food delivery giants like Zomato and Swiggy. With growing competition in the online food delivery space, payouts to delivery partners have reduced gradually over the years as incentives were cut to maximise profits. Therefore, what happened in the online food delivery space a few years ago is repeating in the quick commerce space as more companies take harsh measures to boost revenue and profitability. The quick commerce industry has seen a boom in India after Covid, but companies in the play have struggled to meet large volumes and they were forced to hire a large number of partners always suffer as their executives with low payouts. businesses grow.

While Blinkit has addressed the issue, saying that the strike is almost over and most dark stores have become operational again in Delhi-NCR, the episode is a wakeup call for quick commerce platforms who rely on a vast network of gig workers to deliver orders from neighbourhood dark stores to customers. Delivery partners suffer Many industry executives have raised questions about the business model of quick commerce companies, highlighting how delivery partners always suffer as their businesses grow.

While most of these companies claim that their delivery partners earn around Rs 10,000-Rs 15,000 per month, it is always based on a rough calculation that they work for nearly 10-12 hours per day in a month, with hardly 3-4 off days. This model, according to several industry experts, is unsustainable and also harsh on delivery partners as they do not even get any added benefits that come with proper employment. Entrepreneur Ashneer Grover is amongst the entrepreneurs who feel that quick commerce has "no economics"





# Argentina battles major dengue outbreak with atomic radiation

Dengue is transmitted through the bites of aedes aegypti mosquitoes. Its symptoms include fever, eye, head, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting and fatigue.

(News Agency)- Argentina, fighting one of its worst outbreaks of dengue in recent years, is sterilizing mosquitoes using radiation that alters their DNA before releasing them into the wild. The South American country has this year recorded over 41,000 cases of the disease transmitted by mosquitoes, far

above the equivalent level in previous years of major outbreaks in 2020 and 2016, government data showed. "This mosquito, due to the rise in temperature in our country and the world... is able to spread more. Their population keeps on moving further south," said National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) biologist

Marianela Garcia Alba. To fight back, CNEA biologists have been experimenting with atomic sterilization since 2016. They are sterilizing 10,000 males per week and aim to increase that to 500,000. They expect to release the first batch of sterilized males in November. "They are sterilized through

ionizing energy and those sterile males are freed into the fields and when they meet with a wild female, their offspring are not viable," said Garcia Alba. "This way, by successive release of such males we'll be able to reduce the population of the vector mosquito." Dengue is transmitted through the bites of aedes aegypti mosquitoes.

Its symptoms include fever, eye, head, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. Similar techniques to sterilize pests using the same radiation found in X-rays have been utilised for decades, helping global efforts to control diseases such as chikungunya, dengue and Zika.

## How to save yourself from heatstroke as heatwaves soar up temperatures across India

**Heatstroke is the most serious heat-related illness when the body's temperature rises so fast that the sweating mechanism fails.**

(News Agency)-India has been witnessing high temperatures over the last few weeks. While schools have been closed for a week in West Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said that the heat wave conditions over East India are going to continue for the next four days at least. Over 13 people died from heatstroke in Maharashtra after attending a state award ceremony on Sunday (April 16). As a heatwave alert has been signalled in various states of the country, experts are advising people to stay well hydrated in the hot weather.

Intense heat can cause heatstroke, which is a condition that is caused by the body overheating, usually as a result of prolonged exposure to high temperatures. It could also be because of physical exertion during the hot weather. Your body can become quite serious and will need attention if its



temperature rises to 40 degrees Celsius. Heatstroke is the most serious heat-related illness. The body's temperature rises so fast that the sweating mechanism fails (the natural phenomenon to cool the body down), and the body is then unable to cool itself down.

According to Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the body temperature can go very high

for 10 to 15 minutes and can cause permanent disability or death if the person does not receive emergency treatment.

How to prevent heatstroke? To avoid your body reaching such a situation, there are a few things you can do to avoid heatstroke.

" Drink lots of water and keep your body hydrated. Experts have asked people to have summer drinks like

coconut water, mint water, lemon water, fresh fruit juices and buttermilk.

" Save your skin from severe sunburns by generously applying broad-spectrum sunscreen every 2-3 hours.

" Wear light, loose, cotton clothing to remain cool and to cover your head from direct sunlight.

" Use an umbrella when out in the sun and avoid direct

sunlight whenever possible.

" Have fresh fruits and vegetable juices with your meals and consume a plant-based diet.

" Keep the windows and curtains of your house closed during the day, especially on the sunny side of your house. Open them up at night to let cooler air in. Talking about why a person should not have high protein foods in the current weather, Dr Komal Malik, Head dietician, Asian Hospital, Faridabad, earlier told indiatoday.in that a typical non-vegetarian diet causes dehydration during a heatwave since the food takes time to digest.

"A longer digestion process increases heat in the body, triggering dehydration. To help ease your stomach from pain or increase body heat, have foods like lemon water, coconut water, buttermilk and fluids rich in electrolytes instead of having tea and coffee. Spicy foods should be avoided as well," said Dr Malik.



## After Jr NTR, Janhvi Kapoor To Share Screen With RRR Star Ram Charan For Her Second Telugu Movie

Here is an interesting and unofficial update about Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor and Mega Power Star Ram Charan. The two are likely to share the screen space soon in a new Pan-India movie with a Kabaddi sports backdrop. Sana Buchhi Babu, who rose to fame with the Telugu movie 'Uppena', is going to direct the movie and Oscar award winner AR Rahman is going to



## Kangana Ranaut Says Aamir Khan

Was Her 'Best Friend' But Tiff With Hrithik Roshan Changed It All



Kangana Ranaut took to her Instagram stories on Tuesday and shared a throwback video from her appearance on Aamir Khan's TV show, Satyamev Jayate. In the video, Kangana revealed how she consciously rejected several item songs in Bollywood after she saw a young girl dancing to an item number. Kangana was also joined by Deepika Padukone and Parineeti Chopra in the episode.

Sharing the clip, Kangana penned down a note and claimed how Aamir Khan used to be her 'best friend'. However, she further alleged that the equation between her and Aamir changed after her infamous battle with Hrithik Roshan. Kangana mentioned that it was because of Hrithik that Aamir made his 'loyalties clear'.

"Actually mujhe bhi kabhi kabhi woh din yaad aate hain jab Aamir sir was my best friend... jaane kahan gaye woh din (Sometimes I recall the time when Aamir Sir was my best friend... I don't know where those days have

gone)," Kangana wrote.

"One thing is for sure that he has mentored me, appreciated me, and shaped a lot of my choices, before Hrithik did that legal case on me. Post that they made their loyalties clear – it was one woman against entire industry," the actress further added. Meanwhile, on the work front, Kangana Ranaut is currently working on Emergency. She is not just directing the film but is also playing the lead in it. In the movie, Kangana will be seen essaying the role of India's former prime minister Indira Gandhi. Besides Kangana, Emergency also stars Shreyas Talpade as late former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Anupam Kher as late political leader Jayaprakash Narayan and Mahima Chaudhry as late Pulpit Jayakar, who was an author and Indira's close friend. The film will also feature Milind Soman as Sam Manekshaw. Kangana had earlier clarified that even though Emergency is a political drama, it is not Indira Gandhi's biopic.

score music for the much-awaited movie.

Once the update is officially confirmed by the filmmakers, the above said is going to be Janhvi Kapoor's second movie in Tollywood as well as South India. It is learned that the makers went through several names to pair opposite Ram Charan in the movie but finally decided to go ahead with Janhvi Kapoor.

According to the insiders, Ram Charan is going to play a dual role in the movie whereas Janhvi Kapoor will be seen as a lady love to one character of his characters. 'Sita Ramam' fame Mrunalini Thakur will also act beside another character of RRR star in the movie. However, it should be noted that the official announcement regarding the film or its cast has been made as of now. Meanwhile, Janhvi Kapoor has also been working with RRR fame NTR's 30th movie under the direction of 'Srimanthudu' fame Koratala Shiva.

## Bade Miyan Chote Miyan: Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff in army uniforms on the set

"Bade Miyan" Akshay Kumar and "Chote Miyan" Tiger Shroff, were seen posing in army uniforms on the set of "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" releasing later this year.

Directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" also features Prithviraj, Sonakshi Sinha, and Manushi Chhillar in the lead. This high-octane, action-packed film is one of the most eagerly awaited films this year and is tipped to be one of the most talked about action films. Akshay Kumar's forthcoming releases include 'OMG: Oh My God 2', his debut in Marathi cinema with 'Vedat Marathe Veer Daudle Saat' where he portrays the role of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the real life story of chief mining engineer Jaswant Singh Gill in 'Capsule Gill', the threequel to 'Hera Pheri', and the aviation based film "Sky Force".

## DEMI ROSE LOOKS SENSATIONAL

As she poses in a plunging bejewelled swimsuit on a paradise holiday



Demi Rose put on a busty display in a series of saucy holiday snaps on Thursday. The British model, 28, looked sensational in pictures that she posted to Instagram of herself in a cave in an undisclosed location. She donned a barely-there bejewelled swimsuit that left little to the imagination for the shots. Demi lay on a chair and closed her eyes in one photograph, while she pouted in another, revealing her pert bottom. The star appeared to be enjoying relaxed holiday life, letting her balayage locks flow loose over her shoulders. set. Also in the carousel, she sprawled across a rock and looked down, revealing the detailed back of her ensemble. Despite her seemingly boundless confidence, Demi has previously faced adversity after becoming victim to bullies in her younger years. She has been modelling for over a decade and

credits her career for being a 'blessing' after being subjected to cruelty during her school time. Speaking to Radio 1 Newsbeat, Demi previously revealed: 'I always wanted to get into modelling and when I eventually got there I classed it as a blessing because I grew up being bullied and didn't have many friends at all.' In 2019, both of Demi's parents died, just seven months apart and the star said going into lockdown straight after their deaths was 'a time of reflection. Having to deal with my parents' house and selling their stuff - it was a really sad place for me... 'I wanted to go and travel but I had three months in London, which was a lot of facing what I had been through and was a time of reflection.' Her latest shoot comes after she was seen teasing her OnlyFans page to her Instagram followers, after signing up to the X-rated content-sharing platform.





# Diljit Dosanjh's Turle Wali Pagri at Coachella

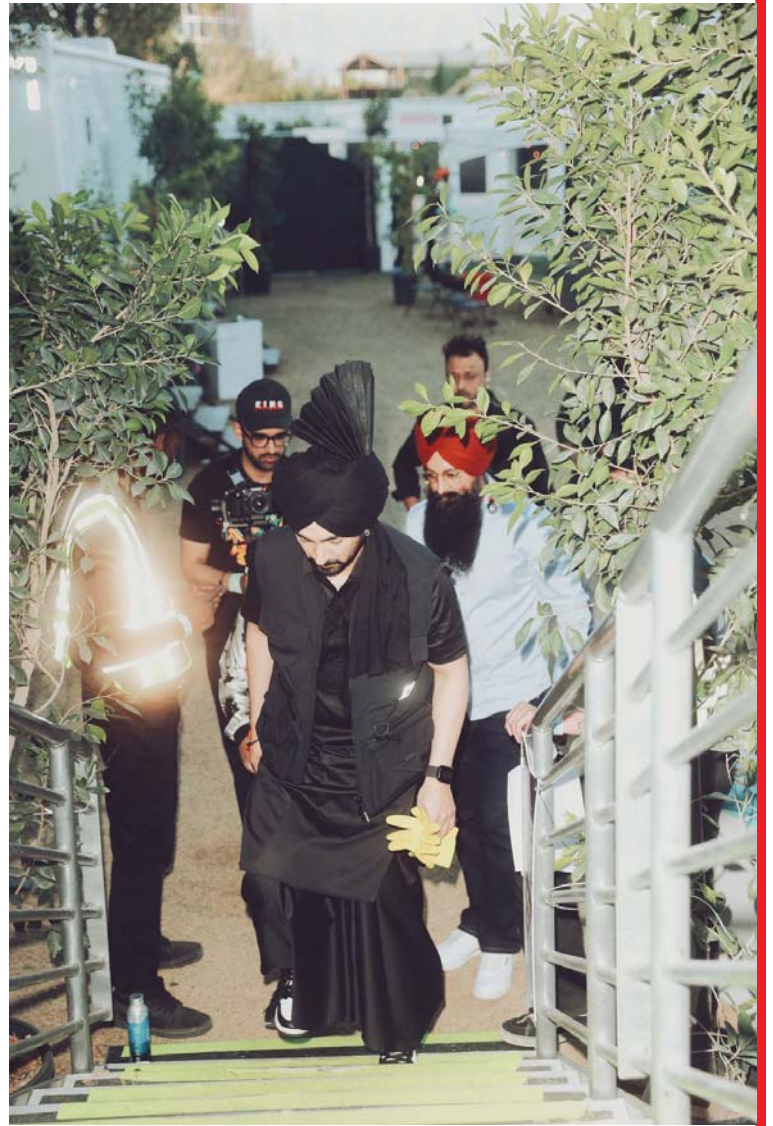
## His Turban Stylist Gurpartap Singh Kang Calls It 'Proud Moment for India'

Diljit Dosanjh created history when he celebrated and performed his music at the Coachella Music Festival on April 15th. Marking his debut and being the only Punjabi Sikh to perform at the festival, Diljit brought his Punjabi vibe not just through his music but with his desi style as well.

Dressed in a traditional Punjabi costume which comprised a black kurta, chadra (a piece of cloth tied on the lower half of the body) and pagri (turban), Diljit added a contemporary twist to the look by including a pair of Jordans, yellow gloves and a Carhartt WIP Elmwood vest. Known for his love for luxury brands and Indian silhouettes, Diljit has never shied away from experimenting with his looks. Keeping Coachella's look an extension of his roots and his identity, Diljit had everyone in the audience vibe with him as he set the stage on fire with his performance at the festival. A pagri is held in high regard by the Punjabi and Sikh community, and Diljit has been honouring it in every performance be it on stage acts or in movies. And making him achieve every look with elan, is his turban stylist Gurpartap Singh Kang. Gurpartap who has been working with Diljit for the past 12 years, has been instrumental in Diljit's iconic pagri looks. And with Coachella 2023 being the most iconic moment, Gurpartap who is currently in the US with Diljit spoke

exclusively to News18 about how proud he was to see Diljit Dosanjh perform on such a big stage such as Coachella. "Haryana ke chote se village Ranjit Nagar (Gondar) se Coachella tak pouncha..Proud moment," expresses Gurpartap Singh Kang. Speaking about his choice of outfit for the festival, Gurpartap further adds, "It is a proud moment for Punjabis and India, to see our traditional costume on such a big stage like Coachella. I feel extremely blessed to share this moment with Diljit and style the traditional pagri for his iconic performance." Donning a traditional look on an international stage, says a lot about Diljit, when asked Gurpartap who styles Diljit's stylish looks, Gurpartap says, "Diljit styles his own on stage looks. I tie and style his pagri based on the costume and the scenario requirement for instance film characters etc. For the Coachella performance, we decided on doing the traditional Punjabi turle wali pagri." The pagri which was made from 8 metres of cotton voile fabric complemented the black kurta and chadra adorned by Diljit. The yellow gloves added a pop of colour to his monochrome look.

While this look definitely celebrated his charming personality, we can't wait to see what he will be wearing for his second performance at Coachella 2023 on April 22. I guess we just got to wait and watch!



## Honey Singh and Tina Thadani Break Up After a Year of Dating?

Singer and rapper Honey Singh has parted ways with his actor-model girlfriend Tina Thadani. If a recent report by Hindustan

Times is to be believed, the two called it quits just a few days ago and are living separately now. Not just this, but they have unfollowed each other on social media and have also deleted pictures with each other. However, the reason behind their break up is not known as of now.

"They wanted different things in life. While they are currently dealing with the breakup maturely, both need time to heal. Tina is heartbroken, currently and trying to focus on her work. Honey, is not shy talking about the breakup. He has informed everyone about it," a source cited by the news portal claimed. However, when Tina Thadani was contacted by the news portal, she refused to comment on her break-up rumours and simply said, "I don't really want to talk about it". On the other hand, Honey Singh remained

unavailable for comment.

Honey Singh confirmed his relationship with Tina in December last year at an event in Delhi. Back then, the singer had announced his new album titled 3.0 when he shared that the title of his album was given by Tina. Pointing out at Tina, who was sitting among the audience, he had said, "Meri girlfriend baethi hai Tina, isne mujhe ye naam dia hai. Isne bola ki you are Honey 3.0 This is the third one (my girlfriend Tina is sitting here, she has given me this name, Honey 3.0)."

"We met on the sets, and I felt something different, more like she is mine. So, eventually I had to put a lot efforts to woo her and finally she agreed upon it. She has drastically changed my life. She knew a little about my early life already. I gave her more details and insights of my life so that someday she does not get to know something suddenly that would shock her or put her in thoughts that she should have known that particular information earlier," he later told Bollywood Hungama.

Prior to Tina Thadani, Honey was married to Shalini Talwar but the two parted ways after the latter accused Singh of domestic violence.







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