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## Canada needs to see India – not just the diaspora

Dealing with common challenges requires a political compact that addresses how both countries view Canada's Indian diaspora and mitigating its worst impulses, particularly those fanning separatist embers in India



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## How Does Pakistan Still Have the Funds to Sponsor Terror Against India?



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## China Goes All In On Taliban: Will Lying With The Devil Lead China to Hell?



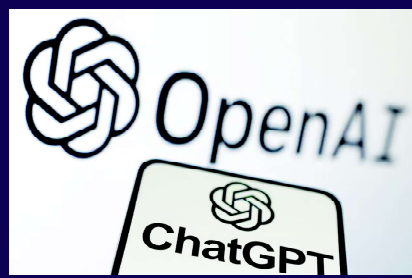
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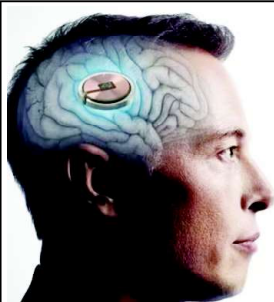


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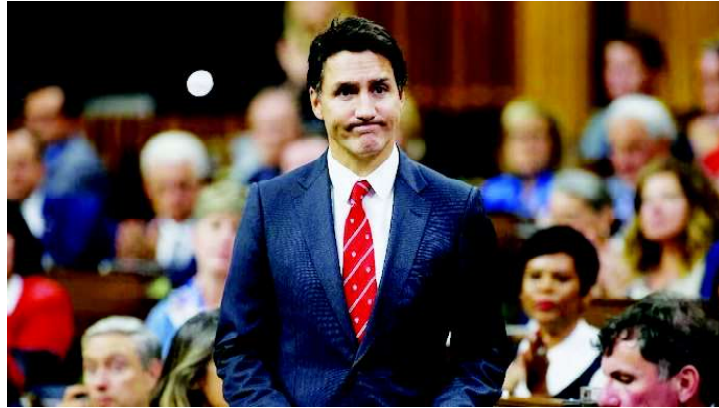
# 'Recognise Khalistani terrorist's threats as hate crime': Canadian Hindus to Trudeau

Amid the tense diplomatic standoff between India and Canada, the Hindu community in Canada has urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to recognise Khalistani terrorist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun's threats as a hate crime.

(Sai Bureau)-Canadian Hindus have written to the country's public safety minister, Dominic LeBlanc, expressing concerns over the recent statements made by Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, the leader of the banned pro-Khalistan group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). The development came amid a tense diplomatic standoff between India and Canada over the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

In a video that went viral, Pannun threatened Indo-Canadian Hindus to leave the country and return to India. "Indo-Canadian Hindus, you have repudiated your allegiance to Canada and the Canadian Constitution. Your destination is India. Leave Canada, go to India," he said. In the letter, the Canadian Hindus urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh to recognise the threat posed by Gurbatwant Singh Pannun as a hate crime. They said tensions have escalated since Trudeau said the Canadian investigative agencies were investigating a "potential link" between Indian agents and the killing of Nijjar.

They also said Gurbatwant Singh Pannun and his Khalistani associates have repeatedly expressed their beliefs and they



intend to target people who do not subscribe to their ideology.

"These threats have now materialised within Canada and it is imperative that the Canadian government does not underestimate their gravity," the letter stated.

The Canadian Hindus said both Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh have previously defended the incidents of Khalistan referendum "as matters of freedom of expression". The community urged them to address the threat posed by Gurbatwant Singh Pannun to Indo-Canadian citizens. "We anticipate that Canadian authorities

will take decisive action to address this matter. Will they persist in classifying this threat as an exercise of freedom of expression, or will they acknowledge the danger that has inadvertently befallen Canadian citizens?" the letter stated.

Earlier, Indian-origin MP Chandra Arya, a member of Trudeau's ruling Liberal Party, said Canadian Hindus were "soft targets", and urged the community to stay calm, but vigilant and report incidents of Hinduphobia to local law enforcement agencies.

HOW DID THE DIPLOMATIC ROW SNOWBALLED?

Ties between India and Canada came under strain when Trudeau on Monday said Canadian security agencies were investigating a link between "agents of Indian government" and the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, in June.

"Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar," Trudeau said in the House of Commons, the lower house of Canadian Parliament. India rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the matter.

Meanwhile, India has suspended visa services for Canadian nationals amid the diplomatic row. A notice by BLS International -- an online visa application centre in India that provides visa consultancy services -- posted on its website, "Important notice from Indian Mission: Due to operational reasons, with effect from 21 September 2023, Indian visa services have been suspended till further notice. Please keep checking BLS website for further updates."

## New CCM Report Reveals Troubling Trend: New York State's Advertising Practices Overlook Community Media

(New York) (Our Staff Reporter) - September 18, 2023 - A ground-breaking report on the advertising practices of New York state agencies and departments released by the Center for Community Media (CCM) at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism uncovers conspicuous inequities in the advertising spending practices of at least six state agencies.

Commissioned for CCM's Advertising Boost Initiative, the report titled 'Community Blindspot: Study of NYS agency advertising practices reveals lack of transparency that leaves community media business sector and audience overlooked' is the result of a year-long research project led by Professor Barbara Gray, Newmark J-School Associate Professor and Chief Librarian, with data analysis and visualization by Jennifer Cheng, CCM's Research and Development Associate. It provides insights into the advertising spend of New York State agencies across the multitude of outlets that make up the state's media ecosystem. Furthermore, the report provides recommendations for state agencies to reform their advertising practices in a way

that is more transparent, equitable and reflective of the state's rich diversity.

"In a state as diverse as ours, it is only right that state agencies distribute advertising funds to ensure fairness and support the economic viability of the media organizations that diligently serve these diverse communities. It is in New York's best interest to strengthen their capacity to fulfill their vital role as the voice of the different communities, fostering informed and engaged citizens," Mikhael Simmonds, CCM Executive Director, said.

New York State is home to a vibrant array of over 700 community media outlets, which not only comprise an essential segment of the state's media fabric but also function as small businesses that are intertwined with the local economy. They often serve as the primary news sources for many communities.

Based on data received from a third of the agencies contacted about their advertising allocations, the researchers analyzed \$216 million spent on 90 advertising campaigns covering various periods between 2015 and 2023. They found that the state's community media received a meager 2.6%,

about \$5.6 million of the total \$216 million spent on media buys over the decade.

In contrast, a total of 61.5%, equivalent to \$133 million, was spent on traditional mainstream media. State agencies, meanwhile, collectively spent \$42.4 million, constituting 20% of the total \$216 million, on social media, tech and ad-serving/targeting companies. This amount represents nearly eight times the agency ad spending that community media received, according to the report.

"Given that community media makes up a significant portion of outlets in our ecosystem, for it to receive only 2.6% of the advertising dollars flowing around New York State confirms the vast disparities we've known existed for years," said Darlie Gervais, Manager of the CCM Advertising Boost Initiative. "Our hope is this report opens a more vibrant discussion about community media's vital role, extensive reach, community issue coverage, and trustworthiness among the diverse communities so our state can better sustain them through increased revenue."

Findings from the report that support the

insights:

"The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance allocated zero of its \$3.9 million in ad spending on community media.

"The Office of Children and Family Services spent a paltry \$17K of \$2.2 million in ad dollars on community media.

"The Gaming Commission, which has the largest advertising budget of the agencies surveyed, spent only \$5.2 million, out of \$201 million, on community media outlets.

"The Department of Agriculture spent only \$3,485, of \$4.6 million, on media ad buys in community outlets.

"The Board of Elections spent \$199K, out of \$4 million, on advertising in the sector.

"The Department of Labor spent \$144,000, out of \$497K, on community media.

The report urges New York stakeholders to reduce these inequities in ad spending on community and ethnic media, and highlights the critical need for legal, administrative and structural reforms to address these disparities.





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# 'Defining moment, congratulations': PM Modi as women quota bill passes Parliament

The 128th Constitution amendment bill, referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, will now require the approval of a majority of state assemblies.

(News Agency) -Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked and congratulated 140 crore Indians after the historic women's reservation bill, titled 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', was passed by the Parliament on Thursday.

"A defining moment in our nation's democratic journey! Congratulations to 140 crore Indians," the Prime Minister posted on his WhatsApp channel.

Thanking all the Rajya Sabha MPs who voted in support of the bill, the PM said, "I thank all the Rajya Sabha MPs who voted for the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. Such unanimous support is indeed gladdening."

Calling the bill a "tribute to countless women", Prime Minister Modi said, "With the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament, we usher in an era of stronger representation and empowerment for the women of India. This



is not merely a legislation; it is a tribute to the countless women who have made our nation stronger. As we celebrate today, we are reminded of the strength, courage, and indomitable spirit of all the women of our nation. This historic step is a commitment to ensuring their

voices are heard even more effectively," he added.

## PARLIAMENT PASSES WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL


A watershed bill to reserve one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and state

assemblies for women received the Parliamentary nod on Thursday as the Rajya Sabha voted unanimously in favour of it.

Unlike the Lok Sabha, where two of the 456 MPs present in the House had voted against the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, all the 214 lawmakers present in the Rajya Sabha voted in its favour on Thursday.


The 128th Constitution amendment bill, referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, will now require the approval of a majority of state assemblies. It will be implemented after a delimitation exercise to redraw parliamentary and assembly constituencies based on a census which the government has said will be commissioned next year.

We made our nation. India has been enriched by their resilience and contributions."




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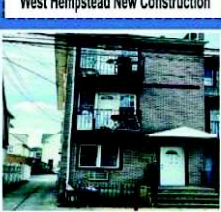
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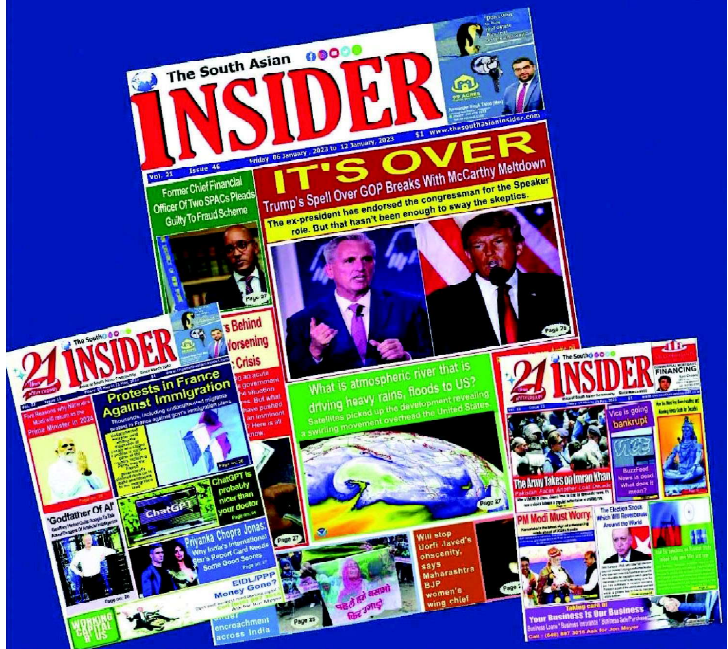
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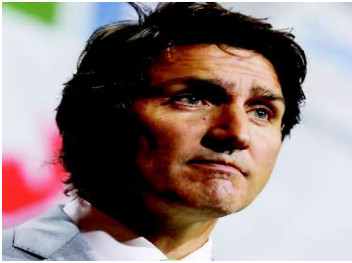
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## Canadian PM Trudeau refused to stay in presidential suite offered by India during G20



(News Agency) -Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau refused to stay in the specially prepared presidential suite in The Lalit hotel in New Delhi during the G20 summit offered by India, causing concern among Indian intelligence officials.

According to the sources, a separate presidential suite was booked for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in The Lalit hotel in New Delhi but he did not use the presidential suite for a single day. Instead, the Canadian Prime Minister stayed in a normal room at the hotel during his stay in India.

The Indian government had booked VVIP hotels for all the heads of state and delegates in Delhi.

Delhi Police and all the security agencies were in charge of the complete security for all the presidential suites. Despite this, the Canadian PM did not stay in the presidential suite and stayed in a normal room of the hotel.

## Owaisi speaks on why he, his AIMIM MP opposed women's quota bill in Lok Sabha

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and his party MP Imtiaz Jaleel were the only two members who voted against the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha. Owaisi told India Today TV why he voted against the bill which was supported by MPs from all other parties.

(News Agency) -All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi and his party MP Imtiaz Jaleel voted against the women's reservation bill in Lok Sabha on Wednesday. They were the only two MPs who were in opposition to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam Bill, that was cleared in Lok Sabha with 454 members voting in its favour.

Speaking to India Today TV about why they were against the bill, Owaisi said they were fighting for the inclusion of the OBC and Muslim women.

"The population of OBCs in India is more than 50 per cent, but their representation in Lok Sabha is 22 per cent. The population of Muslim women in India is 7 per cent, while their representation in Lok Sabha is 0.7 per cent. So wouldn't you give them representation?" Owaisi asked.

Earlier today, Owaisi opposed the women's reservation bill saying it would provide reservation only to "savarna women" (upper caste women).

"The purpose behind this bill was to give representation to women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. However, there are OBC and Muslim women, who remain



under-represented. So, wouldn't you give reservation to them?" he questioned. "Will you not give representation to the ones for whom you are bringing the law? We voted against it so that they would know that there were two MPs who were fighting for the inclusion of the OBC and the Muslim women," he said outside Parliament. The women's quota bill seeks to reserve 33 per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women in the Lower House of Parliament.

Earlier today, Owaisi said, "This Modi government wants to increase representation for savarna women. They don't want representation for OBC women and Muslim women. There have been 690 women MPs elected to Lok Sabha and only 25 of them have come from the Muslim community."

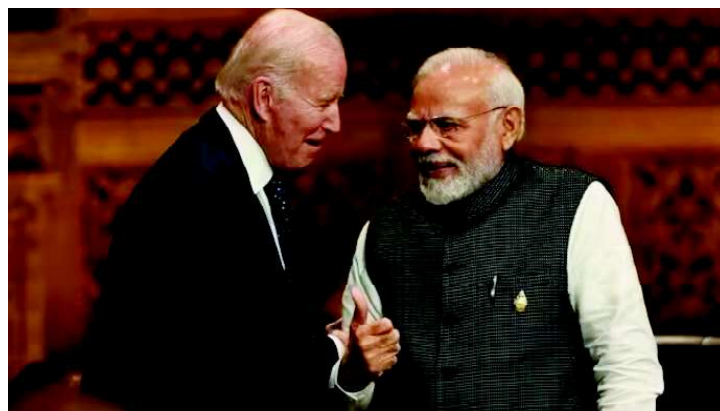
Owaisi said Muslim women face dual discrimination and accused the ruling BJP of denying Muslim and OBC women their due share.

## PM Modi invites Joe Biden as chief guest for Republic Day celebrations

An invitation to be a part of the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest holds considerable symbolic value, representing India's strategic diplomatic relations and partnerships.

(News Agency) -In a significant development marking the close-knit ties between India and the US, US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti told India Today that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited US President Joe Biden to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on January 26 next year. The invitation was extended during a bilateral meeting that occurred a day before the G20 summit in New Delhi.

During a session hosted by the Ananta Centre, Garcetti confirmed to India Today that the gesture from Prime Minister Modi underlines the deepening relationship between the two nations, as they look forward to fostering stronger ties in the coming years. The details surfaced as Garcetti responded to a query by India Today regarding the possible presence of Quad leaders at the upcoming Republic Day festivities. "US President Biden has been invited for Republic Day by Prime Minister Modi during the bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit.



Although the PM did not mention the Quad," said Ambassador Garcetti. Earlier media reports had suggested that India was mooting the idea of inviting all Quad leaders for the Republic Day celebrations, a strategic move seen in consonance with India's escalating engagements on the Quad front. The leaders include Australian Prime Minister

Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. The final decision was reportedly dependent on the availability of these world leaders. An invitation to be a part of the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest holds considerable symbolic value, representing India's strategic diplomatic relations and partnerships. Typically, formal invitations

are issued following an informal confirmation regarding the availability of the dignitaries, ensuring the presence of a significant ally as the chief guest on this notable day in Indian history.

Moreover, India is slated to host the forthcoming Quad summit in 2024, a crucial event in the backdrop of evolving geopolitical dynamics in the region, furthering its role in global strategic developments and reinforcing its relationships with fellow Quad nations.

The speculation is that should Biden agree to be the chief guest, the Quad Summit could be held a day before, on January 25, since Australia celebrates its National Day on January 26 and Prime Minister Albanese will not be able to attend a Quad Leaders' meet on the same day.

The forthcoming Republic Day event and Quad Summit could be important junctures in bolstering India's diplomatic outreach and strengthening international ties, especially given frosty relations with China and now even Canada.



# Probe agency arrests gangster from Kerala in gold smuggling case

**A fugitive member of a gang, accused of smuggling gold worth over Rs 14 crore in 2020, was arrested by the NIA upon his arrival from Dubai.**



(News Agency) A man, accused of smuggling gold worth more than Rs 14 crore in 2020, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday. The absconding accused, identified as Ratheesh, is said to be a member of a gang and he was taken into custody upon arrival from Dubai.

The NIA said that the fugitive member of the gang was involved in smuggling huge quantities of gold from several nations to the country between 2019 and 2020. The central probe agency had launched a manhunt for six accused, including Ratheesh, and filed chargesheets against 20 accused on January 5 2021

in the Trivandrum gold smuggling case after recovery of the contraband.

## NIA PROBE REVEALED

An NIA-led probe disclosed that Ratheesh was an associate of one of the accused in the case lodged in 2021. The accused in the case, Hamsath Abdu Salam, allegedly smuggled gold from Thiruvananthapuram and transported it for sale to one Nandakumar of Coimbatore.

The NIA unearthed the syndicate after the Air Cargo of Trivandrum International Airport by the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate recovered the contraband of 30 kg of gold worth Rs 14.82 crore in July 2020.

The smuggled gold was recovered from a piece of baggage which was addressed to a senior diplomat stationed in Thiruvananthapuram.

At present, a hunt to nab other accused is underway while NIA is carrying out a detailed probe.

## Senior citizen loses over Rs 3 lakh to sextortion in Mumbai, accused arrested

(News Agency) A 39-year-old man was arrested in Rajasthan for allegedly extorting Rs 3.78 lakh from a Mumbai-based senior citizen after threatening him to circulate his morphed obscene video on social media, police said on Wednesday.

The complainant, a resident of Mumbai, received a friend request on Facebook from a 'woman' in February.

He accepted the request and the duo started chatting, a police official said. After the man shared his mobile number, his Facebook friend made a video call on Whatsapp. The caller prepared a morphed obscene video of the senior citizen and sent it on his mobile phone, as per the FIR. The senior citizen was threatened that his video would be circulated on social media following which he paid Rs 3.78 lakh. He later approached DB Marg police station in south Mumbai after the demand for money increased.

An FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

## Rs 2.5 crore seized in raids on celebrity managers in Mahadev betting app case



(News Agency) - The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted raids in Mumbai and Delhi targeting celebrity managers who hired Bollywood stars to perform for Sourabh Chandrakar's wedding, owner of the Mahadev app who is under investigation for money laundering.

In February 2023, Chandrakar hosted a lavish wedding in Dubai, spending around Rs 200 crore in cash. The event saw the participation of several Bollywood celebrities, as per sources.

According to sources, the celebrity managers were paid in cash, through hawala operators, by event companies. A share of that money was handed to the actors and singers who performed at the wedding. During the raids, cash of around Rs 2.5 crores was seized and statements

of these celebrity managers were recorded by the agency. Most of the celebrity managers have revealed that they received payment in cash through operators from the event companies.

The celebrities involved may soon be summoned for interrogation.

The ED also conducted searches at the premises of Rapid Travels, a company responsible for ticketing operations for the Mahadev app promoters, their families, business associates, and the celebrities endorsing betting websites.

## MAHADEV BETTING APP CASE

The ED's probe into the alleged Mahadev betting app scam, revealed that Chandrakar and Uppal, both hailing from Chhattisgarh's Bhilai, are the main promoters of Mahadev Book app and operate their business from Dubai.

## First C-295 transport aircraft of Indian Air Force lands in Vadodara



(News Agency) The first C-295 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force landed in Vadodara on Wednesday. The aircraft was flown by Group Captain PS Negi and landed earlier today after taking off from Bahrain.

This was the first jet of the 56 aircraft on order, which will be assembled at the San Pablo Sur site in Spain's Seville.

The second aircraft is due to be delivered in May 2024 and the next 14 will be rolled out at a rate of one per month until August 2025. The remaining 40 of the Air Force order will be manufactured and assembled - in

partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) - at a Final Assembly Line (FAL) in Vadodara in western India.

The first C-295 transport aircraft under the 'Make in India' initiative will roll out of the FAL in September 2026 and is estimated to be delivered to the Air Force by August 2031. With 283 orders in hand from 41 operators, the C-295 is the undisputed leader in its segment and stands out for its versatility. The transport jet can carry up to 71 troops or 50 paratroopers, and airdrop cargo. It can be used for medical evacuation and take-off and land on short and unpaved runways.



# Row over 'secular' and 'socialist': How and why were the words added to the Preamble

**The Constitution isn't just a book listing laws, rights and duties. It is a vision document by the first-generation leaders of Independent India that guides the country. And if there is any window to that vision, it is the Preamble.**

(News Agency) The Preamble, which explains the Constitution's philosophy and objectives, was adopted on November 26, 1949, by the Constituent Assembly.

The Constitution is a living document; there is a provision to change it and it has been amended over 100 times. The Preamble, too, being a part of the Constitution, can be amended. It was amended just once, during the Emergency in 1976, and the change is still an issue of debate and a source of controversy.

That's exactly what happened on Tuesday (September 19), the day the members of Parliament walked into the new Parliament building.

**LATEST PREAMBLE CONTROVERSY**  
Among the gifts to the MPs by the government was a copy of the Constitution.

Congress's leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, pointed out that the copies of the Constitution given to the MPs did not contain the words 'secular' and 'socialist' in the Preamble. "If these two words are not present in the Constitution, then it is a worrying matter," he added.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi too said,



"In the Preamble, the words ('socialist and secular') were not there."

The Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) accused the BJP of "displaying a biased mindset by removing the words 'socialist' and 'secular'."

"The BJP government says that this printed text was the original Preamble. If BJP does not want to respect the constitutional amendment to the Preamble and wants to follow the original, then why have they moved out from the original 'Temple of Democracy', the old Parliament building? Why did

they not stay in the original one?" countered Clyde Crasto, the spokesperson of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP.

But when and why were the words 'secular' and 'socialist' incorporated in the Preamble?

**'SECULAR' AND 'SOCIALIST' IN PREAMBLE**

The words 'socialist' and 'secular' were incorporated in the Preamble of the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976. The change was enacted during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

during the period of Emergency (1975-1977).

The words were added to the Preamble to emphasise Indira Gandhi's commitment to socialism and burnish her pro-poor image.

It's important to note that the Indian version of socialism was different from that of countries like the USSR or China. It didn't involve the nationalisation of all industries, but focused on selective nationalisation where necessary. It was a unique form of socialism tailored to India's needs.

The inclusion of "secular" in the Preamble aimed to promote unity among India's diverse religious communities. It meant that the state treats all religions equally, remains neutral, and doesn't favour any one religion as the state religion. The Indian state is concerned with human relationships, not the relationship between individuals and God, which is a matter of personal choice.

Even before the 42nd Amendment, secularism was a fundamental part of the Constitution's philosophy. Articles 25, 26, and 27 were specifically designed to promote secularism.

## Maharashtra man, his family members arrested for torturing wife to death

**A man and five members of his family were arrested on Wednesday night on the charges of torturing and murdering his wife in Maharashtra's Thane district.**

(News Agency) -Police arrested a man and five members of his family on Wednesday night on the charges of torturing and murdering his wife in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said.

A police officer told PTI that the medical report indicated the woman died of pellets fired from a country-made rifle used to hunt animals. The weapon has been seized.

The 17-month-old son of the victim was also injured when one of the pellets hit him, he said.

The victim's brother lodged a case of cruelty and murder after her death on Tuesday night. The arrested members include the man, his parents and other family members.

"In his complaint, victim Ranjana Bhavar's brother said her husband and in-laws used to torture and harass her,



due to which she had consumed poison in 2022. She had survived the suicide attempt at that time. The couple currently has two children - a daughter aged three-and-a-half years and a son below two years of age," the official said.

Even after the previous incident, the woman's husband and in-laws continued to harass her. She used to regularly complain about it to the complainant and others, he said.

"Last night, the in-laws of the victim informed her brother that she died due

to injuries after falling. The body was sent to a government hospital for autopsy. The complaint said that there were multiple injury marks on the victim, including her face, forehead and neck. There were injury marks on her minor son as well," the official said.

The accused, identified as Shiva Kalu Bhavar, Savitri Kalu Bhavar, Kalu Maidu Bhavar, Gajmal Kalu Bhavar, Bendu Kalu Bhavar and Atya Kalu Bhavar, were charged under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 302 (murder), 498 A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty), 34 (common intention), the police said.

We have arrested six members of the family, said Shahapur police station inspector Anant Parad said, adding that further investigation is underway.



## War in Ukraine is revealing a new global order - and the 'power south' is the winner

It came as an unpleasant surprise to many in Europe and North America that so many countries - many more than the 30 or so that abstained in UN votes condemning Russia for its invasion of Ukraine - refused to go along with sanctions on Putin's Russia. Forty countries sanction Russia, but two-thirds of the world's population live in countries that do not.

The geopolitical split over Russia's war on Ukraine emerged starkly again at the recent G20 summit in India in early September. A consensus could only be reached on a watered-down statement that referred to the "war in Ukraine" without mentioning Russia's aggression.

This is not to say that countries who sat on the sidelines all back Russia's invasion and don't subscribe to Ukraine's territorial integrity. The G20 statement, in fact, explicitly rejected the use of force in violation of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, it does mean that they consider this to be a European war in which they have no stake, while still suffering its consequences in terms of food and energy security. It means they would prefer the war to end quickly, even if not necessarily justly; and it means they are unwilling to pay a price to ensure the respect for international law.

It was eye-opening then to take part, during a recent trip to Indonesia, in a global "town hall" debate in Jakarta on the theme of rebuilding bridges between the global north and south.

As a global north voice on the panel, alongside Indian and South African colleagues and after China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, delivered a blistering attack on Europe and the US, I was asked "Why does the west now take a greater interest in the global south?" The bluntness of the question got me thinking.

The questioner was right. The term "global south" is suddenly cropping up at almost every gathering in the west. But it is also increasingly used in the south too. Loosely, it includes what used to be called developing countries, and many formerly colonised nations. It includes economic powerhouses such as China and India, mid-sized powers such as Turkey, Brazil and Saudi Arabia, and poor countries that struggle to make their voices heard. The group is so heterogeneous that it begs the question of whether it makes sense to consider it as such at all. Yet these countries share a sense that their independent voices should be heard rather than being shaped or determined by the west. To be heard, they are building and expanding organisations, such as the recent Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit enlarging the grouping to admit Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

They are taking stronger positions, the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) going as far as suggesting a military intervention in response to the coup in Niger (although little action has followed). They want to be seen as international peace-builders: African leaders, including those from South Africa, Egypt, Senegal, the Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Uganda, travelled to Kyiv and Moscow to press for peace and continued grain exports; while Saudi Arabia hosted representatives of more than 40 countries in Jeddah to discuss the principles for ending Russia's invasion.

The west pays greater heed than it used to also because the global south matters more in international relations. As the Indian scholar Amitav Acharya points out, there is a distinction between the "power south", which represents the engine of global growth, and the "poor south". The crucial question is how to ensure that the latter also has a voice. The International Monetary Fund has forecast that Asia is poised to drive 70% of global growth this year, with India and China alone covering about half of the total.

Countries in the "power south" are carving out a role in the world through diplomacy, transactional relationships and "multi-alignment" in different organisations. India, for example, is a member of the China-led Brics, but also of the Quad (with Japan, the US and Australia). Aspiring to be a leader of the global south, it steered the G20 towards greater inclusivity by inviting the African Union into the group. Saudi Arabia has just signed up to the Brics, and despite its atrocious human rights record is in talks with Washington over a strengthened security partnership and normalised ties with Israel. Turkey is a Nato member but has maintained strong relations with Russia, and seeks to revive the grain deal from which Moscow pulled out.

Countries in the global south will play increasingly crucial roles in decarbonising the global economy, given their share of critical natural resources. Europe imports much of its lithium and cobalt from Chile and the Democratic Republic of the Congo respectively, while China has a near monopoly on the extraction, processing and production of many more critical minerals. Finally, the war in Ukraine has forced the west to stop ignoring the global south. Russia's invasion has brought to the surface accumulated global anger and resentment towards European countries and the US, whether for centuries of colonialism and neocolonial practices, or for the double standards western countries have so often displayed towards the violations of rights and law in different parts of the world.

By Nathalie Tocci

## One Nation, One Election: A Long Overdue Move

Elections are considered a festival of democracy. India is now debating how often this festival should be held. There are several compelling reasons for simultaneous elections. First, our huge and ever-increasing population will make periodic elections unmanageable. Holding elections when the population was a hundred million is one thing, but holding multiple elections with one billion people will be a considerable challenge. Nowhere else in the world do a billion population go to exercise their adult franchise twice over in five years. If you include elections for local self-governing bodies, one billion people will vote three times over five years. Critics have argued that the cost is exaggerated, but their computations do not include the actual price and impact on the polity. And even if it's manageable today, it will become unmanageable soon with our growing population. Second, governance comes to a standstill when you have multiple elections. The Model Code of Conduct puts growth and development into a freeze. Security is diverted from their regular law and order work, teachers must go off work, and officials must stop working. Long-term projects come to a standstill. And it is challenging to pick up steam after a long pause. India cannot afford to go into such frequent freezes when it aspires to become a developed country. Development and growth require the polity to adopt a far-sighted view on solving the country's multiple challenges. Leaders must take a long-term view of the economy, but periodic elections push the government to take a short-term view. The incentive to take hard decisions simply disappears. Regular elections evaporate the risk-taking appetite of the government. Third, while elections are a critical element of the democratic process, they also breed

corruption. Elections require massive funding. For most constituencies in the south, an MP election involves an investment of over 100 crores. Handouts in the form of cash and alcohol are still a common practice. And upon getting elected, the candidate has to recover the investment by taking his cut from public funds.

Three legal issues are often raised against simultaneous elections, and it's essential to deal with them.

Ratification by the State Legislative Assemblies

The first objection is that simultaneous elections require the ratification of half of the states. While simultaneous elections need an amendment to the Constitution, the argument is that it also requires ratification by half of the states. Neither the text nor the structure of the Constitution supports the requirement of ratification. Unlike other federal Constitutions, the amendment process in the Indian Constitution has a different structure. In a purely federal Constitution like the American Constitution, an amendment requires the ratification of three-fourths of the states. In contrast, the Indian Constitution requires state ratification only for the specified provisions. The Constitution also does not state that any amendment that affects the states requires state ratification. These specified provisions that require ratification relate to the legislative powers of the state legislatures or representation of states in Parliament, the election of the President, and the powers of the Supreme Court or the High Court. The provisions dealing with elections or the terms of the legislatures are not one of them. Simultaneous elections do not implicate the state legislatures' powers or any other provisions requiring ratification.

By K. Vivek Reddy

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Editor in Chief & Publisher :

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Managing Editor :

Susmita Ghosh

Deputy Managing Editor :

Amaninder Singh Thind

Editor (Political Affairs-India) : Aruna Singh

Special Correspondents: Gagandeep Singh (India)

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

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REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Phone: 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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# Anantnag Encounter



## Our Men in *Uniform* Can No Longer be Treated as Sacrificial Lambs

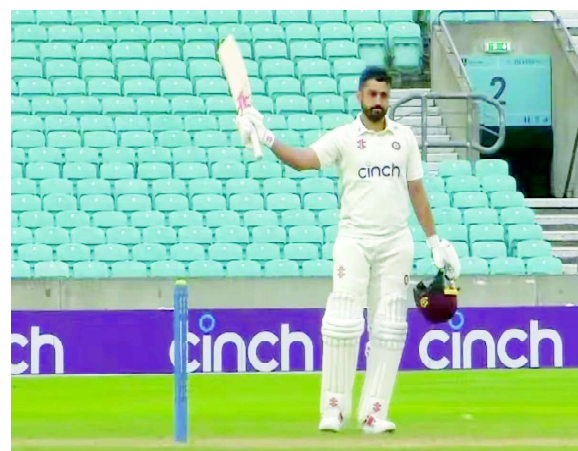
The ongoing encounter in the Kokernag area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district - in which commanding officer Colonel Manpreet Singh, company commander Major Aashish Dhonchak and a soldier of 19 Rashtriya Rifles along with deputy superintendent of J&K Police Hamayun Muzamil Bhat gave the supreme sacrifice - indicates that the menacing shadow of terrorism still looms in some pockets of J&K.

Coming just after New Delhi hosted a grand ceremony to mark India's spectacular and praiseworthy presidency of G20, there are strong suspicions that Pakistan orchestrated this dastardly attack by using terrorists that it has been patronising.

While a lot has been written and said about the strategic and tactical significance of this terrorist act, the human angle has largely been ignored. A Sena Medal awardee, Colonel Singh was a true soldier who volunteered to continue serving in J&K despite completing his tenure. Maj Dhonchak was another die-hard soldier who put duty before self and has left behind a bereaved wife along

with a three-year-old daughter, who will at best, only have a hazy memory of her father.

Son of a retired Inspector General of Police (IGP), DSP



Bhat was a highly motivated Kashmiri, who, following in his father's footsteps, joined J&K police. It was heart-wrenching to see him performing his son's last rites. While DSP Bhat's loss will forever haunt his near and dear ones, his one-month-old son is perhaps the most unfortunate as he will have to grow up without the loving hand of his father on his shoulder.

In fact, this is precisely what had

weighed on Bhat's mind after he was mortally wounded when he made a video call to his wife and told her: "I may not survive. If I succumb to my injuries, please

take care of our son."

This terrorist act reminds all of us that peace and stability in the Union Territory is at best fragile. It also indicates that even four years after Article 370's abrogation that paved the way for unprecedented progress, people of the region remain vulnerable to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and need protection. Accordingly, the counter-infiltration grid and anti-terrorist operations have to

continue as these are live threats to peace and normalcy in J&K. The Kokernag incident also raises several questions regarding the Union Home Ministry's claims on terrorism in J&K. It has projected a 32% drop in terror acts during 2019-22, as compared to 2016-19. However, have civilian and security personnel deaths really gone down by 14 and 52%, respectively, as stated? Is there a significant decline in recruitment of terrorists? Why does the UT still need an excessive security presence? Despite trumpeting major successes, has the local administration fallen short on the issue of dismantling local terror networks?

Why are the areas south of Pir Panjal range, especially in Rajouri & Poonch area, witnessing an upsurge in terrorist activities? Is there unfinished business post-Burhan Wani's elimination in 2016? Is the Anantnag incident a chilling reminder of J&K in the 1990s? It is as clear as daylight that the government and security establishment have to remain alert and we need to have an effective and efficient intelligence grid, while India's strategic

calculus requires freshness and nimbleness.

Our men in uniform can no longer be treated as sacrificial lambs. We also need to rebut any suggestions by Kashmir's (discredited) political class of talking to Pakistan, the indisputable harbinger of state-sponsored terrorism. Leaders like Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and others need to be reminded time and again that human lives cannot be sacrificed for political expediency. The Indian government has already sent out a strong message that every sinew available will be used and strained to counter the 'deep state' within Pakistan.

The international community now knows for a fact that Pakistan stands exposed on the issue of Kashmir. This last year, more than ever, demonstratively reflects that if the lid is firmly kept on terrorism and militancy, the common people in J&K can enjoy socio-economic benefits long denied to them.

Terrorism fundamentally focuses on killing innocent men, women and children. It is totalitarian in approach and power-driven, i.e. might is right. It is absolutely and factually incorrect to say that terrorism began from the 9/11 attacks in the US. India has long been suffering from it and Pakistan's devious outlook has made Kashmir an unstable region for almost seven-and-a-half decades.

Post-Anantnag, New Delhi's messaging has to remain strong and unambiguous. Pakistan needs to be told that come what may, India's security forces will, with active support from citizens, root out terrorism. The people of Kashmir, too, need to be aware and conscious about any form of separatist propaganda aimed at creating unrest. Kashmiri society has long been deprived of happiness and laughter due to terrorism and its time brutal subjugation and violence ends. Former secretary of United Hurriyat conference Dr Gh Mohmmad Hubi warns that poor economic conditions and political uncertainty can lure Pakistani youth to join terrorism just to meet the requirement of two square meals. He is also hopeful that people of Kashmir will remain vigilant and denounce motivated acts that promote violence and escalate terrorism in J&K.

By: Farooq Wani



# India's Lesson For Justin Trudeau

The India-Canada relationship is in a downward spiral. To be sure, for those following Indo-Canadian relations, the fraught nature of the partnership is little surprise. The recent escalation, however, is. Over the last two decades, Indian diplomats and security agencies have requested cooperation from the Canadian government and intelligence agencies. It is no secret to either party that Khalistani separatism and the terrorists involved in targeted killings on Indian and Canadian soil find a safe haven in western nations, especially in Canada. Khalistani separatism finds little hold in the Sikh homeland of India. Yet, referendums demanding a separate state of Khalistan carved out of the Indian state are regularly held with political patronage in Canada.

While Khalistani terrorists are responsible for the deadliest terror attack on Canadian soil - the 1985 Kanishka Airlines bombing that killed over 300, including 85 children - Jagmeet Singh, a political partner of Justin Trudeau, is a supporter



of Khalistan. He is essential to Justin Trudeau's premiership and leverages the Sikh population in Canada as a voting bloc to maintain support for the Liberal Party of Canada. The Sikhs are a small but rapidly growing minority in Canada. Many Sikhs migrating to Canada gain asylum by leveraging a loophole in Canadian immigration law, with some help from separatists in Punjab. Essentially, the Khalistanis have functioned as an immigration scam at scale, but changes Canadian demographics for Trudeau's politics favourably. Unfortunately, that is not all it has functioned as.

In addition to being responsible

for the death of an Indian Prime Minister as well as a sitting Chief Minister, radicalised Khalistani terrorists have been responsible for targeted killings on Canadian and Indian soil even recently, and show disproportionate presence in Canada's drug trade and human trafficking gangs.

The Indian security establishment has repeatedly urged Canada to act against Khalistani terror, to no avail. Still, the Indian government has refrained from taking a confrontational diplomatic position, hoping for future cooperation with Canada. The tit-for-tat action after Canada expelled an Indian diplomat over unfounded allegations of a role

in the killing of a Khalistani separatist on Canadian soil seems to have caught Justin Trudeau by surprise.

On Thursday morning, India suspended visa services in Canada citing "operational reasons". So far, New Delhi's actions included expelling a senior Canadian diplomat and a Canadian intelligence officer, and issuing an advisory for Indian citizens in Canada.

This comes against the backdrop of the awkwardness surrounding Trudeau's visit to India for the G20 summit. Trudeau did not get a bilateral meeting; his "pull-aside" talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi were also strained by the Khalistan row. Canada paused a possible trade deal with India. After the fiasco, Trudeau had to wait for an additional two days in Delhi due to a technical snag in his plane. The Canadian opposition tore into him for his lacklustre international presence and accused him of being an embarrassment for the country. His means of making up for weakness was through a diplomatic show of

force where he accused India, without presenting any evidence, of the targeted, extrajudicial killing of Sikh extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil.

The statement actually used an unheard-of phrase - "credible allegations" - in an attempt to resonate with his domestic audience. The statement was immediately questioned. Canadian analysts called out the lack of substance, with journalist Daniel Bordman pointing out how Khalistani terrorism has flourished under the Trudeau regime, and the Canadian opposition demanding evidence to justify alienating a strategically important democracy.

Former Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) Chief Vikram Sood stated that the "claims are quite absurd... and without evidence, and having made the claim, he (Trudeau) has taken an action". He pointed out that while two apparently friendly nations should be talking, Trudeau was insistent on behaving as if India and Canada were enemies.

By Sagorika Sinha

## Canada Has Become New Pakistan, Thanks To Trudeau's Soft Spot For Khalistan

The last few days have been full of utter disgrace for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. After a cold treatment at the G20 Summit hosted by India, he is finding himself isolated by all his allies in the Anglosphere. None of Canada's alliance partners including the US, the UK, Australia or even New Zealand have extended support to him in his allegations that Indian agents were responsible for the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Khalistani terrorist, on Canadian soil. According to Trudeau, Nijjar was not a terrorist but a Canadian citizen who was shot down at the behest of India. He made this allegation right from the floor of the Canadian Parliament before launching a failed bid to get Canada's allies in the West to issue a joint statement against India at the G20 Summit. But neither his canvassing for support in the run-up to the summit worked nor his expectations after raising the issue at the Canadian Parliament succeeded.

At a time when China is raising the geopolitical temperature, all of Trudeau's allies view India as an important partner, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. They also value India for its emerging market opportunity. It was obvious from the beginning that no country in the Anglosphere would side with Trudeau. Yet, Trudeau marched ahead and ended up jeopardising Canada's relations with India for a long time to come. What explains this ridiculous behaviour by him?

Well, Trudeau is a political opportunist who, in the rush



to play to the Khalistani gallery and in desperation to take attention away from pressing problems of Canada, has used India to project himself as someone who cares about his country deeply. But in reality, if there is one enemy of Canada's national interest today, it has to be Trudeau himself.

Under the misrule of Trudeau, Canada has fallen from grace and has become another version of Pakistan but this time, in the West. So much that even their domestic and foreign policies today bear a close shade of semblance. Picture this, as Pakistan is braving hyperinflation with people struggling to fulfil their basic needs, the same is happening in the cities of Canada. The economy of the country has not recovered from the after-effects of Covid pandemic yet the skyrocketing

inflation is eating away whatever little an average Canadian is able to earn today. In the last three years, the cost of living has increased by at least three times with housing rents witnessing a sharp increase, leaving many people homeless. Even as the price rise has made survival difficult, fears of a recession are also looming large over the Canadian economy. Various sectors including tech have witnessed little to no growth with the country's economy having contracted in the last quarter. Even as Canada is witnessing an economic downturn, the law and order situation in the country has become very concerning. Since 2016, more than 30,000 people have lost their lives due to drug overdose. Canada, like Pakistan, is fast emerging as the hub of narco-terrorism. But unlike Pakistan which is infested with Islamic terrorism, Canada is paying a heavy price for its appeasement of the Khalistani lobby. The country is today home to around 40-50 gangsters and drug peddlers who have escaped from India's Punjab and have found a safe refuge in Canadian cities. Today, they are running transnational crime syndicates with drug supply, extortion and murders as their regular activities. Indo-Canadian drug cartel has become so notorious that many crimes, even in third countries, can be traced back to them. This year, New Zealand busted a shipment from Canada that was carrying a whopping 713 kg of drugs packed in bottles of maple syrup.

By: Monica Verma





**Why is Trudeau treated in India, a country that has traditionally enjoyed good relations with Canada, as somewhere between a figure of fun and enemy of our national interests?**

## Trudeau looking for payback for his Indian humiliations. *He can do Bhangra instead*

Each time Justin Trudeau comes to India, he makes a fool of himself. His notorious official visit, a few years ago, during which he mingled with separatists was sunk when photographs of him doing Punjabi, Bollywood-style dancing in 'native' costume, looking like a junior artiste who had escaped from a shaadi video, were published.

This time, when he came for the G-20 Summit, he was the ghost at the banquet, hanging around on the sidelines, ostentatiously cold-shouldered by the Indian government. And then, to add to his humiliation, he ended up being stranded in Delhi because of a series of accidental mishaps. His official plane developed a snag and could not fly. A second plane from Canada sent to fetch him was diverted to another airport. And by the time that plane was scheduled to arrive, the first plane had finally been fixed. The government of India sent Rajeev Chandrasekhar, an MoS, to the airport ostensibly to see him off but probably just to make sure that he was finally leaving. Trudeau seems a personable enough chap, a photogenic dynast with an eye for the main chance. While his popularity in Canada and this personal life have been through some rocky times lately, he will be around for a while, given his relative youth. (He is young enough to be Narendra Modi's son).

So why is he treated in India, a country that has traditionally enjoyed good relations with Canada, as somewhere between a figure of fun and enemy of our national interests?

Trudeau's India 'tragedy'

The joker part is easy enough to understand.

If you come on an official visit and dress up like a character in a Tik Tok comedy

video, people will laugh at you. More difficult to understand is why he should let us see him as our enemy.

Ultimately, it boils down to just one thing: Trudeau aligns with and promotes Khalistanis in Canada. He does this, I imagine, because of domestic political compulsions and he either does not understand why this angers New Delhi so much or he simply does not care. During his fancy dress official visit, the then Chief Minister of Punjab Amarinder Singh pointedly snubbed one of Trudeau's Khalistani pals on the grounds that he did not deal with people who wanted to break up India.

The snub did not go unnoticed but Trudeau's behaviour was unchanged. It did not seem to worry him that the democratically-elected Chief Minister of Punjab - a state that the whack-jobs he hangs out with claim is "Indian-occupied" - had no time for the Khalistani fringe who sang separatist songs in faraway British Columbia.

Nor was he perturbed by Indian allegations that Khalistanis in Canada were providing financial support to terrorists and separatists in Punjab. He seemed either unaware of - or unconcerned by - the lessons of history. In the 1980s, it was extremist Sikhs in Canada who supported terrorism in Punjab and blew up Air India's Kanishka aircraft, killing hundreds of passengers including many Canadian citizens.

Given this background, you can hardly blame New Delhi - and the rest of India - for not warming-up to Trudeau. As Amarinder Singh kept warning when he was Chief Minister, Pakistan is working hard to revive the Khalistan movement and the support of Canadian Sikhs is vital to its efforts.

Despite all this, India and Canada had come to a weary understanding whereby both countries focussed on the areas where they agreed and looked past Trudeau and his Khalistani pals. Despite Trudeau's tendency to make a fool of himself (aided and abetted by planes that would not take off), this arrangement held - until a few days ago.

That was when Trudeau told his parliament that Canadian investigators believed Indian security agencies had been involved in the assassination of a Khalistani activist/terrorist (choose the term you like) on Canadian soil.

The Canadian counter

As I write this, Canadian officials are still refusing to provide any details of India's alleged involvement or to show us any proof because the investigation is, apparently, at a sensitive stage. But while its sensitive nature prevents Canada from substantiating its charges, it did not stop Trudeau from expelling an Indian diplomat who, the Canadians say, is an R&AW agent whose name had come up in their investigation.

India has called the charges absurd and until the Canadian provide proof, I don't think we are obliged to take them seriously.

But let us - for the purposes of argument only - accept that Trudeau's charges have some merit. What follows from that?

Well, one, it is not difficult to see why the Canadians will be upset about a foreign security agency, conducting hit jobs on its soil. The British, for instance, have been justifiably agitated about Putin injecting his enemies with nerve agents on British territory.

But, two, if Canada thought that Trudeau's charges would attract the sort of global condemnation that the Putin-

sanctioned UK hits did, then they miscalculated.

Apparently, the Canadians tried to get their global allies to express outrage over the dead Khalistani. All they have managed to get is a few careful statements from a few foreign governments. Nobody is willing to condemn India, let alone put pressure on New Delhi.

Three, there are reasons for this. While Putin's men attacked dissidents and political opponents of the Kremlin, the Indian hit (assuming for a moment that this is what it was) was directed at a man the Indian government says has terrorist links. It is not quite the same thing as attacking an elderly dissident and his young daughter in Salisbury.

Four, there is no real international consensus about keeping terrorists alive. The Israelis have been tracking down and killing terrorists all over the world for decades. Nobody has done very much to stop them. In fact, Mossad hit squads are repeatedly glorified in Western popular culture.

The Americans have gone even further than the Israelis. During Barack Obama's time, the President was regularly asked to sign off on a 'kill list' of terrorists. Once he signed, the Americans would kill these people in drone strikes and targeted assassinations. This was not a secret; it was accepted as a legitimate tool in fighting terrorism. The practice continued under Donald Trump and there is no reason to believe that it has stopped under Joe Biden.

This may be difficult for Canada - whose deadliest enemies are people who want to steal its maple syrup - to understand. But in much of the West, targeted assassinations of terrorists are not uncommon.

Five: Canada is supposed to be looking to the US for support. Given Washington's own record in this area, it is hard to see what the White House can say to India (apart from the usual bland, meaningless statements) without seeming hypocritical.

By VIR SANGHVI



# A Good Beginning for New Parliament House

For watchers-and participants-of Indian democracy, the last few days have been momentous. Parliament held its final session in the old building, and the next day moved to the imposing, spacious and ultra-modern new Sansad, next to it. I must confess that when the decision to build the new Parliament was announced, I had opposed it because I felt that to abandon a building which has been identified since 1947 as the most recognisable icon of Indian democracy globally, was in some way also an obliteration of our past. There was too much nostalgia associated with the old building, too many memories, and so much of history, that I felt that imaginative renovation-even extension-was a better idea than to discard it. I also felt that it was a waste of money during Covid times, which could have been spent more usefully on other urgent priorities.

Of course, as a Member of Parliament myself earlier, I was fully aware that the existing Parliament was visibly cramped and not sufficiently technologically updated. It was also clear that should the number of MPs were



to increase, as was likely after the new delimitation exercise, there would be a very genuine problem of space. But there were associations that invariably grew with the old, including the ambience of the ever-lively Central Hall, and even the mustiness of antiquity, which became endearing. At that time, I was against the building of the new Parliament.

However, as the new building came up in record time, and I saw its design, spaciousness, modernity, technological upgrading, and the sincere attempt to embellish it with the best of representative art and historic emblems from all parts of India, I reluctantly but definitely gave up my opposition. The

transfer from the old to the new took place on 19th September, on the auspicious day of Ganesh Chaturthi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the final session in the old Parliament House, gave a statesman-like speech, for once free of acrimony. He recalled the contribution of every PM, every political party, and the historic decisions that were taken within its precincts. To the surprise of many, he also-perhaps for the first time-showered praise on the contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first PM of India, and other Congress PMs. It was a non-partisan speech, a conciliatory statement of collective appreciation, that was listened to with pin-drop silence by all

members.

The next day, in the first session in the new Parliament building, he gave a call-which was endorsed by both the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha-to make a new beginning with a less disruptive, more cooperative, and far more productive Parliament. It was timely advice, since I have long advocated that disruption of Parliament, and ceaseless-in fact sometimes daily adjournments-are truly a stain on our credentials as a democracy. The gross acts of indiscipline, unruly behaviour, open disrespect to the Chair, and the horrific scenes of brawls, paper throwing, placards, sloganeering, and the incessant entering into the Well of the House, have become the unedifying scenes that the people of India are compelled to witness almost daily.

I believe that such behaviour, whether perpetrated by the BJP earlier during UPA rule (and even justified as valid 'democratic protest'), or the Congress and other Opposition parties now, is inimical to all Opposition parties. A reasoned and well-prepared debate, in which those across the Treasury Benches make their point

substantively, is far more impactful, and can now be watched by the entire nation through live telecasts. During my tenure in Parliament, I did not once enter the aisle in protest, let alone enter the Well. Indeed, as the oldest living parliamentarian today, Dr Karan Singh, said on TV recently, such departure from parliamentary decorum was unheard of in the past. Of course, if we are to resurrect that past, the Treasury Benches, whose responsibility it is to run the House, should be open to the valid priorities and requests of the Opposition. And above all, the presiding officers of both Houses should play an impartial role, in letter and spirit. I would also like to express my unreserved appreciation for the announcement by the PM, in the very first session in the new Parliament, of bringing in the Women's Reservation Bill. Finally, the long pending reform, which it is true was proposed several times in the past by both the BJP (during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's term as PM) and the Congress (even earlier, during PM Rajiv Gandhi's tenure), may see the light of reality.

**By: Pavan K Varma**

## Trudeau's Faustian Bargain: Denial of K-Roots On Canadian Soil Mirrors Pak's Compromise with Terror

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau isn't the first politician to have allowed domestic political compulsion to risk his country's diplomatic relationship with a foreign partner. Trudeau told his country's Parliament that India violated Canada's sovereignty by carrying out an extrajudicial killing of a Canadian citizen. The Canadian premier's remarks are at one with the kind of provocation Indians have come to expect from a sundry cast of Pakistani demagogues and dictators. New Delhi has thus far denied the accusation that links it to "agents" who purportedly executed a "Canadian citizen" Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

For those who may not be in the know, Nijjar was shot dead by two unknown assailants near Vancouver on June 18. Indian security establishment claims that he was active in the Khalistan Tiger Force, an organisation proscribed in India under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for aiming to "revive terrorism in Punjab". Immediately after making the announcement, but withholding the evidence needed to establish the bona fides of his serious claim, the Trudeau government expelled an Indian diplomat.

A flabbergasted Modi government issued an immediate denial calling the accusation "absurd" and "unsubstantiated". Later in the day, India also gave marching orders to a senior Canadian diplomat posted to Delhi. It isn't known when Trudeau's administration intends to share evidence of its so-called investigation



into Nijjar's killing with New Delhi. But Ottawa is clearly not interested in addressing New Delhi's concerns over Canada becoming a refuge for terrorists that want Punjab (which they have long christened Khalistan) to secede from India. While the "Khalistan project" is decades' old and triggered a bloody insurgency in Punjab late last century, some groups based overseas mainly in the US, UK, Canada and Australia have been trying to re-ignite separatist fires. A series of Khalistan terrorists have carried out attacks, mostly political assassinations, in Punjab over the last few years. Earlier, this year, a pro-Khalistan separatist threatened to raid a police station and take hostages if his comrades in arms weren't freed from jail. Indian High Commissions and Hindu temples have been vandalised in the UK, Australia, and Canada.

Recently, in Canada, Khalistan groups put out posters declaring a bounty on the heads of Indian diplomats amidst a parade celebrating the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. India has assiduously documented the links of these Khalistanis to Pakistan's deep state and to sleeper cells in India. New Delhi has reportedly shared intelligence dossiers with all the above-named countries. While most have at least verbally assured India that they will pro-actively police these groups, the Canadian government under Trudeau has been reluctant to commit. Even when Prime Minister Modi personally appealed to Trudeau on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Delhi to curb "anti-India activities" on Canadian soil, the latter, rather defiantly and disturbingly vowed that his government would "uphold freedom of expression." But Trudeau is being highly economical with the truth. He's hardly upholding a peaceful cause. A recent media report revealed that, under pressure from Sikh groups, Trudeau's government dropped references to "Sikh extremism" from the 'Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada' that it had itself prepared in 2018. The report said Canada continued to face threats from "individuals inspired to commit violence based on other forms of extremism, including from...Sikh (Khalistani) extremists". The report also noted that "some Canadians continue to support these extremist groups, including through financing".

**By: Rahul Shivshankar**





## Why Modi Government Bringing in Women's Reservation Bill Was a Much-Needed Move

Written By: Bhavdeep Kang

In tabling the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', the latest iteration of the Women's Reservation Bill, the Narendra Modi government has taken a positive step towards closing the political representation gap and sent out a message of hope at a time when women's rights are under assault in many parts of the globe.

Significantly, the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, providing a 33 per cent quota for women in the Parliament and state assemblies, was the first to be tabled in the new Parliament building. It was, perhaps, a signal that the ground had shifted and a shake-up of the political establishment was imminent!

The PM's empowerment initiative puts the Opposition in a tough spot, for three reasons. First, it cannot position itself on the wrong side of such an emotive issue, even though credit for the passage of the law will go entirely to the Modi government. For instance, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha, who has been lobbying for the Bill, has no choice but to welcome it.

Second, the wind has been taken out of the INDIA company's 'democracy in danger' campaign. The government's

stated commitment to furthering gender parity in political representation is eminently progressive, liberal and in keeping with the tenets of democracy. And like the

will have the 'W' factor advantage.

That the prime minister means business is evident from his characterisation of the Bill as

in 1996, every government has tried to push it through - in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2008 and 2010. But the closest it ever came to becoming a law was its



government's welfare schemes, it benefits women of all castes and communities.

Third, the women's vote is now a potent force in electoral politics. In the 2019 general elections, the gender gap was not only bridged but reversed, with 67.18 per cent of women participating as opposed to 67.01 per cent of men. For some Opposition leaders, such as Nitish Kumar and Mamata Banerjee, the women's vote is all-important. If the Bill becomes law, the BJP

an 'agni pareeksha (trial by fire)' for the ruling BJP. Party MPs who are privately opposed to the Bill for fear of losing their seats have been warned that they must fall in line, even if that means voting against their own self-interest. Fortunately, implementation is a long way off, so the fallout will be visible only in 2029.

The debate will be interesting, going by past experience. Ever since the Deve Gowda government introduced the Bill

passage in the Rajya Sabha in 2010 (only to lapse thereafter). Each time, it was held up for lack of consensus, which goes to show that consensus is overrated at times. Opposition to the Bill came largely from OBC MPs, who felt it ought to provide a quota within a quota for certain categories. The current iteration provides reservations for SCs and STs; for obvious reasons, it cannot do so for backward castes.

The other argument, that the

reserved seats would go to the wives, mothers, sisters or daughters of political families, has some basis. The same argument was made vis-a-vis reservation of seats for women in panchayats and local bodies (initially 33 per cent, now 50 per cent in most states) in 1993. However, despite the 'sarpanchpati' culture, political awareness among women has increased over time. Studies testify to the vital role played by reservation in improving the political participation of women and combatting patriarchal attitudes.

Globally, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) pegs the representation of women at 26.5 per cent. Only six countries have achieved or exceeded gender parity in this regard. India, with representation at 15.1 per cent, stands 140th in a list of 186 countries, behind Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. Likewise, in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index, India is 127th in a list of 146 countries. If it is to improve its position, the Women's Reservation Bill must become law.

The fragility of women's rights became evident when the Supreme Court of the United States rolled back Roe vs Wade, which guaranteed the legal right to abortion, in June 2022. Poland, too, has severely restricted the

reproductive rights of women. In Afghanistan, women have been progressively stripped of virtually all their rights. In Iran, anti-hijab protests have resulted in the government mooting a mandatory hijab law that proposes a ten-year sentence for violators.

India's initiative is all the more important against this backdrop. Political parties must, however, ensure that it does not become a tokenism. On no account should women be excluded altogether

from general (unreserved) seats. Some political parties have already made important strides in furthering the representation of women in electoral politics, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Biju Janta Dal (BJD), for example. The BJP, sadly, has not been one of them. For all too long, there has been a disconnect between the grassroots mobilisation of women by the RSS-BJP and their participation in electoral politics. It's time for the BJP to change that, and lead by the power of example.





## Eric Adams and Joe Biden need to talk

Last year, New York City Mayor Eric Adams dubbed himself the "Biden of Brooklyn." And yet President Joe Biden's three-day visit to New York City this week did not involve crossing paths with Adams, who has in recent months slammed the president for not doing more to help the city address the influx of about 100,000 migrants, many of whom have been transported from Republican-controlled states like Texas. Adams, who estimates that it will cost the city \$12 billion to house and care for the migrants over three years, has gone so far as to warn that the crisis will "destroy" New York.

The city has been working hard to keep up with the unfolding situation, opening about 200 emergency shelters and already spending over \$1.45 billion this fiscal year.

But the issue has descended into finger pointing, with Adams attacking both New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Biden. Meanwhile, a White House spokesperson said, "Only Congress can fix the broken immigration system."

Biden is already in hot water with a key part of his base, facing serious criticism from the United Auto Workers for not doing more to support unions in his efforts to encourage the transition to electric vehicles. Members of the UAW represent a core constituency of working-class Americans in the Midwest - support he will need to win reelection in 2024. With already low approval ratings, the president can't afford to anger more Democratic voters. Putting aside whether Adams' pointed rhetoric helps anyone, including himself, the tensions between the

city and the White House are palpable.

While we might not yet have reached the "Ford to City: Drop Dead" moment famously immortalized in the New York Daily News headline when President Gerald Ford refused to provide federal assistance to the city in 1975, the relationship between Biden and Adams is deteriorating,



and the conditions for migrants could worsen as the city's resources are already strained. Biden can't afford to let this continue.

To be sure, Biden has done much more than Adams has suggested. Biden has taken steps to help, such as deploying federal workers to educate migrants about available services and ramping up electronic communications to keep information flowing. On Wednesday, the Biden administration announced that it is expanding a form of humanitarian relief for Venezuelans already in the United States, which will speed up their ability to obtain work permits. New York has also received about \$140 million from the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Human Services, according to the New York Times.

But it is time for the president, along with congressional Democrats to do more, and demonstrate how Democrats can offer a humane and economically constructive alternative to the hardline solutions of the GOP. If

newcomers has the potential to be the best thing that has happened to New York City in many decades - rather than something that will destroy it.

As the economists Ran Abramitzky and Leah Boustan have shown in their 2022 book, "Streets of Gold," immigration has historically had numerous beneficial effects, which include improving the economy and boosting economic prospects for those born in the US.

Besides healing inter-governmental relations and improving the rhetoric, the administration can take a number of key steps. Most important would be easing the work authorization rules and processing times that can bar asylum seekers from working for as a year or more. This prevents them from moving outside of the shelter system and establishing themselves financially. As former Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently argued in The New York Times, "Think about it: We have a system that essentially allows an unlimited number of people to cross our borders, forbids them to work, offers them free housing and grants them seven years of residency before ruling on whether they can legally stay. It would be hard to devise a more backward and self-defeating system."

Second, the federal government must provide more legal resources and administrative personnel to help asylum seekers through the process. This too will ensure that individuals can move as quickly as possible toward the opportunity to work and to contribute to the community around them. Legal representation will also help the state and city government by

lowering the budgetary obligations for detention and legal proceedings.

Finally, and this is a broader goal, but this is an opportunity to deal with the serious problem of affordable housing. For many years, advocates of affordable housing have been warning that big cities face a problem. Rents have skyrocketed, property costs have risen, and it is increasingly hard for middle- and working-class Americans, who have always been the heart and soul of vibrant cities, to find a place to live. Now is a moment for intergovernmental efforts, combined with necessary reforms of zoning rules, to get to work on renovating empty spaces that migrants and others can start to call home in future years.

Of course, Biden has not been wrong to say that the most important step would be for Congress to finally take action and pass sweeping legislation to fix our immigration system and provide efficient pathways to citizenship. Several administrations have failed to achieve this goal, with the major stumbling block having been a Republican Party that since the 1990s has embraced an increasingly hardline approach to immigration. The migrant crisis presents an opportunity. Throughout American history, immigration has been the lifeblood of our economy, culture, and social fabric. It will continue to be so. But at this moment, our politicians have to act by allowing migrants to make a life for themselves in our cities and become part of our communities. Going about this the right way would boost the economy, enrich our society and continue the American way.

By Julian Zelizer

# G20 Slum Narrative: Modi's Critics Defame India, Neglect Global Realities

The world recently bore witness to India's grandeur and prowess during the G20 summit held in New Delhi. This monumental event filled every Indian, wherever they may be, with an overwhelming sense of pride and honour. It showcased India as a sovereign powerhouse brimming with unprecedented opportunities. However, amid the accolades and admiration, some voices of criticism have emerged, levelling accusations against the Modi government for allegedly concealing India's slums and poverty during the G20 summit, thereby attempting to project a whitewashed image of the nation. This narrative has gained traction among various circles, including Left-'liberals', Communists, Islamists, and the Soros group. While it is crucial to engage in constructive dialogue and critique, it is equally essential to understand the nuances and motivations behind such claims. First, let's reflect on the idea of presenting one's best face to guests. In Hindu culture, guests are revered as 'Atiti Devo Bhava', emphasising the duty to serve them regardless of one's



circumstances. Similarly, in Islam, the concept of 'Duyoo'f' holds immense significance. Prophet Muhammad emphasised the importance of honouring guests, regardless of their social or economic standing. He said, "Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him honour his guest as he is entitled." The principles of hospitality are deeply ingrained in the fabric of Indian and Islamic cultures, promoting the idea that every able person strives to serve their guests with the utmost respect and care. Critics must recognise that India is not unique in facing the challenges of poverty and slums. Even in countries as affluent as

the United States and Europe, these issues persist.

In America, we witness war veterans begging on the streets, and cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Camden are infamous for their slums. Drug addiction and homelessness are pressing problems in these nations, and it is not uncommon to see individuals defecating in public areas. Yet, when it comes to international events or showcasing their nations on the global stage, American and European media, whether right or left, often emphasise the brighter aspects of their skylines and downtown areas. This is not an attempt to hide their problems but rather a choice

to highlight their strengths and achievements, just as any host would want to present their best to guests. It is, therefore, important to differentiate between presenting an idealised image and intentionally concealing issues. Critics must also be cautious of crossing the line into destructive mudslinging that ultimately serves the agendas of foreign adversaries. The term "useful idiots" comes to mind, describing these individuals who unwittingly assist in advancing the interests of those who seek to undermine their own nation.

In their fervour to criticise the government, it is essential that critics do not unwittingly contribute to a negative portrayal of their own country on the global stage.

It is undeniable that India, like any other country, faces challenges related to poverty and slums. These issues require attention, concerted efforts, and comprehensive solutions. However, it is equally crucial to recognize the progress that has been made and to acknowledge that the government's role during international events is to showcase the nation's strengths and potential rather than to focus solely

on its challenges.

The G20 summit provided an opportunity for India to interact with the global community, attract investments, and foster diplomatic relations.

Just as homeowners tidy up their living room before hosting guests, India, as a host nation, took steps to ensure that the event would be a success. This is not a unique or deceptive tactic but rather a diplomatic norm followed by nations worldwide.

Moreover, portraying a negative image of India on the international stage can have far-reaching consequences. It can deter foreign investments, hinder tourism, and damage diplomatic relations.

In a globalised world, where countries compete for resources, partnerships, and investments, projecting a positive image becomes a strategic imperative.

Opposition of the Modi government should continue to scrutinise its policies, advocate for social and economic reforms, but the criticism should be done in a positive way, that should never sabotage the image of their own country internationally.

By: Zahack Tanvir

## PM Modi Has Set New Benchmarks in Public Life for Others to Follow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's influence on the landscape of Indian politics and public service has undeniably set new benchmarks. As wishes pour in from across the world for his 73rd birthday, it becomes evident that he has transformed the expectations of politicians aspiring to serve the people of India. His journey has ensured a profound shift in Indian politics - from ruling to serving, from politicians accustomed to VVIP privileges to leaders tirelessly working as servants of the people. In his nine years in office, each of his birthdays has been a testament to his commitment to public service. From donating Rs 5,100 gifted by his mother for Jammu Kashmir flood relief in 2014 to overseeing the administration of a record-breaking 2.5 crore vaccine doses during the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, his birthdays have consistently witnessed the establishment of new standards in public service.

Narendra Modi's work ethic is

unmatched, keeping his competitors on edge. He has not taken a single day off or a holiday in the past nine years. He celebrates festivals with the armed forces, conducts meetings after

popularity in various surveys is not mere chance but a reflection of the trust people place in his intentions to advance India.

A recent viral video from Madhya Pradesh featured a tribal woman



strenuous official trips abroad, and inaugurates numerous developmental projects one after the other. When he declares, "Samay ka pal pal mein desh ke naam rakhta hun" (I dedicate every moment of my time to the nation), he truly lives up to it. His sustained

expressing her gratitude for the support she received from PM Modi during the Covid-19 crisis, including essential supplies like ration and sugar. Her words, "Modi ne hamko ration diyo, shakkar diyo, suvidha diyo, ham to Modi ke sath hai" (Modi provided us with ration,

sugar, and convenience, we are with Modi), echo the sentiments of many across the nation. Similar stories were witnessed by me in tribal areas of Tripura, where pucca houses were constructed for the first time since Independence. Only a Prime Minister deeply connected to the heart of India could inspire such collective spirit and action during the Covid crisis.

His call turned "Swachh Bharat" (Clean India) into a nationwide movement, and his innovative approach to foreign policy leveraged the strength of the Indian diaspora to further India's global interests.

Unlike leaders parachuted into positions of responsibility, Narendra Modi has risen through the ranks, and my visit to his humble beginnings in Vadnagar gave me a sneak peek into his modest roots. When he washed the feet of sanitation workers in 2019, he bestowed upon them a sense of dignity. Upholding the dignity of the underprivileged and

championing development as a people's movement stand as his monumental contributions.

His unwavering faith in the people of India has propelled the country to achieve remarkable milestones, including becoming a global leader in financial payments through UPI (Unified Payments Interface), a significant feat in a nation where cash transactions once dominated. No one can forget his encouragement to the Indian scientists after Chandrayaan 2's unsuccessful soft landing, and his words of empathy post Chandrayaan 2 that motivated our scientists to achieve the historic feat of becoming the first nation to soft land on the south pole of the moon. Narendra Modi has not been hesitant in wearing Bharat's cultural and civilisational pride on his sleeve, and has taken extra efforts in rekindling the pride in India's rich ancient cultural heritage in the youth of India.

By: Pradeep Bhandari



# Changing Portrayal of Muslims in Indian Media

The depiction of Muslims in cinema and media has been a subject of significant discussion and concern. Historically, Muslims have often been depicted using harmful stereotypes, such as associating them with terrorism or religious extremism, which can perpetuate negative biases and contribute to Islamophobia or using the correct term, anti-Muslim bigotry or Muslim-phobia. (Islamophobia is a constructed term by Islamists to shut down critique and debates about regressive practices in Islam). There has been a lack of representation reflecting the diverse range of Muslim identities and experiences, meaning in many forms of media and entertainment, the portrayal of Muslims has often been one-dimensional and limited. The media has tended to focus on a narrow set of stereotypes or narratives about Muslims, failing to capture the rich diversity that exists within the Muslim community.

Arnold Schwarzenegger starring 1994 film 'True Lies' comes to mind which has one of the earliest depictions of Muslims as terrorists and misogynists only. Hollywood is known to be terribly biased in its neglect of portraying Muslims at the forefront of counter-terrorism and resistance to Islamism and Jihadism. It's essential to acknowledge the multifaceted



nature of this portrayal, which can vary widely based on particular media, creators, and context. In countries formerly colonised or under the influence of Marxist historians and post-modernist cultural relativism, the Islamic invasions and conquests, the Muslim Expansion project and various atrocities by Muslims never found space in literature, art, media, or cinema.

Now in the 21st century, as former colonies start renewing their cultures and histories and portraying their unheard, whitewashed, censored stories, it will become even more important to present brutal truths with facts, while making sure entire communities are not held responsible for historic wrongs. Holocaust cinema has been able to do that excellently over the decades after World War 2, not demonising the entire German

population while truthfully depicting the "banality of evil" in which ordinary citizens participated in barbaric crimes against humanity, fully conscious of the consequences of their actions. In India too, movies like 'The Kashmir Files', 'The Kerala Story' and various other films attempted to do this, some failing, some succeeding. Since the Indian film industry is also in the learning stages of making truthful cinema without censorships or bans, it will be a while before movies like 'Schindler's List', 'The Pianist', 'Suite Française' or 'The Boy in the White Pyjamas' are made.

In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to promote more positive and nuanced portrayals of Muslims in the media. This includes showcasing Muslim characters in everyday roles, highlighting their contributions to society, and portraying their

personal and professional achievements. Movies like 'Gully Boy', 'Haider', 'My Name is Khan', 'Mulk' and 'Raazi' come to mind. Some creators have actively worked to challenge stereotypes and provide counter-narratives that humanise Muslims, emphasising their shared humanity and struggles. The latest is the OTT series 'The Freelancer', where a Muslim female protagonist, a victim of an ISIS-radicalised family fights, to escape from their clutches.

OTT platforms have revolutionised creative expression by providing artists, creators, freelancers, and those facing censorship with unprecedented opportunities. These platforms offer global reach and freedom from traditional media censorship, allowing creators to connect with diverse global audiences and express themselves freely. The diversity of content, multiple monetisation models, creative control, and access to valuable audience data empower creators to explore unconventional ideas, generate income directly from their work, and build authentic, artistically driven projects. The adaptation of Shirish Thorat's book 'A Ticket to Syria', by Neeraj Pandey, is a refreshing take on some true stories about ISIS recruiting Indian men and women.

In 'The Freelancer', Avinash

Kamath, an ex-cop turned mercenary, played by Mohit Raina takes up the daunting task of rescuing Aliya, a newly married girl trapped in war-torn Syria, played by Kashmira Pardeshi, against the backdrop of growing ISIS terrorism. Thorat, a former Goa Police officer with a decade of service, pursued further studies at the Royal Military College in the UK. Following a stint in the Middle East aviation industry, he returned to India where he became a consultant and subject matter expert in security, risk management, and innovative software applications for law enforcement agencies. Shirish is highly regarded for his expertise in counter-terrorism, money laundering, and risk mitigation. Media outlets, creators, and producers bear an ethical responsibility to ensure that their portrayals are fair, accurate, and sensitive to the diversity within the Muslim community. This responsibility extends to not only the characters on screen but also to those involved in the creation and production of content. Ordinary Muslims are victims of radical political Islam too. The way Muslims are depicted in media can significantly influence public opinion and policy, with negative portrayals contributing to discrimination, bias, and even hate crimes.

By: Arshia Malik

## Status of The Current Civil Disobedience in Pakistan-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir

By: Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza

The Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) Chaudhry Anwarul Haq has said that before the passage of the 13th Amendment, it was the Kashmir Council that was responsible for levying tariffs on electricity. However, after the passage of the 13th Amendment, the authority to levy tariffs was transferred to the PoJK government. Haq, while addressing the district bar association of Mirpur on September 19, said that in 2022, the agreement was suspended and now his government has taken up the tariff issue with the government of Pakistan once again.

Anwarul Haq's remarks are a manifestation of the pressure his government feels after the state-wide protests against the additional taxes Pakistan has imposed on electricity bills. For a whole month, the people of PoJK have been on the streets protesting. And there is no sign of it withering away in the near future. The PM of PoJK has made a demand to Pakistan to hand over control of all 39 electricity grid stations in PoJK to his government. This brings him

into direct conflict with the interests of Pakistan, which has been plundering PoJK's natural resources for the past 77 years.

As I pen down this article, there is a protest sit-in being observed by the Awami Action Committee in the capital of PoJK. Similar sit-ins are being observed in Rawalakot and Kotli in the Poonch division and Mirpur city in the Mirpur division. Pensioners are planning a massive hunger strike campaign in Muzaffarabad against non-payment of their dues for the past three months. The employees of Northern Area Transport Corporation (NATCO) in Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan are also observing sit-ins at central bus stations demanding payments of their salaries.

To add insult to injury, the monies cut from the NATCO employees' salaries for insurance payments has gone missing. It has been revealed that Rs 22 crore (Rs 220 million) was never deposited with any insurance company and that the bureaucracy has siphoned off the money. The current status of the people's resistance movement against taxes and shortages of

basic daily essentials such as flour, wheat, sugar and others lacks a clear-cut political direction and therefore, there is grave danger that this movement degenerates into factional fights among those organisations which are conducting protests, leading to the failure of bearing positive results.

But more importantly, one must be aware of the tactics being applied by the deep state of Pakistan to divide and split the current people's protest campaign into communal anarchy. I would like to present here two such examples that might help my reader understand what is it that I mean. On August 31, a general strike was observed all over PoJK. On September 5, another general strike was observed in the Poonch and Mirpur divisions while in the third division of Muzaffarabad, solidarity protests were held. Immediately after that, allegedly on the instructions of the Pakistani deep state, religious fanatic organisations were mobilised in PoJK. One such organisation is the 'Tehreek e Tahafuz e Khatam e Nabuwat' (Movement for the protection of the finality of the Prophet).

# Jaane Jaan Review: Sujoy Ghosh is the real star of Kareena Kapoor's digital debut

When you have a solid screenplay to rely on, it is half the battle won for everyone involved. Then all you need to do is cast the right actors. In 'Jaane Jaan's' case, both these demands were met by writer and filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh ably. The Netflix thriller marks the digital debut of Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor, and the artiste was able to keep pace with not just the flow of the story, but also with her talented co-stars, Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Varma. But, we are getting ahead of ourselves.

'Jaane Jaan' opens with a decidedly dark 'dream' of Jaideep Ahlawat. And as soon as the film begins, you see a short

disclaimer on the top left of the screen, which indicates that the feature consists of drug usage, suicide and domestic violence. That warning, coupled with Jaideep's character's nightmare, immediately gives you a broad picture of what you are getting into. After all, this is a Sujoy Ghosh movie.

For the unversed, 'Jaane Jaan' is an official adaptation of the best-selling Japanese novel 'The Devotion of Suspect X' by Keigo Higashino. An acclaimed book, which has been adapted multiple times in various languages, resulting in a South Korean, Chinese, Japanese and even a Tamil film ('Kolaigaran').

The Kareena-starrer is the fifth

official retelling of the same narrative. Now, the question remains -- how many times can you tell the same story without it getting boring or familiar?

Kareena plays Maya/Sonia D'souza who has been running from her dark past for more than a decade until it finally catches up with her in the form of Saurabh Sachdeva's character. Vijay Varma is the skilled Inspector Karan Anand, who has been assigned a 'missing person' case, while Jaideep's Naren or 'Teacher' happens to be the quiet but mysterious neighbour of Kareena's Maya.

Somehow, they all end up in West Bengal's Kalimpong. There, all their fates collide,

resulting in a (mostly) well-woven murder mystery. But this is not a whodunnit, just in case you were wondering. After maybe 15-20 minutes into the movie, you are sure of who the culprit is, but how that 'culprit' evades the authorities forms the crux of the film. 'Jaane Jaan' sees a fresh side of Vijay the actor, who, of course, has more than a few tricks up his sleeve, as he portrays the cocky but charming Karan with ease. Jaideep is quietly unassuming as the humble and awkward teacher, with a passion for Mathematics. Kareena is well-cast as the good-looking, graceful Sonia who can be both strong and vulnerable. And when this gifted bunch share

screen space with each other, 'Jaane Jaan' sings like Kareena's Maya at the karaoke bar -- with confidence and charisma.

The cinematography by Avik Mukhopadhyay is near perfect. The color palette of the film is such that the final product ends up looking suspenseful and lovely in equal parts, highlighting the beauty and mystery of Kalimpong, lending it its own character. The background score by Shor Police and music by Sachin-Jigar complement what is happening on screen. My chief complaint lies with the editing. The run-time of 'Jaane Jaan' could have been cut short by at least 15-20 minutes to keep things moving. Maybe, next time.

# How Does Pakistan Still Have the Funds to Sponsor Terror Against India?

Leopard never changes its spots. This holds true for the precariously alive, cash-strapped Pakistan. Even as it reels on the brink of bankruptcy while the world views it as a pariah, Pakistan has the funds to sustain terrorism in Kashmir. Recent attacks on Indian armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir show just how resilient the terror-funding machinery of Pakistan is. So the question that comes to mind is - how does Pakistan still have the money to fund terror in India?

Living on last-minute bailouts from the IMF, with its citizens getting squashed under the burden of record inflation with crippling food and energy costs, Pakistan may not have enough forex reserves to service its import bills or even enough cash to keep the lights on for its people, but it sure has enough in the bank to fund Lashkar-e-Taiba and its aliases to keep the fire of terrorism alive in Kashmir.

Even as the guns at the Line of Control have fallen silent for over two years now, Pakistan has not turned the engines of its terror machine off. Four personnel - three from the Indian Army, including a Colonel and a Major, and a Deputy Superintendent of J&K Police - were killed during a gunfight this week.

While details of the attack are scarce, it has come to light that Pakistani terrorist groups have recalibrated their strategy - orchestrating small-scale attacks in Kashmir, keeping the region on the boil, but without crossing a threshold that would provoke India

to go all out.

Reports have also emerged that narcotics trade is further fuelling these terror groups' capabilities, helping them buy assistance from locals.

India has campaigned relentlessly against terror financing, with the aim to get Pakistan blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). However, Pakistan has crawled out of the grey lists and has even secured a bailout from the IMF for the 23rd time.

While the IMF's intervention may open up the Pakistani government's books to its scrutiny, it does not secure a view of the Pakistani military's finances which run unruffled, albeit in the shadows. These off-the-books riches of the Pakistani military power the deep state of Pakistan.

In spite of dwindling foreign reserves, the government has raised defence spending by 15.5%, allocating over Rs 1.8 trillion in a budget of Rs 14.4 trillion for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Additionally, the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023 grants complete legal status to the military's extensive business holdings, criminalises any form of criticism directed at the armed forces, and bestows upon them the authority to engage in endeavours related to national development and the promotion of national or strategic interests.

Any "unauthorised disclosures" even by civilian employees working in entities affiliated with or controlled by the Pakistan Army like the Fauji Foundation,

Army Welfare Trust, Fauji Cement, Fauji Urea, and so on, shall be deemed a criminal offence, hence providing further cover to the military-industrial complex and its clandestine empire.

These developments have further empowered the military establishment. The Pakistani army is running the most lucrative and powerful business empire in Pakistan, accounting for nearly 10% of its GDP. The annual revenue of this massive conglomerate is upwards of \$26 billion which is more than any Indian conglomerate.

There is no major business in Pakistan which does not entail the

involvement of the Pakistani army. The Pakistan Army General Headquarters oversees this empire as military generals dominate almost every major sector of the economy, from real estate, cement and fertiliser manufacturing to food and pharmaceuticals.

This sprawling empire functions under the garb of charitable organisations, evading taxation and enriching army generals right, left and centre. Army generals' wealth sees an exponential rise post-retirement in Pakistan. This conglomerate is at the heart of Pakistan's economic woes. The military's hegemony in business prevents the entry of new players,

preventing citizens from reaping the benefits of healthy competition.

During the 1980s, when the US provided funding to the Afghan Mujahideen, some of that money was allocated to various purposes. A portion went to Afghanistan, some to the regions of Punjab and Kashmir, and another part was used to build economic and industrial capabilities in Pakistan, following a model similar to what was done in Egypt. Numerous companies were established, including shell companies, to launder a significant amount of funds. This money could then be used in areas unrelated to Afghanistan without the threat of

## 'If Stephen Hawking had this': Musk's Neuralink to start human brain implant trial

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk said his company Neuralink will soon begin testing its brain implant for a human paralytic patient. He highlighted it will have the potential to restore full body movement.

"In the long term, Neuralink hopes to play a role in AI risk civilisational risk reduction by improving human-to-AI (and human-to-human) bandwidth by several orders of magnitude. Imagine if Stephen Hawking had this," Musk wrote on X.

Stephen Hawking, the renowned theoretical physicist, died on March 16, 2018, at the age of 76. His death was attributed to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a neurodegenerative disease that he had been living with for over 50 years.

ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive condition that erodes motor neurons, which are cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscular function. As the disease progresses, it interferes with the brain's ability to send messages to muscles in the body, leading

to muscle atrophy and loss of voluntary muscle control.

Meanwhile, Neuralink on Tuesday said it had received approval from an independent review board to begin recruitment for the first human trial of its brain implant for paralysis patients.

Those with paralysis due to cervical spinal cord injury or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis may qualify for the study, it said, but did not reveal how many participants would be enrolled in the trial, which will take about six years to complete.

The study will use a robot to surgically place a brain-computer interface (BCI) implant in a region of the brain that controls the intention to move, Neuralink said, adding that its initial goal is to enable people to control a computer cursor or keyboard using their thoughts alone.

Musk has grand ambitions for Neuralink, saying it would facilitate speedy surgical insertions of its chip devices to treat conditions like obesity, autism, depression and schizophrenia.



# China Goes All In On Taliban: Will Lying With The Devil Lead China to Hell?

China has sent a new ambassador to Kabul for the first time since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. With this, even as it has not recognised the Taliban regime, China has signalled a clear intent to engage with it, in a bid to secure an array of interests including the Belt and Road Initiative, access to Afghanistan's mineral wealth and keeping Uyghur militants at bay. Zhao Xing, the new Chinese ambassador, officially presented his credentials in a lavish ceremony held in Kabul last week. China has become one of at least six other countries, namely Qatar, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, to have their ambassadors in the conflict-ridden nation. The Taliban seeks to play this up as an endorsement from China and a cue for other nations to step up and formally recognise the new leadership in Kabul.

China asserts that Afghanistan has significantly recovered since the Taliban takeover in 2021. In an interview with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) mouthpiece Global Times, Zhao said that the nation is gradually recovering with the economic and security situations having improved in the last two years. China has its work cut out in

Afghanistan. Beijing wants Kabul to help secure the BRI project at a time when it is losing steam and is likely to be overshadowed by the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IME EC). China also has to deal with the security challenges emanating from the conflict between the Taliban and Pakistan, with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being a prime target. It not only has to secure the CPEC but also manoeuvre around the Taliban's heated conflict with Pakistan along the border. It also has to balance ties with Iran, a Shia-Muslim nation with ideological differences with the Sunni-Muslim Taliban, locked in a violent water dispute over the Helmand River. China also has the threat of Uyghur militants to take care of. The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is being sheltered by the Taliban in Afghan territory, posing a risk of heightened insurgency in the China-controlled Xinjiang region. In fact, the Taliban threat to China's economic interests in and around Afghanistan is so extensive that Beijing is locked in a catch-22 situation. If it shuns the Taliban, the risks would only worsen, and if it embraces the militant regime in Kabul, it would embolden the warlords and convey a negative image on the

global stage - one where China is seen as complicit in the Taliban's violent oppression of women and young girls, among other crimes. However, for now, China has made its choice since there is an opportunity in this crisis as well. Afghanistan sits on trillions of dollars worth of mineral wealth, more than \$3 trillion according to one US study. With reserves of gold, oil, lithium, copper, cobalt, various gemstones, chromite, iron and more, the war-ravaged nation is a treasure chest that China may deem worth the risk. Not only is the Afghan Taliban regime desperately seeking investments from global players, but it is also keen on being part of China's Belt and Road Initiative and wants China to resume its mining projects in the country.

China has expressed interest in investing \$10 billion in Afghanistan's lithium reserves. A Chinese company has also signed a \$700 million contract to extract oil from the Amu Darya basin. It runs mining operations tapping into the Mes Aynak copper reserves. Afghanistan also announced seven contracts with Chinese and other companies, worth \$6.5 billion, which is nearly half of the country's GDP.

Attacks on Chinese citizens involved in crucial projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan have

continued with the Taliban at the helm of affairs. Pakistan has been unable to fight off the threat of the Tehreek-e-Taliban on its territory, and border disagreements over the Durand Line have escalated into full-blown conflicts with the Afghan Taliban turning hostile towards its former patron.

For long, Beijing has leaned on Islamabad to do its bidding with the Taliban. However, Pakistan has taken a backseat in China's scheme of things, owing to its failure in securing Chinese citizens and interests along the CPEC. It now seeks the cooperation of the Taliban directly and has even agreed to extend the CPEC into Afghanistan. Through this, its mining exploits could now travel through the CPEC and enter the Indian Ocean through the Gwadar port in Pakistan.

China also needs the Taliban to act against the ETIM. Previously, there have been reports of China paying the Taliban to keep the militants at bay. For the Taliban, this is a convenient leverage. The risks are heightened further when one factors in the attacks by ISIS-K, the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group, as well as the opposition posed by the anti-Taliban National Resistance Front (NRF) and internal disputes within the Taliban related to

mineral resources.

Last year December, ISIS-K carried out an attack on a Kabul hotel that was frequented by Chinese business people. This incident occurred after a meeting between Chinese Ambassador Wang Yu and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai to discuss the security of the Chinese Embassy. The Taliban itself has its own fears regarding ISIS-K, particularly concerning the potential for collaboration between militant groups that could weaken the control of the ruling faction. The fight for the Afghan exploits puts into question the Taliban's own abilities to secure Chinese interests.

So what is the end game here? There is no easy way to deal with the Taliban but China is taking the risk anyway. China has to juggle between the Taliban, Iran and Pakistan and also secure its own borders. But by being one of the first in line, China may seek the first mover's advantage. China's Afghan strategy is taking shape amid intensifying rivalry with the United States. If China can secure a lead in the quest for Afghanistan's mineral wealth, it could possibly one-up the US in another battleground. It remains to be seen, however, if it will emerge a victor or with its fingers burnt.

## AI-focused tech firms locked in 'race to the bottom', warns MIT professor

The scientist behind a landmark letter calling for a pause in developing powerful artificial intelligence systems has said tech executives did not halt their work because they are locked in a "race to the bottom".

Max Tegmark, a co-founder of the Future of Life Institute, organised an open letter in March calling for a six-month pause in developing giant AI systems.

Despite support from more than 30,000 signatories, including Elon Musk and the Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, the document failed to secure a hiatus in developing the most ambitious systems.

Speaking to the Guardian six months on, Tegmark said he had not expected the letter to stop tech companies working towards AI models more powerful than GPT-4, the large language model that powers ChatGPT, because competition has become so intense.

"I felt that privately a lot of corporate leaders I talked to wanted [a pause] but they were trapped in this race to the bottom against each other. So no company can pause alone," he said.

The letter warned of an "out-of-control race" to develop minds that no one could "understand, predict, or reliably control", and urged governments to intervene if a moratorium on developing systems more powerful than GPT-4 could not be agreed between leading AI companies such as Google, ChatGPT owner OpenAI and Microsoft.

It asked: "Should we develop nonhuman minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart, obsolete and replace us? Should we risk loss of control of our civilisation?"

Tegmark, a professor of physics and AI researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said he viewed the letter as a success.

"The letter has had more impact than I thought it would," he said, pointing to a political awakening on AI that has included US Senate hearings with tech executives and the UK government convening a global summit on AI safety in November.

Expressing alarm about AI had gone from being taboo to becoming a mainstream view since the letter's publication, Tegmark said. The letter from his thinktank was followed in May by a statement from the Center for AI Safety, backed by hundreds of tech executives and academics, declaring that AI should be considered a societal risk on a par with pandemics and nuclear war. "I felt there was a lot of pent-up anxiety around going full steam ahead with AI, that people around the world were afraid of expressing for fear of coming across as scare-mongering luddites. The letter legitimised talking about it; the letter made it socially acceptable.

"So you're getting people like [letter

signatory] Yuval Noah Harari saying it, you've started to get politicians asking tough questions," said Tegmark, whose thinktank researches existential threats and potential benefits from cutting-edge technology.

Fears around AI development range from the immediate, such as the ability to generate deepfake videos and mass-produce disinformation, to the existential risk posed by super-intelligent AIs that evade human control or make irreversible and highly consequential decisions.

Tegmark warned against describing the development of digital "god-like general intelligence" as a long-term threat, citing some AI practitioners who believe it could happen within a few years.

The Swedish-American scientist said November's UK AI safety summit, to be held at Bletchley Park, was a "wonderful thing". His thinktank has said the summit

should target three achievements: establishing a common understanding of the severity of risks posed by AI; recognising that a unified global response is needed; and embracing the need for urgent government intervention.

He added that a hiatus in development was still needed until global agreed safety standards were met. "Making models more powerful than what we have now, that has to be put on pause until they can meet agreed-upon safety standards." He added: "Agreeing on what the safety standards are will naturally cause the pause."

Tegmark also urged governments to take action on open-source AI models that can be accessed and adapted by members of the public. Mark Zuckerberg's Meta recently released an open-source large language model, called Llama 2, and was warned by one UK expert that such a move was akin to "giving people a template to build a nuclear bomb".

# Canada and India are enmeshed in an unprecedented diplomatic row. Here's how it happened

An explosive allegation from Canada that the Indian government may have been behind the assassination of a Sikh separatist activist on Canadian soil has triggered a huge diplomatic row and sent relations between the two plummeting.

It all started on Monday, when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed he has credible information linking India to the killing of prominent Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Canada's allegation outraged India, which has vehemently denied the claim, calling it "absurd and motivated."

Both Canada and India acted swiftly to expel senior diplomats in reciprocal moves earlier this week. And on Thursday, India's foreign ministry responded by temporarily suspending visa services for Canadian citizens over what it said are "security threats" against diplomats in Canada.

Trudeau on Thursday called on India to "work with" Canada and "allow justice to follow its course." Experts say the falling out raises the prospect of an unprecedented rift between two key partners of the United States, and puts other major Western countries in an uncomfortable position.

## What are the two sides saying?

Trudeau claimed in Parliament on Monday that Canadian authorities had been investigating "credible allegations" of a

potential link between "agents of the government of India" and the killing of Nijjar, a Sikh Canadian citizen who was gunned down by masked men in June.

Canada's foreign affairs minister Melanie Joly subsequently said that Ottawa had expelled an Indian diplomat, whom she described as the head of the Indian intelligence agency in the country, as a "consequence."

India responded hours later by rejecting Trudeau's allegations, accusing Canada of harboring terrorists and claiming its inaction against extremists had been a "long-standing" concern. It also expelled a senior Canadian diplomat from the country.

Nijjar's death in June shocked the Sikh community in Canada, one of the largest outside India with more than 770,000 members.

Following Trudeau's comments, two Sikh community groups in Canada — the British Columbia Gurdwaras Council and Ontario Gurdwaras Committee — urged the Canadian government to "immediately suspend all intelligence, investigative and prosecutorial cooperation with India."

"Canada's comprehensive response must reflect the gravity of India's role in the premeditated murder of a Sikh dissident living in Canada," the groups added in a joint statement.

On Tuesday, Trudeau doubled down

on the allegations. He said Canada wasn't trying to "provoke" India or "escalate" the situation, but was "simply laying out the facts," adding that his government will "follow the evidence and make sure that the work is done to hold people to account."

## Who was Hardeep Singh Nijjar?

Nijjar was an outspoken supporter of the creation of a separate Sikh homeland known as Khalistan, which would include parts of India's Punjab state.

The Khalistan movement is outlawed in India and considered a national security threat by the government. A number of groups associated with the movement are listed as "terrorist organizations" under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Nijjar's name appears on the Home Ministry's list of UAPA terrorists and in 2020, the Indian National Investigation Agency accused him of "trying to radicalize the Sikh community across the world in favor of the creation of 'Khalistan,'" adding that he had been "trying to incite Sikhs to vote for secession, agitate against the government of India and carry out violent activities."

Nijjar's friend and former lawyer, who also appears on India's UAPA wanted list, said Nijjar was warned at least three times by Canadian authorities including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police about

threats to his life.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun told CNN that Nijjar was asked to be careful and avoid giving "big talks" or he would be targeted. CNN has reached out to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Pannun, who faces multiple charges from the Indian government, runs a New York-based outfit called "Sikhs for Justice," which has held referendums for a separate Khalistan state. The organization is considered unlawful in India, where its website is not accessible.

Canadian police have not arrested anyone in connection with Nijjar's murder. But in an August update, police said they were investigating three suspects and issued a description of a possible getaway vehicle.

## Can relations return to where they were?

Relations between the two countries have been tepid for several years and Canada's allegations against the Indian government has further soured things. A noted thinker, called the situation "quite extraordinary." "Friendly nations don't do this to each other," he said. "The challenges (that arise from this) are something to be seen because I don't see any light, at least in the short term, at the end of the tunnel."

## Sukhdool Singh Alias Sukha, Canada-Based Gangster & Khalistan Supporter, Killed in Winnipeg

Gangster Sukhdool Singh, who had fled to Canada from Punjab in 2017, was shot dead by unknown men in Canada's Winnipeg on Wednesday night. According to sources in Punjab Police, Singh had joined pro-Khalistan forces.

Sukhdool Singh alias Sukha Duneke, gangster of Davinder Bambiha gang, was from Punjab's Moga. As Intelligence input suggested Duneke was killed in Canada's Winnipeg in an inter-gang rivalry, hours after reports of his killing surfaced, Lawrence Bishnoi gang claimed responsibility for the same. Follow India-Canada News LIVE Updates Here

In a social media post, the Lawrence Bishnoi gang said Duneke played a major role in the killings of gangsters Gurlal Brar and Vicky Middkhera, adding that the murders were planned by Duneke even when he was staying abroad.

## WHO WAS SUKDHOOOL SINGH ALIAS SUKHA DUNEKE

Sukhdool Singh went to Canada in 2017 on forged passport. Duneke had been aiding, funding and strengthening the Devinder Bambiha gang in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan. He was also inclined towards the pro-Khalistan outfits, but, mostly made calls for extortions and indulges in 'supari' killings, sources told News18.

**CANADA KILLINGS 'DUE TO INTER-GANG RIVALRY BETWEEN GROUPS'**

Top Intelligence sources said these killings are due to inter gang rivalry between these groups. These groups want to own the Khalistani movement for the sake of money, sources said.

This is nothing but an attempt to control immigration business by Pannun and others, sources added.

They hire local gangsters to kill these people because their utility is over. Another fear is they will disclose everything they have done in India on behalf of these gangsters, sources told News18.

Sources said that the anti-India propaganda is nothing but

immigration business. Khalistani groups exploiting emotions and compulsions of youth and spreading fake narrative.

## DUNEKE ORCHESTRATED CRIMES IN PUNJAB

Duneke has been orchestrating crimes in Punjab and nearby states through his associates and figures in the most wanted list of criminals in the state.

On March 14 last year, Duneke conspired to kill kabaddi player Sandeep Singh Nangal with the help of his associates during a match at Mallian village in Jalandhar.

More than 20 criminal cases of murder and other heinous crimes were registered against him in Punjab and nearby states.

## PAKISTAN-CANADA NEXUS

It is learnt that Pakistan's ISI is funding heavily in Canada. Sources said all Khalistani leaders in Canada, especially from Khalistani Liberal Party and New Democratic Party (NDP), are getting regular money from ISI agents in Vancouver. They, on pretext of immigration, are taking money from students and using them for anti-India propaganda, sources said.

## Rahul Gandhi's day with porters at Delhi railway station

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday interacted with porters at the Anand Vihar railway station in Delhi. He spoke with them about their problems, and later also wore the porters' trademark red shirt, as he continued to push his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' message. The Congress leader was also spotted lifting luggage over his head as the crowd cheered him. "People's hero Rahul Gandhiji met his porter friends at the Anand Vihar railway station in Delhi today. Recently, a video had gone viral in which the porter friends of the railway station had expressed their desire to meet him," the Congress said in a post on X, with pictures of Gandhi interacting with the porters. This is one of the many added to his spree of visits and interactions with people from various sections of society -- from mechanics to students -- asserting that his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' continues. Gandhi's focus, through Bharat Jodo Yatra, has been on interacting with the masses at the grassroots-level. He has continued to push this approach through several visits across

the stretch of his yatra -- from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. With many such visits over months, his party has affirmed it to be a continuation of the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'.

## AZADPUR MANDI VISIT

Earlier in August, he visited the Azadpur Mandi in Delhi and interacted with local vendors at the vegetable and fruit market. His visit was prompted by a viral video of a vegetable vendor talking about rising prices of vegetables and its overwhelming impact on the working class.

Gandhi was seen walking through a crowded market, talking to the vendors about their incomes, living conditions, and well-being. He also drank tea with them.

## FARMING WITH SONEPAT FARMERS

In another such visit in July, Gandhi met farmers at Sonepat's Madina village in Haryana. He joined the farmers transplanting paddy during the impromptu visit while he was on his way to Shimla from Delhi.



# Poland will stop providing weapons to Ukraine as dispute over grain imports deepens

(News Agency) -Poland said Wednesday it will stop providing weapons to Ukraine amid a growing dispute between the two countries over a temporary ban on Ukrainian grain imports.

"We no longer transfer weapons to Ukraine because we are now arming Poland," Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on social media.

Poland has long been one of Ukraine's staunchest backers since Moscow's invasion of its neighbor, alongside multiple former Eastern bloc nations who fear they could be next if Russian President Vladimir Putin's expansionist war is successful.

Now Kyiv and Warsaw are at loggerheads. The ban on Ukrainian grain was initially put in place earlier this year by several European Union nations, to protect the livelihood of local farmers worried about being undercut by low prices of Ukrainian grain.

Last week, the EU announced plans to suspend the ban. But three nations - Poland, Hungary and Slovakia - said they intended to defy the change and keep the restrictions in place.

It prompted protests from Ukraine, which this week filed lawsuits against all three countries over the issue.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also spoke out against the ban on Wednesday when addressing the UN



General Assembly, saying "it is alarming to see how some in Europe, some of our friends in Europe, play out solidarity in a political theater - making a thriller from the grain."

He added that the nations involved "may seem to play their own role but in fact they are helping set the stage to a Moscow actor."

Ukraine seemingly moved to ease the rift on Thursday. Kyiv's minister of agrarian policy said he had spoken with his Polish counterpart and issued a statement saying the pair "discussed the situation and Ukraine's proposal to resolve it, and agreed to find a solution that takes into account the interests of both countries."

It also agreed to establish a grain trade system with Slovakia that would enable a ban on imports of Ukrainian grain to be lifted, Slovakia's agriculture ministry said on Thursday.

But Zelensky's comments sparked immediate condemnation from Poland, with the foreign ministry summoning the Ukrainian ambassador to Warsaw to convey their "strong protest."

Polish Foreign Minister Pawel Jablonski told Ukraine's ambassador that Zelensky's claim was "untrue," especially since Poland had been "supporting Ukraine since the first days of the war."

He added that "putting pressure on Poland in multilateral forums or sending

complaints to international tribunals are not appropriate methods of resolving disputes between our countries," according to a statement from the ministry. In a television interview, Morawiecki, the prime minister, said he would not risk destabilizing the Polish market by accepting Ukrainian grain imports but would not prevent passage through Poland, Polish national news agency PAP reported.

"Of course we will maintain the transit of Ukrainian goods. Poland does not bear any costs due to that. On the contrary, it could be said that we earn from it," Morawiecki said, according to PAP.

Morawiecki also accused Ukrainian oligarchs of having "pushed their grain onto the Polish market" without concern for local farmers, and said Poland will now focus on supplying "the most modern weapons" for its own purposes, PAP reported.

"If you want to defend yourself you have to have something to defend with," Morawiecki said. Warsaw has taken a lead among NATO allies in supplying Kyiv with heavy weapons. In the spring, Poland became the first NATO country to send fighter jets to Ukraine - months ahead of the United States, which only agreed last month to approve the transfer of F-16 fighter jets, pending the completion of training by Ukrainian forces.

## Man arrested after allegedly touching Spanish journalist's bottom live on air



(News Agency) - Police in Spain arrested a man on suspicion of sexual assault after he appeared to touch a TV journalist on the bottom as she was reporting live from the streets of Madrid. The man approached Isa Balado, a journalist for the "En boca de todos" program on Spain's Cuatro channel, as she was reporting on an alleged robbery on Tuesday.

The man can be seen approaching her and then appearing to touch her bottom as she's talking to presenter Nacho Abad in the studio.

Balado tried to continue with her piece to camera, but Abad asked her if the man had just touched her bottom.

When Balado said he did, Abad asked her to put "this stupid guy" on camera.

The camera then zooms out to show Balado and the man.

"Do you really need to touch my bum?" she asked, before telling him that she's live on television. "I'd like you to let me work." He continued to talk to her, before reaching his hand out to rub her on the head and then eventually walking away. Balado then continued with the rest of her report.

In a later video segment, Balado commented on what had happened.

"It's very unpleasant, particularly when you are working," she said, before the camera panned to show the man standing on the street with another man.

He then approached Balado again and attempted to talk to her before she asked to cut the broadcast.

## Indonesia jails woman who recited Muslim prayer before trying pork on TikTok

(News Agency) - A Muslim woman has been sentenced to two years in prison under Indonesia's blasphemy law over a video she shared on TikTok which showed her reciting an Islamic prayer before trying pork while visiting the tourist island of Bali.

Lina Lutfiawati, known as Lina Mukherjee on social media, was tried on Tuesday in the Palembang district court on Sumatra island.

The 33-year-old was found guilty of "spreading information aimed at inciting hatred against religious individuals and specific groups," court documents read. In addition to her two-year prison sentence, the court fined her \$16,245 (250,000,000 Indonesian rupiah), a small fortune in a country where the annual per capita wage is around \$4,300. Her jail term could be extended by three months if she does not pay the fine, the court added.

Speaking to reporters outside court on Tuesday after the trial, Mukherjee expressed shock at the sentence.

"I know I was wrong but I really did not expect this punishment," she said, in comments carried by CNN affiliate, CNN Indonesia. It is possible that she will file an appeal, CNN Indonesia added.

Blasphemy cases on the rise

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation, where 231 million people, at least 93% of its adult population, identify as Muslim.

Religious conservatism has been on the rise in the country in recent years and rights groups have warned that blasphemy laws are being "increasingly weaponized" against religious minorities and those deemed to have insulted Islam.

Pork is forbidden in Islam and eating it remains taboo among most Indonesian Muslims. But the meat is commonly consumed by millions of non-Muslims, including the country's ethnic Chinese population as well those living on the Hindu-majority island of Bali.

Mukherjee, who identifies as Muslim, commands a combined social media following of more than 2 million.

Known for her lifestyle and food videos showing her sampling various dishes, she received backlash over a video she shared on TikTok in March, which showed her sitting at a dining table and reciting the Islamic phrase "Bismillah" (In the name of Allah) before consuming crispy pork skin. Bismillah is one of the most important and common holy phrases in Islam. It is the first phrase in the Quran and is often uttered by Muslims before eating. It is also frequently used as a generic declaration.

# King Charles makes historic speech at French senate as he hails 'indispensable' UK-France relationship

(News Agency) -King Charles III became the first British monarch to make a speech from France's senate chamber on Thursday, praising the "indispensable relationship" between the UK and its neighbor which he said was "as firm as it has ever been."

Charles and his wife, Queen Camilla, are on a three-day state trip to France, visiting Paris and Bordeaux, concluding Friday. The tour was originally planned for March but was postponed amid widespread demonstrations over President Emmanuel Macron's pension overhaul.

The 74-year-old sovereign was given an enthusiastic welcome to the chamber - receiving a standing ovation from parliamentarians as he entered. When his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II, visited in 2004, she made her speech from the adjoining Salle des Conferences.

Charles vowed that "for the time that is granted to me as King" he would seek to strengthen UK-French ties, adding that "together, our potential is limitless."

The King - whose speech came 231 years to the day since France abolished its own monarchy and established a republic - spoke of being "flattered" to have been invited to speak by the two presidents of the two houses that make up France's parliament.

During his address, he saved some of his

strongest words to rebuke Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while also urging further action to tackle the climate crisis.

"Now, more than 80 years since we fought, side by side, for the liberation of Europe,



we once again face unprovoked aggression on our continent," Charles told lawmakers at the Palais du Luxembourg, where the French Senate is located.

"Our alliance and our resolve are as important as ever. Together, we stand in resolute solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Together, we are steadfast in our determination Ukraine will triumph, and that our cherished freedoms will prevail."

He continued: "These horrifying events have

once more demonstrated the fragility of so much that we hold dear. Just as we stand together against military aggression, so must we strive together to protect the world from our most existential challenge of all -

that of global warming, climate change and the catastrophic destruction of nature."

Charles deftly flipped between French and English throughout his address, his joke warning against "low blows" but wishing "may the best man win" as France hosts the men's Rugby World Cup eliciting laughter from around the room.

Earlier he'd been greeted at the Palais du Luxembourg by the Senate and National Assembly presidents before meeting

representatives from both houses of French parliament and signing a visitors' book in the Salle des Conferences.

On the other side of the River Seine, Queen Camilla was at the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, the national library, where she and the French president's wife, Brigitte Macron, were launching a new Franco-British literary prize.

Camilla apologized for her "slightly rusty French" but said it was a "huge pleasure" to jointly launch the Prix de l'Entente Litteraire. She added that she and the French first lady shared a "deep love of literature and a passion to promote literacy." She said both had seen firsthand how books can change lives and "bring us joy, comfort, companionship, laughter and tears, opening our eyes to others' experiences and reminding us that we are not alone."

Charles and Camilla then reunited in Saint-Denis, in Paris' northern suburbs, where they rubbed shoulders with top athletes and met community sports groups at an event highlighting the advantages of sport for young people. Their next stop was a flower market in central Paris named after Queen Elizabeth II, before heading to Notre Dame cathedral, where restoration work following a devastating fire in 2019 is due for completion next year.

## 'Godfather' of illicit wildlife trade jailed in US for trafficking rhino horns worth \$2 million



(News Agency) - A US court on Tuesday sentenced a wildlife trade kingpin to 18 months in prison for conspiring to traffic hundreds of kilos of rhino horns, in a ruling conservation groups said would cause a major blow to the illicit business.

Teo Boon Ching, a Malaysian citizen nicknamed "the Godfather" by investigators, was part of a conspiracy to smuggle illegal rhino horns to international buyers, including in Manhattan, according to a news release from the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Ching, who was already under US

sanctions, was arrested in Thailand last year and later extradited to the United States, the release said.

"Wildlife trafficking is a serious threat," said Damian Williams, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, in the release. "The substantial sentence shows the resolve of this office to use every tool at our disposal to ensure the protection of endangered species." Rhinos are critically endangered despite persistent efforts to save the species. Their numbers have dropped drastically due to hunting and habitat loss and mere thousands remain in the wild in Africa and Asia, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

## South Korea says it 'will not stand idly by' if North Korea receives Russian help on nuclear weapons

(News Agency) -South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol warned on Wednesday that his country and its allies "will not stand idly by" if North Korea receives Russian help to boost its weapons of mass destruction - just days after the leaders of the two nuclear-armed nations held a closely watched summit.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia last week for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin. Ahead of the meeting US officials warned that the two leaders could strike a deal that would provide weapons for Moscow to use in its grueling war against Ukraine - and that could see sanction-hit Pyongyang gain access to vital Russian technology. That has alarmed South Korea, a US treaty ally.

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Yoon declared: "While military strength may vary among countries, by uniting in unwavering solidarity and steadfastly adhering to our principles, we can deter any unlawful provocation." He also called to reform the UN Security Council - of which Russia is a member - saying such a move "would receive a broad support" if Moscow did supply Pyongyang with information in exchange for weapons.



"It is paradoxical that a permanent member of the UN Security Council, entrusted as the ultimate guardian of world peace, would wage war by invading another sovereign nation and receive arms and ammunition from a regime that blatantly violates UN Security Council resolutions," Yoon said. He added that if North Korea "acquires the information and technology necessary to enhance its (weapons of mass destruction) capabilities in exchange for supporting Russia with conventional weapons, the deal will be a direct provocation, threatening the peace and security of not only Ukraine, but also the Republic of Korea," the president added.



# Azerbaijan says it has retaken breakaway Armenian enclave after separatists surrender

(News Agency) - 'Azerbaijan said it had taken back the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after launching a lightning 24-hour assault that forced ethnic Armenian forces to surrender and agree to a Russia-brokered ceasefire.

Under the agreement, Azerbaijan said it would halt its military offensive - which killed at least 200 people and injured many more - and said it would hold talks with Karabakh officials "to discuss reintegration."

The first round of talks took place Thursday, Azerbaijani state media reported, with Karabakh representatives meeting a delegation from Azerbaijan. Few details have been released on the meeting, which was also attended by a representative of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in the region.

In a speech to the nation Wednesday evening, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said his forces had "punished the enemy properly" and that Baku had restored its sovereignty "with an iron fist."

Russia's peacekeeping force said it had begun to evacuate civilians from Nagorno-Karabakh, but there are fears that Azerbaijan's reclaiming of the region could create tens of thousands of refugees and Armenia's government has repeatedly warned of the risk of ethnic cleansing.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a landlocked region in the Caucasus Mountains that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but is home to around 120,000 ethnic Armenians, who make up the majority of the population and reject Azerbaijani rule. The region has its own de facto government that is backed by Armenia, but is not officially recognized by



Armenia or any other country.

The ceasefire began at 1 p.m. local time (5 a.m. ET) Wednesday, Nagorno-Karabakh's presidential office announced. It said its army had been outnumbered "several times over" by Azerbaijani forces and had no choice but to surrender and agree to "the dissolution and complete disarmament of its armed forces."

After the ceasefire was announced, local media reported that thousands of Karabakh residents rushed to the airport in the region's capital Stepanakert, where Russian peacekeepers had established a base. Local officials urged residents to "remain in bomb shelters," amid fears that Azerbaijani troops could breach the ceasefire. Evacuation efforts have been complicated by the ongoing blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh, after Azerbaijan-backed forces established a military checkpoint along the Lachin corridor - the only road connecting the enclave to Armenia - in December 2022. For the past

nine months, imports of food, medicine and fuel to the region have been cut off, prompting Western officials to warn that genocide was being committed against the Armenian population.

Tuesday's offensive, while brief, will likely have more substantial consequences than the most recent war for control of the region in 2020. During that conflict, Azerbaijan won a crushing victory in 44 days, reclaiming about a third of Nagorno-Karabakh before Russia, historically the dominant power in the region, brokered a ceasefire which saw both sides lay down their weapons. But, having exposed Armenia's military inferiority in that war, Azerbaijan has since sought to press home its advantage. Wednesday's ceasefire handed Azerbaijan a far more comprehensive victory than the 2020 agreement, and the terms of the truce mean returning the whole of the region to Baku's control. "Let those who cannot digest our successes remember: the iron

fist is in place. And let them not forget: Karabakh is Azerbaijan!" said a triumphant Aliyev in a televised address Wednesday night.

On Thursday, the day after the ceasefire was brokered, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan marked the 32nd anniversary of Armenia's independence by stressing the need for a lasting peace.

"Peace should not be confused with a truce or a ceasefire," Pashinyan warned. Russia's influence

Under the 2020 ceasefire, Russia deployed around 2,000 peacekeepers to the region to prevent a new conflict. But Armenian officials have grown frustrated by what it sees as the ineffectiveness of Russia's contingent, which was laid bare on Tuesday. Armenia's Security Council Secretary Armen Grigoryan accused Russian peacekeepers of failing to protect Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijani aggression, according to state media Armenpress. The Kremlin rejected Armenia's criticisms of the Russian peacekeeping contingent. "Such accusations against us are unfounded," spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday. Azerbaijani prosecutors said five Russian peacekeepers were killed in the village of Chankatagh, in the Terter region, on Wednesday after Azerbaijani troops fired at their car having mistaken them for "illegal Armenian armed groups." On the same day, in the same area, "unidentified members of illegal Armenian armed groups" fired at a Kamaz vehicle belonging to the Russian peacekeepers with firearms, the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan said on Thursday.

## Google sued after US man drives car off collapsed bridge following map directions

(News Agency) -The family of a North Carolina man who died after driving his car off a collapsed bridge while following Google Maps directions is suing the technology giant for negligence, claiming it had been informed of the collapse but failed to update its navigation system.

Philip Paxson, a medical device salesman and father of two, drowned Sept. 30, 2022, after his Jeep Gladiator plunged into Snow Creek in Hickory, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in Wake County Superior Court. Paxson was driving home from his daughter's ninth birthday party through an unfamiliar neighborhood when Google Maps allegedly directed him to cross a bridge that had collapsed nine years prior and was never repaired. "Our girls ask how and why their daddy died, and I'm at a loss for words they can understand because, as an adult, I still can't understand how those responsible for the GPS directions and the bridge could have acted with so little regard



for human life," his wife, Alicia Paxson, said. State troopers who found Paxton's body in his overturned and partially submerged truck had said there were no barriers or warning signs along the washed-out roadway. He had driven off an unguarded edge and crashed about 20 feet

below, according to the lawsuit.

The North Carolina State Patrol had said the bridge was not maintained by local or state officials, and the original developer's company had dissolved. The lawsuit names several private property management companies that it claims are

responsible for the bridge and the adjoining land.

Multiple people had notified Google Maps about the collapse in the years leading up to Paxson's death and had urged the company to update its route information, according to the lawsuit.

The Tuesday court filing includes email records from another Hickory resident who had used the map's "suggest an edit" feature in September 2020 to alert the company that it was directing drivers over the collapsed bridge. A November 2020 email confirmation from Google confirms the company received her report and was reviewing the suggested change, but the lawsuit claims Google took no further actions. "We have the deepest sympathies for the Paxson family," Google spokesperson José Castañeda told The Associated Press. "Our goal is to provide accurate routing information in Maps and we are reviewing this lawsuit."

## HDFC Bank shares fall 4% today. Will weak run continue?



Nomura downgraded HDFC Bank's stock rating from 'buy' to 'neutral' and lowered the target price from Rs 1,970 to Rs 1,800. Nomura cited several negative surprises from the analyst meeting, including net worth adjustments impacting book value per share (BVPS), expected NIM reductions, higher cost-to-income ratios due to accounting changes, and a potential increase in non-performing assets (NPAs) in HDFC's corporate loan book. Meanwhile, Antique Stock Broking lowered its price target for HDFC to Rs 1,925 from Rs 2,025.

The downgrade prompted a significant decline in HDFC Bank's stock, with shares falling nearly 4 per cent.

Will HDFC Bank's weak run continue?

Shares of HDFC Bank have been underperforming ever since the merger with HDFC. It may be noted that today's decline brings the bank's year-to-date loss to 3.85 per cent.

(News Agency) -Shares of HDFC Bank, the country's largest private lender, declined 4 per cent at the end of Wednesday's trading session, making it the top loser on both the Nifty 50 and Sensex indices. The bank's shares ended 3.85 per cent lower on the NSE at Rs 1,566 apiece, and 4 per cent on the BSE at Rs 1,563.90. Why HDFC Bank shares fell This sharp fall followed concerns raised by analysts regarding the bank's recently completed merger with HDFC Ltd and its potential impact on key financial ratios. During a recent analysts' meeting, HDFC Bank discussed the short-term challenges it anticipates after its merger with HDFC Ltd. Among the concerns highlighted was the possibility of a 25 basis points (bps) narrowing of the net interest margin (NIM). This reduction in NIM is expected due to factors such as the incremental cash reserve ratio (CRR) and excess liquidity, with HDFC having accumulated a substantial liquidity buffer prior to the merger. In response to these concerns and the meeting's outcomes, global brokerage firm

## 6 new sectors may get PLI boost worth up to Rs 18,000 crore: Report



(News Agency) -India is planning to provide incentives amounting to approximately Rs 18,000 crore to stimulate local manufacturing across six new sectors, reported news agency Reuters quoting two government officials.

This initiative is part of the ambitious production-linked incentive scheme (PLI), which was initially launched in 2020 to target 14 different sectors, including electronics and drones. However, the scheme has seen limited success, with only a handful of sectors benefiting significantly.

According to two government officials familiar with the matter, a fraction of the incentives

allocated under the PLI scheme has been claimed so far. As a result, the government is considering reallocating these unused funds to support the newly identified sectors.

Six new sectors in focus

The six sectors poised to join the PLI scheme include chemicals, shipping containers, vaccine inputs, toys, bicycles, leather, and footwear. These sectors will share the Rs 18,000 crore allocation, which will be derived from the original outlay of the PLI scheme. The PLI scheme is of paramount importance to India as it seeks to boost its overall economy, which has faced a dearth of private investment for nearly a decade.

## 'Utmost priority': Ola Electric eyes faster IPO filing

**Ola's IPO project is internally codenamed "Project Himalaya", and the memo came with a request to bankers and lawyers: do not plan any "long leaves to ensure availability".**

(News Agency) - India's Ola Electric plans to file regulatory papers for its up to \$700 million IPO before the end of October as the e-scooter maker fast-tracks its listing move, three people with direct knowledge said. Backed by investors including Singapore's Temasek and Japan's SoftBank, Ola Electric was valued at \$5.4 billion in a recent fund raising. In an email to its bankers and lawyers on Sunday, an Ola Electric executive asked external advisers on the IPO - including the investment banking units of India's Kotak and ICICI, as well as foreign banks including Bank of America and Goldman Sachs - to give "utmost priority" to meet a five-week deadline, said the sources. Ola Electric and Kotak did not respond to a request for



comment while the other three banks declined to comment. The sources did not wish to be identified as the communication is internal. Ola's IPO project is internally

codenamed "Project Himalaya", and the memo came with a request to bankers and lawyers: do not plan any "long leaves to ensure availability", said the

sources. IPO-bound Indian companies typically do not instruct senior bankers and lawyers to not take leaves, they said. Once the IPO papers are filed,

they will be reviewed by India's markets regulator who can also send queries, indicating any possible listing is still some months away.

Ola Electric is targeting IPO roadshows for early January or February, said one of the sources.

The company, India's market leader in e-scooters with a 30% share, was founded by Bhavish Aggarwal and has seen its popularity surge as the country promotes use of electric cars and scooters.

He has said his affordable e-scooters, which start retailing at \$1,080, are for the masses, and in an interview this year said "Tesla is for the West, Ola is for the rest." Ola Electric, though, still makes losses. It recorded an operating loss of \$136 million on revenue of \$335 million in the fiscal year ending March 2023, Reuters has reported.



# Sleeping less than 6 hours? Here's how it's affecting your heart

**Adults who sleep less than seven hours each night are more likely to report health problems, including heart attacks and depression, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.**

Sleep deprivation is a significant health concern that can have severe implications on heart health. Research has shown that insufficient sleep is linked to an array of cardiovascular diseases, including high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease and stroke.

A study conducted in 2021 revealed that insomnia could lead to unhealthy habits that harm the heart, such as increased stress levels, reduced motivation for physical activity, and poor dietary choices.

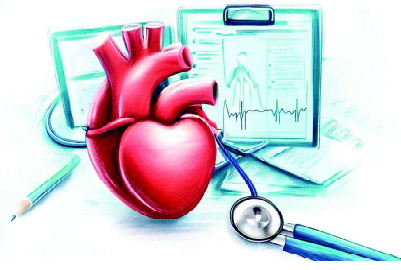
Furthermore, adults who sleep less than seven hours each night are more likely to report health problems, including heart attacks and depression, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Besides, regular lack of sleep can increase the blood pressure level, further leading to heart failure and kidney disease. The American Heart Association recommends 7-9 hours of sleep per night for most adults. However, the quality of your sleep is also important, as it affects how well you feel and function during the day.

Dr Mohit Tandon, Consultant Non-Invasive Cardiologist, Fortis Escorts Hospital, Okhla, New-Delhi, said that since during sleep your "body repairs itself and regulates various functions, including your blood pressure, heart rate, and blood sugar levels," not getting enough of it can pose serious heart disease risks.

"When you don't get enough sleep, your body produces more stress hormones that constrict your blood vessels and raise your blood pressure," Dr Mohit Tandon told IndiaToday.in.

During the non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep stage,



your heart rate slows, your blood pressure drops, and your breathing stabilises. This allows your heart and blood vessels to rest and recover from the stress of the day. However, when you don't get enough sleep or have poor-quality sleep, your heart and blood vessels don't get the chance to relax and heal. This can lead to chronic inflammation, oxidative stress and hormonal imbalances that can damage your cardiovascular system. Besides weight gain, lack of sleep can affect how your body processes glucose and insulin, the hormones that regulate your blood sugar levels. "This can lead to insulin resistance, which means that your cells don't respond well to insulin and can't use glucose effectively. Insulin resistance can cause type 2 diabetes, a disease that increases your risk of heart disease and stroke," said Dr Tandon.

How to get good quality sleep?

Follow the India Today channel on WhatsApp here.

" Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to

bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends and holidays. This helps your body clock adjust to a consistent rhythm and makes it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep.

" Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and heavy meals close to bedtime. These substances can interfere with your sleep quality by stimulating your nervous system, disrupting your sleep cycles, or causing indigestion.

" Create a comfortable and relaxing sleeping environment. Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, cool, and comfortable.

" Avoid screens and electronics before bed. The blue light emitted by devices such as TVs, computers, smartphones, and tablets can suppress the production of melatonin, the hormone that regulates your sleep-wake cycle.

" Exercise regularly but not too close to bedtime. Physical activity can help you sleep better by reducing stress, improving your mood, and promoting physical health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week and avoid exercising within 3 hours of bedtime.

" Limit naps during the day. While napping can be beneficial for some people, especially those who don't get enough sleep at night, it can also interfere with your night-time sleep quality and quantity.

" Seek professional help if you have a sleep disorder or have trouble sleeping on a regular basis, especially if you experience symptoms such as snoring, gasping for air, restless legs, or excessive daytime.

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# After Nayanthara, 5 South actresses we wish were cast opposite Shah Rukh Khan

After the success of Atlee's 'Jawan', it has become clear to us that boundaries between the Hindi film industry and the South are being slowly erased. By including more actors from either of the industries, filmmakers are now breaking barriers and setting new standards. This inclusivity has opened avenues which were initially considered impossible.

Nayanthara, the South star, played the role of Narmada Rai in 'Jawan'. She was cast opposite Shah Rukh Khan's Azad. Shah Rukh and Nayanthara essayed a couple who initially fought with each other but then joined forces to take on the primary antagonist, Vijay Sethupathi. After 'Jawan', it is pretty evident that there is practically no one SRK can't have a chemistry with. Keeping this in mind, we would like to bring you the list of five South actresses we wish were cast opposite the Badshaah of Bollywood. The literal definition of a happily-ever after is 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', which was released more than 25 years ago. Raj, played by Shah Rukh Khan, and Simran, played by



Kajol, have set the standards of romance very high.

In a parallel universe, we wish Paravathy Thiruvothu, who works predominantly in Tamil and Malayalam films, essayed the role of Simran. Her exceptional acting skills would ensure that the audience doesn't miss Kajol very much.

SAI PALLAVI AS GEETA -- SWADES

Sai Pallavi would have been the perfect fit for Geeta in Ashutosh Gowariker's 'Swades'. Her work in the film 'Fidaa' as a

young woman who knows her mind suggests that the actor would have ably pulled off Geeta's character. It would be a dream to see Mohan Bhargav (Shah Rukh Khan) fall for the reimagined Geeta's beliefs and demeanour.

SHRIYA SARAN AS KIRAN -- DARR

Nobody will ever forget the iconic dialogue of Shah Rukh Khan -- "I love you KKK...Kiran". Juhi Chawla as Kiran did exceptional work in the 1993 film 'Darr'. However, given her past film's records, Shriya Saran, too, would have been the

perfect fit opposite SRK's Raj.

TRISHA KRISHNAN AS SONIA -- RA.ONE

Kareena Kapoor essayed the role of Sonia Subramaniam, wife of Shekhar Subramaniam (SRK), in the sci-fi Hindi film 'Ra.One'. She also plays the role of a mother to their son, Prateek. The three share a unique bond in the film which later proves to be one of the strongest forces to defeat the antagonist.

Her damsel in distress roles aside, Trisha and SRK would be a great pair to root for in 'Ra.One', where the latter attempts to break out of his familiar trope of romance. His role as G.One was definitely a breath of fresh air.

RASHMIKA MANDANNA AS KAIRA -- DEAR ZINDAGI

Rashmika's quirky and bubbly nature is enough to suggest that she would do the job well. She can effortlessly essay the role of Kiara in the film. SRK, on the other hand, as an experienced psychiatrist, will provide the perfect balance to her character.

Shah Rukh Khan will be next seen opposite Taapsee Pannu in 'Dunki'. The film is helmed by Rajkumar Hirani.

## Jacqueliene Fernandez enjoys her 'best days' with Selena Gomez in Tuscany



Jacqueliene Fernandez, who was recently in New York, was seen with the American-Mexican music sensation Selena Gomez in Tuscany. The pictures of the duo have been circulated widely on social media. Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez is currently having the time of her life in Tuscany. A picture shared by one of her friends showed her hanging out with the US pop star Selena Gomez. The pictures of the two have gone viral. JACQUELIENE FERNANDEZ IS FRIENDS WITH SELENA GOMEZ - In a photo that is making rounds on the Internet, Jacqueliene Fernandez was seen in a white top and grey pants, posing for a picture with a group of friends. Among them, was Selena

Gomez. The photo was shared by Caroline Franklin, who seems to be one of their mutual friends. She shared a bunch of photos and wrote, "Tuscany mems (sic)." Jacqueliene Fernandez took to the comment section and wrote, "Best days ever (sic)." A fan even replied to her comment and asked her, "Omg hi how was it like to meet @selenagomez (sic)." JACQUELIENE POSED WITH ITALIAN SINGER ANDREA BOCELLI - Italian singer Andrea Bocelli was also seen in the pictures posted by Caroline. Even Jacqueliene Fernandez shared pictures from the night on her social media page and wrote, "@andreabocelliofficial you have given me the most beautiful memory that I will forever cherish!





# Ananya Panday to Rekha, best saree looks from Ambani's Ganapati celebrations

Ananya Panday to Rekha, here are some of the best saree looks from Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations held at Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani's Mumbai residence Antilia.

It was all glitz and glam at industrialist Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani's Ganapati celebrations held at their Mumbai house Antilia. The festivities were hosted on Tuesday, September 19, and the who's who of Bollywood brought their best fashion foot forward for the event.

While many actresses made sure to create some eye-opening moments with their sartorial choices, the saree moments actually stole the show.

From Ananya Panday and Janhvi Kapoor to Rekha and Madhuri Dixit, these divas wore stunning drapes to light up the event, flaunting different hues, patterns and embroideries.

The host, Nita Ambani, weaved six yards of elegance in a splendid silk saree. She looked graceful in her green paithani silk drape with a heavy border. Akash Ambani's wife Shloka Mehta also chose a saree for the occasion and wore a lime green silk drape with exquisite emerald jewels to complement her look. Radhika Merchant, fiancée of Anant Ambani, wore a dazzling sequin Manish Malhotra saree with lots of embellishments and sparkling diamond jewellery.

Ananya Panday opted for a traditional red embellished saree. The gorgeous drape by Arpita Mehta was a spectacle as it featured a long-sleeved blouse with mirror work. She completed her look with an emerald choker and matching earrings. The undisputed queen of silk sarees, Rekha lit up the occasion in a maroon and golden drape. She featured



an assemblage of jewels with a heavy necklace, a maang tikka and heavy earrings. She topped the look with her signature bold red lips. Alia Bhatt wore a

simple yet chic orange saree by designer Arpita Mehta with a matching strappy blouse. While her drape was plain with slight embellishments, her blouse comprised heavy mirror work. She complemented the tone with orange lips and coral eyes. Keeping it sparkly with her approach, Janhvi Kapoor opted for a metallic sheen saree with a matching embellished blouse. The diva looked gorgeous in the traditional number as she paired her look with blingy jewels and mid-length wavy hair. Amitabh Bachchan's granddaughter Navya Naveli Nanda chose a drape by designer duo Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla. She wore a multi-hued saree with a red base. The drape, which had a unique embroidered border with golden details, was paired with a heavily embroidered blouse. Kiara Advani looked stunning in a vibrant yellow saree with a matching silver blouse by Jayanti Reddy. She opted for a sleek bun with a middle partition and finished off her look with glossy makeup, kohl-rimmed eyes, a mini bindi and heavy diamond earrings.





## Samantha on her battle with Myositis: Had to take steroid shots, it messed up...

Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been vocal about her battle with Myositis, an auto-immune condition which affects muscles. The actress recently jetted off to the US for treatment. During an interactive session on Instagram, she revealed that she had to take a lot of steroid shots during treatment. She further added that the steroids messed up her skin. The actress is currently on a sabbatical from work.

### SAMANTHA REVEALS SHE HAD TO TAKE STEROIDS

Samantha was diagnosed with Myositis and has been struggling with the condition. On the work front, she has bounced back with her latest film, 'Kushi'. Recently, Samantha conducted a question and answer session on her Instagram page. One of the followers asked her about her skin and she revealed that her skin was messed up because of the steroid

shots she had to take for her Myositis treatment. She said, "It's absolutely not clear. Chinmayi is going to fix that. She has promised that she is going to make my skin glossy. Actually, because of my issue, I had to be on steroids. I had to do a lot of steroid shots. So, it really messed up my skin and gave me a lot of pigmentation. So, this is the filter guys."

### SAMANTHA IS ON A BREAK FROM WORK

Samantha was last seen in director Shiva Nirvana's 'Kushi', in which she was paired opposite Vijay Deverakonda. The film received positive responses and managed to perform well in theatres as well. The actress has also wrapped up the shooting of Prime Video's 'Citadel: India'. Now, she is on a break from work. She recently went on a spiritual trip to Tamil Nadu and then to Bali with her friend. Currently, she is holidaying in Austria.



## Tiger Shroff to romance Pashmina Roshan in 'Hero No 1', Sara also a part: Report



Pashmina Roshan is all set to make her debut with 'Ishq Vish Rebound' alongside Rohit Saraf, Jibran Khan and Naila Grewal. There have been reports that Pashmina, who is Hrithik Roshan's cousin, has also bagged her second project. Now, it is being said that she will be playing Tiger Shroff's love interest in the film titled 'Hero No 1'. The project will also feature Sara Ali Khan. **TIGER SHROFF TO ROMANCE PASHMINA ROSHAN?**

According to a report in Hindustan Times, Tiger Shroff is all set for a new film. Titled 'Hero No 1', the film will have Sara Ali Khan. What's more - Shroff will be romancing Pashmina Roshan. A source was quoted saying, "The project features Sara and Pashmina as the leading ladies opposite Tiger, and Pashmina will play his primary love

interest."

The film is being directed by Jagan Shakti, who earlier helmed 'Mission Mangal' and it is expected to go on floors early next year.

The same source added, "Though the shoot will begin in London in January 2024, Tiger has already shot for an action sequence, and Sara and Pashmina will join him only next year. Tiger had signed a three-film deal with Bhagnani's production, and after 'Ganapath' and 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', 'Hero No 1' is their third collaboration."

### 'HERO NO 1' NOT A REMAKE OF GOVINDA'S FILM

The report also clarified that 'Hero No 1' won't be a remake of the Govinda-starrer of the same name. It is being touted as an action film with a 'dash of science'.

## Chris Evans hints at retirement from acting: I have no Oscars and...

Chris Evans hints at retirement from acting, revealing in a recent interview that he has not filmed so far in 2023 and has no plans to do so.

**CHRIS EVANS TO RETIRE?** In a recent interview with GQ, Chris Evans confessed that he has not worked a day in 2023 and does not plan to in the near future. The 'Ghosted' actor said,

"Yeah, maybe. I'll never say never, just because it was such a wonderful experience. But I'm also very precious with it. It's something that I am very proud of. And like I said, sometimes I can't believe it even happened. And I wouldn't want the black eye if it felt like a cash grab or if it didn't live up to expectations or if it just felt like it wasn't connected to that original thing. So, no time soon. Chris continued, "And ultimately, I really hope to just maybe act a little bit less in my life. I have a lot of other interests. Look, by no means have I climbed any sort of a mountain in this field. I have no Oscars and I'm not lumped with other names that are at the top of the mountain in any way. But I also feel very satisfied."





# Parineeti-Raghav wedding: Priyanka to attend with Malti, Nick to give it a miss

Parineeti Chopra will get married to Raghav Chadha on September 24 in Udaipur. Priyanka Chopra will be attending the wedding with her daughter, Malti Marie. However, Nick Jonas will give it a miss. Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chaddha are all set to get married at The Leela hotel in Udaipur on September 24. Their wedding festivities began in Delhi with a Sufi night and ardas, which will be followed by sangeet on September 23 and the 'D-day' to be September 24. Everyone has been wondering when Priyanka Chopra would arrive in India for her cousin sister's wedding. **PRIYANKA AND MALTI TO ATTEND PARINEETI-RAGHAV WEDDING** Another year, another big Bollywood wedding! As Parineeti is all set to get married to Raghav, a huge banner was put up outside Udaipur airport welcoming the soon-to-be-wed couple.

IndiaToday.in has exclusively learnt that PeeCee will be leaving for Delhi today (September 22) and will land tomorrow morning. She will head to Udaipur from Delhi and will be accompanied by her daughter Malti. Nick Jonas, however, will



be giving the wedding a miss due to the ongoing Jonas Brothers' tour. She will most likely fly back right after the wedding due to work commitments.

A source informs, "Priyanka is very excited about Pari's D-day, and especially for the music night tomorrow." Priyanka made sure to attend Parineeti's engagement in Delhi as well during her visit to India last time.

## ABOUT PARINEETI AND RAGHAV'S WEDDING

Meanwhile, RagNeeti (the couple's name for Parineeti and Raghav) opted for a simple and subtle theme for their wedding. Their theme for the wedding is pastel and Parineeti has entrusted her friend Manish Malhotra with her lehenga for the wedding. They are going for a simple look, with less embroidery and statement jewelry

accentuating her looks. Raghav is an integral part of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Arvind Kejriwal, among other politicians, will be attending his wedding in Udaipur.

Parineeti has also extended invites to her close-knit friends from the industry, including her 'Hasee Toh Phasee' co-star Sidharth Malhotra and Arjun Kapoor, among others.

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# India can hit Canada where it hurts the most

**Indians constitute the largest chunk of international students in Canada.**

**They not only pump in billions of dollars into the Canadian economy, but also prop up its real estate sector and the gig economy. If India decides to turn that tap off, it could hit Canada hard.**

India's diplomatic battle with Justin Trudeau-led Canada has intensified and so have the fears of lakhs of Indians. The Indian student community in Canada is restless and rattled and those planning to study there are anxious. Amid the confrontation, it is clear — India is in a position to hit Canada where it hurts the most.

India on Thursday suspended visa facilities in Canada. This comes after Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau pointed fingers at the Indian government over the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Both countries, in a tit-for-tat move, expelled diplomats and issued advisories for their citizens.

Also on Wednesday, Khalistani terrorist Gurbhag Singh released a threat video asking Indo-Canadian Hindus to "go back to India".

## ANXIETY AMONG INDIAN STUDENTS

The Khalistani threats along with the diplomatic standoff are causing anxiety and restlessness among the members of the Indian community in Canada, their parents back in India and those waiting to be in Canada for the next academic session.

"We have been receiving numerous calls from parents in India who are worried about the well-being and safety of their children studying in Canada. While reassuring them that things will eventually settle down, we know a lot depends upon the political leadership of both countries to diffuse any fears and tensions," Manan Gupta, a Canada-based immigration expert told IndiaToday.In.

Gupta, a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant, said the diplomatic showdown between Canada and India was causing "endless anxiety" among people waiting to secure their visas for Canada for temporary and permanent residence (PR). A Brampton-based student said all discussions in the Indian student community these days were centred around the Khalistani threats and Trudeau's stand on the issue. The

youngster from Ludhiana who is on a work permit in Canada and awaiting his PR, said it was the first time he was made to think "if there was really some threat".

But the person, who didn't want to be named because of the fear of Khalistani elements, exuded confidence in India's growing stature and recent rescue operations.

"Showing the Tricolour, India not only evacuated its students but also those of other countries from Ukraine war zone. India baithi hai, unpe bharosa hai (We have tremendous faith in the Indian government)," he said.

**INDIA CAN TURN THE CANADA TAP OFF**  
The confidence of the Brampton-based Indian isn't misplaced.

India knows it has the upper hand and, if it chooses, can turn the tap off, hitting Canada where it hurts the most.

Should India-Canada relations deteriorate further, and India decides to turn the tap off on its students going to Canada, its post-secondary education — aside of the well-funded public universities, could collapse, says Daksh Panwar, an independent Indo-Canadian journalist.

"Not just that, as international students bring in 30 billion dollars to the Canadian economy each year, it could have a knocking impact on other sectors as well. In housing, for example, we are talking about widespread mortgage defaults in major metros — Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Greater Vancouver Area, Calgary — where students are present in large numbers. They make up a substantial chunk of the population renting houses, subsidising homeowners' mortgages at a time when interest rates are sky high," Daksh Panwar tells IndiaToday.In from London, Canada. In a recent article, The Globe and Mail raised the fear that tensions with India were creating concerns in Canada that fewer Indian students would choose to study in Canada.

The fears are substantiated by facts and figures.

Indian students form the largest group of

international students studying in Canada. At present, Indians make up about 40 per cent of the 8 lakh international students in Canada, according to Canadian government statistics.

The fees paid by Indian students are three to five times higher than what private colleges charge Canadians. In a way, the entire private college ecosystem of Canada is funded by Indians and it will collapse if the Indian government decides to curb the outflow.

Canada's Auditor-General Bonnie Lysyk flagged the risk to the Canadian economy due to the over-reliance on funds from international students.

In the 2021 report, she said the risks were beyond the government's control. The report said that revenue could take a sudden and massive hit if students from some countries were unable to get into Canada.

And just imagine if India, contributing 40 per cent of international students, were to be that country.

## STUDENTS SUSTAIN REALTY, GIG ECONOMY

In 2022, 2.26 lakh students out of 5.5 lakh international students in Canada were from India, according to Canadian government data. And there were 3.2 lakh Indians staying in Canada on student visas, and helping its economy.

One has to remember, that their contribution to the economy far outweighs what they earn back through mini-jobs. And this contribution doesn't figure in any trade data.

The students not only prop up the private college ecosystem with \$30 billion a year, they also help sustain the real estate market, which is seeing record-high mortgage rates, and are an essential part of Canada's gig economy.

The Indian students help the Canadian government maintain the minimum wage at \$15 an hour.

Canada, the second-largest country in the world, has a population of just over 4 crore, even lower than Delhi's. Labour costs

would skyrocket if the stream from India is halted.

"International students fill low-wage labour jobs, in hospitality, retail and many other sectors. We are looking at an acute labour shortage if Indian students stop coming to Canada," explains Indo-Canadian journalist Daksh Panwar.

That Canada's economy can be rattled isn't without precedence. And it has uncanny parallels with the Indian case.

Saudi Arabia's decision to order more than 15,000 students to leave Canada due to a diplomatic dispute after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi cost the Canadian economy hundreds of millions of dollars.

Saudi Arabia was the sixth-biggest source of long-term international students in Canada with 11,650 students in 2015. India is the largest group in 2022.

Although far fewer students from Saudi Arabia were attending Ontario colleges, their departure brought about the insolvency of Laurentian University in Canada.

The recent row, like in Saudi Arabia's case, was the result of a murder. If it was a journalist's killing in 2015, it was a terrorist's death in 2023.

PM Justin Trudeau's Delhi visit for the G20 Summit did nothing to mend the frosty ties that he has developed with India due to his patronage of Khalistani elements in Canada. In fact, ties have gone downhill at a faster pace ever since. It also emerged on Thursday that Trudeau refused a presidential suite offered by India during the G20 Summit, and stayed at an ordinary room at a 5-star hotel.

**UNCERTAINTY IN INDO-CANADA TIES** — Ontario-based immigration consultant Manan Gupta tells IndiaToday.In how he had been receiving frenetic calls from parents in India after the Khalistani threat video and the diplomatic stand-off. He said the students were a bit restless but said there wasn't any reason to panic.

**By Yudhajit Shankar Das**



# Owners of New Zealand volcano that fatally erupted deny responsibility for visitor safety



**By Charlotte Graham-McLay**

The landowners of a New Zealand volcano that fatally erupted in 2019 have rejected arguments from the country's workplace safety regulator that they ultimately managed and controlled activities on the island and bore legal responsibility for whether visitors to it were safe. When White Island/Whakaari exploded on 9 December 2019, 22 people were killed - 17 of them Australians - with 25 others injured. It prompted renewed debate about controls for natural hazard tourism in New Zealand. A lengthy trial for Whakaari Management Limited (WML), a firm co-directed by the three brothers who own the active volcano off the east coast of the North Island, concluded in the Auckland district court on Thursday.

It had begun with emotional and graphic accounts from the eruption's survivors - many of whom were cruise ship passengers - who said they did not know the dangers they faced when they walked to the crater of Whakaari.

Investigators from the government agency WorkSafe charged a dozen parties with health and safety law breaches after the disaster, including tourism firms, science agencies and the island's owners.

Six organisations admitted to the counts against them before

the case came to trial. But despite the investigation being billed as the most complex of its kind in New Zealand's history, the case against the remaining parties started to crumble after the trial began in July: five firms or people, who had pleaded not guilty, had the charges against them dismissed after prosecution evidence concluded last month.



With only one defendant remaining, closing arguments this week contested whether WML - a company set up to grant licences to tourism operators on the island - was an active manager with legal responsibility for how safely those businesses operated on their land, and whether actions they took discharged any obligations they had.

For the prosecutor Kristy McDonald, the case turned on money; Andrew, James and Peter Buttle earned NZ\$1m (£500,000) in fees and commissions from the

licences their company granted to tour operators, she told the court. The profits were "not reinvested into managing and understanding the risks" of tourism on an active volcano, McDonald said. The firm had obligations under the law "to the tourists whose fees funded its business" because they were engaged and active managers who had the discretion to stop



operators using their land. But James Cairney, the lawyer for WML, said the volcano's owners had set up the firm solely to manage the financial side of granting licences, and the existence of a commercial interest was not anything to be ashamed of.

"The attacks on the financial aspects in this case really don't assist any of the key issues for your honour's determination," said Cairney, referring to prosecution remarks throughout the trial that the owners had put profits before safety.

The company had no active control of day to day activities on the island, no presence on Whakaari or in the region, and was set up solely to licence access to other firms, he added.

Cairney said: "Whakaari is not a business, it's an island."

"Was it hazardous? Yes. WML doesn't shy away from that. Granting rights of access to an active volcano is really just ... the landowner granting rights of access to hazardous natural land, which occurs all over New Zealand all the time."

Nothing in the licences granted to the tourism operators promised an ongoing role for WML in operations on the island, said Cairney. He added that in any case, the firm had done everything the law required of landowners.

The trial has been the biggest test yet of New Zealand's sweeping 2015 reforms to its workplace health and safety laws - the most significant in two decades - which shifted responsibility for workplace hazards to those "conducting a businesses or undertaking", who must be proactive on matters of risk rather than relying upon regulators.

The changes, which brought New Zealand law into line with those in Britain and Australia, were prompted by the death of 29 workers in the 2010 Pike River mine explosion.

Whether WML should reasonably be considered a

responsible party - and if so, whether it failed in its duties - was at the centre of the Whakaari trial. The firm and its directors, who had individual charges against them dismissed last month, appeared to believe that they "did not owe any duties under the law", McDonald said.

"WML effectively points the finger at everyone else," she added. A science agency and local emergency managers came under scrutiny during the case over their readiness for such a disaster.

It was "dangerous" to suggest "a single, private company" had a responsibility to determine "societal risk" of an activity, said Cairney.

After nearly two months of evidence from the prosecution, Thursday's remarks from Cairney were the first time the island's owners have advanced a defence against the charges. The number of deaths and the traumatic nature of the disaster - which made global headlines - had created a risk of "hindsight bias" in a "desire to hold someone accountable", Cairney said, in an "orthodox" case of landowners providing access to land for adventure activities.

Judge Evangelos Thomas, who is deciding the case, said he would give a verdict on 31 October.

# Key takeaways from Michael Wolff's book on Murdoch, Fox and US politics

By Martin Pengelly in Washington

Michael Wolff's new book, *The Fall: The End of Fox News and the Murdoch Dynasty*, was eagerly awaited even before the Guardian published the first news of its contents on Tuesday - and before the stunning news on Thursday that Rupert Murdoch will finally step down as chairman of his rightwing media empire. In a feeding frenzy over Wolff's book, other outlets reported more revelations familiar in tone and sometimes in cast list from the gadfly author's blockbusting trilogy of Trump tell-alls: *Fire and Fury*, *Siege* and *Landslide*. In response, Fox News pointed to a famous impersonation of Wolff by the comedian Fred Armisen when it said: "The fact that the last book by this author was spoofed in a Saturday Night Live skit is really all we need to know."

Nonetheless, what have we learned about Rupert Murdoch, Fox and US politics from *The Fall* so far? Here are some key points: Murdoch did not expect Dominion to prove so costly

Dominion Voting Systems sued Fox News for \$1.6bn, over the broadcast of Donald Trump's lies about voter fraud in 2020. According to Wolff, in winter 2022, an irate Rupert Murdoch told friends of his then wife, Jerry Hall: "This lawsuit could cost us fifty million dollars." When the suit was settled, in April, it cost Fox a whopping \$787.5m. Murdoch thought Ron DeSantis would beat Trump

Murdoch reportedly predicted the Florida governor would beat Trump for the Republican nomination next year, siphoning



off evangelical voters because "it was going to come out about the abortions Trump had paid for". But it seems Murdoch's radar was off again: a few months out from the first vote in Iowa, notwithstanding 91 criminal charges, Trump holds gigantic polling leads over DeSantis, whose campaign has long been seen to be flatlining.

Murdoch wishes Trump dead ...

Murdoch, Wolff says, directs considerable anger Trump's way, at one point treating friends to "a rat-a-tat-tat of jaw-clenching 'fucks'" that showed a "revulsion ... as passionate ... as [that of] any helpless liberal". More even than that, Wolff reports that Murdoch, 92, has often wished out loud that Trump, 77, was dead. "Trump's death became a Murdoch theme," Wolff writes, reporting the mogul saying: "'We would all be better off ...?' 'This would all be solved if ...?' 'How could he still be alive, how could

he?' 'Have you seen him? Have you seen what he looks like? What he eats?'" ... but Lachlan just wipes his bottom on him

Rupert Murdoch's son, Lachlan Murdoch, is in pole position to take over the empire. According to Wolff, the younger man is no Trump fan either. As reported by the Daily Beast, Wolff writes: "In the run-up to the 2016 election, the bathrooms at the Mandeville house featured toilet paper with Trump's face, reported visitors with relief and satisfaction. [Lachlan] told people that his wife and children cried when Trump was elected."

Rupert has choice words for some Fox News stars

The Daily Beast also reported on the older Murdoch's apparent contempt for some of his stars. Considering how, Wolff says, Sean Hannity pushed for Fox to stay loyal

to Trump, the author writes: "When Murdoch was brought reports of Hannity's on- and off-air defence of Fox's post-election coverage, he perhaps seemed to justify his anchor: 'He's retarded, like most Americans.'"

Hannity may have been on thin ice Also reported by the Daily Beast: Wolff says Murdoch considered firing Hannity as a way to mollify Dominion in its defamation suit, with Lachlan Murdoch reportedly suggesting that a romantic relationship Hannity had with another host could be used as precedent, given the downfalls of media personalities including Jeff Zucker of CNN.

DeSantis may have kicked Tucker Carlson's dog

According to the Daily Beast, and to a lengthy excerpt published by New York magazine, Wolff writes that in spring of this year, Ron DeSantis and his wife, Casey DeSantis, visited another leading Fox host, Tucker Carlson, and his wife, Susie Carlson, for a lunch designed to introduce Murdoch's favored Republican to his most powerful primetime star. What Wolff says follows is worth quoting in full:

The Carlsons are dog people with four spaniels, the progeny of other spaniels they have had before, who sleep in their bed. DeSantis pushed the dog under the table. Had he kicked the dog? Susie Carlson's judgment was clear: She did not ever want to be anywhere near anybody like that ever again. Her husband agreed. DeSantis, in Carlson's view, was a 'fascist'. Forget Ron DeSantis.

## Green Shoots in the Indian Economy Bring Ray of Hope Amid Global Gloom

By: Sindhu Bhattacharya

The festivities have begun with Vinayak Chaturthi today and this cheer is expected to bring much needed buoyancy to the Indian economy. In its 'State of the Economy' monthly bulletin, the Reserve Bank of India has pointed to green shoots due to moderation in inflation and a significant uptick in urban as well as rural demand. The central bank has spoken about recovery in urban demand by taking the example of clothing and lifestyle retailers and shopping malls. It says these businesses are experiencing a sharp recovery in sales, across price points, in the past few weeks.

This trend has raised hopes of a pick-up in demand through the rest of the festival season and cheers for discretionary retail spending. Next in line are electronics and automobile sales, which are expected to also benefit from festive buying in the upcoming Navratras and Diwali festivals. In any case, it is not just an uptick in urban spending, the prospects in India's hinterland also appear to be improving. The sale of two wheelers - a key indicator of the quantum of stress and thus



buoyancy in the rural economy - has been the highest in August in calendar 2023. Ditto for three wheeler and motorcycle sales. And demand for work under the rural jobs guarantee programme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), continued to decline in rural areas in August, as demand for labour for kharif crops climbed.

Lesser demand for guaranteed work in rural areas showcases improved availability of work in agriculture (among other industries) and is a sure fire indicator of an improved rural economy. But tractor sales growth continued to decline due to deficient monsoon and late arrival of the festival season this year. And overall, rural inflation, at 7.02%, remained higher than urban

inflation at 6.59% in August.

But a recent analysis by the State Bank of India has predicted that overall retail inflation should drop down towards the RBI's tolerance zone, which means within the 6% range. The SBI has alluded to the spatial distribution of monsoon and its impact on Kharif sowing and subsequently on cereals' inflation as one of the factors for its prediction. It has also taken into account a steep decline in LPG prices offsetting retail inflation.

As the Indian economy shows green shoots, the prospects for a global economic recovery appear bleak. The RBI bulletin shows that the world is becoming less global as global trade slows down and trade barriers come up, there is the looming fear of a global recession as inflation remains a definite concern.

According to the estimates from the World Trade Organisation, global trade growth will fall below GDP growth in 2023. In this gloomy picture of slowdown and rising cost of living, the growth prospects of the Indian economy offer a ray of hope.



# UN chief warns 'humanity has opened the gates to hell' as he convenes world leaders for climate summit

By Rachel Ramirez

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres issued a stark warning as he gathered world leaders for a high-level summit on the climate crisis: "Humanity has opened the gates to hell."

"Horrendous heat is having horrendous effects. Distraught farmers watching crops carried away by floods. Sweltering temperatures spawning disease," he said in a speech to open the Climate Ambition Summit, happening alongside the UN General Assembly in New York.

"Climate action is dwarfed by the scale of the challenge," he added, warning that if nothing changes we are heading "towards a dangerous and unstable world."

The one-day conference - which comes as the world grapples with devastating floods and fires - is intended to build global momentum toward slashing planet-heating pollution ahead of the UN's COP28 climate summit in Dubai in December. Wednesday's summit is unusual due to Guterres' decision to restrict the



speaker list to countries he deemed to have clear and effective climate plans, and those prepared to send a high-level leader to speak.

Of the nearly 200 countries present in New York for the General Assembly, only 34 nations and seven non-governmental bodies secured speaking slots at the UN chief's summit.

Notably absent from the speaker list were some of the world's biggest polluters, including China, India and the United States, though US climate envoy John

Kerry is attending.

Also missing from the list was UK prime minister Rishi Sunak, who is facing a backlash at home over plans to weaken the country's climate commitments.

The aim of the summit is to increase ambitions on climate action, Guterres said.

Selwin Hart, a special adviser to the UN Secretary-General on climate action and just transition, said there has been "massive backsliding" on commitments. "The countries that committed to net-

zero by 2050, and to the 1.5-degree goal of the Paris Agreement, they're expanding fossil fuel licensing at a time when science tells us this is totally incompatible with this 1.5-degree goal," he told CNN in a Tuesday interview.

In his Wednesday speech, Guterres called on developed countries to reach net-zero emissions - removing from the atmosphere at least as much planet-warming pollution as they produce - by 2040, at least ten years earlier than most current commitments.

He also asked countries to commit to timelines to phase out fossil fuel emissions, as well as to significantly increase finance to help low- and middle-income countries quickly move to clean energy and invest in climate resilience measures to better cope with increasingly severe extreme weather events.

"We are decades behind," Guterres said. "We must make up time lost to foot-dragging, arm-twisting and the naked greed of entrenched interests raking in billions from fossil fuels."

## Europe is beating its addiction to plastics. Why is the US so far behind?

By Alexander Hurst

Though I grew up in the United States, I've spent the majority of my adult life in France - which means that every trip "back" across the Atlantic has become a moment of curiosity and culture shock. Most recently, the shock was over the sheer prevalence of plastics in American daily life.

In Paris, and elsewhere in Europe, plastics are clearly on their way out and paper is in. The standard takeaway cup in coffee shops, juice bars and cafes serving hipster smoothies is paper, and when there is a straw, it's paper as well (or some other biodegradable non-plastic material). Delivery food orders arrive in paper cartons - some with a chic design touch that plastic could never replicate, unspooling like origami flowers to reveal the food within - in paper bags. Utensils, when requested, are wooden and wrapped in paper. And in grocery stores, bulk sections for pasta, nuts, dried fruit, cereals, rice and legumes are normal, as is putting those things (or your fruit and vegetables) in paper bags.

Fast food chains such as Pret A Manger, which has opened in at least six European countries outside the UK, Exki, which has branches throughout the Benelux countries and France, and even McDonald's and Burger King serve food consumed on location in glass or other



types of reusable packaging. Extended producer responsibility schemes (which hold companies to account for recapturing the packaging they produce) mean that plastic bottle caps no longer fully detach, increasing the likelihood that they too end up recycled.

Setting foot in the US, on the other hand, felt like stepping out of a time machine - and not in the right direction. Even in progressive spaces, plastics reigned supreme. At a coffee shop in New York City's East Village with an LGBTQ+ flag, gender-inclusive bathrooms and Black Lives Matter signs, my iced coffee came in a plastic cup with a plastic straw. In Cleveland, where my parents live, the

same story: plastic containers, plastic-wrapped plastic utensils, plastic cups, plastic straws in their plastic packages, and in grocery stores, plastic bags for produce, which were then automatically double-bagged in plastic at checkout counters.

Is it the transatlantic difference in ecological awareness or the pull of different cultural norms? After all, the US is the country that pioneered the disposable, fast-food society in the 1950s, and then exported it elsewhere. France leaned heavily into fast food (in fact, it has one of the world's highest numbers of McDonald's per capita) but shows that a society converted to

single-use "convenience" can adjust when political and legislative change demands it.

Too much focus on virtuous individual behaviour is clearly misplaced. It distracts from industry and lets polluting corporations and governments outsource responsibility for systemic change at scale. And systemic change at scale is exactly what the EU's 2021 ban on single-use plastics is in the process of achieving, by intervening at the producer level in a way that has had a visible domestic - and international - effect.

Back in Europe, the message was hammered home by an visit to Lisbon's Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT), which recently hosted an exhibition on plastics. "The industry was quite shaken up by the EU directive on plastics," says Anniina Koivu, a materials and design professor at Lausanne's Ecal and the curator of Plastic: Remaking Our World. She told me that the legislation has accelerated interest from companies in design alternatives to plastics, and in funding available for scaling promising prototypes - such as one student's redesign of medical garments and another student's fully biodegradable nappy design.