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Salman, SRK & Hrithik to come together for the first time in 'War 2'



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Why India Cannot Replace China As The 'Factory Of The World'



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Nancy Pelosi Evicted from Her Capitol Hill Private Office

(Sai Bureau)-Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has been ordered to vacate her Capitol hideaway office "immediately." Patrick McHenry, acting as interim US House Speaker, asked Pelosi to vacate her honorary office at the Capitol as early as Wednesday. The order came while Pelosi was in California, where she was honoring the late Senator Dianne Feinstein. Pelosi, dubbed 'Speaker Emerita' by the Democratic



Caucus even after the Democratic Party lost its House majority in the 2022 midterms, had managed to keep a prized hidden office within

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Canada and the US Shouldn't Preach India, Both Are Complicit in Targeted Killings



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Disabled Muslim man eats prasad at Delhi temple, tied to pole, beaten to death

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India tells Canada to withdraw 40 diplomats, sets deadline and warning

(Sai Bureau)-India has told Canada to withdraw around 40 diplomats by October 10 amid the snowballing diplomatic row between the two countries over Ottawa's allegations of New Delhi's involvement in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil, a report by The Financial Times said.

A person with direct knowledge of the matter told the newspaper that India has threatened to strip off the diplomatic immunity of any Canadian diplomat if they remained in the country after October 10. Canada has 62 diplomats in India, while New Delhi has told them to reduce the headcount to 41 at their high commission, according to The Financial Times.

"Declaring more Canadian diplomats personae non gratae wouldn't help the situation and would make reducing the emotions associated with this disagreement more difficult," Peter Boehm, chair of the Canadian Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade was quoted as saying by the newspaper. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he does not expect to back down,



said Boehm, adding that India saw Canada as "an easy mark". He asserted that New Delhi was aware of Ottawa's limited capacity to retaliate since the latter has a minority government.

Trudeau, who is the leader of the Liberal Party, shares power with Indian-origin and Canadian Sikh leader Jagmeet Singh, who heads the New Democratic Party (NDP). "India knows our capacity to retaliate is limited, that we have a minority government and is aware of the

consequent politics at play. And, of course, India has an election on the horizon," Boehm's was quoted by The Financial Times as saying.


On previous occasions, India has said it wanted an equal number of diplomats posted in the country and Canada. At its high commission in Delhi, Canada has several dozen diplomats posted compared to what India has in Ottawa. An unprecedented diplomatic crisis emerged between India and Canada after

Trudeau on September 18 said that Canadian security agencies had been actively pursuing "credible allegations of a potential link" between Indian government agents and the killing of Nijjar.

India, which designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020, has outrightly rejected Canada's allegations, calling them "absurd" and "motivated". Nijjar, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), was shot dead outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada in June.


India expelled a Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat response to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case. New Delhi also suspended visa services for Canadian nationals.

On September 26, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in a veiled dig at Canada, asked the UN member states not to allow "political convenience" to determine responses to terrorism, extremism and violence. He made the comments while addressing the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.




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BIG relief for Canada work permit applicants as IRCC decides to fast track processing with automation

(Sai Bureau)- In a big relief for applicants, the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is planning to implement automation to fast-track the processing of post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) and work permit extensions. The move comes as Canada is facing large backlogs in processing PGWP and work permit extensions. As per IRCC, the tools are reviewed routinely to make sure they work as intended and that the results are consistent with applications that receive a full human review. The immigration authority clarified that only an IRCC officer can refuse an application; the automated tools do not refuse or recommend refusing



applications. Exciting news! Mint is now on WhatsApp Channels :rocket:

and regulatory criteria for the program. After the introduction of automation, the files will be directed to the correct officers for further processing based on office capabilities and officer expertise.

Moreover, the eligibility function of the tools identifies routine applications for streamlined processing, accelerating our work. When reviewing an application, the tools assess whether it is a routine case and can determine that an applicant is eligible for a work permit extension or PGWP using criteria developed by IRCC officers. The file is then sent to an officer to determine if the applicant remains admissible to Canada and make the final decision.

Applications that do not have their eligibility approved automatically may still be manually approved following review by an officer, the IRCC said in a statement. "Exciting news! Mint is now on WhatsApp Channels ?? Subscribe today by clicking the link and stay updated with the latest financial insights!"

You can sail directly from India to US in a straight line, shows social media user; Elon Musk says 'whoa'



(Sai Bureau)- A recently shared 2D route map, suggesting the existence of a direct sea route from India to the US, has set the internet abuzz. This intriguing map, posted on X by the user Epic Maps, portrays a straight sailing path between the two nations across vast geographical distances. The map's creator boldly claims that one can sail from India to the US without touching any land in a completely straight line. "Without touching a single piece of land, it's possible to sail from India to the USA in a completely straight line," the caption of the post read. This revelation swiftly garnered the attention of internet users, including billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, who expressed his astonishment with a simple "Whoa." Musk's reaction has further fueled the debate surrounding the map. While many, including Musk, were impressed by the concept of a straight-line sea route, some users expressed doubts about its accuracy. Certain X users argued that the line "is far from straight" on the 2D map.

However, it is crucial to note that this apparent lack of straightness in the two-dimensional representation is due to the inherent curvature of the Earth. The debate continued as some users pointed out that the map might not appear straightforward on a 2D surface but indeed follows a straight trajectory when represented on a globe. This means the line remains continuous in one direction, without deviating left or right. In an effort to clarify the concept, a user shared a short video demonstrating the sea route on a 3D globe. This visualization highlights the difference between a 2D projection and the actual path one would follow when considering the Earth's spherical shape. Social media users have expressed various opinions on the matter. Some thanked the user who provided the 3D globe perspective for clarifying the journey, while others criticized those who found the original picture confusing. The debate primarily revolves around the interpretation of "straight" concerning Earth's curvature.

Subscribe today by clicking the link and stay updated with the latest financial insights! Why automated tools for processing PGWP? As per IRCC, the tools take on most clerical and repetitive tasks related to sorting applications, allowing officers to focus their attention on assessing applications and making final decisions. The tools sort applications using rules developed by IRCC officers based on the legislative

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RBI New Rule: Now the countdown of those who do not repay the loan starts, RBI is bringing new rule

(Sai Bureau)-According to a recent update, let us tell you that last week, RBI has prepared a draft to curb those who deliberately do not repay the loan or those who fail to repay the loan despite the ability to pay. Let us know the complete information related to this update in the news below. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last week prepared a draft to curb those who willfully default on loans or those who fail to repay loans despite their ability to repay. These proposed rules may increase the problems of willful defaulters. In fact, willful defaulters means those borrowers who have the ability to repay the loan but still do not do so.

RBI has started preparations to take strict action against such people. In the new draft of the Central Bank, it has been said that willful defaulters taking loans of more than Rs 25 lakh will be cracked down on in many ways.

The special thing is that these proposed rules are based on the feedback of loan giving companies and suggestions of various courts.

Why is RBI taking this step?



This change against willful defaulters has become very necessary as the cases of willful non-repayment of loans have increased in recent years. A report said that by the end of December 2022, the intentional default loan amount had reached about Rs 3.4 lakh crore.

Such defaulters are nothing but criminals to the financial system, because they borrow and run away. Since the bank is the custodian of public money and when the money lent

as loan is not returned, the depositors have to suffer the consequences. Such borrowers are a threat to the banking system.

Distressed borrowers or businesses that intentionally default on loans are not bankrupt. Default has become a way for them to avoid not repaying the loan. Such people have been endangering the banking system for a long time by using legal loopholes as well as the power of money.

In the proposal given by RBI regarding

such willful defaulters, these people will have to first settle their old NPA account to take a new loan. Along with this, RBI has proposed that within 6 months of an account becoming NPA, it should be tagged as willful defaulter. These problems will arise if declared a willful defaulter-

Once a person taking a bank loan is tagged as a willful defaulter, he will have to face many problems. First of all, such people will not get any additional loan from the bank or financial institution. At the same time, under this proposal, willful defaulters will not get the facility of restructuring of loan. It has been said in the draft of RBI that NBFCs should also be allowed to tag accounts as willful defaulters keeping these rules in mind.

RBI said in its circular that the purpose of these instructions is to create a system regarding those who deliberately do not repay the loan, so that the loan giving banks or financial institutions can decide not to give loans to such people in future.

UK couple escaped extradition to India, now face charge of exporting 550 kg cocaine to Sydney

(Sai Bureau)-A London-based couple that escaped extradition to India on charges of ordering the murder of an orphan they adopted in Gujarat due to a technicality, are now awaiting trial on charges of exporting 550 kilograms of cocaine to Sydney. In the first instance, Kaval Raizada, 35, and Arti Dhir, 58, make for an unlikely couple, given the difference in age and background. But on October 30, 2023, they will appear together at Southwark crown court, just like they did between 2017 and 2019 at Westminster magistrates' court. This will be the second run-in with the law for the couple after they just about managed to wriggle out from being extradited to India.

On June 21, 2021, the couple was arrested from their home in Hanwell, London, after authorities in Australia seized cocaine at Sydney airport which was shipped from Heathrow. A gold bullion worth £250,000 and keys to a safe deposit box containing £60,000 cash were seized. "The defendants have both been charged with one count of exporting cocaine to Australia and 12 counts of money laundering," a National Crime Agency (NCA) spokesperson confirmed. Both remain in custody and will be produced on October 30, when the trial is set to begin at Southwark



Crown Court. On Friday (September 29, 2023), His Honour Judge Edward Connell at the Southwark crown court presided over a pre-trial review when counsels representing both the defendants and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) were present. The defendants were due to appear in court, but didn't arrive because of procedural issues.

"I would like to reserve the right to cross-examine NCA officers," said Chris Meredith, the barrister representing Raizada. He told the court that "no connection has been established" between his client and "those arrested

in Australia". Meredith also sought further disclosure of documents by the NCA to prepare for the trial. "The difficulty is we are a month away from trial and these disclosure requests have come very late in the day. A lot of work, time and money will go into this," said Hugh French, who is being instructed by the CPS along with junior Phoebe Bragg. French told the court that they have not been able to access electronic devices belonging to the defendants as they have not been provided with the passcodes. "We have asked for access to digital devices but we haven't been given that," French told the judge. "Since both the defendants are charged with criminal offences there is no duty upon any defendant to help the prosecution," said Meredith. While at this stage Dhir and Raizada have been charged by the NCA and are in custody, it will be the verdict after the trial that will determine their guilt or innocence. As stated earlier, this is not the first time they face a serious charge.

The extradition case

Dhir and Raizada are alleged to have adopted an 11-year-old boy Gopal Sejani, an orphan, who lived with his sister and her husband Harsukhbhai Kardani in a small village in Gujarat. Raizada's father lived in the same village

as Gopal and had helped the couple in the adoption in 2015. Dhir and Raizada had taken a wealth builder policy which entailed a life insurance of 10 times the annual premium in the event of Gopal's death.

On February 8, 2017, Gopal along with Kardani travelled to Rajkot from their village to prepare the visa papers for the UK. When they were returning in a car along with one Nitin Mund, two men on a motorbike attacked Gopal and Kardani. Gopal died on February 11, while Kardani succumbed on February 17, but before that made two statements to the local police.

The police arrested Mund who implicated Dhir and Raizada, following which financial trails between the London couple and Mund were uncovered. The courts in London were also told that the couple did not make any arrangements for the boy's funeral.

The couple was arrested in June 2017 after India requested their extradition, following which hearings began at the Westminster Magistrates' Court. In July 2019, the then chief magistrate Emma Arbuthnot discharged the couple even though she agreed that a prima facie case had been successfully made against the couple.

Rahul Gandhi as 'Ravan', PM as 'biggest liar': BJP, Congress engage in poster war

(News Agency)- Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh on Thursday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party over a poster shared by the party showing Rahul Gandhi with several heads. The BJP released Rahul Gandhi's poster a day after the Congress posted on X a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the caption "The Biggest Liar" and another calling him a "Jumla Boy" who was "going to hit the election rally soon". Taking strong offence to the BJP's move, Ramesh took to X and said the poster is intended to incite and provoke violence against the former Congress chief whose father and grandmother were assassinated by forces that want to divide India.

"What is the real intent of an atrocious graphic portraying Rahul Gandhi as Ravan by the BJP's official handle? It is clearly intended to incite and provoke violence against a Congress MP and a former



President of the party, whose father and grandmother were assassinated by forces that want to divide India," he said in a post on X.

"It is one thing for the PM to give evidence daily of being a pathological liar and of suffering from a narcissistic personality disorder. But for him to get his party to produce something this obnoxious is not just completely

unacceptable, but is downright dangerous," Ramesh said.

"We will not be intimidated," he asserted.

On X, the BJP captioned the poster "Bharat Khatre Mein Hai - A Congress party production. Directed by George Soros".

"The new age Ravan is here. He is Evil. Anti Dharma. Anti Ram. His aim is to destroy Bharat," the BJP said on X. Reacting to

Who is the biggest liar?



the poster, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said in a post in Hindi on X, "Most respected @narendramodi ji and shri @JPNadda ji, what level do you want to take politics and debate to? Do you agree with the violent and provocative tweets being posted from the official Twitter handle of your party?"

"Not much time has passed when you took a vow of

uprightness. Have you forgotten the oaths taken just as the promises made?" she asked. Echoing Ramesh and Priyanka, AICC general secretary, organisation, KC Venugopal also said, "No words are enough to condemn the shameful graphic on the BJP handle comparing Sh. Rahul Gandhi ji to Ravana." "Their nefarious intentions are clear, they want to murder him. He, who lost his grandmother and father to assassinations. They withdrew his SPG protection to score petty political points. After evicting him from his secure residence, they haven't allocated another house that he has requested for," he said. "All this points to a well-planned conspiracy of the BJP to eliminate their fiercest critic, someone who attacks the very core of their hate-filled ideology," Venugopal further said. Earlier too, both parties had launched cartoon strips against leaders of both the opposing parties on social media.

'Red diary conspiracy' was hatched at BJP headquarters: Ashok Gehlot



(News Agency)- Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday alleged that the "red diary conspiracy" was hatched at the saffron party's headquarters. He also claimed that the BJP has no moral right to be in power as it "toppled" elected governments. "The 'lal diary' conspiracy, which has got fused, was hatched at the BJP headquarters," he said. The 'red diary' was allegedly possessed by sacked minister Rajendra Gudha, who had claimed that it contained financial

transactions of the chief minister. Gehlot sacked Gudha in July after he criticised his own government in the assembly over crimes against women when the violence in BJP-run Manipur was being discussed. The Rajasthan chief minister also alleged that Amit Shah, Dharmendra Pradhan and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat had conspired to topple his government, apparently referring to the 2020 political crisis stemming from the rebellion of Sachin Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs. Addressing a function at Commerce College in

Jaipur, Gehlot hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for targeting the Congress government over the communal riots in Jodhpur.

Referring to the May 2022 communal violence in Jodhpur, Modi asked on Thursday during a rally what the chief minister was doing when Jodhpur was burning. He also sought to know where Congress leaders were when people were dying.

Saying the prime minister's post has some dignity, Gehlot said, "I don't know who briefs him. Not a single person died. There was definitely tension, communal tension. It happened in Karauli and it happened in Jodhpur."

"We want love and brotherhood in Rajasthan. There should be no riots in the name of caste or religion," he said.

Hitting out at the Centre, Gehlot said it is the duty of the Union government to strengthen the states. However, contrary to this, all efforts were made to topple the Rajasthan government.

Probe agency ED summons Sanjay Singh's close aides in liquor policy case



(News Agency)-The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh's close aides for questioning in the Delhi liquor policy case. Vivek Tyagi and Sarvesh Mishra, considered close associates of the arrested AAP leader, will appear before the ED on Friday, October 6. Sarvesh Mishra was named by the ED on Thursday, as it sought Singh's custody in connection with its probe into the Delhi liquor policy case. According to the central probe agency, Sarvesh had received Rs 1 crore on behalf of Sanjay Singh. Both Vivek Tyagi

and Sarvesh Mishra are likely to be questioned in the case by the ED, alongside Sanjay Singh, sources said. Meanwhile, Sanjay Singh has been sent to the central agency's custody till October 10. He is the third AAP leader to be arrested by the agency in over a year. Earlier, Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain were arrested in separate cases. Sanjay Singh was arrested after being questioned for more than 10 hours at his residence on Wednesday. The ED also carried out searches at his residence and at the premises of several associated with the AAP MP.

The Ukraine war is in a new phase. Biden must rethink the US position

Scrambling to avoid a government shutdown, the US Congress last week refused to approve a new \$6bn aid package for Ukraine. Nearly half of the Republicans in the House of Representatives also voted to strip Ukraine money from a must-pass military spending bill. The Republican revolt comes as Ukraine's counteroffensive, launched this summer, has garnered lackluster results. Russia has actually gained more territory in this calendar year than Ukraine has, despite the immense quantity of advanced weaponry that the US and Europe have supplied to Ukrainian forces. Together, these two developments mark a new phase of the war that calls for new thinking. The political support of Ukraine's largest international backer, the US, is no longer assured in the near term, let alone if Donald Trump returns to power in next year's election. For Joe Biden, it is a time for choosing. His administration and its allies will be tempted to double down on the approach they have taken of late: cast the war in near-existential terms, vow to arm Kyiv "as long as it takes" and castigate opponents as extremists indifferent to Ukraine's plight and reckless with American national security. (Indeed, some leading House Democrats were quick to deride what they dubbed the "pro-Putin caucus" and "Putin's little helpers".) But this approach has reached its limits. In the absence of progress on

the battlefield – Ukraine's army has not made a breakthrough since last autumn – ever more strident demands for ever more aid, doled out indefinitely and regardless of circumstances, make the war look potentially endless and fruitless. The problem isn't that arguments for helping Ukraine have lacked passion or that skeptics have been treated too kindly. It is that the current aims may be unachievable, as Biden's "as long as it takes" mantra practically admits. And if the mission will not be accomplished, then the case for restricting aid starts to resemble the logic that led Biden himself to order the US military to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2021: it can be better to accept painful losses than to suffer greater losses.

Thankfully, Ukraine is not Afghanistan. Kyiv's war effort remains viable, far more so than the western-backed Kabul government's was. Yet to sustain the support of Americans, Biden needs to put forward a better strategy, starting with more defined and attainable goals that inspire confidence. First and foremost, he can no longer effectively defer to whatever territorial aims the government of Ukraine adopts. Kyiv currently seeks to restore Ukraine's 1991 borders, an unlikely prospect that would include retaking Crimea, which Russia seized in 2014.

(Contd. on page 15)

Hindutva, polarisation and 'Vikas' failed in 2004. Repeat in 2024 for BJP?

In this frenzied world of breaking news becoming obsolete history within a week, only seasoned political commentators would remember two events during the run up to the 2004 Lok Sabha elections. The first involved the then deputy prime minister L K Advani. While his cavalcade was going towards Ghaziabad on the outskirts of Delhi for an event, a patient in an ambulance that was held up by traffic police, died. There was some noise after the tragedy. But the other tragedy made it to the headlines even in international newspapers. In April 2004, the "election agent" of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and BJP leader Lalji Tandon celebrated his 70th birthday in Lucknow by organising a free saree distribution ceremony. As thousands of poor women gathered there – clamoured, jostled and rushed – 22 of them died in the ensuing stampede. All this was happening when the massive BJP campaign revolving around the "India Shining" theme was in full bloom. Virtually, in all of the mainstream media, there seemed near unanimity that the BJP-led-NDA was going to retain power in 2004. So confident,

rather sure were BJP strategists after thumping assembly election victories in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, that Lok Sabha elections were prepped by a few months. We all know what happened in that election. One might as well ask: what is the relation between what happened about 20 years ago with what might happen in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections? There is evidently no direct link. But to put things in context and perspective, nobody expected Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the BJP to lose in 2004. Similarly, no one is expecting Narendra Modi and the BJP to lose in 2024. Yet, anything is possible in Indian politics. Not for a moment are the authors suggesting that there are strong undercurrents against the BJP to the point that it could face a shock defeat in 2024. In April 2004, the "election agent" of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and BJP leader Lalji Tandon celebrated his 70th birthday in Lucknow by organising a free saree distribution ceremony. As thousands of poor women gathered there – clamoured, jostled and rushed – 22 of them died in the ensuing stampede. (Contd. on page 17)

What Western Media Carefully Omits While Covering Canada-India Spat

The Western media has been unsurprisingly doubling down on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation that Indian agencies are behind the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. The latest in this wave of criticism of India and Narendra Modi from the Anglosphere of the US, UK and Canada — nervous about its waning influence and the emergence of a multipolar world — is from the Financial Times, UK.

"But allowing India to commission a murder on Canadian soil — if that is what happened — would pose a much more immediate danger to national security than a temporary setback in efforts to counter China," writes Gideon Rachman. "If the Indian government concluded that it now has a free hand to go after its enemies — foreign and domestic — wherever they are living, that would create a really dangerous precedent for multicultural societies such as Canada, Britain and Australia."

It follows criticism from senior journalist Fareed Zakaria, who says the incident has unleashed "a spasm of jingoism" in India. He cautions that the controversy may hurt India's ambition on the world stage.

However, Zakaria rightly analyses that the Western outrage is playing out very differently in India, where it is only helping Modi. It paints India as a victim of foreign forces and the PM as the strong leader who is willing to give it back overtly or covertly.

But by and large, the Western media has lapped up Trudeau's allegations as an excuse to attack India. The Economist headlined: 'If India ordered a murder in Canada, there must be

consequences'. "The Western countries have far too long acquiesced to the Indian government's abuses," it wrote. But in its criticism, the chiefly Left-leaning Western media is subverting some of the lofty journalistic ideals they vociferously preach worldwide. First, Western outlets unflinchingly fail to mention what Khalistani terrorists have done. From assassinating an Indian PM and a CM to aviation history's biggest terror attack before 9/11, the Air India AI-182 bombing in 1985 which killed 329 people aboard, most of them Canadians — the list is long but never gets into Western coverage of the controversy. Second, they also do not mention that Khalistani terrorists killed hundreds of Indians in the name of religion. On October 21, 1983, for instance, more than 100 Hindus were massacred in Gobindgarh. Just in the five months preceding Operation Blue Star in 1984, 294 Hindus were killed by Khalistanis, according to official figures. On May 10-11, 1985, 85 Hindus were killed in serial bomb blasts carried out by Khalistanis in Delhi, Haryana and UP.

Third, the Western media outlets have variously addressed Nijjar as a 'priest', 'plumber', and 'activist', but never flesh out the charges of terrorism, hit jobs in Punjab and conspiracy to kill a Hindu priest. They conveniently skip referring to the Interpol red corner notice against him, the fact that he had arrived in Canada on a fake passport and identity, and was put on a no-fly list. Fourth, the Western media does not speak about the role of ISI in fanning and funding Khalistani terror, and how groups like Sikhs for Justice led by designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannu were linked to the ISI's Houston Network.

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Right Word | The Khalistan Smokescreen: Trudeau's Accusations, China's Influence and Pak's Manipulation

Arun Anand

On 18 September 2023, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada publicly accused the Indian government of being involved in the killing of the designated Khalistani terrorist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. He was the founder of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), a Khalistani extremist group. Nijjar was killed outside a Sikh gurdwara located in British Columbia in June 2022.

Coincidentally, in a significant move, a judge in Vancouver had initiated a public inquiry into the allegations of foreign government's involvement in Canada's internal political matters. The inquiry was set up on 7 September 2023 following widespread allegations that China was interfering "in federal electoral processes and democratic institutions" of Canada.

A more detailed examination of these events on the same day points out how Prime Minister Trudeau might have been manipulated by Pakistan's infamous Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. This manipulation resulted in the



misrepresentation of the incident and the creation of a distraction from the China-related narrative within the public sphere. This diversionary tactic came at the cost of significant diplomatic turbulence for Canada, suggesting that Trudeau may have been unwittingly drawn into a complex geopolitical manoeuvre. Trudeau's public accusation against Indian government's agents rightly invited strong diplomatic response from New Delhi which pointed out how Canada has turned into a haven for Khalistani terrorists and gangsters over the years. India has been raising the issue of the presence of

Khalistani extremists in Canada with its authorities for several years. Trudeau's tirade was unbecoming of a national leader to level such allegations of grave magnitude without presenting any concrete evidence to substantiate them.

The Canadian prime minister's accusations are the outcome of a heady cocktail of his personal political calculations, Pakistan's role and China's machination. This narrative is closely intertwined with China's global rise in the face of consistent censure from various international organisations for its gross human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet. Beijing's

policy of detention of over a million ethnic Uyghur men and boys in its Xinjiang region in the concentration camps, along with forced marriage of Uyghur Muslim women with Han Chinese has raised eyebrows and drawn condemnation. However, Beijing has often used its economic muscle as a carrot and stick to buy the silence of the international community over these rights violations. In the case of Canada, there have been reports that Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party received generous funding from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the years. Michael Chong, a legislator from the Conservative Party and a vocal critic of China's policies in Xinjiang within Canada, found himself targeted in May 2023 by a coordinated online campaign traced back to China, specifically on the platform "WeChat". This campaign was a response to Chong's anti-Beijing stance and his advocacy for the Uyghur cause. Notably, Chong had sponsored a motion in 2021 condemning China's treatment of the Uyghur Muslim minority

as a genocide.

Furthermore, allegations arose suggesting that "Chinese undercover agents or their proxies" were intimidating Chinese Canadians by making veiled threats against their relatives in China, should they raise concerns about Beijing's policies, both within Canada and on the international stage. While this escalating situation prompted public scrutiny into foreign interference, finally ordered on 7 September 2023 and initiated on 18 September 2023, it seems to have rattled the Canadian prime minister as it could have exposed connections between Trudeau's Liberal Party and the CCP as well.

In light of this context, Trudeau's recent accusation against India for allegedly carrying out a targeted killing on Canadian soil appears to be a multi-layered nuanced move. It becomes evident that he may be hesitating to directly implicate China in the foreign interference inquiry due to concerns of potential diplomatic repercussions from Beijing.

Why the South and North Can't Seem to Agree on the Biggest Crisis of Humanity

K Yatish Rajawat

The Global South has a right to demand financial help and the developed world needs to provide this. The Global North seems to be avoiding all responsibilities and looking at even the climate crisis as an economic game where the winner takes all. This is building a stage where the financing to meet the zero emission targets keeps rising but the efforts to bridge these financing gaps are too little and too sparse. Where trillions are required, even a few billion dollars are not spent. The climate crisis is now a financial crisis, one that needs the intervention of all the financial regulators in the world. Many things are wrong with this approach. One, it makes the Global South a victim or a suffrage of the developed world. Second, this victim mindset shapes the debate between

these two parts of the world, which means that it becomes a blame game or, worse, it seeks financial aid for making changes to climate mitigation strategies. Neither side looks at the solution as a whole or where will the capital come from to resolve this crisis. The crisis is not waiting to resolve itself or for either part of the world to see itself differently. Secondly, the Global North did not meet its commitment made in 2009 of \$100 billion by 2020, at the Paris Conference, to fund the transition of the Global South. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), a climate finance delivery plan by the developed countries for achieving the \$100 billion goal by 2025 was set. They also reiterated at COP26 that the earlier commitment by developed countries will be met by 2023.

The commitment to transition is increasing at the same time. The IPCC study in 2018 revealed that developing countries' climate finance requirements stood at \$600 billion per year between 2020–50 in additional investments for the energy sector alone. That's a per year investment required and that is the gap that cannot be met by investments by the country's public and private sectors.

The cumulative investments (2015–30) required by South Africa for achieving its NDC targets is R8.9 trillion (\$697.55 billion). The cumulative cost of financing India's NDCs till 2030 stands at Rs 245.61 trillion (\$5.26 trillion). If that sounds high in trillions, China needs even more: a report by COMMIT (2018) estimates the country's cumulative financing needs for 2016–30 to be close to

CNY55.95 trillion (\$8.42 trillion). What has come from the Global North to fund this requirement has come only in the form of debt at market rates, making the funding of the climate crisis a market-linked opportunity or exercise. The Global South has resorted to playing the victim and asking for higher amounts. As a result, it is playing into the rules of the same lobby that has denied climate change for the better part of the last few decades. If we look at the rule book developed by Exxon to muddle and divert the climate debate, one of its clearest components is to admit the climate crisis publicly but then ensure that no policy change is ever carried out that will actually affect the polluting industry. Not only that, it is clearly revealed that Exxon actually funded research

to create a false narrative that the climate activists were creating a false scare and even tried to discredit the climate crisis research.

According to a newspaper report, Frank Sprow, then Exxon's head of corporate research, sent a memo to colleagues a few months later articulating what would become a central pillar of Exxon's strategy. "If a worldwide consensus emerges that action is needed to mitigate against Greenhouse gas effects, substantial negative impacts on Exxon could occur," wrote Sprow. "Any additional R&D efforts within Corporate Research on Greenhouse should have two primary purposes — protect the value of our resources (oil, gas, coal) and preserve Exxon's business options."

Distraction of the Ukrainian War Has Enabled Azerbaijan Achieving a Brutal Outcome

Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh

The third war over Nagorno-Karabakh, the long-disputed Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan, ended almost as soon as it began. The Azerbaijani 'anti-terror operations' began on the afternoon of September 19 with artillery and drones and within 24 hours, the Karabakh Armenians, a population that has been pushed to the brink of starvation by a months-long economic blockade, capitulated, leaving Azerbaijan in effective control of the territory.

In scenes reminiscent of the Balkans in the 1990s, images of convoys of cars filling the mountain road from Karabakh to Armenia carrying thousands of ethnic Armenians leaving their homeland with as much as they can carry are flooding cyberspace. A region that has witnessed many such upheavals over the years faces yet another round of de facto ethnic cleansing.

While the focus of the West continues to remain on Ukraine, there is a bigger long-term failure here, in their inability to prevent the violence and get the Armenians and Azerbaijanis to agree on an equitable resolution to this bitterly contested conflict. For the local population, the pendulum has swung since the collapse of the Soviet Union from euphoria, siege, victory, defeat and this outcome marks a bitter end and the complete destruction of a project that began in 1988 when the Armenians of Karabakh first tried to split away from Soviet Azerbaijan. The present loss of this territory and the consequent eviction of its people with centuries-old Armenian history and heritage is no doubt a brutal outcome.

The Azerbaijanis have called for the dissolution of all political structures in the territory — the local Presidency, Parliament, and elected Mayor — and are not offering any kind of political autonomy. In contrast, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan told the Karabakh Armenians that an earlier offer of status had "gone to hell" and what was left on the table were as yet undefined "educational rights, cultural rights, religious rights, and



municipal electoral rights." Under those terms, some older people might choose to stay in Nagorno-Karabakh, and thousands of Azerbaijanis who lived there up until 1991 might return. But little or nothing will remain of all the local institutions built there over three decades.

Although the enclave had in theory been under the protection of Russian peacekeepers, Russian guarantees ended up being worthless. Russia has instead brokered a deal whereby the local population agreed to a full disarmament of their own "defence forces," numbering several thousand men and to begin talks over their full "reintegration" into Azerbaijan. It has intervened to broker a ceasefire, the price for which is that Russia gets to keep its peacekeeping force on the ground and thereby a foothold in Azerbaijan; and to push Western mediators — the EU and US — further to the margins.

CROSS ROADS OF HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

The modern maps of the South Caucasus were drawn between 1918 and 1921, during and after World War I. Then, Armenians and Azerbaijanis fought over the disputed territories of Karabakh, Nakhchivan, and Zangezur, and Turkish and Russian armies marched in and out. In 1923, the Soviet Union established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous

Oblast—home to a 95 per cent ethnically Armenian population within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. Nagorno-Karabakh's regional legislature passed a resolution in 1988 declaring its intention to join the Republic of Armenia, despite its official location within Azerbaijan. The South Caucasus region which lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea comprises Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan apart from Southern Russia. This region has been the crossroads of the Persian, Ottoman and Tsarist Empires as also the intersection between Christianity and Islam. Armenia is mainly Christian, with 97 per cent of the population belonging to the Armenian Apostolic faith, one of the oldest Christian churches founded in the first century CE. Azerbaijan is 96 per cent Muslim, with 65 per cent of the people adhering to Shia Islam and the rest to the Sunni faith. Four-fifths of Georgia is Orthodox Christian. During the Soviet era, the roughly 1,700-square-mile region of Nagorno-Karabakh, whose population has been predominantly Armenian, was an autonomous Oblast of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, it was internationally recognised as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which completely surrounded it.

However, fighting erupted between Azerbaijan and local Armenian forces supported by Russia. Internationally sponsored negotiations tried to balance Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and its viability as a state with the aspirations of the Karabakh Armenians. Back in 1992, when the first war expanded to full-scale fighting, the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe met in Helsinki and called for a conference to be held in Minsk to resolve the conflict. It was to be attended by all parties, including "elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh and others"—in other words, both Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijanis. But in the end, the conference never happened.

The security organisation's mediation was supposed to be based on the principles of the Helsinki Accords, the 1975 agreement between the West and the Soviet Union that formally established territorial integrity, self-determination, and the non-use of force as essential to preserving European peace. In practice, none of these principles were honoured. In fact, international commitment to this conflict was always under-resourced because the South Caucasus was considered too marginal. In 1994, Russia brokered a ceasefire, and for the next 25 years or so, a stalemate was held

in which forces backed by Armenia and Russia effectively controlled the territory. After 1998, the Karabakh Armenians were no longer represented in the talks, as the then President of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, was a Karabakh Armenian who said he could negotiate on behalf of his people. Diplomacy was reduced to secret talks between Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.

In 2017, the Karabakh Armenians, encouraged by Armenian nationalists in the region and the Armenian diaspora, formally renamed their region Artsakh, an Armenian name dating back to ancient times. The implication was that Azerbaijan should give up on not just Nagorno-Karabakh but also surrounding regions under Armenian control.

Azerbaijan also showed little interest in substantial negotiations focusing instead on reconquest. For more than thirty years, no Azerbaijani leader negotiated directly with the Karabakh Armenians or put down any formal proposals for their future within Azerbaijan. Western mediators came up with peace formulas but were never able to offer the "boots on the ground" to enforce them. All this gave Russia the strongest leverage, and at the end of the 2020 war, it duly became the only outside power to intervene directly and put boots on the ground in the form of peacekeepers.

In 2020, however, the momentum in the conflict, which seemed to have been frozen, shifted decidedly toward Azerbaijan, which won a clear-cut military victory over Armenia during a short but consequential war over the territory which is widely remembered in military circles for the devastating role played by the Turkish Bayraktar drones against the Armenian tanks. That outcome heightened the latent tensions among the countries in the region at a time when Russia, which has traditionally been the most important outside actor in the conflict, was distracted by its commitment in Ukraine.

Does Rahul Gandhi's Manthan on Hinduism Normalise Hindumisia?

Rahul Shivshankar

Rahul Gandhi has penned a metaphorical essay on his understanding of the essence of Sanatan Dharma. As metaphors go, it is sufficiently esoteric and, therefore, for the most parts, likely to be understood only by Gandhi's inner circle. But having said this, Rahul Gandhi does draw one problematic conclusion. He writes: "She (Hinduism) is not a victim. And never allows her fear to capture her and turn her into a vehicle for anger, hatred or violence."

It is one thing to counsel Hindus to make a virtue out of the power of forgiveness; to let go off their fears; to never allow their fears to turn them into a vehicle for "anger, hatred or violence". It is quite another to deny that Hindus have suffered at the hands of colonisers who were intent on dismantling the richness of the Hindu civilisation.

Rahul Gandhi's eagerness to deny that Hindus have been victims in the land of their birth appears to stem from two impulses among secular-liberals. First, to propagate a sense of civilisational oneness



(Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb) at all costs; even if it means to distort history. Second, to absolve non-Hindus of the blame of carrying out atrocities against Hindus. This latter tendency is a factor of a callow politics. The hope that appeasing minorities will shape a vote bank. Two instances of this kind of sophistry spring to mind.

In 1921, Moplah Muslims attacked Hindus in hordes along the Malabar coast. In one such attack on September 25, 1921, 38 Hindus were beheaded. There were several

other well-documented accounts of ineffable atrocities upon Hindus. But no less a

figure than Mahatma Gandhi normalised the violence, shockingly placing the onus on the Hindus saying: "(Hindus) must find out the causes of Moplah fanaticism. They will find that they are not without blame. They have hitherto not cared for the Moplah. They have either treated him as a serf or dreaded him. They (Hindus) have not treated him as a friend and neighbour, to be reformed and respected. It is no use now becoming angry with the Moplahs or the Muslims in general."

Dr BR Ambedkar shed light on the reasons why Mahatma Gandhi took such a partisan

stand. In his book *Pakistan or Partition of India*, Dr Ambedkar wrote: "Can any sane man go so far, for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity? But Mr Gandhi was so attached to Hindu-Muslim unity that he did not stop to enquire what he was doing in this mad endeavour..." Without going into the reasons why Gandhi felt the need to propagate an idea of Hindu-Muslim unity beyond what has been pointed out, it is sufficient to say that the Mahatma's decision to paint Hindus as provocateurs and not victims mocked Hindus. After all, which other community in the world can claim to be part of an unbroken tradition that has opened its heart, mind and hearth to others?

More recently, in Kashmir, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, another attempt was made to place the onus upon Hindus the onus for inviting a genocide. Kashmiri Hindus were exterminated from the Kashmir Valley by Islamists. But the atrocity was blamed by many upon economic inequity and not Hindumisia.

Indeed, it was subtly posited that Kashmiri Pandits invited a backlash because they had a near monopoly over the state's resources.

Imagine, saying that to six million Jews who were gassed by the Nazis. Would they ever accept the suggestion that they were responsible for their own genocide because they were the patricians mean-spiritedly denying others their due in Germany?

Rahul Gandhi might be as well-disposed as the Mahatma was to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, but to deny that Hindus have not been victims is to give a licence to Hinduphobes. In any event, since when is giving a licence to violence without cause an inherent part of Hindu Dharma? Rahul Gandhi missed a golden opportunity to shame those who betrayed the innate Hindu impulse of placing their blind trust in the goodness of others. By not doing so, has Rahul Gandhi squandered an opportunity to honestly galvanise all Indians to abide by the precepts of the most eternal and universal dharma known to humanity – Sarva Dharma Sambhava?

Scams and Scandals Have Made Chhattisgarh a State of Corruption

Tuhin A Sinha

The mood on the ground in Chhattisgarh has completely changed in the last couple of months. People are livid over the unending scams that have tumbled out of the Bhupesh Baghel government's closet. From being in a seemingly good position, the Congress state government is struggling to resist an imminent defeat. This is the result of a perspicacious, persistent, streamlined communication strategy of the BJP, where the focus has primarily been on exposing each of the financial frauds of the state government threadbare.

It goes without saying that the huge response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent rallies in Raigarh and Bilaspur has raised



the bar for the state unit. The BJP now senses a win in Chhattisgarh, one that inflicts a body blow to the Congress party's murky funding model for 2024, disguised as "Mohabbat ki dukaan".

To understand the magnitude of loot in Chhattisgarh and the

impunity with which it was carried out, one will need to get into some of these scams in detail. **RS 2,161 CRORE LIQUOR SCAM** In May 2023, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) busted a Rs 2,161 crore 'scam' in Chhattisgarh which was believed to be operated with the help of

top politicians and bureaucrats. The ED arrested a key accused, Anwar Dhebar, who was sent to ED custody by a Raipur court. Anwar Dhebar is the brother of Congress leader and Raipur mayor Aijaz Dhebar.

It is noteworthy that Chhattisgarh generates the highest contribution in excise from the liquor circulation in the state. The excise department is responsible for the regulation of the liquor in the state and the quality of the product. The state government also controls all the aspects of liquor trade from procurement to retail sale to consumer sale. No private liquor shops are allowed. All 800 liquor shops are run by the state government.

The accused operated as a

private entity, in complete defiance of government regulations, minting illegal money through complicity with select bureaucrats and members of the ruling Congress party in the state. These people had made a fake hologram and illegal country and foreign liquor was sold from it. According to the probe agency, 15 per cent of the commission would go to Anwar Dhebar, and the rest would go to bureaucrats and ruling party politicians in the state. When the Delhi liquor scam broke out, there were indications that the Opposition had discovered a 'federal model of corruption' wherein similar liquor scams were taking place in other Opposition states using similar techniques.

First Came Cocaine Bear, Then Cocaine Cat and Now Cocaine Dogs

Dr G Shreekumar Menon

Cocaine Bear is a 2023 American movie loosely inspired by the true story of an American black bear, weighing around 200 pounds, found in a Georgia forest, that had ingested nearly 3 to 4 grams of cocaine, sufficient to kill a person.

The cocaine was apparently dropped from a plane piloted by Andrew Thornton, a convicted drug smuggler, who got killed while parachuting, as he was carrying too heavy a contraband. Thornton was a notorious drug smuggler and a former police officer. He was found dead the morning of September 11, 1985, in the backyard of a house in Knoxville, Tennessee, wearing a parachute and Gucci loafers. He had several weapons and a duffel bag containing about 35 kilograms of cocaine valued at \$15 million. A key found in his pocket matched the tail number of a wrecked plane that was found in Clay County and based on Thornton's history of drug smuggling, investigators guessed there was more cocaine nearby. The investigators searched the surrounding area and found more than 300 pounds of cocaine in a search that lasted several months. They also found the dead bear, whose stuffed body is now kept on display at Lexington, at the Kentucky Fun Mall. Andrew Carter Thornton was born in 1944, he was the son of a prominent Kentucky horse breeder and became an expert paratrooper for the US Army, even earning a Purple Heart when the US invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965. Thornton left the Army that same year and returned to Kentucky, where he joined the Lexington Police Department's narcotics squad. However, he got involved in the drug trade.

But did the bear get high from the cocaine? It's unclear—and scientists are unsure whether any animal



experiences the same type of high that humans do from substances like alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine.

In March 2023, an incident came to light of an exotic cat, rescued from a tree in Ohio, which tested positive for cocaine. The exotic animal was identified as a Serval which are medium-sized wild cats native to sub-Saharan Africa. The Serval, named Amiry, was rescued after escaping from a vehicle during a police stop and climbing a tree. The cat's owner had been pulled over by police for a traffic violation. Rescue workers noted that the cat appeared highly agitated. It fell from the tree during the rescue attempt and fractured its leg. At the animal shelter, the staff took a sample for a DNA test and also tested the cat for narcotics, which turned out to be positive! They started regularly testing exotic animals for narcotics after an incident in which they seized a capuchin monkey who tested positive for methamphetamine. The wild cat is now under the care of the Cincinnati Zoo. Kerala is facing a unique problem of violent behaviour by stray dogs. The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has moved the Supreme Court, saying increasing stray dog attacks on children, often with fatal results, and inaction on the part of state authorities is a violation

of child rights. The Supreme Court in July 2023 orally said that there has to be an enduring solution to the issue of stray dogs in Kerala.

Why is it that only in certain places in Kerala the stray dogs are behaving violently? Generally, stray dogs are docile and avoid humans. These starving animals live on whatever morsels of food they can salvage from the garbage. How is it that they become hyper-aggressive only in some towns? Such abnormal behaviour is reported mostly from Kerala, why? Could there be a drug connection? Researchers found that dogs are susceptible to opioid poisoning. Marijuana toxicity can disable and even kill cats and dogs. Animal shelters in the US have reported that dogs are being injected with heroin to make them more aggressive and are trained to attack anyone in a police uniform. The drug dealers get the dogs addicted to the drugs and then withhold the drugs, forcing the dog to go through 'heroin withdrawal'. The dogs become aggressive and behave dangerously. Of late, Kerala has been reporting regular seizures of synthetic drugs, from users, especially students. The chances of pets or even stray dogs ingesting drugs accidentally or being fed intentionally appear quite possible.

The 'Heroin Dogs of Kabul' is the reality of stray dogs in the streets of Kabul being fed heroin deliberately. Not only does it put dogs at risk of a lethal overdose, but it can cause long-term toxicity to the liver and have profound negative effects on their life. There is little research on the effect of heroin on canines, as well as how morphine is metabolised by dogs. But many doctors hypothesise that dogs might experience a transient sense of euphoria on absorption of the drug. Like in the case of humans, heroin was found to have profound physiological effects in dogs such as severe depression of blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rate. Heroin can cause a markedly reduced concentration of oxygen in the blood, a condition called hypoxia which can lead to muscle pain, brain damage and organ failure.

In Kerala, it can be the case that stray dogs are being given food laced with drugs to make them aggressive and fearful. The sporadic and intermittent aggression among dogs from different locations in the state gives rise to the suspicion that there is some malafide motive, at work. It may be the intention to coerce the government into taking action to cull the helpless dogs.

In September 2023, in Kottayam, Kerala, a state Anti-Narcotics squad, acting on a

tip-off about a suspected drug dealer, was surprised to confront aggressive dogs specifically trained to attack anyone daring to wear khaki clothing. It took nine police officers some time to subdue thirteen dogs, including Pitbulls and Rottweilers. The Police seized about 17.3 kg of ganja from the house.

Intoxication of pets with recreational (or illicit) drugs has become more common over the last decade. Exposure to illicit drugs can be accidental, intentional, or malicious. Also, due to the wandering trait and non-selective appetite, dogs are prone to any type of poisoning, including poisoning by illicit drugs. In dogs, opiate drugs can cause sedation and decreased responsiveness through weakness, stumbling, collapse, shallow breaths, low heart rate and loss of consciousness. Not only stray dogs but even police dogs and dogs maintained by other enforcement agencies are at risk because they come in contact with large quantities of high-purity chemicals during training and search operations.

Because of the illegal nature of illicit drugs, diagnosis can be rather difficult. Furthermore, illicit drugs are often adulterated i.e. combined or contaminated with other pharmacologically active substances, making the diagnosis even more difficult. Some pharmacologically active substances, often found as impurities, are more toxic to pets than humans, like caffeine.

Dogs have more cannabinoid receptors in their brains, hence the effects of cannabis are more dramatic and potentially more toxic when compared to humans. A small amount of cannabis is all it takes to cause toxicity in cats and dogs. It is sad that humans are making cats and dogs to be drug 'connoisseurs'.

Pakistan Copies The Canadian Cat Against India Only To Be Shot In **The Foot Like Ottawa**

Tara Kartha

After days of media headlines gleefully following the India-Canada spat on a daily basis, calling out India and its 'machinations' in Pakistan, its Interior Minister seems to have decided to take a larger step further. He alleged that two deadly suicide bombings recently are the handiwork of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW). Such a statement would be hilarious at one level, given that Pakistan has antagonised everyone on all its borders and has no lack of enemies, including within its own soil. But the tragedy to the people is intense. More than 60 lie dead, and that too in towns that have already suffered from Pakistan Army's counter-terrorism campaigns and its accompanying 'enforced disappearances'.

THE TWIN BOMBINGS

The twin suicide bombings came as the latest terror incidents as the country reels from a rising wave of terrorism over the last year. One bomber targeted an Eid Milad un Nabi procession in Mastung, Balochistan, causing some 55 casualties and the other in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu also targeted a mosque, leaving five dead and 12 injured. Reportedly, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), who are the usual suspects in these cases, have (or so it is said) denied their hand in the attack, which apparently leaves the field open to accusing a neighbour. Justin Trudeau at least waited three months before making his charge. Pakistan couldn't wait three days. That any intelligence agency or police procedure could prove such a claim in just 24 hours is unimaginable, even given that Pakistan does have an intelligence agency that virtually runs the state on behalf of the army. If it had prior intelligence on India fomenting an attack, the question arises as to why it did nothing to prevent it.

SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

At the briefing for the press, the minister also let it be known that security forces managed to secure the release of four footballers out of six who were

abducted in Dera Bugti in early September. In the same month, officials managed to arrest 60 Afghans for drug trafficking, with



the country's premier Anti-Narcotics Force arresting 1,652 narcotics smugglers over the year and recovering some 157 tonnes of narcotics. Here's another statistic: Pakistan recorded the second-largest increase in terrorism-related deaths worldwide in 2022, a 120 per cent rise from the 292 deaths the previous year. Pakistan overtook Afghanistan as the country with the most terrorist attacks and deaths in South Asia, a position



held by the latter since 2017, according to a report by the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

Out of the 'top 20' terrorist groups, seven are in Pakistan. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) was responsible for 36 per

cent or a third of terror-related deaths in Pakistan, a ninefold increase from the year prior, making it 'the fastest-growing

terrorist group in the world.' The GTI noted that the BLA had overtaken the TTP as the deadliest terrorist group in the country. Criminals of all kinds thrive here, moving in and out of the country through some 200-plus passes. And here's a closing statistic: According to another report, the number of 'forcibly disappeared' in Balochistan last year was 629, extrajudicially killed 195 and tortured 187. If you multiply all

up. And this is just within

INCENSED NEIGHBOURS AND ANNOYED 'FRIENDS'

Apart from that, there are those outside the borders who have little reason to like Pakistan at all. The Americans will never forgive or forget that some of the most serious attacks against their men – particularly the Camp Chapman attack of 2009 – where some of the most senior CIA agents were killed by an Al Qaeda terrorist whom the agencies had courted to infiltrate Bin Laden and Zawahiri's inner circles. Bin Laden was killed in Pakistan, and Zawahiri died 19 years later.

The CIA vowed vengeance for that and for other deaths in decades of betrayal. Others who died included a cousin of Jordan's King Abdullah, Captain Zeid, who ran

3,380 have been reported missing and thousands displaced due to aerial bombing, and the numbers start to stack

the operation. The King and Queen were both in attendance at his funeral. There are hundreds of other stories of betrayal in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The UK has suffered a series of attacks arising directly or indirectly from Pakistan, as has France, The Hague, and Spain. Then there's Iran, which has not only had its officers targeted by terrorist groups in Pakistan but also considers Pakistan a 'remote base' for US spying on Iran. Then there's Russia, which has long considered the Islamic State a front, run by the US and Pakistan together. Then there's the Taliban themselves, who have had to live off Pakistan's brutal hospitality for years. Within that, the TTP has been brutalized in Pakistan's counter-terrorism environment. Things have come to such a pass that not a week goes by without the media wondering whether war is likely to break out between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

IN SHORT, PAKISTAN HAS NO SHORTAGE OF ENEMIES EITHER WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

In fact, many would argue that the hatred of the 'Punjabi' army is strongest inside the country and may erupt soon into outright rebellion. Even as the Balochistan provincial government announces an 'all-out war' against terrorism, political tensions climb. Add Imran Khan's supporters to those who take to the streets, even as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir erupts in protests against escalating prices and an economic slide, the likes of which the country has never seen before in its turbulent history. It is against these realities that the interior minister blames India for the attack. Meanwhile, investigative agencies have already made their initial findings that the Hangu attack seems to be by the Islamic State in Khorasan. Someone, perhaps its iron brother China – whose nationals have also been killed on several occasions in Pakistan – should present Islamabad with a mirror large enough for it to take stock of its own actions and their inevitable consequences. A period of quiet reflection may be beneficial for their collective health.

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In short, Pakistan has no shortage of enemies either within or outside the country. In fact, many would argue that the hatred of the 'Punjabi' army is strongest inside the country and may erupt soon into outright rebellion. Even as the Balochistan provincial government announces an 'all-out war' against terrorism, political tensions climb. Add Imran Khan's supporters to those who take to the streets, even as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir erupts in protests against escalating prices and an economic slide, the likes of which the country has never seen before in its turbulent history. It is against these realities that the interior minister blames India for the attack. Meanwhile, investigative agencies have already made their initial findings that the Hangu attack seems to be by the Islamic State in Khorasan. Someone, perhaps its iron brother China – whose nationals have also been killed on several occasions in Pakistan – should present Islamabad with a mirror large enough for it to take stock of its own actions and their inevitable consequences. A period of quiet reflection may be beneficial for their collective health.

Past Forward | From a Platform to a Party: The Transformation of the Indian National Congress

BY Chandrachur Ghose

As the negotiations for the transfer of power began towards the end of the Second World War, it was clear that the Congress organisation could not continue as a platform, accommodating a wide range of political views. The differences between various groups in the organisation had started to become too sharp to let them coexist. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was the first party to be thrown out.

Soon after his release in June 1945, Jawaharlal Nehru started accusing the CPI of acting against the national movement. A committee appointed in September 1945, comprising Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Govind Ballabh Pant concluded that "there is ample evidence on record before us to establish a strong prima facie case against the members of the Communist Party in the Congress". In response, P.C. Joshi, the general secretary of the CPI, asked all communist members of the Congress to resign, except those who were members of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), so that they could respond to the charges. Accusing the CPI of mounting "a tirade against the Congress" in the tone of "self-righteous arrogance" instead of answering specific charges, Nehru, Patel and Pant recommended the expulsion of all the communist members of the AICC and instructed the Provincial



Congress Committees to remove all communist members from elective offices in December 1945. Although Mahatma Gandhi's views counted for little during the last phase of negotiations on the transfer of power, he was still the biggest cementing factor in the organisation. This became clearer as groups and leaders started moving away from the Congress after his assassination in January 1948. Soon after, the Congress Socialist Party decided to move out of the Congress as a separate political party in March 1948, despite their ideological proximity to Nehru. Writing in the Amrita Bazar Patrika mid-January, Jaya Prakash Narayan had explained that the key question in front of them was — can we build up a socialist India by remaining within the Congress or by working outside it? The Congress, Narayan wrote, had transformed into a parliamentary party and those

like Gandhi who struggled to build Congress as "a body of voluntary servants of the people" were losing the battle. Having become a source of power and personal advancement, the Congress was fast becoming a centre for vested interests resulting in corruption and jobbery. The moral edifice of the Congress had collapsed, he accused. He was particularly critical of Patel's statements disparaging political 'isms'. Narayan wrote, "When Sardar Patel decries socialism, he is defending the status quo and is saying that his ism, namely, status-quo-ism is superior to all others." Patel was not unhappy with the exit of the socialists. "I have all along been of the view that if the future of India is in the hands of men like Jai Prakash [sic], it would probably be a most unfortunate circumstance," Patel wrote to Nehru on June 15. Gandhi himself

had actively taken up the question of the Congress organisation towards the end of his life. In a draft constitution for the Congress that he prepared a day before his assassination, Gandhi proposed disbanding the organisation and forming a Lok Sevak Sangh instead, which would be organised on the basis of village panchayats. The relationship between Patel and Nehru was also rocked by serious differences, both on matters of organisation and governance, and on more than one occasion, both offered to resign. The differences were settled through Gandhi's mediation and his death temporarily brought the two closer. However, the differences were too stark to be pushed under the carpet and reached the climax over the Congress presidential election of 1950. Angry with Nehru's unilateral selection of J.B. Kripalani as a candidate, Patel threw his weight behind Purushottam Das Tandon. This in turn upset Nehru. Patel passed away a few months later in December 1950. Had he lived a few more years, it is difficult to say where such deep differences would have taken the top two leaders of the Congress party and the government. The next break in the Congress came from within the party, and more significantly, from some of the leaders who had formed the bulwark of the Gandhian high command. Unhappy with the

corrupt practices within the Congress organisation, these leaders decided to form a reformist group named the Congress Democratic Front (CDF) within the Congress, led by Kripalani, in September 1950. Others who joined the ground were staunch Gandhian and former premier of West Bengal who had been sacked unceremoniously by the party leadership, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Nehru's close associate Rafi Ahmed Kidwai from Uttar Pradesh and T. Prakasam of the Andhra Congress who had raised the flag of rebellion against the central leadership earlier on occasions. According to Kripalani, the idea was approved by Nehru, who however changed his mind later. Tandon, the then Congress president, however, wasn't happy about this development and argued that it would have a disruptive influence on the organisation. By the end of the year, several senior leaders in Bengal, led by Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, had already moved out of the Congress and formed a new party called the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP). As his differences with Tandon and Nehru continued to grow, Kripalani resigned from the Congress on May 17, 1951, followed by other members of the CDF, except Kidwai. A month later, on June 16, they met at a convention in Patna and joined the KMPP.

Let's Not Make PoJK-GB Uprising Another Lost Opportunity For Bharat

BY Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza

Sporadic passive public protests against economic injustice in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) are becoming more frequent and could turn more aggressive. The state has refrained from crushing these protests using brutal force, but that might change if the protests begin to show signs of outright rebellion. So far, the protests against shortages of wheat, load shedding, cuts in subsidies and taxes on electricity bills have only displayed itself as a frustrated

cathartic exercise. This is due to the build-up of the universal



frustration for not being able to

bring about change. Protests against the above-mentioned economic issues

began in Rawalakot in the Poonch division of PoJK. However, over a period of six months, they have spread from Bagh to Mirpur to Muzaffarabad. The Awami Action Committee is observing sit-ins in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, and Bagh to mention a few. Speeches made during the past week are showing signs of frustration turning into anger toward both the PoJK government as well as that of Pakistan. More and more people are becoming vocal against Pakistan's oppression of the natural resources of PoJK. At protest rallies, angry

speakers are informing the wider public that Pakistan is purchasing electricity from PoJK at the rate of Rs 2.03 a unit and then selling it back to PoJK at the rate of Rs 53 per unit. They are reminding protestors of the promises made by Pakistan to the oppressed people of PoJK in the 1960s when Pakistan usurped their most fertile lands in the Mirpur district and constructed the Mangla dam that caused hundreds of centuries-old villages to drown. Pakistan then promised that PoJK would get free electricity.

DISPARITY HAS PUSHED PUNJAB INTO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISTRESS

AS Mittal

It's worrisome that Punjab only receives 45 paise for every rupee it contributes to the Centre's tax kitty. This is especially concerning when compared to states like UP and Bihar, which receive Rs 1.80 and Rs 1.20, respectively. This revenue-sharing disparity is a significant contributor to the socio-economic distress experienced by Punjab. As a landlocked border state, it's even more crucial for Punjab to overcome this fiscal distress since India's and Pakistan's bilateral trade, also halted through the Wagah-Attari route, majorly affected Punjab's economy only. The said cost-effective cross-border route can directly short-connect to Europe, a big potential to catalyse the Punjab economy as strong as the economy of Southern-Western states, because of near to seaports.

Being far away from the seaports is one of the major challenges Punjab is struggling with, which has a crippling impact on industrial growth. Secondly, adjoining to the sensitive Pakistan border not only halted the trade but led to illegal arms supply and drug



terror which scuffed the social fabric and law and order of Punjab. Keeping these two major geographical disadvantages centre-stage, no central government has compensated Punjab as it faces odd challenges in comparison to other states. Not even a fair share of tax kitty given, the Rural Development Fund (RDF) and Mandi Fee of Rs 5337 crore has not been released for long. For how long can a fiscally distressed state government take forward the most development and welfare-oriented expenditure alone? When a state's economy weakens, its people and progress suffer together. This is evident in the current crisis in

India-Canada relations, as Punjab's economic distress has led to a migration of its human resources to Canada. Unfortunately, this migration has created a breeding ground for radicals and anti-Indian Khalistani extremist activities on Canadian soil, a globalised challenge which has gone unaddressed. The Canadian connection to Khalistan is longstanding. Since the mid-80s, there has been a significant exodus of Punjabi youth to Canada, where they often do odd jobs to sustain themselves. Unfortunately, some of these young people become prey to anti-India extremists.

It is not good to allow a lopsided economic development of a

sensitive state like Punjab. It has serious repercussions. If we fail to ensure holistic development, then we will be accused of inefficiencies in handling human resources. Unemployment is a multi-faceted problem exacerbating the distressed places associated with poorer mental health, crime and drug abuse. There is enough evidence of drug abuse and distress in the law and order situation, that an issue of brimming can be ascribed directly to unemployment.

Punjab, which used to be a prosperous and progressive state even during its toughest time, is currently facing a significant problem of uncontrolled unemployment due

to distressed farming and an imbalanced industrial base. This has resulted in Punjab's GDP growth rate dropping to 6 per cent, which is lower than the national growth rate of 7.24 per cent in 2022-23. Punjab is currently ranked at the 19th position, whereas it ranked first in GDP among the states in 1981 and fourth in 2001. Interestingly, UP and Bihar, which were once part of the economically sick states known as 'BIMARU' (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), are now fast-growing economies. UP achieved an impressive growth rate of 16.8 per cent, with a GDP of Rs 20.48 lakh crore in 2022-23, while Bihar's growth rate was 10.98 per cent with a GDP of Rs 7,45,310 crore.

It is crucial to acknowledge that Punjab has immense potential that should not be overlooked when compared to the southern and western states. Presently, Punjab's contribution to the country's tax kitty stands at approximately 3 per cent, and it only receives 1.8 per cent of the divisible pool of taxes allocated by the Fifteen Finance Commission.

NPA and Wilful Defaulters: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Side

Brajesh Kumar Tiwari

According to the recent announcement (Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), financial institutions are required to thoroughly evaluate all factors pertaining to deliberate non-payment of loans (NPA) above Rs 25 lakh. Furthermore, they must identify individuals who intentionally default on their loan obligations within a period of six months after the loan has been classified as a non-performing asset. The regulatory body published preliminary guidelines pertaining to intentional and significant defaulters. Non-banking financial companies and cooperative banks have been granted the ability to identify themselves.

A wilful defaulter refers to an individual who has intentionally failed to fulfil their financial obligations as a borrower or



guarantor, without any external constraints. In such cases, the outstanding amount of the default is equal to or exceeds Rs 25 lakh. A significant defaulter is defined as an individual or entity whose default amount exceeds Rs 1 crore. In order to determine the threshold of Rs 1 crore, it is necessary to incorporate any unapplied interest, if applicable. According to the draft norms, if an account is classified

as a wilful defaulter and has been resolved through either the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code or the RBI's regulations, leading to a change in the management and control of the entity or business enterprise, it is recommended that the name of such a defaulter be eliminated from the list. The removal of a wilful defaulter's name from the list is contingent upon the borrower fulfilling their financial

obligations by making the necessary payment, subsequent to entering into a settlement agreement with the lender. It is imperative that the name not be omitted in the case of partial payment.

The resolution reached with the intentional defaulter will adhere to the lender's policy as approved by the board. The norms stipulate that the policy should encompass many aspects, such as guidelines for assessing staff accountability, procedures for reporting compromises or settlements to the board, and the possibility of requiring greater upfront payments, among others. The compromise settlement will not affect the ongoing legal processes, including criminal proceedings against the intentional defaulter. The Reserve Bank has requested recommendations regarding the draft master direction by the deadline of October 31. The

banking industry has written down loans totalling Rs 10.57 lakh crore over the past five years. While the NPA of banks has decreased over the past few years, the primary reason for this is the write-off of bad loans. In March 2023, NPAs reached a 10-year low of 3.9 per cent due in large part to write-offs. Due to this, the bank's balance sheet is pristine. Due to banks' loan write-offs, Gross NPAs will decline from Rs 10.21 lakh crore in FY18 to Rs 5.55 lakh crore by March 2023, a decrease of Rs 5.55 lakh crore. According to data from the RBI, banks have written off a staggering amount of over Rs 15,31,455 crore since the 2012-13 fiscal year.

The bank writes off a loan when the borrower has defaulted on the loan and the likelihood of recovery is extremely low. The bank then removes the NPA loan from the assets section and records the amount as a loss.

Bengal man takes legal action against wife on finding she is Bangladeshi national

Tabish Ehsan, a 37-year-old businessman and a resident of Bengal's Asansol, tied the knot with Nazia Ambreen Quraishi in 2009. Now, after 12 years of marriage, Tabish got to know that his wife is a Bangladeshi national.

(News Agency)-After 14 years of marriage, a Kolkata-based businessman came to know about his wife's nationality, discovering that she is, in fact, a Bangladeshi national. The man has taken legal action against his wife, alleging that she used him to obtain Indian citizenship. Tabish Ehsan, 37, a resident of Bengal's Asansol, tied the knot with Nazia Ambreen Quraishi in 2009. Nazia had introduced herself as a native of Uttar Pradesh. Their marriage was approved by both families and all went smoothly until 2022. Speaking to India Today TV, Tabish stated, "I met Nazia at a marriage ceremony for the first time and we got married after our relatives agreed. It was an arranged marriage. Before getting married, she claimed that she was born and brought up in Uttar Pradesh. There



wasn't any doubt about her citizenship initially". The turning point in their marriage arrived with the birth of their second child, as Tabish Ehsan alleges that his wife abruptly moved to her maternal home before giving birth and ended all communication with him. His in-laws informed him that Nazia would not be returning to him, and he claimed to have received threats from her family members.

Later, a case under Section 498A was filed against Tabish Ehsan by Nazia's family, but he was granted bail by the Alipore court in Kolkata.

It was during this time that Tabish got to know about his wife's true nationality. Tabish came to know from one of his relatives that Nazia is actually a Bangladeshi national.

"During that time, I came to know from one of the relatives that Nazia is actually a

Bangladeshi national. Shockingly, she did the same thing with another man in Bangladesh. Nazia had married a school teacher in Bangladesh, coerced him into a divorce, and subjected him to false accusations and political influence," Tabish claimed. "After that, they moved to India illegally without any visa, and I was used by them to get an Indian identity. My marriage was just a part of their conspiracy," he said.

Now, Tabish Ehsan has filed a case against his wife Nazia Qureshi and her family members at the Tiljala police station in Kolkata. The police initiated an FIR based on his court complaint, and it covers various sections of different acts, including Section 120B, 465, 467, 471, 363 of the IPC, Section 14A(b) of the Foreigner

Act, and Section 17 of the Passport Act. The case is currently under investigation.

Despite presenting evidence to the authorities, Tabish expressed his frustration with the police's lack of action. "I came to know that she travelled to Canada for studies between 2007 and 2009. But she was approved for an Indian passport for the first time in 2020. How did she travel to Canada without a passport? How did Canada approve her a visa?" he questioned.

Tabish has sent multiple letters to various government departments, including the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Intelligence Bureau, the Viagency Commission, Regional Passport Office in Kolkata, and the State Government of West Bengal.

Shehbaz says Nawaz not coming back for revenge



(News Agency)-Nawaz, who has been in self-imposed exile since 2019, left for London in the middle of his seven-year jail term on medical grounds. In the four years that transpired, Nawaz was declared a proclaimed offender in the Al Azizia and Avenfield graft cases for his continuous absence from proceedings.

Last month, Shehbaz had confirmed that his elder brother was returning to the country on October 21. Subsequently, the PML-N had declared that Nawaz

was ready to face "all kinds of circumstances" upon his return from London. A day earlier, PML-N Punjab president Rana Sanaullah said Nawaz would return to the country with protective bail and would "surrender to the court after his (welcome) reception" in Lahore. Addressing a workers' convention in Lahore as the PML-N prepares for the return of the former three-time premier, Shehbaz highlighted that the rate of flour and sugar during Nawaz's tenure was Rs35 and Rs52, respectively.

A Nepal town imposes a lockdown and beefs up security to prevent clashes between Hindus and Muslims

(News Agency)- Despite quickly escalating tensions between Hindus and Muslims, the night passed peacefully after a lockdown was imposed and security heightened in a city in southwest Nepal, officials said.

Trouble began in the regional hub city of Nepalgunj over the weekend after a Hindu boy posted a status about Muslims on social media. Muslims protested the status inside the region's main government administrator's office building, burned tires on the streets and blocked traffic.

A larger Hindu rally was held Tuesday until stones and bottles were thrown at protesters, resulting in a few minor injuries.

The indefinite curfew was imposed since Tuesday afternoon in Nepalgunj, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) west



of the capital, Kathmandu, directly after the Hindu protest came under attack.

Area police chief Santosh Rathore said officers were patrolling the city and people were not allowed to leave their homes or gather in groups during the lockdown. There were no reports of any trouble overnight, nor on Wednesday morning. Officials said they needed to impose the stay-at-home order and stop people

from gathering together to prevent any more clashes between the two sides.

Communal violence is not common in Nepal, which is a Hindu majority country that turned secular just a few years ago. Muslims make up roughly a third of Nepalgunj's population, and only about 14% of India's population, which shares a border with the Nepal town and has seen a widening religious divide.

Why India Cannot Replace China As The 'Factory Of The World'

With supply-chain inflation out of China contributing to squeezing corporate and family budgets worldwide and escalating high-tech antagonism between Washington and Beijing, India may have a golden opportunity to replace China as the new "factory of the world." It's home to a sizable young labor force and renowned higher education institutions that can provide inexpensive labor to foreign contractors.

But don't count on it. India still needs to be ready to place this role, especially in the semiconductor sector, which is at the center of the U.S. and China trade antagonism.

That's according to Tenpao Lee, professor of economics at Niagara University and editor of the International Journal of Intellectual Property Management.

He thinks India's infrastructure needs to be ready to support the manufacturing

needs of foreign companies. And its labor force needs to be well-trained for the semiconductor industries.

Meanwhile, he believes India's large population is a headwind rather than a tailwind for the country's development. "While China is a big country with a success of 30+ years of economic development, China's internal and external economies are formidable," he told International Business Times in an email. That isn't the case with India. It isn't in a similar situation. And the window of opportunity may close soon.

"China's success story was due to its open policies since 1979," Lee explained. "In the same token, the opportunity was offered to India as China had zero-COVID policies to close its doors with restrictive economic activities. China has paid the price for its zero-COVID policies economically, and China is expected to change its zero-

COVID policies soon dramatically."

That's already under the way, which could ease supply chain pressures on overseas contractors. Moreover, Lee believes that the global economy is in an unprecedented situation, with China and the U.S. competing against each other directly. "India may take some advantages just like they did from the Ukraine war," he added. "However, India cannot easily copy China's story, as both economic and non-economic factors must be in the right place and time. "Geopolitical analyst Irina Tsukerman is skeptical about this contention. She thinks India's middle class is ready to welcome foreign businesses and investments. "The rise of the middle class in India, too, portends a shift away from China's questionable labor practices, with the costs having risen over time due to economic growth," she told IBT. Moreover, she sees India becoming a growing and more active

member of the digital economy in retail with the adaptation of digital platforms, increased speed of production and \$1.2 trillion in a marketing plan. "The digital platform in question is supported by 16 ministries in India and is designed to lure away factories from China," she explained. "But just as important to give a level playing field platform to smaller and medium-sized Indian companies vis-a-vis huge international platforms, including Amazon and Ali Baba." Still, Ambrose Conroy, the CEO of Seraph Consulting, sees the lack of Western law standards as another barrier to India's prospects of becoming a lead world manufacturer. Thus, overseas contractors may have to search elsewhere for the next "factory of the world." "It is more likely that Africa, Central America or other Asian countries will emerge as the new center for low-cost manufacturing," he said.

A 200-Crore UAE Wedding Paid For In Cash Put Mahadev App Under The Scanner

A 200-crore wedding in the UAE this February, paid for entirely in cash, brought the Mahadev Online Book app on the crosshairs of probe agencies. The app made headlines this afternoon when popular actor Ranbir Kapoor, who has appeared in ads for the app, was summoned by the Enforcement Directorate for questioning on Friday.

Sourabh Chandrakar, one of the promoters of the online betting platform, married in Ras Al-Khaimah in February. Private jets were hired to fly down family members, celebrities performed in the wedding functions and a Mumbai-based events firm handled the extravaganza. All of this was

paid for in cash, and this alerted ED.

"In February 2023, Sourabh Chandrakar got married at RAK, UAE, and for this marriage ceremony, the promoters of Mahadev APP spent around ? 200 Crore in Cash," the ED said in a statement dated September 15. The agency said that as per digital evidence, ? 112 crore was delivered via hawala transactions to the event management firm and hotel bookings costing ? 42 crore were made in cash in UAE currency. The ED's searches on the premises of people associated with the event management firm revealed evidence of hawala transactions

and unaccounted cash, the agency said. "It is found that many celebrities have been endorsing these betting entities and performing at their functions in return for hefty fees layered through dubious transactions, but ultimately paid from the proceeds of online betting," the statement added. Searches were also conducted on the premises of the travel agency that booked tickets for the Mahadev app promoters, their family members and for celebrities endorsing the websites on the platform. M/s Rapid Travels is run by

Dheeraj Ahuja and Vishal Ahuja. "The illicit cash earnings from the betting panels were cleverly deposited by Ahuja brothers with main ticket providers, and the wallet balance was used to book domestic & international tickets," the ED said. The agency said it had also identified other major players involved in the alleged money laundering operations of Mahadev Online Book app.

The ED probe has found that Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal are the main promoters of the app. They are from Bhilai,

Chhattisgarh, and are running their operations from Dubai. "Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal have created an empire for themselves in the UAE. The sudden and illegal riches are being openly flaunted by them," the ED statement said. "Large scale hawala operations are done to siphon off the proceeds of betting to offshore accounts. Large expenditure in cash is also being done in India for advertising of betting websites and self-grandizement necessary to attract new Users and franchise (panel) seekers," it alleged.

Disabled Muslim man eats prasad at Delhi temple, tied to pole, beaten to death

A disabled Muslim man was lynched in Delhi's Sundar Nagari area for allegedly consuming prasad at a temple in the area on Tuesday. Several people were detained in connection with the incident, police said. A video of the incident, widely shared on social media, shows the youth identified as Muhammed Israr, appealing to the crowd for help as he cries in pain. However, the mob continued to attack him. According to the complaint filed by the victim's father, Abdul Wajid, he found his son lying outside his house on Tuesday evening with injury marks all over his body. Israr told his father that a group of youngsters accused him of stealing, tied

him to a pole, and thrashed him with sticks. It was one of his neighbours who brought Israr to his house after the assault. He also provided details about the attackers to his father. Israr later succumbed to his injuries.

A probe into the incident was underway and the police said they were trying to identify the accused through CCTV cameras and videos shot on mobile phones.

Police said the preliminary investigation suggests that the victim was mentally challenged and could not provide satisfactory answers when confronted by the attackers.

Meanwhile, police were deployed in the area to avoid any untoward incidents.

The Ukraine war is in a new phase. Biden must rethink the US position

houses a key naval base, and may hold enough importance for Vladimir Putin to employ nuclear weapons in a last-ditch defense. Biden should make clear that the US will continue to keep Russia from conquering Ukraine and extinguishing its sovereign independence but that the retaking of territory must be weighed more heavily against resource constraints, human costs, and escalation risks.

Preserving Ukraine's sovereignty matters: the United States helps the victim of blatant aggression (tragically underscored by Russia's missile strike in Kharkiv on Thursday that claimed 51 lives), keeps Russian forces away from Nato territory, defends international law, and shows would-be invaders that crime doesn't pay. At the same time, Biden should note that none of these objectives requires the US to support a Ukrainian attempt

to liberate Crimea. Nor must Ukraine necessarily regain, prior to a ceasefire or settlement, every inch of land it has lost since February 2022. Such an outcome, if it is militarily feasible at all, would come at immense costs in lives and treasure. The Biden administration has not committed itself to any particular territorial outcome, but neither has it foreclosed maximalist options. It would be wise to start doing so. Further, the Biden administration should pursue ending the war – through diplomatic steps to restart talks – as vigorously as it arms Ukraine. For now, neither Kyiv nor Moscow is willing to stop fighting, but conditions may never become ripe unless the parties communicate in advance with US encouragement and participation. Diplomacy takes time to succeed, as demonstrated by a wealth of

experience from the armistice that ended the Korean war to the nuclear agreement with Iran. The US is uniquely capable of bringing the parties together. It has yet to try in earnest. Although the effort would almost certainly not yield rapid and dramatic results, it would show that Biden is serious about bringing the conflict to a close and is doing his utmost to avoid the escalation risks and financial costs of a long war.

Finally, Biden should highlight the substantial commitments of aid made by the US's European allies, and call on them to give more to Ukraine and to take the lead in European defense more broadly. The stakes of this conflict are greater for Europeans than they are for Americans, and prudence demands that European governments plan for the possibility that US support might dry up.

Journalists linked to NewsClick raided, Minister says 'Don't need to justify'

The homes of several journalists and employees linked to online portal NewsClick were raided by the Delhi Police this morning amid its alleged Chinese links.

Raids were carried out by the Delhi Police's Special Cell at over 100 locations in Delhi and the neighboring areas of Noida and Ghaziabad based on a case filed on August 17 under the stringent anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). UAPA Sections that have been invoked in the FIR lodged against NewsClick are:

Sec 16 of UAPA: Terrorist Act
Sec 17 of UAPA: Raising funds for terrorist acts

Sec 18 of UAPA: Conspiracy
Sec 22 C of UAPA: Offences by Companies

During the raid, cops seized electronic evidence including laptops and mobile phones and took data dumps of hard disks. The searches were based on inputs shared by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), indicating alleged unlawful activities by the suspects. Some journalists were brought to the Lodhi Road Special Cell office, but no one has been arrested so far, officials said.

According to sources, Delhi Police's Special Cell has posed a list of 25 questions to some of the NewsClick journalists they interrogated. The questions pertained to Shaheen Bagh protests, farmers protest, North-east protests and details of their foreign travel.

The Delhi police also conducted a search at CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury's official residence in connection with NewsClick. The raid was conducted on an employee of CPM, Shree Narayan. Narayan's son works at NewsClick.

The CPM's official residence has been allotted in the name of CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yachuri.

CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury reacted to the raids at his residence and said, "Police came to my residence because one of my companions who lives with me there, his son works for NewsClick. Police came to question him. They took his laptop and phone. What are they investigating, nobody knows. If this is an attempt to try and muzzle the media, the country must know the reason behind this."

On being asked about the raids, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said,

"I don't need to justify it... If anyone has committed anything wrong, search agencies are free to carry out investigations against them under set guidelines."

An investigation by the Enforcement Directorate revealed an alleged fraudulent infusion of foreign funds to the tune of Rs 38.05 crore during a short span of three years.

The scrutiny of the evidence by the probe agency revealed questionable infusion of foreign inward remittance of Rs 9.59 crore by way of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Rs 28.46 crore by way of export of services. The funds so received were allegedly distributed to several controversial journalists, including Gautam Navlakha and associates of rights activist Teesta Setalvad.

Cops brought the founder and Editor-in-Chief of NewsClick Prabir Purkayastha to Delhi Police Special Cell office for questioning. Details regarding NewsClick's China links were also shared by probe agency with Delhi Police.

The Press Club of India on X said it is deeply concerned about raids on the houses of journalists and writers associated with NewsClick. "The Press Club of India is deeply concerned about the multiple raids conducted on the houses of journalists and writers associated with NewsClick. We are monitoring the developments and will be releasing a detailed

statement." "The PCI stands in solidarity with the journalists and demands the government to come out with details," it said. According to a government source, "It is about sovereignty of India and not about freedom of speech.

An investigation by The New York Times had also reported that Indian news portal NewsClick is among organisations funded by a network tied to US millionaire Neville Roy Singham for pushing Chinese propaganda." Calling NewsClick funding push by China "an assault on the sovereignty of India", the source added, "The manner of routing of funds and transfer clearly points out to electronic evidences. Large sum of money has been transferred electronically and have been routed further into the system. Payouts have been made to so-called journalist to spread Chinese propaganda. At this stage it is important to secure the evidence and to go to the root of the matter." HOW DELHI POLICE PREPARED FOR RAID

A meeting of senior officers of the Delhi Police Special Cell was held on October 2 in which it was discussed how to take the case forward.

The raid started from 6 am this morning at over 100 places in Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, and Mumbai.

According to sources, a list of names of the people who were to be raided was made and then they were divided into A-B-C categories. The people included in A category

have been detained. Teams from all ranges of Delhi Police Special Cell were deployed in this raid. Around 500 police personnel are involved in the raid.

INDIA ATTACKS BJP OVER RAID ON JOURNALISTS

Condemning the raid on journalists associated with NewsClick, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) attacked the BJP government.

A statement by INDIA said that the bloc "strongly condemn the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) government's fresh attack on the media. We steadfastly stand with the media and for the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and expression."

"In the last nine years, the BJP government has deliberately persecuted and suppressed the media by deploying investigative agencies to suppress the British Broadcasting Corporation, Newsland, Dainik Bhaskar, Bharat Samachar, the Kashmir Walla, the Wire etc., and most recently the journalists of NewsClick," the statement read.

Accusing the BJP of trying to convert the media into a mouthpiece for its partisan, the INDIA parties said, "The BJP government tried to convert the media into a mouthpiece for its partisan and ideological interests by facilitating the takeover of media organisations by crony capitalists. Both the government

and its ideologically aligned organisations have resorted to reprisals against individual journalists who spoke truth to power."

"Furthermore, the BJP government has also spearheaded regressive policies like the Information Technology Rules 2021 that constrict the media from reporting objectively. In doing so, the BJP is not only hiding its sins of omissions and commission from the people of India. It is also compromising India's global standing as a mature democracy." "The BJP government's coercive actions are invariably directed against only those media organisations and journalists that speak truth to power. Ironically, the BJP government is paralysed when it comes to taking action against those journalists inciting hatred and divisiveness in the nation. In the national interest, it would behove the BJP Government to focus on genuine issues of concern to the nation and the people, and stop attacking the media to distract attention from its failures," the statement concluded.

BACKGROUND

Earlier, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had registered a case against the news portal, alleging that NewsClick received foreign funding in violation of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

The agency had also alleged that the money was used for anti-national activities.

Nancy Pelosi Evicted from Her Capitol Hill Private Office by Interim House Speaker Patrick McHenry While She Attended Feinstein Funeral

the Capitol complex. The move came shortly after McHenry was appointed the House Speaker pro tempore, following the removal of Kevin McCarthy in a historical vote Tuesday.

No Place for Pelosi

According to Politico, a top aide on the Republican-controlled House Administration Committee sent an email to Pelosi's office requesting that she vacate the area by Wednesday. The email mentioned that the "room will be re-keyed" and be repurposed for "speaker use." While McHenry will serve as the House leader until a new replacement is elected, he wasted no time in exercising his newfound authority. He provided Pelosi with less than 24 hours to vacate her honorary office. In a statement to Politico, Pelosi strongly criticized the action, characterizing it as "a sharp departure from tradition."

"With all of the important decisions that the new Republican Leadership must address,

which we are all eagerly awaiting, one of the first actions taken by the new Speaker Pro Tempore was to order me to immediately vacate my office in the Capitol," Pelosi said in a statement, referring to McHenry. "Sadly, because I am in California to mourn the loss of and pay tribute to my dear friend Dianne Feinstein, I am unable to retrieve my belongings at this time," she said. Although private offices in the Capitol are fairly common among senators, they are rare and coveted among House lawmakers.

Pelosi served two distinct terms as the Speaker of the House: initially from 2007 to 2011 and then again from 2019 to 2022.

Tactical Move

Pelosi is in California honoring the late Senator Dianne Feinstein. Feinstein's body will lie in state at San Francisco City Hall on Wednesday, and Pelosi is expected to deliver a speech at a memorial service outside City Hall on Thursday.

The office of Pelosi was attended to by

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries' staff, who helped in cleaning out the office on Tuesday. This involved removing a television and packing items into bags, which were subsequently taken away.

"Office space doesn't matter to me, but it seems to be important to them," Pelosi added. "Now that the new Republican Leadership has settled this important matter, let's hope they get to work on what's truly important for the American people." Pelosi was not present for the House vote to remove McCarthy from the position of House speaker. The vote was primarily driven by members within McCarthy's own party. In a vote of 216-210, eight Republicans including Andy Biggs of Arizona, Ken Buck of Colorado, Tim Burchett of Tennessee, Eli Crane of Arizona, Matt Gaetz of Florida, Bob Good of Virginia, Nancy Mace of South Carolina, and Matt Rosendale of Montana joined 208 Democrats to remove McCarthy from power.

Canada and the US Shouldn't Preach India, Both Are Complicit in Targeted Killings

In the film Munich, Steven Spielberg's gritty historical saga of retribution, Palestinian translator and Black September operative Abdel Wael Zwaiter (Makram Houry) collapses before his Rome apartment elevator as Mossad agent Avner Kaufman (Eric Bana) and Jewish explosives expert Robert (Mathieu Kassovitz) bump him off at point-blank range. Zwaiter was the first targeted killing by Bayonet, the hit squad of Operation Wrath of God, Israel's covert plan to avenge the murder and kidnapping of 11 Israeli athletes by Fateh's breakaway militant faction at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Zwaiter's role in the Munich Massacre is disputed: Israel considered him the head of the Black September's Rome branch, but the PLO claimed he wasn't linked to the terrorists. Operation Wrath of God was one of the earliest instances of a series of targeted killings by a nation on foreign soil to avenge terror attacks. Most countries don't shelter or protect terrorists or finance terrorism except a few like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Canada. There's a unanimous, unwritten international agreement that terrorists should be eliminated, not protected. A diplomatic headache occurs when a terrorist commits an act of terrorism at home and scoots abroad or plots/finances an attack or continues to engage in activities against his country of origin from foreign shores. The victim country's options are limited when the country of refuge refuses to act against the terrorist—CANADA VIOLATED UN RESOLUTION, SHELTERED A TERRORIST

Canada is guilty of all the above-mentioned 'crimes' even as it has accused "Indian agents" of murdering Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) chief and Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a wanted terrorist in India. Yes, crimes.

Justin Trudeau is guilty of violating UNSC Resolution 1373, passed a few days after 9/11. According to the Resolution, countries shall prevent and suppress terror financing in any form; freeze funds/financial assets of persons/entities intending to commit terrorism; refrain from supporting entities/persons involved in terrorist acts; take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts; and deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support or commit terrorist acts. The Resolution also prohibits a state from allowing people who "finance, plan, facilitate or commit terrorist acts from using their respective territories against other States or their citizens".

Anyone who "participates in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or in supporting terrorist acts" must be brought to justice.

The Resolution has four other important clauses violated by Canada

Greatest measure of assistance in "criminal investigations or criminal proceedings relating to the financing or support of terrorist acts (Canada has always refused to cooperate)".

Prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on the issuance of identity papers and travel documents by preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents (Nijjar entered Canada using a fake passport and name in 1997).

Take appropriate measures before granting refugee status to ensure that the asylum-seeker has not planned, facilitated or participated in the commission of terrorist acts.

Ensure that the perpetrators do not abuse refugee status, organisers or facilitators of terrorist acts (Nijjar

financed and planned attacks against India), and that claims of political motivation are not recognised as grounds for refusing requests for the extradition of alleged terrorists. Ottawa sheltered Nijjar for years despite an Interpol Red Corner Notice (RNC) against him in November 2014. Trudeau has been crying hoarse over the murder of a "Canadian citizen" by "Indian agents" in Canada. Some media outlets have described Nijjar as a "Sikh activist". However, evidence shows that Nijjar was a terrorist. First, a picture of him holding a Kalashnikov. Since when did "activists" start posing with terrorists' weapon of choice? Second, Public Safety Canada had listed BKI and the International Sikh Youth Federation as terrorist entities in 2018.

In November 2021, the NIA filed a chargesheet against Nijjar under the IPC and UAPA for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy to execute terror attacks in India after arranging arms and ammunition from Pakistan. As per the chargesheet, Nijjar transferred money to India through the Money Transfer Service Scheme and Hawala to form a network to undertake targeted killings in Punjab and tried to arrange arms and ammunition from his Pakistan-based associates, the official said.

Nijjar was designated a terrorist for trying to "incite Sikhs to vote for secession, agitate against the government and carry out violent activities through various posts, audio messages and videos posted on social media," an NIA official told PTI. A detailed dossier shows Nijjar, associated with the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) since the 80s and 90s and then-KTF chief Jagtar Singh Tara since 2012, allegedly planned an attack on Dera Sacha Sauda headquarters in Sirsa, Haryana. He also

allegedly travelled to Pakistan for arms and explosive training and ordered several killings and attacks in Punjab. He allegedly arranged funds for terror activities from Canada.

Nijjar and Tara raised a gang in Canada that was trained in arms in British Columbia in December 2015 to launch attacks in Punjab. In 2020, Nijjar teamed up with Punjab-based gangster Arshdeep Singh Gill, alias Arsh Dalla, for a double murder in Bhatinda. In 2021, he asked Dalla to murder the priest of Bhar Singh Pura village.

WHAT IF INDIA DID ELIMINATE NIJJAR?

Trudeau hasn't provided substantial evidence of India's involvement in Nijjar's murder except that Five Eyes—a spy network of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand—supplied intel about India's 'role'. India has rubbished the accusation.

A New York Times report quoting unnamed Western allied officials claimed that intercepted communications of Indian diplomats indicated New Delhi's 'involvement in the plot'. As per the RCN, Canada should have immediately arrested and deported Nijjar to India. Instead, Canada approved his citizenship application within months despite India's objections. The second RCN against Nijjar was issued in 2016. On September 19, Canada's immigration minister Marc Miller unknowingly exposed his country's blatant disregard for the 2014 RNC. "I can confirm that Nijjar became a Canadian citizen on March 3, 2015. I hope this dispels the baseless rumours that he was not a Canadian," he posted on 'X'. Realising his mistake, Miller posted a day later: "Nijjar became a Canadian citizen on May 25, 2007, earlier than I stated."

Hindutva, polarisation and 'Vikas' failed in 2004. Repeat in 2024 for BJP?

All this was happening when the massive BJP campaign revolving around the "India Shining" theme was in full bloom. Virtually, in all of the mainstream media, there seemed near unanimity that the BJP-led-NDA was going to retain power in 2004. So confident, rather sure were BJP strategists after thumping assembly election victories in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, that Lok Sabha elections were preponed by a few months. We all know what happened in that election.

One might as well ask: what is the relation between what happened about 20 years ago with what might happen in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections? There is evidently no direct link. But to put things in context and perspective, nobody expected Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the BJP to lose in 2004. Similarly, no one is expecting Narendra Modi and the BJP to lose in 2024. Yet, anything is possible in Indian politics. Not for a moment are the authors suggesting that there are strong undercurrents against the BJP to the point that it could face a shock defeat in 2024. There is no need to repeat the content of his slurs as enough has been written and talked about it. A majority of Indians found the remarks of Bidhuri to be no less than hate speech. Even supporters of the BJP have found his remarks appalling.

The point to be noted is: if a senior BJP leader could so brazenly use hate-filled words against Muslims inside the Parliament; that too an MP who represents the elite South Delhi, what would other BJP leaders be doing in the heartland? No action has been taken against Bidhuri who is gearing up to campaign in the forthcoming Rajasthan assembly elections.

Just as no action has been taken against Bhopal MP Sadhvi Pragya for her inflammatory remarks. Clearly, some BJP strategists seem to think that gratuitous abuse of Muslims by second-rung BJP leaders will energise the Hindutva vote bank in the run up to 2024, even as leaders at the top like Modi swear by inclusivity.

In fact, there has been a conscious BJP strategy since about 2020 to assiduously woo so-called Pasmanda Muslim voters. But that possibility is even more remote than Rahul Gandhi outperforming Narendra Modi in popularity ratings in the run up to 2024. The real agenda remains using Hindu-Muslim polarisation to keep trying to suggest that Hinduism is under threat because of repeated onslaughts by Islamists and other assorted "anti-national" forces. The irony is, Islamists are obliging the party by frequent stone pelting on Hindu religious

processions. But there is a catch. The "Congress is an anti-Hindu" party was indeed a factor in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. It wasn't that much of a factor in 2019. Why should it be a factor in 2024? After all, the law of diminishing returns is universal. More importantly, the BJP has been sending conflicting signals that confuse its supporters. On one hand, it punishes leaders like Nupur Sharma and Raja Singh (of Hyderabad) for Islamophobia. On the other hand, it lets off MPs like Sadhvi Pragya and Ramesh Bidhuri. Most importantly, the BJP has been in power for close to 10 consecutive years and has delivered on core Hindutva promises of abrogating Article 370 and building a Ram Temple at Ayodhya. What next? There is a peculiar situation where the critics accuse this regime of anti-Muslim majoritarianism, while hard core Hindutva types flay it on social media platforms for "pampering" Muslims and not doing anything to address issues like state control over temples and the exemption given to minority educational institutions to implement the Right to Education Act.

It is easier to whip up "Hindu" feelings and make promises when you are in the Opposition. But you can't do the same after ruling a country for 10 years.

Point of no return: Pope challenges leaders at UN talks to slow global warming before it's too late

(News Agency)-Pope Francis shamed and challenged world leaders on Wednesday to commit to binding targets to slow climate change before it's too late, warning that God's increasingly warming creation is fast reaching a "point of no return."

In an unusually bleak update to his landmark 2015 encyclical on the environment, Francis heightened the alarm about the "irreversible" harm to people and planet already under way and lamented that once again, the world's poor and most vulnerable are paying the highest price.

"We are now unable to halt the enormous damage we have caused. We barely have time to prevent even more tragic damage," Francis warned. He took square aim at the United States, noting that per-capita emissions in the U.S. are twice as high as China and seven times greater than the average in poor countries. While individual, household efforts are helping, "we can state that a broad



change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact," he said. The document, "Praise God," was released on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the pontiff's nature-loving namesake, and was aimed at spurring negotiators to commit to binding climate targets at the next round of U.N. talks in Dubai.

Francis weighed in on a key and contentious point of negotiations

—whether countries should agree to a phase out of coal, oil and natural gas, the fossil fuels that are causing climate change. He is for it. As fast as possible even, he wrote.

Using precise scientific data, sharp diplomatic arguments and a sprinkling of theological reasoning, Francis delivered a moral imperative for the world to transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy with measures that are "efficient, obligatory and

readily monitored."

"What is being asked of us is nothing other than a certain responsibility for the legacy we will leave behind, once we pass from this world," he said. U.S. climate scientist Carlos Martinez, a committed Catholic who heads a multifaith committee for the American Meteorological Society, said it reads like a report card for Earth and its people and "it appears from the language that he would give students a D, like a D-." Because there has been some progress, but it's not where it needs to be.

"He does not mince his words as to the state of the environment and its impacts to people and to communities," Martinez said.

This is one of the least hopeful messages that Pope Francis has issued, Martinez said. But it is scientifically accurate, he and other scientists told The Associated Press.

"The tone is appropriate given the

magnitude of the challenges we face," Northern Illinois University climate scientist Victor Gensini said.

As it is, Francis' 2015 encyclical "Praise Be" was a watershed moment for the Catholic Church, the first time a pope had used one of his most authoritative teaching documents to recast the climate debate in moral terms. In that text, which has been cited by presidents, patriarchs and premiers and spurred an activist movement in the church, Francis called for a bold cultural revolution to correct a "structurally perverse" economic system where the rich exploit the poor, turning Earth into an "immense pile of filth."

Even though encyclicals are meant to stand the test of time, Francis said he felt an update to his original was necessary because "our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point."

EU countries overcome key obstacle in yearslong plan to overhaul the bloc's asylum rules

(News Agency)-European Union countries on Wednesday overcame a major obstacle in their yearslong quest to overhaul the bloc's asylum rules amid warnings that time is running out to clinch agreement on the entire scheme before next year's EU elections.

EU envoys clinched a deal on a "crisis regulation" of extraordinary measures that a country could take in the event of a massive, unforeseen movement of migrants toward its borders. It means that the 27 member countries now have a negotiating position to take into talks with the EU parliament.

Wednesday's deal would involve setting up processing centers on the EU's outside borders where people would be screened when they arrive and includes the option to detain people until their asylum claims are assessed. "Today we have achieved a huge step forward on



a critical issue for the future of the EU," said Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska, whose country currently holds the bloc's rotating presidency. He said it could allow the EU to seal the so-called New Pact on Asylum and Migration by year's end.

The pact was touted as the answer to the EU's migration woes when it was made public in September 2020. The bloc's old rules collapsed in 2015 after

well over 1 million people arrived in Europe without authorization. Most were fleeing war in Syria or Iraq.

But little progress was made on the pact as the member states bickered over which country should take charge of migrants when they arrive and whether other countries should be obligated to help.

Instead, the EU focused on outsourcing the challenge by clinching morally questionable

agreements with countries that people leave or transit to get to Europe. A deal with Tunisia, where authorities have been accused of dumping migrants in the desert, was the latest example.

The clock is ticking on the whole asylum deal. Elections will be held across the EU in June. For the scheme to enter force, officials and lawmakers say, an agreement on all its 10 parts must be reached between the member countries and parliament by February.

A new European Commission and European Parliament will start work next year and they may want to modify the pact, raising the risk that it might unravel. Countries with anti-migrant governments – Hungary, first, then Poland – will take over the EU presidency after the polls.

"Time is running out. In a few months there will be elections.

We need the pact done and dusted before Europeans go out to vote," commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas told lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

"The whole of Europe is now watching us," he said. "If we fail then we will give fuel to the false claims made by the enemies of democracy, by Russian disinformation, that Europe is incapable of managing migration."

Schinas and commission President Ursula von der Leyen are part of the conservative European People's Party, the biggest bloc in the EU parliament. They want to woo the party of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni into the fold and have taken a tougher line on migrants recently. Human rights organizations are concerned about the EU's approach to its migration pact.

The US warns of a Chinese global disinformation campaign that could undermine peace and stability

(News Agency)- For much of the world, China's Xinjiang region is notorious, a place where ethnic Uyghurs face forced labor and arbitrary detention. But a group of visiting foreign journalists was left with a decidedly different impression.

On a tour in late September sponsored by Beijing, the 22 journalists from 17 countries visited bazaars and chatted with residents over dates and watermelon slices. They later told state media they were impressed with the bustling economy, described the region as "full of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity," and denounced what they said were lies by Western media.

The trip is an example of what Washington sees as Beijing's growing efforts to reshape the global narrative on China. It's spending billions of dollars annually to do so. In a first-of-its-kind report, the State Department last week



laid out Beijing's tactics and techniques for molding public opinion, such as buying content, creating fake personas to spread its message and using repression to quash unfavorable accounts. The Global Engagement Center, a State Department agency that's tasked with combating foreign propaganda and disinformation and that released the 58-page report, warned that Beijing's information campaign could eventually sway how decisions are made around the

world and undermine U.S. interests.

"Unchecked, the (Chinese government's) information manipulation could in many parts of the world diminish freedom to express views critical of Beijing," said Jamie Rubin, who heads the center. He said Beijing's efforts could "transform the global information landscape and damage the security and stability of the United States, its friends, and partners."

"We don't want to see an Orwellian mix of fact and fiction in our world," he said. "That will destroy the secure world of rules and rights that the United States and much of the world relies upon." China over the weekend slammed the report, calling it "in itself disinformation as it misrepresents facts and truth." "In fact, it is the U.S. that invented the weaponizing of the global information space," the Chinese foreign ministry said. It called the State Department agency "a source of disinformation and the command center of 'perception warfare.'"

In a written statement, Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said the report was "just another tool to keep China down and buttress American hegemony."

Beijing argues that Western media have long held biases against China and at times have demonized it. Chinese President Xi Jinping has demanded that China tell its story to the world so

Beijing would be trusted and respected.

But U.S. government officials say Beijing is advancing its agenda through coercion and lies. In one case outlined by the report, the Chinese government created a fake commentator named Yi Fan, whose pro-Beijing writings have appeared in publications in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In social media, Beijing deploys armies of bots, trolls and coordinated campaigns to suppress critical content and boost pro-Beijing messages, the report said. China-made phones sold overseas have been found to come with censorship capabilities.

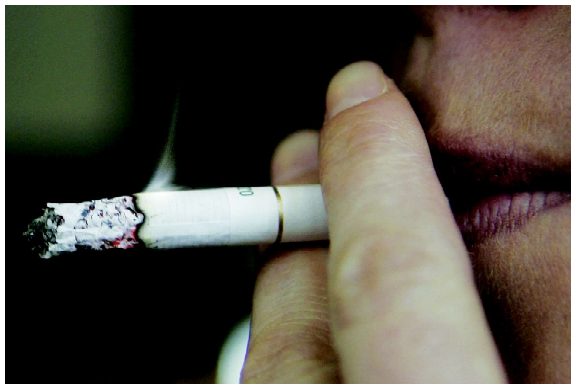
A national security law in Hong Kong has allowed authorities to prosecute those who live overseas but criticize Beijing's policy in the territory, according to the report. On Ukraine, Beijing has cooperated with Moscow to amplify the Kremlin's false claims, it said.

UK prime minister wants to raise the legal age to buy cigarettes in England so eventually no one can

(News Agency)- U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday proposed raising the legal age that people in England can buy cigarettes by one year, every year until it is eventually illegal for the whole population and smoking will hopefully be phased out among young people.

Setting out his plan at the annual Conservative Party conference, Sunak said he wanted to "stop teenagers taking up cigarettes in the first place."

It is currently illegal for anyone to sell cigarettes or tobacco products to people under 18 years old throughout the U.K. Sunak's office said the incremental changes would stop children who turn 14 this year and those younger than that now from ever legally being sold cigarettes in England. If Parliament approves the



proposal, the legal change would only apply in England — not in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. "People take up cigarettes when they're young. Four in five smokers have started by the time they're 20," he said. "Later, the vast majority try to quit ... if we could break that cycle, if we could stop the start, then we would be on our way to ending the biggest cause of preventable death and

disease in our country."

The government said that smoking won't be criminalized, and the phased changes mean that anyone who can legally buy cigarettes now won't be prevented from doing so in the future.

The number of people who smoke in the U.K. has declined by two-thirds since the 1970s, but some 6.4 million people in the country — or about 13% of the

population — still smoke, according to official figures. Britain's government raised the legal age of sale for tobacco from 16 to 18 in 2007. That succeeded in reducing the prevalence of smoking among 16 and 17-year-olds by 30%, Sunak's office said. Health experts welcomed the prime minister's plan to steadily increase the legal smoking age. A similar measure was approved in New Zealand last year.

"This government's plan to introduce 'smoke-free generation' legislation could become its defining legacy, righting a century-old wrong, with tobacco products being the only legally available commodity that, if used as intended, will kill over half of its lifelong users," said Lion Shahab, an academic who co-directs the tobacco and alcohol research group at

University College London. Sunak also said his government would introduce measures to restrict the availability of vapes, or e-cigarettes, to children. It is currently illegal to sell vapes to children under 18 in the U.K., but officials say youth vaping has tripled in the past three years and more children now vape than smoke.

Officials will look into options, including restricting flavored vapes and regulating packaging and store displays to make the products less appealing to young people. Shares in tobacco firms fell after Wednesday's announcement. Dunhill and Lucky Strike owner British American Tobacco saw its shares slide from roughly flat to 1% lower immediately after the announcement, while Imperial Brands saw shares fall 2.4% after Sunak's speech.

Arizona to cancel leases allowing Saudi-owned farm access to state's groundwater

(News Agency)- Arizona governor Katie Hobbs said this week her administration is terminating state land leases that for years have given a Saudi-owned farm nearly unfettered access to pump groundwater in the dry southwestern state.

On Monday, Hobbs, a Democrat, said the state had canceled Fondomonte Arizona's lease in western Arizona's Butler Valley and would not renew three other leases up for renewal there next year.

An investigation by the governor's office found that the foreign-owned farm had violated some of its lease terms. Hobbs called it unacceptable that the farm "continued to pump unchecked amounts of groundwater out of our state while in clear default on their lease." Fondomonte Arizona, a subsidiary of Saudi dairy giant Almarai Co., grows alfalfa in Arizona that feeds livestock in the water-stressed Gulf kingdom. Through a spokesperson, Fondomonte said it would appeal the governor's decision to terminate its 640-acre (259-hectare) lease in Butler Valley. Altogether, Fondomonte farmed about 3,500 acres (1,416 hectares) in



the rugged desert area west of Phoenix.

Fondomonte raised eyebrows when in 2014 it purchased nearly 10,000 acres (4,047 hectares) of land for \$47.5 million about 20 miles (32 kilometers) away from Butler Valley in Vicksburg, Arizona. Since then, worsening drought in Arizona has brought renewed attention to the company's water use and the broader issues of foreign-owned farms and groundwater pumping.

The violations the governor's office

detailed relate to the company's storage of hazardous materials, among other issues. On Monday, Hobbs' office said that Fondomonte was notified of the violations in 2016, but an investigation in August found the company had not fixed the problem seven years later. That gave Arizona's State Land Department grounds to terminate the lease. The Arizona governor's office said the State Land Department decided not to renew three other leases the company had in Butler Valley due to the "excessive amounts

of water being pumped from the land — free of charge."

The department manages land owned by Arizona, which in Fondomonte's case, had been leased to the company. Butler Valley's groundwater is especially important because of state law that in theory allows for it to be pumped elsewhere. That makes its water of interest to cities like Phoenix, also dealing with water supply-related stress and a fast-growing population. In Arizona, cities such as Phoenix and Tucson have restrictions on how much groundwater they can pump under a 1980 state law aimed at protecting the state's aquifers. But in rural areas, little is required of water users to pump from underground aquifers besides registering wells with the state and using the water for activities, including farming, that are deemed a "beneficial use."

Fondomonte also farms in Southern California's Palo Verde Valley, an area that gets its water from the shrinking Colorado River. Those operations have attracted less scrutiny. Not all of Fondomonte's farms in Arizona are affected by the governor's decision.

"Waiting For 40 Years, No Longer...": Erdogan On Joining European Union



(News Agency)-Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday that his country "no longer expects anything from the European Union, which has kept us waiting at its door for 40 years".

"We have kept all the promises we have made to the EU but they have kept almost none of theirs," he said before an inaugural session of parliament.

The president added that he would not "tolerate any new demands or conditions on the accession process" for his country to join the bloc. Erdogan's anger also stems from a judgment on Thursday by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) that condemned Turkey for convicting a

teacher in the wake of the 2016 attempted coup on the grounds he had downloaded an encrypted messaging app linked with the alleged plotters. The ruling that the rights of Yuksel Yalcinkaya had been violated could create a significant precedent, with thousands of similar cases pending before the Strasbourg-based court. Turkey blames a group led by the US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen for being behind the failed attempt to oust Erdogan, alleging that a messaging app called ByLock was used to coordinate the plot.

Erdogan said Sunday that the "decision of the ECHR was the straw that broke the camel's back."

Turkiye says Ankara attack assailants trained in Syria

(News Agency)-Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Turkiye now reserved the right to strike a broader range of Kurdish targets in both Syria and Iraq in retaliation for Sunday's attack.

Turkish police shot dead one of the assailants while the other died in an apparent suicide blast outside Turkiye's interior ministry. Two policemen were injured in the incident.

"As a result of the work of our security forces, it has become clear that the two terrorists came from Syria and were trained there," Fidan said in televised comments.

"From now on, all infrastructure, large facilities and energy facilities belonging to (armed Kurdish groups) in Iraq and Syria are legitimate targets for our security forces." A branch of the Kurdish PKK militia — listed as a terror group by Turkiye and its Western allies — claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack, the first in Ankara since 2016. Turkiye conducted air raids against PKK targets in Iraq hours later.

Fidan's comments suggest that Turkiye could expand its air strikes to include war-

tern Syria.

Syria's Kurds have carved out a semi-autonomous area in the country's north and east.

US-supported Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) — the Kurds' de facto army in the



area — led the battle that dislodged Islamic State group fighters from the last scraps of their Syrian territory in 2019. But Turkiye views the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) that dominate the SDF as an offshoot of the PKK.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly threatened to expand attacks against the YPG.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella calls Bing worse than Google, says he will do anything to make it better

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, during the US v/s Google antitrust trial, said that Bing is behind Google because being the default search engine on a device is crucial for success. He highlighted that Google's deal with Apple to make Google Search the default browser on iPhones has made it difficult for other search engines to compete

(News Agency)- When it comes to search engines, Google Search is leading the space. While there is a list of search engines available including prominent competitors like Microsoft's Bing, Mozilla's Firefox or Yahoo, nothing has till date beaten and is better than Google. And even Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella admits this truth. Nadella during his testimony in US v. Google antitrust trial, admitted that his company's search engine Bing lags behind Google's and said that he would do anything to make it better. Explaining why Microsoft wants to compete with Google, Nadella standing on the witness stand, boiled down his answer to one word: money. "I see search as the largest software category out there by far, ... I used to think of Windows and Office as attractive businesses until I saw search," said Nadella, as reported by The



Verge. He further explained that despite its inferior market share, Bing has managed to turn a profit for Microsoft.

However, commenting on why Bing hadn't managed to top Google, Nadella blamed Apple for it. He noted that one of the biggest reasons Bing isn't as good as Google is due to Google's massive deal with Apple to make the search engine the default option on the iPhone. He admitted that if Apple had agreed to Microsoft's deal to make Bing its default browser, it would have

been a game changer for the company.

In fact, he even revealed that in order to do 'anything' to make Bing work and make it work with Apple, Microsoft was ready to lose \$15 billion a year, hide the Bing brand for searches made on Apple devices, and submit to any privacy preferences that Apple demanded. Nadella quotes that for Microsoft's deal with Apple it was not just money but competitiveness. "We needed to be less greedy and more competitive," he explained.

Microsoft proposed the deal for iPhones. Nadella explained that if Microsoft's deal with Apple to make Bing the default search engine had worked, it would have led to an increase in "query flow," meaning a significant increase in the number of people using Bing. This, in turn, would have generated more data that the Bing team could use to make the search engine better. As Bing improved and attracted more users, advertisers would have been more interested in using the platform.

Nadella called this positive cycle, where a better search engine leads to more usage, more data, and more advertisers, the "virtuous cycle" of search engines. In Nadella's view, this virtuous cycle could have helped Bing catch up to Google's search quality. However, for Bing, which has struggled to gain user queries, data, advertisers, and

users, it has been a vicious cycle. However, Nadella noted that Microsoft's deal with Apple to make Bing the default search engine for iPhones hadn't gone well. He highlighted that the deal failed due to the economic advantages of Google's deal with Apple and hinted that Apple might also be reluctant to sever ties with Google due to concerns about potential retaliation.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella believes that being the default search engine is crucial for success, and that Google's financial arrangements with device manufacturers have made it difficult for other search engines like Bing to compete. He also raised concerns about Google's potential to use its popular services like Gmail and YouTube to promote Chrome, which could lead users to abandon Safari- according to Nadella, this was also the reason why Apple denied Microsoft's deal.

'India can do it': Uday Kotak on unlocking 9-10% GDP growth

Speaking at a session during the India Today Conclave Mumbai 2023, Uday Kotak said India is extremely well-positioned to achieve higher growth, amid the ongoing geopolitical and economic shift of powers.

Billionaire banker Uday Kotak shared his insights into India's remarkable economic journey in the post-Covid world and said the country is well-positioned to achieve a GDP growth rate of 9-10 per cent, even as the global economy slows down.

His statement came during a session during the India Today Conclave Mumbai 2023.

Kotak, who recently stepped down from his position as the MD and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, said India is extremely well-positioned to achieve higher growth, amid the ongoing geopolitical and economic shift of powers. He explained how India has managed to keep its economy steady, supported by a robust financial system, accommodating policies and



geopolitical positioning, at a time when formidable economies like China and US are facing a slump in the wake of a global slowdown. Citing the cracks in the Chinese economy,

he said, "It's a very important opportunity for India to grab it and grow at 9-10 per cent, not 6 per cent as we are.

Kotak, however, highlighted that for India to achieve such a

high growth rate, "we have to work for it".

"We will have to work for it, have the right policies, right execution, and only then can we take growth to the next level," he said.

"India can do its own way over the next 10 or 20 years, go for 9-10 per cent growth, unleash Indian entrepreneurship, have great guardrails for fair completion and encourage free and fair markets with enterprise to transform India, not just to the third-largest economy but to a much higher per capita income," Uday Kotak added.

Kotak also spoke on a wide range of subjects, including ways to boost private investment, the role of the

competition commission's role in creating a level playing field for more companies to grow, the Reserve Bank of India's role in strengthening the economy and banking sector, and the role of artificial intelligence in transforming the future.

Uday Kotak also opened up on what he plans to do next after spending nearly 4 decades shaping the Kotak Mahindra Bank.

"I have been doing this for 38 years and there comes a time to take a view and sit back. For a founder, it's normally difficult to say I give up. But life has a lot more opportunities. I am going back to having a plain white canvas so I can paint the future the way I feel like," he said.

Being a vegetarian might be in your DNA

Adopting vegetarianism may not just depend on willpower but lie in your genetics, as per a new study.



Adopting a meatless lifestyle may not just depend on willpower, as per a new study. The study, published in PLOS One, revealed that there are four specific genes linked to one's ability to stick to a vegetarian diet. "What we can conclude is that genetics plays a significant role in vegetarianism and that certain individuals may be genetically predisposed to excel on a vegetarian path," said Dr Nabeel Yaseen, the lead author of the study and a professor emeritus of pathology at Northwestern University's Feinberg

School of Medicine. Beyond religious and cultural practices, motivations such as health, morality and the environment often inspire people to reduce or eliminate their meat consumption. However, as Dr. Yaseen pointed out, these motivations do not always lead to success. "Interestingly, a considerable number of self-proclaimed vegetarians admit to consuming meat when filling out detailed questionnaires," he added. "This suggests that many individuals who aspire to be vegetarians are unable to do so, and our data suggests that

genetics might be a contributing factor." Although the study did not identify specific genetic predispositions towards vegetarianism, researchers hope that future investigations will shed light on this question. The researchers utilised data from the UK Biobank, a comprehensive biomedical database that monitors individuals over an extended period. The study compared over 5,000 strict vegetarians, defined as individuals who hadn't consumed any animal products in the past year, with a control group of over 3,00,000 meat-eaters.

Through their analysis, the researchers identified three genes strongly associated with vegetarianism, as well as an additional 31 genes potentially linked to this dietary choice. Furthermore, vegetarians were found to have different variations of these genes compared to non-vegetarians. The reason behind these genetic differences may lie in how individuals metabolise lipids or fats. According to Yaseen, several of the genes associated with vegetarianism are involved in lipid metabolism.

Since plants and meat have distinct lipid

compositions, it's possible that some individuals genetically require certain lipids found in meat.

"We hypothesise that this could be related to genetic variations in lipid metabolism and how it impacts brain function, although further research is needed to explore this theory," Yaseen explained.

However, the findings may not be universally applicable. This study represents a significant step in understanding the genetics behind dietary preferences.



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7 Must-Visit Places In Bangalore For All City Foodies



Swati Chaturvedi

Bangalore, often hailed as the “Silicon Valley of India”, is not just a hub for tech innovation but also a paradise for food enthusiasts. As October approaches, the vibrant city of Bangalore prepares for a month filled with pleasant weather, festivities, and delightful culinary experiences. From cozy cafes to bustling brewpubs, the Garden City has something special in store for everyone. From a newly launched restaurant that combines sophistication and allure to an Italian eatery that will transport your taste buds to Italy, here are seven must-visit places in Bangalore that promise a symphony of flavors and experiences.

GAWKY GOOSE

No visit to Bangalore is complete without indulging in its culinary wonders, and Gawky Goose stands out as a must-visit restaurant this October. Nestled in the heart of the city, this gastronomic marvel offers a fusion of Italian flavors with a distinctive Bangalorean twist. Their menu for October promises to tantalize your taste buds with creative dishes using locally sourced ingredients. Be sure to try their signature dishes and innovative cocktails for a dining experience that's nothing short of extraordinary. Their menu boasts an array of appetizers, from the whimsical “Mozzarella Balloon” to the spicy “Crispy Tofu”. For mains, indulge in the “Tofu and Shitake Hotspot” or the aromatic “Kathal Aur Chaap Biryani”. Each dish is a delightful symphony of Italian flavors that will keep you coming back for more.

Cuisine: Italian, South Indian, North Indian, Chinese, Seafood & Desserts

ZEN, THE LEELA PALACE BENGALURU

Experience the enchanting world of Asian cuisine like never before at Zen, the distinguished restaurant nestled within The Leela Palace Bengaluru. Zen's unique brunch promises an unforgettable journey through the captivating realm of Pan Asian culinary expertise. Under the guidance of Chef Santanu Ray, savor the

finest flavors from Thai, Japanese, and Chinese cuisines all under one roof. From prawn and bamboo-shoot dumplings to crispy asparagus uramaki, this mouthwatering spread showcases the wide range of Asian culinary mastery. Highlights include interactive live sushi and bao stations, special robata grills, a Chandon and cocktail bar, and live music to enhance your dining experience. Zen invites all food lovers to savor a genuine Asian feast in an exquisite setting. tyd is the city's newest culinary sensation. In this recently launched restaurant, you'll find yourself in a world where architecture blends seamlessly with the art of



gastronomy. This restaurant is a masterpiece of tastefully crafted spaces with high ceilings, designed to suit every mood and preference. Whether you desire the tranquility of greenery, the romance of stargazing, or the rhythm of a vibrant atmosphere, tyd has it all. It's not just a restaurant; it's an experience. However, what truly sets this restaurant apart is its innovative sushi conveyor belt. As you dine, you'll witness a mesmerizing parade of sushi creations circulating right in front of you. With different dining sections that cater to diverse tastes, this restaurant boasts a menu that spans Chinese, Indian, Tex-Mex, sushi, burgers, Italian, and more. Whether you're craving the spicy punch of



Szechuan or the comforting embrace of a classic Margherita pizza, tyd has it all. And as you enjoy the food, don't forget to explore their exhilarating collection of cocktails that will leave you refreshed. The culinary offerings here promise to delight the taste buds of even the most discerning food enthusiasts.

Cuisine: Asian, Mexican, Continental,

drinks menu, and you're in for a memorable night out.

Cuisine: North Indian, Continental, Italian European, Asian, Beverages & Desserts. For those craving the bold and flavorful tastes of Chinese cuisine, Wok-in-Chow is a paradise waiting to be explored. This Chinese restaurant, tucked away in a quiet corner of Indiranagar, offers a menu that's a delightful fusion of traditional and contemporary flavors.

Dive into the rich flavors of their Hunan Paneer Gravy, indulge in a variety of Manchurians, and savor the fragrant Fried Rice. From noodles to delectable starters, Wok-in-Chow has everything to satisfy your Chinese food cravings.

Cuisine: Chinese, Thai & Momos

Byg Brewski is a brewery that has taken the city by storm with its innovative brews and lively atmosphere. Offering a variety of craft beers to suit every taste, Byg Brewski is a paradise for beer connoisseurs. Whether you prefer hoppy ales or rich stouts, this brewery has you covered. Pair your brew with their delicious food offerings for a memorable evening. Savor their Irani Seekh Kebab, tandoor-roasted mutton kebabs presented like a seekh. And as you enjoy their craft beers, don't miss the delectable “Beer Buddy Chews” appetizers, crunchy munchies, burgers, rolls, or lighter options like greens and salads for the health-conscious.

Cuisine: Continental, Asian, Italian & Beverages

Toit is a legendary brewpub in Bangalore, known for its craft beers and hearty food. The October weather is just right for sitting on their outdoor terrace and enjoying a variety of craft beers brewed in-house. Whether you're a beer connoisseur or simply looking for a relaxed hangout, Toit has it all.

Italian, Modern Indian, Beverages & Desserts

When it comes to classic pub experiences in Bangalore, Watsons stands as an enduring legend. Nestled in the bustling streets of Indiranagar, this iconic pub located in Ulsoor has been a cherished haunt for both locals and expats for decades. The timeless ambiance, live music, and a vast selection of beverages make it the quintessential destination for unwinding. While it offers classic pub fare like “bun cha”, “chilli beef”, and “chilli chicken”, what sets it apart is the exceptional quality of its food. Don't miss their tempting desserts, including brownies and apple pie. Pair your meal with a selection from their extensive

Google Pixel Watch 2 Launched With Better Fitness Tracking, Quad-Core Chip

Google has finally launched its second-generation Pixel Watch 2 during its Made by Google 2023 event alongside the Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro smartphones. The watch comes with a range of upgrades and features compared to the last-generation model, despite its similar appearance—with the same curved glass on the front and circular dial shape. Last year, when the Pixel Watch launched alongside the Pixel 7 series, it did not debut in India. However, this year, the Pixel Watch 2 will also be available in India.

The watch also doubles down on its fitness-centric features by incorporating three new multi-path sensors—which makes the Pixel Watch 2 capable of



detecting body temperature, improving heart rate measurement by 40 percent, and even assessing the body's stress levels. Google Pixel Watch 2 retains the same display size as the first-generation Pixel Watch, featuring an OLED Display with 320PPI and 1000 nits of peak

brightness. The watch is now powered by a new faster Qualcomm 5100 quad core processor. With the new Pixel Watch 2, Google has improved its workout tracking capabilities, thanks to the new multi-path sensors, and the watch also features the redesigned Fitbit app which offers a range of new

tabs, and coupled with new AI features. The app also offers personal health-related questions based on your metrics, and even gives users detailed charts about fitness data. But this new 'Fitbit labs' program will be rolling out next year.

Another valuable feature the watch offers is the 'Safety check.' This feature allows users to set a timer, and when the time elapses, the watch will check in on the user to inquire about their well-being. If there is no response, the watch will share the user's real-time location with emergency contacts. This has been ported over from the Pixel phones. Regarding battery life, Google claims that the Pixel

Watch 2 will provide 24 hours of battery life from its 306 mAh battery cell. It also gives you 12 hours of use in just 30 minutes of charging time. Additionally, the Pixel Watch 2 is constructed from 100% recycled aluminium, moving away from the stainless steel used in the last-generation model. The Pixel Watch 2 will retail starting at \$349.99 in the US, the same price as last year. Users in the US can pre-order today it starting today, and it will begin shipping next week. Users also get 6 months of Fitbit Premium along with the Pixel Watch 2. In India, the Pixel Watch will exclusively retail on Flipkart starting at Rs 39,900, but if you pre-order a Pixel 8 series phone, you can get the Pixel Watch 2 for Rs 19,999.

Dyson Zone Noise-Cancelling Headphones Launched In India: Price, Features



Dyson has entered the audio segment in India on Wednesday with the launch of the Dyson Zone headphones that support noise cancellation. The company claims it has spent over 5 years to develop this product which promises features like ultra-low distortion, active noise cancellation and long battery backup. Dyson says that its engineers have worked on the practical side of sound reproduction to deliver high-quality audio experience. The design is equally focused with comfort at the forefront of its engineering.

DYSON ZONE HEADPHONES PRICE IN INDIA- Dyson Zone headphones will be available at

the company stores starting from Rs 59,900 onwards in the country. The new Dyson headphones have been engineered to offer high-fidelity audio which appeals to the audiophiles. The cups have soft pads so you can enjoy the music in comfort and the density of the foam gives the headband a snugly fit. Dyson claims the design of the headphones allow the weight to be distributed across both sides of the head. The materials chosen for the pads have been thoroughly tested before going with the final product. The Dyson Zone is also flatter than most headphones in the market which allows you to get better noise cancellation with comfort.

Here's How Apple Could Finally Fix The iPhone 15 Pro Overheating Issues

After many iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Max users reported overheating issues, Apple recently acknowledged this problem and revealed that the iPhone 15 Pro models are experiencing overheating due to specific bugs in iOS 17. The company had also said that it would release a software update with a fix for a bug contributing to the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max overheating. According to a report from MacRumors, Apple is now internally testing iOS 17.0.3. It's unclear when iOS 17.0.3 will be released to the public, but the update will likely be available either later this week or next week. The company did not provide any specific details about the bug that it identified, but it expected that it will not be reducing the performance of the A17 Pro chip with its planned software update, the report said.

Apple also said the iPhone 15 Pro's titanium frame is not to blame, so it appears that the overheating issues are not the result of hardware deficiencies. The same bug fix should



eventually be included in iOS 17.1, which is currently in beta and is expected to be released in late October.

Recently, in an official statement to News18 Tech, Apple said: "We have identified a few conditions that can cause the iPhone to run warmer than expected. The device may feel warmer during the first few days after setting up or restoring the device because of increased background activity," Apple added, "We have also found a bug in iOS 17 that is impacting some users and will be

addressed in a software update. Another issue involves some recent updates to third-party apps that are causing them to overload the system. We're working with these app developers on fixes that are in the process of rolling out." The company also clarified a few misconceptions propagated by some reports. "There are certain apps, including Instagram, Asphalt 9, and Uber, that are "overloading" the CPU, which in turn is causing the phones to run warmer than normal," the company informed.

Bhumi, Shehnaaz, Anil Kapoor and others at 'Thank You for Coming' screening

The screening of 'Thank You for Coming' took place on October 3. It was a glitzy event with many famous celebrities, ranging from the movie's lead actors to numerous other well-known figures from the entertainment world.



The screening for 'Thank You for Coming' was held on October 3. The makers of the film hosted a grand and star-studded event in Mumbai. The film features Bhumi Pednekar, Shehnaaz Gill, Dolly Singh, Kusha Kapila, Shibani Bedi, Karan Kundrra, Anil Kapoor and many more. Directed by Karan Boolani, 'Thank You for Coming' will release on October 6. Take a look at the stars who

attended the event: It was a night of celebration as the stars of 'Thank You for Coming' graced the red carpet with their presence. Kusha Kapila, Shehnaaz Gill, Bhumi Pednekar, Dolly Singh and Shibani Bedi looked absolutely gorgeous for the night. Karan Kundrra, Anil Kapoor and the veteran actor Jeetendra were also seen at the screening of the film. Anil Kapoor will also be seen in a cameo appearance in 'Thank You

for Coming' as well. The entire cast later on posed together and they were joined by Jeetendra, Jackie Shroff, Sonam Kapoor and Rhea Kapoor. Bhumi Pednekar's co-star in 'Badhaai Do', Rajkumar Rao, was also seen at the event. He was accompanied by his wife, Patralekha. Anil Kapoor was seen alongside his fellow 'Night Manager' actor Aditya Roy Kapur and Kartik Aaryan, all dressed in

relaxed and casual attire. Fatima Sana Sheikh, known for her role in 'Dangal,' graced the screening event in a striking halter neck dress featuring a stylish slit, showcasing her impressive fashion sense. Sanya Malhotra, who made an appearance in the movie 'Jawan' alongside Shah Rukh Khan, was also seen attending the screening event. Singer-rapper Guru Randhawa and Shehnaaz Gill

posed together. The photos and videos of the duo have become the talk of the town now. Khushi Kapoor, set to embark on her acting journey with 'The Archies,' was photographed alongside her father, renowned filmmaker Boney Kapoor. Anil Kapoor graced the red carpet alongside his daughter, actress Sonam Kapoor, his son-in-law Anand Ahuja, as well as Jackie Shroff.

Ayan Mukerji to bring Salman, SRK & Hrithik together for the first time in 'War 2'

The YRF spy universe is perhaps the most awaited. The universe will feature some of the biggest names in the industry including the likes of Shah Rukh Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Salman Khan, Deepika Padukone, Katrina Kaif, Kiara Advani, NTR Jr, among others. Now, in an exclusive scoop, IndiaToday.in has learnt that Ayan Mukerji will commence shooting for 'War 2' this October. 'WAR 2' TO BEGIN SHOOT

A source informed us, "The muharat for 'War 2' has already happened. Ayan is looking at starting shooting for the film this month itself. While Hrithik is currently in Italy for 'Fighter,' he will soon return to commence shooting for 'War 2'. In the meantime, shooting with NTR Jr might begin. Kiara Advani has also been locked as the female lead for the action-thriller."

EPIC TIGER X PATHAAN X KABIR



UNION

The source added, "The film is exciting for several reasons but also because Ayan's directorial will be the first film in the YRF spy universe to bring the three megastars together. The epic Tiger X Pathaan X Kabir

union onscreen will happen in 'War 2'." Meanwhile, reports suggest that Salman as Tiger will be introducing NTR Jr into the universe. However, there is no confirmation about the same as yet. Meanwhile, 'War 2' might look at a release date next year or

early 2025. The studio is not leaving any stone unturned to ensure that they up their game with their last releases. 'Pathaan' is one of the highest earning Hindi films for YRF this year. It crossed Rs 1000 crore landmark earnings worldwide.

Aamir Khan teams up with Sunny Deol, Rajkumar Santoshi for 'Lahore, 1947'

Aamir Khan's production house has announced a new film. Titled 'Lahore, 1947', it will star Sunny Deol in the lead and will be helmed by Rajkumar Santoshi.



Have you been waiting to see Sunny Deol more on screen after the recent success of 'Gadar 2'? Well, we have a good news for fans. The actor has been roped in 'Lahore, 1947'. It will be directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and produced under the banner of Aamir Khan Productions. Interestingly, this film will also mark Aamir Khan Productions' (AKP) 17th production under their banner. SUNNY DEOL, RAJKUMAR SANTOSHI AND AAMIR KHAN TEAM UP FOR 'LAHORE, 1947' Aamir Khan will take on the mantle of producer under Aamir Khan Productions, while the accomplished director Rajkumar

Santoshi will helm the project. Leading the film as the main actor will be Sunny Deol. With this formidable trio of Sunny, Aamir and Santoshi, the film has already raised expectations. The note shared by Aamir Khan Productions on their social media platforms read, "I, and the entire team at AKP, are most excited and happy to announce our next, starring Sunny Deol, directed by Raj Kumar Santoshi, titled Lahore, 1947. We look forward to collaborating with the immensely talented Sunny, and one of my favourite directors, Raj Santoshi. The journey we have embarked on promises to be most enriching. We seek your blessings. (sic)" Rajkumar Santoshi and

Sunny Deol have previously delivered three box office hits together with 'Ghayal', 'Damini', and 'Ghatak'. Given this impressive track record, it's only natural to anticipate that their upcoming project will be nothing short of epic. 'Lahore, 1947' also marks the reunion of Aamir Khan and Santoshi after their iconic cult classic, 'Andaz Apna Apna'. Rajkumar Santoshi and Sunny Deol have previously delivered three box office hits together with 'Ghayal', 'Damini', and 'Ghatak'. Given this impressive track record, it's only natural to anticipate that their upcoming project will be nothing short of epic.

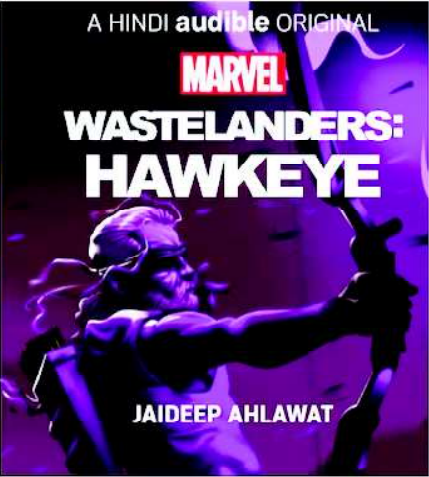
Imtiaz Ali on 'Jab We Met 2': If it is happening..



With a rich filmography that comprises projects such as 'Socha Na Tha', 'Highway', 'Jab We Met', 'Tamasha', and others, Imtiaz Ali is one of the most celebrated filmmakers in the industry. Currently, he is judging National Geographic's photography reality show, 'NoFilter By IndiGo'. This is around the same time 'Jab We Met 2' rumours are at its peak. IndiaToday.in exclusively asked Imtiaz if there's any truth to the matter. He also spoke about how he deals with criticisms that come his way. 'I DON'T KNOW IF 'JAB WE MET 2' IS HAPPENING' We asked Imtiaz Ali about reports buzzing all over about 'Jab We Met 2'. He told us, "I have also read these reports, but nobody asked them before printing, so I don't know." When asked whether it's not happening altogether, Imtiaz told us, "I don't know about it. Really, I have no idea. If it is happening, I don't know." "I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER I AM EVEN SET APART OR NOT" Imtiaz Ali has a rich career graph with films such as 'Socha Na Tha', 'Highway', 'Jab We Met', 'Tamasha' and many more. We asked him what, according to him, sets him apart. He shared, "I have no idea. I am compelled to tell the stories that come to my mind and the first audience member is me, myself. I'm primarily also entertaining myself by making these films. I have no idea whether I am even set apart or not. But, my sense of enjoyment comes from participating in life, seeing people around me, imagining what is beyond what I can see in them and putting that into the picture. So, for me, making movies is a continuation of life. And it also helps me live life better. What sets me apart, I don't know."

'Marvel's Wastelanders': Jaideep Ahlawat reacts to playing the new Hawkeye

Jaideep Ahlawat, who was recently seen in 'Jaane Jaan', is back, but in a different avatar. The actor will next be a part of 'Marvel's Wastelanders', where he will be voicing Hawkeye, for the Hindi version. JAIDEEP AHLAWAT'S STEPS INTO THE SHOES OF HAWKEYE After being praised for his acting in the recently released 'Jaane Jaan', Jaideep Ahlawat is back in another avatar. This time the actor will be lending his voice to the archer-superhero, Hawkeye, in the audio podcast 'Marvel's



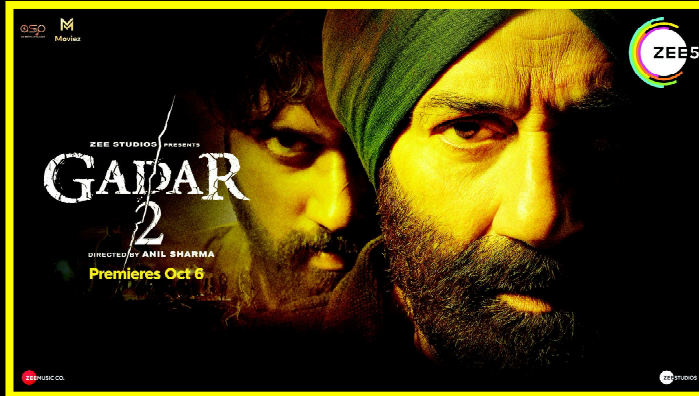
'Wastelanders'. This series is set in the Marvel Universe. Jaideep's casting as the voice of Hawkeye has generated considerable excitement among fans. After venturing into the world of audio-books and voice acting, the actor said, "Marvel's Wastelanders: Hawkeye on Audible is an inspiring story that humanises the iconic superhero. Portraying Hawkeye has been a rewarding journey for me because of the remarkable strength and resilience he showcases in the face of adversity."

ZEE5 Global announces the World Digital Premiere of the biggest Hindi blockbuster of the year, 'Gadar 2' starring Sunny Deol and Ameesha Patel

Produced by Zee Studios and directed by Anil Sharma, *Gadar 2* will premiere on ZEE5 Global from 6th October 2023

Global, 4th October 2023: ZEE5 Global, the world's largest streaming platform for South Asian content, announces the world digital premiere of the biggest Hindi blockbuster of the year, 'Gadar 2' today. After a successful theatrical run collecting 63M USD in India and still counting, *Gadar 2* is set for another successful innings on ZEE5 Global on 6th October. Produced by Zee Studios and directed by Anil Sharma, the superhit sequel to the 2001 hit 'Gadar' will see Sunny Deol, Ameesha Patel and Utkarsh Sharma reprise their roles as Tara Singh, Sakeena and Charanjeet "Jeete" Singh respectively.

Gadar 2 brings back India's most loved family of Tara, Sakeena & Jeete; 22 years after its predecessor. Set against the backdrop of Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, Tara Singh, once again, will face every enemy to protect the honor of his country and family. This time, the narrative will delve deeper into the enduring love of Tara Singh and Sakeena and additionally, will see a strong father-son bond between Tara Singh and Charanjeet as the latter lands in Pakistan and ends up being caught and tortured. While the last time, Tara Singh visited Pakistan to get his wife



back, this time, he will return to rescue his son. So, gear up for bigger, better and bolder action sequences from Sunny Deol and a repeat of his most popular dialogue "Hindustan zindabad tha, zindabad hai aur zindabad rahega" which will continue to echo in every Hindustani's heart for a long time. The movie will also see Sunny Deol reprise his famous handpump scene and sing and dance to the original chartbusters (from the 2001 film) like 'Udd Jaa Kaale Kaava', 'Main Nikla Gaddi Leke' and recreate the same magic from 2001.

Archana Anand, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 Global said, "Bollywood blockbusters have always transcended geographical boundaries and resonated with global viewers through their powerful and emotionally charged stories. With the World Digital Premiere of *Gadar 2*, ZEE5 Global is thrilled to present our global viewers with the sequel to one of Hindi cinema's all-time blockbuster hits that has captivated audiences for over 22 years".

Shariq Patel, CBO, Zee Studios said, "*Gadar 2* brought back India's most loved

family of Tara Singh, Sakeena and Jeete; 22 years after its predecessor. Hindustan Ka Asli Blockbuster will make history once more with its digital premiere on ZEE5 Global".

Sunny Deol said, "We are absolutely delighted with the overwhelming response that 'Gadar 2' has received in theatres. Now with its World Digital Premiere on ZEE5 Global, I am very excited for the movie to reach a wider, global audience. *Gadar 2* is a perfect family entertainer which will keep the viewers completely engaged and entertained. I urge everyone to watch it if you haven't already and watch it again if you have".

Ameesha Patel said, "Sakeena is a character who has stayed with me throughout my career, and I was so excited to revisit her in 'Gadar 2.' The chemistry between Tara and Sakeena is timeless, and the sequel reignites that magic for our fans. ZEE5 Global's platform allows us to connect with a global audience, and I'm thrilled that viewers from around the world will have the opportunity to witness this epic love story, all over again but with more twists and action".

Taylor Swift loans Sophie Turner, kids her apartment amid legal battle with Joe

Sophie Turner and Joe Jonas are going through an ugly divorce battle. Amid this, Taylor Swift, who is a good friend of Sophie, has loaned her New York apartment to the actress and her kids. Sophie Turner and Joe Jonas are now heading for a divorce. The duo, who got married four years ago, are also engaged in a legal battle over the custody of their kids. Sophie sued Joe alleging that he was holding their kids' passports with him. The actress had earlier filed a lawsuit against him for refusing their daughters' return to England, her native country. Joe even shared a long statement later clarifying it. Amid this drama, Taylor Swift has been by her friend, Sophie's side. She has reportedly lent her plush New York apartment to the actress and her kids. TAYLOR SWIFT LENDS HER

APARTMENT TO SOPHIE TURNER Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner recently confirmed their separation with a joint statement on Instagram. Joe and Sophie have two children - three-year-old Willa and another 14-month-old daughter. Taylor Swift has been a rock solid support to Sophie Turner in her hard times. She is keeping her entertained and was even seen taking Sophie out for dinner a few days ago. According to Page Six reports now, Taylor Swift has even loaned Turner her stunning apartment in New York City neighborhood. The actress and her children can live there while Turner and Jonas get their complex custody arrangements ironed out. Taylor keeps a Tribeca pad as an



investment property, but has handed the keys to the 'Game of Thrones' star as a temporary home. Page Six further reports that Turner has been spotted settling into the famously chic hood. She was also seen checking out some of the local food spots there.

JOE-SOPHIE SHARE STATEMENT TO ANNOUNCE SEPARATION

The duo took to social media to issue their joint statement that read: "After four

wonderful years of marriage, we have mutually decided to amicably end our marriage. There are many speculative narratives as to why but, truly this is a united decision."

They also expressed their desire for privacy, particularly for the sake of their young daughter, stating, "We sincerely hope that everyone can respect our wishes for privacy for us and our children."

TASVEER FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS ITS 18TH EDITION LINEUP, BRIDGING CULTURES AND BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH FILM

Celebrating diversity and innovation, TSAFF 2023 named as the only South Asian film festival eligible for Oscars

SEATTLE, WA, September 28, 2023 – Tasveer South Asian Film Festival (TSAFF) is gearing up for its 18th edition from October 12 to 22, 2023, across multiple venues in Seattle, WA. This year, TSAFF achieves a momentous milestone as the first and only South Asian film festival whose winning films will qualify for submission to the esteemed Oscars. The significance of a South Asian film festival qualifying for the Oscars illustrates the importance of representation and inclusivity in media as it challenges historically limited narratives and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

With the theme of "Breaking Cinematic Barriers," this year's lineup unveils an impressive collection of 83 selected films spanning diverse genres and captivating themes. The carefully curated selection includes 23 features, 60 shorts, 20 documentaries, and 63 narratives; 25 World Premieres, 36 North America Premiere, with 33 Female identified directors. These



films, presented in 26 languages, promise an unparalleled global cinematic journey reflecting the rich tapestry of South Asian stories.

Tasveer co-founder Rita Meher expressed her pride in the festival: "As the only Oscar-qualifying South Asian festival, we are committed to presenting a program of

unparalleled depth and significance. Our festival winners can directly compete in the Academy Awards run, allowing authentic South Asian narratives to shine on the grandest stage, unfiltered and unmediated." The 18th Annual Tasveer Festival kicks off with in-person screenings from October 12th to 15th at premier

venues, including the Paccar IMAX Theater at Pacific Science Center. The festival will continue in a virtual format on TasveerTV from October 16th to 22nd, offering audiences the flexibility to engage with the content from the comfort of their homes.

Film + Event Highlights:
Opening Night Film: The opening night will feature the gripping drama of "Munnel (Sand in Tamil)" from Sri Lanka. The film skillfully weaves together themes of love, loss, faith, and desperation that immerse us in the post-war landscape of Sri Lanka, where Rudran, an ex-Tamil militant, returns home in search of his vanished lover, Vaani. The film won a jury award at the 2023 International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).
Centerpiece: "Pasang: In the Shadow of Everest" presents an inspiring tale from Nepal, chronicling the remarkable journey of mountaineer Pasang Lhamu Sherpa as she challenges racism, gender bias, and political opposition to become the first Nepali woman to conquer Mount Everest.

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Gandhi Jayanti: How Mohandas Became Mahatma

Santosh Chaubey

Every ordinary individual possesses the capacity to achieve remarkable feats, provided they discover how to tap into their inherent potential and let their creative energy flow freely. Few individuals symbolise this fundamental truth about human excellence better than Mahatma Gandhi, also known as 'Bapu' or the 'Father of the Nation' in India, born as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Bapu's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, is a blend of simplicity and boldness that puts into perspective how a young man excelled in life and became one of the greatest political and spiritual leaders the world had ever seen and will ever see.

In childhood, Mohandas was much like any of us, engaging in typical pursuits of a boy. However, what set him apart from most of his peers was the spirit of experimentation that began to germinate during his teenage years.

His autobiography indicates this. "My own recollection is that I had not any high regard for my ability. I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from my eyes. When I merited, or seemed to the teacher to merit, a rebuke, it was unbearable for me. I remember having once received corporal punishment. I did not so much



mind the punishment as the fact that it was considered my desert. I wept piteously. That was when I was in the first or second standard." That nature to guard his character slowly started transforming the schoolboy. He aspired to be a caring and disciplined student and son. When in Class 7, he was once accused of lying when he missed the gymnastics training session. He had no watch, and as it was a cloudy day, he miscalculated the time and reached the training session late when all others had left, and he was thus marked absent.

"I was convicted of lying! That deeply pained me. How was I to prove my innocence? There was no way. I cried in deep anguish. I saw that a man of truth must also be a man of care. This was the first and last instance of my carelessness in school."

He was married when he was 13 and left for England when he was 18 to study law. His time in England and South

Africa served as successive testing grounds where he explored the impact of his thoughts, education, and upbringing on his personal identity. As mentioned earlier, he was acutely



aware of his own persona, a self-awareness, and a time away from home, in a different country that ruled us and a professional education, ultimately gave birth to a formidable ideology rooted in non-

remained beyond reproach and should forever remain unquestionable. Remarkably, even his staunchest adversaries found him endearing on a personal level. Gandhi acknowledged his mistakes, often in a straightforward manner. He might have made errors as many critics suggest, but his positive contributions, progressive ideology, and innovative methods to achieve his goals overshadowed any negatives on his record and surpassed the achievements of many others. As the saying goes, to prove a point, you must draw a line larger than the existing one, and Gandhi did so with remarkable



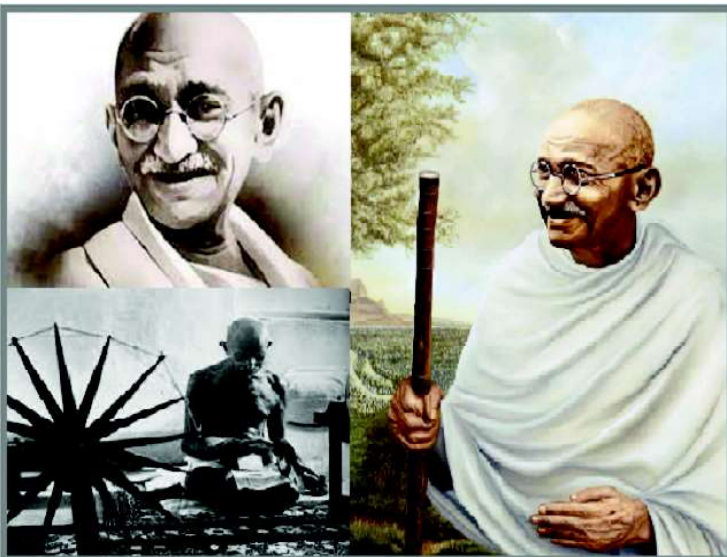
He aligned his goals with those of ordinary Indians. He truly became one of them, striving to embody their essence and succeeding in becoming the embodiment of their thoughts.

From being a Gandhi from Porbandar, his acts of being an altruist and caring one for all the needy in society gradually transformed him into the Mahatma of the masses. Propagation of non-violence to achieve freedom from the colonial rule – no one before the Mahatma had ever spoken about it – and its success in South Africa made him the political leader the colonial India was waiting for. What India of the day got was a mistakes or spiritually visionary as well. Bapu seemed to be following Gautam Buddha in his thoughts and Satyagraha was the core of his non-violent

political ideology. It means 'holding onto truth'. Hunger strikes or observing fasts as a tool to achieve goals on the path of Indian freedom was a symbol of his commitment to ordinary Indians and to the country. Sacrificing your life and its energy to force others to think positively to help and free the common man, no other political leader in the world has done so before Bapu. It gradually converted the young lawyer turned freedom fighter into Mahatma.

Bapu's 1918 fast was for common, poor Indians. Bapu observed four days of fasting in support of poor workers of textile mills in Ahmedabad. Workers were demanding a 35% wage hike, but owners were not ready to go beyond 20% and declared a lockout. After some workers returned to work accepting a 20% raise, Bapu decided to go on fasting until the 35% raise demand was accepted. It encouraged not only the protesting workers but also those who had broken ranks; they returned too. The mill owners then had no option but to accept the 35% wage hike demand. Since then, until 1948, Bapu observed around 16 fasts in India, with four fasts unto death. In 1947 and 1948, when India got independence and Pakistan was carved out of its geographical territory resulting in widespread religious violence, Bapu observed fasts unto death for communal harmony. Rabindranath Tagore called him Mahatma for the first time in 1915.

Bapu's philosophy, the Gandhian way of life, has not only deeply influenced India but has also left an indelible mark on many parts of the world. Rarely in history has a single individual's philosophy become such a significant force in socio-political thinking. In the annals of contemporary world history, he stands unmatched, alongside the revered spiritual sage Swami Vivekananda, another experimental soul who became a beacon of thought.



Caste Count A Turning Point In Indian Politics, Just Before 2024

By Bharti Mishra Nath

The Bihar government's caste survey report, released on October 2, has opened the floodgates for caste reconfigurations and realignments in the country. The survey, timed just six months before the Lok Sabha elections, will have wider ramifications for political parties at the national and state levels. There is a clamour for similar exercises in other states, with regional parties believing it will only benefit them.

At the recent meeting in Mumbai, the opposition INDIA bloc had already called for a caste census in the country. With this masterstroke, Nitish Kumar and Lalu Yadav - the veterans of caste engineering - have set the agenda for political parties. The country may witness a second Mandal-Mandir political match in the run up to next year's national election.

The caste-based survey, also known as the Bihar Jaati Adharit Ganana, was launched by the Nitish Kumar-led government in January. Its aim was to improve the lot of backward communities and ensure better implementation of welfare schemes. In the caste and community-based vote bank politics of Bihar, an overall statistics of the state's caste demographics would certainly influence the ruling coalition's strategies and policies, particularly linked to social



justice and welfare. In fact, there are no surprises in the survey. The caste break-up shows that Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes form 84 per cent of the electorate. Upper castes, with a 10.5 per cent share in the population, will have no major impact on the math. The Muslim (17.7 per cent) -Yadav (14.26 per cent) combination will call the shots, with 32 per cent of the votes. Muslims have been voting as one homogenous bloc for INDIA parties until now. The EBC population of 36 per cent (including more than 100 castes, including Nitish Kumar's) has always oscillated between the BJP and the

opposition. The caste survey is bound to trigger spinoffs in other states. The demands for a caste census are focused on proving that the OBC population far exceeds the 27 per cent reservation limit and that urgent correction is due. There is also a call for enhancing the quota beyond the 50 per cent cap suggested by the Supreme Court. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party's new opposition formula "PDA" - pichhde (Backward), Dalit, alpasankhyak (Minority) - is central to its strategy for 2024. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party and the BJP-led NDA's alliance partners, the Nishad Party and OP Rajbhar's Suheldev

Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), are all for a caste census. The Congress has promised a survey in Madhya Pradesh if it comes to power later this year.

The Maharashtra, Odisha and Jharkhand assemblies have already endorsed the demand for caste surveys. Down South, Karnataka and Telangana have completed similar surveys and but have not revealed the data. Only Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress opposed the census. However, in the emerging scenario, it may not be long before Mamata Banerjee revises her stand.

The Congress has realised the importance of bringing its OBC leaders to prominence (Siddaramaiah in Karnataka, Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan). However, it is yet to do that in the northern Hindi belt states like Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In the last decade, the BJP has demonstrated to its rivals how Mandal and Kamandal could be a formula for electoral success. The party has also projected Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the face of the OBC in national politics (DON'T THINK IT IS SUBTLE). At the same time, it is no secret that the BJP continues to find the task of balancing its traditional upper caste support base and its recent success in reeling in OBCs, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Study finds more people are moving into high flood zones, increasing risk of water disasters

By SETH BORENSTEIN

Far more people are in harm's way as they move into high flood zones across the globe, adding to an increase in watery disasters from climate change, a new study said.

Since 1985, the number of the world's settlements in the riskiest flood zones has increased 122%, compared to 80% for the safest areas, according to a study in Wednesday's journal Nature by researchers at The World Bank. The authors looked at settlement extent and expansion using satellites instead of population, with the world's built-up regions growing 85% overall from 1985 to 2015.

"People are on a search for better lives and better jobs and



then sort of get stuck in bad lands because that's what they can afford," said study co-author Stephane Hallegatte, a World Bank senior climate adviser and expert on disaster economics. He said they know it's dangerous when they arrive.

The problem is driven by middle- and low-income countries, the study found. Richer countries like the United States and parts

of Europe are seeing more growth in safer areas than flood-prone ones and the poorest nations haven't quite developed as heavily in flood-prone areas, it said.

China and Vietnam both saw their settlement extent more than tripling in the past 30 years, increasing far more than their dry land areas. Most countries, especially in East Asia, saw

more settlements in regular flood zones and ultra high flood zones than in dry areas. Libya, which suffered from devastating flooding last month, had an 83% increase in settlement extent in the worst flood zones. Pakistan, also the victim of catastrophic flooding both last year and this year, had an 89% increase.

What's happening is that as a nation grows a bit wealthier there's a change from rural to urban and people leave the country to go to cities, which are often near waterways that flood in places, said study lead author Jun Rentschler, a World Bank economist.

"What we're trying to do with the study is to track the process of urban development over time," Rentschler said. "What you would expect is that initially you settle in a safe space, but as

the city expands, it's more likely to grow into areas that it previously avoided, flood zones for instance."

Then comes the issue of is it cheaper to fortify these dangerous areas or better to move people out, the study authors said. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, is a poster city for this problem, they said. It boomed from a fishing village of about 83,000 people in 1950 to more than 7 million people now, according to World Population Review.

On the other hand, the United States saw dry settlements increase 76% and the highest flood settlements go up only 46%. Other countries with more dry settlements than ultra-wet include France, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Japan, Canada and India.

Mumbai slums | Not much to dwell on

With an eye on the polls, the Maharashtra government announces several steps for those covered under Mumbai's slum redevelopment projects. But stalled projects and an alleged pro-builder bias are undoing any good intent

By Dhaval S. Kulkarni

With the Lok Sabha and state assembly polls in 2024 drawing near, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government in Maharashtra is going all-out to woo the powerful slum-dweller vote bank in Mumbai. The state government has decided to allot apartments in slum redevelopment schemes at Rs 2.5 lakh to residents of shanties that have

come up between 2000 and 2011. It is estimated that this will cover around 1.6-1.8 million people as their slums are redeveloped in the coming years. Slum-dwellers whose houses were constructed before 2000 are legally protected and eligible for free housing. Many are housed in 300 square feet flats under Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) projects.

In 2018, the BJP-Sena coalition under Devendra Fadnis decided to rehabilitate and grant houses to residents of shanties built between January 1, 2000 and January 1, 2011 at an appropriate cost. In May 2023, a government resolution was issued, fixing the price of a tenement at Rs 2.5 lakh. Sources from the Maharashtra state housing department say that, initially, the plan was to charge residents on the basis of the cost of construction. But since this would work out to Rs 8 lakh-Rs 12 lakh for a 300 sq. ft house in a highrise, it was fixed at Rs 2.5 lakh. The state cabinet has also approved a decision to reduce the lock-in period for the sale of free SRA rehabilitation tenements from 10 to seven years; a bill is expected to be tabled in the legislature soon. This means that individuals who have been given flats free of cost can sell them after seven years. SRA officials admit that despite the lock-in period, beneficiaries continued to sell flats or clandestinely create third-party rights. In 2021, a survey of 86,429 tenements by the SRA found that 10,983 were occupied by unauthorised entities. The state government



has also approved in principle a policy of covering residents on the first floor of chawls located in slums under SRA schemes. At present, only those on the ground floor are eligible for rehabilitation. Officials say this policy will apply to around 2,000 chawls built before January 1, 1976, housing an estimated 18,000 residents, largely in Mumbai's western and eastern suburbs such as Malad, Kanjurmarg, Ghatkopar and Bhandup. "Since these first-floor residents were not covered under SRA norms, thousands were rendered homeless," says Gopal Shetty, the BJP MP from North Mumbai who had taken up the issue with the government. "Builders paid them modest amounts like Rs 10 lakh, and they would shift to far-off places like Vasai, Virar and Nalasopara."

The state housing department is also working on a policy to allow government agencies like the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) or the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) launch or complete work on stalled SRA projects where private developers have shown little interest. Bombay's slums are as old as modern-day Mumbai. They began sprouting since the beginning of the 20th century, with the arrival of thousands of economic migrants from across Maharashtra and India. Gradually, informal settlements like Dharavi or the Matunga labour camp took the shape of today's slums. The city has 2,583 slum clusters, with around

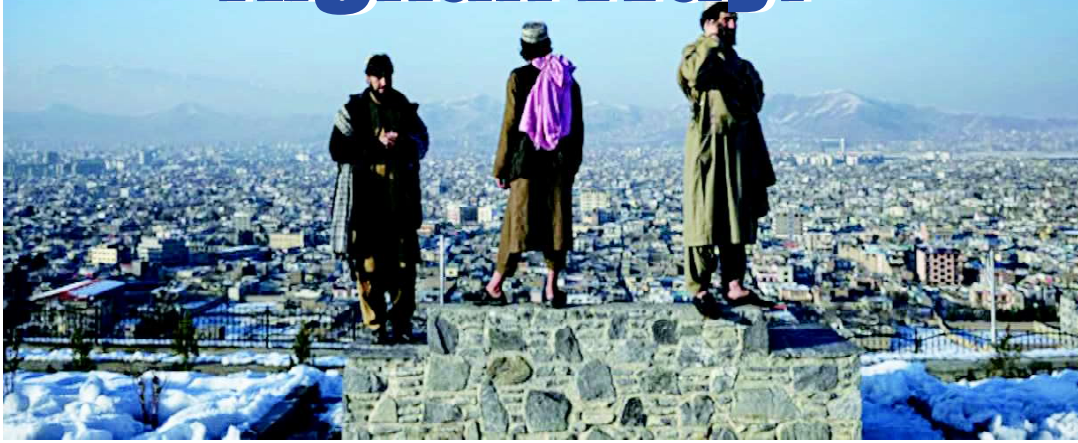
1.2 million structures. Today, of Mumbai's 34,000-acre approximate area, around 8,333.5 acres, or 24 per cent, is covered by slums. An estimated 48.4 per cent of Mumbai's 124 million population (as per the 2011 census) lives in these densely-populated areas. Importantly, slum-dwellers are enthusiastic voters. Till the '70s, slums were considered illegal, and many were demolished. In 1971, the Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement Clearance and Redevelopment) Act was passed, and basic amenities like sanitation and water were provided. In the '90s, a committee under senior IAS officer Dinesh Afzalpurkar recommended the use of land as a resource to tackle the problem of burgeoning slums. The government accepted it in 1995 and the SRA was created. Under its schemes, builders can redevelop slums into tenement buildings to house slum-dwellers. In return, they can develop part of the land for sale in the market. Over the years, the size of rehabilitation tenements grew from 180 sq. ft to 225 sq. ft, 269 sq. ft and now, 300 sq. ft; the cut-off date for legalised slums has been pushed back from 1995 to 2000. Some 253,421 tenements constructed under SRA projects have been given occupation certificates by July end. However, officials say that the goal of a slum-free Mumbai, with residents being housed in highrises, is a long way off. A senior SRA official says that around 380 slum rehabilitation

schemes have been stuck for years due to lack of clearance from the Union defence and environment, forests and climate change ministries, the Civil Aviation Authority and due to legal/ financial issues. Work on 517 schemes approved since 2008-09 is yet to begin. To kickstart stalled projects, the SRA has empaneled around 30 developers, who will bid for tenders floated by the authority. In another option, financial institutions that have invested in stalled SRA projects will be empaneled and can appoint a new developer to complete work. So far, of the 380 pending projects, 161 have been revived. "We are working to give an impetus to stalled projects and ensure they are implemented efficiently," says Satish Lokhande, chief executive officer, SRA. In around 150 SRA schemes, developers have defaulted on paying around Rs 602 crore as rent to slum-dwellers who are in transit accommodation while their houses are being redeveloped. In August, the SRA issued a circular mandating that developers must pay two years' rent in advance and submit post-dated cheques for another year. "Several SRA projects have been languishing for 10-15 years," says Krishna Hegde, deputy leader and spokesperson of the Shinde-led Sena. "Residents evicted are yet to get houses and are living in dilapidated transit accommodation...the government is looking into the matter." "Pro-builder scheme" Critics point to how the SRA scheme, instead of catalysing

urban renewal, is heavily tilted in favour of private builders. "It is a pro-builder scheme," alleges Ramesh Prabhu, chairman, Maharashtra Societies Welfare Association. "Builders are also responsible for creating slums." Builders, developers, politicians, babus have become richer in the name of the poor." He points to how successive governments increased the size of SRA tenements and hiked cut-off years for legalising slums, which served to encourage people to create new slums and nurture vote banks. Sitaram Shelar, co-convenor, Hamara Shaher Mumbai Abhiyan, agrees. "The land belongs to the government, which bears the cost, but it is the builder who benefits. The utilisation of land is more towards the resale component, at around 60-65 per cent, with residents housed in the rest. This ensures that SRA tenements are a vertical version of slums with no gardens, open spaces or facilities that slum-dwellers can access," he explains.

Shelar complains about the faulty attitude of policymakers towards slums. "Slums are not a problem," he says, "but a source of energy for the city. They provide labour to it." As a remedy, Shelar proposes that the size of flats for slum-dwellers be hiked to 350 sq. ft, and an increase in the share of housing be given to government agencies such as the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA) to put up those uprooted by Mumbai's infrastructure projects. Former minister Varsha Gaikwad of the Congress says that SRA schemes must be pro-people, not pro-builder. "Decisions should not be taken from the comfort of air-conditioned cabins but must take ground realities into account," she stresses. Varun Singh, founder, Square Feet India, a real estate news website, says that the government must ensure that slum-dwellers do not get multiple houses.

Which Way Is The Afghan Way?



By Maha Siddiqui

India's Afghanistan conundrum
India had to deal with a seemingly contradictory situation regarding Afghanistan last week. While the Afghan embassy in New Delhi put out a message on social media saying they were shutting down due to lack of cooperation from the Indian government, India's representative was part of the Kazan Declaration at the fifth meeting of the Moscow Format Consultations where nine countries and four guests of honour engaged with the Taliban leadership. The Afghan embassy in India has been at sea since the Taliban takeover in 2021. The diplomats and staff engaged by the

former Ashraf Ghani government were lost about their status with a new Taliban dispensation in Kabul, which had no recognition from any country including India. However, it became clear in less than a year after the Taliban takeover that India would take a different approach towards the regime this time, as opposed to New Delhi's stand on Taliban's earlier regime in 1996-2001. After an overnight operation to remove all its personnel from Kabul in August 2021, India said in June 2022 that a "technical team" would be based in Kabul, in what was seen as the reopening of the embassy in the Afghan capital. The move came a week after India's senior diplomat dealing with the region (Pakistan,

Afghanistan and Iran) JP Singh travelled to Kabul and met with acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mottaqi. India and the Moscow Format Consultation
Feeling left out of the loop as the US troops suddenly withdrew from Afghanistan in a chaotic and hurried manner, India had to rely largely on Russia to avoid being blackballed in its own region. The Russian National Security Advisor, Nikolai Patrushev, travelled to India twice within a span of a few months to engage with Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. India continued to be part of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan that started in 2017 as a six-party discussion

with special representatives of Russia, Afghanistan, India, Iran, China and Pakistan. However, since the Taliban takeover in 2021, the meeting last week in the Russian city of Kazan was the first time that a Taliban representative - Foreign Minister Mottaqi - joined the meeting. The Kazan Declaration spoke of the security situation, "appreciated the current Afghan authorities for their serious fight against ISIS" and "called on the current Afghan authorities to take effective measures to dismantle, eliminate and prevent placement of all sorts of terrorist groups based in Afghanistan." It also mentioned the reduction in poppy cultivation and the need for cooperation to fight against the threats of terrorism and drug-trafficking emanating from the Afghan territory. The declaration "regretfully stated that there had been no progress in forming a truly inclusive government in Afghanistan, reflecting the interests of all ethno-political groups of the country". The Russian Presidential envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, told the media - as reported by Middle East Monitor - that Moscow expected additional measures by Kabul to have an all-inclusive government as it could form the basis for official recognition of the new Afghan leadership. No voice for women
Even though countries are coming forward to engage with the Taliban, there is, so far, little pressure on the Taliban to be fair to the women of their society. The Kazan declaration expressed concern about the restrictions on women's employment and education. The declaration urged the Taliban "to promote the modern education in the schools conforming to international standards".

Mahadev App Scam: Here's All About The Case And Why Ranbir Kapoor Is Under ED Scanner

The online application enrolled new users and allegedly laundered money through a layered web of Benami bank accounts. The games, the lotteries and betting options allegedly were all rigged where the 'players' always lost money and the company gained. Chandrakar's company allegedly gained around Rs 5,000 crore through the scam. Owners of the Mahadev online betting app are suspected to have links in Pakistan apart from association with local businessmen and hawala operations, Enforcement Directorate sources told News18. WHAT DOES ED INVESTIGATION SAY?
An investigation into 28-year-old Sourabh Chandrakar was prompted by his lavish Rs 250-



crore wedding in the UAE, following which investigators stumbled upon the details of alleged hawala operations and their connections in the UAE and Pakistan. The ED has clubbed at least seven FIRs filed by the victims of the scam who lost their money. The FIRs were filed across locations, including Goa,

Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Ahmedabad and Chhattisgarh. Around eight major international hawala operators are under the scanner for laundering money to Middle Eastern countries and to Pakistan by running a similar portal. Chandrakar and his associates allegedly used at least 70 shell companies to launder money to

offshore accounts. The anti-money laundering agency is now exploring options to seek cooperation from international agencies to take legal action against the app owner, who is currently in the UAE. WHY ARE BOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES UNDER RADAR?
Several Bollywood celebrities, who attended or performed at Chandrakar's wedding in February this year and the company's success party in September last year, are under the ED scanner. "The celebrities accepted a huge amount of cash as remuneration for attending or performing at the wedding. The money is the proceeds of the crime and the celebrities are liable for taking the money. There are more than a dozen celebrities

who participated in the wedding and they are seen in the videos," a senior source in the ED told CNN-News18 earlier. The ED has already raided several premises related to hawala operators across cities in India and attached Rs 417 crore. During a recent raid in Mumbai, the ED also tracked seven hawala kingpins who allegedly laundered the money. "Each hawala operator handled more than 500 dummy accounts to launder money," a source told CNN-News 18. MODUS OPERANDI OF MAHADEV APP
The app platform, based out of the UAE, has call centres, which are routed through the Netherlands, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the UAE. When customers call this centre, they are asked to share details on a WhatsApp number.