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Donald Trump accepts Republican nomination for second term

“The Best is Yet To Come”

Trump paints Biden as a 'Radical' Candidate and a Danger to America



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NRIs production- Encrypted- The Cyber Crime English feature film has released on amazon prime US & UK this August.



Story on
Pages 05



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FRONT PAGE FEATURE

Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu interacts with Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker



Charlie Baker Governor of Massachusetts



Taranjit Singh Sandhu Ambassadors of India to the United States

recent policy developments in the education and technology landscape in India with Governor Baker. He highlighted the potential of mutually rewarding India-U.S. collaborations in the post COVID phase.

India and Massachusetts share a strong trade and investment partnership with historical roots dating back to the 18th century. Today, total merchandise trade between India and Massachusetts has grown to US\$ 729 million(2019). Also in recent years, about US\$ 873 million worth of Indian investments have created over 1350 jobs in Massachusetts. Prominent Indian companies present in Massachusetts are Datamatics, HCL, Infosys, TCS, Sun Pharma among others. Similarly, a number of Massachusetts origin companies in Energy, Financial Services, Defense and Technology sectors are present in India. Some notable names are General Electric, Raytheon

Ambassador of India to the United States, Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Governor of Massachusetts, Charlie Baker had a comprehensive discussion on the multi-faceted India-Massachusetts relationship today.

Ambassador Sandhu and Governor Baker's discussion covered areas of economic significance for both countries - including finance, higher education, healthcare, technology and innovation. Ambassador Sandhu shared the

Technologies, Liberty Mutual Insurance Group, Thermo Fisher Scientific among others. In their discussion, Ambassador Sandhu and Governor Baker underscored the importance of the vibrant Indian diaspora in the India-

Massachusetts relationship. Ambassador Sandhu shared that a large number of Indian professionals, academicians, and students have made Massachusetts their home. He said that they form a key part of Massachusetts's STEM

workforce and contribute to the state's innovation economy. Ambassador Sandhu and Governor Baker agreed to further build upon the synergies in the India-Massachusetts relationship for mutual growth and prosperity.

2020 is special for Indian-Americans in US politics

Donald Trump recently said he has "more Indians" than Kamala Harris, the Indian-descent Democratic nominee for vice-president. His campaign released a video of him with Narendra Modi at the "Howdy Modi" and "Namaste Trump" events, cheered by stadiums packed with Indians (and those of Indian descent). The Biden-Harris campaign was already on it, building on Harris' part-Indian heritage to further consolidate its hold on the Indian-American community that has traditionally voted Democratic, through outreaches headlined by top campaign officials. It also rolled out a two-pronged agenda for a Biden administration - one part dedicated to relations with India and the other to the welfare of Indian-Americans. It was an

unparalleled effort, and exhaustive in scope. Indian-Americans haven't felt so politically coddled - empowered, you can also say - before. "We have arrived, says some. Others call it the "coming of age." It's been a long journey, from the Luce-Celler Act of 1946 that allowed Indians to become naturalised Americans, clearing their way for politics. In 1956, Dalip Singh Saund, a California farmer-judge-politician, who helped organise that effort, was elected to the US House of Representatives, becoming the first Indian-American elected to the US congress. There are five now, including Harris, collectively called, by some, the "Samosa Caucus". Indian-Americans have also won an increasing number of state-level positions, including two

governorships. Year 2020 is more special. The community believes it can make a difference. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns agree. With an estimated 1.8 million eligible voters, Indian-Americans form a tinier than tiny part of the US electorate. But they look heftier because of their weighted equity in battleground - also called swing - states won or lost by slim margins in close contests. Just three of them swung it for Trump in 2016 - Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin; by 0.2, 0.7 and 0.8 percentage points respectively. Democrats are eyeing the 1.3 million Indian-Americans that live in eight states that they believe are in play this time: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - the above three - and Arizona, Texas, Florida, North

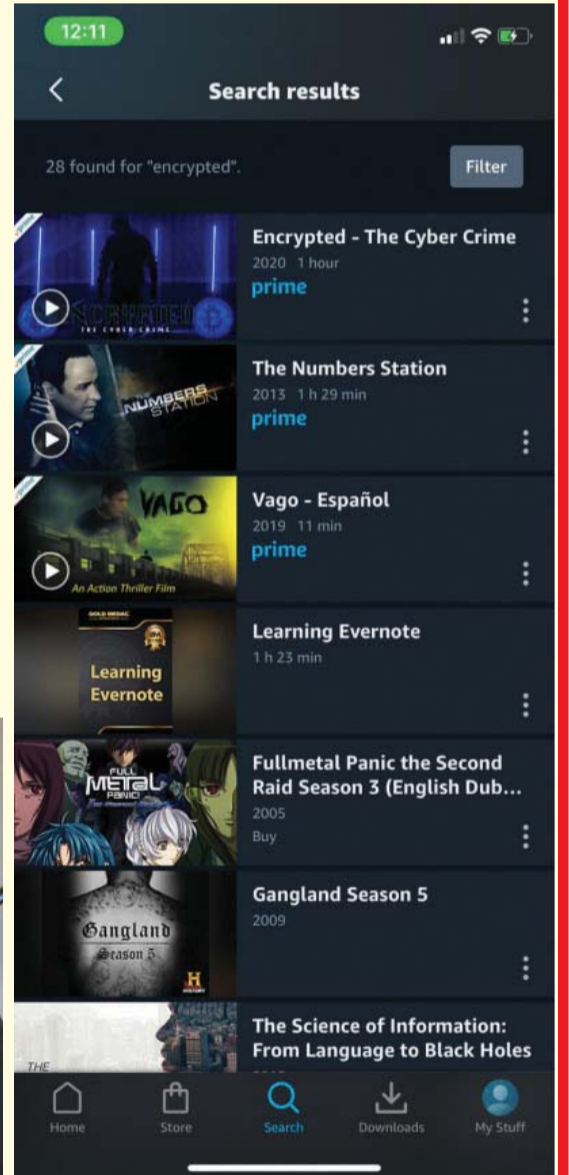


Carolina and Georgia. The Trump campaign is looking at Indian-Americans in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Florida. Indian-Americans have historically favoured Democrats. But only 50% of the registered

voters among them identified as Democrat, in a survey of Asian-American voters in the run-up to the 2018 mid-term elections; 18% identified themselves as Republicans; and the rest 32% were "non-identifiers".

SPECIAL FEATURE

NRIs production- Encrypted- The Cyber Crime English feature film has released on amazon prime US & UK this August.



By : Staff writer

Encrypted- The Cyber Crime! English feature film has been released on amazon prime USA & UK this 20th August. This is a suspense, high tech film based upon true life events. This film is also releasing on XUMO OTT platform worldwide next week through Shemaroo. Film is produced by NRILIFE Productions, Yeh Cheez & AB entertainment as joint venture with producers - Gunjan Kuthiala (badee out of NH) & Noman Khan (Based out of IL) & Director - Anand Bhatt (Based

out of Chicago). Gunjan & Noman have played lead actors in the film along with Shannon Lee, Basam Fattah, Priyank Thakkar, Simran Bal etc. Song by: Sanjeev Sharma & Background score by Sreenivas GS. Film has been shot in Chicago and is on most cutting edge subject of bit coins, fbi hacking & Cyber Security. Film has won award at cladeiscope film festival of Boston earlier & people have been giving good reviews to film on amazon prime lately. Upon conversation Gunjan Kuthiala (Producer, Actress) shared that this is their first feature film release

and their production platform goal is to bring authentic film making for NRI's in usa within the vicinity of their neighborhoods as for most NRIs its not feasible to quit everything & explore mumbai/ LA to pursue their creative aspirations. Producers are giving credit of their film success to the entire team & friends who stepped forward to support in its making journey. Film can be watched by all age groups and is appreciated a lot by kids as good geeky fun/comedy with suspense & some action plus very informative indeed.

OPINION

UNSC: A diplomatic 'two-front' war

India warded off the China-Pakistan game on Kashmir. But don't let the guard down



Stoking diplomatic deadwood in the hope that the embers may catch fire is a parlour game at the United Nations. One of our neighbours - Pakistan - has indulged in this for years. "The India-Pakistan Question", inscribed on the United Nations Security Council (SC)'s agenda on January 6, 1948, was last considered by SC on November 5, 1965. Yet, on the annual requests of Pakistan, the item has remained an inert part of the Council's formal agenda. These requests are followed by sundry communications, in a bid to stir

the pot. They are circulated and filed. No one is bothered. Then, in August 2019, following changes to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)'s special status provided in the Indian Constitution, China weighed in favour of its "iron brother" and initiated what was akin to a diplomatic "two-front war".

Using its perch on the Council, China took over the driver's seat of this venture. Since China did not have the requisite majority to call for a formal meeting, it requested an informal consultation. China proposed a draft outcome statement and

lobbied for support. The tussle was transformed into one between a Permanent Member of the Council - China; and a non-member of the Council - India. Pakistan was the cat's paw in the equation.

The duo threw everything into the fray. They argued along the following three axes. Contrary to previous Council decisions, India changed the status quo, violating international law. The change resulted in large-scale human rights violations, leading to a serious humanitarian situation. This, along with India's military assertiveness along the Line of

Control constituted a threat to international peace and security. The Council, which is responsible for maintenance of international peace and security, needed to respond.

The same talk that we hear now on India-China issues was voiced then. Can India take on an economy five times its size? Can actions evoking criticism domestically be shielded from global scrutiny? Will a global power, which had sewn up vast swathes with its Belt and Road Initiative, not get broad support against a mid-sized delegation with limited resources?

A blow-by-blow account is left for another time. Suffice it to say that then, as now, hubris of global overreach was on display. Then, as now, quiet diplomacy was in play. Then, as now, despite the disparity in the power equation, some stay silent. Then, as now, key partners weigh in our favour. The closed-door outcome was better than expected. The public diplomacy victory was the icing on the cake.

More efforts - including one earlier this week - have been made. These follow a slightly different tack. Pakistan writes a letter to the president of the Council. China follows up to raise the

matter during closed, informal consultations under "Any Other Business". The "pinprick" doesn't yield anything, as overwhelmingly, others aren't interested. The rubric "Any Other Business" can be used by anyone, to raise anything. Some have used it to prick China about Hong Kong, and in course of discussions also referred to the treatment of Uighurs. Others target Russia by raising matters not on the active agenda. In short, failed "pinpricks" are par for the course. Our overcoming such efforts provides useful "lessons learnt".

First, in August 2019, the People's Republic of China took the unprecedented step of trying to extricate an agenda item that it had historically never engaged with. When the item was last considered in 1965, it was the Republic of China whose representative sat on the Council. China invalidated the oft-repeated shibboleth that it will handle "differences through peaceful discussion" bearing in mind "sensitivities and concerns". Despite not succeeding, China keeps trying in other ways. Try, try and try again seems their theme song; never letting our guard down needs to be ours.

The Mandal moment

It empowered. But it also opened a Pandora's box

Thirty years ago, on August 7, Indian politics and society changed. In a historic move, the VP Singh government decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, and open up reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs. This came in the wake of the gradual political rise of the backward communities, which was due to a set of complex factors. The first was the demographic weight of the backward communities. The second was the fact that OBCs were not a natural constituency of the Congress and preferred peasant-based formations, socialist parties and regional

parties - all of which were on the ascendant then. And the third was the impact of the Green Revolution which led to their economic empowerment and desire for upward professional mobility. The immediate political trigger for Mr Singh's decision was an effort to counter the Mandir politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which sought to prioritise religion over caste, but its impact went way beyond that. The Mandal moment saw ferocious backlash by sections of upper castes. This opposition was articulated on two axes - the fact that reservations compromised merit, and if at all reservations should open up beyond what was offered to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, it

should be on economic lines. These arguments hid beneath it a real fear of losing power and opportunities. And it launched an era of open hostility between upper castes and backward communities, particularly in the Hindi heartland. OBCs became a force to contend with, and it is no surprise that no government in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar can now be formed without their active support. But it also opened up a Pandora's Box. For one, the resentment of those communities which did not have a share in the reservation pie increased. And political parties, in order to appease them, continued to expand reservation - to the extent that now economically weaker sections of dominant



communities avail quotas, and in many states, there is over 70% reservation in key spheres. This has undermined the entire purpose of reservation, envisaged as a tool to address historic injustice, and made it an exercise in power distribution

and employment generation. Second, within OBCs, some communities benefited more than others, which led to a political divide and demands for sub-categorisation, a process currently underway. Mandal empowered communities.

OPINION

Ayodhya marks the twilight of the first Republic

Hindu nationalism has been the bedrock of the Indian State and polity. Nehruvian secularism was the fringe

The last time a temple existed in Ayodhya, Krishnadevaraya was emperor in the South ruling over the Vijayanagara empire, Nuno da Cunha was governor of Portuguese India, Spanish conquistadors were setting foot in Texas, and Suleiman the Magnificent was inaugurating the era of Ottoman supremacy in West Asia. With the bhoomi puja on August 5, the long saga of struggle of a people has come to an end. This day falls on the first anniversary of the full constitutional integration of Jammu and Kashmir to India, making it a symbolic date in post-colonial India. This is the twilight of the first Republic.

The first Republic was founded on the myth of a secular-socialist India supposedly born out of the anti-colonial struggle. However, the Indian freedom movement was always a Hindu movement. From its origin, symbolism, language, and support base, it was the continuation of a Hindu resurgence already underway, but which was disrupted by the British conquest. The coming together of various pagan traditions in the Indian subcontinent under the umbrella of Hinduism is a long-drawn-out process. But it began to consolidate as a unified political entity in the colonial era in the form of Hindutva. The Hindutva concept is driven by an attempt by the older pagan traditions, united by a dharmic framework and intertwined by puranas, myths and folklore, to navigate the modern political and intellectual landscape dominated by nations and nation-states. Hindutva is not Hinduism. Hindutva is a Hindu political response to political Islam and Western imperialism. It seeks to forge Hindus into a modern nation and create a powerful industrial State that can put an end to centuries of persecution that accelerated sharply over the past 100 years when the Hindu-Sikh presence was expunged in large swaths of the Indian subcontinent.

India's freedom struggle was guided by the vision of Hindu nationalism and not by constitutional patriotism. The Congress brand of nationalism was but a subset of this broader Hindu nationalism with the

Congress itself as the pre-eminent Hindu party. The Muslim question forced the Congress to adopt a more tempered language and symbolism later and to weave the myth of Hindu-Muslim unity. But it failed to prevent the Partition of India. The Congress was taken over by Left-leaning secular denialists under Jawaharlal Nehru who, instead of confronting reality, pretended it did not exist.

After centuries, Hindus were the dominant power. Despite self-denial, the post-colonial State



was essentially a Hindu State. The misleading secular-communal debate blinded us to the obvious; the Republic of India is a Hindu reformist State. It abolished the caste system, integrated and Sanskritised the Dalits and large sections of tribals, codified Hindu social laws, revived classical and folk art forms and replaced Urdu-Persian with Hindi and native languages, controlled Hindu temples, introduced an element of uniformity in temple laws and even harmonised rituals and continues to intervene in Hindu social and religious matters with popular legitimacy. At the same time, it has left Islam outside its ambit in the guise of minority rights and freedom of religion. The Indian state intensified the historical process of Hindu consolidation even as Nehruvian elites denied that India is a Hindu polity above all. Hindu nationalism has never been fringe; it is Nehruvian secularism that was the fringe. And with the fall of the old English-speaking elites, the system they created is also collapsing along with accompanying myths like

Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb and Hindu-Muslim unity. The fact is that Hindus and Muslims lived together, but separately. And they share a violent and cataclysmic past with each other, which has never been put to rest. Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb was an urban-feudal construct with no serious takers outside a limited circle. In villages, whatever unity existed was because the caste identities of both Hindu and Muslims dominated instead of religious identities or because Hindu

converts to Islam maintained earlier customs and old social links with Hindus like common gotra and caste. But all that evaporated quickly



with the Islamic revivalist movements such as the Tabligh and pan-Islamism from 19th century onwards. It never takes much for Hindu-Muslim riots to erupt. There was nothing surprising about the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)?protests and widespread riots. As political communities, Hindus and Muslims have hardly ever agreed on the big questions of the day. What we are witnessing today is twilight of the first Republic. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is but a modern vehicle of the historical process of the rise of the Hindu rashtra. In the north, Jammu and Kashmir is fully integrated. In the south, Dravidianism is melting away. In the east, Bengal is turning saffron. In the west, secular parties must ally with a local Hindutva party to survive. The political debate has

decisively shifted from the pseudo-secular paradigm to the Hindu-pseudo Hindu one. The Ram mandir is reborn. The CAA is the law. The National Population Register is underway. And the National Register of Citizens will happen sooner or later. Although history is never linear, it is time to face the truth: Hindu nationalism has always been the bedrock of the Indian State and polity. However, as we witness the rise of a new republic, the question which we must ask is what its shape will be? Is becoming a Hindu State India's destiny? There are no clear answers given the lack of precedent, barring a few instances such as the Vijayanagara empire. Even the Hindutva movement has concerned itself with the Hindu rashtra and not Hindu rajya.

Pakistan's cartographic absurdity

The new map shows shallowness and weakness. It has no legitimacy

The Imran Khan government has issued a map that shows the entirety of Jammu and Kashmir and the former Gujarati princely state of Junagadh as Pakistani territory. Such maps were common in the 1950s. Over time, Junagadh was largely dropped, but Survey of Pakistan maps have shown the border running south of Jammu. The map has kept the self-determination flag flying by printing across Kashmir that its future will be "decided" under the relevant United Nations resolutions. Curiously, the border between this fictional Greater Pakistan and China is a "frontier undefined" - something not reflected in Beijing's maps.

Ancient maps have some use in territorial disputes, overnight ones produced by a weak government have none. Mr Khan issued the map one year after the



amendment of Article 370. One of the policy shifts explicit in India's decision was that the future of this part of Kashmir would no longer be negotiated with Islamabad. Pakistan has spent the past year trying to argue it is essential to the issue. Initially, it turned to the international community to get some support. When that failed, it resumed shelling across the Line of Control and supporting terrorism. That Mr Khan's

government has now been reduced to printing pieces of coloured paper should be seen as further evidence that Pakistan has been reduced to a cipher as far as Kashmir is concerned. Nepal, Pakistan and others have recently turned to cartography to provoke the Indian government. But drawn ink lines are not even credible statements. They show shallowness of thought and, most crucially, weakness at home.

PERSPECTIVE

The economic situation is grim

The financial sector, in particular, is vulnerable

On Saturday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the government was extending its credit facility, originally announced for medium and small enterprises to private professionals such as doctors and chartered accountants. This, the minister said, was being done after stakeholder consultations. The decision is an indicator of the stress faced by professionals such as doctors and accountants, as economic activity is far from normal and new Covid-19 cases continue to rise in most parts of the country. But this is not the only indicator of a troubled economy. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in the month of July dropped to Rs 87,422 crore from Rs 90,917 crore in June. In July 2019, this number was Rs 1.02 lakh crore. Most analysts have been warning that economic revival has started plateauing in July after showing a brief spike due to lockdown induced pent-up demand in June. Ms Sitharaman herself said that the “government is cautious about overstating the green shoots of a recovery visible in the economy”. As Covid-19 cases continue to climb and large parts of the country experience intermittent

lockdowns, the pandemic’s economic challenge will only get more difficult. Supply chains remain disrupted; demand continues to be low; unemployment is still high; and the Centre’s budgetary numbers may not quite hold because of both revenue shortages and new expenditure commitments. Among the most complex challenges will be loan-default related difficulties in the financial sector, especially once the ongoing moratorium comes to an end. Any large crisis on this front will necessitate a bailout and impose an additional strain on the government’s already



stretched fiscal resources. A sudden withdrawal of credit relief can make firms unviable, and trigger an inflationary shock as productive capacity suffers. These questions will hopefully be discussed at the Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting this week. Signalling on this front will matter more than any decision on policy rates, which many private forecasters believe will see a pause. It will also be interesting to see whether the MPC makes a GDP forecast for this year and whether there has been any revival in consumer confidence after lockdown restrictions have been eased.

2 Chinese generals dissect Xi Jinping’s US policy, push for a relook



General Dai said that traditionally, China and the US had a very close trade relationship, but the Trump administration has now branded the country a trade terrorist and a global economic aggressor.

Dai Xu, a top general of the People’s Liberation Army has advocated that China should take stock of its relative weaknesses compared to the US and behave accordingly, according to a report in Nikkei Asian Review that cited a recent article authored by the officer who has been described as one of China’s most prominent hawks. In his article, Dai underscored how no country had come forward to establish an alliance against

the United States through the ongoing China vs US episode that has been playing out. “China has provided assistance to so many countries, benefiting them in so many ways, but at this critical moment, none of them has taken any unified action with China,” Dai wrote. The top general, the analysis in Nikkei Asian Review said, appeared to suggest that China had gotten ahead of itself.. He warned that China should never

“knock on (America’s) door and make a loud announcement that ‘I shall surpass you, replace you and be the world’s number one’.” The Nikkei Asian Review analysis authored by a senior fellow at the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Richard McGregor, interpreted multiple voices from China to signal the view that Beijing’s interests would have been far better served by sticking with the low-profile policy counseled by Deng Xiaoping. The reference the doctrine of a revered political leader like Deng, was seen as an effort to criticise Xi Jinping without mentioning him by name. In the article (Here is the link to the article published in a mainstream Chinese publication), General Dai said that traditionally, China and the

US had a very close trade relationship, but the Trump administration has now branded the country a trade terrorist and a global economic aggressor. He also listed 10 understanding about the Sino-US relationship. Among them is the United States’ ruthless push towards portraying China in a negative light which is beyond the expectations of most Chinese officials. He also said that China has not received support from any country. General Dai then went on to say that the US has been united at the domestic front. He also said that China needs to understand that China is not a paper tiger, but a real tiger that kills people. Suggesting the way forward, the

military general said that China doesn’t need to make a loud announcement to be number 1. General Dai said that even if China knows it can beat the US, it needs to keep a low profile. He also said that China should consider the US as world’s number 1. Another retired army officer, Major General Qiao Liang had told South China Morning Post in May this year that Beijing “should not consider the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity to take back Taiwan by force”. The military strategist said Taiwan can be used by the US and its western allies to impose sanctions on China that would stop Beijing from importing resources needed for its industry.

Can nuclear war be morally justified?

In the early 1980s, the Harvard law professor Robert Fisher proposed a new, gruesome way that nations might deal with the decision to launch nuclear attacks. It involved a butcher’s knife and the president of the United States. Writing in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Fisher suggested that instead of a briefcase containing the nuclear launch codes, the means to launch a bomb should instead be carried in a capsule embedded near the heart of a volunteer. That person would carry a heavy blade with them everywhere the president went. Before authorising a missile

launch, the commander-in-chief would first have to personally kill that one person, gouging out their heart to retrieve the codes. When Fisher made this proposal to friends at the Pentagon, they were aghast, arguing out that this act would distort the president’s judgement. But to Fisher, that was the point. Before killing thousands, the leader must first “look at someone and realise what death is – what an innocent death is. Blood on the White House carpet”. Killing a person with a butcher’s knife may be a morally repugnant act, yet in the realm of geopolitics, past leaders have justified their

atomic acts as a political or military necessity. Following the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – 75 years ago this month – the decision was justified only in terms of its outcome, not its morality. The bombing ended World War Two, preventing further deaths from a protracted conflict, and arguably discouraged the descent into nuclear war for the rest of the 20th Century. Yet those positive consequences cannot obscure the fact that on 6 and 9 August 1945, two of humanity’s most destructive objects brought the horrifying power of the atom onto two civilian cities. We can attempt to describe

the events through numbers: at least 200,000 people killed by the flashes, firestorms and radiation; tens of thousands more injured; an unquantifiable inter-generational legacy of radiation, cancer and trauma. We can remember the individual stories – of mothers and children, of priests and doctors, of ordinary lives transformed in a moment. Or we can memorialise the relics left behind, as described in the poem No More Hiroshimas: “The ones that made me weep... The bits of burnt clothing. The stopped watches. The torn shirts. The twisted buttons”.

INDIAN-CURRENT AFFAIRS

70% Covid-19 related deaths in Bengal due to delayed admission in hospitals

Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said most of those who died of Covid-19 had delayed getting admitted to hospitals.

Nearly 70% of the Covid-19 related deaths in West Bengal happened due to delayed hospital admissions, the state's top bureaucrat said on Thursday.

"We are analysing each and every Covid-19 related death on a daily basis. Nearly 70% of the deaths took place because people delayed in reaching the hospital," said Rajiva Sinha, chief secretary of West Bengal.

Over the past few months multiple allegations have

surfaced against both state-run and private hospitals that they have refused to admit patients because of various reasons including shortage of beds, resulting in the death of some patients.

Sinha, however, said that there is no shortage of hospital beds. At present there are 11,560 beds in 83 Covid-19 designated hospitals out of which 60% are still vacant. In all there are 23,500 beds in hospitals and safe homes. "There is demand

for a particular category of hospital which can't be guaranteed in a pandemic situation. What we can guarantee is a kind of hospital where patients would be provided with adequate treatment by the best experts," he said.

The state government said that the case fatality rate has dropped to around 2.2% in West Bengal. The National CFR stands at 2.7%. At present only 1,144 patients in the state are in critical condition while 1,043 and 1,946 are

with moderate and mild symptoms.

"This means only two out of 100 Covid-19 patients have died. Out of this, 87% of the deaths were because of comorbidity," he added. The chief secretary was addressing media persons at the state secretariat.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee was also present.

The Covid-19 pandemic has claimed 1,846 lives in Bengal till Wednesday which also saw the highest single-day



casualties at 61. On Thursday West Bengal crossed the 25,000-mark of daily swab tests. The state has already done more than one million tests. Veteran CPI (M) leader Chakraborty, who had tested positive for Covid-19, died in Kolkata on Thursday. Banerjee and West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed their condolences.

700 tonnes of Chemical stored in Chennai safe, to be e-auctioned: Customs



Customs authorities on Thursday sought to allay fears over safety regarding the storage of nearly 700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate at a container freight station near here.

The storage of the chemical here became a cause for serious concern in the backdrop of the explosion of the chemical in the Lebanese capital city of Beirut on Tuesday, which killed 135 people and injured around 4,000.

The chemical worth Rs 1.80 crore was seized from a Tamil Nadu-based importer in 2015 who had allegedly declared it as fertiliser

grade although it was an explosive grade, a Customs official said.

However, the consignment, imported from South Korea, was safe and an e-auction process was on to clear it, he said.

The Customs' clarification comes in the wake of reports in a section of media that huge quantities of the chemical substance being stored here

could be a risk, even as political party Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) sought the government to ensure its safe disposal.

"The goods are safe and pose no danger" a senior Customs department official told PTI when asked about the fears of safety in the backdrop of the devastating Beirut explosion.

Elaborating, the official, on condition of anonymity, said the sleuths had in November 2015 seized 697 tonnes of ammonium nitrate in 37 containers valued at Rs 1.80 crore from the importer.

"The importer had misdeclared the goods as ammonium nitrate of fertiliser grade whereas on examination it was found to be

of explosive grade and that (the importer) had not followed the Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012," he said.

The containers were seized then and were since lying at a container freight station in the city while the licence of the importer had been cancelled.

While seven tonnes of the chemical got spoilt during the deluge in December 2015, the remaining 690 tonnes were under process of e-auctioning, he said.

Earlier during the day, PMK founder S Ramadoss urged the government to take immediate steps to safely dispose of the ammonium nitrate, saying a possible Beirut-like incident

should be avoided. Expressing concern over the reported huge quantity of the seized chemical kept at the freight station here since 2015, he said the uncleared substance could be a risk and that it should be safely disposed of and utilised for purposes like composting.

Tuesday's explosion in Lebanon's port city of Beirut killed 135 people and injured about 4,000.

Buildings were damaged for miles around the city after 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive chemical used in fertilisers, stored at the facility for six years, reportedly caused the explosion.

No communication from Pakistan on Kulbhushan Jadhav case, says India

The Islamabad high court on Monday had directed the government to inform India to appoint a lawyer for Kulbhushan Jadhav in order to file a review petition against his conviction. He is facing a death sentence for alleged spying.

Islamabad has not reached out to New Delhi after the Islamabad high court's order on Monday to the Pakistani government to give another chance to India to appoint a counsel for former Indian navy commander Kulbhushan Jadhav who is on death row. "We haven't received any communication from Pakistan on Kulbhushan Jadhav case. Pakistan needs to provide

unhindered, unimpeded consular access to him," external affairs ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said on Thursday. The Islamabad high court on Monday had directed the government to inform India to appoint a lawyer for Jadhav in order to file a review petition against his conviction. He is facing a death sentence for

alleged spying. A two-judge bench of the Islamabad high court headed by chief justice Athar Minallah also directed the Pakistan government to again inform Jadhav, 50, of his rights under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) order of 2019 staying his execution and calling for a review of his



conviction. India had recently said Pakistan had blocked all its efforts to seek remedies in the case of Jadhav, who was arrested by Pakistani security agencies in Balochistan in

March 2016 and charged with spying. India maintains Jadhav is not a spy was kidnapped by Pakistani operatives from the Iranian port of Chabahar, where he was running a business.

FRONT PAGE FEATURE

Trump paints Biden as a 'Radical' candidate and a Danger to America

President accepts Republican presidential nomination in event staged at White House, raising ethical concerns

Against a backdrop of a global pandemic, heightened racial tensions, and widespread unemployment, Donald Trump framed his Democratic rival Joe Biden as the real danger to the country's safety and economic welfare in his address to the Republican convention on Thursday.

Accepting the party's presidential nomination ahead of November's elections, Trump argued for more than an hour that his administration had accomplished everything it had set out to do and warned that a Biden presidency could be ruinous.

"This is the most important election in the history of our country," Trump told an audience of around 1,500 supporters and officials on the South Lawn of the White House, raising concerns over the ethics of holding a political rally at the site, and over the apparent lack of social distancing measures.

"At no time before have voters faced a clearer choice between two parties, two visions, two philosophies, or two agendas." Trump went on to excoriate the Democratic party and argue that the choice for voters is between a "law and order" president who has a record of unmatched accomplishments, and a "socialist" opposition party and "radical" candidate eager to bring anarchy to the streets.

"Your vote will decide whether we protect law abiding Americans, or whether we give free reign to violent anarchists, agitators, and criminals who threaten our citizens, Trump said.

"And this election will decide whether we will defend the American way of 'life, or whether we allow a radical movement to completely dismantle and destroy it.

"At the Democrat national convention, Joe Biden and his party repeatedly assailed America as a land of racial, economic, and social injustice," Trump said. "So tonight, I ask you a very simple question: how can the Democrat party ask to lead our country when it spends so much time tearing down our country?"

Trump delivered his speech in front of a line of flags on a stage at the White House, a decision that raised questions over whether doing so would be



violating the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activity while on duty. Though the president is exempt from that law, government officials are not. "It certainly breaches any norms for just good government, the idea of mixing politics with government resources," Daniel Jacobson, a former Obama administration attorney, told the Guardian.

Trump's remarks were the capstone of a night during which speakers focused on national security and policing, describing the country as rife with chaos and lawlessness in the streets because of Democratic leadership.

Speakers also repeatedly stressed that Trump was a longstanding friend of the African American community and minorities. Most speakers of color at the convention devoted significant portions of their speeches to stressing that Trump is not a racist.

Few mentioned the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 180,000 Americans dead and more than 5.8m infected, far more than any other country in the world. "If we had listened to Joe, hundreds of thousands more Americans would have died," Trump claimed, ignoring widespread criticism of his administration's response to the pandemic. "I did what our political establishment never expected and could never forgive, breaking the cardinal rule of Washington politics," Trump said. "I kept my promises."

Trump has kept around half of his 2016 campaign pledges, according to Politifact. Earlier in the campaign cycle Trump struggled when directly asked what he would do if elected to a second term in office, but laid some plans out on Thursday.

Trump promised, if re-elected, to create 10 million jobs within the first year of his second term. He said more police would be hired and more judges appointed, and he promised to defend

social security and protections for Americans with pre-existing conditions, despite his administration's moves to weaken those programs during his current term. He promised to reduce taxes and cut regulations "at our levels not seen before", adding: "We will fully restore the patriotic education to our schools, and always protect free speech on college campuses." He also said the country would land a woman on the moon, and "the United States will be the first nation to plant a flag on Mars".

Trump delivered his speech amid heightened tensions across the country over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a black man who was repeatedly shot in front of his children and left paralyzed by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sunday. The shooting sparked another wave of anti-racism and anti-police brutality protests across the country.

Though the protests have been largely peaceful, Trump condemned "rioting, looting, arson and violence" that he said had taken hold in Democratic-run cities, but did not mention Blake by name.

In a taped speech, senate Trump and his campaign have charged again and again that Biden is a "socialist" and liberal extremist who wants to defund police across the country and supports a government-run Medicare for All healthcare plan championed by the Vermont senator Bernie Sanders. Both said in the video, going on to are untrue, and Biden is seen as a moderate in the party. Biden himself has pointed out that the dire picture Trump has described is actually what's going on now, during his time in office.

"The violence you've seen is in Donald Trump's administration. Donald Trump's America," Biden said on Thursday.

Trump, Mike Pence, and other speakers have also argued that under Trump the economy has

only improved, foreign terrorists have been defeated, and the coronavirus pandemic is an afterthought. But the US defense department says Isis has not been entirely defeated; tens of millions remain unemployed; and Covid-19 is still claiming hundreds of lives every day. Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter and White House advisor, gave the most effusive speech of the evening.

Besides the Trumps, the Arkansas senator Tom Cotton and Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani delivered speeches.

Giuliani, the former New York mayor, used his speech to paint a portrait of an America on the verge of anarchy, and accused New York current mayor Bill De Blasio of allowing protests and crime to across the country over the spiral. "Today, my city is in police shooting of Jacob Blake, a black man who was and violent crime are increasing in percentages never heard of in the past," Giuliani claimed. In reality, serious crime is down under de Blasio, the annual number of murders is around half the number it was under Giuliani.

"These continuous riots in Democratic cities gives a good view" of a Biden administration, Giuliani claimed. He ended by saying "Mr President, make our nation safe again!"

McConnell, described Trump as his friend, and framed himself as a midwestern champion leading the defense of the Senate from Democrats. "Today's Democratic party doesn't want to improve life for middle America," McConnell said in the video, going on to say "we are the firewall against Nancy Pelosi's agenda".

Unlike most speakers this week, Trump's housing secretary Ben Carson directly addressed Blake's shooting, starting his remarks by saying "our hearts go out to the Blake family" before launching into a full throated defense of Trump on the African American community.

"Before the pandemic African

President Donald Trump accepted the Republican Party nomination for reelection Thursday before a large crowd at the White House -- and against a national backdrop of explosive racial tensions and the coronavirus pandemic. "My fellow Americans, tonight, with a heart full of gratitude and boundless optimism, I profoundly accept this nomination for President of the United States," Trump said.

American unemployment was at an all time low," Carson said, in a somewhat misleading statement. "At this point in time President Trump is the man with the courage, the vision, and the ability to keep it shining brightly." The RNC has notably lacked some key party figures and the presence of the last Republican president, George W Bush. Meanwhile, Democrats' convention included speeches by former Republican elected officials who have emerged as outspoken critics of the president.

On Thursday morning, aides to the previous two Republican nominees for president, the late John McCain and the Utah senator Mitt Romney, released statements endorsing Biden. The Biden campaign hopes that support will motivate moderates and Republicans to support the centrist Democrat.

Earlier on Thursday, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, delivered a scathing rebuke of the Trump administration's handling of the pandemic.

"The Republican convention is designed for one purpose: to soothe Donald Trump's ego, to make him feel good," Harris said. "But here's the thing: he's the president of the United States, and it's not supposed to be about him. It's supposed to be about the health and the safety and the wellbeing of the American people."

Thursday night's events ended with Trump and his family standing on the stage in front of the White House balcony listening to a band play Ave Maria, another norm-shattering piece of Trump's convention.

FRONT PAGE FEATURE

Keeping it in the family: a guide to the many Trumps speaking at the RNC

As Trump family members take the podium one by one at the convention, here's who's who - and their memorable RNC moments



You may have noticed that the Trump relatives who have been invited to speak this week at the Republican national convention are getting increasingly obscure.

Perhaps the president is simply running out of family members who have not turned against him yet - because these days, it seems Trump family members don't even require the Trump surname to justify them speaking at the event, let alone a formal title within the Republican administration.

The list includes Kimberly Guilfoyle (who was appointed as Trump adviser after she started dating Donald Trump Jr); Eric Trump (who has no role in the administration outside of being his father's son) and even Tiffany Trump (who most of us had forgotten about until this week). If you are finding it hard to keep up, here's a guide on who's who in the Trump dynasty, and their most memorable RNC moments. It has been reported that Melania and Ivanka Trump have been warring for some time over the

top spot in the Trump dynasty. But Melania Trump has so far come out on top at the RNC. Her speech has been commended on all sides for managing to acknowledge the US's racist



history while encouraging unity - and she didn't even need to plagiarize this time. And people have also rallied around Melania Trump following a xenophobic low blow from Bette Middler, who laughed at Melania Trump's accent on Twitter and called her an illegal alien.

Kimberly Guilfoyle

Kimberly Guilfoyle has managed to become one of the most easily recognizable speakers in the Trump clan. She represents the family on chatshows; has bagged herself a job as a Trump

adviser while Trump's own son Eric has yet to be given a job in the administration - and now has bagged herself a slot at the RNC. Guilfoyle - a former Fox News host and millionaire who has twice dated political royalty (she was previously married to California's governor, Gavin Newsom, hence becoming San Francisco's first lady), devoted

her speech to routing out the "cosmopolitan elite" from telling you what to think. She did make a few missteps - like when she spoke about her mother being an immigrant from Puerto Rico, when Puerto Rico is, in fact, part of the United States - but she still gets top marks for effort. Why? Because if shouting "The best! Is yet! To come!" full blast during a speech that was pre-recorded in front of a crowd of exactly zero people does not count as good showmanship, then I don't know what does.

Eric Trump

Eric Trump has been accused of having more lies in his speech than verbs (he repeated false claims that Joe Biden wants to defund the police, claimed Biden wants to take away the right to bear arms when he has never said such a thing, and that his father delivered the biggest tax cuts in US history - he didn't). Nonetheless, we believe he should get a special mention for managing to break away from being under

establishment politicians and upsetting the status quo.

But Ivanka Trump's speech was as much about rattling off her own role in the last four years. She recounted how the administration has taken on issues like human trafficking, criminal justice reform, and support for working women, all issues she has made a priority. Four years ago in Cleveland I said President Trump would deliver for working women,"

investigation in New York for fraud to speak at Daddy's convention.

Tiffany Trump

You've got to feel good for Tiffany Trump. The much-forgotten Trump sibling, who was overlooked for a role at her father's third wedding to Melania (Donald Trump Jr and Eric Trump were best men; Ivanka Trump did a Bible reading; Trump's show producer's son was a page boy, but Tiffany Trump got to hand out wedding programs), has finally taken her moment to shine.

Her RNC gambit to be recognized as the most relatable Trump (that prize previously went to Donald Trump Jr, who once flew coach) has to be commended. Tiffany Trump wants you to know that she, the president's daughter who has a net worth of \$10m at 26, can relate to the ordinary American student, having graduated during a pandemic.

Tiffany Trump can, at least, call herself one of the more self-made Trumps: instead of inheriting Donald Trump's businesses as a young adult, Tiffany Trump wanted to make a name for herself, as, errr ... a pop singer. And sure, the line in her speech where she celebrates the US being "the only country to have the word dream associated with it" sounds naive at best - but at least she has shown improvement in her writing. Her 2011 song included the lyrics "Diamonds are so shiny / Special things I got on me".

Ivanka Trump champions father in fiery convention speech

Ivanka Trump, the president's eldest daughter and senior adviser, delivered a fiery speech Thursday in support of her father's reelection bid, simultaneously highlighting many of the issues she has championed during his first term. "Four years ago I told you I would fight alongside my father, and four years later, here I am," Ivanka Trump told hundreds of supporters gathered on the South Lawn of the White House.

The roughly 15-minute address

attempted to frame President Trump as a man who has achieved what he set out to do in his first term and portray his brusque personality as an asset.

"Dad, people attack you for being unconventional, but I love you for being real, and I respect you for being effective," she said.

Ivanka Trump walked out onto the stage to the tune of "I'm Still Standing" by Elton John. She proceeded to offer an intensely defensive speech of the president's

record on the merits of policy and attempted to soften his image, at times contradicting his own behavior.

She described how hard he takes the toll of the coronavirus pandemic, despite the president rarely offering such sympathy in public. She praised Trump as a consensus builder despite his refusal to meet with Democratic leaders. Ivanka Trump argued her father has upended Washington, D.C., for the better, rattling

establishment politicians and upsetting the status quo.

But Ivanka Trump's speech was as much about rattling off her own role in the last four years. She recounted how the administration has taken on issues like human trafficking, criminal justice reform, and support for working women, all issues she has made a priority. Four years ago in Cleveland I said President Trump would deliver for working women,"

Ivanka Trump said.

"Four years ago I told you my father would focus on making childcare affordable and accessible," she added.

She recounted sitting in the Oval Office when Trump made key decisions about trade deals and halting travel from Europe amid the coronavirus pandemic.

But most of the applause and most passionate lines came in support of her father, whom she described as a "warrior in the White House."

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SOUTH ASIA

Delhi-Dhaka ties: India is doing well in the region

Don't view India's neighbourhood policy in terms of wins or losses. Focus on the structural imperatives

(News Agencies)- In a telling statement, Sri Lanka's new foreign secretary Jayanath Colombage has said that Colombo will have an "India first" strategic policy outlook. Arguing that while the Rajapaksa government has adopted a posture of neutrality in its dealings with major regional and global powers, he was categorical in underlining that "the president [Gotabaya Rajapaksa] has stated that we have a strategic security-wise 'India first' policy because we cannot be, we should not be, we can't afford to be a strategic security threat for India, period." These are powerful words indeed, and along with Colombage's acknowledgement that the

decision to give Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to China was a "mistake", it underscored the pitfalls of a rather infantile debate in this country about India's neighbourhood policy in recent months.

There has been a barrage of criticism that India is "losing" its neighbourhood as border tensions with Nepal have grown and China has continued to spread its tentacles in India's vicinity. That Indian and Chinese forces are squaring off at the border has reinforced this plaintive cry that New Delhi is getting marginalised in the neighbourhood. Even foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's visit to Bangladesh, his first outside India since the

Covid-19 lockdown, got mired in needless debates about rising Chinese clout in Dhaka.

By all accounts, Shringla's visit to Dhaka was a successful one and it managed to convey Bangladesh's privileged position in Indian foreign policy matrix. Against the backdrop of the two nations celebrating "Mujib Borsho", and the 50th year of the liberation of Bangladesh as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations next year, this visit was key to setting the tone for a busy calendar of events ahead and a number of high-level bilateral visits. From expediting and conceptualising major connectivity projects to diversifying bilateral engagement, the two nations



are getting serious about their priorities. What is key here is the role played by top leadership in both nations. Both Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina, despite some domestic scepticism, understand the importance of cultivating strong bilateral relations. For Modi, the development of India's East and Northeast is a top priority and a strategic imperative for New Delhi. And that region can only

achieve its full potential if it's better integrated with Bangladesh, thereby ensuring that India-Bangladesh connectivity projects will continue to be at the top of the agenda. It is important to recognise that this connectivity push is being shaped by a politician like Narendra Modi who has been forthright about the challenges posed by illegal immigration.

Pakistan's attempts to get Islamic countries to condemn India over J&K have had mixed results

(News Agencies)- To condemn India for changing the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan had approached Saudi Arabia to convene a session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), but the request was turned down. Thereafter Pakistan got together with Turkey and Malaysia to convene a summit of Islamic states - a kind of parallel OIC - which turned out to be a flop. Even Pakistan refrained from attending it as did most other members of the OIC. Then the "released" news came that Pakistan was returning the aid it had got from Saudi Arabia - a billion out of the \$6.2 billion

pledged - after borrowing the billion from China. In fact, the Saudis had demanded their money back.

The Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi tried gauchely to explain: "Saudi Arabia is facing economic pressure due to fall in oil prices and Pakistan is well aware of Saudi Arabia's problems and Pakistan stands by its brotherly country in this hour of need." But the truth is that Saudi Arabia was greatly miffed over what he had said with or without Prime Minister Imran Khan's clearance: "If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries

that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."

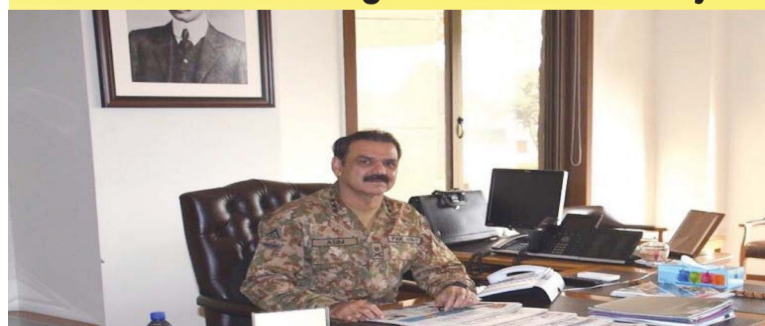
In another move, Pakistan inched closer to Iran after China signed a \$400-billion deal with it and India moved out of the Chabahar project that was seen as threatening Pakistan. But the Arab states across the Gulf will not take kindly to it. Iran is involved in the "Shia" wars that plague Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Turkey is the maverick of the region, challenging the Saudis by supporting the Brotherhood in Egypt, encouraging the maverick Arab state of Qatar in the Gulf to do

likewise. Oddly, however, Turkey doesn't please Iran either because in Syria it is killing the Syrians supported by Iran. It has also forced Iran to side with Saudi Arabia in Libya where Turkey is fighting a proxy war with the Saudis.

Imran Khan has struck up a special relationship with Turkey's President Recep Erdogan, which also touches the heartstrings of most Pakistanis whose school textbooks glorify the Khilafat Movement in India, supporting the deposed Ottoman-Turkish caliph in Turkey. (Today, the Arabs collectively hate the Ottomans for having ruled over them in the past and express it by banning

Turkish cinema in their countries, as in UAE and Egypt.) Prime Minister Khan ignores what Erdogan is doing to the freedom of expression in Turkey because the Turkish president doesn't care if India is upset over his support to Pakistan over Kashmir. He also ignores the dangerously decreased capacity of Turkey to dole out financial support that Pakistan's belly-up economy needs under Khan. Turkey under the dictatorial Erdogan was not expected to perform well economically and that is what has happened after the pandemic struck, increasing unemployment up to 52 per cent.

Former Pakistan general Asim Bajwa, who is PM aide and CPEC chief, faces 'corruption' heat



(News Agencies)- A corruption scandal involving Lt Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa (retd), chairman of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and special assistant to Prime Minister Imran

Khan, is gathering a storm in his country.

On Friday, the website of the Pakistan Remittance Initiative was hacked, and a picture of Bajwa and his family was put up, calling for

accountability. This came a day after a Pakistani media report had elaborated the "suspicious" financial dealings of Bajwa's family, worth millions of dollars. "The growth of the Bajwa family's business empire in the United States and later in Pakistan directly matches the rise in power of retired general Asim Saleem Bajwa, who is now chairman of the country's massive China-financed infrastructure project and a special assistant to the prime minister," the report, penned by journalist Ahmed Noorani and published on Fact

Focus, stated. Bajwa is a former director general of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani military, and was appointed as special assistant to PM Khan on information in April this year. Following the publication of the report, Asim Bajwa denied the allegations on Twitter, saying: "A malicious propaganda story published on an unknown site, against me and my family, is strongly rebutted." Bajwa's declared assets versus report's claims in his declaration of assets and liabilities signed in June as special assistant

to the PM, Bajwa declared an investment of \$18,468 (Pakistani rupees 31 lakh) in his wife's name. He also declared that he and his wife have no immovable property held outside Pakistan, or any business capital outside Pakistan. However, the report traces the Bajwa family's business dealings as far back as 2002, saying that was the year his younger brothers opened their first Papa John's pizza outlet. This was the year Bajwa went to work for Gen. Pervez Musharraf, as a lieutenant colonel on the military dictator's staff.

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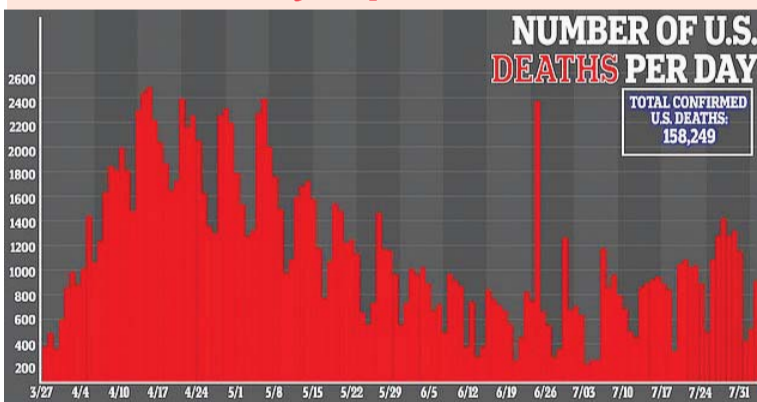
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Dr Fauci says parts of US are 'on fire' with COVID-19 and America has WORST



Dr Anthony Fauci says the 'numbers don't lie' when it comes to coronavirus in the United States as he acknowledged that the country has the worst COVID-19 outbreak in the world and some states, in a sense, were 'on fire'. Fauci, who is a member of the White House's coronavirus task force, said that the US has 'quantitatively' suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic as the country averages nearly 60,000 new cases and 1,000 deaths per day. His comments came during an interview on Wednesday with CNN's Dr Sanjay Gupta at a virtual Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health forum. When asked if the US had

suffered the worst globally given the country represents a quarter of total COVID-19 infections but only holds about 5 percent of the world's population, Fauci said: 'Yeah, I mean it is. Quantitatively, if you look at it, it is.' 'The numbers don't lie. 'Every country has suffered. We, the United States, has suffered... as much or worse than anyone. 'I mean, when you look at the number of infections and the number of deaths, it really is quite, quite concerning.' Data from Wednesday shows that the US represents 22 percent of global COVID-19 deaths and more than 25 percent of worldwide infections. The US has so far recorded 4.8 million positive cases and more

than 158,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. Deaths related to COVID-19 have now risen nationally for four straight weeks, while the number of infections have declined for the second week, according to an analysis of data. Fauci's tone contrasts with comments made by President Donald Trump on Monday when he declared in an interview with Axios on HBO that coronavirus was 'under control' in the US. When confronted by the fact that an average of 1,000 Americans are dying each day from COVID-19, Trump said: 'They are dying, that's true. And you have - it is what it is.' 'But that doesn't mean we aren't doing everything we can. It's under control as much as you can control it. This is a horrible plague.' In an interview with Reuters in which he was asked if he shared that sentiment, Fauci said some parts of the country were more under control than others. 'We're a big country. You can pick out some parts of the country that are looking good and you could say is under control; you could pick some

parts of the country that are on fire, in the sense, I mean you're having outbreaks that you know you don't get 70,000 cases a day when nothing's going on,' he said. Trump also said in that interview, which was filmed on July 28, that the country's current death rate was 'lower than the world'. Citing a series of charts and graphs regarding death rates in comparison to cases, Trump said: 'The United States is lowest in numerous categories. We're lower than the world, than Europe.' He went on to say: 'Death is way down from where it was. Where it was is much higher than where it is right now.' Even though deaths are now rising across the US, they are below the levels seen in April when an average of 2,000 people a day were dying from the virus. Deaths surged in April in the weeks after coronavirus infections spiked mostly in the Northeast. The number of fatalities are now increasing in Sunbelt states and across the Midwest after infections surged there throughout June and July. The death rate is a lagging

indicator and can continue to rise weeks after new infections drop. A coronavirus death, when it occurs, typically comes several weeks after a person is first infected. Fauci went on to say that he doesn't believe the US would have to lockdown again like it did in April to stop the spread. 'We can do much better without locking down,' he said. He said Americans should wear masks, keep physically distanced, shut down bars, wash their hands and favor outdoor activities over indoor ones in order to help stop transmission of the virus. Meanwhile, Dr Deborah Birx - who is leading the White House task force - warned nine cities on Wednesday about increasing cases. In a call with state and local officials that was obtained by the Center for Public Integrity, Birx said there were encouraging signs in southern states hit hard by the pandemic. 'We are concerned that both Baltimore and Atlanta remain at a very high level,' Birx said on the call.

TRAVEL

Mahesh Bhatt Loves Controversies But Sadak 2 Row Is Too Hot To Handle



From doing lip-lock with daughter Pooja Bhatt for a magazine cover to making movies on his past relationships, Mahesh Bhatt remains controversy's favourite child with his proclivity to ruffle a feather or two. But now, he has waded into a big row at what appears to be the most inopportune time in his illustrious career. The 71-year-old, once called a maverick filmmaker for making acclaimed offbeat movies such as Arth (1982) and Saaraansh (1984), is returning to the silver screen as a director for the first time in more than two decades with Sadak 2. A sequel to his 1991-hit, Sadak, which starred Sanjay Dutt and Bhatt's elder

daughter Pooja Bhatt in the lead, the film is set to be premiered directly on the digital platform, Disney+Hotstar on August 28. Bhatt had last wielded the megaphone for Kartoos in 1999 and taken a voluntary retirement of sorts in the new millennium. He was happy producing movies and giving breaks to newcomers under his home banner of Vishesh Films, until he decided to return to direction with Sadak 2, apparently at the prodding of Sanjay Dutt as well as his daughters Pooja and Alia Bhatt. Ideally, the return of somebody like Bhatt, who has an awesome repertoire to boast of, should have been a cause for big celebration

and his comeback project an eagerly-awaited one in and outside the film industry. He has, after all, been one of the finest filmmakers in Hindi cinema. In his heyday, he not only made several avant-garde movies like Arth and Saaraansh but also delivered commercial hits like Naam (1986) and Jakhm (1998).

A sequel of Sadak, his biggest success so far, ought to have created a positive buzz all around solely because of his comeback but that was not to be. Instead, Sadak 2 is being brutally trolled and not being talked about either for the return of Bhatt or for that matter, its cinematic merits. Worse, the film's trailer, released on August 12, has become the most disliked trailer and second most disliked video ever on YouTube in the world. (YouTube Rewind 2018 with 1.8 crore thumbs-down remains the most disliked video so far).

As of August 26, in just a fortnight since its release, Sadak 2 trailer on YouTube has garnered more than a whopping 1.2 crore dislikes. The primary reason behind the tsunami of dislikes for the film apparently is Bhatt's open support

to actress Rhea Chakraborty, whose boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his Bandra home in Mumbai on June 14. Some of Bhatt's pictures with Rhea -- an accused in a case of abetment of suicide and embezzlement of money lodged by Sushant's father --- went viral soon thereafter. His brother Mukesh Bhatt was also quoted in a section of the Press as saying that Sushant reminded him of actress Parveen Babi, who had allegedly suffered from depression before her death in 2005. The Bhatt's unstinting support to Rhea, who had played the lead in their home production Jalebi (2018), immediately after Sushant's death, apparently angered the admirers of the late actor, who suspected foul play in his death. At the outset, Sushant's fans blamed the rampant nepotism in the film industry for driving Sushant to take his life. An online call for Sadak 2's boycott was given by people running a campaign to seek justice for Sushant. The film

was also singled out for being "98 per cent nepotistic" as per a "Nepometer" launched by a kin of the departed actor.

As the suicide-or-murder mystery over Sushant's death has since deepened with the CBI launching its investigation now, there is no sign of let up in the anti-Sadak 2 or anti-Bhatt campaign. A WhatsApp chat purported to have taken place between Bhatt and Rhea shortly after she left Sushant's house on June 8 has further infuriated the trolls. Bhatt now needs to let his latest movie do all the talking. A few fellow film-makers such as Prakash Jha have come out in support of Mahesh Bhatt, calling it obnoxious, sad and unfair to drag the name of a director of Bhatt's calibre into a conspiracy theory without any evidence but it has made no difference to the trolls. It has left Bhatt's ambitious comeback movie mired in an unsavoury controversy that the filmmaker himself might not have wished for at this juncture, regardless of his usual predilection for anything that kicks up a storm.

The Grand Old Meltdown

What happens when a party gives up on ideas?

Earlier this month, while speaking via Zoom to a promising group of politically inclined high school students, I was met with an abrupt line of inquiry. "I'm sorry, but I still don't understand," said one young man, his pitch a blend of curiosity and exasperation. "What do Republicans believe? What does it mean to be a Republican?" You could forgive a 17-year-old, who has come of age during Donald Trump's reign, for failing to recognize a cohesive doctrine that guides the president's party. The supposed canons of GOP orthodoxy-limited government, free enterprise, institutional conservation, moral rectitude, fiscal restraint, global leadership-have in recent years gone from elastic to expendable. Identifying this intellectual vacuum is easy enough. Far more difficult is answering the question of what, quite specifically, has filled it. Bumbling through a homily about the "culture wars," a horribly

overused cliché, I felt exposed. Despite spending more than a decade studying the Republican Party, embedding myself both with its generals and its foot soldiers, reporting on the right as closely as anyone, I did not have a good answer to the student's question. Vexed, I began to wonder who might. Not an elected official; that would result in a rhetorical exercise devoid of introspection. Not a Never Trumper; they would have as much reason to answer disingenuously as the most fervent MAGA follower. I decided to call Frank Luntz.

Perhaps no person alive has spent more time polling Republican voters and counseling Republican politicians than Luntz, the 58-year-old focus group guru. His research on policy and messaging has informed a generation of GOP lawmakers. His ability to translate between D.C. and the provinces-

connecting the concerns of everyday people to their representatives in power-has been unsurpassed. If anyone had an answer, it would be Luntz.

"You know, I don't have a history of dodging questions. But I don't know how to answer that. There is no consistent philosophy," Luntz responded. "You can't say it's about making America great again at a time of Covid and economic distress and social unrest. It's just not credible."

Luntz thought for a moment. "I tried to give you an answer and I can't do it. You can ask it any different way. But I don't know the answer. For the first time in my life, I don't know the answer." Every fourth summer, a presidential nominating convention gives occasion to appraise a party for its ideas, its principles, its vision for governing. Recent iterations of the GOP have been easily and expertly defined. Ronald Reagan's party wanted to end the



scourge of communism and slay the bureaucratic dragons of Big Government. George W. Bush's party aimed to project compassion and fortitude, educating poor Americans and treating AIDS-stricken Africans, while simultaneously confronting the advance of Islamic terrorism. However flawed the policies, however unsuccessful their execution, a tone was set in these parties from the top-down.

ENTERTAINMENT



Kubbra Sait slams derogatory tweet that called Rhea Chakraborty 'sex bait'

Actor Kubbra Sait has slammed a tweet by Madhu Kishwar, in which Rhea Chakraborty had been called a 'sex bait'.

Actor Kubbra Sait has slammed a tweet attacking actor Rhea Chakraborty, who has been accused by Sushant Singh Rajput's family of having abetted his suicide and siphoning off his funds. Rhea, in a tweet, had identified herself as Sushant's girlfriend. The case is now being investigated by the CBI, based on Sushant's father's FIR against Rhea and a few others. "Imagine the day you wake up one morning and you realise that the bile you've spewed, won't allow you to look at yourself in the mirror. That would be a horrible day. Be responsible, or don't use social media," Kubbra wrote in her response to a tweet by women's rights activist Madhu Kishwar.

Kubbra wasn't the only one to slam the tweet. "This woman started Manushi. Was an academic feminist who was an inspiration to so many of us. And, now - she crucifies a woman based on gossip and innuendo, using the worst possible misogynist descriptions - fortune huntress, mafia moll," another person wrote. "What drives some women to speak ill of other women? Also why do ppl talk so much about an on going investigation-is it because they don't trust the investigation agencies or are they being just being

gossip mongers?" a third person commented. Earlier this week, a HuffPost report quoted anonymous friends of Rhea as saying that the attacks on the actor are unfair. "They haven't had a moment to grieve. Has anyone paused to think that here's a young woman who lost the love of her life? It's bonkers for us to even process the hysteria that's



unfolding right now. It's so far from the truth, it shocks the mind," a friend said. Sushant's death is being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation. A separate investigation into the allegations of misappropriation of funds against Rhea is being carried out by the Enforcement Directorate. Recent reports suggest that the Narcotics Bureau could enter the picture after a drug angle was recently uncovered in relation to the case.

Tom Cruise makes surprise appearance at Tenet screening in London, says 'great to be back in a movie theatre'.

Hollywood star Tom Cruise posted a video of himself at a preview screening of Christopher Nolan's new film, Tenet, in London. Cruise expressed his excitement to return to the theatre and when asked what he thought of the film, he said, "I loved it!"

In a video shared on his Instagram page, Cruise is seen braving the London rain and going to the theatre in a car. "How does that happen? I am wearing a mask," he says in the clip. He is also seen waving to fans outside. As Cruise reaches the theatre, he poses



outside a giant hoarding of Tenet and says, "Here we are, back to the movies!" He is then seen applauding as the film plays, as a masked man that looked like his Mission: Impossible 7 director Christopher McQuarrie sits next to him. Before leaving, he tells his fellow moviegoers, "Great to be back in a movie theatre, everybody!" On being asked what he thought of the film, he says, "I loved it!" "Big movie. Big screen. Loved it," Cruise captioned his video, which has been viewed more than

7,00,000 times on Instagram. Nolan's time-bending espionage epic, Tenet, is the first big Hollywood film to hit the screens since the coronavirus pandemic shuttered theatres worldwide earlier this year. Though it will be officially released on Wednesday in select US and overseas markets

where theatres have reopened, previews began over the weekend. Cruise was lauded for supporting Tenet as the exhibition sector desperately needs a boost. "Yes Tom! Thank you for supporting movies at an important time for the film industry to rebound! You are the

man, would love to see you in a Christopher Nolan project! Cheers," one Instagram user commented on his post. Another wrote, "Awesome positive post THISSSSSSS!!!!!!" Tenet shows John David Washington in the 'afterlife', as he attempts to prevent World War III. While it is not clear exactly how disastrous that could be, we are told that it is 'something worse' than nuclear holocaust. The film also stars Robert Pattinson, Elizabeth Debicki, Dimple Kapadia, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Kenneth Branagh and Michael Caine.

BTS fans' rape threats force Neha Bhasin to file police complaint

Singer-songwriter Neha Bhasin has filed a complaint with the Mumbai Police's Cyber Crime branch, after the 37-year-old singer was "trolled, bullied, abused and given rape threats" along with her "family and friends". "I waited for a week, this time. I tried warning them. But it just kept getting worse and worse every day and I decided that I couldn't take it any longer, and filed a complaint with the cyber crime department of Mumbai police yesterday," she says. "I posted a photo of my father, who passed away two years back, and in the comment section on that post,

young girls dishing out threats," by the "so called fans" of (the Kpop sensation) BTS. "I dont even know Badshah personally. But he was being trolled and called average musician, because he said something about buying google ad words, and what he said



was completely alright. I had just given my opinion that every artist needs to be respected, and added that I am not a big fan of Kpop music. Since then, for nearly two months I was abused and criminally threatened," says Bhasin. But it did not end there. This year, ever since it was reported that Badshah was questioned by the police about buying fake likes, The BTS Army, as the fans of the popular South Korean band like to call themselves, "abused, gave rape threats and bullied" Bhasin to apologise them, for her remarks that she made last year.

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Coronavirus Pandemic World On Edge

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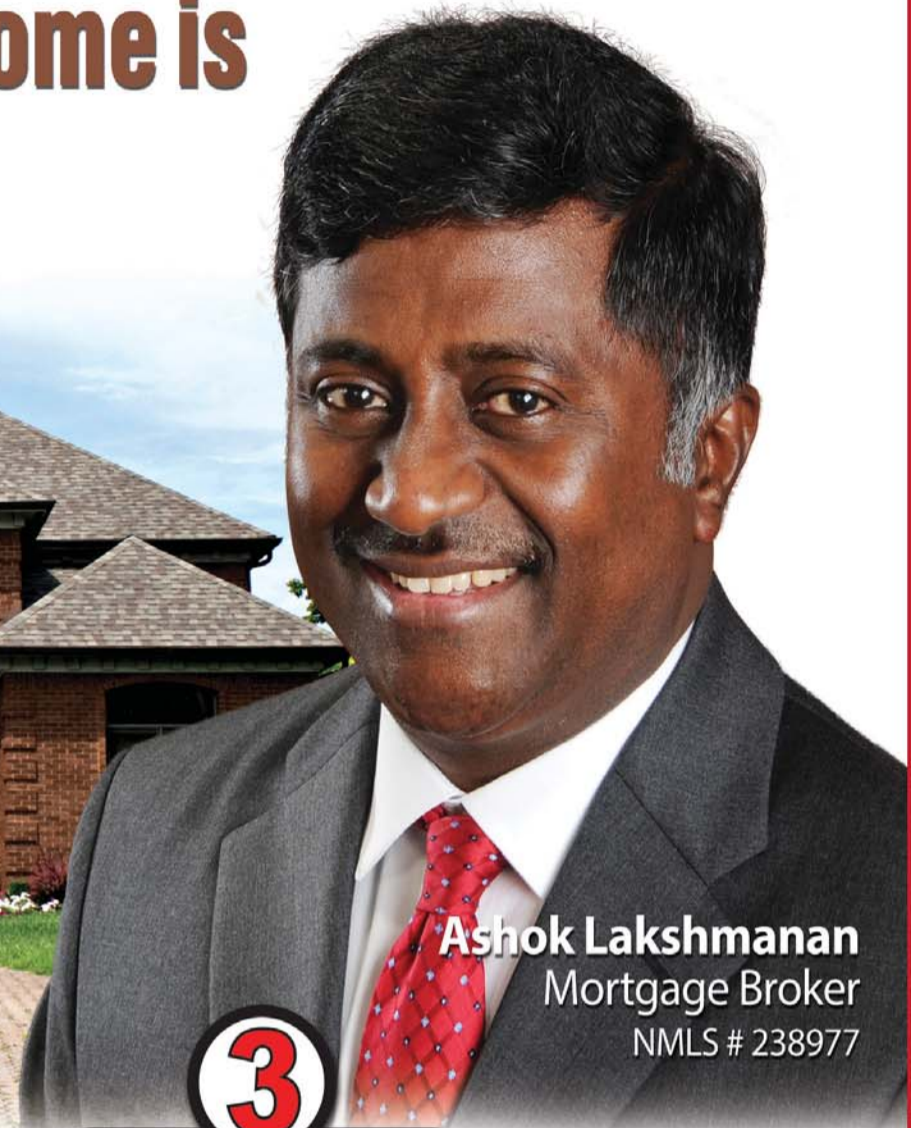
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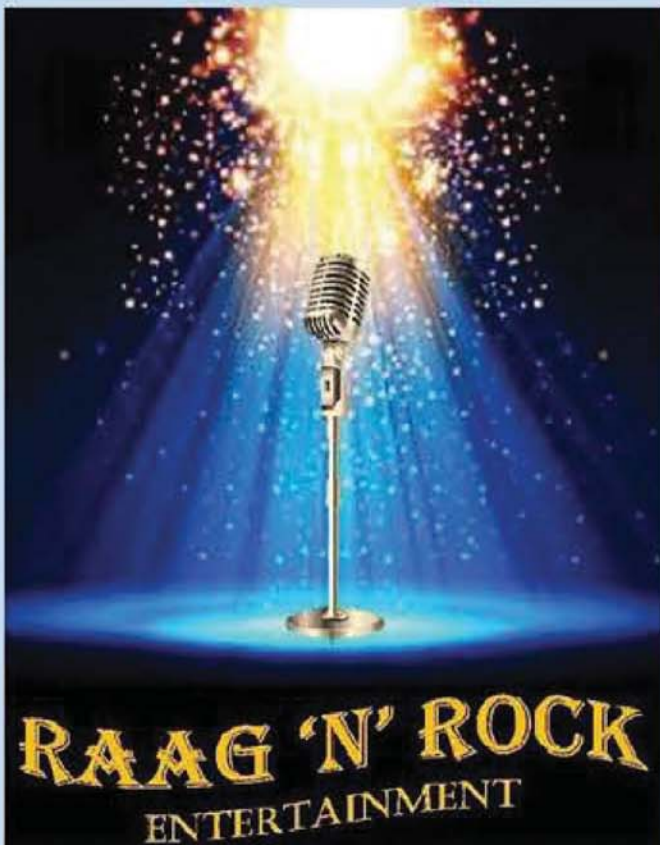
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