

E Pluribus Unum

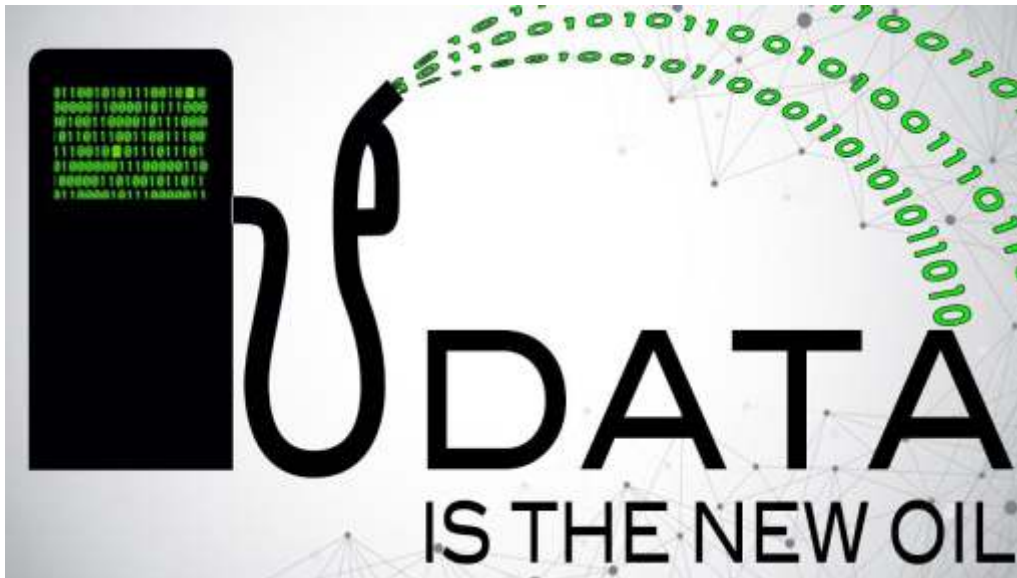
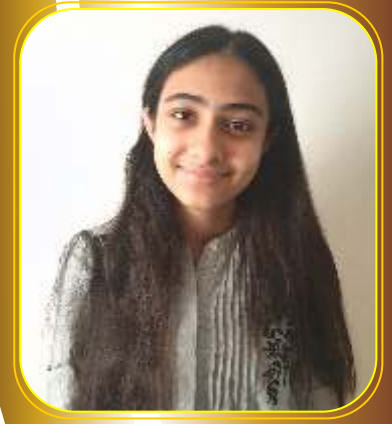
DATA IS THE NEW OIL



193 MEMBER STATES \leftrightarrow ONE UNITED NATIONS

Data is the new oil

-by Mehar Gaba, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



"Without data, you are just another person with an opinion"
~W Edwards Deming

What is data?

Data is simply facts or statistics collected together for reference or analysis. Data is an extremely precious thing that will last longer than the systems controlling it.

Data is used extensively by each of us, regardless of our oblivious nature towards it. From Healthcare to Transportation, Education, Employment, News, Marketing and Entertainment, data is used everywhere. Just as a few years ago, oil was and, in most places,, still is, used. How then can we say that Data is the new oil?

One way of thinking about data in the modern economy is to probably call it the new oil. These two valuable commodities, one pumped out of the ground, one

withdrawn out of us, have been the basis of economic revolutions and each one become the foundation of enormously profitable monopolies.

Traditional oil is finite. As per a study in 2014-2015, there are 1.688 trillion barrels of oil left which would be good to go for the next 53 years. Data availability, however, is infinite. There are 2.5 quintillion bytes of data created each day at our current pace. That pace nonetheless is constantly accelerating with the growth of the Internet of things (IoT). Over the last two years alone, 90% of the data in the world was generated.

Once upon a time, the wealthiest were those with the most natural resources. Such as Saudi Arabia, which is the biggest exporter of oil in the world as it has the largest reserves of oil in the world. Today's world, however, is knowledge economy, where the more you know is proportional to the more you data you have.

Oil is now an extremely scarce resource, there is a limited quantity of this natural resource. Like any other national resource, it is bound to vanish someday. Data, on the other hand, isn't just abundant but also categorised as a cumulative resource. Meaning that it is only going to continuously increase over time.

Oil powered the transportation era, in the same way Data is also powering the emerging transportation options such as the driver less car or the hyperloop that can go upto 1200km per hour.

When oil is used at a certain place, it cannot be used again elsewhere. This results in natural tension, over who controls oil. If data is being used, it can be used again elsewhere without it ever running out.

As a tangible product oil has huge amounts of transportation and storage costs. As an intangible product, data has much lower friction transportation and storage costs.

Websites use your data- the topics you search for, the websites you visit, the links you “like” on social media, and so forth- to create a profile of your interests which they use to choose ads especially for you.

If you've ever purchased a new pair of shoes or simply browsed a few styles online, only to start noticing ads for those products on your sidebar, that's no coincidence. Websites are picking up on everything you search for in order to design a personalized advertising experience just for you.

Social media is also a rich field for social scientists, who collect and aggregate data on what we decide to share, post, like, and so on, in order to better observe an array of contemporary social trends.

Your data is much more valuable than you likely realize. In fact, there's a whole economy in place to buy and sell your online information. Data brokers collect your online data- everything from your name and address to your income and general internet activity- and sell it to other brokers or institutions who use it for various different purposes.

There are also plenty of ways your data could be used illegally. Thieves can use the data you share online to steal your identity, using your name and credit card information to make purchases of their own. While it's nearly impossible not to put any of that information online, it's important to be careful what websites

you use and make sure your passwords are secure in order to avoid having your personal information stolen.

In conclusion, the world is changing and so are the resources that drive it towards development and prosperity. Data can help us in ways that we are yet to imagine. It's use and relevance is far diverse from that of oil, yet we compare it to a rich resource like oil.

Data is only increasing and it is in our best interests to put it to use. Data can prove to be life saving and fatal at the same time. Data should be used with absolute caution as along with helping us it can prove to be quite dangerous.



Data is the
new **oil** of the
21st century

Women's Safety

-by Mihika Pant, Grade XII, SNS Noida



When will women feel safe?

The roads that mark Sarah Everard's last journey are wide and heavily trafficked. They are main roads, rather than side streets that may have gotten her home faster. **Hundreds of people - many of them young women just like Sarah - walk the same path she did, and consider the streets in and around them home.** Everything about Sarah's trip was entirely ordinary; until she was killed.

Sarah was first reported missing on March 4. In the days that followed, police surveyed footage, knocked on doors, spoke to more than 750 people and searched parklands and ponds for evidence. At midnight on March 9, Metropolitan Police announced they had arrested a serving police officer, Wayne Couzens, in connection

accused offenders. There are three areas where the UK is not yet compliant with the Istanbul Convention:

- Criminalising psychological violence
- Extraterritorial jurisdiction - prosecuting a UK national or person who lives here for conduct committed outside the UK
- Providing support to victims with refugee and migrant status

The safeguarding minister, Victoria Atkins, said the first two areas were being addressed through legislation in the coming months. She also said the government had opened the tendering process for a Support for Migrant Victims Scheme.

But the scheme will be piloted and reviewed which raises concerns that the ratification could be pushed back until 2022 or 2023 by the time migrant support is approved. Interestingly, Turkey was the first country to ratify this convention but withdrew from it just a few days ago.

In July 2020, UK's House of Commons passed the much-awaited Domestic Abuse Bill. The Bill creates Britain's first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic.

US laws and the Convention

Along similar lines, the US is the only established democracy in the world that has failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is often described as an international bill of rights for women.

It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. While US President Jimmy Carter signed the Convention in 1980, the United States never ratified it.

The issue of ratification of CEDAW has never even made it past the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where it has been stuck since 1980. The main arguments brought forward against CEDAW ratification are largely reflective of the cultural divide between American conservatives and progressives. Even if ratified, CEDAW like most other international treaties would still need national legislation to implement the provisions of the treaty.

A major federal law that the US does have for the safety of women is the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**. VAWA marked a major shift in the response to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. VAWA created a system for enforcement where there was none, while adding a comprehensive approach to ending gender-based violence by funding essential social services for victims and survivors.

However, according to the annual census of domestic violence programs from the National Network to End Domestic Violence, a snapshot of a single day saw 72,245 individuals receive services for shelter, housing, transportation, legal assistance, prevention and education, and counselling.

On that same day, an additional 11,441 requests for services went unmet because the programs did not have sufficient resources. Almost 40 percent of prevention programs had a waiting list of a month or longer.

Violence against women in India

India also has schemes similar to those in the US. The Indian government set up the Nirbhaya Fund in 2013 for projects for the safety and security of women. The Nirbhaya fund is primarily meant to implement three initiatives: One-Stop Centres (OSC), Universalisation of Women Helpline (WHL), and Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV).



The OSCs are meant to help women who are victims of violence by providing a range of services such as police, medical aid, legal aid, counselling and psychological support under one roof. But a lack of trained counsellors, failure to link centers with women helpline numbers in various states, and a lack of awareness among women have all meant that OSCs' reach remains limited.

It has also been found that many One Stop Centres have come to operate as centers of marriage counselling when faced with cases of domestic violence wherein the individuals involved are pushed to come to a compromise. There have been reports of faulty

functioning of One Stop Centres, especially in the state of Haryana where lack of resources and amenities, along with alleged police interference is creating more problems for women instead of solving them.

An analysis of the data shared by the government on the Nirbhaya Fund shows that of the Rs. 2,264 crore allocated to states and UTs, about 89% remains unused. No state has reported utilisation of over 50% of the fund. Six states and UTs - Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura and Daman & Diu - have not spent a single rupee from the fund allocated to them. The data also showed that Delhi, where the brutal Nirbhaya case took place, saw utilisation of less than 5 percent of the fund allocated to it.

Another step taken by the Indian government was the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. To ensure women's safety at their workplace, this Act seeks to protect them from sexual harassment. Popularly known as the POSH Act, it provides protection to all workers in the public, private, formal, and informal sectors including health, sports, education, or government institutions, and any place visited by the employee during the course of her employment, including transportation.

The act was a significant legislative step for India but for most women workers in the country, especially those in the informal sector, the law exists only on paper. A 2017 survey by the Indian National Bar Association found that sexual harassment was pervasive in different job sectors, ranging from lewd comments to an outright demand for sexual favours.

It found that most women chose not to report sexual

harassment to management because of stigma, fear of retribution, embarrassment, lack of awareness of reporting policies, or lack of confidence in the complaints mechanism.



There is also the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA). PWDVA has various provisions to address not only the immediate protection needs of the victim, but also to address their housing and financial needs by providing them protection from dispossession from their shared household, and compensation for their long-term physical and psychological care.

The PWDVA was considered to be a novel solution to a very complicated issue. After a case has been filed, many different kinds of organisations play a role in ensuring justice and rehabilitation to the victim. There are problems at each level of implementation. Protection officers (POs) are often overloaded with work and are not provided with guidelines in implementing certain provisions in the law.

Another flaw in the implementation of the law is that there is no uniform protocol for service providers. Service providers in this case are mostly NGOs, and often have no link with the police or with protection officers. Service home authorities are not trained under the PWDVA or taught to handle cases of domestic violence. These organisations lack adequate funding.

Further, speedy trials – the PWDVA mandates that the magistrate shall endeavour to dispose of every application filed, within a period of sixty from first day of its hearing—are not a reality. No court has been able to achieve this provision. In 2017, over ten years since the PWDVA was passed, over 1,000,000 cases were filed across the country under sections pertaining to “cruelty by husband” and dowry.

If anything is going to change, there needs to be a dramatic shift in culture. Simply creating laws to help women does nothing if they are never implemented. It's quite sad that in 2021 women still have to be scared to simply step out of their homes alone.



Asian is not a Virus

-by Jiya Gaur, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



"Asian is not a virus, racism is."

As rightly said by Hannah Yoon, To be Asian in America is to know that there will be times when you will be told that the country is not your home, that you should go back to where you came from. It is to know that there is an increasing chance you will get punched in the face or slit with a box cutter while walking home or sitting on a train or going to protest anti-Asian violence. To be Asian in Atlanta right now, or an Asian woman anywhere, is to know that six members of your community, who look like you, who loved their families like you, went to work and never came home and that the person charged is a 21-year-old White man.

On March 16th, 2021, nine people were victims of mass shooting in Georgia, Atlanta, 6 of whom were Asian Women. The suspect is a 21-year old white man and has been charged with eight counts of murder. The shooting took place at 3 spas in the metropolitan region of Atlanta. **While many attempted to justify the shooter by saying that "he was having a really bad day" the truth remains that it was a hate crime.**

Xiaojie Tan, one of the victims of the shooting dreamed of travelling the world and celebrating her 50th birthday with her daughter. She would have assembled with her child for a slice of her favourite strawberry fresh cream cake.

The Atlanta shooter took those chances away. Just like Tan, most of the victims were of Asian descent, once again drawing attention towards the ongoing surge of anti-Asian hate crimes fueled by racism, xenophobia, the global pandemic and political leaders.

This is only one of the numerous bone chilling incidents that have taken place over this year. **Vichar Ratanapakdee, an 84-year-old immigrant from Thailand** was known for his morning walks that lasted about an hour. It was a daily ritual that kept him healthy and well during the global pandemic.

It was just another day when he was walking through his neighbourhood after receiving the coronavirus vaccine when he was assaulted and shoved to the ground in a horrific manner. **Ratanapakdee did not regain consciousness after the attack. "I never see him again" were the words his daughter cried after hearing about her father.** While some may believe that Ratanapakdee was attacked sorely due to him being a senior citizen and vulnerable, the truth

remains in the fact that it was a hate crime with years of anti-Asian bigotry lying under the surface.

Noel Quintane, an elderly man of 61 years of age was riding the train to get to work in Harlem on Wednesday, February 3. Despite the fact that he was only trying to commute to work, a man walked by and kicked the bag that Quintana had set on the floor. Upon confrontation, the man took out a box cutter and slashed Noel's face, leaving him with severe injuries. This incident once again draws attention to the tumultuous rise of hate crimes.

Stereotypes are deadly. During the pandemic, people of Chinese descent have remained amongst the worst sufferers of hate crimes. An 89-year-old woman was attacked and set on fire. An inhumane act for which no justification can be given.

These are nothing but heinous crimes, or as legally termed, hate crimes. By definition, a hate crime is typically one involving violence, that is motivated by prejudice on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, or other grounds. These incidents have shaken the United States and millions of people worldwide. As a society, we have failed our duty.

While many may wonder why the crime rates against Asians have increased during the pandemic, it is important to note that these cases of injustice have always been there. Many have gone unnoticed and have remained silent.

It is neither new nor surprising. People take one look at those who are Chinese or Korean and blame them for the cause of the coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. Stereotyping and demonizing people has never been right or acceptable. Assuming

false accusations and notions only harms and scares those who are being targeted. The model minority myth is the false narrative that Asian Americans are a model minority.

These unrealistic expectations and stereotypes cause more harm than imaginable. The global pandemic is said to have caused an increase of 149% percent anti-Asian hate crimes since April last year. Chinese and Korean restaurants were vandalized with epithets such as “Stop eating dogs”.

Apart from physical hate crimes, internet trolls have taken to derogatory statements and have been harassing Asians online. **Not only this, but political leaders with great power over masses of people such as Donald Trump influenced the public with statements such as “China virus”.**

It is time to include Asians in our conversations. We need to demand justice for the innocents who have lost their lives. They were mothers, grandfathers and most of all, humans. **Degrading and discriminating against someone because of the colour of their skin, the features they possess and the cultural backgrounds they come from is wrong.** Equality can only be achieved once everyone is free to walk the streets without being attacked and beaten.

As a society, we must keep trying to eradicate the widespread inequality, discrimination and racism that Asian Americans continue to face till this date.



Freedom Of Academia

-by Aanya Makhija, Grade XII, SNS Noida

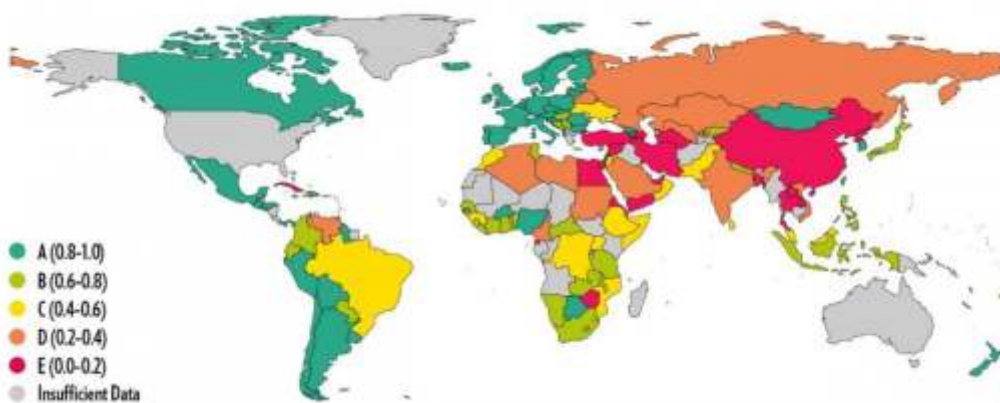


On March 17th this year, Pratap Bhanu Mehta resigned from Ashoka University as he thought he would be a “political liability” due to him being associated with the university. After 2 days, Arvind Subramanian also resigned from the same university as he said that Ashoka “can no longer provide space for academic expression and freedom”. C.P. Chandrasekhar of JNU resigned from a government panel set up to review India's statistical data in January 2020.

Professor Kholoud Saber from Egypt had her scholarship abroad terminated by Cairo University. Likewise, Professor Ahmad Reza Jalali, an Iranian-Swedish Doctor, was sentenced to death over espionage and being in collaboration with Israel. Patrick Zaki, an Egyptian postgraduate student has been detained in Egypt since February, 2020. He was pursuing a master's degree in 'Women and gender studies' at the University of

Bologna. Are we looking at a trend? Is there something under the covers that we can't fathom? Is the current political scenario forming a pattern for such instances to happen so regularly? Are we really dealing with a case of constrictive academic freedom?

We, in India, are not doing too well anyways on freedom of academia. Ref. chart below and look for saffron color! This study by 'Inside Higher Ed' shows the global levels of Academic Freedom as of 2019.



Pratap Bhanu Mehta is among India's most perceptive and most cutting columnists. The letter he wrote to students and his fellow faculty members after resignation explaining the reason for quitting while expressing his gratitude to both his students and colleagues for supporting him smells of frustration with the larger forces - the odor gets stronger if you pay attention to some of his past writings and interviews. In these earlier writings and speeches, we can see that he is critical of the government and openly voiced his opinions. One year back, in an interview with 'The Wire' he stated that "It's literally a who's who of this government basically declaring as openly as they can that they want to play a politics divisive... and the targets perpetually shift, it's not just minorities, its universities, anybody who dares to call themselves liberal..."

Over 150 academicians from international universities, including Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, and Cambridge, have come out in support of scholar Pratap Bhanu Mehta. These include Homi K Bhabha, Anne F Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University; Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean at UC Berkeley School of Law; Rogers Smith, Christopher H Browne Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania; among others - so this is no mean a list.

Arvind Subramanian, an economist and a professor at Ashoka University also gave in his resignation letter in support while stating that the university can no longer provide academic freedom and freedom of speech.

All these instances make it vividly clear that there is a growing need of freedom of Academia in modern society. Scholars and professors alike need to have a liberal platform to voice their thoughts, opinions and ideas. **For the growth of the society as well as the younger generations, it's necessary for academia to be free and value everyone's mindsets and suggestions.**

Students need to have the access to a multi-disciplinary approach and that can only be made possible through academic freedom. Inquiry-based learning can take place only if there is freedom of academia. **Inquiry-based learning is a form of learning that occurs by posing in questions, thoughts, ideas, problems and scenarios. New ideas, solutions, opinions and perspectives can only be expressed thoroughly if academia is liberal. These help in imparting contemporary knowledge and critical thinking skill.**

Suppression is not a virtue for any action - even lesser when it's being forced upon academia. History is ripe with examples of

Academia & scholarly having steered the society ahead, having shown us the next path - be it Gandhi or Marx or Dr. C V Raman or Vivekananda or Angela Davis or B. R. Ambedkar who were heard and made the difference.

There are also many examples like Galileo or Martin Luther King Jr or Nelson Mandela whose voices were suppressed but they were proven right and their research or suggestions paved the way forward.

We, as humans, our societies, our political ideologies are nothing but a speck in the larger scheme of the Universe, and eventually the right path, righteous thoughts propel ahead and prosper.



The US - China: Alaska Dispute

-by Arunima Singh, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



When the whole world was looking at Alaska summit with lot of hope and optimism for a positive outcome resulting into a new relationship between the two countries United States and China, whatever happened between the top officials of these two nations was anything but close to that.

The exchange, which happened before the world's media, got off to a fiery start and went on for quite an hour. On the 19th of March, 2021 the United States' National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary State Antony Blinken met in Anchorage, Alaska, with top Chinese diplomats Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi. The relationship between the two countries has been strained at its most for many years as the two countries have been at odds on many issues, from cyberattacks to trade. The relationship has steadily declined under former US President Donald Trump.

China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, who took part in the Alaska summit, stated "In the past few years, China-US relations deviated from the normal track, and has run into the biggest difficulties since the establishment of diplomatic ties." As the summit neared, each side began gesturing that any room for compromise was small this restrained the probabilities of real progress.

When the session commenced, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken read prepared remarks for all the journalists invited to observe the opening of the meeting, during which he promised to mention "deep concerns" the Biden administration had with some Chinese actions, Beijing's top diplomat.

Blinken said the U.S. will not stop holding China accountable for its actions in places like Hong Kong, where Beijing has cracked down on democracy and economy.

Yang Jiechi, immediately countered by warning the US to stop meddling in China's "internal affairs" and said that they ought to "stop advancing its own democracy within the rest of the world."

As Mr Blinken said the US would discuss their deep concerns with actions by China, including in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and cyber-attacks on the United States. "Each of those actions threaten the rules-based order that maintains global stability," he said.

In response, Mr Yang accused Washington of using its military might and financial supremacy to suppress other vulnerable countries. "It abuses so-called notions of national security to obstruct normal trade exchanges, and incite some countries to attack China," he added. Mr Yang said human rights in the US were at a low point, with black Americans being "slaughtered", and that many Americans

"actually have little confidence in the democracy of the United States."

Further discussions took place and the Chinese officials were angered when the U.S. announced new authorizations on 24 Hong Kong and Chinese people over the erosion of democratic freedoms in the prior colony. This action led some analysts to interpret and suggesting the U.S. had no desire to start out patching up the connection.

The session had started off with a rocky start when the two sides used opening statements that are considered obligatory with unusually blunt words in front the cameras to trade allegations and insults.

As the first session finished and closed, a senior White House official told reporters that the talks were "substantive, serious, and direct." Both the sides claimed that they utilised the session just as they had planned; to outline their interests and priorities. However, many current and former State Department diplomats, who asked to not be identified sharing their notion of the events, said they were horrified, saying that Blinken and Sullivan had lost control of the meetings.

The meeting's results emphasized that neither government feels the great urgency or immediate need to cooperate with the other. The U.S. and Chinese officials ended their first face-to-face talks of the Biden administration, saying they voiced their disagreements candidly over hours of conversations in Alaska.

After the talks in Alaska, it appears unlikely to result in closer ties between Washington and Beijing

Climate change, taking over the world?

-by Anwita Ganesh, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Today, we live in a world where Oxygen is not the only gas that we inhale. We live in a world where our own Earth's atmosphere has become poisonous for us to breathe and it not only affects our respiration but the whole of our bodies and basically all living organisms on this Earth.

We collectively emit 50 billion tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per year and this value has increased by more than 40% from 1990. So what do these greenhouse gas emissions really do to us? More importantly, what does it do to our planet Earth?

Greenhouse gases are what causes global warming. The more us humans emit these gases, the more global warming increases. There are many types of greenhouse gases for example **Carbon dioxide which is the most dominant one**, carbon monoxide,

Nitrous oxide, Ozone and so on and so forth. Now ozone is one of the most important layers of greenhouse gas that we know of. It's the layer that protects us from the harmful UV rays of the sun and other rays that can be harmful for Earth and all living organisms on the Earth.

Global warming leads to depletion of this very ozone layer that affects us. In fact, it has depleted so much that there is now a hole in the ozone layer in Australia (This is a contributing fact to why the weather there is hot and sunny at all times). This hole in the ozone layer has affected global climate more so than ever. Our ice caps are melting and animals like the polar bear or the snow leopard are endangered and have chances of even going extinct.

Researchers say by the time it's 2050, major cities and states like New York, San Diego, New Jersey, Florida and more, will all be submerged in water. All this will be the result of greenhouse gas emissions. If greenhouse gases are emitted in high quantity, these gases will make up our atmosphere therefore making it thicker. If this continues to happen then the heat produced would not be able to escape out into space like it is supposed to, instead it will stay trapped inside the Earth and would not be able to escape.

This increases the temperature on Earth which melts ice caps like the Arctics and since this ice has melted, sea water levels begin to rise which in turn submerges different regions and locations. This tells us how interconnected our Earth truly is and how we are dependent on everything around us.

Sea levels are rising and they will continue to rise unless and until something is done. The governments and parliaments all over the world have Sustainable Developmental goals for their countries

because it has been made necessary to do so for each country by the UN. This is a step taken in order to prevent this disaster from taking place.

Activists like Greta Thunberg are fighting for the Earth and are creating awareness all around the world so that everyone is alarmed about the fact that we truly do need to do something about this grave matter and should ponder and solve it in any way we can.

THE BEST TIME TO STOP IS...



Covid Vaccination In India

-by Maanya Malhotra, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



After almost a year of living with lockdowns and quarantines and all the uncertainty of a COVID19 world, on 16th January 2021, India began nation-wide vaccination against Covid 19, in 3006 centers. The drive that commenced earlier this year prioritizes healthcare and frontline worker, then those above the age of sixty followed by those above 45 with certain comorbidities. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Gueterres even went as far as to say that India's vaccine production capacity is the best asset the world has.

As of now, in India, two vaccines have been approved which are:

1. **Covishield by AstraZeneca:** It has been developed by Oxford University and its spinout company Vaccitech. It has a shelf life of at least 6 months

2. Covaxin by Bharat Biotech (in association with Indian Council of Medical Research and National Institute of Virology): On 3 March 2021, Bharat Biotech announced that the efficacy of this vaccine was 81% in interim results.

Each vaccine center in India will offer either Covishield or Covaxin, but not both. Several states have chosen to use only Covishield and keep Covaxin as buffer stock. Since Covaxin has not completed Phase 3 trials yet, all those who are receiving it need to sign a consent form.

On 16th January, 165714 people received the vaccination. Within the first days of vaccination there was concern about low turnout due to vaccine safety concerns, initial glitches with software and misinformation. By 1st March 2021, 14 million health care workers had been vaccinated, falling short of the original goal of 30 million. On this very day, vaccination commenced for people aged above 60 and people above 45 years of age with specific comorbidities. From 1st April 2021, all people above 45 will begin to be vaccinated.

For several days now, our country is experiencing a second wave of the virus, with cases having meteoric rises in several states, especially, Maharashtra. SBI's Group Chief Economic Advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh has published a report highlighting the following key points:

1. States like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Haryana have vaccinated over 20% of their elderly population while other states (Having a higher elderly population) like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra have vaccinated much less.

2. Though the second strain of COVID19 is more intense, the presence of vaccination will help.

India has been applauded by Congresswoman Karen Bass for sending vaccines to African countries as this shows deep faith in humanity of our nation. India delivered 30,000 vaccines to Botswana. Luis Amalgro (secretary general of Organisation of American States), during a hearing by Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Democracy in Latin America and Caribbean, commended India for a similar move in their region. As of now, India has sent more than 60 million doses of COVID19 vaccines to over 70 countries.

Gavi, who is co-leading the COVAX facility has released an official statement stating- "Delays in granting further export licenses for SII-produced vaccine doses are due to the increased demand of Covid-19 vaccines in India. SII has pledged that, alongside supplying India, it will prioritize the COVAX multilateral solution for equitable distribution.

COVAX is in talks with the Government of India with a view to ensure deliveries as quickly as possible." Amid rising cases and the opening of vaccination for all aged above 45, the government has asked Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India to prioritize deliveries to domestic markets. The government has also placed an order of 100 million doses with SII last week and is expecting deliveries soon.

Various private companies are also launching vaccination programmes for their employees. Swiggy announced that it will vaccinate 200,000 delivery partners against COVID19. IT Giants like Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Accenture said that they will be covering vaccination costs for their employees and their family

members who are eligible and choose to receive the vaccine. Reliance Industries wrote a letter to all of its staff stating that they would be vaccinating them and their family members free of cost.

All India Petroleum Dealers Association has written to the ministry to declare 700000 pump staffers as essential workers so that they get vaccinated. IndiGo and Capgemini are also going to bear the costs for vaccination of their employees and dependents. UpGrad and Amway plan to do the same. Wipro Consumer Care will reimburse India employees for vaccination.

Recently, there has been growing concern on the matter of the side effects of Covishield, especially whether it causes blood clotting or not. The AEFI committee (which closely keeps track and records adverse events following immunisations) has concluded that thrombosis events due to Covishield in India is not a problem. NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr VK Paul stated that "There is no signal whatsoever for this concern. **Covishield is safe, please proceed with its scale-up and uptake. We want to assure that there is no risk of blood clotting-related complications that were suspected in some nations with Covishield.**"

The second dosage period of Covishield has also been increased to 6-8 weeks as protection seems enhanced, if and only if, the second dose is administered between 6-8 weeks, but not later than 8 weeks.

It seems that we will return to our pre-covid normal world only after either our population is immune or if there is significant herd immunity. So its only natural that we hope that the vaccine is able to bring us back to normalcy after over a year of living in a COVID19 World.

Book Review: *The book Thief*

-by Maanya Malhotra, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



“As always, one of her books was next to her.”
— Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*

Markus Zusak wrote a revolutionary book. The story of a young girl, with a book in her hand, in nazi Germany. **It's a book about suffering, misery, words, fleeting moments of happiness and epiphanies.**

A story narrated by death is one worth reading truly. The novel is filled with meaningful sentences, rays of hope and words that can reform a person's life. Zusak has managed to portray Nazi Germany as a world that the young girl, Liesel and her best friend, Rudy cannot even begin to understand.

The story starts with the unfortunate death of Liesel's brother and her separation from her mother. She is placed in the house of the Hubermans as a foster child. The Hubermans don't have an easy life. They face money-issues, familial quarrels, ideal struggles. **But, what seems to amuse death as well, is that they get up, dust themselves off - resilient as ever and go ahead with their lives.**

What is truly ironic is Liesel's obsession with books even when she can barely read. She seems to find some sort of comfort, some essence of hope when she has a book in her hand. Her relationships with her friends and the members of her foster family are very simple but are shrouded in a cloud of complexity.

As a young girl, she was particularly fond of her foster father, Hans Hubermann, who was an accordionist. Rosa Hubermann, Liesel's foster mother, was a more aggressive and disciplinary figure in her life. Both Hans and Rosa loved Liesel, though, but had varied ways of showing it. It took Liesel some time to understand Rosa's affection for her, but she felt it right from the beginning.

Rudy Steiner, Liesel's best friend, who would look for her book in cold water, when it was thrown there, played a very important role in her life. He somehow helped her adjust to her less-than-generous circumstances.

He was obsessed with American athlete Jesse Owens, and would often imitate him. His confidence based on absolutely nothing was sometimes what kept her from going insane at times.

My favourite part of the book is the wonderful witty sayings of death inserted occasionally. Here is a glimpse into his beliefs:

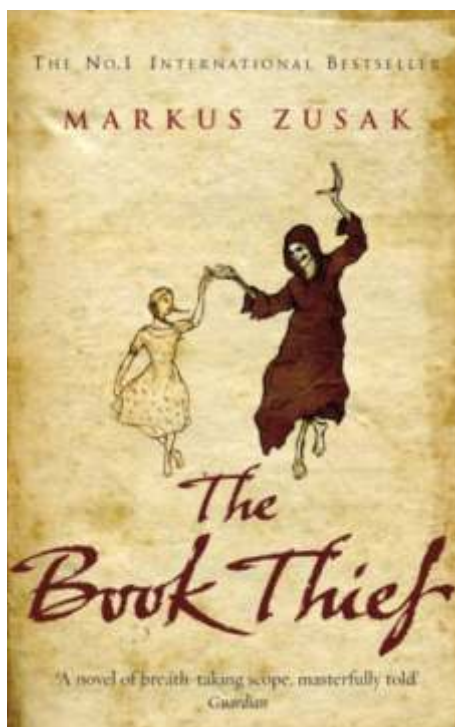
1. "Sometimes I arrive too early. I rush, and some people cling longer to life than expected."

2. " 'Not leaving': An act of trust and love, often deciphered by children."

3. "Would the gates shut behind her? Or would they have the goodwill to let her back out?"

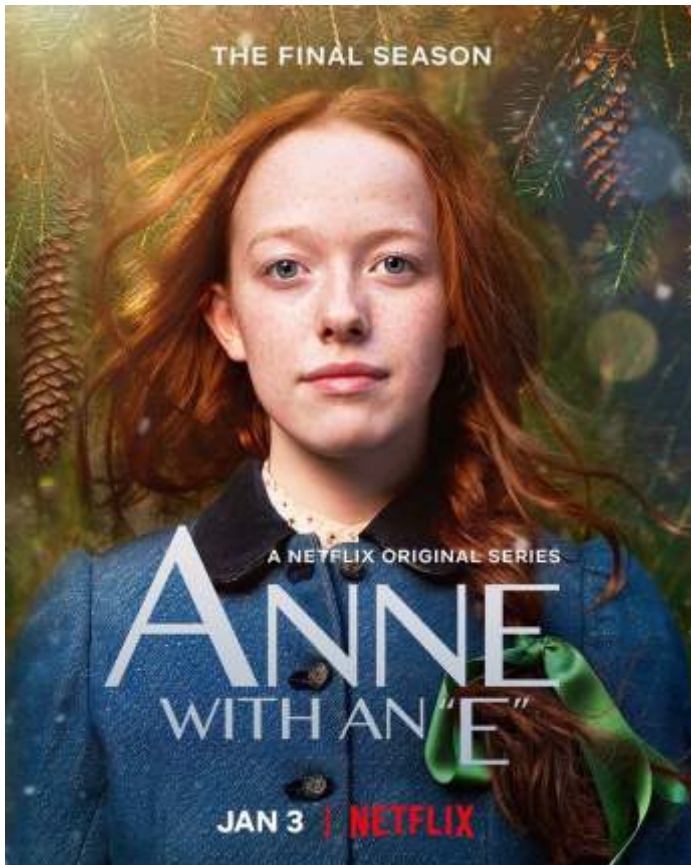
For the faint of heart, this book will make them yell with laughter and cry out with the sadness. For the strong hearted, they will sit with a pensive look on their face, wondering, why were things the way they were? Why couldn't they be better?

So read this book with an open mind and try not to get too attached to the characters, the end will just hurt you. In the words of the spirit of the book thief, read when you are in the dark, even though it might be tough without the light.



TV Series Review: *Anne With An E*

-by Vyoma Ial, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



The 20th century brought its challenges for all sections of society. But **without hesitation, we can all agree that women of the 20th century were strong, resilient and empowering.** Not only did they understand their strengths and that they weren't only meant to cook and clean, they also proved themselves to be adequate in other fields like sports, voting, business, music and various, or rather, all other fields.

'Anne with an E', an extended adaptation of the book *Anne of the Green Gables* by **Lucy Maud Montgomery**, addresses and depicts all these topics. It has 3 seasons in total and 27 episodes and the series casts Amybeth McNulty and Lucas Jade Zumann as the main character.

The seasons take us through the journey of Anne Shirley, a girl who has escaped an abusive childhood at an orphanage when, through some miscommunication, mistaken for a boy, she is adopted by ageing brother and sister, Marilla Cuthbert and Matthew Cuthbert when they need help with their agriculture. After proving herself worthy and desperate for a loving home, she is taken in by them even though they were not rather affluent.

In the first episode itself we see the strong, imaginative character of Anne, almost drawing her to us. It is apparent that she is not anything like a girl that Prince Edward Island has seen before. *She speaks up for herself, does not stay shut simply because she is a girl, stays strong on her opinion and has the imagination of a writer.*

'Anne with an E' battles issues such as racism, misogyny, suppression of Tribes, right to education and opinion and the importance of consent. It is a 13+ series which makes it great for educating all ages on such sensitive topics. *To simply put it, it is the story of progressive people born in suppressive times.* This series had a wide audience and got much love from its viewers. In fact, when the series was cancelled on Netflix and was not going to be continued for a 4th season, the internet was infuriated.

I would recommend everyone to watch this series. Beautifully directed and shot in one of the most scenic regions in Canada, it is a must watch. Maybe watch it with your family? One episode a day won't harm anyone.

Happy streaming:)

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