

E Pluribus Unum



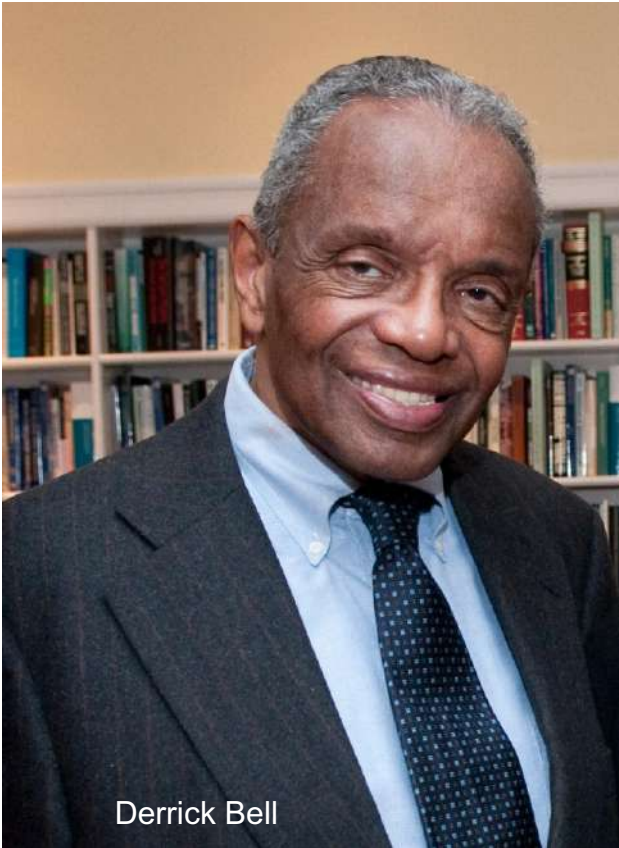
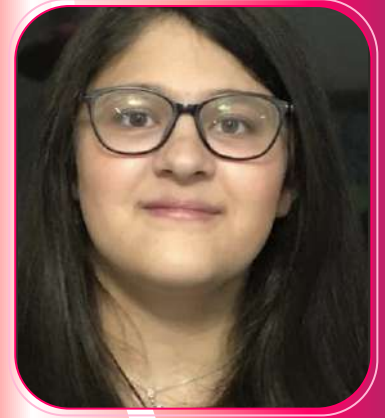
CRITICAL RACE THEORY

By Maanya Malhotra, X , SNS Gurugram

193 Member States<> One United Nations

Critical Race Theory

-by Maanya Malhotra, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



One of the first scholars of the Critical Race Theory, Derrick Bell, said “ It appears my worst fears have been realised: we have made progress in everything yet nothing has changed.”

Critical Race Theory simply provides techniques to analyse American History and legal institutions, by being cognizant of the fact that racial problems don't go away by being unaddressed.

The development of the Critical Race Theory originated from scholars like Derrick Bell and Kimberle Crenshaw as a response to slow legal processes and setbacks faced by African American Communities post the Civil War and through the Civil Rights Era.

To be able to understand the Critical Race Theory, it is important to first be aware of some of the fundamental issues, as listed below:

1. After nearly 304 years of enslavement, the erstwhile slaves gained equal protection under the law owing to the 14th Amendment in 1968. The subsequent 15th amendment in 1870, guaranteed voting rights for men regardless of race and previous conditions of servitude.

2. During the period which historians refer to as Radical Reconstruction (1866-1877), African Americans began businesses and became involved in local governments and some were even elected to the Congress. Unfortunately, this progress was, over time diminished by laws in the Southern States of the USA. The Jim Crow Laws, which advocated segregation across the country in all aspects of life, contributed to the same.

3. The Civil Rights movement, using civil disobedience and nonviolent protests, succeeded in banning explicit legal discrimination and segregation as well as promoting equal access to work and housing and extended federal protection of voting rights. The movement however did not have an effect in terms of racial wealth gap.

To be precise, the Critical Race Theory is a field of intellectual inquiry that demonstrates the legal codification of racism in America. Through the study of US Law and US History, it endeavors to expose how racial oppression has played a fundamental role in constructing the very fabric of the US Legal System.

A few popular beliefs amongst the theorists are:

1. Race is a social construct, not a fundamental or essential part of biology. The geography and origin of person does play a part in defining one's race but societies simply make up the rest of the paraphernalia associated with race. **An example of this could be that of the 19th and early 20th century scientists thinking that people of colour are intellectually or morally inferior.** These false associations were then used to justify their racist approaches.

2. Such racial views have been codified into USA's foundation documents and legal documents. The **"Three-fifths compromise"** would be the perfect example of this. Herein, and this is one from the yesteryears, slaves who were denied the right to vote were nonetheless treated as a part of the population for increasing congressional representation of slave holding states.

3. **Considering how aplenty racism is in the US legal system and institutions, racism itself in the society would not appear as out of the ordinary.**

4. Elements like race and gender can lead to compounded discrimination, simply ignoring protection of civil rights. **Kimberle Crenshaw states candidly that she feels that there is a lack of legal protection for Black Women.**

5. Not only do they want to examine these laws, they want to change them for good.

Christopher F Rufo, a conservative activist, who with the help of Fox News set into motion the panic over critical race theory. He uses words like hostile, academic, divisive, race-obsessed, poisonous

and elitist to describe it. Rufo also wrote that CRT assumes that whites are born racist, which he went as far as to call “textbook cult indoctrination”.

On Fox News, Rufo even said, “Conservatives need to wake up. This is an existential threat to the United States. And the bureaucracy, even under Trump, is being weaponized against core American values. And I'd like to make it explicit: The President and the White House-- its within their authority to immediately issue an executive order to abolish critical-race theory training from the federal government.

And I call on the president to immediately issue this executive order-- to stamp out this destructive, divisive, pseudoscientificideology”.

Conservatives in state legislatures across the USA have proposed and in some cases passed legislation banning or restricting critical race theory instruction or seminars.

Rufo has advised on the language for more than 10 bills. Many liberals responded to the campaign against critical race theory by primarily arguing that the ones defaming it know nothing about it. The liberals also suggested that the grassroots outrage was really the work of Republican operatives.

A controversial topic such as this is often in the limelight, making varying political and social views and outlooks on the same come as no surprise. Its use in the K-12 classrooms sparked quite the debate on whether children should be taught about it and if so, what was the best way to do this.

To conclude simply, the critical race theory was developed by scholars to examine the inherent racial aspects of the US legal system. In our dynamic world, where social and political views change by the second, it is but natural for the critical race theory to take on new meanings.

As it takes on new meanings, there will always be people coming up with new ways to contradict it. The important thing is that each person should think about these meanings carefully and make an informed and unbiased decision, which is what the critical race theory wanted to achieve.



Canada's History: The Dark Side

-by Mihika Pant, Grade XII, SNS Noida



Canada has recently been rocked by the discovery of remains of indigenous children all over the country. On May 27, the remains of 215 children were found at the site of a former residential school in British Columbia. This first find at the Kamloops school led to excavation being done around many other former institutions for indigenous children.

In late June, Cowessess First Nation (an indigenous organisation) found 751 more unmarked graves in Saskatchewan. They called this "the most significantly substantial" discovery of graves of Canadian indigenous children to date. Since then, indigenous groups have uncovered more sites, taking the number of unregistered graves to more than 1000. A First Nations Chief said that the graves may have been marked at some point, but the Catholic Church removed the headstones. Doing so is a

crime in Canada, and the site is being treated as a crime scene.

They may have different customs and cultures, but indigenous people across countries face the same harsh realities. They are forcibly removed from their ancestral lands, not allowed to practice their culture, subject to violence and abuse, and treated as second-class citizens. Indigenous people are often marginalised and have to face discrimination, even in the legal systems of their countries.

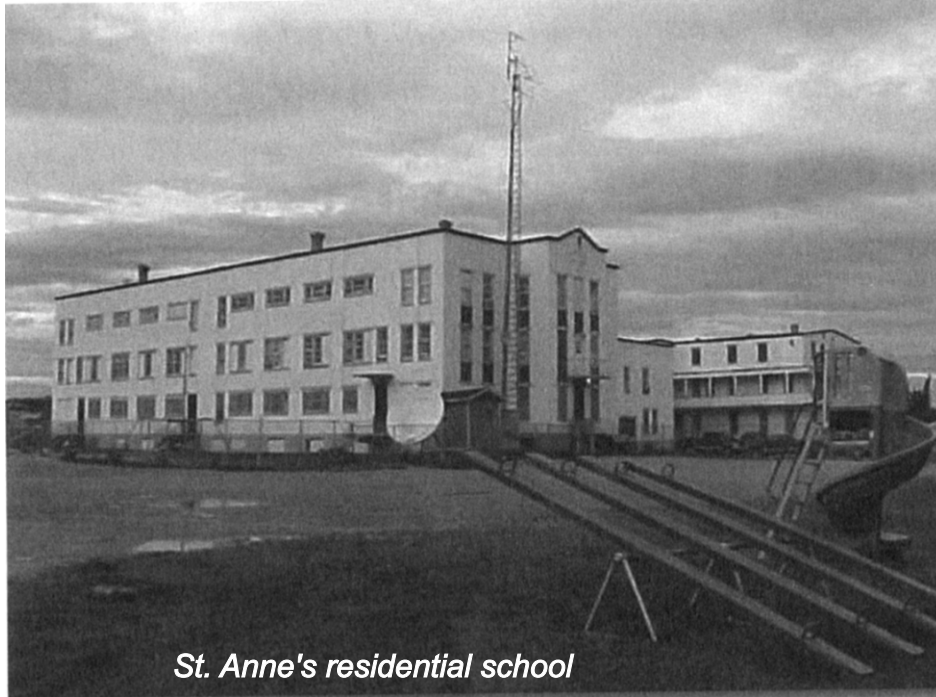


What are residential schools?

The residential school system was a federal government initiative started to forcefully assimilate indigenous children into the Canadian way of life. The system was started in the 19th century, and there were over 130 residential schools across Canada. The schools were run by churches, mostly the Catholic Church.

Attendance was mandatory and approximately 150,000 indigenous children were forcefully taken from their families and sent to these schools. Many of them never reunited with their families. At the residential schools, the children were not allowed to speak their language or practice their culture. Many of them were physically, emotionally, and sexually abused.

The notorious St. Anne's residential school in northern Ontario built their own electric chair to punish students. The children died mainly due to tuberculosis, malnutrition, and other illnesses caused by the inhumane conditions they had to live in.



St. Anne's residential school

The authorities didn't even hand over the bodies of the children to their families. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up in 2008 to investigate the residential school system, estimated that about 4100 of these students either died or went missing. The Commission said it was impossible to know the exact number of deaths because of the schools' burial policies and poor record keeping.

They gathered more than 7000 statements from survivors of residential schools to prepare a report highlighting the truth behind the system. The report concluded that the system was, essentially, a "cultural genocide". Although the last residential schools were shut down in 1996, their painful legacy still continues today.

How have other countries treated their indigenous people?

The residential schools in Canada were inspired by boarding schools for indigenous children in the US. The schools sought to culturally assimilate thousands of Native American children by relocating them from their families to distant residential facilities located in white communities.

The children were taught to replace tribal practices with Christian ones. They were given Anglo names. Their native languages and cultural practices were forbidden. "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man," is a famous quote made by the founder of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School.



The children had to study manual labour and housekeeping, and had to keep the school self-sufficient by labouring when they were not in the classroom. Students died of diseases like influenza, smallpox, and tuberculosis. The schools had their own cemeteries and students often had to build their own classmates' coffins. Some students also committed suicide or ran away. The practice was so

widespread that schools offered bounties for runaways. "The temptation to return to their wild life, with the savage influences surrounding them, is no doubt very strong," wrote one newspaper. 15 boarding schools and 73 total schools for Native Americans remain open as of 2021, with federal funding.



In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, known as the Stolen Generation, were removed from their families in the 1900s. The children were forced to adopt white culture. They were not allowed to speak their native languages or refer to themselves by the names their parents gave them.

Most of the children had to stay in institutions where neglect and abuse was rampant. Many of them were adopted by white families throughout Australia, and used for domestic work. The removal of these children disrupted the transfer of knowledge and culture between generations. Out of more than 250 indigenous Australian languages, only 140 are still spoken and 110 are critically endangered.

What was the public reaction?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called the findings at

Kamloops and Marieval residential schools, “a shameful reminder of the systemic racism, discrimination and injustice that indigenous peoples have faced — and continue to face — in this country.

Together, we must acknowledge this truth, learn from our past and walk the shared path of reconciliation, so we can build a better future," he said. "I recognize these findings only deepen the pain that families, survivors, and all indigenous peoples and communities are already feeling, and that they reaffirm a truth that they have long known.

The hurt and the trauma that you feel is Canada's responsibility to bear, and the government will continue to provide indigenous communities across the country with the funding and resources they need to bring these terrible wrongs to light. While we cannot bring back those who were lost, we can – and we will – tell the truth of these injustices, and we will forever honour their memory."

During his campaign, Justin Trudeau had promised that addressing the problems of indigenous people would be central to his agenda, but indigenous groups say that the government has only implemented 10 of the 94 “Calls to Action” made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 6 years ago. The Trudeau government had set aside 27 million dollars to search for indigenous graves, but did not release the funds until after the events of May.

There were many calls for the Pope and Catholic Church to apologise, including from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Trudeau also blasted the church for being “silent and not stepping up”. He called on it to formally apologise and make amends for the role it played in the residential school system. In June, Pope Francis said “I am following with pain the news that arrives from Canada

about the upsetting discovery of the remains of 215 children. I join with the Canadian bishops and the entire Catholic church in Canada in expressing my closeness to the Canadian people traumatised by the shocking news.

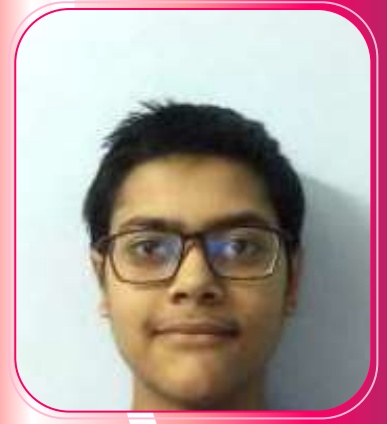
This sad discovery adds to the awareness of the sorrows and sufferings of the past", but did not actually apologise. In 2018, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said the Pope could not personally apologise for the residential schools. There have been several attacks on churches around Canada, and many of them have been burned.

Cities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick cancelled Canada Day celebrations on July 1 in protest. Canada Day has a history of controversy for indigenous people, who see it as a celebration of their marginalisation. "I hear people say that Canada is the greatest nation, but many choose not to acknowledge this country's true history with indigenous people and the legacy that continues to this day," an indigenous representative said in a statement.

Although Canada Day celebrations were held, Justin Trudeau kept flags flying at half-mast on all federal buildings, to symbolise the mourning of the indigenous children. Statues of figures involved with residential schools, including Canada's first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, have been vandalised or removed throughout the country.

100 years of: Communism in China

-by Akshay Bhatia, Grade X, SNS Faridabad



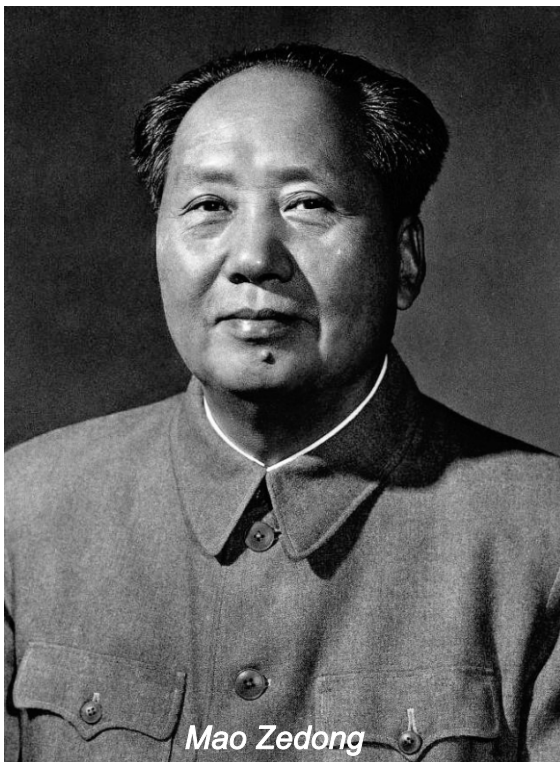
1st July 2021 marked 100 years of communism in China. The Chinese Communist Party was founded on 1st July, 1921. Let us see in brief the history of communism and communist rule in China.

Beginning

The beginning of the 20th century saw the end of dynasty rule in China. The republic of China was established in 1912, whose president was Sun Yat-Sen. Yuan Shikai became the president, and later declared himself as the emperor, which was disliked by people. However, he passed away in 1916, which marked the beginning of the warlord era in China, in which there was no centralized leadership. Sun Yat-Sen

established a revolutionary government to try to consolidate power again and re-establish the republic of China. Sun Yat-Sen died in 1925.

The Chinese communist party(CCP) or the Communist party of China(CPC) was founded in 1921. The demise of Sun Yat-Sen was the cause of tensions between communists and Kuomintang (Chinese nationalist party), each party claiming to really represent the ideology of Sun Yat-Sen. Hence, the Chinese civil war began in 1927, lasting intermittently till 1949. It ended with the victory of CPC, and establishment of the People's republic in China.



Mao Zedong

Mao Era (1949-1976)

After the establishment of the People's republic, Mao Zedong became the new leader of the country. Once in office, Mao led many radical changes in China.

Land reforms - the government initiated land reforms, which involved seizure of land from the landowners, and its consequent distribution among the people. **Although the rich landowners were beaten by the government, there was no protest. This policy lasted till 1953, and the persecution of landlords and rich peasants is estimated to have caused from about 2 lakh to 50 lakh deaths.**

Great Leap Forward - January of 1958 saw the initiation of the infamous 'Great Leap Forward' Policy - a complete disaster. This policy aimed at great advancement in food grains and industry. People had to produce more steel and work as farm labourers. **The policy had the support of people in the beginning, because they could now get food in the commune kitchens.**



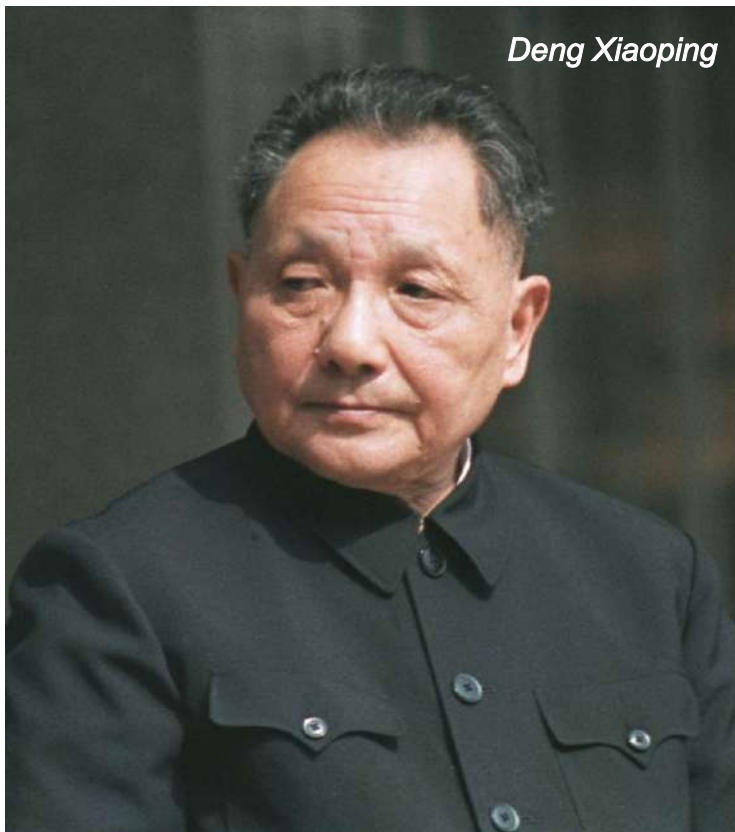
However, the policy had many horrible effects. Sparrows were killed as they ate grains. The population of locusts increased, since their predators were now less in number. This led to locust attacks, causing great destruction of crops. **Deep ploughing also caused a lot of damage to crops. In the countryside, there was starvation because grain was exported to the urban areas even though there was no increase in production.**

The cities were also soon consumed by the famine, as export of food lessened. Estimates show that about 1.8 crore to 4.5 crore people died due to the famine, which has been considered as the worst man-made disaster in history.

Cultural revolution - a cultural revolution was launched by Mao, to establish communism in China and destroy the influence of other traditions and ideology. A book was published to spread Maoist ideas, called Mao's little red book. The youth who studied this book were known as red guards.

Anyone opposing Mao's ideology was beaten or even killed. The red guards would even torture their teachers and parents. There was great violence. The Chinese cultural revolution, causing an estimated 2.2 crore deaths, ended with the demise of Mao Zedong.

Deng Era(1978-1989)



After the death of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping became the new leader. He is regarded as the father of reforms, who opened China to the rest of the world.

Economic reforms - in 1978, Deng initiated economic reforms, which improved China's economy greatly. He even paid a visit to the United States, convincing businessmen to invest in China. Deng also set up special economic zones, where factories were exempted, markets were opened to them, and tax was relieved.

Chinese agriculture, which had suffered horribly in the policy of Great Leap Forward, also improved. These economic reforms brought an incredible change in the country, and it is because of these that Deng Xiaoping came to be known as the 'Architect of modern China'

One child policy - the strict implementation of the 'one-child policy' began in 1980. This was initiated to control the increasing population, though it is debated that this policy did not decrease the birth rates very significantly.

However in many cases, and to many groups of people, having two children was allowed and thus, almost half of the parents had a two-child limit. This policy was repealed in 2015 and replaced by a two-child policy.

Tiananmen Square Massacre(1989)

On 4th June, 1989, the infamous Tiananmen Square Massacre took place in Beijing. On 15th April, 1989, Hu Yaobang, a leading reformer, died. Many students came to mourn his death, but soon started demanding democracy and liberty. The government

tried to make them return, but did not succeed. The students erected a 33 feet long statue on 30th may, called the 'Goddess of Democracy'. 3 days later, Chinese troops fired at the students, who were unarmed. They were trampled upon by tanks.



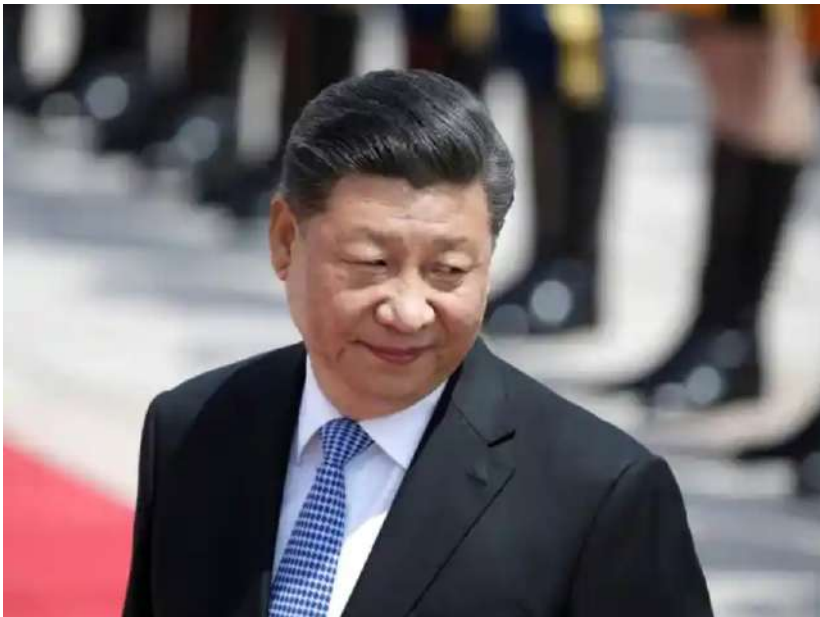
A very infamous video was recorded on that day, which showed a single student facing three tanks. A few soldiers were also attacked by students. Some students had to flee from the country. The number of student deaths due to the massacre is not clear. Although China gives a death toll of 241, this data is mostly considered to be false, and estimates vary from 800 to 10,000 deaths.

Jiang Zemin (1989-2002)

Soon after the Tiananmen Square Massacre, Jiang Zemin became the new leader. Under his rule, the Handover of Hong Kong took place. Hong Kong had remained a british colony for 156 years. On 1 July, 1997, it again became a part of the People's Republic of China. Similarly, Macau, earlier a portugal colony, 'returned' to the Republic. Jiang Zemin was succeeded by Hu Jiantao(2002-2012).

Xi Jinping(2013-present)

On 14th March, 2013, Xi Jinping became the president of China. In 2018, the term limits of president and vice president were removed, and hence Xi Jinping could rule as long as he lived. In the same year, the China-US trade war began. **There have been scientific advancements during this time, such as the launching of China's first space laboratory, Dark Matter Particle Explorer, in December 2015.**



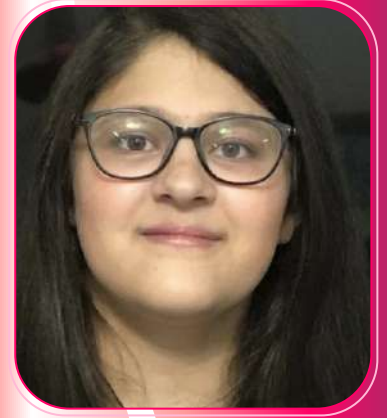
In May 2020, tensions began on the India-China border in Ladakh. Many reasons have been given for this, such as China's plans to capture more territory, and the growing US-India association.

Conclusion

Communism in China has taken different forms through the years. Many times the policies and moves of the government do not seem to coincide with the ideals of communism. **These 100 years have involved enormous changes, and it is indeed difficult to imagine what we would see in the next 100 years.**

Chinese Communist Party Centenary Celebrations

-by Maanya Malhotra, Grade X, SNS Gurugram

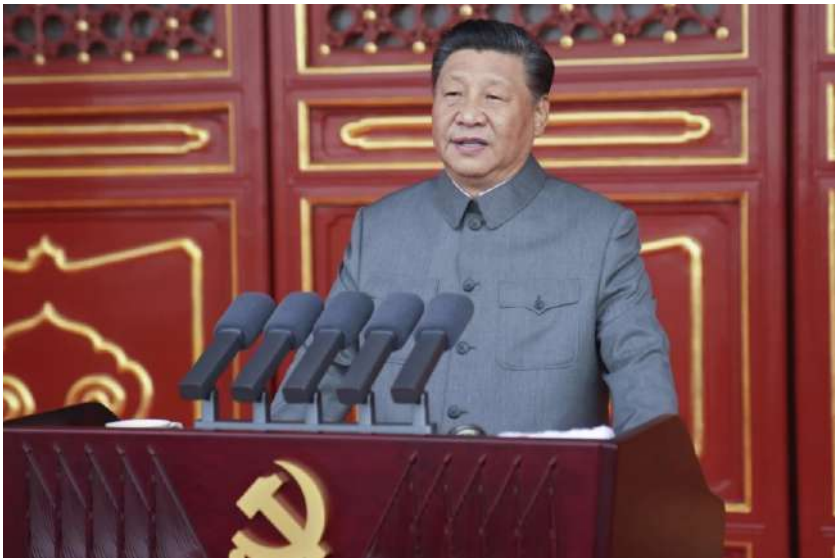


Napoleon once said, "Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world". In our current times we are witnessing what Napoleon foreseed nearly four centuries ago. China has an eclectic set of accomplishments from being the largest manufacturing country, having the largest population, home to the world's largest palace and largest high speed rail network. Their potential and achievements can only be denied by those living under rocks.

One of the highlights of China is the Communist Party of China popularly known as the Chinese Communist Party or the CCP. The CCP is the founding and sole governing body of the People's Republic of China. It leads 8 other legally permitted, subordinated minor parties together as the United Front. The CCP was founded on 1 July 1921, mainly by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao with the aid of Eastern Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Far Eastern Secretariat of the Communist International.

The CCP is officially organized taking inspiration from democratic centralism, a principle that was the brain child of Marxist theoretician Vladimir Lenin which elaborates on a democratic and open discussion on policy on the condition of unity in upholding the agreed upon politics.

The party leader is the country's paramount leader who is currently Xi Jinping who was elected on 15 November 2012. Being the leader of one of the most prosperous countries in the world he is most always in the news for reasons which may lie beyond good and evil.



Marxism-Leninism was the first ideology of the CCP. As per them, "Marxism-Leninism reveals the universal laws governing the development of history of human society." To them it provides a "vision of the contradictions in capitalist society and of the inevitability of a future socialist and communist societies".

The funding of all CCP organisations mainly comes from state fiscal revenue. To join the party, an applicant must be approved by the CCP. In 2014, only 2 Million were accepted out of the 22 Million applicants. Very recently the centennial celebrations of the Chinese

Communist Party took place. Leading up to the centenary celebrations, the Chinese Government has been promoting Xi Jinping's outlook on history as the new orthodoxy. Internet screening and censorship were augmented and simultaneously museums across the country prepared exhibits on the history of the CCP. Billboards and banners have been decked up with praises for them with slogans such as, "Listen to the party, appreciate the party, follow the party!"

The film industry paid their own tribute to the centennial celebrations by mandating local film organizations and the likes to promote and screen "outstanding films", "works focused on themes of loving the party, loving the nation and loving socialism" and "eulogising the party." CCTV even went ahead to produce a patriotic TV series titled "The Awakening Age" which is centered around the Chinese Revolutionary History from 1915 to 1921.

The first full rehearsal for the celebrations happened on 13 June 2021. In regard to this, security was ramped up, with a notable increase in number of officers of the People's Armed Police and officers of the state security police in Beijing.

The first press conference related to these celebrations was hosted on the twenty seventh of June 2021. In Hong Kong, the police was mobilised to prevent any protesting and Victoria Park (the start point of the annual march) was sealed and all occupants were banished.

All through June 2021, light shows were organised in several cities including Shanghai and Beijing. A gala produced by China Central Television was held at the Beijing National Stadium on 28 June 2021. There was a firework show and a rendition of "Without

the Communist Party, there would be No New China”.

A huge national ceremony accompanied by a rally took place on Tiananmen Square in Beijing with a crowd of 70,000 people. The event began with the PLA Honour Guard raising the flag followed by a salute, performed by 56 gunners. The flag of China was raised to the national anthem of China, “March of the Volunteers”. 71 People's Liberation Army Air Force fighters flew over Tiananmen Square with helicopters and fighter jets forming the numbers 100 and 71.

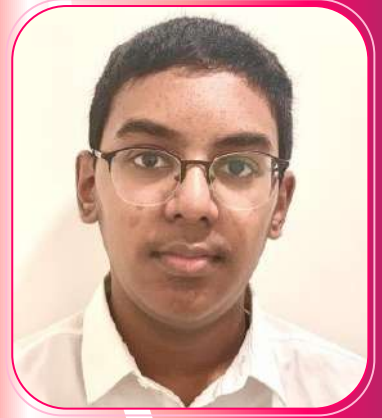
General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an hour long speech in which he declared the realisation of the first of the two “Two Centenaries Goals”. Jinping went as far as to say that “ any foreign force that attempted to bully China would find their heads broken and bashed bloody against the great wall of steel forged by the blood and flesh of 1.4 Billion Chinese people”.

As expected he praised the communist party and even said that there was a need to “crush any Taiwan Independence”. He also wanted social stability, sovereignty and security of China should be maintained in Hong Kong.

The Communist Party has a rich legacy that they feel deserves to be honoured in the best way possible. The USA however endeavors to disagree by suggesting that there is no reason for celebration and the party must reflect on their history. Leaving the political aspects aside, spectators said that the celebration was simply marvelous, a delight to watch and proud moment for the Chinese.

Israel- Palestine Conflict:

-by Ashutosh Sudaresh, Grade X, SNS Faridabad



History:

In May this year, people around the world came to know about the series of bloody clashes between Israel and Palestine. It was a conflict which resulted in significant loss of life and property and both sides showed no signs of withdrawing. What most people do not realise is that this highly publicized conflict this year is a part of an on-going decades-long conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The modern phase of the conflict began in the early 20th century. Until 1922, Palestine was one of the provinces of Turkish Ottoman Empire. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the first World War, Palestine came under British control and remained under the British rule until 1948. There was a clear increase in Jewish

immigrants to Palestine during this time. This escalated tensions between the Arab Muslims and the Jews.

The beginning of the modern conflict:

Thus, Britain brought up the Palestine Issue to the UN in 1947. The UN suggested a partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish States with the city of Jerusalem becoming a separate entity to be governed by a special international regime under the UN. The Jews accepted this plan but the Arabs were against it.

However, the Jews of Palestine went ahead and created an independent sovereign state in 1948. The history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict began with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Full-scale hostilities were seen during this time in the 1947–48 civil war. After the creation of Israel, there has been a series of Arab-Israel wars and armed clashes from time to time, the most recent conflict being the one in May 2021.

Seizing of land:

Today's borders in this region largely reflect the outcomes of two of these wars, the 1948 war and another war waged in 1967. The 1967 war is particularly important for today's conflict, as it left Israel in control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, two territories home to large Palestinian populations. The Arabs continuously resisted against the Jews during this entire time as they saw the land as rightfully theirs. However, the Jews were successful in setting up their own nation State, Israel, as well as being able to take control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in armed conflicts. The West Bank is nominally controlled by the Palestinian Authority but is today under Israeli occupation.

The conflict today:

The 5 million Palestinians living in Gaza and The West Bank do not enjoy the same freedoms and rights as the Israeli citizens. The Israeli citizens, around 65% of which are Jews, live in relative comfort to the Palestinians. Israel is a democracy and is recognized as a member of the UN.

An Israeli citizen is free to use their passport to travel and trade in any part of the world. The Palestinians in Gaza and The West Bank however, live in an occupied territory governed by Israel. This territory was never officially annexed leading to these Palestinians not being citizens of Israel.

These Palestinians are forced to live their lives under decisions made by Israeli politicians and army generals. They cannot build houses, start new businesses outside their current cities, cultivate a healthy economy, import or export good without permits from the Israeli Government.

Conclusion:

It is essential that people around the world support the fight for the rights of these Palestinians. It is important that people do not support the violence on either side, but to instead support the Palestinians' wish to having rights to live like a citizen in any other Democratic country in the world. They deserve access and control over the land which has historically been theirs. The Palestinians cannot be left out as refugees on land which is historically theirs. A two-state system must be worked out, giving sovereignty to the Palestinians in the regions of Gaza and the West Bank, with Israel being allowed to maintain their rule over the rest of the land.

Freedom of Religion in France: Secularism or Islamophobia?

-by Naisha Arora, Grade XI, SNS Gurugram



We have all heard of the term secularism, be it in our civics textbooks or through a political debate on the television. Secularism means the separation of religion from the state and civic affairs. *"Secular states do not discriminate or favour individuals to groups based on their religious beliefs. Secular governments shall not interfere with religion and its activities, and faith shall not play a role in law and policy-making decisions. If a country wishes to have true freedom of religion, establishing a secular state is crucial."*

However, secularism can manifest itself in various different ways. It means and manifests differently in different states, often based on their history and culture. *For India, secularism means giving people freedom to practice their religion without it interfering in state laws and no discrimination on the basis of religion.*

In France on the other hand, secularism takes a form which is a little stricter. In 2004, France banned all overtly conspicuous religious symbols for children under in schools. This included but was not limited to- hijabs, niqabs, kippahs and large catholic crosses. They did this with the motive of preventing discrimination and parent-imposed dogmas on children.

To an extent, I agree that this is fairly reasonable to have if the measures were not as stringent. Children deserve to be able to explore themselves and their identities, especially in school. However, this was a decision which received a fair bit of political and social support in upholding secularism in France.

The people believed that banning ostentatious religious symbols in school would demote the practice of secularism in France. Islam is currently the second largest religion in France. This means that a great deal of French population believes in their faith and their religion, viewing it as a positive force for human development.

The French secularism hence poses a threat to their practice of their religion. This has led us to the battle over Islamic veils worn by women (The hijab and the niqab) and the freedom of religion in France.

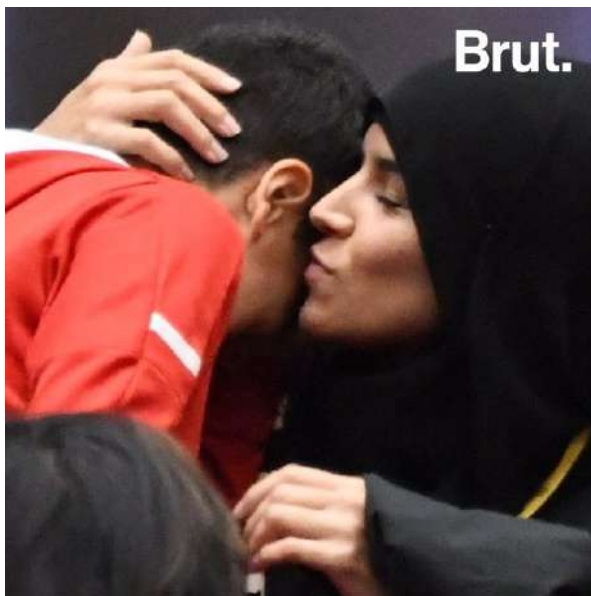
In 2010, the National Assembly in France passed a law prohibiting the use of Islamic face veils in public places. This law also imposed a fine on any woman who chose to wear the veil in public and made their reeducation through "a citizenship course" mandatory.

This was done believing that a Muslim woman who covers her face is oppressed and placed in a situation of "exclusion and

inferiority” as stated by the Constitutional Council in France. Many women took to social media and very public protests stating that wearing a face covering was their choice and that them wearing them was not a form of oppression but not allowing them to freely practice their religion was.

An anonymous woman stood up against this law stating that she was willing to remove her veil for security reasons such as at the airport but should be allowed to wear it in public as she wished. Unsurprisingly, she lost the case, perhaps because of lack of public support. In 2016, a law was also created to ban the burqini- a full body covering swimsuit for women and even though it was later outlawed, this begs the question: **Is this the promotion of secularism or islamophobia?**

Just recently, in October 2019, a woman accompanying her son along with a horde of school children to a French council meeting was asked to remove her Islamic veil in the name of French laïcité or secularism by a far-right politician named Julien Odoul, the leader of the National Rally in France.



The president of the council, Marie Guite Dufay, told Odoul that neither French national law nor the rules of the regional council prohibited her from wearing her veil in the meeting. She further stated that this is how divides in the society deepen and a culture of hatred emerges and that the request was awful, a statement I happen to completely agree with.

The image of this mother comforting her crying son along with the video of Odoul asking her to remove her religious veil later went viral and ignited a spark of indignation amongst Muslim women who choose to cover their face.

This outrage, I believe, is justified for it should be the woman who gets to choose what she wishes to wear and what she doesn't. Whether she covers her face or flaunts her beauty is her choice and the state banning face veils for Islamic women is not justified.

Let's discuss a situation pertaining to a more recent time- the period of lockdown and quarantine amidst the global pandemic. Most countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have adopted a similar strategy to make masks compulsory in any and all public spaces in order to inhibit the virus from spreading and France is no different, well not significantly different anyway.

The Islamic face veil or the niqab has been proven to be just as effective as a mask, if not more. However, despite masks becoming compulsory, the niqab and hijab still remain outlawed which is an irony most people smirk at and scorn the government for.

It is also theorized that these laws and incidents border on the principle of islamophobia and are discriminatory ideas which hinder Muslim women's right to freedom of religion and self-

expression. Sources showed that banning the face veil would lead to women leaving their house less often and not being able to properly avail the developmental facilities offered by the country hence hindering national development in an indirect sense.

I personally believe that while secularism is necessary for the administration of a country with diverse cultures and religions, it should not be propagated to such an extent so as to make a community feel oppressed and violated of their fundamental rights. The question that now remains is this- how far must the state interfere in religion?



The Emergency

-by Agastya Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



What was the emergency?

The emergency was one of the darkest time periods in modern Indian history. It was more than 1 and a half years where all forms of constitutional laws and even fundamental rights cast aside, and some form of a dictatorship was formed.

It was the 3rd emergency in the history of India (the first two were during the Indo-China and Indo- Pak War). While there is no single reason to pin-point why the Emergency happened, what I can tell you is that **it all started because of greed.**

The events leading up to the declaration of the Emergency-

2.The JP Movement- 1974

-Another student protest sprung up in Bihar, following in the footsteps and success of the student protests in Gujarat. It was led by a freedom fighter Jayaprakash Narayan who was a socialist leader, which led to it being called the JP Movement. This protest was not as successful as the Gujarat protest, and instead was one of the reasons why the Emergency was declared.

-Even though the protest was very popular and even resulted many opposition Parties joining the protest, it was disregarded by PM Indira Gandhi. Mrs Gandhi issued a challenge to Mr Jayaprakash Narayan to face each other in the election, but the Emergency was declared before the election could happen.



3.The Railways Strike- 1974

-In between the turmoil in Bihar during the protests, another Socialist Leader named George Fernandes rose to prominence. The strike went on for 3 whole weeks and more than a million people took part in it. Goods, equipment, letters - none of them were sent. It was like the entire country had come to a standstill.

-They Railways workers were agitating for better pay and fixed working hours. Railway Union leaders were arrested. To make matters worse, many Railways employees were arrested, and their families were thrown out of their homes. This gave the people a dim view of the Gandhi Government.



4. Electoral Fraud Case- 1975

-The Electoral Fraud case was the last straw for the declaration of the Emergency. One case filled against PM Indira Gandhi was about to destroy her already fragile government. Yet another Socialist leader Mr Raj Narain, tussled with Mrs Gandhi in the 1971 Assembly elections (of Raebareli) and lost.

-However, he filled a case of Electoral Fraud. The petition filled by him held scandalous allegations stating that excess money was used by Mrs Gandhi in her campaign and used other corrupt measures to win. She had the dubious distinction of being the first Indian Prime Minister to testify in court.

-The judgement resulted in the Prime Minister's winning of the assembly elections being false, and she was given time to appeal

in the Supreme Court. The JP Movement and the Congress Party wanted her to resign, but she stayed firmly stated that she was the only person who could save the country from its current state.



Shortly after, the President of India signed the letter for declaration of Emergency. National Security and various other vague reasons were stated as the reason for the declaration of Emergency. On radios throughout the world, they said that "The President of India had declared an Emergency", but was it the President, or the Prime Minister?

What Happened during the Emergency-

The Emergency conveniently came before the verdict of the Electoral Fraud case was announced by the Supreme Court, the Emergency was declared and of course, the Prime Minister could no longer be removed.

During the Emergency, PM Gandhi announced a 20 Step

program to “heal” India, focusing on improving agriculture, eradicating poverty and more. However, the Emergency took a much darker turn and ticked every box to point towards the Emergency time period being a dictatorship under the Prime Minister's rule. After all, the Prime Minister had the power to “Rule by Decree”.



Stern Un-Democratic measures taken by the PM during The Emergency-

1. Imprisonment of Political Opponents-

There was a mass imprisonment of Political Opponents during this time. Important political figures who went against PM Gandhi in the past, or wielded significant power, such as the leader of the JP Movement in Bihar **Mr Jayaprakash Narayan**, former Deputy Prime Minister **Mr Morarji Desai** (who had broken away from Indira Gandhi's Congress faction), up-and-coming leader **Mr LK Advani** were among the hundreds of people arrested.

Many opposition leaders were arrested from various parts of the country. **The RSS and Jamaat-E-Islam were banned.**

2.Censorship of the Press

-These were dark days for freedom of the Press. The Press was heavily censored, and all newspapers and articles had to go through an 'approval process' before they were allowed to be published. The Chief Press Advisor post was set up to approve and censor articles before they were published. A sad state of affairs in a country whose Constitution categorically included the freedom of speech and expression as a Fundamental Right.

-Reporters from foreign newspapers were sent back to their respective countries. There were no private news channels, and radios and tv were under the control of the Government. Many newspapers ran their papers with many empty pages with editorial pages empty, due to censorship by the government.

- "Puppet" news agencies were made after combining 4 privately owned newspapers, to make one government controlled "official" news channel.

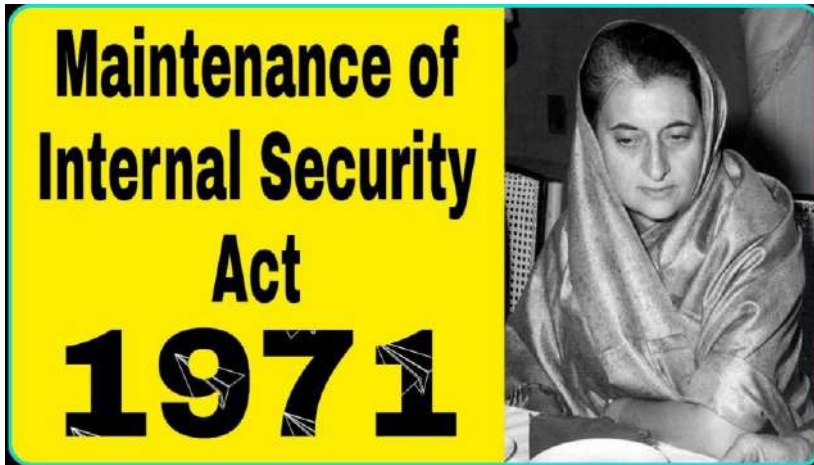
1.Arbitrary laws and Human Rights Violations-

There were some shocking developments that clearly violated norms of human rights, such as:

-A nationwide sterilisation campaign to control population was run by Indira Gandhi's son Sanjay Gandhi.

-The MISA- Maintenance of Internal Security Act: This controversial act (which was passed by the Parliament) permitted Indian Security and Law Enforcement groups to arrest, search people

and take control of properties- all without a warrant. Which if you ask me, made it easy to cut down on dissent. **This act let more than a 100,000 people get arrested without trial for months on end.** (Seems similar to the Rowlatt Act of the colonial era to me!)



Countless laws and polices similar to MISA were brought into use to crack down on dissent.

What was the situation in India after it occurred?

India was left broken after the Emergency ended on the 18th of January in 1977, and even Indira Gandhi's Congress Party, and their "dynasty" was broken for the near future. The elections that were held in 1977 March led to the Congress party being walloped as they went on to win only 153 seats.

The Janta Party along with its allies won a grand total of 345 seats. **The man who was arrested by the Gandhi government during the Emergency- Morarji Desai- was elected Prime Minister.**

The Congress too split in half leading to Indira Gandhi spearheading the Congress (I). The seat which she had won before the emergency in Raebareli, was where she lost post the Emergency. She went on to be arrested in 1978, but the trial bore no fruit. Her

Party went on to win the elections in 1980, following the fall of the Janta Government.

The Conclusion-

The Emergency left a stained mark on the aspect of what “democracy” is in India. Free speech has always been a problem in India. Whether it is the many protests against movies or books, or the new IT laws which may or may not be trying to curb free speech, freedom of speech is still met with bumps on the road. **The fact that is clear is that the Emergency remains as a painful reminder of what happens when a person has too much power and does not want to lose it.**

Hopefully this reminds us that democracy should always prevail, and that no one person rules a country, but the people in it, that do. A strong democracy is one that not only allows but welcomes dissent.



Myanmar Resistance

-by Arunima Singh, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Myanmar's military has seized full control of the country's government and detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi along with hundreds of members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party in an early morning raid, hours before Myanmar's new parliament was set to meet for its first session.

The military has said it will remain in control of the country for at least a year, with ultimate authority resting with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. It's unclear what will happen after 12 months, though some suspect the military will stay in charge beyond that.

On February 1st, before dawn, Myanmar's military – known as the Tatmadaw – detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other officials

from the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party. The military also declares a state of emergency for a year. **This startling happening is also followed by an Internet and communication blackout that started at about 3am without any warning.** The military sealed off roads around the capital Naypyidaw and shut the international airport.



The coup has triggered nationwide protests, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets to demand the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the restoration of civilian rule. Security forces have cracked down, opening fire on unarmed protesters and has caused a lot of violence. Open fires have caused the death of more than 50 people across the country. Dozens more have been wounded and more than a 1,000 people detained.

HOW AND WHY IT ALL STARTED:

The Tatmadaw has justified the coup as a response to what it says was voter fraud in the November 2020 general election. The military states that there were millions of disagreements in voter lists, a claim Myanmar's election commission has denied.

The NLD won the November election by an outstanding number, taking 83 per cent of available parliament seats. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won just 33 of 476 seats and demanded a re-run of the polls, but was denied.

On Jan 26, the military warned it would "take action" if its calls to investigate the voter lists were not regarded. "We do not say the Tatmadaw will take power. We do not say it will not as well ... What we can say is we will follow current existing laws, including the Constitution," said a military spokesman.

All these events had led to a lot of protests across the country, on February 2nd; In Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, people bang pots and pans and sound car horns in protest. Doctors and student groups call for civil disobedience campaigns. The people are filled with fear and anger as they take the streets and media. "Our country was a bird that was just learning to fly. Now the army broke our wings," said student activist Si Thu Tun.

Civil disobedience campaigns start on the 3rd of February. Staff at 70 hospitals and medical departments across Myanmar stop work while the others wear red ribbons to express their discrepancy. Teachers and some government workers join the Civil Disobedience movement, saying they will not work for the authorities unless the elected government is restored.



Myanmar police file charges against Aung San Suu Kyi and seek her detention until February 15. A police document says military officers who searched her home found six hand-held radios that were imported illegally and used without permission.

Charges are also filed against President Win Myint for violating protocols to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The generals block Facebook, as well as its Messenger and WhatsApp services, for the sake of "stability". With this the Tatmadaw orders blocks on Twitter and Instagram, where protesters had been sharing information, and then a blackout of the entire internet. Tens of thousands of people take to the streets to protest against the coup in Yangon and other cities.

On February 4; A group of protesters wave banners and chant anti-coup slogans in Mandalay, Myanmar's second-biggest city, in the first such street protest against the army takeover. At least three people are arrested. The United Nations Security Council calls for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and others detained by the military.

The situation worsened within a week when military imposes a curfew in Yangon, Mandalay and other townships, and bans gatherings of more than five people in a bid to stamp out growing protests. Hundreds of thousands join nationwide pro-democracy demonstrations, with three people wounded by rubber-coated bullets in clashes with police. The UN Human Rights Council urges Myanmar to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other officials, and refrain from violence against people protesting against the coup. Mid-way through February, the civil disobedience movement spreads, disrupting air and train travel.

News spreads fast and countries like The UK and Canada impose sanctions on Myanmar's generals while Japan says it agrees with the US, India and Australia that democracy must be restored quickly. Singapore condemns the killings as "inexcusable" and the UK threatens "further action". By the beginning of march, more than 30 people were killed in an open fire once again and several were wounded.

As of May 9, more than 700 people have been killed in clashes with security forces and another 3,800 arrested, charged or sentenced, according to the monitoring group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.



WHAT LIES AHEAD?

Christine Schraner Burgener, the UN's envoy on Myanmar, describes rising toll "shocking" and calls for international action. The state of emergency will last for one year, as provided for under Myanmar's Constitution. Activists have already voiced strong doubts that the military will step down after only a year. The protests continued in the month of June; On 6 June, thousands of protesters took to the streets in Yangon and across Myanmar, calling for a

"spring revolution". Security forces cracked down on protesters in Hsipaw, killing at least two people.

And on 19 June, protests divided the country between those celebrating Suu Kyi's 76th birthday and pro-military protesters across the country. The name of pro-Suu Kyi protests was chosen as "Flower Protests" due to the use of flowers on her clothing by Suu Kyi.



Considering the past events and the recent protests that took place in June, the future of the country seems very uncertain with social, economic and political oppression continuing.

I see very slow progress and the situation of Myanmar. With the social media platforms being banned, limited access being provided and restricted freedom of speech and expression; I do not see much change in the situation. The country has outsized influence by the military and has earlier also only been seen a semi-democratic country.

Compromise of civil rights will continue and it is very likely going to be a long struggle for Myanmar to get back to being a democratic country again.

Jacob Zuma

Imprisonment of South African President

-by Arunima Singh, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Jacob Zuma, the former president of South Africa, had been sentenced to 15 months in prison for contempt of court after failing to appear before a corruption inquiry earlier this year. South Africa's top court on June 29 served Zuma with a 15-month imprisonment for refusing to appear before an investigation into the corruption that entangled his nine years in power, making him the first ever former post-apartheid president to be jailed. Zuma had initially refused to hand himself in.

When the official imprisonment term was served, Zuma denied all the accusations and insisted that his political enemies are using the courts to target him, but this allegation has no substance and isn't backed by any formal statements or facts.

On Tuesday 6th July, South African judge Khampepe said: "The constitutional

court can do nothing but conclude that Mr Zuma is guilty of the crime of contempt of court."



South African Judge Sisi Khampepe

She added: "This kind of recalcitrance and defiance is unlawful and will be punished. I am left with no option but to commit Mr Zuma to imprisonment, with the hope that doing so sends an unequivocal message ... the rule of law and the administration of justice prevails. "The majority judgment orders an unsuspended sentence of imprisonment for a period [of 15 months]."

Zuma had "repeatedly reiterated that he would rather be imprisoned than to cooperate with the commission or follow with the order made," said Khampepe.

But in a short statement on the Wednesday, the Jacob Zuma Foundation said he had "decided to comply". Zuma was sentenced on 29 June for defying an instruction to give evidence at an inquiry into corruption during his nine years in power.

Zuma had been given a deadline of the 11th of July, Sunday night for turning himself in. Failing his surrender, police were given three days until midnight Wednesday to arrest him. Nearing the first

deadline, Zuma declared at the weekend that he was prepared to go prison, even though "sending me to jail during the height of a pandemic, at my age, is the same as sentencing me to death."

"I am not scared of going to jail for my beliefs," he said. "I have already spent more than 10 years in Robben Island, under very difficult and cruel conditions." He spent 10 years in jail on the infamous Robben Island for his role in the armed struggle against the apartheid system.

Jacob Zuma who became democratic South Africa's third president in 2009, has been reported to have billions of dollars in state assets siphoned off by allies.

The former president does not have the cleanest past records and has been earlier Charged with corruption over multi-billion-dollar 1999 arms deal - charges dropped shortly before he becomes president in 2009, followed by him facing prosecution for 12 charges of fraud, one of racketeering, two of corruption, and one of money laundering, relating to the arms deal.



Zuma has also been accused of involvement in a bribery affair dating back more than 20 years. He faced 16 charges of fraud, graft and racketeering relating to a 1999 purchase of fighter jets patrol boats and military gear from five European arms firm for 30 billion rand, then the equivalent of nearly \$5 billion.

As of July 19, Zuma has asked for the trial to be postponed for a week, citing the recent violent disruptions as having prevented him from meeting with his legal team as a key reason for asking for the postponement. He is also set to make a "special plea" to be acquitted without trial.

"It is just another delaying tactic on their part", says NPA spokesperson, Advocate Mthunzi Mhaga. "There will be a fair administrative of justice, Mr. Zuma will be presented with a fair trial before the court.", he further adds.



In a talk on an international broadcast, NPA spokesperson, Advocate Mthunzi Mhaga concludes that they are ready to proceed with the trial and that they have everything in order.

However, they may be dominated by the talk of a postponement from Jacob Zuma's side. The NPA has witnesses ready and eager to begin and that they would not be following or wanting this delay to take place and want the trial to start as soon as possible.

Gender

Equality, Equity and Feminism

-by Naisha Arora, Grade XI, SNS Gurugram



“Gender equality is a human fight, not just a female fight” – Anonymous

Gender equality is necessary for the development of the human race as a whole, not some frivolous campaign for women. We have all heard of and understand the term 'Gender Equality' but off late, new terms and phrases have come up for the same but with a slightly different meaning- two of them being 'Gender Equity' and 'Feminism'. So, what is the difference amongst these? What do they mean?

To understand gender equality, we first need to know why it is necessary. The need for gender equality, gender equity or even feminism stems from sex discrimination and social stereotypes. Even as children, girls are raised to believe and follow societal norms of helping with household chores, raising a family and boys are encouraged to focus on skill development and their career.

According to a recently conducted survey, the literacy ratio of India is 65.38% with male literacy at 75.85% and female literacy at 54.16% . The difference in educated males and females can clearly be seen through this data, leading us to infer that less girls attend school than boys.

Now you may think, why is this such a big deal? Different genders have different assigned roles and responsibilities, even in different religions followed by people and that's how it works. **The point is to break past these social stereotypes, changing them from 'that's how it works' to 'this is how I want it to be and so it is' and do what you like, inspite of an assigned role per gender. The main problem faced even while considering this seemingly simple solution is sex-based discrimination.**

Let's take a simple example. Imagine you are a female looking for a job. **You apply for a job for which you have experience and excellent qualifications, but you are not hired because the general mentality is that a few specific jobs are meant for Men Only;** you are told that you are laid off due to company cutbacks and reorganization, while men in the same job and with less seniority than you keep their jobs; you have worked for your company for several years, with outstanding performance reviews, yet every time you have applied for promotions, the positions you applied for are instead filled by less qualified men just because the organization cannot fathom having women at Senior leadership positions .

How would that make you feel? Is that fair? **In a word, NO, it's not. But the fact is, this is something that continues even in today's times, even in this 21st century when we are educated and aware.** Gender equality, in this case, would be giving an equal chance to both men and women applying for the job, and choosing them on

the basis of their talents and acquisitions rather than focusing on the gender of a person.

This is not just limited to women. While men have traditionally been the wage-earners in most families, and are known to hold a disproportionate percentage of executive positions, there are certain industries and jobs where women have historically held the power. Teachers, nurses, and child care providers, for example, can sometimes face male gender discrimination because of their sex or gender. This could cause them to be passed over for employment or promotion or receive worse performance reviews because they do not conform to gender stereotypes connected to the industry.



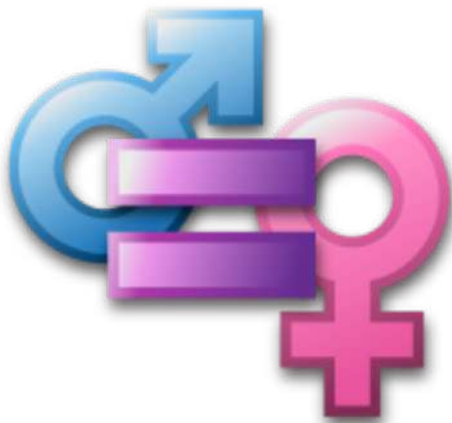
Gender equity is to give both women and men the means necessary for them to achieve an equal status (of opportunity, of social status, etc.). It also means compensating for the unjustified social and historical scenarios leading to the gender-based discrimination of women. Gender equity can be seen a major stepping stone to gender equality. A progressive example of this is reserved constituencies for women in the Indian Parliament, government jobs. It aims at bringing women to empowerment, which is an important step.

As far as feminism is concerned, I think that with the education and awareness today, it's safe to assume that most of us know what feminism is. What I wanted to draw attention to, however, is what feminism is NOT. It is meant to be used as a term to express gender equality and to fight for women's rights, but not as a means to promote or in any way imply female superiority or dominance over the male populace.

Paraphrasing the renown actress and feminist Emma Watson- Feminism is not a prescriptive or dogmatic, it is simply a choice which aims at making the world a better, more equal place.

Also, in recent times, we see multiple examples of gross misuse and misrepresentation of terms relating to gender equality. These are used by different people to promote false ideals, taking away the real, impactful meaning of terms like feminism and gender equity. It portrays a false and negative image, unnecessarily radicalizing these movements to an extreme.

In conclusion, it is my belief that men and women should be **EQUAL** in all aspects, neither one superior. While the fight for getting women equality by implementing strategies to compensate the historical disadvantages must continue, it must not lead to an extreme turnover either, with women misusing provided privileges.



Quality Education

-by Jiya Gaur, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Education liberates wisdom, unravels the imagination, unleashes the depths of knowledge and opens a gateway of opportunities. It is fundamental for each one of us, making it possible for every human to contribute to a progressive society. Learning, unlearning and schooling benefits every individual.

It should be the bare minimum for everyone to have access to equitable education. Remembering Nelson Mandela's words, it is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

The questions continue to persist. Why are we still persevering to achieve quality education for all? How did the global pandemic dismantle the education system? What can we do to help?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals were adopted by all United Nation Member States in 2015 as a ubiquitous call to action to end poverty, inequality, protect the planet and establish world peace and prosperity by 2030. With the pivotal aim to transform society for the better, these goals range from Zero Hunger to Reduced Inequalities, Gender Equality and Climate Action.

Taking into consideration the fourth sustainable development goal of the United Nations, that is known as Quality Education, it strives to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Before commencing further, it is crucial to note the targets and indicators of this goal. The first and foremost target aims to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Target 4.2 intends to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

The third quarry focuses to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical and tertiary education including university. Eliminating gender disparities, increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, making certain that a substantial proportion of youth achieve literacy and numeracy, warranting that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights and gender equality.

Building and upgrading facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive, safe and inclusive environments for all and

increasing the amount of qualified teachers are the succinct targets of the United Nations.

Education is a fundamental right. Regardless of the fact, the progress towards equitable and inclusive education has been frustratingly slow. The truth remains in the fact that an estimated 617 million children and adolescents around the world are unable to reach the minimum proficiency levels in reading and writing and an increasing number of the youth continues to have little to no access to education or learning facilities.

Prior to the coronavirus, projections showed that more than 200 million children would be out of school, and only 60 per cent of young people would be completing upper secondary education in 2030. Statistics showed that about 750 million adults, two thirds of them being women remained illiterate in 2016. Up to half of the global illiterate population lives in South Asia, and a quarter live in sub-Saharan Africa.

In ten low income and middle income countries, children with disabilities were 19 percent less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading than those without disabilities. In the year 2017, four million refugees were out of school. Bearing in mind the past and present year, what little progress was made towards achieving this goal was entirely demolished, much like a monster on a rampage.

Towards the end of the year 2019, hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents were still out of school. More than half of those schools were failing to meet the minimum proficiency standards in reading and numeracy. The facilities were lacking in these fields of education.

The sudden escalation of the global pandemic in the past year was a watershed in the development of equitable education. The closure of schools took an unimaginable toll on the social and behavioural development of children and adolescents.

Studies suggest that more than ninety percent of the world's student population has suffered and remained susceptible to this unprecedented and rampant epidemic. While in many cases the pandemic has served to be a boon in terms of advancing towards a rather newfangled and futuristic approach towards education, that is remote learning, it has been a dreadful source of bane, misfortune and calamity for unprivileged and vulnerable communities.

The newfound education system as well as the digital divide will only widen existing gaps and loopholes with regard to equitable education.

Otherwise known as a “generational catastrophe”, the global pandemic has had noxious consequences on children's learning and wellbeing. Hundreds of millions of children and youth are straggling behind and are unable to cope with their education. While this may not be a great concern at the moment, the deep-rooted repercussions will continue to cause issues.

One year into the crisis, reports acknowledge that two in three students worldwide are still distressed by the full or partial discontinuation of regular school. Heart shatteringly, the most vulnerable and unprotected children are at an exceedingly high risk of never returning to school, having access to education and being victims of the vicious cycles of child marriage, child trafficking or child labour. Their lives are at stake now more than ever.

Researchers have estimated that a further statistic of 101 million children and youth fell far below the minimum reading proficiency levels due to the coronavirus which demolished the progress paved over the last twenty years. While it is believed that recovery could be possible by the year 2024, it can only truly occur if phenomenal efforts are made through forms of remedial and catch-up schemes.

Disparities in access to education and learning outcomes remain lasting across a range of education indicators. **For instance, there were still only ninety-two literate women aged fifteen years or older for every 100 literate men of the same age in 2019.** Almost half of countries with recent data did not meet gender parity in primary completion, and only a handful of countries demonstrate parity in tertiary enrolment ratios.

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to lead to a reversal of recent progress towards equity. With the shift to remote learning, those from the poorest households and other vulnerable groups are less equipped to participate and more likely to drop out permanently or for a notably large period of time.

In India alone, there has been a drastic change in the education system. **Remote and virtual learning has been implemented in most schools and despite the fact that most students are able to continue their schooling amidst these unprecedented times, thousands of children do not have any educational resources or opportunities whatsoever.**

They are missing out and have not been able to study for more than a year now. Owning fancy electronic gadgets is a distant reality for many. **According to a 2019 government study, only twenty four percent families have accessible internet.** This in itself speaks

volumes for the situation that has hardly changed in the last couple of years. **We must understand that over 1.5 million schools in India closed down in the past year. A sudden switch to large scale virtual education at this stage is impossible.**

The education system was already weighed down due to a myriad of issues concerning and including gender disparities, disabilities and lack of infrastructure. Digital learning is simply put, another rock in the road.

This very issue is persisting globally. There are a few steps that we as individuals can take to prevent any child or young adolescent's future from being snatched from their hands because they could not access education and learning opportunities.

Firstly, diversifying school staff so as to ensure an inclusive and safe space for students would be crucial for educational equality. Secondly, being aware and alert of all stereotypes and implicit biases and working to address them is pivotal for change. Raising our voice and amplifying situations wherein gender, race and other such biases take place within the school facilities are some of the things we can do to help achieve this goal.

Donating our old books to non-profit organizations, hosting fundraisers to raise money for vulnerable groups so children can continue their education and trying our very best to support children and the youth during these times may help us progress towards finally achieving quality education for all regardless of any factor.

As for bodies with higher power, new policies could be introduced to safeguard the interests of vulnerable groups and ensure that no one is left behind in terms of receiving education.

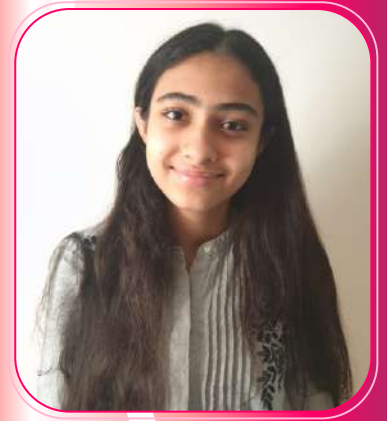
There is an urgent need for educational reforms taking note of these issues, be it any mode of education.

Above all, education is a fundamental right. Every human being is entitled to receiving or giving systematic instruction and learning. No child deserves to be left behind. **Unforeseen circumstances, weak systems and extensive inequality is depriving countless individuals of the bare minimum, opportunities, knowledge and the greatest tool one could possess.** We need to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education for all. This is not a cry for help, it is a call for action.



India's Unsolved Mysteries

-by Mehar Gaba, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



India is a unique land. It is one of the most diverse countries comprising many cultures, languages, beliefs and traditions. Everybody enjoys conspiracy theories and unsolved mysteries, so here are some of India's most mind baffling unsolved mysteries.

1. The Nine Unknown Men

It is said that Emperor Ashoka believed that knowledge was the ultimate power and thus it was important to nurture and use knowledge for the greater good. Knowledge however, can be very dangerous if in the wrong hands. This theory states that around 270 BC, Mauryan Emperor Asoka summoned nine of the greatest minds of his time from various different fields to form a secret society 'The Nine Unknown Men'. This society was to preserve and develop knowledge while also protecting it from falling

into the wrong hands. The nine unknown men were entrusted with guarding nine books of secret knowledge. The books are said to be as follows-

-Propaganda:- The first book contained techniques of propaganda and psychological warfare. This was an important book since it had information that could be used to completely alter the thinking of anybody. With this book, one could even rule the world.

-Physiology:- The second book was about physiology. This book held the secret of killing a human by just a single touch. It even involved the reversal of nerve impulses.

-Microbiology:- The third book discussed microbiology and biochemistry. They had also apparently derived a 'divine nectar' that had been said to make them immortal.

-Alchemy:- The fourth book dealt with alchemy. This book knew the transfusion of metals. It is said that during the drought temples and relief organizations received gold from a 'secret source'.

-Communication:- The fifth book contained the study of all means of communication, terrestrial and extraterrestrial. This indicates that the Nine Unknown Men were aware of the latter.

-Gravity:- The sixth book explored the secrets of gravitation and contained instructions on how to build an anti gravity flying machine termed as 'vimanna'

-Cosmology:- The seventh book dealt with cosmology and everything related to the universe.

-Light:- The eighth book discussed all the properties of light, such as the speed of light and how to change its speed so that it can be used as a weapon.

-Sociology:- The ninth and last book was about sociology. It included rules for the evolution of human societies and a means of foretelling their eventual decline. Thus, it contained ways to create, nurture and destroy a whole culture or civilization.

This society remained unknown until 1923, when Talbot Mundy wrote a novel named "Nine Unknown Men". If conspiracy theorists are to be believed, this society exists even today, right among us, guarding these books. Illuminati who?

2.The Iron Pillar in Delhi

The 1600 year old Iron Pillar in Delhi is a seven metre column which is globally known for its rust-resistant characteristics. Many scientists have done their analysis and done research to test as to how the pillar is resistant to corrosion. It is a mystery on how 1600 years ago the people were able to construct such a chemically forward Pillar.



3.Jodhpur Sonic Boom

In Jodhpur, an abrupt deafening sound was heard on December 18th in 2012. The noise sent a wave of panic among the residents of the city. The sound was very close to that of an explosion but nobody knew the source. It was thought that the noise could have been produced by the nearby air force range, however the Air force chief denied this. Generally, sonic booms occur when planes break the speed of sound. It was clarified that no planes had flown over Jodhpur and neither any explosions had taken place around the area. The sonic boom was later experienced in other parts of the World as well. The sonic boom remains a mystery till this day.



4.Roopkund Lake

For the longest time, this lake in Uttarakhand was known for its mysterious and eerie skeletal remains of humans. These skeletons, after research were dated to 900 AD.

Nobody knew how these skeletons came to appear at this very lake. Only very recently did scientists find out that the 200 bodies found around the lake were a part of a tribe that tragically died due to a hail storm.



5.Taj Mahal

This monument is world famous, yet very few know and believe in the theory that this structure was actually built over a temple which was dedicated to Lord Shiva, called Tejo Mahalaya. P.N. Oak, an Indian author introduced this theory along with documentary evidence in Mughal documents as well as supporting points related to architectural indication etc.



6.The Death of Subash Chandra Bose

A classic and long debated mystery. As known to all, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose died on August 18, 1945 due to three-degree

burns after a plane crash in Formosa, Japan (now in Taiwan). According to the conspiracy theories, Subhas Chandra Bose faked his own death and became a 'sadhu'. There is no proof of Subhas Chandra Bose being alive, and the Indian government has completely rejected the possibility of the latter.



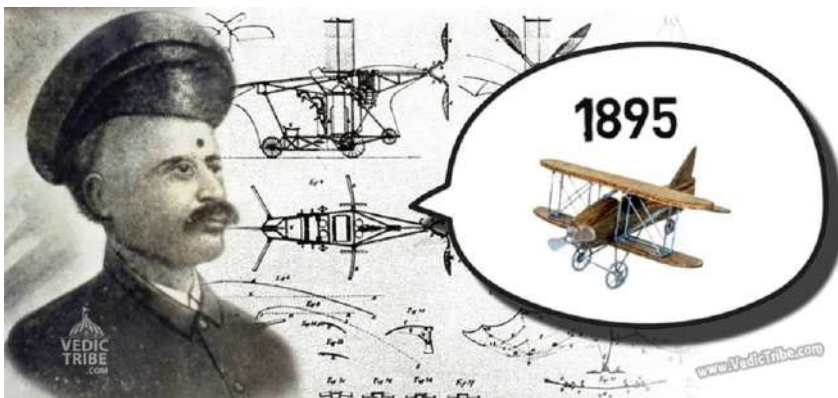
7. Prahlad Jani



Now this mystery is interesting. Also known as mataji, Prahlad Jani is an Indian sadhu. Mataji has been in news and in a series of scientific researches as he claims that he hasn't eaten anything since 1940. He is a devotee of Goddess Amba and he believes that can live without food and water. Scientists have run many tests on him since 2003 and there is no explanation as to how this is possible.

8.The Indian who made the first airplane

We were all taught that the Wright brothers made the first aeroplane in 1903. However, according to contrary beliefs, Shivkar Talpade, flew the first aeroplane called Marutsakha in 1895. Talpade received backing and funding from the Maharaja of Baroda and built an unmanned aircraft.



Apparently, it flew at a height of 1500 feet compared to the mere 2.8 meters of the Wright brothers model, before it came crashing down. Although there are no records, and this was never proven, the machine 'allegedly' used four mercury powered containers that acted as engines, propelling the craft with a powerful thunderbolt to heights. However, the aircraft was never controlled, and after repeated warnings from the British government, the Maharaja stopped his funding, and the aircraft model remained a dream. According to the theory this was eight years before the Wright brothers would even come up with an aircraft model.

9. Did the Vimanas of ancient India actually exist?

Relating to flying again, this mystery is quite riveting. It is little known that the Vedas contain something about the Vimanas, i.e. flying aircrafts. Apparently, the Vimanas are of two types:



1) A man made craft that resembles the modern airplane and flew with the aid of birdlike wings. The machines, and its mentions, bear a lot of resemblance to the modern day aircraft.

(2) Unstreamlined structures that fly in a mysterious manner and are not made by man. Its structure and functioning generally treads towards what we know today as the UFOs.

Although this theory seems far-fetched, the fact that there are a number of carvings, both in India and abroad that show a picture of the flying aircraft certainly made a few people sit up and take notice.

These are just some of the many engrossing and thrilling mysteries that there are. I hope that this article will interest you enough to spend some of your time learning about our great country and all the fascinating mysteries connected to our history.

Archduke Ferdinand Assassination

The wrong turn that caused a war

-by Abhimanyu Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



The First World War is one of the major events that altered the course of history. It was one of the most devastating conflicts in history and it is remembered till today. However, while everyone knows about the war and its consequences, what everyone may not know is what started it.

Sometimes even a minor incident can have a ripple effect that is devastating. This is precisely the way it was with the case of the First World War. Now, as we approach the anniversary of Archduke Ferdinand's assassination, let us look back at the one bullet that caused the deaths of millions of innocent human beings...

A brief introduction to the man of the moment, so to speak. Who was Archduke Ferdinand?. He was the eldest son of Archduke Charles Joseph, and became the next in line to the **Austrian throne**. However, he didn't like his life back then, because the country felt that his brother was more suited to the task of ruling than he was. **To make matters worse, no one wanted him to marry the woman he wanted to, and the only way he managed to ensure that he could marry her was by giving up his children's rights to the throne!**



What was the state of world politics at the time?

At the time, Austria-Hungary (yes, it was a single country) had control over Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is no longer a country). **There was a lot of ongoing turmoil in the areas around and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with rampant civil and political unrest, and riots a regular occurrence.** There was a huge group of people

who didn't want Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a part of Austria-Hungary. These people were usually responsible for all of the riots, and the violence, which they did in an attempt to show their strength, and their dissatisfaction with the current state of events.

What happened on that fateful day?

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Ferdinand went to Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) to inspect the imperial troops. This was problematic in itself, because the citizens of B&H, and of some of the neighboring countries had a strong dislike-to say the least - of the Austro-hungarian government. If the situation wasn't bad enough already, there was also the teeny tiny detail that the Archduke's visit coincided with the anniversary of Turkey defeating B&H's neighbors in the Battle of Kosovo. Many found that a visit of this pomp should not have been planned on such an important day in a sensitive area.

Anyway, the Archduke's entourage was going along Appel Quay when a young man named Mr. Nedjelko Cabrinovic who was standing in the crowd, did something daring. He had a grenade in his hand, he pulled the pin, and lobbed it at the Archduke's car!



Nedjelko Cabrinovic

However, unfortunately for him, the grenade bounced off the back of his car, and instead blew up in front of the car behind the Archduke's, and injured the people inside it. The Archduke went to the city hall to complete the reception that had been planned for him, and decided to go to the hospital where the members of his staff who had been injured were being treated.

Unfortunately for him, his poor driver was fairly inexperienced, and the near-death experience he had just had wasn't helping his nerves at all! He took a wrong turn, and went back to Quay Avenue, where there was still quite a crowd. Most of the crowd now was people who wanted the Archduke dead. So, taking this golden opportunity, **Gavrilo Princip**, who was only 19 at the time, walked in front of the Archduke's car, pulled out a pistol, shot him, shot his wife Sophie, and then consumed a cyanide pill.



However, there is one more plot twist here! **Princip** tried to kill himself by consuming cyanide, however, he failed miserably, and he survived. Unfortunately, unlike his cyanide pill, his bullets did not fail. The Archduke and his wife were killed almost instantly by the deadly pieces of metal.

Who killed Archduke Ferdinand?

What we just learned about is how the Archduke was assassinated. Now, I am going to talk about the man who killed him, **Gavrilo Princip**. He was born into a family of peasants who were part-Serbian. **He was trained as a part of the Black Hand, a Serbian Secret society, and was taught to be a terrorist.** He wanted to destroy the control of Austria-Hungary in the Balkan area, and unite all South Slavic people in one federal nation. He was too young to face the death penalty and was instead sentenced to 20 years in prison. However, he contracted tuberculosis, and died on the 28th of April in 1918. People are divided in their opinion of him. **Many believe that he was a heartless terrorist, others, however, think that he was a national hero!**



Gavrilo Princip and the others are brought to the court-1914

Implications

This dastardly act had several implications, all of which are of varying scale, but are equally important. Imagine a game of dominoes - one tile falls and causes every other tile to come tumbling down. **This incident had a somewhat similar impact on world politics and international relations.**

● **Firstly, the assassination caused the first World War!** The assassination actually caused Austria-Hungary to threaten to attack Serbia! To help defend Serbia, Russia told Austria-Hungary that they would assist Serbia if it was attacked. **Knowing that they would be crushed in a war against Russia, A-H managed to get Germany's support, and a great war (The Great War, actually) ensued.** This was one of the most devastating conflicts in history, with innumerable deaths every day, and even more people severely injured. **This was probably the biggest and most important implication of Archduke Ferdinand's Death.**

● **The Second World War is another implication of the assassination.** Yes, the other giant war was also caused by this event, albeit indirectly. **This is because the First World War ended with Germany facing very harsh terms of treaty, which caused severe humiliation.** This humiliation was one of the main reasons that Germany decided to go on a rampage, which is why the Second World War began!

● **The creation of The League Of Nations can also largely be attributed to this one instance.** The bloodshed caused by the Great War showed countries that they need a body to facilitate peace instead of fanning the flames of fatal battles. **The League of Nations may not have succeeded as a body, but it paved the way for the**

creation of the United Nations, which still stands strong to this day!

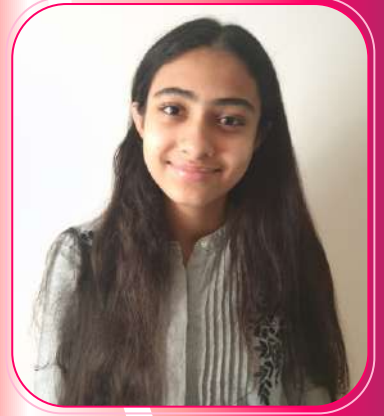
Conclusion

In this article, I have written about how a simple incorrect turn by a dazed driver caused the world to go into tumultuous battle, **twice!** This really shows us the importance of the smaller things, and how the tiniest details could make the biggest difference. I leave you with one question- do you think that the Archduke's trip being on a different date would have changed the events that unfolded, or is bad planning not responsible for Archduke Franz Ferdinand's death?



India's Architectural Wonders

-by Mehar Gaba, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



India has experienced a long and prosperous history. It has witnessed the rise and fall of great empires and kingdoms along with being a cradle to great personages that changed the course of its destiny. India has been seen altering the character of its face every now and then.

All these incredible phenomena have bequeathed the country a wonderful and marvellous legacy that is conspicuous through its wonderful monuments, buildings and sites.

Here are some of the lesser known prodigious architectural beauties, both modern and traditional-

1.The Chand Baori, Abhaner, Rajasthan



The Chand Baori is a stepwell built over a thousand years ago in the Abhaneri village of Rajasthan. It is one of the largest stepwells in the world and also one of the most beautiful ones. Located in the eastern part of the province of Rajasthan, it was built by King Chanda somewhere in the 9th century. has 3,500 narrow steps arranged in perfect symmetry, which descend 20m to the bottom of the well.

2.Ajanta Ellora Caves, Aurangabad, Maharashtra



Considered as one of the best examples of ancient Indian paintings, depicting beautiful Buddhist religious art and the Jataka tales. The Ajanta caves are a series of 30 rock cut cave monuments which dates back to the 2nd century BCE to about 480 or 650 CE. The caves were originally used for various different purposes which included worship, education and living.

3.Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai



This temple is a clear exhibition of the stupendous richness of South Indian Architecture. This prepossessing edifice is a part of the important heritage of the region. It is one of the largest temples in India, with 12 massive gates, with the largest gates being situated on the outer walls.

4.Amdavad ni Gufa, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

This stunning work of architecture is an underground art gallery. The cave-like underground structure has a roof made of multiple interconnected domes, covered with a mosaic of tiles. On the inside, irregular tree-like columns support the domes. It was

earlier known as Husain-Doshi ni Gufa.



6. Kanchanjunga Apartments, Mumbai, Maharashtra

This residential society is a marvel. Also known as 'The Vertical Bungalows', this revolutionary high rise structure standing 32 storeys high resonates the values of climate sensitivity by utilising the natural winds from the Arabian sea to regulate the temperature of the houses as well as considering harsh sunlight. Each bungalow has a double height open space and living plan.



The ICC World Test Championship Final

-by Uday Soni, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

The IPL is now one of the most successful examples of franchise cricket in the world, using the introduction of T20 cricket to inject new life into the slowly dying sport. Cricket itself has quite a rich history, dating all the way back to the 17th century.

With the rise of popularity of the sport came a council which sought to propagate, regulate and administer the game worldwide, now known as the International Cricket Council or ICC. **The first ever Cricket World Cup was held in England in 1975, and the inaugural World Twenty20 championship was played in 2007 with India emerging as the first ever T20 world champions.**

But never before has there been a World Test Championship, a stage on which

countries could showcase the true mettle of their players in the oldest, most grueling and mentally challenging format of the game. In 2019 the ICC announced the inaugural World Test Championship, a tournament that would be played over 2 years, with the 9 top ranked Test countries competing against each other to claim the title of best in the world.

All of this has finally culminated in the WTC final which took place from June 18th-June 22nd of 2021, where India and New Zealand squared off in a battle for the ages, but before we can go over this historic match, we must first understand what Test cricket is and how it is played.

What is Test cricket:

As opposed to the now popular formats of ODI's and T20's, both commonly referred to as limited-overs cricket, a Test match is played over five days and has four innings.



A standard day in Test cricket consists of three sessions of 30 overs each. The breaks between sessions are 40 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for tea.

In test cricket each team bats twice. The game starts with a coin toss through which the winning captain decides whether he would like to bat or field first. If team X bats in the first innings and team Y bats in the second, the same order will be followed, except in the case of a follow on. If team Y exceed the total set by team X in their first innings, they are said to be in the lead with the excess. If they fail to do this they are said to be trailing by a deficit.

A follow on can be enforced by Team X if team Y is bowled out for a deficit of more than 200 runs. In this case team Y is asked to bat again in the third innings. The decision to enforce a follow on is taken by team X's captain.

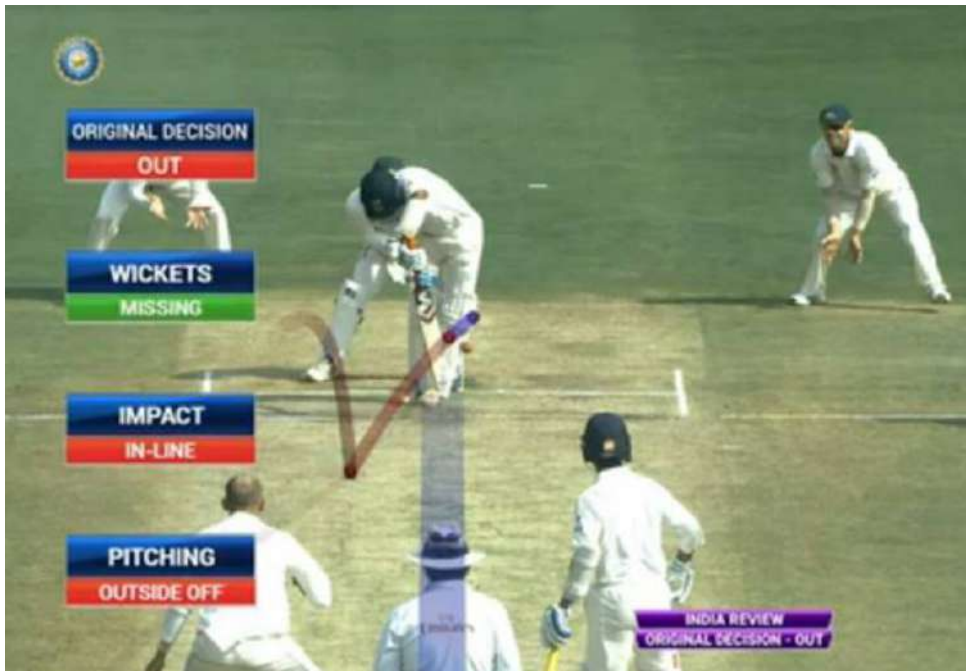
If a team feels they have batted enough to be in control of the match they can choose to declare and end their innings, thereby asking the other team to bat.

If all four innings are not completed in the allotted time of five days, then the match is declared a draw.

Due to cricket balls' tendency to lose shape and deteriorate in condition after excessive use, a new ball is available after every 80 overs in a test match. The ball can also be replaced by another ball of similar condition if it is deemed unfit by the umpires.

Thanks to the innovation of ball tracking technology and other such innovations, teams are now allowed to challenge an umpire's decision for a wicket using the DRS system, first introduced

in 2008. Each team is allowed two reviews per innings and a review is not lost in case of umpire's call in an LBW decision.



India's road to the WTC final:

West Indies vs India, August 2019 -

India started off their WTC campaign with a bang, defeating West Indies 2-0 at their home turf. Ishant Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah both took five wicket hauls in the first match. Ajinkya Rahane's century helped set an unattainable target of 419. Bumrah again was at the heart of India's second win claiming his first Test hat-trick with figures of 6/27 leading India to a 257-run win.



India vs South Africa, October 2019-

India continued their winning streak when they hosted South Africa in what looked to be a serious test of their WTC ambitions. In their last confrontation South Africa trounced India 2-1. The first Test saw the opening pair of Mayank Agarwal and Rohit Sharma put on a 317-run opening stand to help India to a mammoth total of 502/7d.

However South Africa rose to the challenge scoring 431 runs in their first innings despite a 7 wicket haul from Ravichandran Ashwin. In the end it took another century from Rohit Sharma and a five-wicket haul from Mohammed Shami to secure India's victory over the visitors.

In the second test Virat Kohli scored an unbeaten 254 with help from a century by Mayank Agarwal to post a first innings total of 601/5d. South Africa could not put up a fight this time around and their batting order crumbled to an innings and 137-run defeat. Similar punishment was dealt out in the final Test with Rohit Sharma scoring a maiden double century to lead India to an innings and 202-run victory.



India vs Bangladesh, November 2019-

India seemed to be in unbeatable form during their third series in their first Test against Bangladesh as once again led to an innings win thanks to double century bolstered by opener Mayank Agarwal. The highlight of this series was watching India get their first taste of day night Test cricket which included five wicket hauls from both Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav and a century from Virat Kohli. at this stage, India had picked up all 360 points available to them.



New Zealand vs India, February 2020-

India's then perfect WTC record came crashing down in an away series against New Zealand, who at that stage had lost four of the five games they had played in the WTC, where India was comprehensively defeated two nil due to unfortunate batting order collapses in both tests with help from five wicket hauls by both Tim Southee and Kyle Jamieson.



Australia vs India, December-January 2020-21-

India's hopes of reaching the final were dealt a major blow at the start of the Border-Gavaskar series as they were bowled out for an all-time low of 36 at the Adelaide Oval in their first test. With captain Kohli flying home for the birth of his daughter and Mohammed Shami suffering from a broken forearm no one gave India much off a chance.



In Melbourne, India immediately bounced back with a win thanks to a match defining knock of 112 from stand-in captain Rahane. Unfortunately, this victory also came at a cost with bowler Umesh Yadav limping off the ground and being sent back to India for rehabilitation on the 30th of December.



The next match in Sydney truly showcased the heroics and undefeatable spirit of the Indian side. India went into their second innings chasing a total of 407 runs with injury clouds hanging over wicket keeper Rishab Pant and allrounder Ravindra Jadeja who had been struck on the arm and glove respectively in the first innings.

Enter the batting pair of Cheteshwar Pujara and Rishab pant, both batsmen with extremely different techniques. Pant played an almost T20 like knock scoring 97 runs off 118 balls while Pujara played at a much more sedate pace, copping blows to the body left and right.

When Pujara finally perished India needed 135-runs to win. An injury ravaged pair of Ravichandran Ashwin, who reportedly was crawling on the floor in pain the same morning due to a back injury sustained during the third day, and Hanuma Vihari batted for nearly 40 overs to force a draw on the fifth day while Ravindra Jadeja sat padded up, ready to bat despite dislocated thumb.



India seemed revitalized and raring to go as the fourth and final test match neared at the Gabba Cricket ground in Brisbane, nicknamed the 'Fortress Gabba' as the Australian team hadn't lost a single test match here since 1988. Despite the heroics seen in Sydney, India's future still seemed unclear. The team had lost 8 of its original 11 players due to injuries, 7 of those being India's premier bowlers not to mention their captain Virat Kohli.

It was here that India's youngsters truly showcased their talent, the first of whom that I must talk about is Mohammed Siraj. Siraj was given his debut at the MCG and was in tears when the national anthem played. In November 2020, Siraj's father passed away while he was quarantining in Australia. The cricket board offered to fly him back home for the funeral rites but he refused saying, he just wanted to fulfill his father's dream of his son playing cricket for his country.

In Sydney he faced racist abuse from a section of the crowd and in a rarely seen move he reported it to the umpires, who stopped the play for nearly ten minutes and eventually asked six Australian supporters to go home. Finally in Australia's second innings at the Gabba he picked up his maiden five wicket haul, ending the series as the third highest wicket taker on both sides.



He was also spearheading India's bowling attack at the Gabba despite having debuted only 2 matches earlier. During India's first innings Shardul Thakur and Washington Sundar put on a match defining partnership stand of 123 runs, a stand that will be remembered long after they retire.

India started their second innings chasing a target of 328 runs and despite a brilliant 91 runs scored by Shubman Gill, yet another player who was handed his debut in the same series, it was Rishab Pant who steered India to victory on the fifth day with a scintillating knock of 89 not out, despite it seeming more and more likely that this match would also end in a draw. Pant pulled India to a fairy tale finish, cementing the series as the one of the best comebacks in cricketing history.



India vs England, February-March 2021-

England were the final roadblock in India's path to the WTC final. Due to a change in the rules India now required a 2-1 win in the four-test series.

Unfortunately, they got off to a terrible start in Chennai where Joe Root became the first player to score a double-century on his 100th international test match and suffered a 227-run defeat despite a 6-wicket haul from Ravi Ashwin. India quickly bounced back in their second test where Rohit Sharma led the attack in their first innings with a blistering score of 161 runs.

Ravichandran Ashwin was the man to watch though as he grabbed a five-wicket haul in England's first innings and then scored a century right after that. Debutant Axar Patel sealed the win with a maiden five wicket haul. Axar picked up right where he left off in the third test taking two more consecutive five-wicket hauls to comfortably lead India to victory. India seemed to be on the verge of collapse in their first innings of the final test, sitting at a score of 146/6.

It was at this point that Rishab Pant proved once again that he was one of the brightest youngsters of the game, scoring a well-paced century to pull India into the lead, later bolstered by a brilliant knock of 96-runs not out by Washington Sundar. Ashwin and Axar then proceeded to eviscerate the English batting order both picking up 5-wicket hauls to secure an innings-and-25-run victory for India and therefore sealing the series 3-1. And with that, India's spot in the Final was secured.



A match for the ages:

The World Test Championship Final. The first of its kind. The match that was 144 years in the making. And what could be a more fitting start to such a historic event than a cameo from Test Cricket's oldest accomplice, the weather. The entire scheduled first day was washed out by rain, but thankfully the reserve day on 23rd June could be utilised if needed.

The play started on the 2nd day, 19th June where New Zealand captain, Kane Williamson won the toss and elected to bat first. The opening pair of Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill looked to be in complete control of the innings in the first hour but as New Zealand's pacers gained their footing India began to slow down. India's batsmen walked out sporting black armbands to honour the recent death of Milkha Singh, one of the best athlete's India ever saw.



Kyle Jamieson made the first breakthrough when Rohit Sharma was caught out, with Wagner taking the wicket of Gill soon after. Cheteshwar Pujara was bowled out next for 8 runs and just as it seemed that India would be facing a batting order collapse, the pair of Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane stabilised things putting on a 61-run stand as the day's play came to an early end due to insufficient lighting.

The third day saw the end of India's first innings with Kyle Jamieson picking up his fifth five-wicket haul becoming the fastest bowler ever to reach the mark, accomplishing the feat in just eight matches. India posted a first innings total of 217-runs.

The opening pair of Tom Latham and Devon Conway made quick work of India's bowlers, putting on an opening stand of 70-runs before Latham's wicket was taken by Ravichandran Ashwin. Devon Conway was later caught out after scoring a brilliant half century on only his third match ever as Mohammed Shami seemingly plucked the ball out of the air to dismiss him.

New Zealand ended the day's play with a score of 101/2. The fourth day saw another disappointing washout due to heavy rains the entire day. New Zealand looked to be in control during the first hour of the fifth day but thanks to a breakthrough in the partnership of Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor by Mohammed Shami, their wickets soon started to fall.

New Zealand were bowled out for 249 runs during the second session with Mohammed Shami being the principal wicket taker with figures of 4/76, giving New Zealand a lead of only 32 runs. India ended the days play with a score of 64/2 with Tim Southee claiming the wickets of both openers.

Both teams walked onto the ground on the sixth day with the intent to win, even though a draw seemed more than likely. India fought valiantly but could only post a score of 170 before they were bowled out in between the second session.

The New Zealand openers walked out with a target of 139 runs in more than 50 overs, an easily attainable target that seemed to

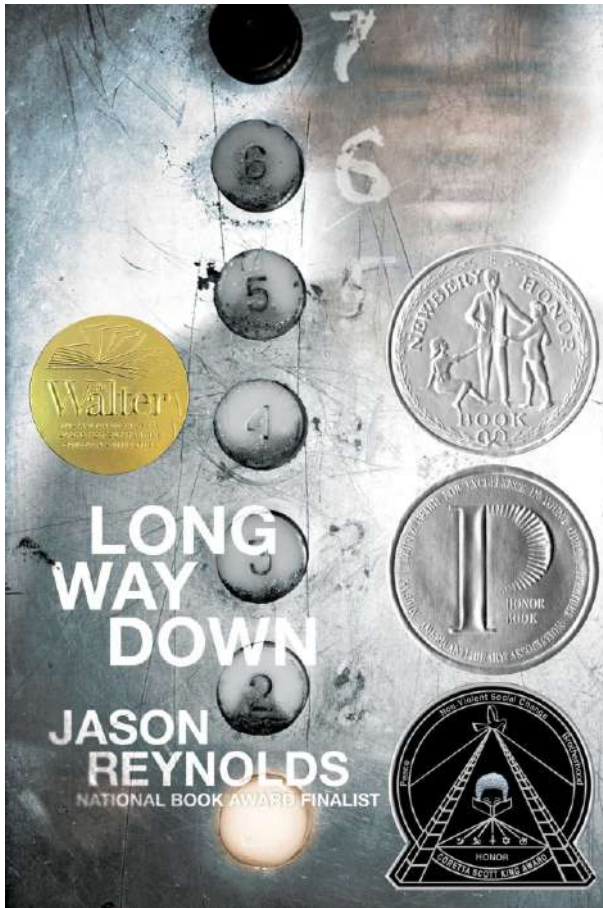
be farther than ever as Ravichandran Ashwin bowled both Devon Conway and Tom Latham out in quick succession. **Then, in a match filled with as many twists as one can expect, the batting pair of Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor put on a match winning stand of 96 runs, claiming the title of World Test Champions, the first in the history of the game.**



Book Review:

Long Way Down

-by Abhimanyu Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Long Way Down is one of the most powerful books I have ever read. It follows the story of Will, a fifteen-year-old boy, who is on an elevator. I know, it doesn't sound like the most intriguing start to a plot yet, nothing groundbreaking, or trail blazing. But it's not about where he is, but about how he got there, and why he is where he is.

You see, his brother Shawn was murdered by a gang, and now, he will follow his neighbourhoods rules in his story of dealing with his brother's death. What rules, you ask? Well, the rules are quite simple; No crying. No snitching. Revenge. It turns out, young Will has a gun in his pocket, and is going to take the life of Shawn's killer, and

avenge his death in the process. When he steps into the elevator, things seem alright, but it stops on the floor right below the one he boarded on, and Shawn's friend Buck walks in.

Now, he makes pleasant conversation with Buck, and he doesn't mind talking to him, but then he remembers a terrifying detail, that Buck is DEAD. He remembers that Buck had been killed a while ago. Meanwhile, he tells Buck what he is planning to do. It stops on the floor below Buck's and a girl walks in. He later recognizes her as his childhood friend who had died during a shooting.

The Elevator stops on each following floor, and an important person from his life who is no more, steps in on each floor, and talks to him about something related to the task he is about to carry out. Does he end up carrying out the act of revenge he so craved when he set foot in the elevator? Does he have a change of heart?

❖The most remarkable aspect of this book is how Jason Reynolds has managed to explode this moment into a thousand different moments, each as poignant as the next. Why do I say that? Well, it's because this entire 300-page book takes place in 60 seconds! That's right, Mr. Reynolds has written 300 pages about 60 seconds in a boy's life, and the way he has done it means that I have to remind myself to pick my jaw out of the hole it made by thudding to the floor every time that I think about this book, and the process of writing it.

❖The second remarkable aspect of this book is the fact that the book is in verse. This book is actually written entirely in verse, and is more of a collection of poetry than a written story. More than that, the way Mr. Reynolds has used the most beautiful analogies in his poems paint a picture so clear in your mind that you are actually



there in the elevator with Will and his companions. **The words of the book are brutal and powerful.** There is no sugar coating, just as Will's life and the circumstances he lived in, were not all sugar and spice - his life was made of guns and death.

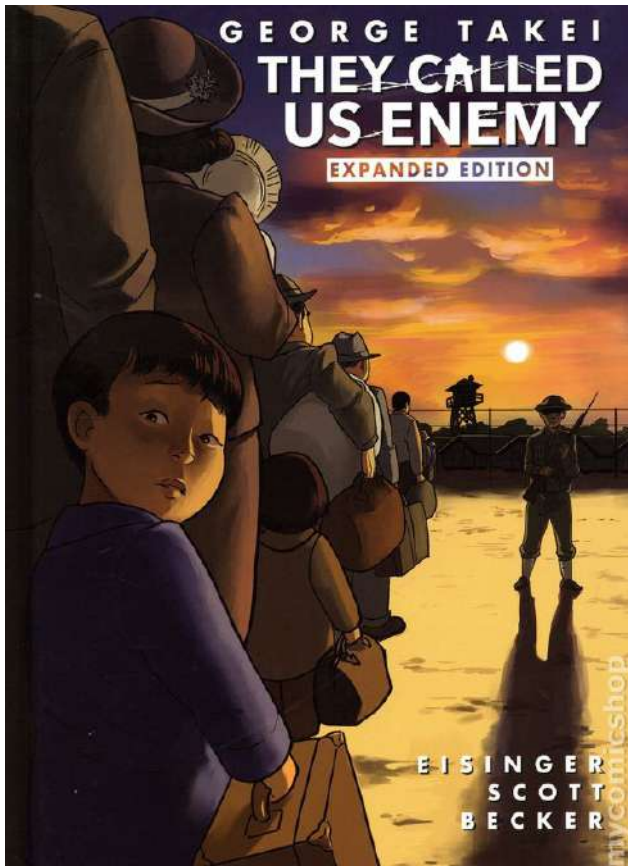
This book really moved me, and put me in Will's shoes. **One of the moments where I feel exactly like Will would have been is when he talks about the sadness he feels.** He explains it as the pain you feel when a dentist extracts a tooth. The worst part isn't the throbbing of his head, or the swollen gums, or even the blood pooling in your mouth. **It is the feeling of the empty space in your gums where your tooth once was, and how you might never get used to it.**

With that powerful analogy, I end my review. Everyone **MUST** read this book, though, if you want to, you should be prepared for a very disturbing story, and a heart breaking one at that. **Heartbreak aside, this story is the epitome of emotional poetry, and I don't really have any criticism for it, so please go ahead, pick it up, and discover what you have been missing out on!** Another suggestion is to try and watch a few videos where the author narrates parts of his book - to experience him narrate his verses takes the book to a much higher level.

Book Review:

They Called us Enemy

-by Agastya Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



When people think of the Second World War, they probably think about the Nazis and Britain and air force planes flying after each other. **But as nice as the United States of America were to the Allies, they were not even nice to their own citizens**, and in some cases, the atrocities they committed during the time of the Second World War in their own country, could easily match up to what the Nazis did.

George Takei is a world-famous actor, appearing as one of the leading roles in the Star Trek series, in the Disney classic Mulan and countless other films. **His book 'They Called us Enemy' is a form of an autobiography**, depicted through a graphic novel. In this book, he shines a light on the persecution, the torture and humiliation that Japanese

Americans were subjected to, and the inhumane conditions they were forced to live in.

The book starts of with a young George and his family greeted in the morning with a loud bang on their door where armed soldiers force them leave their house, sell its contents and land at a price much lower than what it was worth. However, they were not the only people who faced this arbitrary crackdown of State power. **All Japanese Americans throughout the United States of America were ordered to be shifted into what were called “relocation centres”.** This is what happened when the USA went to war with Japan during World War II.

The situation of Japanese Americans was completely overlooked in the hullabaloo surrounding the war. With racist attacks at Japanese Americans, hostile treatment towards them, life was terrible. **The humiliation continued when the first location that all Japanese Americans (including George and his family) had to stay in their “relocation camps” was actually in horse stables, which reeked of manure.**

They had to board a train (might I add that this is similar to what the persecuted Jews had to go through in Nazi Germany) where they were all forced to put on 'identification tags and the train had guards on both ends of each car of the train.

The book does not merely depict with honesty the harsh and inhumane conditions that Japanese Americans went through, but also portrays the innocence of children. In a poignant manner, the book tells us how George and his little brother and sister had no clue what was going on around them, as their parents told them it was a holiday. While it may have seemed fun to the children, the book

details the pains the parents how to go through to put on a happy face to make sure their children do not feel the pain inflicted by governments that are meant to be protectors.

As I read the book, I had goosebumps as I pictured the life the protagonists had to lead. Reading the book is bound to make your eyes well up. *My mind kept wondering, "why is humanity not always made up of basic human decency?"*

Mr Takei vividly describes how they shifted from camp to camp, how each camp had tall, barbed wires around it. Mr Takei even gives the reader a glimpse into the arguments he had with his father over what was the right thing to do when living in the camps.

For me, a major highlight of the book was the lasting effect of the "relocation camps" and turmoil that the author's father felt. As a reader, one can only imagine how tough the circumstances were – for someone to have actually lived through them, must obviously have been harrowing and had long-lasting effects.

The book tells us how the author's father was forever scarred by their time in the camp. *After all, most of the author's childhood was spent in the camp, so the pain must have left deep scars in his mind and heart too.*

The impact was so severe, that when Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt (the wife of President Franklin D Roosevelt) was visiting an election campaign of a candidate that the Takeis were helping, the book shows us that we see that Takei's father, "did not want to shake hands with the woman whose husband had imprisoned his family.

We have often been told that humankind manages to find

small snippets of joy even in the midst of the darkest of times. This book shows us the lighter aspects of the Takeis' life through many instances of light humour and happiness.

To summarise

Sometimes the stories that don't find their place in the sun are the ones that are most powerful. When we read or watch films and TV documentaries about the World War, we find very little mention of this strata of American society. To give a voice to a class of people who have not had their story shared with the world, is perhaps the biggest strength of this book.

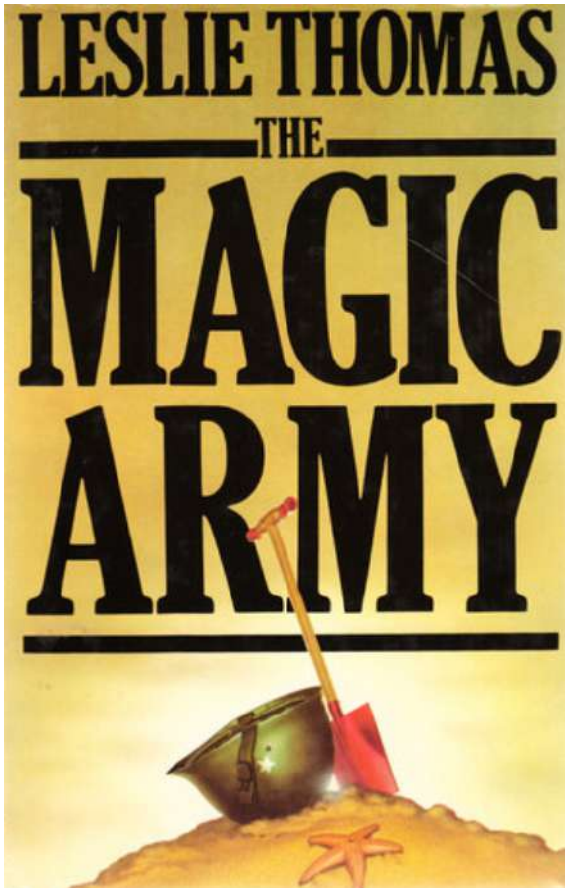
The book offered me an insight into a different perspective of the so-called "good guys" of World War II. We may not like it, but we live in a world that is deeply fragmented today. We can see tones of discrimination and misuse of State power across the world today – all we need to do is to open a news website. The rampant racism that persists in the world, including in the United States of America is just one example. This book shows not only what happened in the past, but what we can learn from it and implement in the future.

This book is an emotional one. I could see the entire gamut of emotions of the author pouring out into his words. Takei has painted a picture with all shades of angst and the end product is bound to touch your heart. It is a graphic novel, but its message is as powerful (in fact, probably more powerful) as that of a book written fully with words. This book is definitely for fans of the Second World War, and also for those who like to see the truth come to light. The book starts and ends on a strong note with how he used his fame as an author to bring to the fore to issues such as race, LGBTQIA+ rights and much more!

Book Review:

The Magic Army by Leslie Thomas

-by Naisha Arora, Grade XI, SNS Gurugram



"The war, they said, would be over by Christmas. That was 1939. It is now 1944"

The second World War, one of the bloodiest wars in history, started because of Germany and Hitler's quest for greater power and ending the humiliation due to its defeat in the first global conflict. In the years leading up to the war, Britain and France, having won WW1, followed a policy of appeasement, not hindering Germany's growth and its reacquiring of territories, for neither alliance were ready to go to war.

Most countries were still recovering from the economic depression, heavy loss of lives and property, unemployment, etc. During this period though, Hitler was slowly

and steadily rising to power as the leader of a humiliated Germany. He followed repressive policies, national expansion, censorship and slowly and steadily, the Nazi Party began to take control.

Thus emerged the holocaust and Germany gradually gained control of Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia and a few more countries in Europe. This came to be known as German occupied Europe.

Not long after that, Germany made its worst political and power hungry move- it attacked Poland in 1939. Britain, which at the time had an alliance with Poland, retaliated by attacking Germany. Germany then attacked the USSR and thus the cycle of violence continued. France and Britain being capitalist nations, were very obviously allies, along with the USSR. The collective aim now was to defeat Germany and abate its rise to power.

Why, you may ask, did I give you this incredibly boring history lesson? The answer: to have a basic concept of the timeline of the book and the long, drawn out conditions of the war. Trench warfare continued, soldiers kept on dying, families kept on crying. We've heard of the impacts of WW2 on specific countries, the global world order, international relations, etc.

But there are two key actors people almost always forget to consider the perspective of- The soldiers and the small, local towns. Young, even teenaged soldiers left their hometowns to fight in the war, miles away for a cause they often didn't understand. Instead of the glory they hoped for, they were served death.

'The Magic Army' is set in 1944 in a small shire county known as Devon, in the south of England. It follows the story of the first

invasion of occupied Europe and American involvement in the war. South Devon was to be used as a site for war games involving live mines and ammunition.

Residents had to uproot their homes, their livelihoods-farms, fields, businesses, all within a fortnight of New Year's Day. The book discusses, in a humour-filled way, grave themes of war and death, imbued with instances of warmth and camaraderie.

It explores first the existing situation of the towns: *How people had gotten so used to the war even being in sight of the enemy lines that drinks and dances were common at night with blackout curtains in place; how wives gave up hope for their husbands to return and husbands gave up the hope of ever seeing their families again.*

Next, it moves the plot along with the arrival of American soldiers to the town for military exercises and the eventual invasion. This starts off as distrust between the soldiers but soon turns into acceptance and even friendship as they realise the clear similarity of their situations. Humour and friendly competitions ensue, aided along by the locals.

It describes various events moving slowly along to D-Day, when the small community, ages standing, would be destroyed, its churches and schools bombed and land rendered infertile for decades to come.

A citizen, dead by accident; a grenade, in the hands of a school child; the arrival of a famous singer; the crashing of a German plane; A parade, turned into a competition between the local Brits and new Americans; a bottle of alcohol, opened on a lonely night and

a dog in the middle of a military exercise with bullets being fired. A story of speakeasies and strategy; of homey warmth and cold barracks; of enmity and soldiers' shenanigans; but in the end it's a story of war.

Leslie Thomas adds a unique flavour to this work of historical fiction. He adds **thriller, adventure, even romance and suspense, all perfectly combined with facts and realities.** He tackles the loss of war and slowly but steadily, you'll find yourself getting attached to the well written characters.

It can be a bit of a slow read at times but you will find yourself thoroughly engaged in the plot and the subtle sarcasm sprinkled in throughout. **Although it ends in tragedy (what war doesn't?) and loss, it shows great strength and perseverance of not only the soldiers, but each and every person in the town: from the single mother to the teacher, from the faith abiding pastor to the colonel with a round belly and a loud voice.**

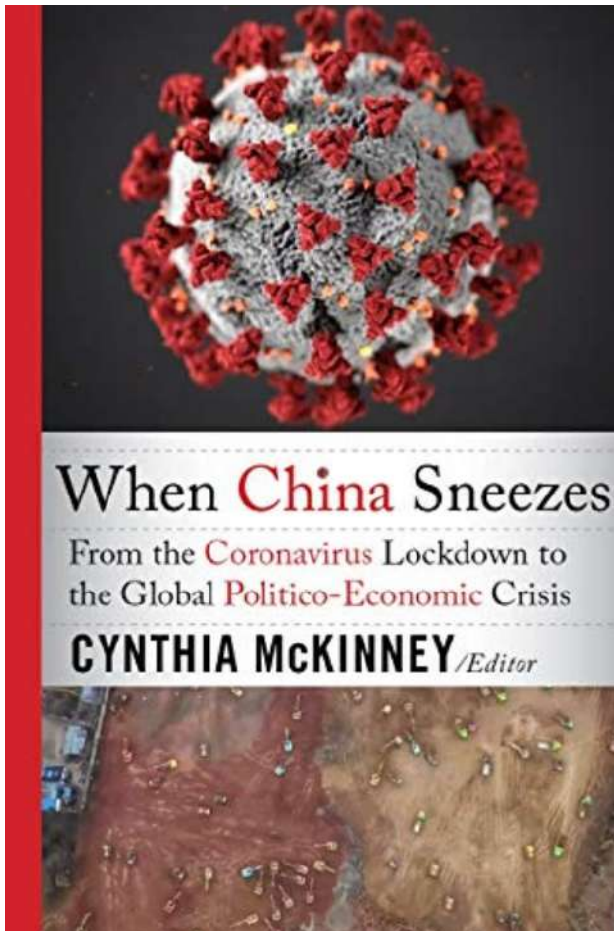
I'd recommend this to anyone who is 14-15 years and above for it does deal with some themes and instances which may not be understood by younger kids. However, it's truly a splendid read for fans of historical fiction.



Leslie Thomas

Book Review: ***When China Sneezes***

-by Jeiya Khurana, Grade XII, SNS Gurugram



"To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill.
To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."
—Sun Tzu, The Art of War

The 2019 coronavirus or COVID-19, not only took numerous lives but also had disastrous ramifications on the economy, jobs, food security, finance, the oil sector and more. **This pandemic, whether natural or a covert act of biowarfare has skilfully put the world and the lives of the world's population on hold.**

The anthology, 'When China Sneezes: From the Coronavirus Lockdown to the Global Politico-Economic Crisis,' by Cynthia McKinney offers perspectives, analysis and

reflections of national and international analysts on science, state responses and the political and economic crisis brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic. It also scrutinizes accusations directed at China, which propound a laboratory in Wuhan as the possible source of the COVID-19 virus and calls to attention the vast network of biowarfare research laboratories many of which are of the USA.

The volume sets out by providing an intuitive understanding of the nature and microbiology of viruses like SARS, MERS, Ebola, HIV/AIDS and the COVID-19. It helps us differentiate between the good and bad microbes and gives a background to support our thorough understanding of SARS-COV-2.

Underscoring the massive and consolidated efforts undertaken by China to contain the spread of the virus, the book related Chinese bureaucracy and people's success in pandemic management. At the same time, it underscored the policy failures of numerous other countries including the US, where late pandemic response resulted in a heavy price being paid in the form of lives and the deteriorating economy.

The inclusion of a personal diary of a Nigerian woman in China, the book examines the life of foreigners in China during the pandemic and how prejudices spread as rapidly as the contagious virus. The psychological and emotional impact of the pandemic and lockdown was depicted fairly well through this first-hand account.

Moreover, as entire regions were under lockdown, air travel restricted, world trade reduced and global supply chains broke, the book highlights how the economic impact of the pandemic was just as devastating as the loss of life. The loss of jobs and using up of savings put strain on the financial conditions of millions of people in

the world. Loss of access to education is also an important consequence of social distancing norms and lack of access to the internet and electronic devices.

Further, Cynthia McKinney compares the characteristics and features of the Great Depression of 1929-30, the 2008-09 recession and the recession caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The positives of responding to 'acts of God' that disrupt the means of support, by annulling personal debts, rents are discussed.

The author states that this method, followed for centuries in the East, has prevented the coronavirus from causing widespread insolvency and polarising economies."

The book raises questions regarding the possible implications of biowarfare research, including the use of bat-generated viruses. Tracing the use of bioweapons in the Second World War, the author examines pieces of evidence that raise the question if the COVID-19 pandemic was planned or not.

The anthology concludes by making an appeal for a new social contract. It propounds the rethinking of the current financial and economic system characterised by "boom-and-bust cycles, widespread unemployment, demonstrably unjust distribution of wealth and unwise allocation of national budgets, which have left societies inadequately prepared to deal effectively with disasters including pandemics, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions".

In conclusion, it proves to be a comprehensive piece having a diverse range of contributions by analysts. It is an interesting read recommended to all readers open to a fresh perspective.



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