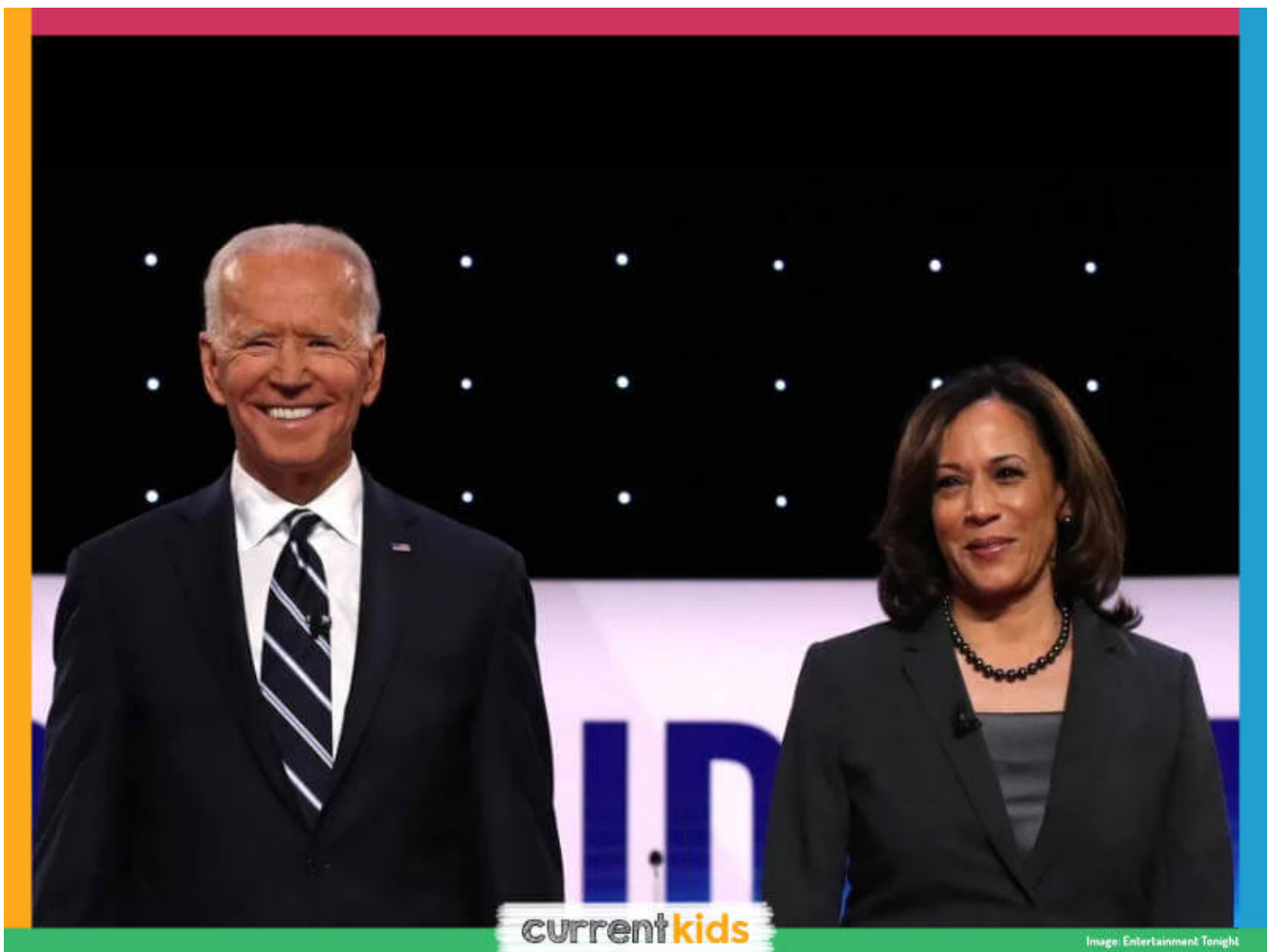


Joe Biden picks Kamala Harris as his running mate



Joe Biden and Kamala Harris

The Democratic Party in the United States has chosen Joe Biden to be their candidate for President of the United States for the elections that will be held in November. Joe Biden will be running against current US President Donald Trump in these elections.

Last week, Biden chose Kamala Harris as his running mate, or his candidate for Vice President. This is seen as a bold move on many levels.

Kamala Harris is the daughter of a black man and Indian woman. Her mother grew up in Tamil Nadu, India, and migrated to America. Ms. Harris became a lawyer, and served as Attorney-General of California (the main legal advisor to the State of California). She is also a US Senator.

This is a bold and some say, fitting choice as she stands for issues that the current President Donald Trump has stood against. She is the daughter of an immigrant, and a Black woman, at a time when America under Trump has been burning with movements like Black Lives Matter and anti-immigration. She is an incredibly accomplished woman, and together, Kamala Harris and Joe Biden present a starkly alternate choice for America.

Let's see how the people vote in November!

The UAE makes a deal with Israel



Israel and the Arab states have been at odds for decades. This is because they don't see eye to eye on Israel's occupation of former Palestinian land in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. The UN had proposed a two state solution and the Arab states are calling for a division of the land in a fair manner. Israel has over time annexed and built settlements in these areas.

Here is a proper background of what led to this standoff.
<http://currentkids.in/politics/president-trump-officially-recognises-jerusalem-israels-capital/>

Got it! Why are we talking about this now? Well last week, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi, and one of the most important leaders of the UAE, struck a deal with Israel, in a meeting organised by US President Donald Trump to broker a deal between Israel and Palestine. Even though there was no deal struck between Israel and Palestine, the UAE and Israel started discussions and worked something out between them. The deal involved Israel maybe agreeing not to annex more land in the area, and the UAE opening up trade with Israel.

OK that's confusing! Does this mean peace between Israel and Palestine? No it doesn't, although Israel has kind of agreed not to annex more Palestinian land for now.

What does Israel get out of this? They get an ally in the region (they had struck deals with Jordan and Egypt before, but are at odds with the rest of their neighbours). The current President Benjamin Netanyahu, who has not really won a lot of support in the last elections, gets some goodwill out of this. This also means trade with the UAE, and a further legitimisation of Israel. .

What does the UAE get out of this? A trade partner, and access to Israeli technology. Israel is a leader in technology and healthcare.

What does Palestine get out of this? Some kind of a halt on annexation for some time. Importantly though, it signals to the Palestinians that they need to get more creative with their deal making. They can't afford to lose more allies.

Should schools open now or remained closed for a while longer? New Zealand's experience with the coronavirus has some lessons for us.



Schools around some countries in the world have been open for a while and some are opening in the next month or two. Colleges in America and the UK have been coming up with ways to teach students in some combination of online and offline learning. Some people have been going to work, to offices with 10% occupancy in the space at one time. Here in India, the central government is recommending the opening of schools on September 1, 2020, or is thinking about it anyway. The trick will be in keeping people safe and not giving the virus a chance to gain more of a foothold than it already has.

Through all this, New Zealand seems to have had the best luck with controlling the spread of the virus. Until August 11, 2020, it reported that it had had no new cases of COVID-19 transmitted through the community for 100 days! All new cases were those in people returning from outside the country. And those coming into the country are kept in a government quarantine facility for two weeks. In addition, they have reported only 22 deaths due to coronavirus through this pandemic, from a population of 22 million.

How did they achieve this feat? They have been testing a lot and isolating those who test positive. They are also a nation that doesn't share land borders with anyone else and have been successful in stopping people from entering their country since March. Furthermore, they have a much smaller population per unit of area than we do in India - they have an average of 18 people per square kilometer, whereas here in India, we have 455 people per square kilometer! That means that when people fall sick, people in India have a greater likelihood of passing it on to others, sometimes even before they might know they are sick!

This changed today, August 12, 2020, when they reported the first four cases in more than 100 days in the community, for which the origin is unknown. This highlights the fact that this virus is wily and will find a way to live and propagate itself, and that we must continue to take care.

What do you think about schools opening in India? While there are some who have the luxury of learning online, there are many kids who do not have the devices or the wi-fi to be able to access this. The UN released a report recently that said that the education of 1 billion kids around the world is being compromised due to the schools being shut and limited access to learning materials!

This pandemic is affecting people around the world in many ways, and because they have less access, some say that it is disproportionately affecting the poor. It is a difficult decision that authorities face now - open schools and risk the health of children, teachers and school staff? Or keep them closed for a while longer and risk more children losing out on their learning experience? What do you think?

Written by: Sunaina Murthy

An explosion in Beirut



Credit: worldatlas.com

Beirut is the capital of Lebanon, and has a vibrant population of 2 million people. It has recently been in the news because of an explosion in a warehouse at the main port. This warehouse was storing an estimated 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate.

What is ammonium nitrate? It is a chemical that is used as a fertilizer and is used along with oil as an explosive in areas where mining takes place.

What happened? A warehouse in the main port in Beirut was storing 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate. It is a bit of a

mystery what exactly happened, but there was a fire near the warehouse where the ammonium nitrate was kept, and somehow, the chemical exploded, killing more than 135 people and injuring a few thousand. These were people who lived and worked near the vibrant waterfront.

The Lebanese are furious with the officials in the government for allowing an accident like this to happen. The ammonium nitrate has been stored there since 2013, and apparently many officials at the port have warned the government about this over the past 6 years. Nothing was done.

The Lebanese have taken to the streets and are protesting against corruption in the government and demanding change. On Monday, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet resigned from their positions in the government, The protests continue as the people want real change. The country has been suffering from a crippling economic crisis, and this explosion on top of that has triggered the demand that even the President and Speaker of the Parliament should resign in order to effect real change.

Written by: Sunaina Murthy

Let's talk about China

China is one of the biggest and strongest countries in the world and one of the fastest growing. It has a glorious past, filled with mystical kingdoms, dynasties and beautiful art and stories and traditions. It has also held firmly onto communism as a form of government since 1949. Let's take a look at some of the important facts and historical events that helped to shape this country.

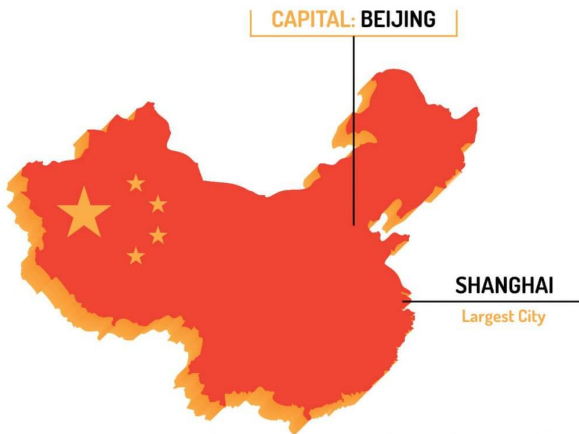
CHINA INFOGRAPHIC





Population **1.4 Billion (2016)** 

Currency **Renminbi** 

Leader **Xi Jinping**

Food **Dim Sum & Fried Rice** 



RELIGION				BUSINESS	
 Taoism	 Islam	 Christianity	 Buddhism	Major Businesses: Manufacturing, Agriculture & Telecommunications	
GOVERNANCE		COMMUNISM?		World's 2nd largest economy & the world's largest exporter.	
A communist state, with one party.		It is a belief that everyone is equal and should equally share the fruits of their labour.	The government owns all property and economic resources. Individuals do not.	They are very good at producing goods at a low cost.	
		It is different to capitalism where individuals create their own wealth.		What do they make? Everything! Shoes, mobiles, air conditioners... you name it they make it.	

HISTORY	1912	One of the four ancient civilizations of the world, along with Mesopotamian, Indus Valley, and Ancient Egypt.	It was a series of dynasties until The Republic of China was established in 1912, and put an end to all monarchy.	1949	The People's Republic of China was established. The Communist Party of China took control, under Chairman Mao Zedong
	1949 - 1976	The old guard of The Republic of China retreated to Taiwan.	Chairman Tao ruled China with total power.	After Chairman Mao's death China introduced the law that the leader of China could only serve a total of two terms.	Hua Gefong and then Deng Xiaoping led China. Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms and opened China to foreign investment.
	June 4, 1989	Student-led protests for democracy in Tiannenmen Square. The military shot hundreds of defenceless students.	2012	Chinese President Xi Jinping took office in 2012.	Has led China into a position of great economic and political strength. Has removed the 2 term rule for President and is assuming total power. Has increased government surveillance of citizens, and clamped down further on individual freedom.

Why has India issued a ban on 59 Chinese Apps including TikTok and CamScanner?

What's going on?

On the 30th of June, the Indian government enforced a ban on 59 Chinese apps including TikTok, CamScanner, WeChat, and Meitu, because of security and privacy concerns.

These apps are no longer available for download on the Indian App Store or Google Play Store. Users that still have these apps on their phones have reported that they're no longer functioning on any data or Wi-Fi networks.

Why were these Chinese applications banned?

This digital strike was implemented shortly after the Galwan Valley clash wherein over 20 Indian soldiers were unjustly slaughtered by armed Chinese troops; this act caused tensions to rise between India and China. The Indian Ministry of Information contends that these apps were illegally "stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data" to servers that are out of the country. This makes it a threat to national security. With this argument, banning these apps was a way to protect Indian citizens from having their data leaked without their permission.

Has this adversely impacted China?

The ban is mainly a political power move on the part of the Indian government. The opprobrium China has earned following the activity in the Galwan Valley could lead to Chinese technology firms being purposefully excluded from key global markets. Unfortunately for China, these repercussions aren't limited to applications; the USA has been rallying to restrict the usage of Huawei for 5G networks as they have been skeptical about China's access to consumer data.

Meanwhile, apps such as TikTok owned by Chinese tech giant ByteDance, may risk losing \$6 billion in revenues and the more than \$1 billion that the company has invested in India. India has some of the largest consumer bases for these apps including 200 million Indian TikTok users. The UC browser (a Chinese web browser developed by a subsidiary of the Alibaba Group) is also the second most popular mobile browser in the country. This makes India a critical market for China. Chinese hardware companies, smartphone companies, and venture capitalist firms are in turn going to be hit by this ban. All in all, the Galwan intrusion has (literally) cost China more than its soldiers thanks to India's swift redressal.

How will this ban affect Indian consumers?

Numerous Indian citizens have been quick to share their concerns about the ban on these commonly used Chinese apps. 1 out of 4 apps in India are Chinese and Indians make up the largest consumer base of these apps. The popular short video app TikTok was beloved in India and helped numerous online celebrities grow their fan bases, so much so that some of them were even reliant upon this app as a source of their livelihood. Through this app, famous 'TikTokers' were able to secure paid sponsorships and brand deals. Meanwhile, Indian companies used it as a place to creatively advertise their products. An example of this was Dettol's #handwashchallenge that has spread awareness about hygiene during the COVID-19 crisis. This placed Dettol hand soap in the spotlight, and the involvement of celebrities like Kartik Aaryan and Disha Patani elevated the strength of the marketing campaign.

Apps such as WeChat were particularly used by Indians to keep in touch with friends and coworkers internationally, where apps such as Whatsapp are blocked. This ban will simply make communication harder for them now. For this reason, the Indian government has been under scrutiny from its citizens for blocking such applications without having any good alternatives. Indians are hopeful that this will be used as an opportunity to develop homegrown apps and goods that make up for the banned foreign ones.

Do other countries also plan on enforcing this ban?

Countries around the globe may use India's ban as a precedent, in fact, the USA is currently mulling over it. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States is 'certainly looking at' banning Chinese social media apps, including TikTok. He even blatantly stated that individuals should only download this app 'if you want your private information in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.' Furthermore, the Australian Government is also facing calls to restrict the use of Chinese apps like TikTok among others. An unnamed Australian member of parliament also fears that TikTok is gathering user's private information and saving it on Chinese servers.

What are some alternative apps that can be used in India?

If you find yourself bored without TikTok or in a desperate need to scan documents without CamScanner, here is a list of great alternatives to these Chinese apps!

The following apps are available on the Android and IOS:

Triller or Youtube: Alternative to TikTok

Google Chrome: Alternative to UC Browser

Adobe Scanner: Alternative to CamScanner

B612 or Candy Camera: Alternative to Meitu and BeautyPlus

Whatsapp or Telegram: Alternative to WeChat

Files by Google: Alternative to Xender and ShareIt



Zara Shroff is a 17 year old who loves writing and singing. She enjoys writing and is a student at the **Ecole Mondiale World School**.

How does one get to run for President of the United States anyway?



Credit: YouTube

Kanye West is an extremely successful American rapper, singer, songwriter, and music producer, and is also a designer. He is married to reality TV star Kim Kardashian. He is releasing a new album called 'God's Country' soon. On Saturday, July 4, Kanye also tweeted the following;

"We must now realize the promise of America by trusting God, unifying our vision and building our future. I am running for president of the United States! [#2020VISION](#)."

Could this be true? Is Kanye West running for President? Nobody is really sure what he is upto. He could be, or it could be a stunt to generate some publicity for himself and his new album.

But it begs the question: Can absolutely anyone run for the Office of the President of the United States?

People have checked if Kanye has registered his name with the Federal Election Commission (FEC), a body that monitors campaign finance. Essentially a campaign requires quite a lot of money. The candidate and his or her advisors and staff move around the country, talking to citizens, understanding their issues, and discussing how these concerns will be addressed. All this to win the vote. All of this is expensive, so the candidates raise money through donors (individuals and companies) who want that candidate to win the election because they feel that he or she is the one who is most closely aligned with what is important to them. The FEC keeps track of how each campaign is raising money and from whom. So it's a quick check to see if people are serious about running for President.

Anyway, Kanye's name is not on the FEC list, but apparently there is a registration for Kanye Deez Nutz West, at the address: '1977 Golddigger Avenue, Suite Yeezus!' Catchy! But no money has been raised for this registered account.

So back to the election then. How does someone run for President? The election this year is on November 3, 2020. In India, we vote for a political party, and the political party decides which party member will be Prime Minister of the country. **Here is a quick recap of how General Elections work in India.** <http://currentkids.in/politics/your-guide-to-the-indian-general-elections/>

In America, people vote for a person to be President, and there is a different system of election. Here's a 2 minute video that

describes the process:

Got it! So what about Kanye? Hmm... we will have to wait and see what he says next. Stay tuned!

Written by: Sunaina Murthy

A brief background on a decades long dispute between India and China.

The News: India and China have recently engaged in another skirmish at a stretch of land that serves as a border between the two countries, in an area called the Galwan Valley. This is a big deal because 20 Indian soldiers died on that day. The two sides are now using diplomacy to sort out the argument. But what is it about?

Disputed territory: See the picture below. The Galwan Valley is very close to the disputed area of Aksai Chin (Ladakh), which both India and China claim as theirs.



How can both sides claim the area as their own?

India and China share a border that is about 2,200 miles long, and surrounds the Himalayas. The two countries have fought over parts of this border for the past 80 years. The British who were ruling India in the late 1800s drew two lines as borders between the two countries, and demarcated a Western Sector in Kashmir and an Eastern Sector near Sikkim. China didn't agree to these borders. Upon gaining its independence from the British in 1947, India's leaders stated that the British-drawn boundaries were final and claimed some of the disputed territories. This included the Aksai Chin Region near the Galwan Valley.

India and China do not see eye to eye on the border, and this has led to fights between the two countries as they both try to stake their claim on these disputed regions. India and China fought a 32 day war over the Galwan Valley and some other

disputed areas in 1962.

The war was settled after the two countries decided to honour a Line of Actual Control (LAC), however this line has still not settled the claims over the disputed areas, and the two sides have maintained an uneasy truce. This has resulted in both sides trying to wrest control at opportune moments, including in 2017 when the Chinese tried to build a road through the Doklam plateau that was marked as Indian territory. Indian troops were able to successfully push the Chinese back on this occasion.

Why get into a conflict at this time? Each side is sending a larger message to the other. China wants greater control along the LAC and parts of South Asia, and has spent money on developing roads and bridges in the region. It has also invested upto \$60 billion in developing a trade corridor with Pakistan.

In the second half of 2019, India took over control of the state of Jammu & Kashmir (it was part of India but functioned with special rules), and divided it into the two Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. China got worried because this could serve to block it from accessing its trade corridor or region with Pakistan.

In addition, India has been building similar infrastructure in these areas. It has recently built a road close to the Line of Actual Control in that area, and has reactivated an airfield / air base there as well. This road will allow India to get troops and supplies to the border quickly in case it needs to, and the air base will give it further access to the region. This is upsetting China.

What happens next? Despite multiple rounds of diplomatic negotiations, the two countries with nuclear capabilities haven't come close to agreeing on most of the boundaries, which serves as a constant source of tension. The good news is that neither side actually wants a full-blown war. Both countries currently have their hands full dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Let's see how they manage to settle the argument this time.

Written by: Biyash Choksey and Sunaina Murthy.

Sources: The New York Times, BBC, CNN, Vox, Al Jazeera

Have you heard of the Island of Socotra?



Photo Credit: The exams made simple

Socotra, Yemen, also referred to as the Dragon's Blood Island, is a remote archipelago or a collection of islands located in the Arabian sea. It lies between Africa and Arabia and is home to numerous rare plants and species. This island is situated in the Gulf of Aden which is one of the busiest shipping routes, all ships transporting goods between Europe as Asia must pass through this waterway. Due to its strategic position and pristine beauty, the island has been involved in numerous conflicts over the years.

Recently it got caught up in the "Forgotten War" in Yemen. UAE forces supporting a separatist group in Yemen seized control of Socotra and staged a 'full-fledged coup' in order to fulfil their geopolitical ambitions. To read more about the Yemeni war [click here](#).

What's unique about this Island?

Socotra is considered to be a gem of flora and fauna in the midst of the Arabian sea. It boasts 825 plant species, a large number of which are endemic which means that they are native to the island and don't exist elsewhere. These plants include the Desert Rose and the Dragon's Blood tree which was believed to give out dragon's blood in the form of red sap. Furthermore, the island has a panoply of exotic endemic animals including the Ghost crab and the Golden-Winged grosbeak. What's quite unusual is that besides the human inhabitants on the island, bats are the only other mammals found to be living in the rocky caves of Socotra. Until now, the island has been able to safeguard and maintain its rare ecological profile from conflicts such as the Yemini Civil Wars thanks to its isolated position.



The Dragon's Blood Tree

Why does Socotra need to be saved? The island is a UNESCO world heritage site and if damage continues, it may have to be added to the list of world heritage sights in danger. The trouble here began when UAE's interest in the island piqued. With its unique topography and proximity to the Gulf of Aden, the UAE believed it would be a great tourist spot with the added advantage of having direct control over one of the world's most important shipping routes. The UAE backed party recently took over Socotra and launched an attack with heavy weaponry on the island. The remote province that lies off the beaten path is sparsely populated with a population of 60,000 locals; however, this recent conflict has already started to wreak havoc with Socotra's biodiversity and ecosystem that is not accustomed to adapt to these changes.

Nonetheless, the natural habitat of Socotra has been deteriorating for a couple of years now owing to the private investment in the considerably 'exotic' island. Leisure sports have been conducted in ecologically sensitive locations in Socotra, which

destroyed coral reefs and disturbed the turtle nesting beaches. Additionally, the introduction of invasive species* -through uninspected cargo - such as goats - is causing problems. The island is home to the Dragon's Blood trees which take eons to grow and are a part of the island's identity itself, however, goats have begun to prey on the vulnerability of these trees and have been 'chomping down' on the young trees before they're able to grow. If the UAE's plans of modernizing Socotra -by building Dubai style resorts- materializes, the crystal waters and rare species are going to be ruined with the unrestrained development. A dramatic increase in people and cargo traffic will disrupt the otherwise serene island.

Experts have agreed that due to the political tension on the island caused by the numerous political parties and the UAE's aggressive interest in involving Socotra in its future business expansions, this island is going to be greatly exploited. In fact, it is on its path to turn into one of Yemen's greatest environmental disasters.

* These are species that are not native to a particular region and therefore damage the ecosystem and environment if introduced to this area.



Zara Shroff is a 17 year old who loves writing and singing. She enjoys writing and is a student at the **Ecole Mondiale World School**.

A deafening silence when it comes

to issues regarding the treatment of minorities in India



What's going on? The brutal murder of George Floyd that took place on the 25th of May 2020 gave a boost to the Black Lives Matter movement that has taken the world by storm. Numerous Indian celebrities and citizens have stood up in solidarity with this movement that aims to abolish institutionalized racism. Through promoting petitions that demand justice for George Floyd on their Instagram accounts and spreading awareness about the importance of the movement on Twitter, they've been open with expressing their outrage towards this heinous act of racism. While this fervent outburst of support by Indians towards #BLM is

commendable, their sheer ignorance towards minority violence within India itself is saddening.

Who are these minorities and why are they discriminated against? India's systematic discrimination towards minorities including **Dalits**, **Muslims**, and **Adivasis** is deeply rooted in Indian culture, however it has become even more evident in recent times. The Dalits belong to the 'lowest' rank of the Hindu caste system and have been unjustly subjected to untouchability while the Adivasis are the tribes of indigenous people in India who have been severely marginalized because of their low socio-economic status. Both of these minorities along with the Muslims have been at the receiving end of extreme hostility from the Hindus in India particularly because of the nation's Hindu nationalist political parties and its longstanding caste system.

From the recent killing of a young Dalit boy by 'upper caste' men due to a minor dispute regarding permission to participate in a puja, to Delhi policemen joining Hindutva supporters in lynching the city's Muslims. History is littered with countless stories like these although it is possibly the first time that you're hearing about them. Indians have grown complacent with their undue support towards issues across the pond and have conveniently turned a blind eye on the persecuted and oppressed sects in our own backyards while rapidly tweeting away in support while assuming that this makes us progressive.

Are some celebrities enraged about this hypocrisy? Bollywood actor Abhay Deol took to Instagram to call out Indian netizens for this blatant hypocrisy and disregard towards injustices within our own country by saying - "Now that 'woke'* Indian celebrities and the middle class stand in solidarity with fighting systemic racism in America, perhaps they'd see how it manifests in their own backyard?" Similarly, politician Omar Abdullah noticed the undercurrents of western infatuation within India and tweeted "So much respect for all the celebrities tweeting #BLACK_LIVES_MATTER. It takes courage to bring your cowardice to the fore when you tweet for American lives but can't tweet for Indian lives."

What can be done to make a change? It is time that we yank this caste and class system out from its roots in order to make any effective change. Discrimination against minorities deserves the same recognition and importance the black lives matter movement received as no society can truly progress if it keeps a vast percentage of its population suppressed, stifled and poor. In order to start a revolutionary movement, we will need Indian celebrities to use their platform for good and spread awareness and outrage with the same passion that they did for #BLM.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

Maybe it's time for these now? Now that "woke" indian celebrities and the middle class stand in solidarity with fighting systemic racism in America, perhaps they'd see how it manifests in their own backyard? America has exported violence to the world, they have made it a more dangerous place, it was but inevitable that it would come back karmically. I'm not saying they deserve it, I'm saying look at the picture in it's totality. I'm saying support them by calling out the systemic problems in your own country, because they turn out to be one and the same thing. I'm saying follow their lead but not their actions. Create your own actions, your own movement, relevant to your own country. That is what the black lives matter movement is all about! In the larger picture, there is no "us" and "them". There is not a country that's real. But a planet in peril. #blacklivesmatter. In addendum : What I mean when I say the US "exported violence", and "made the world a more dangerous place" is in reference to their continued development of dangerous weapons, which are then exported to countries around the world as a solution to their problems. Even their own people do not support endless wars. And I'm not letting the other players in the war theater off either, that's why I have said a "more dangerous" place. That mentality has led them to militarize their own police, and that's where the "karma" comes. Karma means action, and their action of always fighting fire with fire has lead to a mentality which they then repeat on home ground. How many more decades must pass before we see the need for a different approach? A dialogue is what is needed, communication, not intimidation, whether on home soil or another country! An eye for an eye will make the world go blind and ironically it is only the US who is in the best position to lead us towards peace.

A post shared by [Abhay Deol \(@abhaydeol\)](#) on Jun 2, 2020 at 8:24pm PDT

*woke - this is a slang term used to describe awareness about social issues and injustices including racism, classism and sexism



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