

Protesters deface Winston Churchill's statue in London as part of the BLM movement



What's going on?

Numerous protestors flooded the streets of London on the 7th of June, 2020 to show solidarity with the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement that was triggered all across the world after the heinous killing of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. The UK had its moment of awakening with people pulling down the statue of Edward Colston- a slave trader from the 18th Century- and tossing it into the Bristol Harbor. Following this act against racism, protest marches in London led to the vandalization of the 'iconic' statue of Winston Churchill on Parliament Square. A protestor struck out the name of the legendary British Prime Minister and scribbled 'Was a racist' on it while a throng of people around him chanted 'Churchill was a racist' to show their support. The vandal later proudly told TV crews that he was not sorry about calling a racist a racist, however, he is currently being searched for by the Metropolitan police.

Who was Winston Churchill?

Sir Winston Churchill was a renowned politician, and army officer, and was elected prime minister of the United Kingdom twice. He is a prominent figure in 20th-century British history as he conducted an allied strategy with the USA and USSR during World War II which assisted Great Britain in defeating Hitler and emerging victorious. To honor his devotion to his country, in 1973 a statue of him was unveiled on Parliament Square.

Why is he referred to as a racist?

Although Winston Churchill was a greatly admired statesman, he was notorious for his racism and intolerance towards people of color including Indians, Blacks, and Palestinians. He was a strong believer in racial hierarchies which sadly led to the death of millions.

In fact, he blatantly stated, "I hate Indians...they are beastly people with a beastly religion" and orchestrated the Bengal Famine in 1943 wherein he exported rice from India to feed the rest of his British empire, leaving 4 million Indians to die from hunger. Furthermore, 1.5 million blacks were sent to detention camps in Kenya on Churchill's orders, he was also responsible for depriving black communities of their voting rights in South Africa.

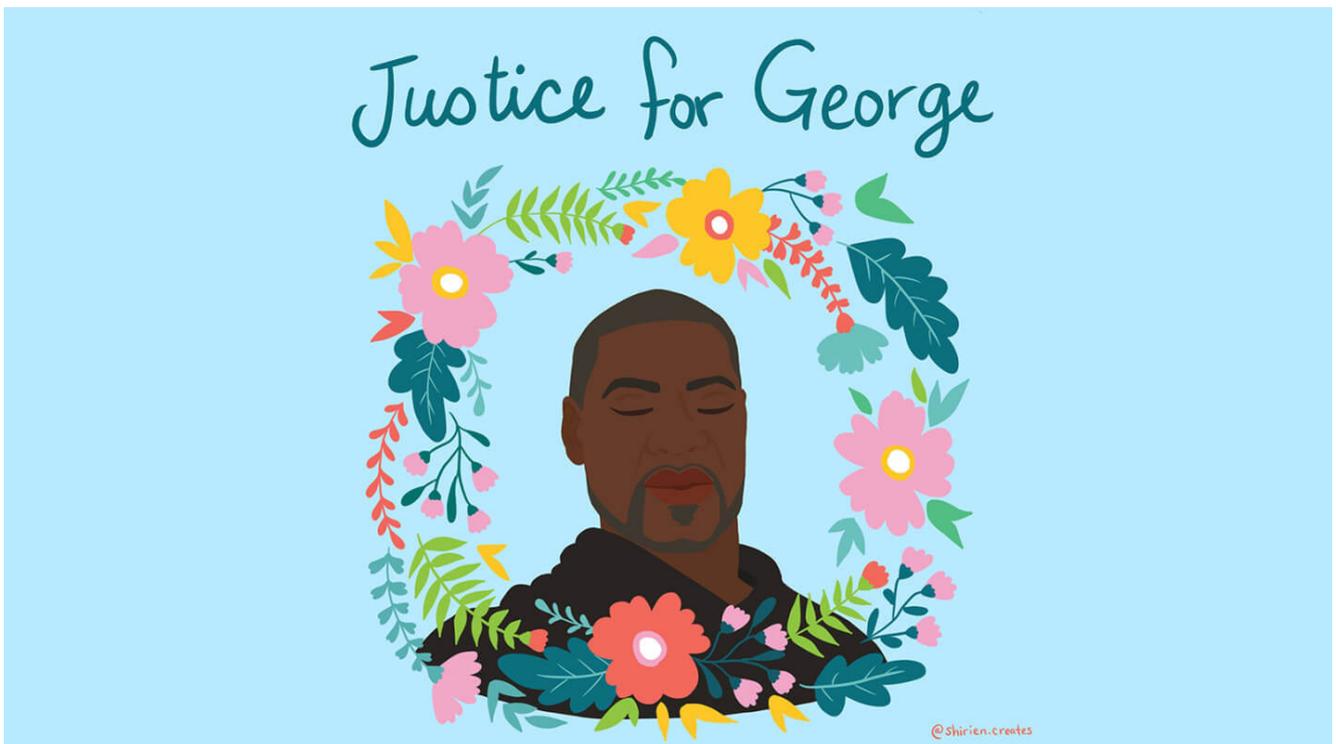
From Winston Churchill to Donald Trump, the world has had its fair share of controversial leaders, however, I suppose it's their cult of personality that sees them through. The human race is an impressionable race, we invest blind faith in our elected leaders and treat them with extreme adulation, in turn, justifying all their wrongdoings or refusing to acknowledge them.



Zara Shroff is a 17 year old who loves writing and singing

Why are people in America

rioting?



Courtesy Shirien Damra

The News: There are mass protests and curfews across America. People from 30 cities are marching in the streets, parks, squares and plazas demanding justice. While the demonstrations started peacefully, some have become violent. People have clashed with police officials and some have broken store windows and even stolen items from inside. Several US cities have imposed curfews to try to cut down the violence.



Editorial Credit: Shutterstock.com

Why are so many Americans protesting? They want justice for a black man named George Floyd, and equality in treatment for black people. They want an end to racial inequality and injustice.

What is racism? When people who look or speak different than the majority are treated poorly because of the colour of their skin, language, culture, or where they person were born. **Racism has existed throughout human history.**

What happened to George Floyd? Floyd a resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was arrested on May 25, 2020. The cops thought Floyd had used a fake (counterfeit) \$20 bill at a store. He was unarmed. They held him down on the ground, and one officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck. Although Floyd said he couldn't breathe, the police officer didn't listen and Floyd died shortly after.

Have the police been punished? Four police officers were present when this happened. They were all fired from their jobs the next day. The policeman with his knee on Floyd's neck was taken into custody and charged for murder.

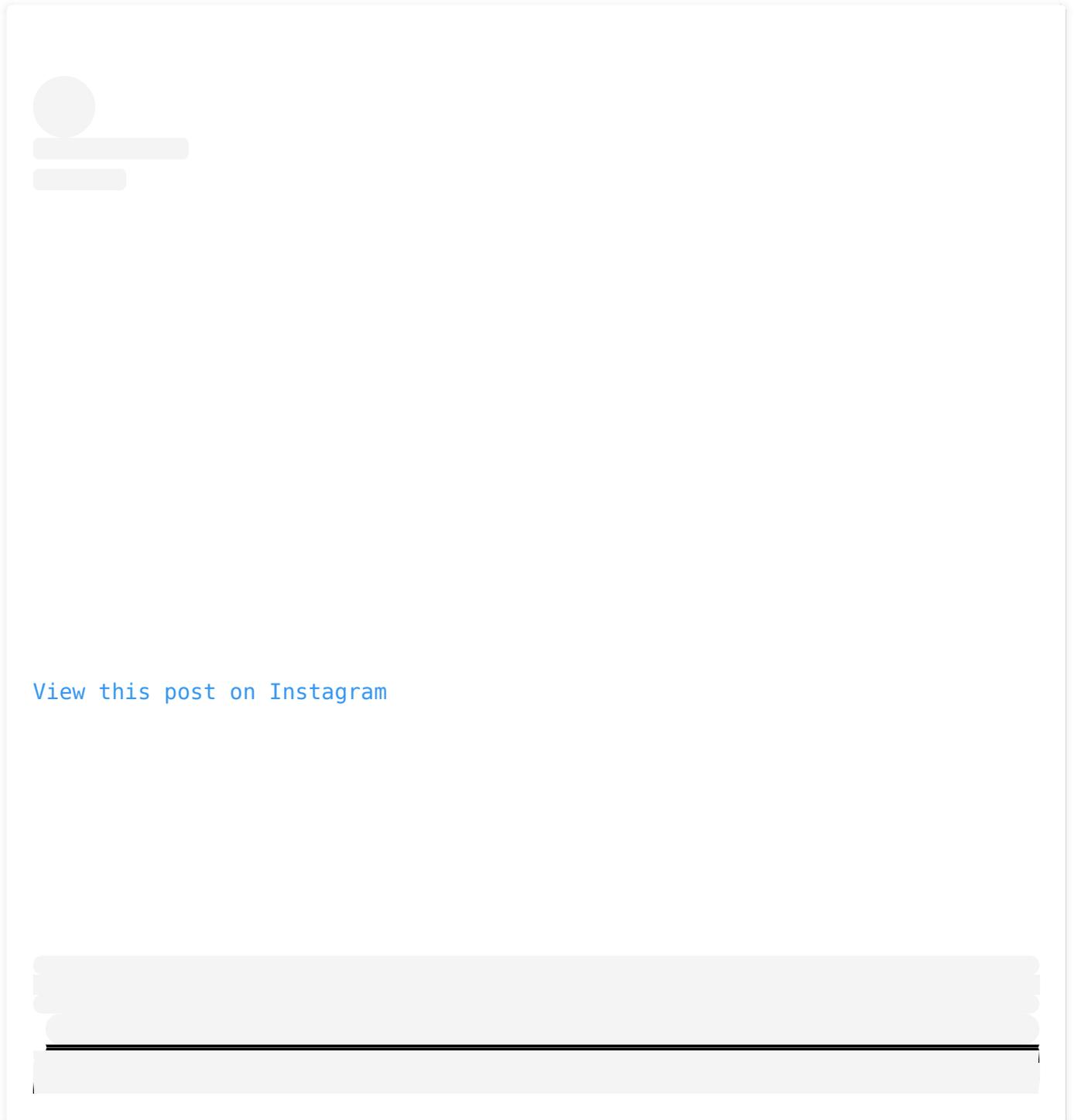
People don't think this is punishment is enough. Why? People aren't only speaking up for George Floyd but for better treatment for all Black Americans.

The truth of the matter is George Floyd is not the only unarmed black person to die in an interaction with the police. The US newspaper *The Washington Post* has been tracking police shootings since 2015. It reports that the police have killed at least 98 unarmed black men between 2015 to 2019. Police are more likely to question or arrest a person of colour, especially black men.

People are angry and frustrated and are calling to end police violence and white violence against black people. The movement has taken the world by storm, especially at this time where the coronavirus pandemic has brought other inequalities glaringly to the surface. Where those with access to money, a health system and houses to isolate themselves in are faring much better than those without. In addition, in this year of the US Presidential election, American President Donald Trump has also been behaving in an insensitive manner, and has been causing a lot of controversy. Many frustrations are being acted out on the streets of America today.

Citizens of all races, businesses leaders and celebrities are coming out to stand in solidarity with the Black Community and

their demands for equal justice. Here is Nike's new post that has struck a chord with many!



Let's all be part of the change. #UntilWeAllWin

A post shared by Nike (@nike) on May 29, 2020 at 3:50pm PDT

Book Recommendation: "The Hate U Give" By Angie Thomas

Age: 13 years plus. This best-selling young adult novel casts a spotlight on racism and police brutality.

China passes a new law that might end Hong Kong's unique status



The Chinese parliament will discuss the controversial new laws at its annual session [Andy Wong/Pool/AP Photo]

China's parliament has voted and passed a new security law for Hong Kong. Many people worry that this will end Hong Kong's unique status.

What is Hong Kong's unique status?

To understand this, one needs to understand Hong Kong's past history. Though Hong Kong is a part of China it is different from other Chinese cities like Beijing or Shanghai.



Almost 200 years ago, Hong Kong was a fishing community and a safe zone for pirates. It was colonised by the British in the 19th century, and was ruled by the British Empire for 156 years. During this time, they made it a major trading centre. Today, it is one of the world's top financial centres. The British ultimately had a 99 year lease on the city. This means that they 'rented' it from China, for a period of 99 years. The lease expired in 1997.

In the early 1980s, as the deadline for expiry of the 99 year lease drew closer, Britain and China held talks to discuss the return of Hong Kong to China. While China claimed that all of Hong Kong should be returned to them and governed under their system of communism, the British disagreed. The two countries reached an agreement in 1984 that would see Hong Kong return to China in 1997, under the basis of **"one country, two systems."** China agreed that until 2047, Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy (independence) in all matters except foreign and defense.

Today, Hong Kong enjoys its own legal system, has multiple political parties, and its citizens enjoy the freedom to gather and freedom of speech.

The new security law is set to change this. What does it say?

Though the details of the law are still unclear, it seems as though it is aimed at stopping protests that have plagued Hong Kong for the past year. The law will punish anyone who criticises the Chinese Government in Hong Kong just like those in mainland China are. It will also punish activists who lobby (ask for help from) foreign governments to help them fight the Chinese government. The law could also see China installing its own security agencies in the Hong Kong for the first time.

All in all it seems people in Hong Kong will lose many civil and political freedoms that they have enjoyed so far.

What is the current mood in Hong Kong?

The city of Hong Kong has been in turmoil for over a year. Last June, the Chinese government started to exert more influence on the island and introduced an 'extradition bill'. If this bill were passed, people suspected of committing a crime could have been extradited or sent from Hong Kong to mainland China, to face their punishment there.

This didn't sit well with the people in Hong Kong. Millions of anti-government protestors took to the streets, calling for change. Though the extradition bill was scrapped protests continued. The peaceful demonstrations became violent and lasted for months.

Then Covid-19 struck and put a pause to the protests. This new move from Beijing has prompted a lot of disapproval inside and outside of Hong Kong. Stay tuned for more updates.

Who are India's 'migrant workers', and why is everyone talking about them during the COVID crisis and lockdown in India?



Credit: scroll.in

Let's not beat around the bush. Lockdown has been challenging for all of us. We are separated from our friends and extended family, not allowed to go out much, or to play sports. There are some silver linings though! For example, your parents will be working from home so maybe you see them more, you can watch more of your favourite movies, read some books, and pursue your hobbies without spending hours in traffic. While it is certainly stressful and everyone's lives have changed, there are many in India who are much worse off than others.

Who are migrant workers? Migrant workers are those who come to big cities to find work. Many of them work as day labourers, earning a daily wage, as delivery people, or as construction workers, making roads and buildings. When the lockdown in India was announced with only 4 hours of notice, these hard-working people were hit the hardest.

All of a sudden, the work that they were hired to do on a daily basis was halted. The money they had in their pockets was what they had to live with.

There was no real plan announced by the government to get them home to their villages and families. They were kept in camps, with little access to food, some with their immediate families and children, with limited access to medical facilities. Transportation was stopped so there was no way for them to get a bus or a train back home to safety and to their loved ones.

Even now, when transportation has been started between states, and there are some trains and buses plying, they have to get a medical certificate saying they are COVID-free. They don't have access to doctors like you and I do, and have had to

spend what little money they have on medical certificates, and on transportation fares – as transport has not been provided by the government. What were they to do? They started walking home, walking for hundreds of kilometres as they couldn't afford to wait or to buy tickets. Many with young children. Some have died along the way. Hungry and exhausted.

Their plight is being chronicled in the newspapers every day. Many conversations you have been and will be part of, are about them and about trying to make things a little easier for them. Some people are providing food to the families as they wait in interminable lines, some people are donating money to organisations that say they are distributing food and water to them. Their journey is far from over, and when they do reach their villages, many are being quarantined on the outskirts before being let in so that they reduce the threat of spread of the disease in the villages.

Let's think about how we can help them more. Let's pay attention in the next couple of weeks while people are talking about how to come to their aid. Let's do what we can. Keep your eyes and ears open, and please do share your stories with us! Write to us at: mail@currentkids.in

Written by: Sunaina Murthy

Trump put a halt on US funding for the World Health Organisation. What does this mean?



The **World Health Organisation** (WHO) is part of the **United Nations**, and its aim is to ensure that people around the world attain the highest levels of health possible.

Ethiopian microbiologist **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** is the Director-General or leader of the WHO. He has been criticised for his handling of the coronavirus global outbreak. Some feel that China should have shared more information about this dangerous disease much earlier than it did, and that it should have acted more quickly to stop its spread. Some people also believe that the Director-General and the WHO should have acted much more decisively and quickly to stop the spread of the virus and to contain it before it took wings and infected so many people around the world. On the other hand, some people believe that the governments and the WHO acted as best they could in response to the information they received and have done whatever they could in a rapidly changing situation.

Donald Trump, President of the United States, recently announced the the US will halt its funding for the WHO, as this body has failed to do what it is supposed to do. The United States is the largest funder of the WHO, and last year, contributed \$900 million of the agency's \$2.4 billion budget in funding.

Is this warranted? The WHO says that it is dangerous to cut funding of this organisation at this critical point where the whole world is fighting to gain control over the pandemic. Furthermore, the officials say they did declare it a pandemic on January 30, 2020, when the number of deaths worldwide was a little less than 10,000 people.

What do others have to say about this decision? Other leaders say that withdrawing funding right now is a dangerous decision. This is a time when all resources are required to slow the spread of this disease and save lives.

Fun Fact: Philanthropist Bill Gates is the second largest funder of the WHO! He gives more money to them than most countries do!

What do you think about all this? Write in at mail@currentkids.in and let us know!

Written by: Sunaina Murthy

What is the status of lockdowns across the world?

Did you know that a third of the world's population is on coronavirus lockdown?

What is the purpose of a lockdown?

Scientists and labs around the world are learning more about the COVID-19 virus. They are working very hard to come up with a vaccine as well as a medicine to beat it. In the meantime, governments are taking some precautions to keep their citizens healthy. Right now they are focussed on reducing the number of people each confirmed COVID case infects i.e. to break the chain of transmission.

Governments and doctors feel that this will give older people or people with other illnesses (vulnerable population) a better chance to fight this virus. It will also give the government time to ready hospitals and organize more medical equipment.

You must be wondering what is happening in other countries. Are the kids there back to school? Are gyms open? Are they eating out? Well, a lot of kids are experiencing some degree of "lockdown."

Here is some country-specific news:

Some countries that have previously imposed rules are beginning to lift quarantine measures. For example **in Denmark**, its good news for children up to the age of 11. They are returning to nurseries and schools as they become the first country in Europe to relax coronavirus restrictions on education. Denmark was one of the first countries in Europe to impose a lockdown, with schools closing on 12 March.

In Spain, thousands of construction and factory workers returned to work. Though a majority of the country is still under strict lockdown and schools and nonessential businesses like retail stores and restaurants will remain closed.

In Italy, once the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe, will also start to relax some lockdown rules and allow some shops to open. Factories and schools will remain closed and most of the rules will remain in place until May 3, 2020.

In the United States, Donald Trump is still deciding when to reopen businesses and reduce social distancing measures. A new report modeling the spread of Covid-19 in the United States says that "prolonged or occasional social distancing may be necessary into 2022.

In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended India's mandatory lockdown to May 3rd, 2020 but are relaxing some specific measures around industry.

Singapore witnessed a rise in infections within the daily wage workers that are employed in construction, shipping, and maintenance. It started a mandatory lockdown last Tuesday. People can only go out for essential activities and exercise. If they don't follow rules they might be surprised with fines of up to S\$10,000 (\$7,000; £5,600) or six months in prison!

Well, most kids are in the same boat. **Is there light at the end of the tunnel?** Of course, social distancing measures seem to be working. The cases of infections are reducing and some countries are actually slowly starting to relax social distancing measures.

Does that mean life will go back to normal? Maybe not. There might be a new normal. Wearing face masks, reduced outings to restaurants, movie theatres and malls, less travel, multiple temperature checks during the day might be the new normal but nothing that we can't adapt to.

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One Thousand Steps Forward

In a huge victory for women in the Indian Army and gender equality, the Indian Supreme Court recently passed a landmark judgment declaring that women can be awarded permanent commissions in the Indian Army.

What does this mean? A permanent commission (or PC) in the army will allow women to receive bigger promotions, a higher salary, pensions upon retirement and the opportunity to command entire battalions and even head the Army Intelligence Division!

Weren't they treated equally to other men serving the army? No! Until the Supreme Court decision, which was passed on February 17th, 2020, women in the Indian Army were only enlisted on short service commissions which allowed them to serve for a maximum of 10-14 years only. These short service commissions also prevented them from getting a lot of benefits and advantages that come with a permanent commission. Women were not allowed to receive the same promotions as men, were not allowed to be in charge of divisions and were not entitled to receive pension payments either.

Those arguing against permanent commissions for women said that because women have to deal with having babies and managing their homes and families, they were not physically or mentally suitable for senior positions or positions of authority in the Army. These arguments come from an old-school mentality and they do not hold true today.

Luckily, the Supreme Court was able to see this clearly and to see the merit in the arguments of those fighting for the rights of women in the Army and therefore passed their ruling in favour of granting permanent commissions saying that it was time to bring about a change in the Indian Armed Forces.



Written by: Disha Mirchandani. Disha is a former lawyer turned freelance content writer. She is a fitness enthusiast and amateur aerialist with her own fitness photo-blog as well.

Why are there riots in New Delhi?

News: President Trump ended his visit to India in the country's capital in New Delhi. As he was enjoying a lavish welcome and state dinner at one end of the city, there were violent riots in another. The riots took place in the slum districts in the north-east of the city. The riots have left at least 27 dead, dozens injured, and many properties burnt and damaged.

What caused the riots?

Peaceful protests against the [CAB \(Citizenship Amendment Bill\)](#) started in Shaheen Bagh, a predominantly Muslim area, on December 14. People have been protesting here non-stop (for 24 hours) since that date. Reports say that there are anywhere from 1,000 to 20,000 protesters there every day.

Like this, there have been protests across Delhi and other parts of India. People are protesting what they feel is an anti-Muslim Bill. Many Muslims feel like they have been targeted and may be stripped of their rights. Muslims make up 4% of India's population and 13% of Delhi's.

Last week on Sunday, a leader of the ruling party in India, the BJP, warned the peaceful protesters to vacate the protest sites

in the north-eastern parts of Delhi. On Monday, the police tried to forcefully evacuate the protesters, which led to violence between the groups that have escalated over the past few days.

Got it. What's happening there now? Extra police have been deployed across Delhi, and the situation is still unfolding.

Written by: Biyash Choksey and Sunaina Murthy

President Trump visits India

U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump are visiting India. They landed in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They are here on official business.

The US president is hoping to sign a trade deal with India in the next couple of months. The US is India's largest trading partner. Last year, India and America traded \$90 billion worth of goods. India sells more to the US than its buys.

Though the trade talks haven't materialised into anything substantial yet, the two countries have signed a defence deal. The US plans to sell \$3 billion dollars worth of military equipment to India's armed forces.

During this packed 2-day trip, Trump spoke at a huge rally in Ahmedabad Gujrat. He addressed a crowd of 100,000 and pledged his love and respect for India. He spoke about the teachings of Swami Vivekanada and the popularity of Sachin Tedulkar and Virat Kohli. His wife and family also traveled to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal monument.

The verdict: Donald Trump has not been impeached.

The US Senate voted yesterday on whether or not to impeach Donald Trump, and the answer was a clear no. This was largely expected. He will continue to be President of the United States until November 2020 when the next Presidential elections will be held. Will he get re-elected? Or will America vote for a change? Stay tuned!

Why was Trump almost impeached? Read here to find out.

[What you should know about President Trump, the Ukraine and the impeachment investigation.](#)

Written by: Sunaina Murthy