



PICT MUN'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

# THE INQUISITOR

ISSUE 3.0

## Featured Article

Do we really learn ‘World’ History ?

By Yash Kale (Page 11)

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# Introduction

The PICT MUN Club consists of a group of students who are passionate about social and political aspects of events that have and are taking place throughout the world. Our main goal is to enhance the spread of such awareness and information, which has a direct and imperative relevance, among the general public.

Our organization abides by the motto- ‘Think. Discuss. Prosper.’

The PICT MUN team has developed Issue 3.0 of ‘The Inquisitor’ from scratch. It consists of In-house articles that have been written by the club’s members after carrying out extensive research in order to serve reports to the readers with the maximum possible factual accuracy. We plan on expanding the outreach of this esteemed newsletter with each edition and would love to accept articles from individuals who would be interested to get their work published. Feel free to communicate with us on - newsletterpictmun@gmail.com regarding the same.

Our authors have ensured that the content is accurate up to the date on which the article was written. The views expressed in the articles reflect the author’s opinions and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the organisation publishing this document.

With this, we invite you to indulge in controversial propagandas, urgent and relevant coverage of events taking place over the globe, and fresh, new perspectives on raging, intriguing topics of today’s day and age.

The members of the club have poured their heart and soul into this newsletter and we hope that the readers realise and appreciate these emotions.

Happy Reading!

Regards,

The Secretariat

PICT MUN

# *Private Players Operating Indian Railways?*

Zeel Patel



**A**s of 1st April 2020, the total Indian railway track expands to a tremendous length of **123,542** kilometres. In the year 2019, the passenger traffic in the railway sector amounted to over eight billion across India, transporting **23 million** passengers daily.

These are staggering numbers, quite

likely in a country that has considered rail communication as one of its most important means of transportation since 1853.

Since then, the railway sector has remained wholly under the Indian government, up until **July 2020**. The Modi government decided to diversify its near-total monopoly in the Railways and has announced the introduction of 151 new trains run by private players.

*“The objective of this initiative is to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world-class travel experience to passengers, and also reduce the demand-supply deficit in the passenger transportation sector”*

While that statement from the ministry received a hugely positive response, some may argue that while the vision is extensive, the plan poses a few unanswered questions.

The railways saw a considerable drop in traffic, losing passengers to air and road-ways. The upper class, air-conditioned fares in trains are already similar to the prevailing airfares. Will private parties lose interest in the railway sectors after incurring losses due to the inability of raising fares? Or will they settle for lesser passenger traffic looking for a difference in the resources?

While the private exploitation of services might come as a boon to passengers looking for more comfort, food options, and entertainment, there can be a surge in fares, causing friction between the railways and private players, thus requiring an independent regulator. It is unclear how the railway authorities will provide judgement in case of a dispute, as they pose as competitors with the private operators in the same field.

Other red flags include the prioritization of trains commuting on the same route. The experience with freight trains has already proved what a sensitive and tough task it is. Will this lead to corruption, as private operators may want to bribe their way out?

While the aviation and telecom sectors succeeded in benefiting from privatization, it was only due to the government withdrawing itself from these areas. Is the Indian government ready to do the same for the railway sector? If not, several questions arise on the authenticity of the private-

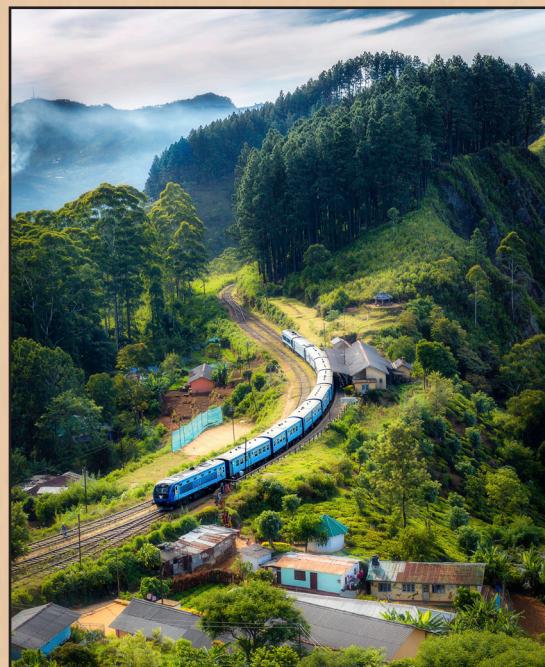
public partnership and who may it finally reap benefits.

The plan also introduces the concept of private platforms on the same route. How is the government planning to divide resources, and accommodate new trains when its current rail network is choked?

It would however seem ignorant to not acknowledge the enormous boost the “Make-in-India” movement receives with this initiative. This privatisation will also provide bulk employment, and expand capacities of traveller traffic. Passengers used to air-travel and comfortable road travel will now be attracted towards the rail sector on the introduction of positive changes in the service provision.

The government has recently updated the implementation and service provision year to 2027, which may lead to a wave of questions on the efficiency of the Indian government. This republic of **1.3 billion** will just have to wait **7 years** in the hope of receiving refined services from **151 trains** nation-wide.

The ministry has still left us unclear on a lot of subjects. Nevertheless, their words have brought the Indian public to think of a renewed travel experience, which has lead to high expectations from the government and the private sectors, who some may say, have taken a huge step considering all the risk factors involved.



# *Reckless Developments Lead to Disasters*

Sufiya Sayyed

The 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy was the most horrific industrial disaster to occur in India's history. This was the wakeup call that led India to pass the Environment Protection Act in 1986. This act ensured that all projects went through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to get prior Environmental Clearance (EC). However, the government has made changes to the draft which violates the very existence of the process.

Amidst Covid-19 pandemic, the EIA draft was released in early March suggesting controversial amendments to the existing draft. These amendments make the development process increase its pace

but at what cost? Originally the projects were supposed to be granted a prior EC, while the new draft grants post-facto clearance, which normalizes violation of environment laws and allows seeking for clearance afterwards. Moreover, the violator has to self-report the violations conducted. The opinions of concerned cit-

izens are not entertained. Projects that violate environment act can now apply for clearance. The post-facto clearance eliminates the analysis of pros and cons of the project and suggestion of mitigation methods for safer and sustainable development. The Visakhapatnam gas

leak which occurred on 7 May 2020 is evidence as to why post-facto clearance is a dangerous amendment. The polymer plant was functioning for over two decades without an EC. The gas leak caused several injuries and loss of life.

A number of projects have been included in the category that does not require public feedback before acquiring prior EC. These projects may have an adverse effect on the

biological system. Raising voices against the draft has led to silencing collective campaigns like LetIndiaBreathe.in by blocking the website without citing any reason. The website was later unblocked on July 24th 2020. Certain projects that the government labels "strategic" do not require an EIA draft and are exempted from



public hearing. Projects that do not require EIA draft include expansion of roads and highways, modernization of irrigation projects, etc. sometimes leaving the local community homeless. The window for public feedback has also been reduced from 30 days to 20 days. Certain defence related projects that come within 100 kilometre aerial distance from the border do not require an EC and are exempted from public consultation. Environmentalists are concerned as this also endangers areas including rich biodiversity of the North-Eastern regions of India. Since public hearing is not considered in the earlier stages, it often leads to conflicts in the later stages after the completion of the project. Disconnecting the public view in major projects and not maintaining enough

transparency leaves very little in the hands of the people and majority in the hands of the bureaucrats.

Due to various loopholes in the process, many steps required to attain a sustainable growth are missed out. The draft and the forms are bulky and often difficult to interpret for the industrialists. Developing new projects in rural areas also becomes difficult due to the technicality of each step in the draft. It is very important to simplify the draft in order to protect the environment and sustainably develop infrastructure. Such complicated changes and shorter time frames promote quicker development at the cost of quality of development.



# *An Account of India's Population Policies*

Shravani Dhas

**O**verpopulation and the problems associated with it like lack of resources, environmental destruction and increase in unemployment have been a chronic issue for us Indians. A root cause of most of India's problems can be blamed on overpopulation.

In 1952, India became the first country to launch a National Program emphasizing family planning. Shortly, in 1966, several important developments concerning family planning programs were implemented. A full fledged department for Family Planning was established within the Ministry of Health, which was then designated as the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. A Minister of the cabinet rank along with a committee was placed in its charge at the central level.

During the emergency, sterilization of around 11 million people failed to show reduction in India's population growth rate. Instead, it led to health problems and deaths in extreme cases.

In the year 2000, the NDA government, under the promising leadership of the then Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, set up a National Population Commission which provided a policy framework for advancing goals and prioritising strategies to meet the reproductive and child health needs of the people of India. Almost all the five year plans have also tried catering to this problem.

Recently, as a population control measure, the Assam government announced a two child policy under which citizens having more than two children will be excluded from government jobs and various government subsidies and schemes. A similar population bill proposing implementation of the two child policy in the entire country was also tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

However, are such policies and programs



a realistic solution for the overpopulation problem in India?

The consequences and results of such policies must be analysed thoroughly before its implementation.

China's One Child Policy of 1979 to control population proved that child control programs have many undesired and negative consequences. It led to a wide gender imbalance in society, female foeticides and abortions as people preferred a male child. Population control policies could also lead to an aging crisis like the one Japan is likely to face in the long run.

The two child policy in India is debated to cast a bad effect on women and lead to their exploitation. The worst part is that it will target the marginalised sections and lead to a counter effect as the needy families with more than two children will be excluded from government schemes, policies and opportunities.

In spite of the measures taken, overpopulation has only worsened over the years. The negative consequences and rapid population growth rate clearly indicate that development in sectors like education, healthcare and economy is the best solution for controlling population instead of forced sterilizations and population control bills.

Studies by organizations like the World Economic Forum and National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) have proved that there is a positive correlation between the fertility rate and literacy rate of a country. States in India which have higher literacy rates (such as Kerala) have reported lower fertility rates while the ones with lower literacy rates (such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) have reported higher fertility rates. Similarly, states with rapid developments in economy and healthcare have reported lower fertility rates.

Hence, developments in these sectors must be prioritised as a solution to control

population effectively. Rather than addressing people to procreate less, a benevolent system must focus on mobilising the economy and raising the quality and standards of education and healthcare facilities.

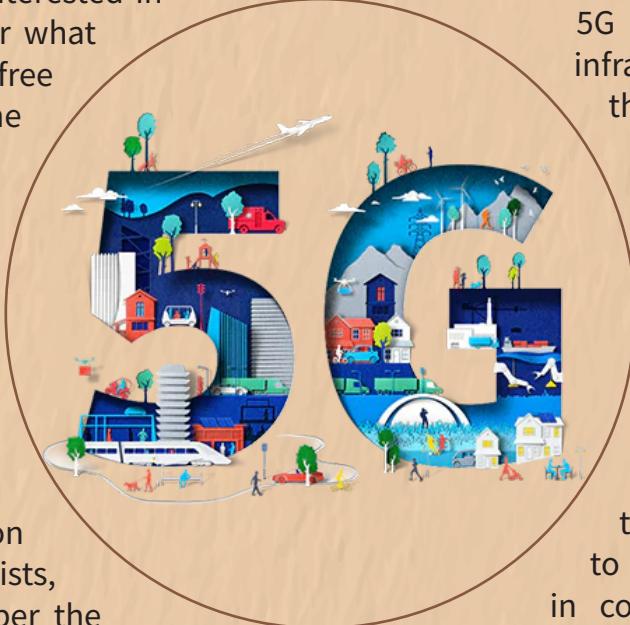
# The New Age of Politics

Yugandhar Hujare

In a dark room, barely enlightened by the blue light emitted by my phone, I was busy listening to the ruthless capitalist with a legacy of predatory practices and a long history of manipulating the political system to get what he wants, announce the next big revolution in India after quite generously announcing another revolution four years ago he still wasn't done. He was a person interested in creating a monopoly over what is touted as the biggest free internet country in the world. With the COVID-19 pandemic already unleashing its wrath on countless people he decided to have the Annual General Meeting (AGM), in virtual mode! He was announcing what would undoubtedly be India's new big revolution sadly brought by capitalists, The Age of 5G! I remember the crony capitalist proudly mentioning it to a clown that visited India for a brief time, that his company was the only company that had not used a single Chinese equipment for 5G! And this is where the bigger picture exists. He is nothing but a pawn in this bigger game of chess played by some altogether different players.

There are three big questions interrelated with each other, would 5G change humankind? Is the 5G Industry dominated by China? Will the

rise of China alter the global world order? With happiness, sadness and utter confusion: "yes, yes and yes". Welcome to the New Age of Politics where privacy has become more important than poverty, data has become more important than development, unrestricted access has become more important than unemployment. As times change so do the issues of concern. Irony rules the world, while rhetoric rules man.



5G is the necessary infrastructure to implement the digital utopia we all dream of. 5G is supposed to power breakthrough innovations, capable of handling and transmitting the data at astonishing speeds. With the Internet being an inseparable part of our lives the amount of data that we produce is predicted to grow at exponential rates in coming years. 5G requires more infrastructure than 4G. But

the critique of wireless networks has been its reliability and vulnerability against cyber-attacks. With the rise of 5G the internet would be catapulted to be an inseparable part of our lives. The Internet is touted to power automated cars, IoT and what not. When these things become a part of our life, we will start to depend on faster networks for these things to function smoothly. But the thing is wireless networks are not as

safe as wired networks and that is why 5G is more prone to cyber-attacks, not the catastrophic ones used to hack to steal information about Iranian nuclear projects or Russian attempts to interfere in the US election. These hackers can easily control our daily lives, they can hack into your automated car and cause crashes, they can use them to interfere with possibly anything that's connected to the Internet. To imagine how a world where the Internet is controlled by China would look like one need not take any extra effort, one has to just look at what they do in their own country, they censor it! And that is why the race to dominate 5G technology is not just a race to dominate the internet, but also the race to dominate the lives of global citizens like us.

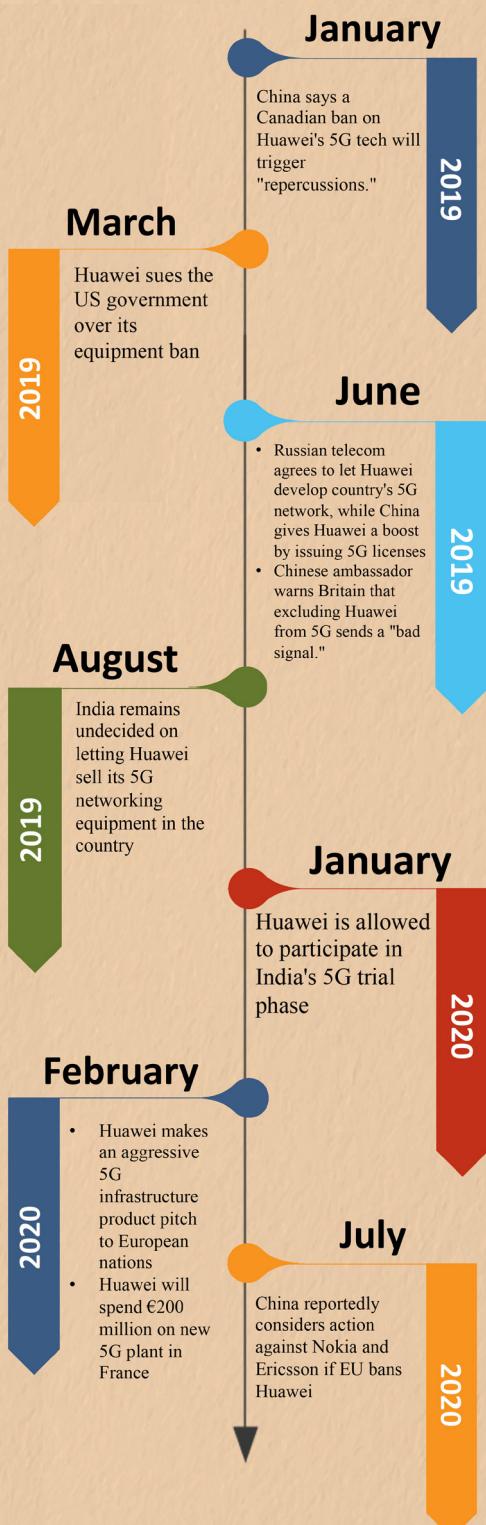
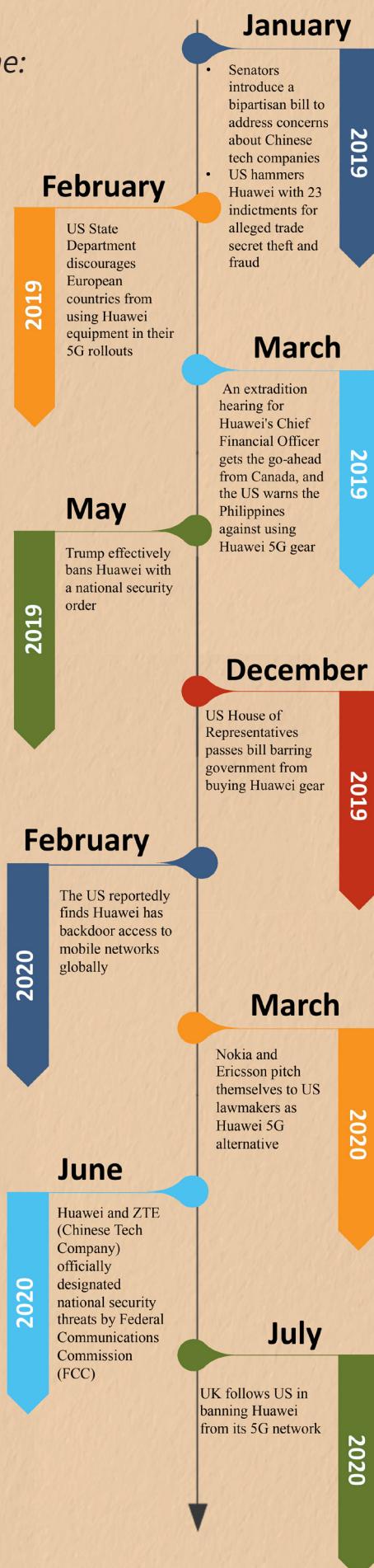
*'If the Berlin Wall was the physical symbol of the first Cold War, the Great Firewall could well be the virtual symbol of the new one.' said an NYT article.*

Let me put it this way. 5G is just a Trojan Horse for the changing geopolitical contours, ideological rift between the East and the West and the growing hallowing importance of the Internet today. With Britain announcing the removal of all Huawei equipment from the UK by 2027 is another spark in the growing conflict between the east and the west. A Cold War is on the horizon between the United States and China. The West always believed that with increasing progress the grip of the communist party on the Chinese population would be loosened and China would turn out to be a

democracy, but it has turned out to be the exact opposite. Beijing not only wants to dominate its people but also the world. Technological prowess is what's going to define the new age of politics and the US just doesn't want Beijing to have it.

What I hate the most about it is the repetition of history. Two World Powers clashing for supremacy, boasting about their ideologies making this an ideological conflict because people need a reason to fight why not give them something that they care most about, their ideals! Each Superpower is trying to lure every country either by carrot or by stick to join their faction. This Cold War continues to get heated with passing time until one of them eventually crumbles and falls like a star collapsing into itself. Then the other ideologically supreme superpower is free to reign the world until it is challenged by another superpower.

I am going to be quite blunt about it, we have all seen this story, heard it countless times, unfortunately some of us have lived through it and one question stares us through the abyss! How long are we going to continue to live in a bipolar world order? It isn't effective we should have learnt that the first time, a bipolar world order is fragile and cannot exist! We must maintain and stick to our Non-Aligned principles and try to make a global order independent of superpowers, a multipolar global order. That is the need of the hour. We simply cannot be reduced to rooks, bishops, knights and pawns fighting for someone else.

*China Timeline:**USA Timeline:*

# *Do We Really Learn “World” History?*

Yash Kale



*“History is  
not about Past  
Stories but how  
the Present has  
come about”*

All of us have most probably studied history at school. Students start studying the subject by the time they are in third or fourth grade. For years, history, as a subject, has just been about learning the important dates and the hard-to-pronounce names of ancient rulers and modern dictators worldwide. But have we really been taught ‘world’ history?

The history curriculum taught in schools starts with Ancient Indian and Roman civilizations. Seems pretty inclusive right? But what about the Han Dynasty? The Chinese Civilization is one of the oldest and largest civilizations till date

and yet almost nobody seems to know about it. Greek and Roman history has been popularised by video games and pop culture, hence many people know about these civilizations. Most people are ignorant of the fact that there existed other civilizations as influential as the Romans.

As we move to higher grades, History focuses on feudalism in Europe. See a pattern here? History taught in India is almost entirely Europe centric. Of course, Indian History was well included too- Indus valley civilization, the Mughals, Marathas, the Freedom Struggle, and yet there seem to be too many missing pieces when we look at the bigger picture. The reason seems pretty apparent - when India was under



European rule, we were fed Europe centric propaganda by the Britishers, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the Dano-Norwegian powers.

World history centric english education has always been influenced by the British. This becomes apparent when we look at the syllabus - French revolution, Russian revolution, Imperialism in Europe. History taught in India was also polluted by Western propaganda during the World Wars. The World War chapters only focus on the German and Italy side of the story. Australian and South East Asian influence was also ignored. Infact, the rise of Communism in China has been almost disregarded, even though it is an event that shaped the modern world. It surprises me that we know so little about our Asian neighbours.

Also notice that Latin America has a total

of zero references in our History textbooks. The European powers exploited the locals and established colonies in South America. Sounds similar to India? Most of South America had become independent by the 19th Century. This might lead one to believe that these freedom struggles were purposely omitted in British Indian History textbooks, which was used as a reference while creating the curriculum post-independence.

The only mentions of Africa are restricted to the facts that it was exploited by the European powers and was used for slave trading. The current textbooks shy away from impact of slave trade, which was even one of the main reasons for the American Civil war. Again, African freedom struggle, or even wars with the colonial powers are not even mentioned.

## ***The question remains - Why do we need to learn about all these countries? Is it even relevant to us?***

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Our grandparents or great- grandparents were very politically aware, as wars fought in their time were relevant to them. They were always focused on what was happening all around the world, as it influenced their day-to-day life. In today's peaceful times, there is no major international political dispute and hence the youth are rather ignorant about geopolitics.

Recently, we are seeing a decline in growth of the US and the EU and the meteoric rise of China as a new superpower. China is a neighbour that we have even fought a war with. We have territorial disputes with a country that is largely excluded in our curriculum. We never learnt about the rise of Mao, or the Chinese Civil war, which scapes the current political climate in Asia. Recently, we have seen tensions rise in the South China sea. The belt and road initiative will have an important impact on this century's economy.

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Middle Eastern history is a dicey topic. The gulf war, the conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, are a part of politics that influence day to day life of millions of people. These recent conflicts have roots in history. Teaching middle eastern history might potentially be a way to curb religious paranoia.

The Israel - Palestine issue is never mentioned.

The splitting of North and South Korea is neglected.

Currently there are no major conflicts in Europe and growth has stagnated. The emerging markets like Brazil, India and China are projected to lead the world economy. Maybe these non-colonial powers that were irrelevant in the past should be given a more important role in our textbooks today.

## ***But when do we learn about these? There is only so much that can be taught in schools!***

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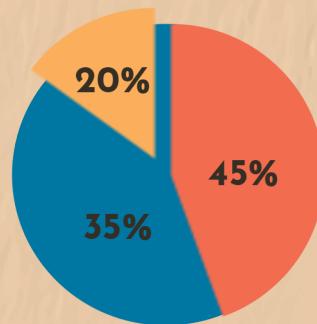
**One word- Repetition.**

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When I was at school, we were taught about the freedom struggle and Maratha history twice. That is two years learning about historic events that had already been covered before. As a student who liked history, I remember being a bit disappointed in learning that our history syllabus was repeated and there was almost nothing new to learn.

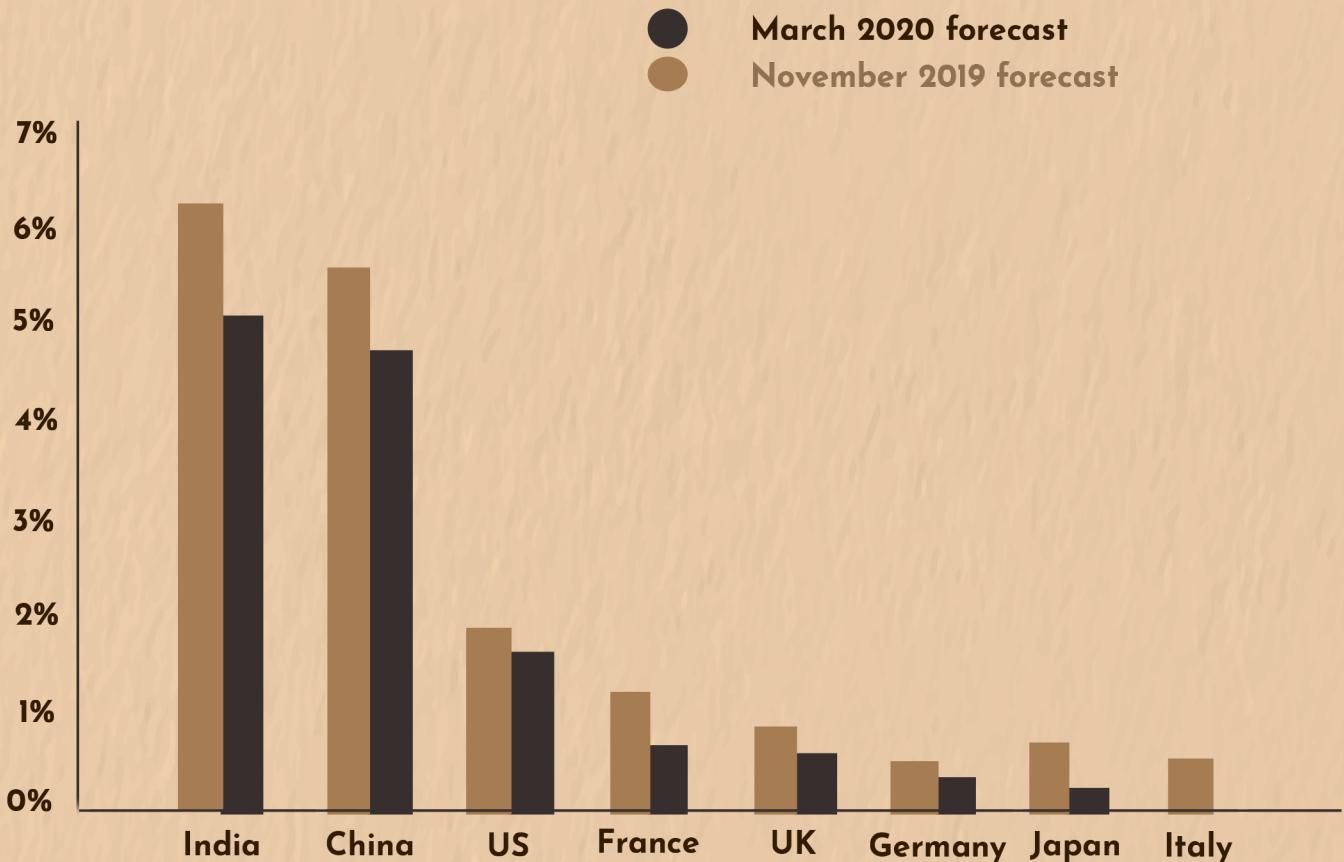
I realize the importance of learning Indian history. We are after all Indians. However I think that instead of learning the same facts repeatedly, we could learn more about our Asian neighbours or the events that influence the current economic and political climate.

# STATISTICS SECTION



# CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## GDP growth forecast 2020



## Covid-19 : Increased poverty level



# ENVIRONMENT

## WATER

### RISING GROUNDWATER CONFLICTS

(2000-09 & 2010-19)

World sees 111% increase in water conflicts

**466**  
2010-2019

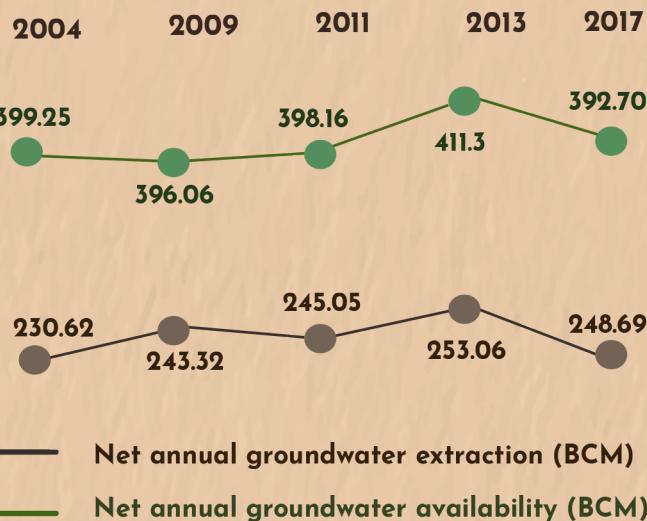
**220**  
2000-2009

India records 118% increase in water conflicts

**32**  
2010-2019

**11**  
2000-2009

### DRYING GROUNDWATER



## ENERGY

### BLEEDING DISCOMS

**91,813 cr**  
distribution companies owed power generators on May 24, 2020

Close to 83% dues are delayed by over 2 months

**18.52%**  
of discom's revenue gets wasted due to aggregate technical and commercial losses

## WASTE

### HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous waste generating industries



Total waste generated (million tonnes per annum)  
2016-17

Total waste generated (million tonnes per annum)  
2017-18

### BIOMEDICAL WASTE

**559,084.5 tonnes/day**  
of biomedical waste was generated

**92.75%**  
of biomedical waste gets treated

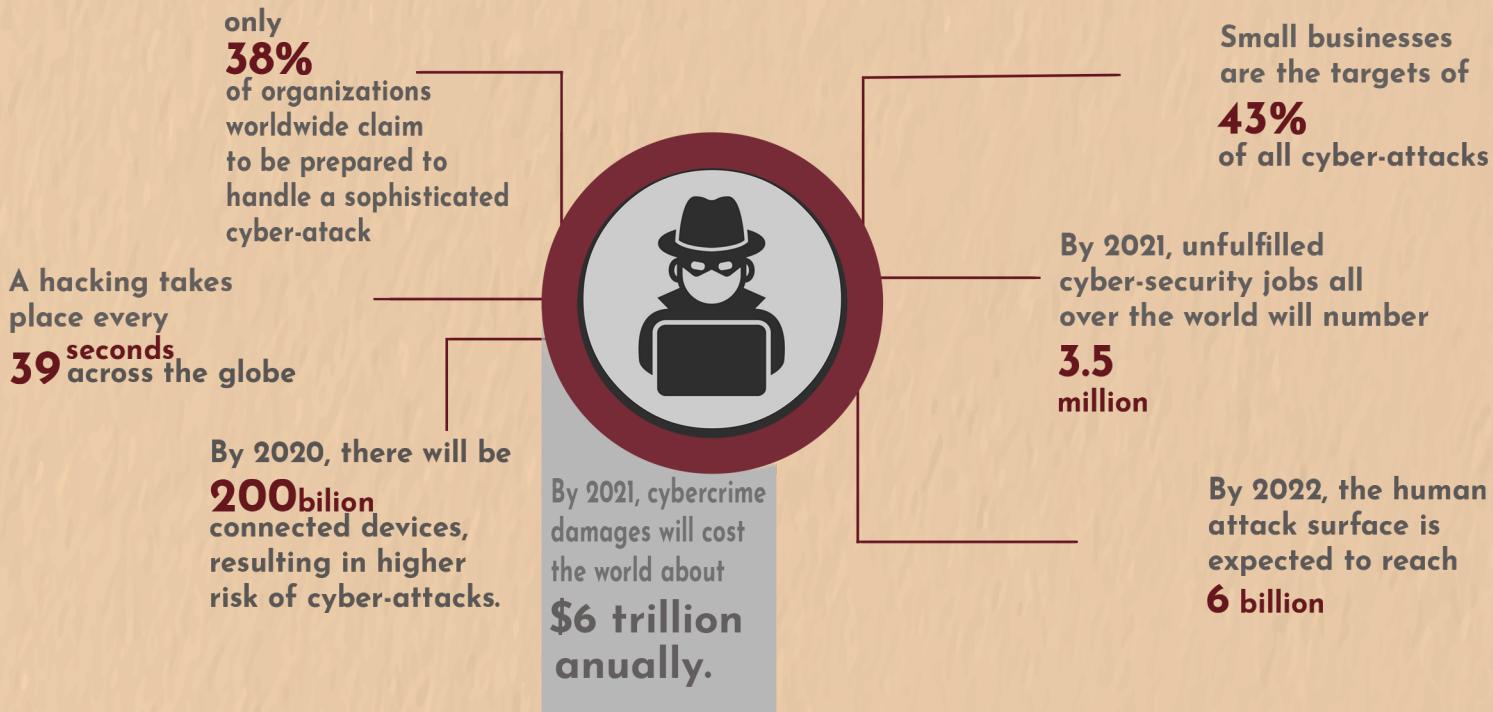
**84,805**  
authorised healthcare facilities in operation

**518,574 tonnes/day**  
of biomedical waste generated gets treated

**Rs0.4/unit**  
is the average amount of losses discoms incur for every unit sold in the country

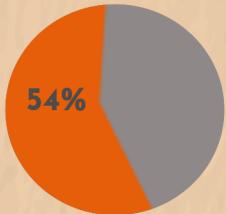
**4**  
the number of times discoms have been bailed out since 2001. The last three happened in just eight years

# CYBER CRIME

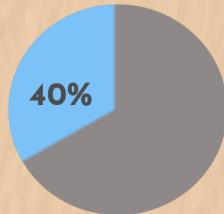


# MENTAL HEALTH

**Coronavirus Crisis is Harming the mental Health Says The People Who Lost Their Job or Income**

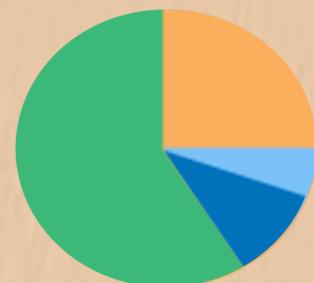


**of those who have lost job or income**



**of those who have not lost job or income**

**Average Stress Level By Generation**



**Xers      Millenials      Boomers      Matures**

■ CEOs of Amazon, Google, Apple and Facebook testify before Congress in an antitrust hearing.

■ US economy contracted at an annual rate of 32.9% in biggest decline since at least the 1940s.

■ The Dutch city of Arnhem drafts Climate Adaption Strategy to reduce asphalt and add green spaces in the city to combat effects of climate change.

■ Turkey's parliament passes law to control social media platforms, a move human rights groups say poses a severe threat to freedom of expression.

■ UAE launches 'Hope' mission to Mars from Japan, becoming the first Arab country to do so.

■ Turkey's reconversion of UNESCO, World Heritage Site Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque faces backlash on grounds of secularism.



■ Under-threat jaguar population in Atlantic Forest to have doubled in 15 years, study suggests.

■ Bolivian elections, crucial to restoration of political stability in the country, postponed as COVID-19 infections rise.

■ Sudan's transitional government bans female genital mutilation and breaks with hardline Islamist policies, takes first step towards liberalization.

■ Measles vaccination disruptions due to coronavirus pandemic puts millions of children across the continent at risk.

■ Australia is actively considering providing safe haven to Hong Kong residents in response to China's new security law.

■ Reports find that Koalas face extinction in New South Wales by 2050 unless there is an urgent policy change.