



PICT MUN'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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Featured Article

G20 Summit - High Hopes vs Harsh Realities

By Sanket Kittad

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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 12.0 of ‘The Inquisitor’ from scratch. It consists of Inhouse 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

The Tumultuous State of Sudan: Coup d'état and More

Varun Sovani

The northeastern African nation of Sudan is making headlines yet again, and not for a good reason. Most people would remember Sudan for its 2011 secession of the South Sudan region shortly after a referendum. However, its short democratic history since the independence from a joint British-Egyptian colonial rule in 1956 has been shaky at best.

colonial rule led to a brief period of stability. The western and southern regions were not happy with the northern Islamic tribes' domination of the government. Following independence, the country was riddled with conflicts. With several coups, an attempted communist rule, and a north-south civil war, the country was in turmoil. The Addis Ababa agreement in 1972 established peace between the



The flawed colonial system sowed the seed of this conflict, following suit of almost every colony around the globe. The sovereign tribes in the region had to put up a united front against the suzerain. These mutually exclusive cultures were coalesced to form a unified Sudanese identity. This dilution of culture was tolerated by the noble tribes only till they had a common purpose-to overthrow the colonial power. The epilogue to

northern and southern regions, giving them each a decree of self-rule. This period of peace was cut short in 1983 when the then-president Gafaar Nemeiry declared all of Sudan as an Islamic state, providing impetus to the second Sudanese civil war.

In a move that would prove to be the country's most significant political event, Colonel Omar al-

-Bashir led a successful military coup in 1989 and usurped all power, leading to his rule of almost three decades. Al-Bashir was a radical Islamist who made himself the supreme leader of the country. The western Sudanese region of Darfur consists of majority non-Islamic tribes. The minority rebel groups from this region took up arms in 2003 against the military-funded violent Arab Janjaweed militia. The United Nations described this strife as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis” and issued an indictment against Al-Bashir for ethnic cleansing and genocide via the International Criminal Court. Resistance to the Arab apartheid evoked international intervention and several peace agreements, which the government almost always disregarded. And therefore, the Darfur region remains in crisis to this day. The second Sudanese civil war concluded in 2005 with the Naivasha agreement and the 2011 referendum seceding Sudan as a sovereign state.

Al-Bashir’s ironic downfall began in 2018. What started as small scale protests due to the economic collapse caused by the junta quickly snowballed into a general feeling of dissent against the dictator who had broken multiple promises to step down. In 2019, through a full-fledged Sudanese revolution, a mordant toppling of Al-Bashir by yet another coup d'état took place.

With the understanding of this brief coverage of the country’s political history, we come to the current events. After the upheaval in the Al-Bashir administration, a political agreement was signed between the military and the civilian and rebel coalition group. In this agreement, the military agreed on a 39 month transition period back to democracy. Abdalla Hamdok was sworn in as the Prime Minister and the civilian representative. The military retained a lot of power, and hence, the country was led jointly by Hamdok and the military head Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as the transitional government. This was supposed to be a temporary arrangement until the military gave up its power ultimately. This interim government was a coalition between parties of polar opposite ideologies, leading to undeniable tension. The juxtaposition of extreme tenets surprisingly proved to be quite fruitful. The sovereign council brought about

a renaissance of unprecedented intensity. Religious and gender diversity got their deserved representation. Women’s rights were strengthened, and female genital mutilation, a horrible tribal practice, was banned. Hamdok repealed all the inherently misogynistic laws and removed the restrictions on attire, association, work, and education. He promoted women’s emancipation from the patriarchal society by appointing the first-ever female minister in his cabinet. International sanctions were lifted, and the IMF provided economic relief to Sudan in this period. The pivotal decision of the US, rescinding Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism, fuelled the economic restoration further.

Hamdok proposed several changes and reliefs related to agriculture to make it more commercial and self-sufficient. This move was received positively and restored the country’s agricultural capability and commercial agriculture, as promised.

While the elected civilian representatives were working towards real socio-economic resurgence, the military focused on restoring order in the tense regions with tribal-military conflict. Al-Burhan opined that the country was mismanaged due to its dismal economic performance with soaring prices of essential goods and feared another civil war. His attempt at stifling the emerging protests was made with disregard towards human rights. The eastern tribes blockaded port Sudan in September 2021. Port Sudan is the only major port in the country through which most trade takes place. This blockade halted all major trade, causing a shortage in all essential commodities. The civilian administration accused the military of funding this blockade, but it denied any part in it. The civilian government’s work which reduced tensions in Darfur and the south, helped the military strengthen itself and amass more weapons and finances.

So then, why exactly did the coup happen? The civilian government exceeded expectations and rapidly gained traction with internal as well as international support. The movement for a democratic government devoid of military presence had



gained a solid footing. The military was threatened by their rising power, as many have hypothesized that they never meant to give up control to an entirely democratic government. The alliance was shaky from the beginning, with alleged unsuccessful coups and assassination attempts to enfeeble the civilian administration. The conservative military had been suspected to be faithful to al-Bashir, despite being the ones to overthrow him and hence they disagreed with most of the changes implemented by Hamdok. In August 2021, the cabinet agreed to hand over al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court, which could jeopardize the entire military and its power if convicted.

A coup attempt was foiled in September, leading to peak tension between civilian and military leaders. October 2021 saw the conflict reach its climax, with both pro-military and pro-civilian protests observed on a large scale. Calls were made for al-Burhan to take control on one side, while the other demanded his resignation. Ultimately, on October 25, the military arrested top civilian officials, including prime minister Abdallah Hamdok. Al-Burhan justified his actions by claiming that rather than a coup d'état, he rectified the path to a democratic government as he was left helpless by the civilian government's incitement against the military. He declared that a new technocratic government would rule the country until it's 2023 elections. Protests following the coup

were met with unwavering resistance, leading to loss of life and property. Civil disobedience was being observed throughout the country and legal action was underway, initiated by an alliance of the highly educated Sudanese.

The UN offered to mediate this dispute, and after talks with al-Burhan, he offered to reinstate Hamdok as PM, but with a cabinet of his choosing. Hamdok rejected this offer, calling to restore the pre-coup system. Al-Burhan counter offered an independent technocrat led government. On 21 November, Hamdok signed a deal with Al-Burhan and was reinstated as Prime minister, and several other civilian political prisoners were freed. Hamdok will lead an independent technocratic government with military supervision. This diplomatic move by the military has seemed to successfully make Hamdok the scapegoat while also easing the pressure from the relentless protests.

This coup shook up the already unstable region of the horn of Africa. Countries around the world have shown solidarity towards the people and condemned the coup. It is observed that the civilians are not fond of the pre-coup power-sharing system or the military technocrat rule, hence impeding the progress of resolution. Citizens who believe that the civilian government is a European puppet government are happy about this change.

Colonization in the 19th century has proved to be one of the most devastating events in history. The forceful mish-mash of cultures has been seen as a positive because “unity is strength.” Each one wants their people and land to be free from outside rule.

The colonies’ independence has been done messily, with unfair treaties and borders, giving rise to civil wars and area disputes in most ex-colonies. International mediation and people’s protests have proven to be of little help, but there is still hope. Hope for justice and the people’s power to triumph over the after-effects of the flawed colonial system.

Darkness Looms Over the Bright Future of the “Horn of Africa”

Saifuddin Shaikh

If the map of Africa was presumably assumed to be the head of an animal, then the distinctively protruding land jutting out into the Arabian Sea in the northeastern part of Africa would most certainly be called the Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa refers to four countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti. However, looking from a broader perspective of political and economic context, the term also includes Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda, making it a part of the region sometimes referred to as “The Greater Horn of Africa”.

Historically speaking, it has been one of the most important geostrategic regions for international powers, specifically for Eritrea and Djibouti, holding out the key ports of the region. The Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal play a key role in the trade and maritime relations between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. The strategic importance of the Horn of Africa has been sinusoidal peaking at certain times and plummeting at other times. It all depends on the activities being played down in the Horn of Africa by the political megalomaniacs responsible for the peace and regional integrity in the region. The EU, the United Nations and other international organizations have consistently delivered emergency relief aid to help the people who are already on the brink of humanitarian crisis. But time and again they have failed to establish peace in the region, with recent conflicts cropping up in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and the military takedown on the democratic government in Sudan. The people of this region are in dire need of inter-

national assistance, for they have been so severely set against each other that they keep thwarting their own efforts at settling their differences.

Sudan is an important strategic location bordering 7 countries and holds the potential to garner a significant impact on the Horn of Africa. There was a renewed sense of hope among the people of Sudan and the country had looked to be on the path to democracy leaving behind decades of violent military dictatorship to become a pocket of stability in the turbulent but strategically important Horn of Africa region. Abdalla Hamdok was being considered an able leader to revitalize the battered economy which the country has been facing for decades. There were chances of receiving even more international aid but that was tied to Sudan’s democratic transition. This coup has adversely impacted and endangered the peace and stability in its neighbouring nations like Ethiopia and Eritrea, as they are all intertwined in this complex web of regional integrity.

The most recent developments in Ethiopia doesn’t seem to be far fetched as compared to what is happening in its neighbouring nation Sudan. In fact, it’s turning out to be even worse, with the government announcing a national emergency in wake of burgeoning violence emerging from a year-long civil war between the TPLF (Tigray People’s Liberation Front) and the government’s national defence forces. The country once being hailed by its Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, also a Nobel Laureate for his economic reforms

and the breakthrough peace treaty between Eritrea and Ethiopia, has come under extreme scrutiny for his actions in the Tigray region.

The United Nations believes that both parties are responsible for the atrocities committed in the Tigray region. Almost a year ago, Ethiopia was most certainly considered

to remain the fastest-growing economies in Africa. The PSNP program (productive safety net program) established in 2005 was one of the key initiatives taken by the government of Ethiopia in handling the chronic food insecurity problem, which helped Ethiopia alleviate poverty and achieve sustainable development. One of the key reasons for the booming economy in Ethiopia is the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda.

This plan incorporates administrative changes which would open one

area after the other and would guarantee that organizations work effectively in the country. It also includes macroeconomic changes, like changing the nation's monetary and unfamiliar trade markets.

Abiy Ahmed also started liberalizing the economy by introducing privatization in certain sectors like aviation and telecom which eventually attracted many foreign investors to Ethiopia. The war has jeopardized the economy of this nation and has put everything at stake. Timelines keep changing constantly. But there are countries like Somalia and Somaliland which have witnessed years of turmoil since the 1970s and it never looked like there was peace in the region. Ever since the British and the Italians left their colonies, Somalia was at the epicentre of civil unrest. Not to mention the rebel outfits such as the Al-Shabab and the Somali

Pirates, which have worsened the stability of the region at times. Almost the entire population in modern-day Somalia survive on the earnings made through livestock and agriculture and it forms the backbone of their economy.

However, climate change has impacted the state quite severely and now there is always an uncertainty in the rainfall, due to which the people have lost their only source of income, as the droughts have been recurrent in the region throughout the past couple of years. Poverty has grappled the state and in today's age, Somalia and Somaliland

stand out among the poorest countries in the world with an average population lying below the poverty line.

Ending decades of civil war in 1990, the newly declared autonomous region in Northern Somalia, Somaliland has experienced continued stability. It has its own currency

and established government but it is yet to be recognized internationally.

Likewise, Eritrea is a poor country and has recently gained de-facto independence from Ethiopia.

Although one-third of the economy is agrarian based, developments in the mining sector have also shown considerable promise for the future of Eritrea. Djibouti serves out the largest number of ports on the east coast of Africa, given that its location is so well-placed, allowing them to handle almost 30% of the world's shipping. It has developed into a logistics super hub. Although it has the state of the art infrastructure for ports, meeting food requirements is a daunting task since the climate there is arid and hardly receives any rainfall. Djibouti also endeavours to play a leading role in improving the harmony of the Horn of Africa by recently hosting a meeting between Somalia and Somaliland thereby gaining cooperation from both nations for ease of doing business.





The gross violations of Human rights against certain ethnic groups in the region, the chronic food insecurity problem and constant conflicts have all led to the disruption of steady economic growth in this region. It is more or less a domino effect. Even if one country fails to withhold its position and falls into a state of crisis, then every other nation will inadvertently come down tumbling over each other like a house of cards.

What was being considered as a promising bright future for the region is now drastically turning out to be a vicious downward spiral of insurgency, economic crisis, famine and oppressive government in which they have become deeply entangled. Hope and resilience remain the only way forward for the people living in the “Horn of Africa”.

Privatisation in India: Tata Acquires Air-India

Soham Kulkarni

Tata group has emerged as the successful bidder of the divestment process of national carrier Air-India and will be taking over it by 23rd January 2022.

Air-India which was initially known as Tata Airlines, was one of the best in the world. India had become one of the few countries which owned a self operated airline before independence. Infact, the airline was so successful that the current world leaders such as Singapore Airlines and Thai Airways considered Air-India as their inspiration for their top class service. This epitomizes the glory of Air India when the Tata's were operating the airline.

But as fate would have it, the Indian government passed the Air Corporations Act on 28th May, 1953, which resulted in the entire airline sector being nationalized. Subsequently, the downfall of an exemplary airline soon started. An unfortunate combination of poor regulations, inefficient operations and bureaucracy led to the fall of Air-India which incurred a loss of 7017.42 crore over the course of time.

When Air-India was operated by the government, it was treated as just another government sector. The decisive power was given to the ministers and IAS officers who had insufficient knowledge of the industry. A series of bad decisions were made by the board, such as ordering 111 Boeing aircrafts

in 2005-06, when the actual order was supposed to be of 10 A330 aircrafts. This led to Air-India's equity capital being wiped out and the losses eventually turned the airline's net worth negative. The 2006-07 merger with Indian Airlines further added to the troubles as there was no synergy and the excess manpower due to avoiding lay-offs after the merger just put them under more scrutiny.

Among the long list of problems that plagued Air India was the fact that they did not offer direct non-stop flights from most of the mega cities. Since other airlines offered better connectivity, Air India lost a significant part of their customer base. The first class cabins were rarely filled, which resulted in inefficient operations incurring losses of over 350-400 crores per year. Air India had historically used the Airbus fleet for short haul services. The decision to order 18 Boeing 737s added to the inventory costs. The staff and crew had to be trained to operate this new fleet which further increased the operational cost.

Over the years, the Air-India staff started to lose the professional touch for which it was known for once. Immense corruption at the top level and lack of competence in the industry degraded the reputation of Air India and ultimately forced the government to sell hundred percent of its stakes.

This is a classic example wherein the government failed to properly run a nationalized industry. The

socialist ideology failed to operate under a competitive, profit and loss system of accounting and the debt incurred by the government is ultimately borne by the people - the taxpayers. The government couldn't analyze the operations which needed to be expanded, and the ones which were desperately in need to be terminated. This analysis needs a parameter, and measuring profit suits the best. Socialism prohibits offering incentives to the employees which kills any efforts to boost productivity. When Air India was operated by the government, neither the citizens nor the employees were benefited.

The other ideology which has successfully managed the airline sector is "Capitalism", which is a consequence of privatisation. It works on the principle – "money – product/service – more money". In privatisation, an industry or a sector is owned by a private organisation rather than the state.

So, the question arises – How could privatisation of AirIndia be beneficial?

When an industry is privatised, multiple organisations compete against each other with a goal to emerge profitable and the consumer gets the power to choose the best service or product. In order to deliver a competent service, the organisation will hire knowledgeable staff, cut down the cost of

their services and invest extensively in R&D to find new ways to attract the consumers. Also, the constant pressure to perform at a high level leads to the decision making being more swift and effective. Whereas, on the contrary, in the government sector, bureaucracy leads to slow decisions which negatively impact the service.

Privatisation of Air-India will likely save crores of public money. The profit driven ideology will come with solutions that will deliver the best service. Moreover , privatisation will bring in the

much needed transparency. Government owned sectors often employ too many workers which increases inefficiency. When Tata takes over Air India, efficiency is bound to increase.

To give this ideology a positive push, the government's role should be to impose strict regulations that prohibit the monopoly of any single organisation.

Also, as the ultimate goal of privatisation is to make profits, the government should restrict some sectors from being completely under private ownership. For example - education, health sectors and a few others should not be privatised completely.

Tata group reacquiring Air-India is a big move to boost privatisation in India. If the government releases the sectors which are handled inefficiently, India will see a welcome boost to the economy.

Can Philanthropy Solve Major World Issues?

Sagar Gokhale

Philanthropy is an effort an individual or organization undertakes to improve human welfare, and wealthy individuals sometimes establish private foundations to facilitate their philanthropic efforts. It involves charitable giving to worthy causes on a large scale, but it is much more than just a charitable donation. Philanthropy refers to charitable acts or other good works like volunteering your time or efforts that help others or contribute to the well-being of society overall.

We live in a capitalist world. Capitalism enables philanthropy. It helps support leaders within government to better tackle various issues.

Philanthropy is adaptable and it can be swiftly mobilised. Whenever there is a natural disaster various humanitarian organisations appeal to people to donate funds which can be used to support relief efforts. Private giving is incredibly satisfying to those donating as it is a joy like no other to help others without expecting anything in return. Various non-profit organisations help provide opportunities to the needy to help them build a better future and to escape the circle of poverty.

In India during the year 2020 there was a 43 percent increase in the donations given by people to charity due to the covid pandemic. Azim Premji and Ratan Tata made news around the world for their generous contributions. This provided much

needed assistance to the government in tackling the pandemic and provided monetary as well as social support to the people affected due to this pandemic. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which is the largest private philanthropic entity has an estimated net worth of about \$51 billion in assets. It has played an instrumental role to help reduce the problem of malaria, HIV / AIDS, eradicating polio especially in Africa. It also provided huge amounts of money for the Covid vaccine research in the United States.

Philanthropy aims at reducing and solving major world issues like world hunger, homelessness, poverty etc. It has not had much success in the long run. Even today 9% of the world's population is living under extreme poverty and about 2% is homeless and these numbers are increasing with each passing year.

Philanthropy tends to focus only on providing immediate relief rather than focusing on providing sustainable innovative solutions to solve some of the major issues. The pay in the non-profit sector is very less as compared to the for profit sector which presents top talent with two mutually exclusive choices between doing very well for you and your family or doing good for the world and most of them are not willing to make that kind of life-long economic sacrifice. Advertisement of the good work and of the various fundraisers is considered as a waste of money by the investors of the

philanthropic organisations as they feel their money should be used to help the needy, not realising that advertisements can multiply the amount of money collected to the causes they care so deeply about.

Philanthropy is controlled by the rich. Billionaires have too much power to change the world according to their wishes. And only the most visionary of philanthropists will spend money to transform a system that has already made them rich.

The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation was under public scrutiny considering the outsize influence they had in public education. They were trying to influence policy makers and neglect public opinion. The Gates Foundation first dabbled with education nearly 20 years ago with a \$650 million

way among the ultra rich to give away their money is D.A.F which stands for donor advised funds. In the donor advised funds billionaires invest their money to gain tax benefits and the actual donations take place after 5/10 years. At the time of donation they can give away their money to any cause which they support (example to the school in which their child is studying in the form of grants or to another influential person and the possibilities are endless.) This is used as a loophole to avoid paying taxes by the wealthy which increases social inequality.

In 2014 when GoPro had gone public the CEO Nick Woodman was suddenly worth \$3 billion. He announced one of the biggest acts of generosity and decided to donate \$500 million dollars of stock to charity but there are no records of the



investment to break large failing high schools into small schools, on the theory that small schools worked better than large ones. Some do, and some don't, but in any case, Bill Gates declared in 2009 it hadn't worked the way he had hoped (with some experts saying the Gateses had ignored fundamental pieces of the project), and the foundation moved on.

Billionaires start charitable foundations as a way to save taxes. Many charitable organisations are not required to disclose the donors. This helps them save up to 40% of income tax as well as capital gains tax. At the same time they are able to create a good image for themselves considering the large amount of sums donated. Another popular

grants given by him to non-profit organisations. If he didn't make this donation at the time when Go-Pro went public he would have owed taxes worth \$500 million of stock. So by donating he saved all of the above taxes and claimed a charitable tax deduction that would reduce his taxes for years to come. The problem with this is that even though this is legal, it is highly unethical as the money "given away" cannot be directly used for those in need. This system helps the rich to save taxes which increases social inequality. It also allows them to change entire systems without taking into account the interests of those affected. One of the solutions to the above problem is increasing the taxes on the super rich.



Climate change is one of the most pressing issues currently. Despite climate change's impact, philanthropies have historically allocated relatively small sums to addressing the problem. More recently, major philanthropists have pledged large sums to climate change—\$500 million from Michael Bloomberg, \$3.5 billion from Laurene Powell Jobs, and \$10 billion from Jeff Bezos . Mr Beast is a leading youtuber with 75.9 million subscribers. He uploads various outlandish and expensive videos. His most recent videos have him buying all the items in five stores and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on expensive food. Mr-Beast also puts on attention-grabbing donation and charity stunts. He once opened up a car showroom where he gave out cars for free, and is known to dole out thousands of dollars to small streamers on Twitch and YouTube, as well as to waitresses and Uber drivers in person.

His philanthropy is different in the sense that he donates huge amounts of money to individuals without donating to any cause, also makes click-bait youtube videos on the same which help him amass viewers so the return on investment is really good.

Thus philanthropy working alongside the government has the potential to bring about revolutionary changes. For this the policy makers have to draft stricter rules to keep tab on the philanthropic organisations. Philanthropy works best as a support, not a control system, for broad-based participation in social change. Philanthropists should diversify their boards and include some people from the groups they seek to support. If we want philanthropy to deepen democracy and reduce social inequalities and justice then philanthropy itself should become more democratic and fair in its own internal workings.

G20 Rome-High hopes vs Harsh Realities

Sanket Kittad

The G20 is a group of 19 countries and the European Union(EU). It works to address major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development. It was founded in 1999 in response to several economic crises. Its primary purpose has been the governance of the Global economy. The first G20 summit was held in 2008 as a response to the financial crisis of 2007-2008, at Washington DC.

The 2020 G20 summit was scheduled to take place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was held virtually. On 26 March 2020, the G20 members held an emergency summit via video conference, maintaining social distancing amid COVID-19, in order to plan a coordinated global response against the COVID-19 pandemic. Chaired by King Salman of Saudi Arabia, who presided over the 2020 summit, the meeting aimed at finding ways to tackle the economic implications of the virus on the global economy, with people losing their jobs and incomes due to lockdowns and curfews imposed globally.

The 2021 G20 summit was held in Rome, on 30th and 31st October 2021. As part of the G20 deci-

sion-making process, the Working Groups are in charge of leading the in-depth analysis of a range of internationally relevant issues. The members are experts from the G20 countries, and they address specific issues linked to the broader G20 agenda, feeding into the Ministerial segments and ultimately the Summit itself. Each group is coordinated by a representative of the competent Ministry of the country holding the G20 Presidency.

The 2021 Summit resulted in the Leaders committing to the Paris Agreement goal of Limiting Global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. They agreed to phase out investments in new offshore coal farms. Coal was one of the hardest fought issues between the countries with China, Australia, India and Russia standing against a push from European and British diplomats to make a firm statement ahead of the COP26 about ending the use of the most polluting fossil fuel.



The Leaders also endorsed the OECD deal to subject Multinational Companies to a minimum 15% tax citing an effort to build "a more stable and fairer international tax system". 136 countries reached a deal on a minimum tax on global corporations, including internet giants like Google, Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft or Apple to make it harder for them to avoid taxation by

establishing offices in low-tax jurisdictions. It was a long coming decision which would result in the decline of the companies trying to escape taxes and help increase government revenue.

They agreed to support the WHO's goal of vaccinating at least 40% percent of the world's popula-



tion against COVID-19 by 2021, and 70% by the middle of next year.

Five leaders' absence was noted at the summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin participated via video conference. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent his Minister for Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ebrard on his behalf. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Both skipped the summit due to elections being held in their respective nations. The absence of Russian and Chinese Presidents highlighted their unwillingness to have serious talks about the dire consequences the world faces if climate change is not combated. Them sending lower-level ministers, while consolidating all power into their own hands, making it unlikely that they would be authorised to make important decisions. It also shows their lack of concern for global cooperation.

The overall conversation at the summit was dominated by the impending threat of climate change. The agreement from the summit has disappointed many climate-change activists.

Developing countries making a firm agreement on phasing out use of coal, would have gone a long

way in reaching the carbon neutrality goals, but no such agreement was made. Developed countries not committing to mobilise over 100 billion \$ in climate adaptation costs also contributed to this. The agreements and declarations from the summit lacked ambition and vision and simply did not meet the moment, where we are seeing rapid increase in the effects of climate change.

The summit highlighted the divisions that exist between western developed countries, who have historically polluted our planet the most but are now seeing a decline in carbon-emissions, and emerging economies led by China are seeing their emissions rise as their economies grow. Though the summit was not a grand success, it was a stepping stone and helped build momentum to the COP26 held at Glasgow, and also a rare moment of consensus between the West and the developing countries.

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Special Section

on

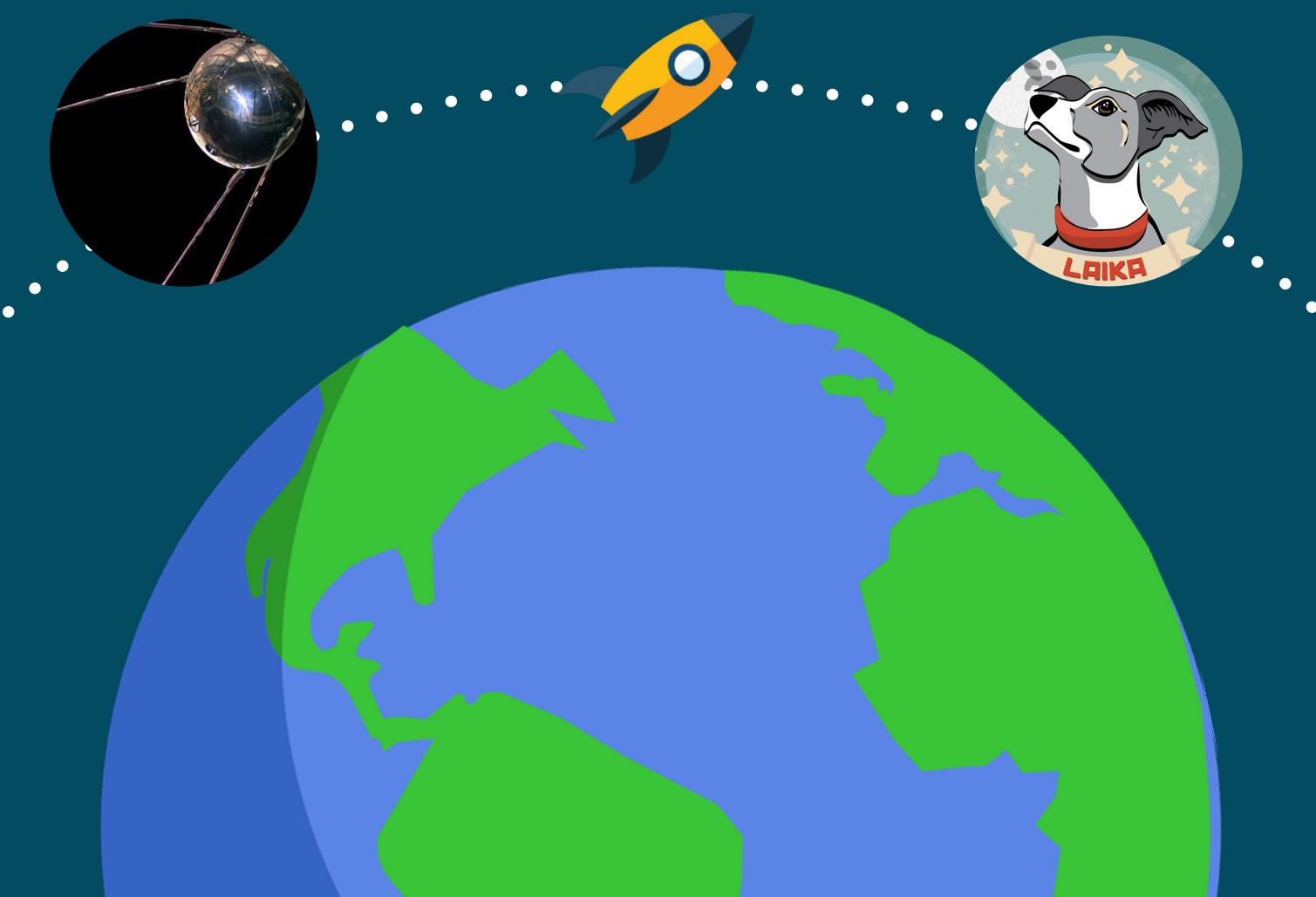
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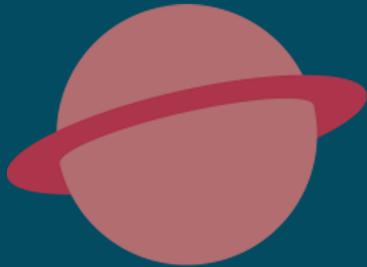
Sputnik 1 was the first artificial Earth satellite launched on 4 October 1957 as part of the Soviet space program. It orbited for three weeks before its batteries died and then orbited silently for two months before it fell back into the atmosphere on 4 January 1958.

Sputnik 2 was the second spacecraft launched into Earth orbit, on 3 November 1957, and the first to carry a living animal, a Soviet space dog named Laika. It was launched into a $212\text{ km} \times 1,660\text{ km}$ orbit with a period of 103.7 minutes, similar to the one used to launch Sputnik 1.





Timeline



3 November 1957

17:30 Moscow time, GMT+3 - Launch time

5 November 1957

Telemetry data indicated that Laika's vital signs were normal for the 1st three orbits, but during the 4th orbit, the cabin temperature rose to 43 °C (109 °F) followed by movements of the dog. No signs of breathing, heart rate, or blood pressure were seen, but the cardio sensor was still registering a heart beat.

6 November 1957

Laika died on the 4th orbit due to overheating caused by an air conditioning malfunction.

10 November 1957

The batteries in the spacecraft ran out and all data transmission ceased, after 150 separate telemetry sessions.

14 April 1958

Sputnik 2 re-entered the atmosphere after 162 days (nearly 23 weeks) in space and about 2500 orbits. Reentry was sighted from the east coast of the United States and surviving debris impacted in the Amazon region of South America.



1

Sputnik 2 was planned hastily after Premier Nikita Khrushchev requested a flight to coincide with November 7, 1957, the 40th anniversary of Russia's Bolshevik Revolution.

2

Female stray dogs were chosen because they were smaller, apparently more docile and initial tests showed their obedience and passivity. Canine finalists lived in tiny pressurized capsules for days and then weeks at a time.

3

Eventually, the team chose the placid Kudryavka as Sputnik 2's dog cosmonaut and Albina as backup. Introduced to the public via radio, Kudryavka barked and later became known as Laika, "barker" in Russian. Doctors performed surgery on both dogs, embedding medical devices in their bodies to monitor their activities.

4

Engineers working on Sputnik 2 believed the ship's 1,120-pound payload, six times as heavy as Sputnik 1, could be kept within limits by feeding its passenger only once. They expected Laika to die from oxygen deprivation, a painless death within 15 seconds after seven days in space.

5

According to *Animals In Space* by Colin Burgess and Chris Dubbs, between 1951-1966, Russia sent dogs into flight 71 times with 17 deaths. The Russian space program continues to use animals in space tests, but in every case except Laika's, there has been some hope that the animal would survive.

6

The flight sparked ethical debate about cruelty to animals, as Laika had been shot into space with the knowledge that she wouldn't survive and may have suffered an unpleasant death from panic and overheating. The space dog gave her life for her country, involuntarily fulfilling a canine suicide mission and opened the doors for humans to explore more into space.

NORTH AMERICA



US President Biden hosts the leaders of Canada and Mexico on the first trilateral summit since 2016, with discussions on tackling trade and immigration issues among others.

Canada's West coast faces deadly floods due to rainstorms, resulting in heavy damages to the infrastructure. Experts suggest it as effects of climate change.

HIV drug named Cabenuva receives approval in the UK as the first long acting injectable treatment for the horrifying ordeal.

Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko allegedly seeks retribution for the trade sanctions imposed by the EU by forcing migrants on to the Polish Border.

ASIA



Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai not heard from or seen publicly for weeks following her claims of sexual assault from China's former Vice-Premier.

India PM Narendra Modi repeals 3 controversial farm law reforms after a year of protests.

EUROPE

AUSTRALIA

Venezuela's ruling party (The United Socialist Party) wins the state governorship elections, the first in nearly four years which was not boycotted by Venezuela's main opposition parties. Yet, the US cries foul play.

Local units of America Movil, Telefonica, Telecom Italia and a number of local firms spent over \$1.27 Billion on the first day of Brazil's 5G Auction held at Sao Paulo.



Libya's Minister of Oil and Gas announces plans to construct a solar plant with French multinational Total Energies, inviting more foreign investors for business.

Twin suicide bomb attacks target Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The Allied Democratic Forces, an IS-linked group, suspected to be behind the incident.

The Australian government decides to relax the ban on foreign citizens flying to Australia, provided they are fully vaccinated. Skilled workers, international students and refugees to be given priority.

Australian army personnel dispatched to the Solomon Islands to ensure peace and stability in the riot affected regions, primarily in the capital Honiara.

SOUTH AMERICA



AFRICA

