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EDITORIAL 01

Dodging bullets: On an assassination bid and U.S. politics

Joe Biden and Donald Trump should not worsen the polarisation after the assassination attempt

Former United States President Donald Trump has narrowly survived an assassination attempt by a gunman who fired at him during a political rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, hitting his ear before the 78-year-old was rushed off the podium by Secret Service agents. The shooter, identified as Thomas Crooks, a registered Republican who also made a small donation to a pro-Democratic group, died when law enforcement officers at the scene returned fire. The dramatic events have unfolded at a **fraught** time in American politics — not only is the 2024 presidential election a little over three months away, but, **ironically**, the attack comes after months of Mr. Trump and his supporters periodically indulging in **rhetoric** that **condoned** or sympathised with violence or violent intentions in the political sphere. The most notable among these instances was when he said that he believed that the mob that breached the gates of Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021, was comprised of “unbelievable patriots”. To a certain extent, the



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seriousness of the latest incident, rare but not unprecedented in U.S. political history, **engendered** sympathy bridging the partisan divide. President Joe Biden **unequivocally** and immediately condemned the attack on Mr. Trump, saying that there was no place in America for this. “We must unite as one nation to condemn it. It’s sick.” Similar sentiments were expressed by other political figures.

So far as the impact on the election is concerned, Mr. Trump was already projected to be leading Mr. Biden narrowly in swing States — critical to the election result — in a range of polls. Now, that lead may widen, although whether it will be **unassailable** by election day remains to be seen. The ratings of former President Ronald Reagan jumped dramatically after he was shot by a man on March 30, 1981, 69 days after assuming office, yet that boost disappeared within several weeks. The more complex and troubling question is the extent to which the Trump campaign, in its bid to capitalise on the near martyrdom of its candidate, will adopt the language of hate politics, building on **vicious** comments that have already been circulating on social media since the attack, many of them blaming Democrats for the violence and deliberately **conflating** political opposition with personal animus. If the two presidential candidates,

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their campaign teams, and their party leaders abandon common civility in what should ideally be a structured partisan contest and allow **baser** populist instincts to dominate their speeches in the months ahead, it will inevitably **exacerbate** the already bitter state of polarisation in the public discourse. Whoever wins on November 5 would then stand on the brink of a deeply troubled polity, hardly the ideal scenario to build bipartisan bridges, so essential to ensure that the U.S. can tackle the many challenges it faces, foreign and domestic.

SUMMARY

Former US President Donald Trump has survived an assassination attempt by a gunman during a political rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. The shooter, identified as Thomas Crooks, was a Republican who made a small donation to a pro-Democratic group. The incident occurred at a time when the 2024 presidential election is just over three months away. Trump and his supporters have been indulging in rhetoric that condones or sympathizes with violence or violent intentions in the political sphere. President Joe Biden condemned the attack, calling it sick and urging unity. The Trump campaign may adopt hate politics, building on vicious comments since the attack, blaming Democrats for the violence and conflating political opposition with personal animus. If the two candidates abandon common civility and allow baser populist instincts to dominate their speeches, it will exacerbate the already bitter state of polarisation in public discourse.



Vocabulary

1. Fraught

Synonyms: Filled, laden, charged

Antonyms: Empty, devoid

2. Ironically

Meaning: "Ironically" means in a way that is contrary to what is expected or intended; often involving a surprising or unexpected twist.

3. Rhetoric

Synonyms: Oratory, eloquence, persuasion

Antonyms: Silence, conciseness

4. Condoned

Synonyms: overlook, excuse, forgive

Antonyms: condemn, punish

5. Ungendered

Synonyms: gender-neutral, non-binary, neutral

Antonyms: gendered, binary

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6. Unequivocally

Synonyms: clearly, definitely, unquestionably

Antonyms: doubtfully, ambiguously

7. Unassailable

Synonyms: impregnable, invincible, indisputable

Antonyms: vulnerable, disputable

8. Vicious

Synonyms: brutal, cruel, savage, malicious

Antonyms: gentle, kind, benevolent, compassionate

9. Conflating

Synonyms: mixing, merging, blending

Antonyms: separating, distinguishing

10. Baser

Synonyms: inferior, degraded, ignoble

Antonyms: noble, elevated

11. Exacerbate

Synonyms: aggravate, worsen, and intensify

Antonyms: alleviate, mitigate, and reduce

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EDITORIAL 02

Back to the future: On Wimbledon 2024 and tennis

Alcaraz and Sinner confirm the rise of a new generation

Ever since Roger Federer retired and Rafael Nadal started **fading** away, tennis fans have had their eyes set on the future. On Sunday, at the Centre Court in Wimbledon, came the clearest evidence that there was a fresh dynasty taking shape with a new king in place. Carlos Alcaraz's straight sets **demolition** of Novak Djokovic will likely be the **watershed** that **heralded** the change. Djokovic, a 24-time Major winner, may have entered the tournament just weeks after a knee surgery and without a final appearance since the ATP Finals last November. But the 37-year-old was a seven-time Wimbledon champion who had lost just nine completed matches at SW19 since his debut in 2005, and no two to the same opponent. That Alcaraz, 21, managed to beat the legendary Serb twice in a row might be his greatest achievement. If the 2023 triumph established the Spaniard as a serious contender, the latest victory is sure to **upend** the hierarchy. For the first time since Federer won his first in 2003 on these **hallowed** lawns, three consecutive Majors have gone by without a winner from the Big Three. Alcaraz, with four Grand Slam

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titles in a short span of two years, has already zoomed past Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka, who **toiled** long and hard for three Slams each.

It is not that Alcaraz is the only **prodigiously** talented player to emerge in recent years. Jannik Sinner, the reigning World No.1 and the 2024 Australian Open champion, has shown sufficient mettle to prove that he will be the generational rival to Alcaraz. On his day, Daniil Medvedev, especially on hard courts, can be an equal. But no player has looked as complete as Alcaraz, who has all the shots in the book and a mental make-up to match. Of his 15 titles, eight have come on clay, four on hard and three on grass. And he has won his debut finals at both Roland-Garros and Wimbledon, a feat even Federer, Nadal and Djokovic have not managed. Among women, it was the turn of Barbora Krejcikova to master the sport's natural surfaces as she added the grass-court Major to the French Open singles trophy that she won in 2021. The Czech may have been the seventh first-time winner at the All England Club in as many editions, but her success is more a sign of the depth in the ladies' game than of **perpetual flux**. And Wimbledon is where this is likely to be most pronounced until the women's Tour's leading players, Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka, crack the code on the lush green lawns.

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SUMMARY

Tennis fans have been eagerly anticipating the rise of a new generation since Roger Federer retired and Rafael Nadal faded away. Carlos Alcaraz's straight sets victory over Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon 2024 is likely to be the watershed, as it heralded a change in the sport. Alcaraz, a seven-time Wimbledon champion, has already won four Grand Slam titles in a short span of two years, surpassing Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka. Jannik Sinner, the reigning World No.1 and 2024 Australian Open champion, has shown mettle to prove he will be the generational rival to Alcaraz. Alcaraz has won his debut finals at both Roland-Garros and Wimbledon, a feat even Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic have not managed. Barbora Krejcikova's success at Wimbledon 2024 is a sign of the depth in the ladies' game.

Vocabulary

1. Fading

Synonyms: Diminishing, waning, dwindling, disappearing

Antonyms: Growing, intensifying, strengthening, brightening

2. Demolition

Synonyms: Destruction, dismantling, razing

Antonyms: Construction, building, creation

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3. Watershed

Meaning: • Noun:

- . A ridge or area of high ground dividing two drainage areas; a divide.
- . An event or period marking a turning point or a division.

• Adjective:

- . Relating to or forming a watershed.

4. Heralded

Synonyms: Announced, proclaimed, broadcasted

Antonyms: Concealed, hidden, ignored

5. Upend

Synonyms: Overturn, invert, and tip over

Antonyms: Stabilize, straighten, and set upright

6. Hallowed

Synonyms: Sacred, holy, and revered

Antonyms: Profane, unholy, and desecrated

7. Toiled

Synonyms: Worked, labored, slogged

Antonyms: Rested, relaxed, idled



8. Prodigiously

Synonyms: Enormously, tremendously, immensely

Antonyms: Insignificantly, trivially, slightly

9. Perpetual

Synonyms: Everlasting, eternal, incessant

Antonyms: Temporary, intermittent, finite

10. Flux

Synonyms: Flow, change, fluctuation

Antonyms: Stability, constancy, steadiness

