

The self-sabotaging president: Joe Biden's broken legacy



Ashfaque Swapian
is a writer and editor based in Atlanta, US.

ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

Today, Donald J Trump takes over the White House. If his recent antics are any guide, it is quite likely there'll hardly be a dull moment. With his proposal to include Canada as the 51st state of the US and capture the Panama Canal and Greenland, Trump is already in the eye of a media storm.

Before the Trump media frenzy completely sucks up the oxygen, let's take stock of the reputation of his predecessor.

I still remember the joy of supporters that greeted the election of President Joe Biden four years ago. It wasn't just his supporters who welcomed a return to normalcy, civility, and quite frankly, a degree of sanity to the White House.

Many people heaved a sigh of relief. No more wildly provocative tweets at 3 am to rile up Trump's enemies.

Farewell to the parade of dubious cabinet appointees, a surprising number of whom had to quit under a cloud. No more outrageous gossip coming out of disgruntled former associates which turned the White House into tabloid territory.

Finally, we had a proper president to do justice to the gravitas of arguably the most powerful office in the world.

What a difference a four-year term makes. As Biden left office, Americans didn't exactly burst into tears.

According to a CNN Poll, he left office with a 36 percent approval rating. It's a huge climbdown from his 60 percent approval rating at the beginning of his term.

"Americans broadly view Biden's four years in office more as a failure than as a success," CNN reports.

Yet his supporters claim—with some justice—that Biden's achievements are considerable. He

steered the nation through the Covid crisis and left the country with an economy in a relatively robust state, which is an envy for the rest of the world.

In his first two years in office, Biden passed a major bill to rescue the economy from COVID, a bipartisan law to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure, the first gun-safety law in decades, the largest climate investment in history, a law to lower the price of prescription drugs, as well as bills to help veterans and spur the semiconductor industry," writes Dan Pfeiffer, a former adviser to President Barack Obama.

Then why are Americans so unhappy with Biden?

There are multiple reasons, including Biden's critical flaws.

Biden's predicament must be considered in the context of the brutal political landscape in the Western world. Massive post-pandemic disaffection has left incumbents buffeted by populist outrage. UK Conservatives have been unceremoniously kicked out of power; Canada's Justin Trudeau has quit; Germany's Olaf Scholz is likely on his way out, and France's Emmanuel Macron is teetering.

In the US, inflation led to a sharp rise in grocery and gas prices that hit voters' pocketbooks.

There is also the uncomfortable fact that US media, like its population, is increasingly polarised. For avid watchers of right-wing Fox News, their view of any leader from the Democratic Party is likely to be jaundiced. But it is also true that Biden's own shortcomings provided the critical impetus to his downfall.

The US president's bully pulpit is an enormously powerful tool; yet Biden hardly used it to make his case. In fact, he engaged in fewer press conferences and media interviews than the previous seven presidents, going all the way back to Reagan. Trump, in comparison to his predecessor, had twice as many interactions with the press.

his party a huge favour by declaring himself a one-term president from the get-go. Instead, in a fit of extraordinarily selfish hubris, Biden chose to remain until his party elites had to force him to leave. His recent claim that he could have won the election is mind-boggling.

Biden also tarnished his own legacy—in my view irrevocably—when

Beyond the US, Biden's reputation will be permanently stained for his complicity in Israel's unconscionable genocide of Palestinians. He may claim credit for the recent ceasefire breakthrough between Hamas and Israel. But the fact remains that the ceasefire deal was ready in May; why did it get signed now? Reports suggest that Trump, waiting in the wings,

on Iraq. When UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter's principled stand undermined his phony argument for destroying Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction, Biden attacked Ritter viciously.

For most of the world, excluding the delusional bubble in the US and its mostly European allies of the "rules-based order," America's blind support for Ukraine and attacks on Russian President Vladimir Putin reek of sanctimonious hypocrisy when one considers its coolness to the vicious attacks of Saudi Arabia and its allies on Yemen and Israel's terrible slaughter in Gaza and Lebanon.

Even in his farewell speech, Biden's warning against the rise of an oligarchy in the US, while true, carries little moral weight.

"The very richest Americans are among the biggest winners from President Joe Biden's time in office, despite his farewell address warning of an 'oligarchy' and a 'tech industrial complex' that threaten U.S. democracy," Bloomberg reports.

"The 100 wealthiest Americans got more than \$1.5 trillion richer over the last four years, with tech tycoons including Elon Musk, Larry Ellison and Mark Zuckerberg leading the way... The top 0.1% gained more than \$6 trillion."

The New York Times offers a devastating appraisal of Biden's legacy. "President Biden ran for the White House promising to be a transitional figure, then once he got there began thinking of himself as a transformational one. But after a tumultuous four years in office, it turns out he was really neither," Peter Baker writes in The New York Times.

"Instead, Mr. Biden will end up in the history books as an interregnum between two terms of Donald Trump, a break in the middle of a chaotic period of change, for good or ill. Mr. Biden had hoped to make Mr. Trump an asterisk in the American story, soon to be forgotten. Now he will be the one trying to make his case for posterity."



US President Joe Biden leaves the stage after his speech at the State Department in Washington, DC, on January 14, 2025.

PHOTO: REUTERS

There is no denying the dreadful fact that towards the end of his presidency, he was often too senile, and an unduly deferential media was complicit in maintaining the laughable fiction that Biden was fully functional. Long before his disastrous debate performance with Trump, there were alarming signs of his senility on TV including a propensity to go on tangents or offer a phantom handshake, among other embarrassing quirks.

Biden would have done himself and

he pardoned his son Hunter Biden. Even more egregious was a blanket indemnity for Hunter—a terrible moral descent for a man who once epitomised the rule of law against the much more wayward Trump.

History offers some telling clues about Biden's moral frailty. Biden's 1988 presidential campaign crashed and burned following accusations that he had plagiarised a speech of

Netanyahu, and much of his reported anger was performative.

A deeper look at Biden's long-time record reveals a streak of warmongering tendencies. As a US senator from Delaware, he was gung-ho for years on a massive US attack

on Iraq. When UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter's principled stand undermined his phony argument for destroying Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction, Biden attacked Ritter viciously.

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Non-toxic toys are essential for protecting our children



Waliullah Bhuiyan
is the founder of Light of Hope Ltd.
He can be reached at bhuiyan.waliullah@gmail.com.

WALIULLAH BHUIYAN

Toys play a crucial role in enriching children's activity and fostering developmental growth. They ignite imagination and serve as a foundation for improving cognitive and motor skills. Thus, choosing non-toxic toys is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of our children. Such toys not only provide fun and enjoyment but also protect them from harmful chemicals, making playtime a healthier experience.

However, a disturbing reality has emerged from a recent study by the Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO) and BAN Toxics, which revealed that numerous toys available in Bangladesh contain harmful chemicals that pose serious health risks to children. This unsettling revelation underscores the hidden perils associated with commonplace playthings and highlights the urgent necessity of safer, eco-friendly alternatives for our kids.

The ESDO study revealed approximately 80 percent of toys found in Dhaka's popular markets contain hazardous heavy metals—such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and chromium. Since all toys are distributed from Dhaka, those sold across the country pose a similar threat to children on a national level. These toys—primarily composed of recycled plastics—frequently exceed safety limits established by the European Union (EU). For instance, a toy water cup was discovered to have lead level at 1,380 ppm, significantly surpassing the EU's safety limit of 90 ppm.

Furthermore, a doll set was found to contain 1,500 ppm of chromium, which is far above the acceptable threshold. Even elevated concentrations of cadmium, arsenic, and barium were found in children's mugs and stationery items. This is particularly concerning because these heavy metals can easily enter children's bodies through saliva when they play with them.

Moreover, research has reliably

first step in driving a behavioural shift towards prioritising safety. Otherwise, parents are unlikely to seek out safer alternatives for their children, consequently perpetuating the cycle of exposure to harmful toxins.

Eco-friendly alternatives

ESDO has been publishing reports for the past 10 years in Bangladesh. However, there have been no noticeable change in customer perception among toy manufacturers and policymakers. Children's toys are as crucial as baby food. While baby food focuses on physical growth, toys assist children in cultivating their cognitive and mental well-being. But the pressing question is: are we providing parents with viable alternatives?



Eco-friendly toys crafted from natural materials by local artisans can be a safer alternative for children.

PHOTO: COURTESY

health.

Despite the severe risks, a staggering 88 percent of parents remain unaware of toxic metals presence in toys, while 64 percent do not know whether the toys they purchase are safe for their children's health. This lack of awareness leaves children vulnerable to long-term health risks. Alarmingly, the toxic metals are not just found in local toys; they are also present in the imported ones sold at top-tier stores in Dhaka. This is why raising awareness among parents—especially those with young children—is critically important.

Educating consumers about the potential hazards in toys is the

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they are chemical and toxin-free, providing peace of mind for parents. Furthermore, they are sustainable and biodegradable. Many of these toys, locally crafted with care, are made in Bangladesh. This can also provide support for local artisans and promote sustainable livelihoods and traditional crafts.

Reviving nostalgia through handmade toys

The past can evoke fond memories for many of us. Although toys were often crafted from household items—such as dolls made from scraps of cloth or cars carved from wood—these creations were simple, safe, and filled with creativity. They not only brought joy but also taught us how to create and imagine. Rediscovering these homemade toys can offer

today's children similar experiences, reminding us of the charm and value of simplicity.

Results from the ESDO study should prompt us to make more thoughtful choices regarding the toys we provide our children. Stricter regulations are necessary, and we, as parents, also possess the power to drive change.

Choosing safe, eco-friendly toys is a proactive step towards safeguarding our children's health and nurturing a sustainable environment. By opting for toxin-free alternatives, we can invest in a safer, healthier future for our children. Although some may argue that eco-friendly options are limited, let's embrace the simplicity and safety of these choices, giving our kids a joyful and secure childhood.

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ঢাপত্য অধিদপ্তরের স্মারক নং-ন-২৬(অংশ-৩)/৫৩/ঢাপত্য অধিদপ্তরের স্মারক নং-২৫-০১-২০২৫, তারিখ-০৭/১১/২০২৪ এর মাধ্যমে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী ৭(সাত) ক্যাটাগরির নন্দ-গেজেটেড পদে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ কর্তৃত হবে।

পরীক্ষার কেন্দ্র	পদের নাম	পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের তারিখ	সময়
ডাইলস লিটল ফ্লাওয়ার ফ্লু এন্ড কলেজ ৮৫, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা-১০০০।	সহকারী মডেল মেকার	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	অফিস সহায়ক	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	ড্রাফ্টসম্যান (নকশাকার প্রেড-২)	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	স্টেম্বুডাক্টিক-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
ভিকারনিসা নূন ফ্লু এন্ড কলেজ প্রধান শাখা ১/এ, নিউ বেইলী রোড ঢাকা-১০০০।	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাকারিক	২৫-০১-২০২৫ (শনিবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
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	গাড়িচালক	২৫-০১-২০২৫ (শনিবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত