**Mixed bag for Biden**

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Since taking over as the 46th president of the US, Joseph Biden has been facing challenges on various fronts – some of which he inherited from his predecessor Donald Trump, and some what he promised during his election campaign for presidency and which now face the harsh realities and results of the Congressional elections with a thin majority for his Democratic Party.

The increased influence and grassroots agenda of the progressive group (PDA) in his own Democrat Party is equally an important factor challenging the Biden Presidency in a capitalist country that is also the world leader. The agenda of the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) can be sensed through its slogans – 'Healthcare not warfare', 'Windmills not weapons’, 'Panels not pipelines', and 'Don't agonize, organize'.

In the changing demographic and economic situation, the PDA has assumed the role of an aggressive pressure group within the Democratic Party, with Senator Bernie Sanders and his supporters in Congress leading the group.

Republican activism and opposition by supporters of Donald Trump spans from the US Congress to Republican majority states. Though spread, effects, travel restrictions, and economic and medical measures regarding the Covid-19 pandemic occurred during the Trump administration, Democrat President Biden inherited all the after-effects of Covid-19 on America – and dealt with it.

While European countries are facing a resurgence of a new wave of Covid-19, the Biden Administration has lifted all restrictions on Trans-Atlantic travel including travel to and from other countries. This may help in the restoration of the aviation industry and the economy – but it can equally be another serious challenge for President Biden and his administration. The World Health Organization has asked the US to consider the effects of lifting travel restrictions as Covid-19 sees a resurgence in European countries.

Within 10 months after assuming the presidency, Biden’s popularity plummeted to 38 percent while Vice-President Kamala Harris’s popularity lowered to 28 percent. The Democratic Party lost the gubernatorial race in Virginia. Election victories with narrow margins on some other significant seats have also created an impression of poor performance by Democratic candidates. Republican opponents are already engaged in a political strategy to unseat 70 Democrat members of the House of Representatives, in the forthcoming midterm elections. A flip of only five seats in the House can give Republicans a majority in the lower chamber while the Senate is equally divided. More tough times are ahead for President Biden until a Democrat majority in the mid-term elections in 2022.

Despite all such challenges, President Biden, 78, has gained some success. A $1 trillion public works bill has been passed by the House of Representatives while a $2 trillion education, healthcare and climate package is to come under focus. The Democratic Party’s slim majority in the Congress makes it difficult to negotiate this package.

Inflation and a rise in oil and gas prices are a threat to the US's economic rebound. Biden may take some measures to control this but these options may be short lived and collide with his commitment to fight climate change.

The attack on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021 by Trump supporters has caused a lot of political damage to Republican Trump, his supporters and even the Republican Party. An investigation is on and the results awaited. But the Republican Party is already divided. And the political beneficiaries of this are Biden and his Democratic Party.

Donald Trump through his policies and personal traits caused friction and disappointment among Nato allies. Biden has reversed this through a policy of reconciliation and engagement. The conflict or 'competition' with China has its own compulsions for the US president to cultivate consensus among its allies.

In the aftermath of Covid-19 restrictions and consequences, Canada and Mexico are ready to revive trade links with America to make up for the loss.

President Biden is faced with political and economic challenges on the domestic front. His handling of these challenges will affect the world – and the world is watching.

The writer is a journalist based in the US.