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## We Wish Readers a Happy Vaisakhi

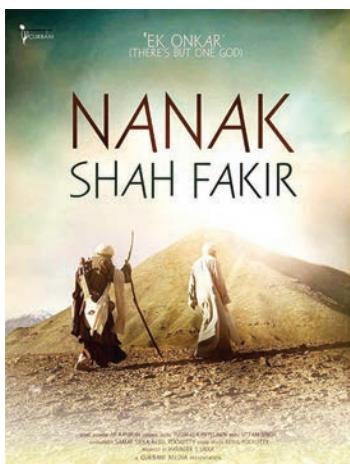
The most interesting comment of the week

*"Sure, making use of Donald Trump to keep Hillary Clinton from being president is a fascinating flourish by history's Author, but the idea that the Almighty might use a porn star to make Mike Pence president represents, if anything, an even more amazing miracle. So, anyone interested in looking for the hand of God in history should probably welcome that miracle's arrival, rather than resisting in the name of MAGA."*

(Ross Douthat, Opinion Columnist,  
New York Times April 11, 2018)

Row over the film 'Nanak Shah Fakir': Punjab on tenterhooks

**Takht banishes filmmaker Sikka, calls upon Sikhs worldwide to boycott**



Poster of the film

sternly, the edict said.

**A M R I T S A R , INDIA(TIP):** The Akal Takht on Thursday, April 12, issued an edict to excommunicate Harinder Singh Sikka, the maker of "Nanak Shah Fakir", from the Sikh panth.

After deliberations with Sikh organizations, the Five High Priests directed Sikhs around the world to snap ties with the filmmaker. Any Sikh found "guilty" of sympathizing with him would be dealt with

*contd on page 40*



Turbans being tied

**Suozi Meets with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discusses U.S.-India relationship**

**HUNTINGTON, NY (TIP):** Last week Congressman Tom Suozzi (D - Long Island, Queens) traveled to India and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to discuss the U.S. - India relationship, Betsy Davidson stated in a press release April 12.

*contd on Page 40*



Congressman Tom Suozzi (D - Long Island, Queens) traveled to India, as part of a Congressional delegation and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to discuss the U.S. - India relationship



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# THE TRUTH BEHIND FAILED PRITAM MUSICAL CONCERT IN NEW JERSEY



By Dave Makkar

The ball was set rolling as early as the 2nd-3rd week of January 2018 to sabotage the show on the issue of nationality of the lead local promoter Jaweria Khan. A very prominent person, "famous" for organizing big shows, personally made phone calls to investors/lenders for Show Biz not to invest/lend money for this show.

At the last moment Pritam's team made a big hue & cry on the issue of technical rider that there will be less spot lights, rather glaring lights, on

These concerts have nothing to do with our culture, rich music and traditions

Pritam while he will be performing on stage. If Pritam is an artist and was not concerned about the nationality of the promoter Khan, he would have performed by declaring the tech rider deficiencies to the audience. No one would have stopped him from making that announcement. Rather he chose to rope in the local Overseas BJP officials to defend him on the social media via video interviews and blame everything on the local promoters.

We don't have artists anymore. What we have is synthetic music & vocals, corrected or improved or altered by high tech computers with glaring lights

and very loud sound effects. One can hardly notice how well the singer is singing or the quality of the singer's voice. Then, they have vulgarly choreographed dances with barely or scantily clad dancers trying to take the audience to their fantasy world. In majority of the concerts after 2-3 songs the singers do lip singing only on pre-recorded songs in studio settings.

I challenge Pritam and all the singers in his group to sing non-stop for 1 hour individually without their battalions of so called musicians with high tech gadgets and high-tech computers.

*contd on page 40*



## Highland Mayor and Council to issue proclamation for Sikh Awareness Month

Middlesex County Council proclaims April as Sikh Awareness and appreciation Month



Sikh group of Middlesex county at the proclamation of April as Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month

I. S. SALUJA

EDISON, NJ (TIP): Asa di war Group has been invited to receive from Highland Mayor and Council, a proclamation for Sikh Awareness Month on Tuesday, April 17.2018 at 7.00 pm at 221 South 5th Ave Highland Park, NJ 08904.

Giving this information to The Indian Panorama, Jatinder Singh Bakshi acknowledged the cooperation and contribution of Ms Stephney in the proclamation of the month of April as Sikh Awareness Month in Highland. Bakshi said it was a great honor for Sikhs and extended the Sikh community an invitation to attend the ceremony of presentation of proclamation.

Only last week, Middlesex county council proclaimed April as Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month.

## NAMAM Excellence Award 2018 winners announced

EDISON, NJ (TIP): A community activist & leader, a successful businessman, an industrialist, a scientist, a renowned musician, a young prodigy, an organ donor, and a journalist have made it to The NAMAM Excellence Award 2018 winners list. The most awaited "Namam Excellence Award 2018" will be held at Royal Albert Palace, Edison, New Jersey on April 28th, 2018 Madhavan Nair, Founder and Secretary General of North American Malayalees and Associated Members (NAMAM, announced here, April 7. "An unforgettable evening as we honor extraordinarily accomplished individuals, who have made valuable contributions to the Indian-American community with the NAMAM Excellence Awards," Nair added.

The world renowned community leader and activist, Dr. Thomas Abraham; Dr. Babu Stephan, the CEO of DC Healthcare Inc and the president of SM Reality LLC; T. S. Nandakumar, a well-known and versatile Carnatic music percussionist; Ramadas Pillai, President/CTO of Nuphoton Technologies, Inc; Rekha Nair, who has been an advocate for organ donation; Tiara Thankam Abraham, a 12-year-old soprano prodigy and a child genius; and, Ajay Ghosh, an accomplished journalist, are the winners of the NAMAM Excellence Award 2018.

## Sikhs celebrate Turban Day at Times Square

with no affiliations with Islamic terrorists. The education departments in various cities and states also tried to educate teachers and students about Sikh identity. But it appeared these efforts were not enough to save Sikhs from being bullied and attacked.

Sikhs in America, as elsewhere, realized they needed to reach out to people in the streets to let them know about who they are. Thus was born an organization in New York by the name of Sikhs of New York. Their main objective was to spread awareness about who the Sikhs are. They wanted to let all know about their identity of which turban was the most visible form. The young volunteers of Sikhs of New York launched 2 years ago a movement to spread awareness about Sikhs.

What better place than the center of the Universe, Times Square in New York, for the movement's success. They decided to organize turban tying at Times Square, once a year, close to their festival of nativity, Vaisakhi which falls in mid-April. Now Times Square has a footfall of hundreds of thousands every day. The tourists who throng the Times Square got attracted to the radiant colors of the turbans and to the force of the Bhangra beats. Many came for fun, had the turbans tied and enjoyed the music and, some went in for free snacks which were served with a lot of love. Well, serving free food is the major hallmark of Sikhism. The experiment of the Sikhs of New York proved successful. More and more people, particularly coming from rural areas where they had not seen a turbaned Sikh got to know who the Sikhs are, even though superficially. But it was a small step to a leap forward.

Volunteers from Sikhs of New York organized, April 7, the Turban Day and tied turbans on the heads of visitors while explaining the significance of a Turban for Sikhs and telling them about their religion.

Thousands of turbans were on the heads of people from different races, religions and nationalities in the city's Times Square as Sikhs launched the annual series of Turban Day events to promote understanding of their faith and dispel stereotypes about the piece of



Visitors enjoying the Punjabi music and Bhangra dance at Times Square on April 7

attire.

The successful experiment of Turban Day has inspired organizations elsewhere to organize a day to tie turbans and let visitors know about them and their faith.

A Turban Day celebration has been planned at the California state legislature building in Sacramento on April 12.

California State Assembly is expected to pass a resolution on that day recognizing April 12 as Vaisakhi in California that was proposed by assembly member Ash Kalra.

On April 13, Vaisakhi eve will be celebrated as International Turban Day by the Sikh Children Forum based in Fremont, California, "to popularize adoption of turban as a personal, religious and social symbol of identity amongst Sikh children and our no-turban wearing Sikh brothers and sisters". It urges Sikhs who don't usually wear turbans to wear them on that day as they go about their daily routine.

Indian American Democrat Suraj Patel raises \$1.1 million to challenge incumbent Carolyn Maloney



*Suraj Patel has emerged as a formidable challenger to Maloney*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Indian American Democrat Suraj Patel, who is running for New York's 12th District, has raised nearly \$1.1 million ahead of his primary on June 26, 2018.

In the Democratic primary, Patel along with three other democratic insurgents will challenge incumbent Carolyn Maloney, who has been representing the District since 2013. A member of Congress since 1993, Maloney now has a formidable challenger in Patel in the June 26 primary.

The District 12 of New York, which has a long-standing tradition of electing Democrats over Republicans, is also one of the richest in the United States.

Patel, a businessman and an adjunct professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, is running the campaign in full throttle with 45 interns spreading the word across the 12th District.

Patel, who has a law degree from NYU, is also an alumnus of the Stanford University and UK's Cambridge University. He is the president of the Sun Group of Companies, a real estate development and investment firm specializing in the hospitality industry. Patel worked for the Obama campaigns in 2008 and 2013, and also served on the 2013 inauguration committee.

"I'm not running against her; I'm running against apathy," Patel said. "Something like 75 percent of young voters in this district voted for president in 2016, and something like 2 percent voted in the congressional primary. Why would you vote, if your only choice is a 25-year incumbent?"

Even though a majority of Democrats back 72-year-old incumbent Maloney, Patel became her immediate challenger for the primary after he raised more than \$500,000 in his first quarter.

Patel once again surprised his opposition campaigners by raising \$525,000, which stood slightly above Maloney's fund of \$500,000.

Ever since Trump administration took charge of the White House, the prospects of Maloney have faded slightly as Patel campaign has been portraying her as someone who authorized the war in Iraq and as a representative who continues to oppose the Iran nuclear deal.

Apart from this, the two Democrats have been engaged in social media war for some time.

At present, Patel seems to be the only strong campaigner who is taking on incumbent Maloney even though two other Democrats, Sander Hick and Peter Lindner, have filed their nominations.

# Indian American high school student on a mission to revive a nation-wide movement by the name 'The American Iftar Dinner'

**DES MOINES, IOWA (TIP):** Fez Zafar, an Indian American high school student from Iowa, has started a nation-wide movement by the name "The American Iftar Dinner" that aims at showing the world that the United States is a nation of tolerance and diversity.

Since the time of President Bill Clinton, the White House has been holding special annual dinner with Muslim representatives living in the United States ranging from journalists, activists and humanitarians. The program called "White House Iftar Dinner" continued through the term of Bush and Obama administration until it was scrapped by the current administration.

Zafar is on a mission to revive the Iftar Dinner by collaborating with South Asian communities across the United States including that of the Indian American community.

"As a South Asian American Muslim, I came up with the idea of reviving and re-creating the Iftar Dinner not just as a celebration of Muslims, but as a celebration of all the world's religions, ethnicities, and cultures (including Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and more), with the mission of showing the world that we are a nation of tolerance and diversity," Zafar said.

According to Zafar, his initiative is not restricted on one event or a single location as he has urged all Americans to conduct "The American Iftar Dinner" across the US by inviting guests from diverse groups to sit around a dinner table.

"At a time of global turmoil and intolerance, a movement like this is vital now more than ever. Our nation needs this wake-



*President Obama hosts an Iftar dinner celebrating Ramadan 2015*

up call in order to realize that our diversity is what makes this country so great," Zafar said.

This year's "The American Iftar Dinner" will be held on June 7, 2018, as universities, high schools, organizations, and institutions across the country will take part by hosting their own dinners in solidarity with one another.

Zafar is collaborating with diverse people within our national community such as Bishop Pates of the Catholic Diocese, Rabbi Kaufman of Reform Jewish faith and Pastor Mike Householder of Lutheran Christian faith, to spread the movement.

A sophomore at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, Iowa, Zafar is also the founder of a 501(c)3 public foundation called 'Site for Smiles and Smarts,' an organization that maintains the mission of providing education and healthcare for poor and orphaned children living around the world.

Zafar has a team of energetic youth from the student community who are helping him in his endeavor. His team also include two Indian Americans - JJ Kapur, a senior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa and Aarushi Dervesh a senior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa.

## INDIAN AMERICAN FAMILY FROM CALIFORNIA STILL MISSING



*A picture posted on Facebook by the family*

procedures to obtain search warrants for cellphone carriers. They are also checking to see whether the car the family was driving was equipped with a locating system.

A flier posted online by friends of the family says the Thottapillys were in a maroon Honda Pilot with a California plate (7MMX138).

The San Jose authorities, who are investigating the case, are checking if the car was swept away into the Eel River as a result of a massive storm in Northern California. An SUV matching the description of the family's car was reportedly swept away into the river in Mendocino County on April 6. But, the car has not been recovered due to tough weather conditions.

The Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station is also on the lookout for the family.

While the authorities continue their search for the family of four Indian Americans who have gone missing, friends and relatives of the family are pleading for assistance of the community to locate them.

Meanwhile, India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj informed the family members that she was "in constant touch" with the Consulate in San Francisco.

"They are coordinating with the police. Rest assured. We will spare no effort," Swaraj tweeted. Babu Subramaniam Thottapilly, the father of Sandeep Thottapilly, had tweeted seeking the help of Swaraj to locate his son and family. He has also requested Union Bank authorities to extend their help to "ensure that law authorities are able to track" Sandeep and his family.

Sandeep Thottapilly, who is from Surat, in the Gujarat state of India, is a vice president at Union Bank and the family lives in Los Angeles.

## Indian American hate crime victim delivered justice



*Ankur Mehta got justice when his attacker Jeffrey Burgess was sentenced in the hate crime*

**PITTSBURGH (TIP):** A US district court last week sentenced Pennsylvania resident Jeffrey Burgess after he was found guilty of physically attacking Indian American Ankur Mehta and abusing him with racial expletives.

According to the sentence delivered by US District Judge Nora Barry Fischer, Burgess, 56, in addition to the house arrest and four months of probation, must also perform 50 hours of community service, undergo treatment for alcohol abuse and participate in a restorative justice program administered by Center for Victims.

Restitution to the victim will be determined at a later date.

Burgess, a resident of Pittsburgh, was indicted by a federal grand jury on a charge of violating the Hate Crimes Prevention Act in March 2017.

According to the indictment report, Burgess allegedly violated the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act by willfully causing bodily injury to Mehta because of the victim's perceived race, color, and national origin.

Burgess pleaded guilty to causing physical injuries to Mehta in addition to calling him "terrorist." *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*



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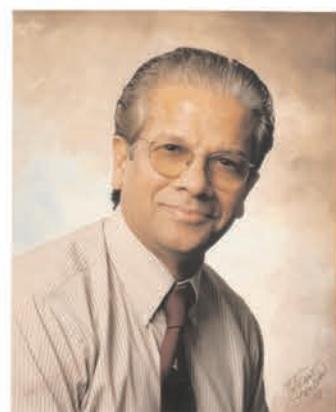


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## GUEST COMMENT

### Disruptive Mr. Trump

**The consistent undermining of multilateralism by the U.S. must be countered**

This week has seen rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs between the U.S. and China, set off by U.S. President Donald Trump levying import duties of 25% and 10% on American steel and aluminum imports, respectively, in early March. Mr. Trump, who has repeatedly used the U.S. trade deficit of over \$500 billion as a barometer for the country's lot in the international trade order, has railed against the U.S. being treated "unfairly" by its trading partners, often singling out China. While it is true that China produces approximately half the world's steel and that the European Union, India and other countries have complained about international steel markets being flooded with Chinese steel, only 3% of U.S. steel is sourced from China. Interestingly, among those exempted from the tariffs are Canada and Mexico, top sources for U.S. steel imports. Mr. Trump has linked the threat of tariffs to the North American Free Trade Agreement, a trade deal among the U.S., Canada and Mexico that Mr. Trump has pried open for renegotiation. Earlier this week China retaliated with tariffs that would impact \$3 billion worth of American goods. This was followed by the U.S. proposing tariffs on more than \$50 billion of Chinese goods, including in the aerospace, robotics and communication industries - the outcome of an investigation of several months into whether Chinese policies were placing unreasonable obligations on U.S. companies to transfer technology and hand over intellectual property while setting up shop in China. Beijing responded with a second round of proposed tariffs impacting a similar value of U.S. imports into China. Mr. Trump has now asked the U.S. Trade Representative to examine if an additional \$100 billion worth of goods can be taxed.

Since the proposed tariffs have not kicked off, there may be room for negotiation. The economic ties between the countries are deep; China holds some \$1.2 trillion in U.S. debt, and it is in everyone's interest to avoid escalating matters. However, the larger cause for concern here is that Mr. Trump continues to undermine the World Trade Organisation and the international world trade order, now that it has served the West well and developing countries are in a significantly stronger position than when the WTO came into existence in 1995. Mr. Trump has pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is pushing changes to NAFTA and has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement to combat climate change. While large-scale protectionism and unilateralism may please some of Mr. Trump's constituents in the short run, undermining existing rules arbitrarily serves no nation, including the U.S., in the long run. In the current climate, it is therefore especially important for India to be a good steward for responsible globalization.

(*The Hindu*)



By KC Singh

The Lok Sabha eventually adjourned sine die after weeks of being non-functional. The Opposition's no-confidence motion was ruled by the Speaker as un-implementable as the House was not in order. Under similar conditions, the important annual Budget was allowed to be passed without debate. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for all BJP members of Parliament to observe a one-day fast against disruption by the Opposition. The Opposition, on the other hand, has alleged that those disturbing the House were, in fact, allies of the government.

Denying Opposition the right to test the majority of a government sets a bad precedent as any government having lost majority can create conditions of chaos, with Speaker's connivance, and preclude a floor test. Thus, a government can rule without a majority till its term ends while avoiding debate on important issues facing the nation. Democracies to succeed require not only written guidelines, but also many unwritten ground rules. Many books this year are addressing these fundamental questions.

In *How Democracies Die*, authors Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt reach into history for answers. They hypothesize that in the US post-election of President Donald Trump "politicians say and do things that are unprecedented in the United States". They add that "American politicians now treat their rivals as enemies, intimidate free Press, and threaten to reject the results of elections". Even more worrisome, they "weaken the institutional buffers of our democracy, including the courts, intelligence services, and ethics offices". Finally, they note that in 2016 Americans elected a President, who for first time in US history, had "no experience in public office, little observable commitment to constitutional rights, and clear authoritarian tendencies". Larry Diamond, an authority on democracy worldwide, believes the world has entered a period of democratic recession.

In India, too, as it enters the final year before parliamentary elections, attempts are afoot to weaken institutional sinews. India thus shares the global democratic recession referred to above. Of course, this is not happening for the first time, as worse was witnessed during the Emergency or in the unwise move by the Rajiv Gandhi government to curb Press freedom via legislative action. Clearly, all Prime Ministers since the 1980s having single-party majorities have shown a tendency to override democratic principles.

"Thus, the current attempt to weaken institutional base of democracy needs countering. The attack on the independence of media has been thwarted after uproar over the "fake news" order of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, but the recasting of the Press Council of India leaves doubts about government's intentions. The attempt to bend judiciary to the executive's dictates surfaced dramatically after open defiance of the Chief Justice by his four senior colleagues when they went public with their angst. The government, not seriously attempting to make Parliament function, poses further questions about its commitment to constitutionalism", says the author.

Europe, which saw in the 1930s the rise of authoritarian leaders and parties in Germany and Italy, using democratic processes to enter the political space, is again witnessing the slow strangulation of democratic principles. Take the example of Hungary, which gained freedom from communist stranglehold after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Despite the history of its brave, but unsuccessful fight to overthrow communist shackles in 1956, and the memory of authoritarianism, its PM, Viktor Orban, is today allegedly centralizing political and economic power unknown since communist times. He is using the bugbear of immigration and external threats from the likes of his old patron Soros, who gave him a scholarship as a young dissident to study at Oxford in 1988, to get re-elected after eight years in power.

Likewise, in Germany, the rise of extreme right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD), particularly in former East Germany, is forcing other moderately right-of-center parties to adopt politics of identity and belonging. At the federal level, after the last election and following the new grand alliance, Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is, as *The Economist* states, "steering clear of culture wars in favor of bread and butter issues". In faraway Costa Rica in central America, the victor Carlos Alvarado scored for liberal values by roundly defeating his fulminating rival Fabricio Alvarado who wanted to "put God in government", targeting gays to start with. In Ethiopia, run for three decades by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF), this time, a charismatic and young Abiy Ahmed was elected by secret ballot among the top brass to be Prime Minister. Though hardly democracy in play, it showed a display of controlled freedom to choose a successor by all players representing different factions in the EPRDF. Whether this is the first step towards more open governance remains to be seen.

Against this background and the consolidation of power by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the banner of democracy and liberalism has to be carried by India. It is a misnomer to think of these values as imports from the West. There is enough historical evidence in Greek and old Indian sources that India had thriving republics even at the time of Alexander's



*Denying Opposition the right to test the government's majority is a bad precedent*

invasion, though they existed alongside kingdoms run autocratically. The Dalai Lama puts it in Buddhist terms saying that the Himalayas were never as pristine white till the light came from India. That light includes liberal values strewed across Indian religious and philosophical discourses.

Thus, the current attempt to weaken institutional base of democracy needs countering. The attack on the independence of media has been thwarted after uproar over the "fake news" order of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, but the recasting of the Press Council of India leaves doubts about government's intentions. The attempt to bend judiciary to the executive's dictates surfaced dramatically after open defiance of the Chief Justice by his four senior colleagues when they went public with their angst. The government, not seriously attempting to make Parliament function, poses further questions about its commitment to constitutionalism. That leaves the Election Commission as the last bastion to ensure free and fair elections. Many opposition parties are pointing fingers at the possibility of EVMs being tampered with. Belfer Centre at Harvard University has produced a report on EVMs in the US. In their federal system, the choice of machines is left to the states. The report calls machines, like the ones used in India, as "hackable". It recommends the alternative machines used in the US, where vote is cast on paper and then scanned by machine. Thus, paper record remains in case of recount.

Karnataka election is a watershed moment for Indian democracy. If the BJP wins, it can draw a wrong lesson that people endorse its tactics. If it loses, PM Narendra Modi will have a choice to go for reforms or perish.

(The author is a former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs)

### AS I SEE IT

# What democracy now means? Which way is India headed?

### DISCLAIMER

# America's Taking on China is Good for the World



By A.D. Amar

**"His (Trump's) taking on China for its flagrant violation of the trade and intellectual property rights has given courage to Europe and Japan to chime in the American challenge on China's practices. The challenge will spread as Trump succeeds further in controlling China's behavior, and that will benefit the whole world", says the author.**

The implementation of China's 75-year long project known as the "Great Trilogy of 21st Century" that aims to erase the humiliating defeat China suffered at the hands of the British during the Anglo-Chinese trade wars or the Opium Wars of the 19th Century and bring back its glorious past by taking the sole control of the world leadership. It started in 1978 and is to be completed by 2052. The strategy to achieve this populous goal involves benefiting from the laissez-faire policy of the free-market economies, particularly the USA and the countries in the Western Europe. Consequently, China decided to sell in these countries all types of products and services by applying predatory pricing policy with the goal to turn these countries into China's captive markets.

China devised policy to conduct its foreign trade as means to provide cash to fund its ambitious goal to displace the USA as the global leader. It has continued to build its cash reserves by selling but not buying or buying very little. To subvert the nations' ability to export to China, it wrote or rewrote its laws and regulations more than 10,000 times a year, more than the rest of the world combined. The purpose has been to keep out competitive imports of any kind to preserve its huge cash reserves built by trade surpluses. While it worked to indigenize all products, services, processes, and technologies, it also worked to bring Chinese culture back to its past. This included displacing Buddha with Confucius by using the "Da Tong" that teaches achieving deals in the world with harmony.

Since America is the world's largest, freest market, China had larger designs to take over the US markets. It used its United Nations Security Council (UNSC) veto power as a strategy to achieve this goal. It used the veto power to negotiate the opening up of American import of goods from China whether it were apparels, consumer



*America First*

electronics, or whatever else. When so ever America got in conflict at any place in the world and went to the UNSC for its nod, China agreed to abstain from exercising its veto power against America for easing of Chinese imports into the USA. Also, this is how it made America have it become a member of the World Trade Organization and lift limits on import of apparel and other consumer goods that were supplied by many other smaller countries. In due course, it routed out other countries that competed against it in American market and turned America into China's monopolistic market. Everything selling in the USA carried the China label.

To maintain hefty cash reserves for its Great Trilogy of 21st Century goal, globally, China imported one-dollar worth of goods for each five dollars of exports it made. This behavior became apparent in 2009 when it tremendously cut back on its imports to preserve its foreign cash reserves when its exports to some countries went down after the 2008-09 recession.

In 2012, when the world was still going through an extended period of what was

dubbed as "the greatest recession since the great depression", China entered the global markets in a big strategic way with the cash it had preserved through the lopsided foreign trade. It started taking control of land and strategic natural resources and assets from mismanaged countries in Africa and Asia, and even in Europe by straightforward acquisition where possible or long-term leases. It started to build passageways to control its flow through the globe, building ports and strategic bases for monitoring and controlling global activities through international waters and to enhance the speed of its own movements along all continents. It started to claim its rights and, in some cases, forcibly take possession of lands based on its centuries, or in some cases millennia old dubious records.

American presidents from the early seventies, starting with President Richard Nixon slowly but steadily, for one reason or another, gave in to China. This went on unchecked until President Bill Clinton. President George W. Bush, who had a strategy to reduce America's dependence on China and

get closer to India and other democratic countries, gave up on it after 9/11 as he decided to fight the Islamic terrorism for which he needed China's support in the United Nations. President Barack Obama, as a candidate, had huge plans to confront China on its trade practices, the stealing of America's intellectual property and constantly hacking into American business and government installations. After his election, in November 2009, during his first visit to China, he brought along plans to ask China to address its huge trade surplus with America and to open its markets to the USA to plug it. Instead, he was harangued by the Chinese President Hu Jintao on free trade. The meeting was so embarrassing for Obama that he did not have the courage to check on China for its trade imbalance, the stealing of intellectual property or the cyber hacking during any of his meetings with the Chinese for all of his eight years in the White House. He was afraid that China would carry forward its threat to withdraw its deposits at the US Treasury and cause a monetary havoc. Obama with the desire not to unravel the economy, kept low and China became bolder.

No American president dared challenge China until President Donald Trump came in the White House. It is not just that Trump is bold to handle simultaneously problems along several fronts in the world but is smart and efficient to negotiate to get what is good for America. His taking on China for its flagrant violation of the trade and intellectual property rights has given courage to Europe and Japan to chime in the American challenge on China's practices. The challenge will spread as Trump succeeds further in controlling China's behavior, and that will benefit the whole world.

*(The author is Business Professor at Seton Hall University. He can be reached at AD.Amar@shu.edu)*

## INDIANS CAN INNOVATE

BY UDAY BALAKRISHNAN

Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak's contention that Indians cannot innovate is wide off the mark. It is just that, like on the hockey field, we stumble at the finish, unable to convert great ideas and brilliant prototypes into world-beating products.

Long before the iPhone made its debut in 2007, Indians had developed a world beater, rich in features that are now found in all smartphones: no keys but just a touch screen, being only one among many. The Simputer, developed at the Indian Institute of Science, was for quite some time the most talked about technological product from India, frequently figuring positively in the international media. Then it died.

I was there at its creation, witnessing the device's advent first hand, and interacting with the faculty members who conceived of and developed it. It was a most elegant device, the kind Steve Jobs, with his eye for simple

design, would have approved of. An aspirational product like that required scale that only



*Reva Electric car*

government could provide, but that never came. The electric car is another story. My friend, Sudarshan Maini, the brilliant engineer-entrepreneur who developed the Reva electric car, had sound business sense. His company, astonishingly, through the early years of this millennium, was the largest producer and exporter of electric passenger vehicles in the world, a record it held for years. The car had limited success in India but was quite a hit in foreign markets, emerging as the best-selling electric vehicle in the U.K. where a lot of them still run.

At my request Mr. Sudarshan sent across three Revas, modified for postal use in Kerala, where I was the Chief Postmaster General. For 18 months and over thousands of kilometers the Revas ferried mail across Thiruvananthapuram with unheard-of reliability, never once breaking down even in the heaviest rains, easily taking the city's ultra-narrow lanes in their stride. The Reva was a high-visibility product in a small city, noticed and appreciated by all those who saw it. A few fisherfolk even considered it an alternative to their noisy, gas-guzzling autorickshaw trucks to ferry their catch from nearby landing-points to markets inland. Distressingly there wasn't a single

**Generous tax breaks would have seen Reva evolve as a mass electric vehicle, spawning a world-beating electric car industry right here in India, long before it struck roots in the U.S. or China. We must learn to nurture the innovations emerging from India, rather than sigh with Mr. Wozniak, that Indians as a people are incapable of innovation."**

enquiry or expression of interest from the State government. The Postal Department, even as it came to know of its potential through our end-of-trial report, failed to capitalize on it.

Innovation in India needs timely government support and the right kind of promotion. This would have enabled the Simputer, not the iPhone, to emerge as a much sought-after communication device.

Generous tax breaks would have seen Reva evolve as a mass electric vehicle, spawning a world-beating electric car industry right here in India, long before it struck roots in the U.S. or China. We must learn to nurture the innovations emerging from India, rather than sigh with Mr. Wozniak, that Indians as a people are incapable of innovation.

*(The author is Visiting Faculty at the Centre for Contemporary Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore)*

## Man arrested for killing pregnant singer in Pakistan: Police

**KARACHI (TIP):** Pakistan police has arrested a man who shot dead a pregnant singer at a village in southern Sindh province after she failed to stand up while singing, according to a senior police official.

The man, identified as Tariq Jatoi, had ordered Samina Samoon to stand up while singing but when she could not get up due to her pregnancy he shot her dead, said Abdullah Sheikh, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG).

She was rushed to a nearby hospital but she succumbed to her injuries.

The weapon used to murder the singer was recovered, Geo TV quoted the DIG as saying.

An FIR has been filed and a medical test of the accused ordered. The police said the singer's husband filed a double murder report because of the unborn child. (PTI)

## Taliban seize district in Afghanistan's Ghazni province

**GHAZNI (TIP):** Taliban militants captured a district in Afghanistan's Ghazni province near the provincial capital early on Thursday and killed more than a dozen people including the district's governor, a police official said.

Ghazni's Khawaja Omari district was considered one of the province's safest districts.

The militants killed district governor Ali Dost Shams, his bodyguards, seven police officers and five government intelligence agents, said Ramazan Ali Mohseni, deputy police chief in Ghazni.

The Taliban then torched the district headquarters, he said. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement 20 police officers were killed in the attack.

The fall of Khawaja Omari to the Taliban extends their territory closer to the provincial capital, also called Ghazni, a city of 150,000 people 150 km (95 miles) southwest of the Afghan capital, Kabul. (Reuters)

## Chinese solar power illuminates Nepal PM's office

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** Making further inroads into Nepal, China has set up a solar power generating system which is now illuminating the famous Singha Durbar - the government's main administrative building complex which also houses the Prime Minister's Office.

China had in January donated over 32,000 solar power generating systems to Nepal to enhance its domestic capacity and to provide electricity to communities, who had been without power since the devastating 2015 earthquake.

Under the China-aided Solar Photovoltaic Project, solar panels have been installed on the roof of 21 buildings of the Singha Durbar which included the Prime Minister's Office, the ministry of finance and the ministry of energy, among others.

The project, which started in November 2016, was completed in 14-month time.

One megawatt electricity generated through solar panels have started illuminating the central administrative offices from yesterday officials said today.

Nepal's Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli and Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Yu Hong on Tuesday jointly inaugurated the solar power generating system installed at the central secretariat of the Nepali government.

Oli stressed that the solar technology was important and crucial for the mountain country like Nepal for the modernisation of agriculture and the operation of small and large scale industries.

"It is necessary for Nepal to end dependence on traditional electricity sources for energy needs. Though we are rich in water resources, sole dependence on hydropower is costly. Thus, we are focusing on renewable energy," the prime minister said.

"Solar energy is important for the mountainous country like Nepal in terms of efficiency and cost. I am thankful to China for the construction of this solar photovoltaic project in a short period of time and hopeful that this project can work as a model project for other areas," Oli was quoted as saying by the China's state-run news agency Xinhua. The power generated by the around Rs 600 million project would be linked to the national grid, according to officials. (PTI)

# Pakistan may bar US diplomat from leaving country

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan is set to bar a senior US diplomat from leaving the country after he was involved in a fatal road accident that killed a motorcyclist here, media reports said.

A fast-moving Land Cruiser, driven by Col Joseph Emanuel Hall, the defence and air attache at the US embassy, jumped the red light and hit a motorcycle carrying two men at a traffic signal near Islamabad's Daman-e-Koh area on Saturday.

One of them died and the other was injured.

The capital police sent a letter to the Ministry of Interior, asking to include Hall's name in the Exit Control List (ECL). The ministry has started the process, Dawn News reported.

A person on ECL cannot travel abroad.

Inspector General of Police Sultan Azam Temuri said that a written request was sent to the ministry yesterday seeking the name of the American diplomat on the ECL.

The capital police informed the ministry that the diplomat was booked on criminal charges, including murder by mistake or rash or negligent driving. The presence of the diplomat is necessary for investigation.

CCTV camera footage showed that the diplomat had jumped the red signal. Although the diplomat was not detained because of his diplomatic immunity, the



police are now proceeding to get his local driving licence revoked.

The director general Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) also confirmed that arrangements were made to prevent the diplomat from leaving the country, Temuri stated.

Another letter was sent to the FIA to place the US diplomat's name on its Watch List.

"So far the US diplomat has not left the country," the sources in the immigration department were quoted as saying. Subdivisional Police Officer Secretariat ASP Zohaib Nasarullah Ranjha said that the US diplomat had

made an attempt to travel abroad on a Middle East-bound Qatar Airway. He reached the airport at 4am on Sunday but left from there after seeing officials of the capital police there, he added.

Investigating officer of the case, Inspector Arshad Ali, said the investigation of the case was being finalised.

The investigators have so far collected statements of eyewitnesses, the injured victim and the accused, he added. The police are waiting for the medico-legal report of the deceased and the injured to finalise the investigation and challan, the officer said. (PTI)

## Sri Lanka president suspends parliament until May 8



**COLOMBO (TIP):** Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on April 12 suspended parliament until next month in a shock move amid a deepening power struggle between him and his unity government's prime minister. A government decree quoted the president as stating that he had halted parliament's meetings "with effect from midnight" Thursday under article 70 of the constitution.

The move, scheduled to last until May 8, came hours after at least 16 Sirisena loyalists, including six cabinet ministers, said they would leave the troubled coalition.

Relations between the rival groups in the unity government have soured after both suffered losses in February's local council elections.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) had increased pressure on the followers of Sirisena - who voted against Wickremesinghe in a recent no-confidence motion - to resign.

Parliament had been expected to meet again next Thursday and presidential officials declined to comment on the reason for the suspension.

"We have been surprised by the announcement," one government legislator who requested anonymity told AFP.

Just hours before he announced the suspension of parliament, Sirisena had appointed acting ministers to the positions of those who quit the Cabinet.

Wickremesinghe last week won the motion of no confidence moved by the joint opposition and backed by Sirisena's ministers.

With the help of minority Tamil and Muslim parties, the premier defeated the motion -- dealing a blow to Sirisena, who had campaigned for Wickremesinghe to stand down to allow him to appoint a prime minister of his choice.

In recent weeks, Sirisena has reduced Wickremesinghe's powers, removing from his control the central bank, the policy-making National Operations Room and several other institutions.

Former strongman Mahinda

Rajapaksa's party trounced the UNP and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in the February polls to win control of two-thirds of the 340 local councils at stake.

In the run-up to the election, Sirisena branded the prime minister and his party as more corrupt than the Rajapaksa regime, which Sirisena and Wickremesinghe jointly toppled in 2015.

Earlier Thursday, a presidential spokesman said a wider government reshuffle would be announced next week.

The SLFP is to decide later this month if it will remain in government. Rajapaksa is pressing for a 2020 national election to be brought forward. (AFP)

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Indian American owned cryptocurrency company under SEC scanner



**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Securities and Exchanges Commission (SEC) is investigating into an alleged securities fraud with a cryptocurrency Longfin company founded by an Indian American.

According to the complaint filed by SEC in federal court in Manhattan on April 4, shortly after Longfin began trading on NASDAQ and announced the acquisition of a purported cryptocurrency business, its stock price rose dramatically, and its market capitalization exceeded \$3 billion.

The SEC alleges that Amro Izzelden "Andy" Altahawi, Dorababu Penumarthi, and Suresh Tammneedi then illegally sold large blocks of their restricted Longfin shares to the public while the stock price was highly elevated. Through their sales, Altahawi, Penumarthi, and Tammneedi collectively reaped more than \$27 million in profits.

The complaint alleges that Meenavalli, caused the company to issue more than two million unregistered, restricted shares to Altahawi, who was the corporate secretary and a director of Longfin, and tens of thousands of restricted shares to two other affiliated individuals, Penumarthi and Tammneedi, who were allegedly acting as nominees for Meenavalli. The subsequent sales of those restricted shares violated federal securities laws that restrict trading in unregistered shares distributed to company affiliates.

Venkat Meenavalli, the founder and CEO of the cryptocurrency company Longfin, and his three associates are being investigated by the SEC authorities. The authorities have already frozen more than \$27 million in trading proceeds from allegedly illegal distributions and sales of restricted shares of Longfin. Last week, the company was suspended from trading on Nasdaq.

"We acted quickly to prevent more than \$27 million in alleged illicit trading profits from being transferred out of the country," said Robert Cohen, Chief of the SEC Enforcement Division's Cyber Unit. "Preventing defendants from transferring this money offshore will ensure that these funds remain available as the case continues."

The SEC's complaint, which was filed under seal on April 4, charges Longfin, Meenavalli, Altahawi, Penumarthi, and Tammneedi with violating Section 5 of the Securities Act of 1933. The complaint seeks injunctive relief, disgorgement of ill-gotten gains, and penalties, among other relief.

# Indian American Sikhs set Guinness World Record of tying 9000 turbans in 8 hours in New York

**NEW YORK CITY(TIP):** About 9000 turbans were tied in eight hours to make it a Guinness World Record by Sikhs of New York, an organization promoting the Sikh religion, at the annual Turban Day held at Times Square in New York on April 7.

Representatives from Guinness World Record judged the event and handed over a certificate to the co-coordinators.

Thousands of Sikh community members from across the US reached Time Square to participate in the record-breaking event. Several Americans and tourists also took part in this year's annual Turban day.

The program was aimed at creating awareness about the Sikh religion and its customs and beliefs amid increasing incidents of hate crimes targeting the Sikhs. Volunteers from the community tied colorful turbans on New Yorkers and tourists while explaining the religion.

"On Turban Day, we tied turbans regardless of age, color, gender or race. These are core Sikh values and American values that make us Sikh Americans. Our diversity is our



*The large number of Sikhs on Turban Day, April 7, in Times Square, New York*

strength." Chanpreet Singh, the founder of the organization said.

"On behalf of the team of Sikhs of NY, we want to thank everyone that came from far and near to support our cause yesterday! We were truly overwhelmed to see the support of 1,300+ volunteers and many more participants," the Sikhs of New York said on their website.

"Also, we would like to congratulate everyone around the world for creating

a new Guinness World Record of "Most Turbans Tied in 8 hours," it added.

According to the group, the purpose of this campaign is to bring awareness among all Americans and other World citizens about Sikhism and Turban and to help correct misperceptions about turban through which the Sikhs share the values of love, faith, equality and social justice.

The Turban Day has been organized in New York from 2013 onwards.

## Indian Origin Engineer in US Pleads Guilty to Raising Money for top Al Qaida Leader

**HOUSTON (TIP):** A 38-year-old Indian engineer Ibrahim Zubair Mohammad, in the US state of Ohio, accused of funding a top al-Qaida leader, has pleaded guilty to concealment of financing of terrorism.

The accused sent money to Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen. Al-Awlaki was later designated a terrorist and killed by a US drone in 2011.

Mohammad is to receive an agreed-upon prison sentence of 60 months, although he would receive credit for the 30 months he already has spent in the Lucas County jail awaiting trial.

US District Judge Jeffrey Helmick told him that due to his plea and conviction, he would be deported to India. "You ultimately will be removed from this country and told you are not welcome to come back," the judge said.



*Ibrahim Zubair Mohammad, accused of funding a top al-Qaida leader, has pleaded guilty to concealment of financing of terrorism*

Mohammad had studied at the University of Illinois and lived in Toledo since 2006.

As part of a plea agreement, the four original charges brought by a federal grand jury in 2015 are to be dismissed at the time of sentencing, which was not

scheduled, the report said. Two co-defendants, Sultane Roome Salim, 43, and his brother, Asif Ahmed Salim, 37, are scheduled for a change of plea hearing before Judge Helmick later on April 12. A fourth co-defendant, Mohammad's brother, Yahya Farooq Mohammad, 39, pleaded guilty last year to conspiracy to provide and conceal material support or resources to terrorists.

He had also pleaded guilty to solicitation to commit a crime of violence for a separate case in which he tried to hire a hitman to kill Judge Jack Zouhary. At the time, Judge Zouhary was presiding over the terrorism case.

Yahya Farooq Mohammad was sentenced to a total of 27 years in prison and ordered deported to India once he completes his prison term.

## YOGA CAN HELP SCHOOL CHILDREN MANAGE ANXIETY & STRESS, PER TULANE UNIVERSITY STUDY

**LOUISIANA (TIP):** Yoga/mindfulness activities may facilitate stress management among elementary school students and may be added as a complement to social and emotional learning activities, according to a Tulane University study.

Published April 10 in Psychology Research and Behavior Management Journal, the school-based study "Effect of mindfulness and yoga on quality of life for elementary school students and teachers" suggested that "yoga/mindfulness interventions may improve symptoms of anxiety among students".

The intervention was associated with a significant improvement in emotional and

psychosocial quality of life in the intervention group when compared to the control group, the study concluded.

Welcoming the results of the study, distinguished Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, in a statement to The Indian Panorama, urged all the elementary schools of Louisiana to introduce yoga in their curriculums so that the students could explore various benefits yoga offered.

Yoga, referred as "a living fossil", was a mental and physical discipline, for everybody to share and benefit from, whose traces went back to around 2,000 BCE to Indus Valley civilization, Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism,

noted.

Rajan Zed further said that yoga, although introduced and nourished by Hinduism, was a world heritage and liberation powerhouse to be utilized by all. According to Patanjali who codified it in Yoga Sutra, yoga was a methodical effort to attain perfection, through the control of the different elements of human nature, physical and psychical.

According to US National Institutes of Health, yoga may help one to feel more relaxed, be more flexible, improve posture, breathe deeply, and get rid of stress. According to a "2016 Yoga in America Study", about 37 million Americans (which included many celebrities) now practice yoga; and

yoga is strongly correlated with having a positive self-image. Yoga was the repository of something basic in the human soul and psyche, Zed added.

Objective of the Tulane study included: To assess the impact of a yoga curriculum in an elementary school on student quality of life... benefits of introducing yoga and mindfulness into the classroom. Study group included 20 third-grade students of a public school in New Orleans who screened positive for symptoms of anxiety and participated in yoga/mindfulness activities for eight weeks. Researchers included Alessandra Bazzano, Christopher Anderson, Chelsea Hylton and Jeanette Gustat; reports suggest.

Tulane University in New Orleans (Louisiana), whose history goes back to 1834, claims to be "one of the most well-respected research universities in the country". Douglas J. Hertz and Michael A. Fitts are Board Chair and President respectively.

# Trump keeps everyone guessing on Syria attack- 'Could be very soon or not so soon at all!'

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US President Donald Trump cast doubt on Thursday, April 12, over the timing of his threatened strike on Syria in response to a reported poison gas attack, while France said it had proof of Syria's guilt but needed to gather more information.

Fears of confrontation between Russia and the West have been running high since Trump said a day earlier that missiles "will be coming" after the suspected chemical weapons attack in the Syrian town of Douma on April 7, and lambasted Moscow for standing by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"Never said when an attack on Syria would take place. Could be very soon or not so soon at all!" the US President said in his latest early morning tweet on Thursday, April 12.

Prime Minister Theresa May recalled ministers from their Easter holiday to debate military action over what she has cast as a barbaric poison gas attack in Douma, then rebel-held, just east of the capital Damascus.

May has ordered British submarines to move within missile range of Syria in readiness for strikes against the Syrian military that could begin as early as Thursday night, London's Daily Telegraph newspaper said on April 11.

The BBC reported that May was ready to give the go-ahead for Britain to take part in military action. She would not seek approval from parliament, the BBC said. Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said parliament must be consulted.

Parliament voted down British military action against Assad's government in 2013 in an embarrassment for May's predecessor, David Cameron. That then deterred the US. There were signs, though, of a global effort to head off a direct confrontation between Russia and the West. The Kremlin said a crisis



*President Trump's missiles against Syria are on hold for now*

communications link with the United States, created to avoid an accidental clash over Syria, was in use.

"The situation in Syria is horrific, the use of chemical weapons is something the world has to prevent," Britain's Brexit minister David Davis said, adding, "But also it's a very, very delicate circumstance and we've got to make this judgment on a very careful, very deliberate, very well thought-through basis." - Agencies French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday "we have proof that chemical weapons were used last week, at least chlorine, and that they were used by the Assad regime". He said they would decide whether to strike back when all necessary details have been gathered.

Macron said during an interview on France's TF1 television said he was in daily

contact with Trump and that they would decide on their response "at a time of our choosing"

## Keep US at peace: Carter to Prez

Expressing pride in his own record of peace, former President Jimmy Carter has warned that President Donald Trump should steer clear of any military action involving Syria or other world hot spots and avoid a nuclear attack at all costs

"I pray that he would keep our country at peace and not exaggerate or exacerbate the challenges that come up with North Korea, in Russia or in Syria," Carter said in an interview on his new book - "Faith: A Journey for All"

A lifelong Democrat, Carter has been critical of Trump, a Republican, on a number of fronts, and he said "a lot of people" have "realized they made a mistake" supporting Trump. Yet Carter made clear that his critique is not about the current occupant of the Oval Office

## Moscow to West: Consider consequences of Syria threats seriously

Moscow on Thursday called on the West to "seriously consider" the consequences of threats against Syria after the US and France said they would respond to an alleged chemical attack

"We call upon... members of the international community to seriously consider the possible consequences of such accusations, threats and especially action (against Syria)," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said

"Nobody has authorized Western leaders to take on the role of global police-simultaneously investigator, prosecution, judge and executor," she said during a press briefing. (*Source-Agencies*)

## USCIS announces launch of its new website 'E-Verify.gov'

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on Tuesday, April 10, the launch of its website E-Verify.gov that would help employers and employees in getting information on electronic employment eligibility verification.

"The user-friendly website provides information about E-Verify and Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, including employee rights and employer responsibilities in the employment verification process," the agency said in a press statement. "E-Verify.gov allows employers to enroll in E-Verify directly and permits current users to access their accounts." The new website is for employers, employees and the general public. "For the past decade, E-Verify has been the cornerstone of our continued commitment to helping employers maintain a legal workforce," said USCIS Director L. Francis Cissna. "E-Verify.gov now allows users to better understand and navigate through the employment verification process."

The Internet-based system where about 800,000 employers are enrolled compares information in Form I-9 with records of the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to authenticate work authorization of an individual in the US.

"On April 18, 2017, President Trump signed the Buy American and Hire American executive order to help reduce illegal immigration and preserve jobs for U.S. workers. To support these objectives, USCIS encourages all U.S. employers to verify all new hires through E-Verify," USCIS said.

The agency said that nearly all employees are confirmed as work-authorized instantly or within 24 hours.

The new website will provide all the required information required on employment, for instance, employment eligibility, employee rights and employer responsibilities on one platform. Earlier, such information could be gathered through USCIS website, but it was not centralized.

# My data also harvested, sold by Cambridge Analytica: Zuckerberg

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has told US lawmakers that his personal data was also harvested and sold by Cambridge Analytica and he intends to initiate legal action against the British firm accused of stealing personal information and using it for political purposes.

Zuckerberg replied "yes" when asked if his personal data was included in the information sold to the "malicious third parties" by the lawmakers during a testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee yesterday. Cambridge Analytica compromised personal information of approximately 87 million users, half a million of whom were from India. The American people are concerned about how Facebook protects and profits from its users' data, lawmakers said.

Beginning this Monday, Facebook has started to notify those users whose data have been breached. Responding to a volley of questions, Zuckerberg, 33, said it would take some time to work through all the changes the company needs to make.

"But I am committed to getting this right, and that includes the basic responsibility of protecting people's information, which we failed to do with Cambridge Analytica," he said. Zuckerberg said he was getting to the bottom of what the UK-based firm did and will tell everyone who may have been affected. "What

we know now is that Cambridge Analytica improperly obtained some information about millions of Facebook members by buying it from an app developer that people had shared it with," he said.

"This information was generally information that people share publicly on their profile pages, like their name and profile picture and the list of pages that they follow. When we first contacted Cambridge Analytica, they told us that they had deleted the data. And then, about a month ago, we heard a new report that suggested that this was not true," he said. Now the Facebook is working with governments in the US, the UK and around the world to do a full audit of what they've done and to make sure that they get rid of any data that they still have.

Responding to a question, he told lawmakers that he intended to initiate legal action against the firm accused of stealing personal data and using it for political purposes in the 2016 US Presidential elections. To make sure that no other app developers are out there misusing data, Facebook is now investigating every single app that had access to a large amount of people's information on Facebook in the past.

"If we find someone that improperly used data, we're going to ban them from our platform and tell everyone affected," he said. To prevent this from ever happening again, Facebook is making sure developers can't access as much

information, going forward, he said. "The good news here is that we made some big changes to our platform in 2014 that would prevent this specific instance with Cambridge Analytica from happening again today. But there's more to do, and you can find more of the details of the other steps we're taking in the written statement I provided," he said.

Zuckerberg told lawmakers that Facebook had now removed the option for advertisers to exclude ethnic groups from targeting. "Every time, there is a control right there - not buried in settings somewhere, but right there, when they're posting about who they want to share it with," he added. Zuckerberg asserted that Facebook did not sell data.

"We don't sell data. That's not how advertising works, and I do think we could probably be doing a clearer job explaining that, given the misperceptions that are out there," he said in response to a question. Facebook is neither a media or a financial institution, he said.

"I consider us to be a technology company, because the primary thing that we do is have engineers who write code and build products and services for other people," he said. "There are certainly other things that we do, too. We do pay to help produce content. We build enterprise software, although I don't consider us an enterprise software company. We build



*Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg replied "yes" when asked if his personal data was included in the information sold to the "malicious third parties"*

planes to help connect people, and I don't consider ourselves to be an aerospace company," he said. It is clear now that Facebook didn't do enough to prevent these tools from being used for harm. That goes for fake news, foreign interference in elections and hate speech, as well as developers and data privacy, he said.

"We didn't take a broad enough view of our responsibility and that was a big mistake. It was my mistake, and I am sorry. I started Facebook, I run it, and, at the end of the day, I am responsible for what happens here. So, now, we have to go through every part of our relationship with people to make sure that we're taking a broad enough view of our responsibility," he said. (*Source: PTI*)

## PACT ON MIGRANTS LIKELY DURING PM MODI'S UK VISIT FOR C'WEALTH MEET

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India and the UK hope to ink a revised pact on return of illegal immigrants when Prime Minister Modi visits London this month for the Commonwealth Summit. The existing agreement ended in 2014.

The MoU seeks to "ensure the return of persons who have no lawful basis to be in the territory of the other party after verification of nationality to its satisfaction". The agreement will also help provide information to police about known criminals, including sex offenders on both sides. "As and when we are informed that someone is illegal and the status has been confirmed by Indian High commission in London, we have a mechanism to bring them back. We ended the process in 2014, but we still have the procedure in place," said K Nagaraj Naidu, Joint Secretary, Europe West.

However, India disagrees with UK Homeland authorities that number of Indians overstaying their visas run into several thousands. Indian officials argue that once the individual claims to have lost their passport, ascertaining identity could be time taking and all South Asian migrants must not be profiled as Indians. Officials also point out that post 2008 Indian Passport Issuing Authority has captured biometric data of individuals which is easier to compare with British database. But passports issued prior to 2008 are complicated ones. "In the last 10 years, only some 5,000 Indians have been deported back," said Naidu. Most of these returning Indians belonged to states like Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu among others.

Prime Minister Modi who will hold formal talks with counterpart Theresa May during his Commonwealth visit, will also call on the Queen and hold a diaspora interaction possibly answering a few questions asked through social media.

*Source: The Tribune*

## Storm damages Taj Mahal



Tourists walk past the debris after a powerful storm Wednesday night toppled two minarets at the entry gates of the Taj Mahal.

**AGRA (TIP):** A thunderstorm in Agra and other districts of UP on Wednesday evening left 25 persons dead and 60 injured and also damaged a minaret at the entry gate of the Taj Mahal. The freak thunderstorm, with winds of over 130 km/hour, brought the 12-foot metal pillar at Darwaza-e-Rauza gate crashing down while other minarets withstood the storm. The damaged minaret is of the royal gate where tourists get their first view of the 17th century Mughal-era monument. Several electricity poles and trees were uprooted in the storm, which killed 15 persons in Agra, four each in Firozabad and Mathura and one each in Bijnore and Ballia.

## Sripriya Ranganathan new Indian envoy to Korea

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A 1994-batch IFS (Indian Foreign Service) officer, Sripriya Ranganathan has been appointed as the new Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea at a time when the peninsula is preparing for historic summit talks between the two Korean leaders.

Sripriya Ranganathan is currently the Joint Secretary in MEA (Ministry of External Affairs), in-charge of territorial division of Bangladesh and Myanmar. She will replace 1992-batch diplomat Vikram K Doraiswami as the Ambassador in Seoul.



# Verdict has diluted SC/ST Act, caused disharmony: Govt to apex court

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Centre has urged the Supreme Court to recall its March 20 verdict banning automatic arrests and registration of cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, saying the ruling had done "great damage" by giving rise to anger among the people the law was meant to protect.

Written submissions drafted by attorney general KK Venugopal and submitted to the court on Thursday support the review petition filed by the Centre against the judgement, which made a preliminary enquiry of a complaint under the Act mandatory before the registration of a first information report (FIR) by the police.

According to the submissions, the ruling had caused a "lot of commotion in the country and also created anger, unease and a sense of disharmony." The situation, the Centre argued, can only be rectified through a recall of the order.

The submissions come against the backdrop of Dalit protests in the wake of the order, which was perceived to be a dilution of the SC/ST Act, a law meant to protect marginalised communities from abuse and discrimination. This ruling was necessary, the court said, to prevent the "rampant misuse of the tough provisions of the law." It also held that a court can grant anticipatory bail if it, *prima facie*, finds the complaint to be an abuse of the law, false, motivated and intended to blackmail or harass a person.



*Bharat Bandh: Dalits were protesting against a Supreme Court order on SC/ST Act.*

On April 3, the Supreme Court refused to put its ruling in abeyance, saying the order was only meant to safeguard innocent people against harassment without affecting the rights of the marginalised communities. Hearing the Centre's review petition, justices AK Goel and UU Lalit remarked that those who had taken to the streets to protest had been "misled by vested interests".

The court, the AG submitted, was dealing with a "very sensitive issue" and that it was encroaching into the areas of legislation, a power beyond its jurisdiction. He specifically asked the court to recall the directive that

specifies a preliminary enquiry by a deputy superintendent of police before an FIR is registered and also calls for disciplinary action as well as contempt proceedings if the direction is not followed.

"...the Court declares the 'role of this court travels beyond merely dispute settling, and directions can certainly be issued which are not directly in conflict with a valid statute. Power to declare law carries with it, within the limits of duty, to make law when none exists,'" read the AG's submissions, reminding the bench that the top court has itself upheld the validity of SC/ST law.

*Source: HT*

# Modi, BJP leaders fast to protest House washout

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Top BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his ministerial colleagues and party MPs and office-bearers, observed fast on Thursday to protest the washout of the second phase of Parliament's Budget session, for which they have blamed the Congress.

While many, including Modi and Home Minister Rajnath Singh, kept to their work while fasting, several ministers, among them Prakash Javadekar, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Piyush Goyal, travelled to different parts of the country to sit on fast and attack the Opposition party.

BJP president Amit Shah joined his party colleagues in Karnataka to protest against the Congress' "disruptions" of Parliament. "The Congress knew very well that they cannot debate in any of the Houses so they did not let the Parliament function. The BJP was left with no choice but to go to the people as it is the biggest forum for us," Shah said at a public meeting in the state, which goes to the polls next month.

The main Opposition party, he claimed, does not believe in democracy and it has held democracy "hostage" in its own household. It does not have internal party democracy and cannot save democracy in the country, he said.



The BJP's Lok Sabha members mostly sat on protest fast in their constituencies while most of the Rajya Sabha members did so in their states. In his interaction with party leaders earlier, Modi had asked them to "expose" Opposition parties which, he said, had "throttled" democracy by stalling Parliament proceedings during the Budget session.

Health Minister JP Nadda travelled to Modi's constituency Varanasi, while Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Minister of State for Rural Development Minister Ram Kripal Yadav were in Patna

and Digha in Bihar, respectively to sit on a fast. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was in Chennai while Javadekar was in Bengaluru. Union minister Vijay Goel was in Tamil Nadu.

Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh was in Motihari in Bihar while Steel Minister Birender Singh was in Jind. Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu was in Delhi.

BJP general secretaries Bhupender Yadav, Anil Jain and Arun Singh were in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, respectively.

*Source: PTI*

# Unnao gangrape case: CBI detains BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Senger

**UNNAO (TIP):** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) detained Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar early on Friday morning for questioning in connection with the alleged gang rape of a 16-year-old girl in Unnao. An FIR was lodged against the rape accused BJP MLA on Thursday under sections 363 (kidnapping), 366 (abduction of woman), 376 (rape), 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and the case was handed over to the CBI.

Sengar has maintained his innocence and claimed that he has been framed in the gangrape case. Uttar Pradesh police's failure to arrest Sengar was noticed by the Allahabad High Court too, which on Thursday asked why the accused BJP MLA had not been arrested. The court also observed that based on the prevailing situation, it would be compelled to say in its order that the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh has collapsed.

While the HC will pronounce its order on Friday, it has taken a grim view of how police acted on the complaint made by the rape survivor.

"Police was not ready to register FIR of the minor rape victim. In spite of the SIT report, you are repeating that you can only take any action after further investigation," the court said. "If this is the conduct of the police in the state, whom will a victim approach to register a complaint? If this is the stand you are repeatedly taking, then we will be forced to observe in our order that 'law and order has collapsed in the state'."



Kuldeep Singh Sengar

The teen, from Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district, had accused the MLA and his associates of raping her in June 2017. The family of the victim had also alleged that the accused MLA's brother, Atul Singh Sengar, had thrashed the victim's father on April 3 for refusing to withdraw the FIR over the rape. On April 9, the victim's father died in police custody. Up to six police personnel have also suspended for allegedly beating up the victim's father.

The victim's father died just a day after the rape victim, along with her family members, tried to commit suicide in front of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence in Lucknow on April 8. The victim's father was thereafter taken into police custody from the location. However, on April 9, he was admitted to a hospital after complaining about abdominal pain and vomiting and subsequently died there.

## KATHUA RAPE: FAILED ASIFA AS HUMANS, SAYS V.K. SINGH

New Delhi (TIP): Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh on Thursday assured justice to an eight-year-old girl who was brutally gang raped and murdered in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua and said "we have failed Asifa as humans".

"...But she will not be denied justice," V.K. Singh, former Chief of Army Staff, tweeted.

While the Congress has targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his "silence" over the issue, V.K. Singh's tweet also received backlash from several twitterati, who questioned him of his party's stance.

"Sir how shameless you and your party workers could be? Your ministers are standing with the rapists and you are saying you would deliver justice? You are an Army officer I beg you please restore our faith in judiciary," said one user. Another tweeted: "You have failed, unable to act in an exemplary way despite of being part of the government! Not us. You."

Eight people, including the mastermind Sanji Ram, have been charged with abduction, rape and murder of the "Bakerwal" (nomadic) minor in Kathua's Rasana village in January.

Investigations have revealed that the girl was held in a temple, drugged, repeatedly raped and finally murdered to scare the Bakerwal community out of the village. Sanji Ram has also been charged with bribing local policemen, including a Sub-Inspector and a Head Constable, to destroy vital evidence.

## BOEING JOINS HANDS WITH HAL, MAHINDRA FOR 'MAKE IN INDIA' SUPER HORNET FIGHTER JET



NEW DELHI (TIP): Eying the mega IAF contract for 110 fighter jets, Boeing on Thursday announced a partnership with PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and Mahindra Defence Systems (MDS) for manufacturing the F/A-18 Super Hornet in India.

The US aerospace major said the partnership will also work for joint development of future technologies in India, saying it will transform India's aerospace and defence ecosystem.

The Super Hornet 'Make in India' proposal is to build an entirely new and state-of-the-art production facility that can be utilised for other programmes like India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme, the company said in a statement.

"Boeing is excited to team up with India's only company that manufactures combat fighters, HAL, and India's only company that manufactures small commercial airplanes, Mahindra.

"This partnership brings the best of Indian public and private enterprises together in partnership with the world's largest aerospace company, Boeing, to accelerate a contemporary 21st century ecosystem for aerospace & defence manufacturing in India," said Pratyush Kumar, the president of Boeing India.

The announcement was made on the second day of the Defence Expo here. Boeing is among the leading military aircraft producers like Lockheed Martin, Saab, Dassault and Russian Aircraft Corporation MiG that are likely to vie for the deal to supply 110 fighter jets to the IAF in one of the biggest such procurements in recent years globally which could be worth over \$15 billion.

An RFI (Request for Information) or initial tender for the mega deal was issued by the Indian Air Force (IAF) on April 6 with officials saying that the procurement would be in sync with the government's 'Make in India' initiative in the defence sector.

Aircraft manufacturers have to send their proposals by July 6. Officials had said the jets will be produced jointly by a foreign aircraft maker along with an Indian company under the recently-launched strategic partnership model which aims to bring in high-end defence technology to India.

Noting that HAL has always been at the forefront of aerospace development in India, its chairman T Suvarna Raju today said the partnership will create an opportunity to strengthen indigenous platforms in India thereby contributing to the Make-in-India activities. *Source: PTI*

## MHA brings robust system to secure its computers, block pornographic material

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Ministry of Home Affairs has put in place a robust security system to check external attempts to infiltrate into its computer network, and block access to pornographic materials on its systems, officials said.

This came after former Union Home Secretary GK Pillai had said that some subordinate staff in the MHA would see pornographic content on internet and download malware in office, leading to compromise of the computer networks.

"Intrusion prevention system, intrusion detection system, anti-virus and anti-malware have been put in place. It is a very robust system to ensure foolproof security in the MHA computer networks," an official said.



Punjab mining department to study the mining policies of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Earlier, legal heirs of the complainant in the case against Sidhu had told the Supreme Court that he had admitted his role in the incident in a TV interview in 2010.

In 2007, the Supreme Court had suspended Sidhu's conviction that enabled him to contest elections. Earlier he was acquitted in the case by trial court. But, Punjab and Haryana High Court convicted him for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

*Source: PTI and Indian Express*

## ENCOURAGED BY XI'S REMARKS BUT WANT CONCRETE STEPS TO AVERT NEW TARIFF: WH

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Trump Administration on Wednesday, April 11, said it was encouraged by the remarks of Chinese President Xi Jinping but ruled out reversing its recent move to impose 25 per cent tariff on import of products from China amounting to USD 150 billion.

"Certainly, we are encouraged by President Xi's words, and his kind words. But at the same time, we want to see concrete actions from China, and we're going to continue moving forward in the process and in the negotiations until those happen," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters at her daily news conference.

The White House remarks come after President Donald Trump praised Xi for his remarks.

"Very thankful for President Xi of China's kind words on tariffs and automobile barriers...also, his enlightenment on intellectual property and technology transfers. We will make great progress together!" Trump tweeted.

The US State Department also suggested the same. "We've been clear with the Chinese government in areas that are of concern to US workers, US companies, and the overall trade balance. We have had those conversations with them, so I think we're looking like we're in a better place," State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters at her daily news conference.

"What we may be seeing is China coming to terms with some of our concerns about unfair trade practices and the United States saying. We stand by to engage with you, the government of China and President Xi, on that matter," she said.

In his keynote address at the Boao Forum for Asia after he began his second five-year term last month with prospects of continuing in power for life, Xi said, "China's door of opening up will not be closed and will only open wider." Without mentioning Trump's concern over the huge trade deficit, Xi said China does not seek trade surplus and have a genuine desire to increase imports and achieve greater balance of international payments under the current account. (*Source:PTI*)

## GREEK FIGHTER JET CRASHES IN SEA AFTER PATROL, PILOT MISSING

**ATHENS (TIP):** Defence ministry officials in Greece say an air force fighter jet has crashed into the eastern Aegean Sea after returning from a patrol, and it is unclear whether the pilot survived.

The officials told state-run television that the Mirage 2000-5 crashed Thursday north of the island of Skyros. They gave no information about the possible cause of the crash.

Patrolling has intensified in recent weeks amid a spike in tensions between Greece and Turkey and near-daily mock dogfights in disputed airspace.

Greek navy ships and army helicopters are searching for the missing pilot. (AP)

# British PM May summons ministers to discuss possible military action in Syria

**LONDON (TIP):** British Prime Minister Theresa May summoned her senior ministers to a special cabinet meeting on Thursday to discuss joining the United States and France in possible military action against Syria after a suspected poison gas attack on civilians.

After warning Russia on Wednesday of imminent military action in Syria, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday that a possible military strike against Syria "could be very soon or not so soon at all".

Russia has warned the West against attacking its Syrian ally President Bashar al-Assad, who is also supported by Iran, and says there is no evidence of a chemical attack in the Syrian town of Douma near Damascus.

May recalled the ministers from their Easter holiday for the meeting at 3.30 pm (1430 GMT) in Downing Street to discuss Britain's response to what she has cast as a barbaric attack that cannot go unchallenged.

"No decision as yet, the cabinet is meeting in full at 1530 to discuss," Brexit minister David Davis said.

"The situation in Syria is horrific, the use of chemical weapons is something the world has to prevent," he said. "But also it's a very, very delicate circumstance and we've got to make this judgement on a very careful, very deliberate, very well thought-through basis."

The rising tension over the Douma attack demonstrates the volatile nature of the Syrian civil war, which started in March 2011 as an anti-Assad uprising but is now a proxy conflict involving a number of world and regional powers and a myriad of insurgent groups.

The attack was first reported by Syrian rebel group Jaish al-Islam on Saturday.



Inspectors with the global chemical weapons watchdog, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, are due to investigate the incident.

### USA VS RUSSIA?

The BBC said May was ready to give the go-ahead for Britain to take part in action led by the United States without seeking prior approval from parliament. Downing Street spokesmen repeatedly declined to comment on that report.

"The chemical weapons attack that took place on Saturday in Douma in Syria was a shocking and barbaric act," May told reporters on Wednesday. "All the indications are that the Syrian regime was responsible."

May is not obliged to win parliament's approval, but a non-binding constitutional convention to do so has been established since

a 2003 vote on joining the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

It has been observed in subsequent military deployments in Libya and Iraq and many British lawmakers and voters are deeply sceptical of deepening involvement in the Syrian civil war.

Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn said parliament should be consulted before May approved military action.

"Just imagine the scenario if an American missile shoots down a Russian plane, or vice-versa - where do we go from there?" Corbyn said.

A YouGov poll published on Thursday showed just one in five British voters supported a missile strike on Syria. The poll showed 43 percent of voters opposed such a strike and 34 percent did not know what should be done. (Reuters)

## Baby in China is born 4 years after parents' deaths

**BELJING (TIP):** A surrogate mother gave birth to a baby boy in China four years after his parents died in a car crash, Chinese media reported.

The deceased couple was undergoing fertility treatments before the fatal accident in 2013. Their parents fought a drawn-out legal battle to gain access to the couple's fertilised embryos, kept in a hospital in Nanjing. The baby boy — nicknamed "Tiantian", or "sweet" in Mandarin — was born on December 9 to a Laotian surrogate, The Beijing News reported on Tuesday.

Surrogacy is illegal in China, forcing those who can afford it to look for potential options abroad. Laos has become the latest nation in Asia to witness a flourishing but legally opaque commercial surrogacy industry.

The grandparents had to clear several hurdles to transport the embryos out of China and prove the paternity and nationality of the baby once he was born

"First we thought of using air freight, but none of the airlines were willing to take the thermos-sized bottle of liquid nitrogen where the four embryos were stored," Liu Baojun, a surrogacy expert who assisted the families, said.

So the families decided to transport their precious cargo by road to Laos.

The next problem was getting the baby back into China. Children born through surrogacy outside the country need to have a DNA test proving that one of the biological parents is a Chinese national. The surrogate was brought to China on a tourist visa and gave birth in a Guangzhou hospital. The child was kept there for 15 days, until all four grandparents gave blood and DNA tests, establishing the baby was their grandson and that both parents were Chinese nationals.

The ruling that allows parents to inherit frozen embryos created by their children has triggered a debate on Chinese social media. Dozens of commentators said it highlights the plight of parents who have lost their only child under China's controversial one-child policy while others discussed the need to legalise surrogacy. (AFP)

## CHINA HOLDS BIGGEST EVER MILITARY DRILL IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

**BEIJING (TIP):** The Chinese military on April 12 held its largest ever maritime drill in the disputed South China Sea during which it displayed for the first time the country's aircraft carrier strike group and the most advanced weaponry of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

President Xi Jinping, also the general secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), reviewed the drill and addressed the sailors, PLA Daily reported.

CMC is the overall high command of the 2-million strong Chinese military.

Forty-eight warships, 76 aircraft and more than 10,000 sailors and soldiers took part in the drill which was hailed as "the biggest maritime military parade since the foundation of the new China and a heroic display of the PLA Navy in the new era," the PLA Daily reported today.

The drill was held amid frequent forays made by US naval and aircraft into the South China Sea to assert the freedom of navigation especially around the artificial islands built by China, where it has also established garrisons.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims over the area.

It was the first maritime military parade held in the South China Sea and to be open to the public, state-run Global Times reported.

The PLA's previous four maritime parades were held in Beihai. China's aircraft carrier, Liaoning joined the parade for the first time.

All combat systems of the PLA Navy and 10 air echelons joined the parade.

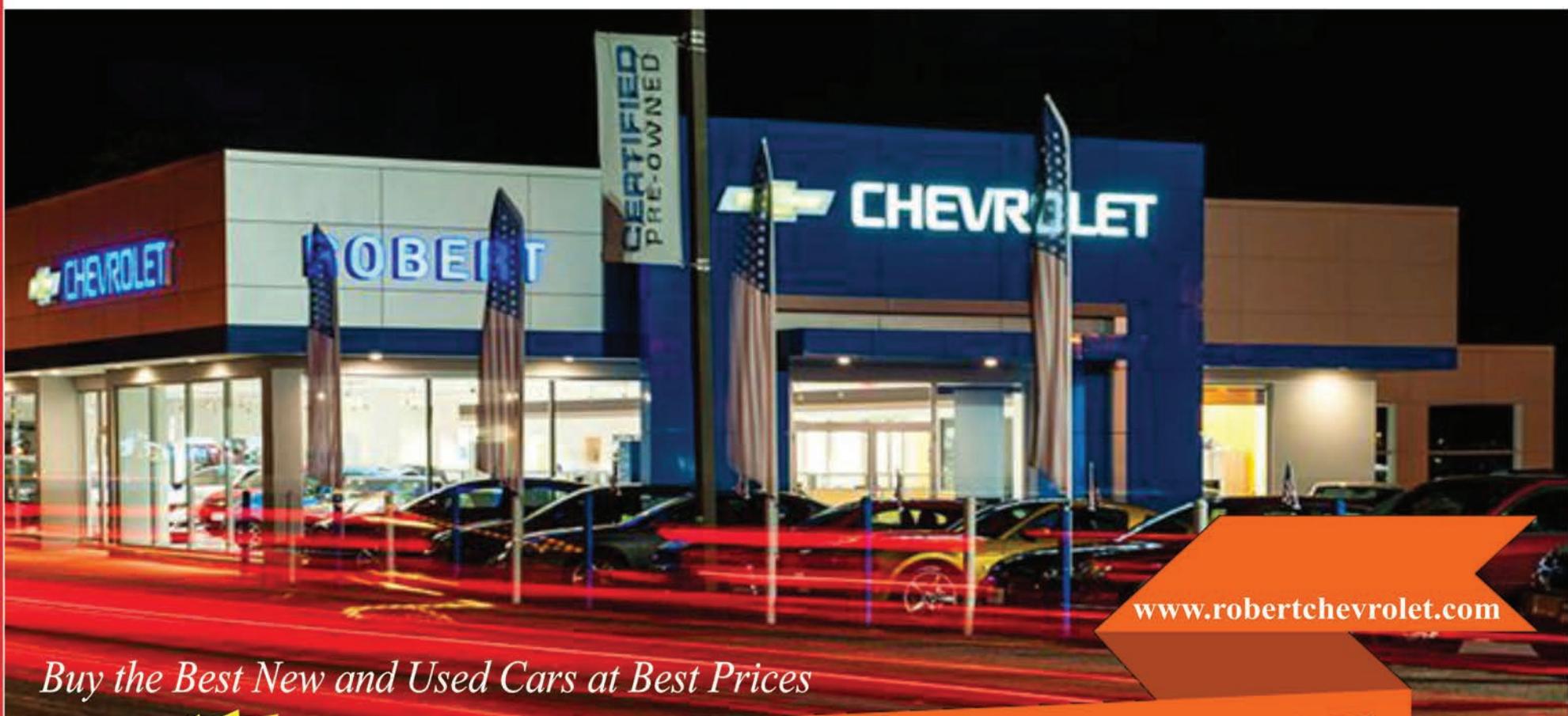
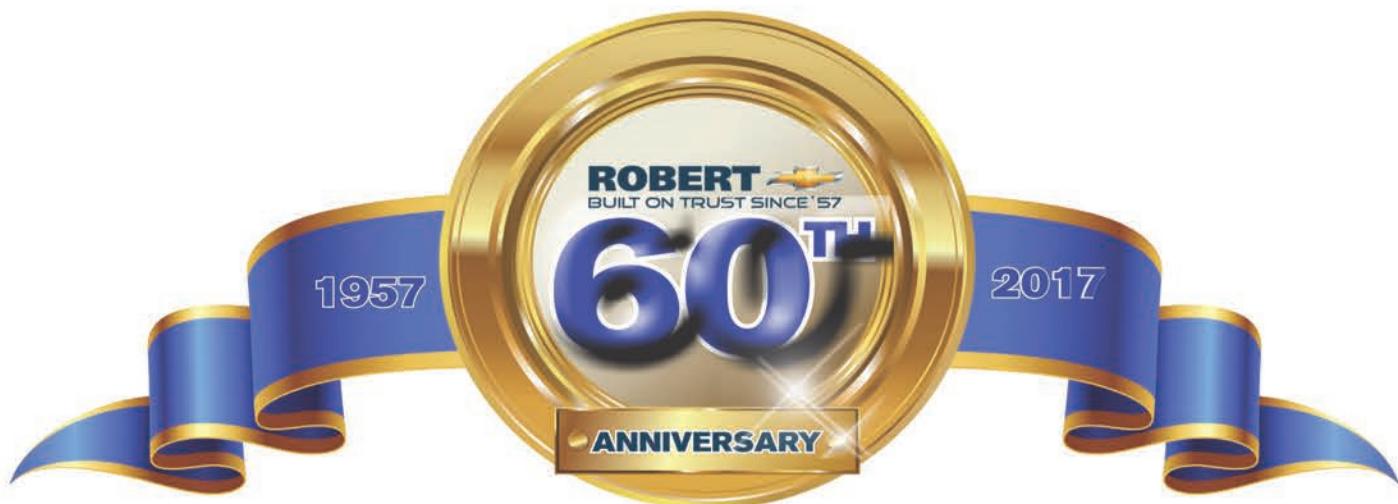
"The most advanced weaponry, including the Liaoning, type 052D destroyers, type 052C destroyers, type 071 amphibious transport dock and type 093 submarine all appeared on South China Sea," Song Zhongping, a military expert and TV commentator, told the Global Times.

The parade showcased the PLA's aircraft carrier group and its enhanced combat capability in the high seas, Song said, adding that China's upgraded navy signifies the PLA is not afraid of war and is capable of winning any battle.

"China's strength in protecting its national maritime interest has grown. The Thursday parade could also serve as deterrence to maritime hegemony, making adversaries think twice before attempting to harm China's core national interests," Song said.

Holding the parade in the South China Sea was a strategic move as the waters are a potential combat zone, said Li Jie, a Beijing-based naval expert.

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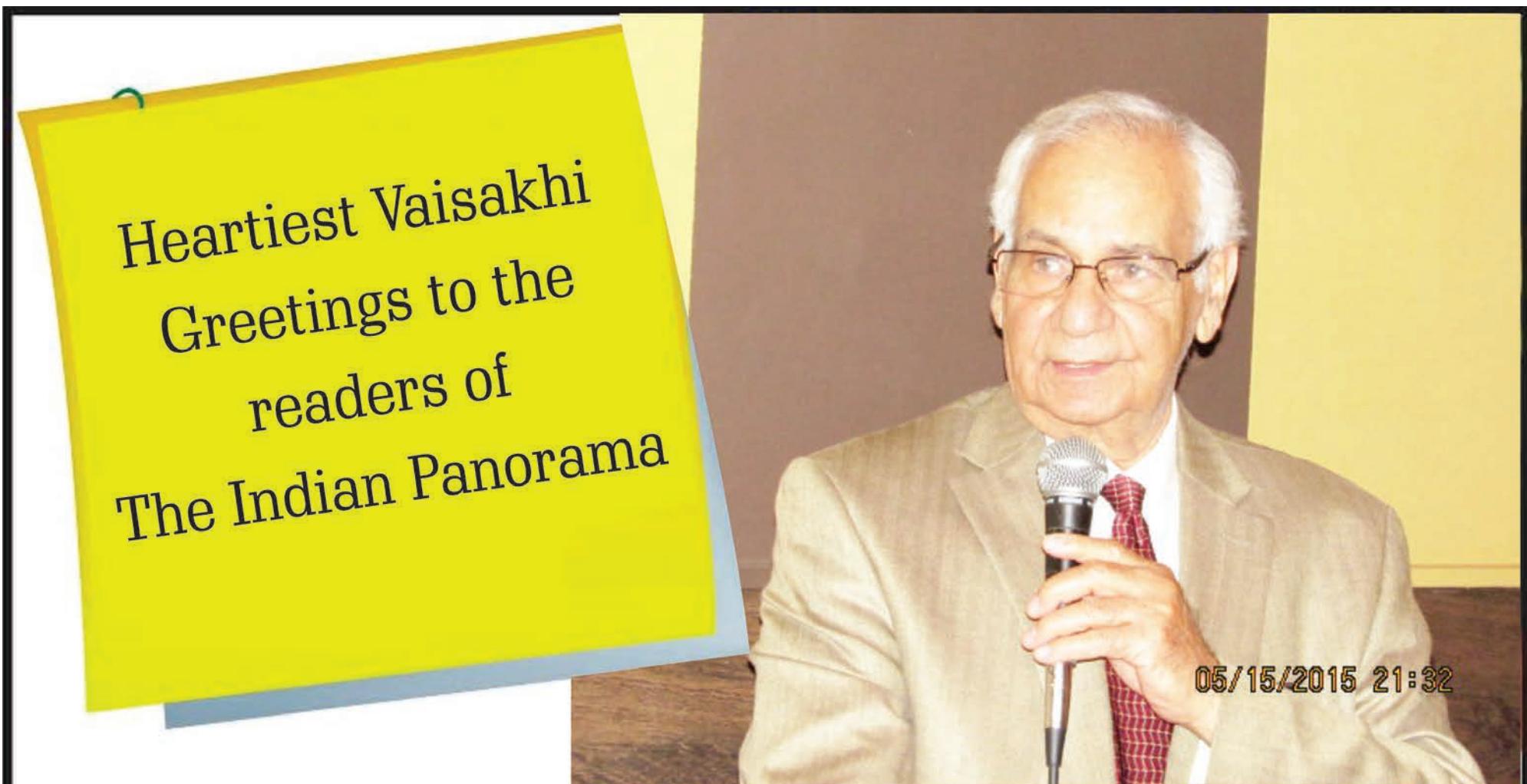
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05/15/2015 21:32

Shiv Dass, President, Indian Merchants Association

For decades Shiv Dass has been a voice for the South Asian business community in Jackson Heights, Queens, New York. He is a business leader, a community organizer, and member of the local community board and has worked tirelessly to establish a positive and open relationship between the community and the elected officials, and in turn, he is often sought out by politicians seeking to get their message out.

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## Paper Mill Playhouse's The Sting (The Musical)

BY MABEL PAIS

**C**hicago. 1936. Get ready to enter a smoke-filled world of cons and capers, where nothing is what it seems, and no one is who they appear to be. An adaptation of the 1973 Academy Award-winning film, The Sting tells the tale of a pair of con men, small town grifter Johnny Hooker and big-time hustler Henry Gondorff (played by marquee Harry Connick, Jr.), who plot to bring down the city's most corrupt racketeer. The Sting takes you back to an era where jazz reigns, the stakes are high, and the dice are always loaded.

The world premiere production of the new musical The Sting begins at Paper Mill Playhouse. The musical is an adaptation of the Academy Award-winning 1973 film by the same name that starred Paul Newman and Robert Redford who carried it to a best-picture Oscar. The movie won 7 Oscars.



Left: J. Harrison Ghee (Johnny Hooker), Right: Harry Connick, Jr. (Henry Gondorff) (Photo Credit: Jerry Dalia)

The Tony-award-winning creative team of director John Rando and choreographer Warren Carlyle bring to life this clever screen-to-stage adaptation by Bob Martin (book), and Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis (score), with more music and lyrics by headliner Harry Connick, Jr.

The movie's fans will be delighted with the musical version that retains all the charm and intrigue of the film while adding some exciting touches. The score also has music by Scott Joplin including the classic ragtime favorites, "The Entertainer," and "The Easy Winners."

The principal cast stars Harry Connick, Jr. as Henry Gondorff, with Peter Benson as The Erie Kid, Janet Dacal as Loretta, Christopher Gurr as J.J. Singleton, J. Harrison Ghee as Johnny Hooker, Tom Hewitt as Doyle Lonnegan, Richard Kline as Kid Twist, Kevyn Morrow as Luther, Kate Shindle as Billie, and Robert Wuhl as Snyder.

Rounding out the cast are Lucien Barbin, Darius Barnes, Keely Beirne, Michael Fatica, Luke Hawkins, Tyler Huckstep, Matt Loehr, Erica Mansfield, Drew McVety, Ramone Owens, Tyler Roberts, Angie Schworer, Christine Shepard, Britton Smith, Sherisse Springer, Diana Vaden, Kevin Worley and Lara Seibert Young.

The production team includes set design by Beowulf Boritt, costume design by Paul Tazewell, lighting design by Japhy Weideman, sound design by Randy Hansen, hair and wig design by Charles G. LaPointe, make up design by Cookie Jordan, vocal arrangements by Fred Lassen, dance arrangements by David Chase, orchestrations by Doug Besterman, and fight coordinator Robert Westley. The production stage manager is Bonnie L. Becker. Casting is by Tara Rubin Casting, Tara Rubin, CSA.

**Runtime: 2 hrs. and 25 min.**

**Weekly Schedule: Wednesday to Sunday**

**Closing Date: April 29, 2018**

**ACCESSIBILITY PERFORMANCES FOR THE STING :** Paper Mill Playhouse, a leader in accessibility, will offer audio-described performances for The Sting on Sunday, April 22, at 1:30pm and Saturday, April 28, at 1:30pm. Prior to these performances at noon, the theater will offer free sensory seminars. Sensory seminars offer an opportunity for patrons with vision loss to hear a live, in-depth description of the production elements of the show and hands-on interaction with key sets, props, and costumes. There will be a sign-interpreted and open-captioned performance on Sunday, April 29, at 7:00pm.

**FREE AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE STING :** Conversation Club: Join the theater's educational team on Thursday evening, April 19, one hour before curtain for an informal,

**"The Sting, at its heart, is entertainment"**

David Ward, screen-writer, 1973 film, The Sting

**"A musical is an entertainment.... perhaps, the most audacious of all. Theater is a con and we are all willing marks" -**

Bob Martin, book-writer, The Sting

**"(Harry Connick is) a dream come true, the real deal. There's not another on the planet who's more talented or works harder"**

Warren Carlyle, choreographer



Center: Harry Connick, Jr. (Henry Gondorff) and the company of The Sting (Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade)



Center: J. Harrison Ghee (Johnny Hooker) and the company of The Sting. (Photo Credit: Jerry Dalia)



Center: J. Harrison Ghee (Johnny Hooker) and the company of The Sting. (Photo Credit: Jerry Dalia)

informative gathering. You'll learn more about the performance you're about to see.

**Q&A WITH THE CAST:** After the matinee on Saturday, April 28, stick around for a lively Q&A with cast members directly following the performance.

For more information or tickets, visit [www.PaperMill.org](http://www.PaperMill.org) or call the box office at 973.376.4343.

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*(Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Health and Wellness, and Spirituality).*



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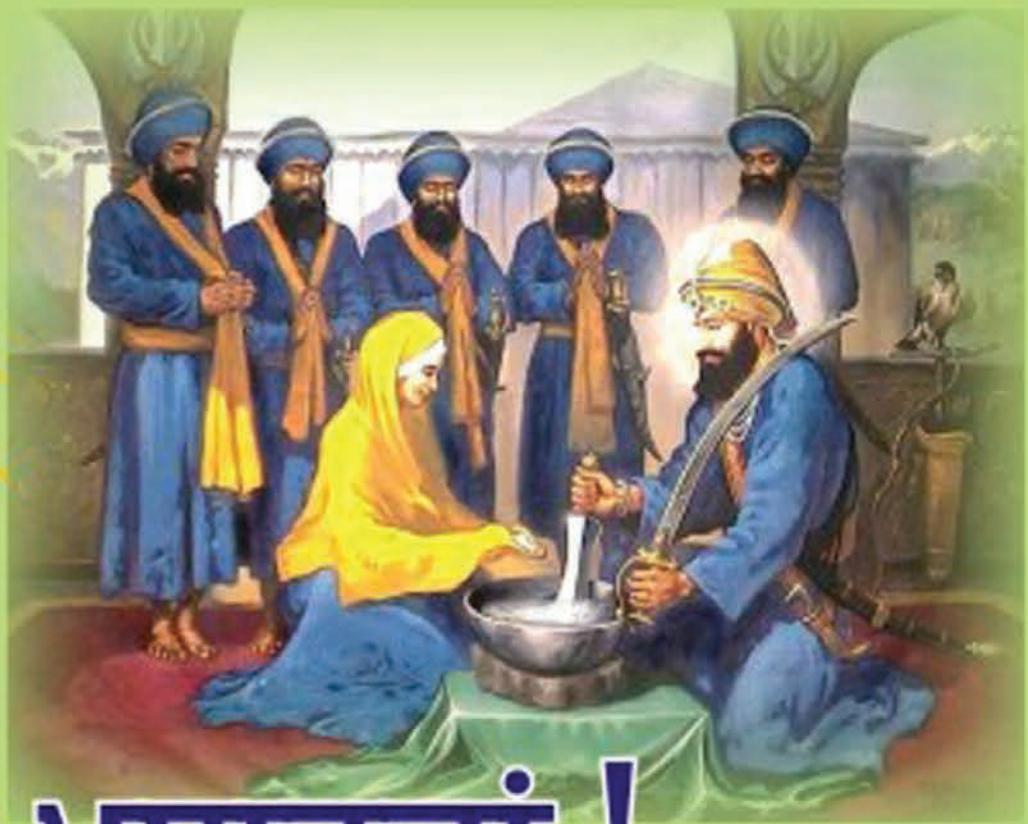
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# HEARTIEST VAISAKHI GREETINGS



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Gobind Singh  
Created Khalsa  
in 1699,  
on the day  
of Vaisakhi



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Founder President,  
Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah  
Lobana; Former President,  
Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society;  
Member, Queens Borough  
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Pritam Singh Gilzian  
President, Richmond Hill  
Merchants Association;  
Former President,  
Gurdwara Baba Makhan  
Shah Lobana



Himat Singh Sarpanch,  
Former President,  
Gurdwara Baba Makhan  
Shah Lobana



Gurmej Singh,  
Former President,  
Gurdwara Baba Makhan  
Shah Lobana



Raghbir Singh Babby,  
President, Gurdwara  
Baba Makhan  
Shah Lobana

Happy  
*Vaisakhi*



# CELEBRATING VAISAKHI: THE STORY BEHIND THE SIKH FESTIVAL

**This week, millions of Sikhs, all over the world, wearing vibrantly colored turbans parading to the sound of beating drums will commemorate a tradition which is centuries old**



A mammoth participation. According to unofficial estimates, around 50,000 participated in the April 2017 parade in New York City.



Vaisakhi, besides being the day of baptism of Sikhism in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, is also a celebration of the Punjabi wheat harvest.

The Sikh celebration called Vaisakhi happens annually in mid-April. The origins of Vaisakhi stem from a spring harvest festival native to the Punjab region of South Asia, but more importantly marked as a religious significance for Sikhs.

But while some may confuse Vaisakhi as the initiation of Sikhism, that is not the case.

"Vaisakhi celebrates the culmination of a centuries-long journey, from the foundation of the faith in 1469, to ensure equality of all people — regardless of race, gender, faith, nationality, or any other identity," Sumeet Kaur Bal, communications director for Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, told NBC News. "This journey culminated in the institutionalization of the Sikh identity and our shared values, which occurred on Vaisakhi."

In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708) - the tenth Sikh guru-prophet — gathered a record number of Sikhs to formally establish the Khalsa Panth, a community of initiated Sikhs. The Khalsa Panth was formalized and entrusted as the collective body with authority. It is important to note that Sikhism was born at a time of great

inequality and injustice in India - which in many ways continues today, according to Bal.

"Guru Gobind Singh Ji vested power in the Khalsa Panth, or Sikh familyhood, to be politically and civically engaged and combat injustice in the world around us, but to have this engagement guided and fueled by our understanding of religion," Bal said.

Sikhism is a monotheistic faith founded on the principles of equality, freedom of religion, and community service. As the fifth-largest religion in the world, one of the core teachings of the Sikh tradition is that all Sikhs must cultivate spirituality while also serving the world around us. Sikhs, both men and women, cover their uncut hair with a turban which represents a commitment to equality and justice.

"One of the many terms that captures this outlook is sant-sipahi, which translates to saint-soldier," Simran Jeet Singh, senior religion fellow for the Sikh Coalition, told NBC News. "Maintaining such a balance is a difficult thing to do. Yet being both spiritually focused and politically engaged is an integral part of the Sikh faith."

Sikhs have been in the U.S. for over 100



Sikh Day Parade in April 2017 in New York City. The Living Guru, Shri Guru Granth Sahib, with priests in attendance, leads the parade.

years, with large communities in California and New York. For decades, New York City has hosted the annual Sikh Day Parade, which will take place this year on April 23. Thousands of Sikh community members from around the country are expected to come together to share their traditions with local New Yorkers.

"The most popular aspect of the Parade is the langar, free food served in the way of the Sikh tradition, in Madison Square Park," says Singh. "Tens of thousands of people enjoy the

langar together, and it serves as a powerful way to socialize and connect with others who join."

Sikhs mainly worship by singing from the scripture and reflect on their Gurus' teachings as a way to model values and principles within their own lives. Vaisakhi is fundamentally about celebration, remembrance, community, and progress. This week Sikhs will gather with their communities at gurdwaras, local places of worship, and reflect on these values.

(With inputs from NBC News)



Langar (free food) is being served at one of the free kitchens at the Sikh Day Parade in New York City in 2015.



A display of Sikh martial arts at the April 2017 parade in New York City.

As per the Nanakshahi calendar and the Mool Nanakshahi Calendar, Baisakhi is commemorated on April 13 or 14 every year. This occasion marks the beginning of the Sikh New Year and the traditional solar New Year for the Hindus. For the Sikh community, this day marks the birth of the Khalsa way of living as well as the formation of the Khalsa Panth under the renowned Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. While for the Hindus, it is believed to be the time when Goddess Ganga descended on earth and in her honour, people gather along the sacred river Ganges for the holy bath. While this occasion has different names, it is more or less celebrated in a similar way by both Hindus and Sikhs.

This day is of great importance in the history of Sikhism as well as the Punjab region. In the year of 1699, the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded on the order of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb for refusing to convert to Islam, which prompted the coronation of the Tenth Guru of Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh. Interestingly, on the same day Guru Gobind Singh formed the Khalsa Panth – also known as the Order of the Pure Ones. For this, he picked five Sikh warriors who would go on to defend religious freedom. The Jallianwala Bagh (1919), where thousands of Indians were massacred on the orders of British empire official Colonel Reginald Dyer, also took place on Baisakhi.

On the occasion of Baisakhi, Gurdwaras all across India are decorated with lights and other ornamental decorations. Several satsangs are held and Sikhs visit and bathe in lakes or rivers before visiting the Gurdwaras.

### Other harvest festivals

Many harvest festivals similar to Vaisakhi are observed across the country through the year. Popular examples are Makar Sankranti, Onam and Pongal. Though most of them essentially involve prayers to the sun god for a good harvest, they differ in the ways they are celebrated and the communities that observe them.

Pongal, for instance, is a four-day festival celebrated by the Tamil community with cow as a major symbol. Sankranti involves kite flying, ludi music and is celebrated widely in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Onam is celebrated by Malayalis and famously involves activities like boat racing, Kaikottikali dance and rangoli making by women.

Festival of Vaisakhi is celebrated as a Thanksgiving Day by the farmers. People wake up early on the day and take bath in rivers or pond water and pay a visit to the temple or gurdwara (Sikh worship place). Farmers thank god for the bountiful harvest and pray for prosperity in future also. Many people also perform charity on the day as a custom.

As the day progresses, loud cries of "Jatta aayi Vaisakhi" reverberate in the sky as men and women move towards the field to celebrate the harvest festival. As a tradition men dress up in colourful lungi, kurta and pagri while womenfolk clad themselves in salwar kameez or lehenga. They further adorn themselves with loads of jewellery.

Major attraction of Vaisakhi celebrations in villages is the performance of energetic bhangra and giddha dance by men and women respectively. This very popular traditional folk dance is performed in groups on the fast beat of dhol. Dancers perform everyday farming scenes of sowing, harvesting, winnowing and gathering of crops through zestful movements of the body to the accompaniment of ballads.

Later during the day, people exchange greetings with friends, neighbours and dear ones and relish best of world famous Punjabi cuisine.

Colourful Vaisakhi Fairs are organized at several places in Punjab to mark the harvest festival of Vaisakhi. Performance of

# VAISAKHI: THE SIKH NEW YEAR



bhangra and giddha dance besides other recreational activities make Vaisakhi melas a major crowd puller. People also indulge in shopping and eating spree in the numerous stalls set up in the fairs.

### Legends of Vaisakhi

There are various legends associated with the colourful and vibrant festival of Vaisakhi. A study of these interesting legends of Vaisakhi reveal that the day of Vaisakhi is significant not just for Sikhs but also for Hindus and Buddhists alike. Besides, it is joyous to note that as a harvest festival, people of all communities in Punjab celebrate Vaisakhi in a harmonious manner.

Vaisakhi Festival marks the time for the harvest of Rabi crops and is therefore celebrated with utmost joy and enthusiasm in the state of Punjab where agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people. To celebrate the occasion, people dress themselves gaily and perform the joyful bhangra and giddha dance on the tune of the dhol. Farmers in Punjab celebrate Vaisakhi Festival to hint by feasting and merrymaking before they hit on tiring but joyful task of harvesting from the next day.

According to a popular legend in Sikhism, it was on the day of Vaisakhi in 1567 that Guru Amar Das had first institutionalized Vaisakhi as one of the special days when all Sikhs would gather to receive the guru's blessings at Goindwal.

The day of Vaisakhi Festival is also important for the Hindus as it on this day in 1875 that Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj - a reformed sect of Hindus who are devoted to the Vedas for



spiritual guidance and have discarded idol worship.

For the Buddhist, the day of Vaisakhi Festival is significant, as according to a popular legend it was on this auspicious day that Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment or Nirvana under the Mahabodhi tree in the town of Gaya. For this reason, the day of Vaisakhi is celebrated as Buddha Purnima in several parts of the country.

The auspicious day of Vaisakhi is

celebrated all over India though under different names and with different set of rituals. People of Assam celebrate April 13 as Rongali Bihu, while those in West Bengal celebrate it as Naba Barsha. Bihar celebrates Vaisakhi as Vaishakha in honour of the Sun God, Surya while Kerala celebrates it as Vishu and Tamil Nadu as Puthandu. In Kashmir, a ceremonial bath and general festivity mark Vaisakhi while in Himachal Pradesh devotees flock to the temple of Jwalamukhi and take a holy dip in the Hot Springs.

# THE BIRTH OF KHALSA

**T**was the Vaisakhi. The year was 1699. As usual, Sikhs from far and near had gathered together at Anandpur to celebrate the New Year Festival. However, the gathering was a bit different that day. This year Guru Gobind Rai had sent a message that every Sikh who could afford to come, must come to the annual fair. They should come to Anandpur with their hair and beard uncut; and that they should wear turbans instead of caps or scarves.

By noon, well over twenty thousand Sikhs (eighty thousand by one estimate) had assembled in the fair ground at Anandpur to participate in the festivals of the Baisakhi Day. Everybody was excited and looked forward to meeting the Guru as if this unusual 'message' was especially sent for him. Also, there was a large and richly festooned tent pitched on a hillock overlooking the extensive fair grounds.

It was afternoon. Word went round that the Guru was in the marquee and he would be coming out soon to meet his Sikhs. All eyes were turned towards the tent and everyone was waiting patiently for Guru's Darshan (appearance) and to receive his blessings. But it took a little longer than expected.

At last their patience was rewarded. Guru Gobind came out of the tent clad in a strangely coloured uniform. It was saffron coloured from top to toe with a blue waist band. There was a long sword hanging from his left side. He walked briskly and came to a specially erected platform near the tent. The skies were clear and bright; and the Guru seemed to be standing so near; although he was actually at some distance from the people in the back. He had a strange smile on his face. Suddenly he stopped staring at the crowd, he pulled his sword out and raised it high with his right hand. There were a million voices and then a sudden hush.

Now, like a thunder, the Guru spoke, "My dear Sikhs, I am glad to see so many of you here today. Today I have planned to offer you something special, but for this I need your help. Indeed, I need your head. I need the head of a Sikh who claims his faith in me."

There was a deadly silence all around. Everybody was too stunned to walk away or even whisper. Then the Guru flashed his sword again, raised his voice and repeated, "My Sikhs, I want a head and nothing less than a head. If anyone among you claims to be a true Sikh, then come forward and prove it." He looked so fierce and blood thirsty.

Before he had finished his last sentence, a tall lean Sikh was already moving forward towards the Guru on the platform. His name was Daya Ram and he was from Lahore. Reaching the Guru, he folded his hands, bent his head forward and said, "O, Lord, the true Guru, I claim to be your humble Sikh. My head is ready for you. Please take it."

Hurriedly, the Guru held him by the arm and led him into the tent. Soon after the crowd inside heard the sound of a sword striking a body. They then heard a voice, Waheguru and then a loud thud. Then they saw the Guru coming out of the tent, looking even more fierce. Fresh blood dripped down his sword. The crowd was truly horrified. Nobody needed to be told what had happened inside the tent.

Once again the Guru stood on the platform. Once again he raised his sword and addressed the crowd, "Well, my Sikhs! I want a second Sikh who would willingly offer his head to me." This new demand made the people even more scared. But they dare not ask or challenge the Guru for his seemingly wrongful act. However, as he was repeating



his strange call, another Sikh began to move forward. His name was Dharam Das, and he was from Delhi.

Dharam Das stood before the Guru and said in a humble voice, "O, my true king, I offer my head to you, please take it, it is yours." Now the Guru seemed pleased as he quickly took him inside the tent. This time again, the crowd heard a voice saying Waheguru and then a loud thud. Everyone gasped. They were sure that Dharam Das, too, had been put to death.

Again the Guru emerged from the tent with a sword drenched in blood. He looked as fierce as before. With a terrifying look in his eyes he again shouted to the crowd, "Come, come my Sikhs, who comes next. I still want some more. Now I want a third head. I want a Sikh who has faith in me."

The people were terrified. They thought perhaps the Guru had gone mad. He was asking too much. Now they were no longer spell bound by the events which had taken place just before. They could think. They began to move; they whispered with each other. They began to slip away from the crowd. Some just fled for their lives.

In the mean time another Sikh named Mohkam Chand had reached the Guru on the platform. He was from Dwarka. With folded hands he requested the Guru to accept his head. The Guru did not wait or waste a minute, and did the same as he had done with the other two.

For the fourth time, the Guru stood before the crowd and repeated his demand for yet another head. Now the crowd was even more restless. Some people were slinking away but most stood their ground. They all were really scared, and it did not take long before they saw yet another Sikh on the platform offering his head to the Guru. His name was Sahib Chand and he was from Bihar. The Guru dealt with him in the same way as with the other three before him.

The crowd was getting thinner every moment. By the time the Guru came back and asked for a fifth head, only the very faithful had stayed behind. But there seemed to be no shortage of volunteers. Soon, another Sikh named Himmat Rai moved forward. He was, at



once, led to the tent, but this time the Guru did not return quickly. The people outside began to wonder. Their horror began to change into hope. At least the Guru had stopped asking for more heads. They waited nervously and prayed 'Waheguru'.

Then the Guru appeared. He was followed by five other men. They, too, were dressed in saffron colour, with blue scarves tied round their waists and turbans. They looked very much like the Guru himself. All stood on the platform facing the crowd. Their faces beamed with joy and satisfaction.

As soon as the people near them recognised that they were the same Sikhs who they thought had been killed by the Guru, they immediately started cheering them and saluted them with loud shouts of 'Sat Siri Akal'!

Soon everybody joined in, and the whole atmosphere was vibrant with the deafening sounds Sat Siri Akal. Many people who had left the fair ground in fear and disappointment heard these cheers and rushed back to see what was happening. They could not believe their eyes. Everything had happened so fast. They could not understand.

'Had the dead been brought back to life?'

When the cheering crowd had stopped, the Guru spoke to the crowd, "My dear Sikhs; we all remember that when Guru Nanak gave a test to his Sikhs only one passed it. His name was Lehna, who then became Guru Angad. Now two hundred years after the first test, I have given you another final test. However this test was not for Guruship, but for the 'nationhood'. I call it the Khalsa, the brotherhood of the pure at heart. You have witnessed the birth of the Khalsa. These Sikhs standing beside me are my Panj Piaray (five beloved ones). Each of them is a saint and a soldier in one. These five Sikhs are dedicated and daring enough to lead; and strong enough to support the edifice of the Khalsa."

Later the Guru introduced his Sikhs to a new kind of initiation ceremony called the Amrit (Baptism). First he Baptised the 'Panj Piaray' and gave them a new name - 'Singh'. Then he himself was baptised by 'the five' and called himself Gobind Singh. After this all Sikhs present at the fair ground were asked to receive Amrit. It was estimated that well over 20,000 Sikhs were baptised the same day.

# GURU GOBIND SINGH, THE SAINT SOLDIER

**N**ature has its own ways to establish equilibrium in the universe. Otherwise, the powerful will always prevail and vanquish the weak. At about the time Guru Gobind Singh was born in the winter of 1666 A.D., India was passing through a period of extreme religious bigotry.

A home grown centuries old religion-Hinduism- was the faith of the majority of Indians. They were subjugated and ruthlessly ruled by a far fewer number of Sunni Muslim conquerors hailing from Afghanistan. The Sunni Muslim Afghan conquerors wanted to propagate and spread only their form of religion in India.

Guru Gobind Singh was vehemently opposed to such dictats. The founder of Sikhism Guru Nanak was the first high profile social reformer in India, who was a witness to the cruelty and tyranny of the first Mughal Emperor Zahir-Ud-Din Babar. Guru Nanak was briefly imprisoned by Babar, but soon Babar realized his folly, apologized to Guru Nanak and released him from the prison. Babar's grandson Jalal-Ud-Din Akbar was more tolerant and just to the people of all faiths and he befriended the successors of Guru Nanak.

By far the most intolerant Mughal Emperor was Aurangzeb Alamgir. He was determined to convert every well-meaning Indian to his Sunni Muslim faith. He picked up the affluent and fair colored and blue eyed Brahmins living in the Northern most hilly areas of Kashmir for forcible conversion into Sunni Islam. Guru Gobind Singh's father, Guru Tegh Bahadur the ninth "Jyot" of Guru Nanak was on a gospel tour of North Eastern India, when Guru Gobind Singh was born in an ancient city of Patna on "Poh Sudi Satween" (according to the Christian Calendar in 1966). Guru Gobind Singh's early childhood was spent in the North Eastern areas of India consisting of the present states of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam and Bangladesh.

As a child, he developed a strong inclination to play with bows and arrows. At his early age before ten, the family moved to a small hamlet in the lower Shivalik Himalayas in Punjab. This place later on became famous as Anandpur Sahib in Ropar district of Punjab. One fine autumn morning in 1675 A.D., a group of Kashmiri Brahmins came to see Guru Gobind Singh's father Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur Sahib. From their grim faces it could be made out that they were quite a frightened lot. Soon they started narrating their tales of utter despair and miseries. According to their version, they were being coerced to convert to Islam.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was not opposed to conversion by logic and persuasion, but he was fiercely opposed to all forms of forced conversion. On hearing their tales of horror, while Guru Tegh Bahadur was absorbed in thoughts, his nine year old son Gobind Rai came there. Seeing his father immersed in deep thoughts, he asked him about the



reason for his being so immersed in thoughts. When Guru Tegh Bahadur told him the story of the Kashmiri Brahmins and asked for his son's advice, the son surprised everyone when by advising his father to offer his own supreme sacrifice to awake the conscience of the nation.

This is how Guru Tegh Bahadur made up his mind to offer himself to be beheaded in the national capital, Delhi. The place where Guru Tag Bahadur was beheaded is now a sacred Sikh temple. After Guru Tegh Bahadur's merciless beheading, his son Gobind Rai made up his mind to fight the Sunni Islamic tyranny of Emperor Aurangzeb with an army of highly motivated saint soldiers. For years, young Gobind Rai struggled consistently against the far superior Mughal Armies. During the spring harvest season in 1699, Gobind Rai gave a call to his "Sikhs" to congregate at Anandpur Sahib in big numbers. In this very congregation he established the order of the "Khalsa" (the pure) and he changed his as well as his male followers' last name to "Singh" and the last names of the females were changed to "Kaur". Thus was created the bearded and turbanned "Khalsa".

From 1699 to 1707 A.D., Guru Gobind Singh fought a relentless series of battles against the imperial forces of Aurangzeb Alamgir and scores of his subject Rajas of small hill area principalities. In the process of fighting the tyranny of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, Guru Gobind Singh lost all four of his sons and his mother. Thousands of his saint soldiers, including his five most favorite disciples and forty of his choicest soldiers died in the battlefields.

Aurangzeb died in 1707. His son Bahadur Shah abandoned his father's

bigotry and coercive policies and befriended Guru Gobind Singh. A meeting marking a period of peace and harmony was arranged between Guru Gobind Singh and Emperor Bahadur Shah in 1707 A.D., after which Guru Gobind Singh moved to the Southern Peninsular India and started living at a place called Nanded (Sri Huzoor Sahib).

Here he was assaulted with sharp edged weapons by two Muslim assassins. Guru Gobind Singh died at the age of forty two in 1708. Due to Guru Gobind Singh's relentless military campaign against Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire's power base started eroding. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, even the dreaded Mughal Empire saw its slow disintegration. Guru Gobind Singh was a great soldier, a great linguist and a brilliant scholar of theosophy.

He composed volumes of spiritual verses. His poetry was composed in a number of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic meters, unmatched by any other poet. The line by line weight in his poetry is so well balanced that it is a treat to sing his poetry in classical Raagas. He was so humble that he did not include his own poetry in the Sikh holy book "Sri Guru Granth Sahib", although he did include some "Baani" of his illustrious father Guru Tegh Bahadur in the final version of "Sri Guru Granth Sahib".

Guru Gobind Singh very well knew that the time to end the practice of living Gurus has arrived. He had a group of fifty two celebrated poets in his court, who used to admire his poetry and likewise the Guru used to enjoy their poetry. Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh most respectfully placed the final version of holy "Sri Guru Granth Sahib" on a higher pedestal and then bowed his head before it.

## CELEBRATIONS OF VAISAKHI AROUND THE WORLD



A Sikh devotee throws flower petals as the procession passes by during the Baisakhi festival at Panja Sahib.

Most of us know that Vaisakhi celebration commemorates the anniversary of the Khalsa which was laid down by Guru Gobind Singh. Though it signifies its establishment in India, Sikh communities all around the world engage in an overwhelming festivity to mark this auspicious day.

### Pakistan

The festivities of Vaisakhi are widely celebrated by the Sikhs of Western Punjab in Pakistan. The celebrations are observed on the Panja Sahib complex in Hasan Abdal, numerous Gurudwaras in Nankana Sahib and various historical sites in Lahore.

### Malaysia

Earlier Malaysia did not observe Vaisakhi to be considered as a public holiday, since the Sikh community ranked among the minorities here. However in 2013 Prime Minister Najib Razak announced that all Sikh government servants would be granted leave on the same occasion. The celebrations in Malaysia typically take place in the form of 'open houses'.



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May assisted to make chapatis during her visit to the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, in Walsall, central England, as preparations to mark Vaisakhi get underway.

### United States

Los Angeles and Manhattan are the two primary places that epitomize Vaisakhi celebrations. The Sikhs of Manhattan offer 'Seva' to the community by offering food and contribute to the completion of labour oriented tasks. A full day Kirtan is also hosted at the Gurudwara which is followed by a procession.

### United Kingdom

Birmingham being the largest concentration of Sikhs makes a point to celebrate this festival king size. More than one lakh people make it to the festivity at the Handsworth Park. This year it's going to get bigger as the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras in Birmingham is marking their 25th anniversary. The celebration will be followed by a Simran which is the remembrance of God by repetition or recital of his name during a spiritual meditation.

### Canada

Canada has the most of Sikh population and the celebrations of Vaisakhi here are considered as a global phenomenon. A massive parade is observed with more than 2 lakh participants. With an array of entertaining performances, the celebrations consist of floats represented by various communities.





## VIDYA BALAN'S NEXT TO BE A GANGSTER DRAMA

In a career spanning over 15 years, Vidya Balan has given Bollywood some of its most memorable films. From *The Dirty Picture* to *Kahaani* to *Tumhari Sulu*, Vidya has offered something new to her fans with each of her films. And with her next film, she is all set to venture into a new genre. Buzz has it that Vidya might play a gangster in her next film.

According to a report in *Mid-Day*, Vidya has been approached for a yet-untitled project to be helmed by Jyoti Kapur Das.

A source told the daily, "Set in the murky world of crime, the drama sees the leading lady as a grey character. The role is that of a strong-minded woman who is almost a crime overlord. After Jyoti finished penning the script, Vidya was the first name that came to her mind. Given the kind of author-backed roles that she has done, the actress would be a perfect fit for the character."

The report suggests that Vidya has shown interest in the film, but she's yet to work out her dates. "The actress also has the *Indira Gandhi* biopic in the pipeline. It all depends on when she starts the biopic. She is also in talks for another project. But if all goes as planned, the crime drama will go on floors later this year," added the source.

# PEOPLE WHO TAKE TROLLS SERIOUSLY ARE FOOLISH, SAYS TWINKLE KHANNA

Bollywood actor-turned-writer Twinkle Khanna never minces her words while voicing opinions on social media and often pays the price for it too - she is a frequent target for trolls who abuse and disturb her. Twinkle, however, has said social media trolls are like cockroaches and labelled people who take them seriously as 'foolish'.

"They come along and they do that to everybody and people who take trolls seriously, I'd rather say they are foolish. Trolls are like cockroaches, once in a while, you spray hit on them and get them out of the way and you go on," she said during a panel discussion "Social Media Trolling on Social Platforms" that was organised for forthcoming OSM Awards.

"I do look at criticism and examine it carefully as sometimes it is valid and it always tells me about the world around me," she added.

Eminent personalities, including Twinkle Khanna, Gul Panag, Jose Cavaco, Malini Agarwal and Tanmay Bhat hosted the OSM Outlook Social Media Awards Jury Panel discussion here.

Gul Panag has also been targeted several times on social media. Her political allegiance and strong viewpoint have attracted many threats. Talking about online trolls and dealing with them, Gul said, "The moment you take a position, you set yourself up for an attack; either from people, who disagree with you or people who just don't like the fact that you have taken a position because traditionally women, especially those who belong to film industry, are not entitled to have an opinion. A woman having an opinion was discouraged outside and within the industry, but it is changing now."

People from film and media industries,



digital platform, culinary, fashion, politics, sports, among others, have been nominated under various categories.

Celebrities, including Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukone, Varun Dhawan, Kamal Haasan, Rajinikanth, Shah Rukh Khan, Alia

Bhatt, Diljit Dosanjh, Karan Johar, among others have been nominated in 2018 edition of the awards.

The award ceremony would commence on April 20.

Source: IANS

## Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja's marriage this month?

**S**onam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja's wedding has been the talk of the town for a while now. The couple has been going strong for almost two years now, and the Kapoor family has already accepted Anand as one of their own, if his presence at all their family gatherings is anything to go by.

Buzz is that Sonam and Anand are all set to take their relationship to the next level this year, and get hitched. From Jodhpur to London to Geneva, rumours of a destination wedding has sent their fans into a tizzy.

While the Kapoors have remained tight-lipped about the wedding preparations, there was speculation that the couple would tie the knot in Geneva (Switzerland) on May 11-12. But latest reports suggest that Sonam and Anand won't have a Swiss wedding, instead the lovebirds will marry in aamchi Mumbai.

According to a report in DNA, Sonam and Anand will tie the knot on April 29, and that too in Mumbai.

A source told the daily, "Neither will it be a destination wedding nor will it take place

in May. Sonam and Anand are likely to tie the knot on April 29 in Mumbai."

Another report in Spotboy.com suggests the unavailability of resort in Montreux as the reason behind the change in destination. The website reveals the Kapoors couldn't have the wedding at their choice of resort as it was pre-booked by a Saudi princess for those dates. And that's why the Kapoors had to apparently alter their wedding plans.

Their source revealed that Sonam and her sister Rhea Kapoor tried to convince the resort authorities to let them make the bookings as the wedding can get the hotel a lot of publicity. But the resort authorities declined the bargain as their policy is 'first come, first serve'.

Meanwhile, wedding cards have been sent out to Sonam's friends from Bollywood. Buzz has it that Kareena Kapoor Khan, Salman Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan and Swara Bhasker are on the list.

On the work front, Sonam is awaiting the release of *Veere Di Wedding*.





## HAVE GROWN ANXIOUS MOVING FORWARD IN LIFE: DAKOTA FANNING

Hollywood actor Dakota Fanning says she has faced anxiety troubles while growing up.

The 24-year-old actor says smaller things being out of place often trigger a sense of unsettlement in her, as trivial as seeing her apartment in a "mess".

"I wasn't an anxious child at all, but as I've got older, I've felt more anxiety moving into my life. Usually the little things I get anxious about are indicative of a bigger thing."

"For me, making a decision that's going to affect something in the future is overwhelming. Or I can be fine for a long, long time, and then I'll walk into my apartment and then (panic) that things are a mess," Fanning told Times Style magazine.

## HEIDI KLUM: I AM TRYING TO EMBRACE AGEING



Supermodel Heidi Klum said at the age of 44 she is not searching for the fountain of youth and is trying to embrace ageing.

The fashionista said she does not believe in holding onto the past and is fine with getting older.

"My nose would grow like Pinocchio's if I said that I didn't feel some pressure about ageing, as I am constantly asked about it. I'm in the public eye, and there's more scrutiny because of that. I can look

at photos of when I was 24, and of course I am going to look different now at 44 and having had four children - but, again, it's about being comfortable with yourself and what you see in the mirror.

"I'm not trying to hold on to the past or searching for a fountain of youth. We are all going to age, so I'm trying to embrace that, but not without a bit of a fight. If I could go back in time, I would appreciate each moment more. When I was younger, I was always looking ahead and how to

get there faster. Now I wish I had really been more present during each moment to fully enjoy and savour them," Klum said.

The model, who has Helene, 13, Henry, 12, Johan, 11, and Lou, eight - believes confidence makes people look 'sexy'.

"Confidence is sexy. There's something alluring about a person that just seems at ease and comfortable with themselves. It's something we should all strive for."

Source: PTI

## Avengers Infinity War: Scarlett Johansson reflects on how the marvel movies have changed in last decade

Scarlett Johansson was the lone female superhero as compared to five alpha males in 2012's Avengers and six years later the actor is glad that studio bosses have brought in more inclusivity and diversity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

The 33-year-old actor portrayed the superhero character of Black Widow aka Natasha Romanoff in five MCU films till now. Her character first appeared in Iron Man 2 and will be next seen in Avengers: Infinity War.

The film will feature a gigantic cast of superheroes battle it out against supervillain Thanos, who is on a quest to gather all the Infinity Stones.

Johansson said that she has been advocating for more female presence and diversity in the franchise, and is happy that the audiences have started embracing diverse characters.

"I've been advocating for some more female energy just in the cast and crew as a whole for a better part of a decade. So it's really great to



see a more diverse group and certainly great to see that the audiences are embracing and even asking for really strong female super heroines.

"They're hungry for those stories, and they also want to see a more diverse group that better represents the population. It's wonderful to feel like you've witnessed and been a part of that growth," she said in a statement.

The Avengers: Infinity War will mark the culmination of MCU of the past ten years and newer faces such as Black Panther, Doctor Strange, Captain Marvel, Spiderman and others are expected to take over the mantle of Avengers which started with Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, Hulk, Black Widow and Hawkeye.

Johansson said she had a "wonderful" experience of working with the new faces and she is up to the task of making them feel at home.

Source: PTI

# PARTNER'S FINANCIAL HABITS MATTER EVEN BEFORE MARRIAGE

A romantic partner's finances may begin to matter in relationships long before the wedding bells ring, a study has found. Researchers led by the University of Arizona in the US set out to see how financial socialisation from three different sources affects life outcomes and well-being in young adults. Financial socialisation means how individuals learn about finances. The three sources the researchers looked at were the young adults' parents, the young adults' romantic partner and the young adults themselves.

According to the findings, young adults' own financial behaviours, unsurprisingly, had the most impact on their well-being. In second place were the financial behaviours of their romantic partners, while financial expectations of parents - who undoubtedly have the earliest financial influence in children's life - seemed to have the least impact.

"The fact that young adults are perceiving that what their romantic partner does, financially, impacts them is really interesting, especially because most of them are not married and not cohabitating," said Melissa Curran, an associate professor at the University of Arizona. "They are young in relationships, which really goes to say that even in these non-marital, non-cohabitating relationships, the person who you are with matters. "Their finances matter for your relationship outcomes and well-being," said Curran, lead author of the study published in the Journal of Family and Economic Issues.

The study is based on responses from 504 participants, average age 24, who self-identified as being in a committed romantic relationship. Most of those young adults - 61.5 per cent - were



unmarried and were not living with their partners. Thirty per cent were unmarried but cohabitating, and 18.5 per cent were living together and married. Researchers found that the individuals' own financial behaviours were associated with all outcomes measured, except relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Individuals' perceptions of their

romantic partners' financial behaviours were associated with their relationship satisfaction and commitment, as well as their overall well-being and life satisfaction. Financial socialisation from parents impacted only one outcome: young adults' performance on the objective financial knowledge questions, researchers said.

Source: PTI

## DO A FACE CLEAN UP AT HOME



### Cleansing

Wash your face thoroughly with a facial cleanser or face wash, and pat the skin dry with a soft towel. "Avoid hot water as it dries out the skin", recommends Dr. Rahul Nagar, Dermatologist, Max Hospitals. Next, dab some cleansing milk on a cotton pad and wipe your face with it in order to unclog your pores and remove any leftover dirt.

### Steaming

Optional: Steam for as long as your skin can sustain (approximately 5 minutes) and then gently wipe the face with a facial tissue. This step works wonders for oily skin. Massage your face using an ice cube (in circular motions), thereafter, to tighten the pores and bring back the skin temperature to normal.

### Scrubbing

Proceed by applying a face scrub for a few minutes since it helps eliminate dead skin cells, which make your skin look dull. You can also skip the store-bought variety, and instead apply a mix of sugar and honey in equal parts to exfoliate your skin naturally. Scrub your face for 5 minutes, and then leave it on for another 3 minutes or so, before you wash it off.

### Face Pack

No matter what your skin type is, the application of a moisturising face pack makes your skin soft and also improves your skin tone. Dr. Rahul Nagar, Dermatologist at Max Hospitals, adds, "If you have combination to oily skin, apply a face pack that contains multani mitti (fuller's earth)" since it soaks up excess oil. India's leading beauty expert, Suparna Trikha says, "Bananas, tomato and papaya are also known to have a cleansing and tightening effect on the skin". If you have normal to dry skin and wish to go au naturel, mix sandalwood powder with rosewater and apply the paste on your face till it dries up.

## FOOD CORNER

### KASHMIRI LAMB

#### Ingredients

4 dried red chile peppers (such as cayenne), 3 long, green fresh chile peppers (such as Indian Jwala), 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, 1 teaspoon Kashmiri garam masala, 1 (1 inch) piece fresh ginger root, peeled and grated 5 cloves garlic, crushed 1/4 cup dried unsweetened coconut, 3 tomatoes, chopped, 6 tablespoons vegetable oil, 2 large onions, thinly sliced 2 pounds lamb meat, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes, salt to taste, 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric, 1 cup plain yogurt, 1/2 teaspoon saffron threads, 20 whole blanched almonds, 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro.

#### Method

- Place red chiles, green chiles, cumin seeds, garam masala, ginger, garlic, grated coconut, and tomatoes into a blender; pulse several times to chop, then blend into a smooth paste.
- Heat vegetable oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in onion; cook and stir until the onion has softened and turned translucent, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, and continue cooking and stirring until the onion is very tender and golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more.
- Stir the spice paste into the onion and cook and stir until the oil separates from the mixture, about 3 minutes.
- Stir in lamb pieces and salt. Cook, stirring frequently over medium-high heat, until the lamb pieces are browned on all sides, about 8 minutes.
- Mix in yogurt, saffron, and blanched almonds until well combined.
- Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the meat is tender and the gravy is thick, about 1 hour.
- Garnish the curry with chopped cilantro before serving.



### CHICKEN MAKHANI

#### Ingredients

1 tablespoon peanut oil, 1 shallot, finely chopped, 1/4 white onion, chopped, 2 tablespoons butter, 2 teaspoons lemon juice, 1 tablespoon ginger garlic paste, 1 teaspoon garam masala, 1 teaspoon chili powder, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, 1 bay leaf, 1/4 cup plain yogurt 1 cup half-and-half 1 cup tomato puree 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, 1 pinch salt, 1 pinch black pepper, 1 pound boneless chicken thighs, 1 teaspoon garam masala

#### Method

- Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a saucepan. Sauté shallot and onion until soft and translucent. Stir in butter, lemon juice, ginger-garlic paste, 1 teaspoon garam masala, chili powder, cumin and bay leaf. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add tomato sauce, and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in half-and-half and yogurt. Reduce heat to low, and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
- Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Cook chicken until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat, and season with 1 teaspoon garam masala and cayenne. Stir in a few spoonfuls of sauce, and simmer until liquid has reduced, and chicken is no longer pink. Stir cooked chicken into sauce. Mix together cornstarch and water, then stir into the sauce. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, or until thickened.

# HEART DISEASE IN YOUR FAMILY? DAILY EXERCISE MAY HELP YOU LOWER ITS RISKS

**A**ccording to the findings reported in the American Heart Association's journal Circulation, greater grip strength, more physical activity and better cardio-respiratory fitness are associated with reduced risk for heart attacks and stroke -- even among people with a genetic predisposition for heart disease.

"The main message is that being physically active is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, even if you have a high genetic risk," said Erik Ingelsson, lead study author and Professor of Medicine at Stanford University's School of Medicine in California.

To reach this conclusion, researchers looked at data from roughly a half-million people in the UK Biobank database. For participants with an intermediate genetic risk for cardiovascular diseases, those with the strongest grips were 36% less likely to develop coronary heart disease and had a 46% reduction in their risk for atrial fibrillation, compared to study participants with the same genetic risk who had the weakest grips.

Among individuals deemed at high genetic risk for cardiovascular diseases, high levels of cardiorespiratory fitness were associated with a 49% lower risk for coronary heart disease and a 60%



**Greater grip strength, more physical activity and better cardio-respiratory fitness are associated with reduced risk for heart attacks and stroke — even among people with a genetic predisposition for heart disease**

lower risk for atrial fibrillation compared to study participants with low cardiorespiratory fitness.

"The study is not a prescription for a specific type or amount of exercise and because the results come from an

observational study, Ingelsson said, adding that "we can't definitely claim a causal connection." Nonetheless, the researchers said the data is robust and the results are worthy for consideration in guidelines.

Source: IANS

## Dancing can help people age better

**MELBOURNE (TIP):** Taking dance classes can boost energy levels, flexibility and happiness in older adults and help them age better, a study has found.

Researchers from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Australia examined the health and wellbeing benefits of dancing.

Over a three-month project, researchers found that participants experienced higher energy levels, greater flexibility, improved posture, and an enhanced sense of achievement.

They also felt happier and enjoyed a sense of community and friendship.

"The project critically investigated older adults' motivations to participate in ballet, the health and wellbeing outcomes for active older adults, and the examination of the teaching practices involved in this delivery," said Felicity Mandile from QUT.

"We weren't surprised by the research findings strongly indicating that ballet participation is considered to be a highly pleasurable activity for active older adults, we were pleasantly surprised by the flow on effects of that," said Mandile.

"It found that ballet participation may contribute to positive outcomes across various health and wellbeing categories and promotes a general feeling of wellbeing," she said.

Performance psychologist and former professional ballet dancer Professor Gene Moyle from QUT said movement, be it



dance or other forms of exercise, was a critical factor in better ageing.

"The physical benefits of movement and dance on ageing bodies is well documented and our project really reinforces these findings, however additionally highlights the joy and

benefits social connections in dance can bring to people's lives," said Moyle.

"Some of the participants reported that they found the classes positively euphoric and transformational in the pleasure they felt at being part of such weekly social engagement," she said.

Source: PTI

## BERRY PIGMENTS MAY HELP TREAT CANCER



**LONDON (TIP):** Pigments in berries can help regulate a key enzyme in cancer cells, according to a study that opens up new avenues for treating the deadly disease.

Sirtuins are enzymes regulating the expression of genes that control the function of cells through key cellular signalling pathways.

Ageing causes changes in sirtuin function, and these changes contribute to the development of various diseases.

Sirtuin 6, or SIRT6 for short, is a less well-known enzyme that is also linked to glucose metabolism.

Berries get their red, blue or purple colour from natural pigments, anthocyanins, according to researchers from University of Eastern Finland.

"The most interesting results of our study relate to cyanidin, which is an anthocyanin found abundantly in wild bilberry, blackcurrant and lingonberry," said Minna Rahnasto-Rilla, lead author of study published in the journal Scientific Reports.

Cyanidin increased SIRT6 enzyme levels in human colorectal cancer cells, and it was also discovered to decrease the expression of the Twist1 and GLUT1 cancer genes, while increasing the expression of the tumour suppressor FoXO3 gene in cells.

The researchers also designed a computer-based model that allowed them to predict how different flavonoid compounds in plants can regulate the SIRT6 enzyme.

The findings indicate that anthocyanins increase the activation of SIRT6, which may play a role in cancer pathogenesis.

The study also lays a foundation for the development of new drugs that regulate SIRT6 function.

Source: PTI

## New blood test can diagnose TB two years in advance

**JOHANNESBURG (TIP):** Scientists have found a new blood test that can accurately predict the development of tuberculosis (TB) up to two years before its onset in high-risk patients.

Those living with someone with active TB are at highest risk for developing the disease, yet only about 5-20 per cent of people infected with tuberculosis actually develop TB, according to a study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

The researchers developed and validated a blood test that measures the expression levels of four genes that can more accurately predict the development of TB in high-risk patients. "We found that this prediction (up to two years before the onset of the disease) is possible through measurements of a combination of a four-gene signature in the blood," said Gerhard Walzl from Stellenbosch University in South Africa. This signature, known as 'RISK4,' is a combination of four genes associated with inflammatory responses.

Source: PTI

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### DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



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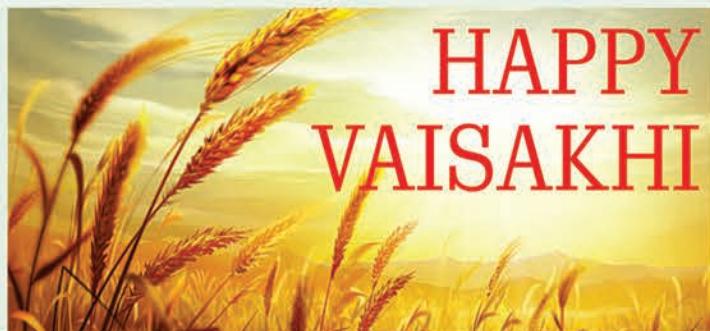


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# Amazon pulls child sex dolls after criticism from UK watchdog

**LONDON (TIP):** Child sex dolls have been pulled from sale by online retail giant Amazon.com Inc after widespread criticism from a watchdog and charities in Britain over concerns that people who use such lifelike dolls may go on to sexually abuse children.

More than a dozen child sex dolls were removed from sale, having been listed by third-party sellers, according to Amazon.

"All marketplace sellers must follow our selling guidelines and those who don't will be subject to action including potential removal of their account," an Amazon spokesman said in a statement. "The products in question are no longer available."

England Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, said Amazon should explain how the dolls were permitted to be posted on their website, and ensure they cannot be put back up for sale.

"Such dolls are clearly built for one purpose, and that purpose is a clear danger to the safety of real children," she said in a statement after a BBC investigation into the issue.

Britain allows people to manufacture and own child sex dolls yet it is illegal to import them. A British man was convicted last year for doing so in what



police said was a landmark case in the fight against a new form of sex crime against children.

Opinion is divided over the use of child sex dolls, which have the appearance, weight and anatomy of real children.

Some charities argue such dolls should be made available on prescription to help prevent people who are sexually attracted to children acting on their desires.

Other organisations, such as the National Society for the Prevention of

Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), say sex dolls can be dangerous proxies to act out fantasies like rape or child abuse.

"There is a risk that people using these dolls could become desensitised ... (and) go on to harm children, as is often the case with those who view indecent images of children online," said Almudena Lara, NSPCC's head of policy and public affairs.

"There is absolutely no evidence that using the dolls stops potential abusers from abusing children," she added.

Source: Reuters

## Lockheed Martin ready to manufacture all F-16 fighter jets in India

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** With the Indian Air Force beginning the process of buying 110 fighter jets, in a deal that could be worth more than \$15 billion, Lockheed Martin has expressed its readiness to shift its F-16 fighter aircraft manufacturing unit to India -- and the US government, according to the manufacturer, will allow it to do that. The American global aerospace and defence major is also prepared to transfer the technology of its third generation anti-armour Javelin guided missile system to India for its future manufacture.

At least two Lockheed officials at the DefExpo 18 told IANS that if the defence procurement deals were signed with the company that is gearing up to bid for the world's biggest fighter jet order, it would walk the extra mile and transfer technology to local partners for sophisticated parts of defence products. "We are offering a deal that is completely compatible with 'Make in India' -- offering a stand-up production line in India," said Randall L Howard, who heads International Business Development for aircraft at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

He said more than 4,000 F-16s have been sold to countries across the world. "We are offering to shift the manufacturing base and produce all of our F-16s in India; not just for India, but for the whole world -- across South East Asia, across South America, across Middle East."

Asked if the Trump administration would allow it to do so, Howard said the company had "full support of the US government".

He said the single-engine supersonic multi-role fighter aircraft that has seen action in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars was currently being built around the world, and setting up facilities in India would not impact jobs in the US. "So whenever we have a situation, we will be able to build the entire aircraft in India. But we will continue to have parts that come from the US. That will continue to create jobs in the US. This absolutely supports American jobs," he said, adding Lockheed was also looking at the possibility of setting up the entire ecosystem, including one with a runway, to produce the fighters in flyaway condition.

Another Lockheed official, Haley Donoho, who is business development head of the shoulder-fired anti-armour Javelin missile, said a possible joint venture for the system "is in good standing with the Indian government".

Source: IANS



## INDIA ASKS HONG KONG TO ARREST NIRAV MODI, AWAITING RESPONSE



Parliament had been informed that Nirav Modi is present in Hong Kong. External Affairs ministry spokesperson said that India and Hong Kong have an agreement on surrender of fugitive offenders.

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India has requested Hong Kong to arrest fugitive jeweller Nirav Modi and is awaiting for a response from the authorities there, a senior official said in New Delhi on Thursday.

"We have requested the authorities in Hong Kong to surrender Nirav Modi," external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said at a media briefing in New Delhi.

"There is an agreement between India and Hong Kong about surrender of fugitive offenders," he said. "We are still awaiting a response."

Kumar also informed that, according to the Indian mission there, the Department of Justice is examining India's request for provisional order for Modi's arrest.

Diamond jeweller Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi have been accused of defrauding the Punjab National Bank (PNB) of Rs 12,600 crore, with Rs 1,300 crore being added to the fraud kitty on February 26.

Parliament was earlier informed that Modi is present in Hong Kong.

## WALMART LIKELY TO SEAL FLIPKART DEAL BY JUNE-END



**HONG KONG/MUMBAI (TIP):** Walmart Inc is likely to reach a deal to buy a majority stake in Indian e-commerce player Flipkart by the end of June in what could be the US retail giant's biggest acquisition of an online business, sources said. Reports said Walmart completed its due diligence on Flipkart and had made a proposal to buy 51 per cent or more of the Indian company for between \$10 billion to \$12 billion. A deal with Flipkart would step up Walmart's battle with Amazon for a bigger share of India's fledgling e-commerce market, which Morgan Stanley estimates will be worth \$200 billion in a decade.

## CII pegs India's GDP growth at 7.3-7.7% for 2018-19

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Thursday said it expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at 7.3-7.7 per cent during the 2018-19 financial year. "This is based on strengthening demand in the rural economy, including agriculture and non-farm activities, as well as better global growth climate," said Rakesh Bharti Mittal, President, CII. "There are some macro challenges like rising oil prices, but that would be more than compensated by improving industrial performance," he added.

Source: IANS

## Volvo, Alibaba develop AI car audio system



**BEIJING (TIP):** An artificial intelligence audio system has been jointly developed by Swedish luxury car maker Volvo and AI lab of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba group to be used in cars. The system, called "Tmall Gene" offers voice enquiries like car window and door status, and remaining fuel amount, and can also unlock doors and turn on air conditioning before the driver approaches the car, Volvo China said in a statement. The audio system will be soon applied to Volvo car models, it added. The two companies are also cooperating on online services like navigation, weather and air quality as well as parking, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Source: PTI

## SBI launches UK subsidiary

**LONDON (TIP):** The SBI has announced the launch of its UK subsidiary, SBI (UK) Limited, with an initial capital commitment of £225 million from its parent entity.

India's largest state-owned bank, which celebrated the new subsidiary with a special event in London on Monday, becomes the first foreign bank in the UK to ringfence its retail division from its wholesale business. SBI said the ringfencing and subsidiarisation of the retail franchise SBI UK, the bank's largest overseas operation, offers UK customers "stability and reassurance" amid continuing uncertainty around the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU). "We are extremely proud of how far the bank has come from the first time it opened its doors to UK residents in 1921," said Sanjiv Chadha, Regional Head of SBI UK.

## FACEBOOK LAUNCHES BOUNTY PROGRAM FOR REPORTS OF DATA MISUSE BY APP DEVELOPERS



**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Facebook Inc said on Tuesday it is launching a "data abuse" bounty program to reward people who report misuse of data by app developers.

The announcement comes ahead of two days of congressional hearings starting on Tuesday, where Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg will be asked how up to 87 million Facebook users' data was improperly shared with political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

The program will reward people with first-hand knowledge and evidence of a Facebook platform app collecting and transferring user data to another party to be sold, stolen or used for scams or political influence.

*Source: Reuters*

## Orkut founder launches 'hello' social network app in India

**A**s people vouch to delete Facebook in the wake of a massive data breach scandal, Orkut Buyukkokten -- a former Google employee who founded the trendsetter social networking website Orkut.com more than a decade ago launched a new social network "hello" in India.

Built particularly for the new mobile generation, "hello" brings people together around their interests to create positive, meaningful, authentic connections and sustained social engagement, the company said in a statement.

"We designed 'hello' to help you make connections in the real world. It's a social network built on loves not likes, and I'm delighted to say 'hello' to India once again," said Buyukkokten, now the CEO of San Francisco-based Hello Network Inc.

The app, currently available in Brazil with nearly one million downloads, was in the beta test mode in India for the past several months. Test users spent over 320 minutes each month on the app, thus, reflecting the popularity of sport, entertainment, devotion and technology in India.

"Today's online networks force people to treat each other totally differently from how they would behave face-to-face. Technology should help us become more understanding, more optimistic, kinder and better people," the Orkut founder added.

The app is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

Orkut was owned and operated by Google and was named after its creator, Orkut Buyukkokten. Google shut down Orkut on September 30, 2014.

*Source: IANS*

## Google Home, Mini smart speakers to get Hindi support

**G**oogle on Tuesday said that its smart speakers, Google Home and Google Home Mini will soon get Hindi language support. Google made this announcement during the launch of its Home smart speakers in India.

"We will launch Hindi language support later this year so that users can choose the language they are comfortable with. Both the devices understand Indian accents and will respond with uniquely 'desi' contexts," Rishi Chandra, Vice President of Product Management and General Manager of Home Products, Google, told reporters here.

Google Home and Google Home Mini are priced at Rs 9,999 and Rs 4,499, respectively. The smart speakers are powered by Google Assistant, and the company has confirmed Hindi language support by the end of the year. Google had recently rolled out Hindi language support for its AI-based Assistant. The smart home speakers will be available for purchase online on Flipkart and at over 750 retail stores.

*Source: IANS*

# INSTAGRAM INTRODUCES 'FOCUS' MODE FOR STORIES: HERE'S HOW TO USE IT

**I**nstagram has introduced a new 'Focus' mode for its Stories feature. Focus on Instagram essentially blurs the background focusing on the object to produce a depth of field effect popular on smartphones these days.

Instagram's focus mode is available on iOS devices from iPhone SE, iPhone 6S, iPhone 6S Plus, iPhone 7, iPhone 7 Plus, iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus, iPhone X, and on select Android smartphones.

If you've updated to the app to the latest version on iOS and Android, you can start using the focus feature by following these simple steps.

### How to use 'Focus' mode on Instagram

- Head over to Stories on the top left corner of the app. Here, you'll find the focus button between superzoom and rewind.
- For selfies, you will need to focus the camera lens as it concentrates on the subject and blurs the background.
- The same can be done while using focus from the rear angle.
- Instagram's focus mode can be used for video recording as well.
- Make sure that the object is close to the camera.
- You can then enhance the image with filters, stickers and text before sharing as a message or Story.

Instagram is also rolling out mention sticker on iOS, making it easier for users to connect with their friends via Insta Stories. After the image is clicked from the stories camera, a user may open the sticker's tray, tap the @mention sticker, and start typing the name of the account to be mentioned. This can then



be rotated, scaled and placed wherever required.

### How to save mobile data on Instagram

Instagram is a content heavy app which requires good internet connectivity to function properly. You have pictures, videos and Stories to view which usually doesn't load if the internet is even slightly weak. While there is no lite version of Instagram like Facebook Lite, the app does come with a data saving option.

Instagram's data saving option has been around for a long time now but many users are not aware of this feature. This feature is available on both iOS and Android platforms. If you're an aggressive Instagram user but face connectivity problems you would want to turn this feature on. By default, data saving is turned off on Instagram.

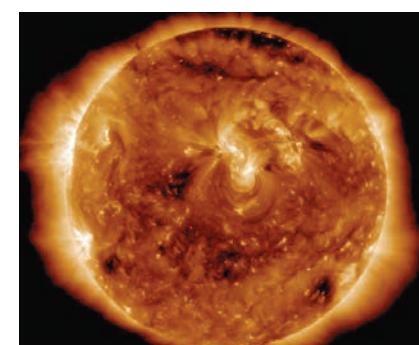
### How to use data saver on Instagram

- This feature is available under the Settings menu located on your

Instagram profile.

- On iOS this feature is titled 'Mobile Data Use' and on Android it's called 'Cellular Data Settings'.
- iOS users have just one functionality of toggling it on/off. Android users on the other hand customise quite a bit.
- Android users can choose between autoplaying videos on cellular and Wi-Fi network or only on Wi-Fi. The same applies to loading pictures on their Instagram feed.
- Instagram for Android also allows users to disable autoplaying videos completely.
- On iOS if users turn on data saving on, photos and videos will take longer to load. On Android, the purpose is to save data by not loading videos in advance. This is understandable considering that videos uploaded on Instagram have maximum duration of one minute thereby consuming heavy data.

# Humanity's first flight to Sun set to launch in July: NASA



**WASHINGTON (TIP):** NASA's Parker Solar Probe--humanity's first mission to the Sun—is undergoing final preparations for its launch scheduled for July 31.

The spacecraft was flown by the US Air Force to Florida, where it will continue testing, and eventually undergo final assembly and mating to the third stage of the Delta IV Heavy launch vehicle.

Parker Solar Probe is humanity's first mission to the Sun. After launch, it will orbit directly through the solar atmosphere—the corona—closer to the surface than any human-made object has ever gone.

While facing brutal heat and radiation, the mission will reveal fundamental science behind what drives the solar wind, the constant outpouring of material from the Sun that shapes planetary atmospheres and affects space weather near Earth.

For the next several months, the

spacecraft will undergo comprehensive testing. Just prior to being fuelled, one of the most critical elements of the spacecraft, the thermal protection system (TPS), or heat shield, will be installed.

The TPS is the breakthrough technology that will allow Parker Solar Probe to survive the temperatures in the Sun's corona, just 9.8 million kilometres from the surface of our star.

"There are many milestones to come

for Parker Solar Probe and the amazing team of men and women who have worked so diligently to make this mission a reality," said Andy Driesman, Parker Solar Probe project manager from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in the US.

"The installation of the TPS will be our final major step before encapsulation and integration onto the launch vehicle," said Driesman.

Parker Solar Probe will be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Throughout its seven-year mission, Parker Solar Probe will explore the Sun's outer atmosphere and make critical observations to answer decades-old questions about the physics of stars.

Its data will also be useful in improving forecasts of major eruptions on the Sun and the subsequent space weather events that impact technology on Earth, as well as satellites and astronauts in space.

*Source: PTI*



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*Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage, and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations, and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.*

For more information contact: IDC President, Ashook Ramsaran at [AshookRamsaran@gmail.com](mailto:AshookRamsaran@gmail.com)



### Shree Ganeshaya Namah

**Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, lunched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.**



**Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at [info@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com) and on phone 011-91-8141234275 [www.bejandaruwalla.com](http://www.bejandaruwalla.com)**

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE APRIL 16 - APRIL 22, 2018

### Aries:

Ganesha says new associations now dominate and motivate your existence. In this period your life will revolve around people and relationships. You may also indulge in enormous feel good shopping. Your feelings will be at a peak and there will be intense bonding and sharing and, I dare say, many copious tears of joy, sorrow, anger, love and repentance. It is a period that will change you from the inside out.

### Taurus:

You get out of the trough and start flying this period. There is happiness, fulfillment, gains and achievements. You are filled with new longings, dreams and hopes and are possessed with a new zest for life and its glorious uncertainties. The tough days are over, and you climb the peaks of success from now on. You have worked hard for it and gone through very difficult times and Ganesha will reward you well.

### Gemini:

The bubbly flows, and the good times roll on and on as if to make up for lost time. Friends and colleagues rally around you and work issues sort together. There is harmony at home and office and a lot of ground is thankfully covered. There is profitable travel and new associations to be made which will be beneficial in the long run. It will be a good idea to grab what comes your way as the tide has evidently changed and you climb the rungs of success.

### Cancer:

You spend a lot of time at home and with domestic activities. There could be reorganizing and a lot of chopping and changing. You will spend happy moments with your spouse, children, parents, in-laws and extended family. There will be many auspicious occasions at home. Friends will also chip in and add to the harmony. There could be marriages, pujas and various family commitments to attend to.

### Leo:

You continue making good progress. Work issues take your time and you look at expansion seriously. The period is ending, the worst is over, and the current is in your favor. You can feel it. All that you touch turns to gold and you know that you are destiny's flavor of the season. Your hands are full with investments, bonds, loans, funds, real-estate deals, stocks and other such profitable issues.

### Virgo:

Your work does tremendously well, and you earn plaudits. You are recognized for your efforts and, if employed, will be rewarded with a promotion and better perks. Your financial condition is stable and there is happiness at home too. You will explore new love and make new friends and acquaintances. There will be quality time spent with parents and family elders and you receive their blessings.

### Libra:

You have come a long way and are more relaxed, easy-going and fun-loving. You seem to have dropped all your cares and are in a great mood. There is love, laughter, companionship and shared joys. There are new trends at work too and they are all beneficial. You don't hesitate to grab every opportunity that comes your way and make substantial gains. This is an excellent period and you are filled with stamina, determination and zest.

### Scorpio:

The hectic work phase continues without a pause. There are all sorts of expense, but it is not something that you should complain about because it is work related and it is money well spent. There is travel and new associations and your mood and spirits are on a high. You are blessed with energy and are happy too; life is working out well for you. There is joy at home too but what drives you this period is work.

### Sagittarius:

You embark on a period of collaborations, companionships and associations. You are in meetings, social and business gatherings, conferences and everything to do with large amounts of people. You are in your elements and this is not time to be sullen, withdrawn or introverted. You are quite a draw and others seek you out for your charm, ingenuity and inventiveness. You have a way of attracting and regaling people with your soft, non-obstructive ways tinged with sincerity.

### Capricorn:

You enter the period with a feeling of satisfaction. You have been on an upward spiral for some time now and the money, status and prestige that you have earned are well deserved. Success breeds success and you are full of confidence in your abilities. You sometimes come up with ideas that could be termed 'crazy' by average minds but they are actually strokes of genius.

### Aquarius:

The collaborations that you have inked bear fruit almost immediately. Your fertile brain is abuzz with innumerable new ideas and you are waiting to pounce on opportunities to give expression to them. You will do exceptionally well if in the media, sales, law and other professions where there is people contact and ideating. You have the gift of the gab and can be a versatile writer too. Keeping your ego hidden is also good strategy and you are great strategists.

### Pisces:

The period takes on a new intensity, a sort of culmination of all that you have embarked on. You scale new heights, come up with brilliant ideas and all your efforts are crowned with success. There is merrymaking with friends and family and the time is perfect for celebrations. Children bring joy and close family will rally around you and share your happiness. You are the ideas person, the imaginative visionary and dreamer.

**P**arashurama Jayanti is celebrated as birth anniversary of sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It falls during Shukla Paksha Tritiya in the month of Vaishakha. It is believed that Parashurama was born during Pradosh Kala and hence the day when Tritiya prevails during Pradosh Kala is considered for Parashurama Jayanti celebrations. The purpose of the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu is to relieve the Earth's burden by exterminating the sinful, destructive and irreligious monarchs that pillaged its resources and neglected their duties as kings.

According to Hindu belief unlike all other avatars Parashurama still lives on the Earth. Therefore, unlike Rama and Krishna, Parashurama is not worshipped. In South India, at the holy place Pajaka near Udupi, one major temple exists which commemorates Parashurama. There are many temples at the western coast of India which are dedicated to Lord Parashurama.

The Kalki Purana states that Parashurama will be the martial guru of Shri Kalki, the 10th and final Avatar of Lord Vishnu. It is not the first time that 6th Avatar of Lord Vishnu will meet another Avatar. According to Ramayana, Parashurama came to the betrothal ceremony of Sita and Lord Rama and met the 7th Avatar of Lord Vishnu.

The principal objective of this incarnation was to weed out the vicious rulers of the Kshatriya clan. The name 'Parashu' stands for the axe that he got from Lord Shiva as a boon to his penance, which he always carried with him. Here is the interesting story of Lord Parashurama.

#### RENUKA, THE CHASTE WOMAN

Parashuram was the youngest son of Jamadagni and Renuka. Parashurama was a pious and virtuous son. Renuka, the wife of sage Jamadagni and the mother of Parashurama was known for her chastity. Every day she would go to the river, make a clay pot instantly out of the power of her chastity and bring home water for her husband's puja. One day she saw the image of a Gandharva (celestial being) on the river water and lost her balance. Therefore she could not make the pot. Sage Jamadagni knew of this through his omniscience. Upon her return to the hermitage, the sage ordered his sons to kill their mother Renuka as a punishment to her imbalance.

#### THE DUTIFUL SON

None of the four sons of Jamadagni was ready to kill their mother. Angered by their act, sage Jamadagni burnt them alive with the power of his angry sight. Now it was the turn of Parashuram who was ordered by the sage to kill his mother. Without waiting for a second, Parashuram obeyed his father's words and killed his own mother by severing her head. Jamadagni was pleased with the

# PARASHURAMA JAYANTI

Birth anniversary of the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu falls on April 18 this year



devotion and obedience of his son and asked him to seek a boon from him. Parashuram asked the sage to bring back his mother and brothers to life and the sage did so.

#### THE DIVINE COW

Sage Jamadagni had a divine cow in his hermitage known as Nandini. She was so powerful to give any foods in unlimited quantities. The sage fed his family and the visitors to his ashram with the help of this divine cow. Once King Kartaviryaarjun visited the sage and was surprised to see the power of the cow. During that time, the kingdom of the king was facing a severe drought. The king asked the sage to gift him the cow which the sage refused. The angry king destroyed the ashram and abducted the cow forcibly.

#### PARASHURAM KILLS KARTAVIRYARJUN

Upon receiving the orders from his father, Parashuram rushed to the palace of Kartaviryaarjun, destroyed his army and killed the king also. The sons of Kartaviryaarjun wanted to avenge the death of their father and therefore visited the hermitage of sage Jamadagni and killed him carrying his head with them. Parashurama's mother wailed falling on the body of her husband and beat

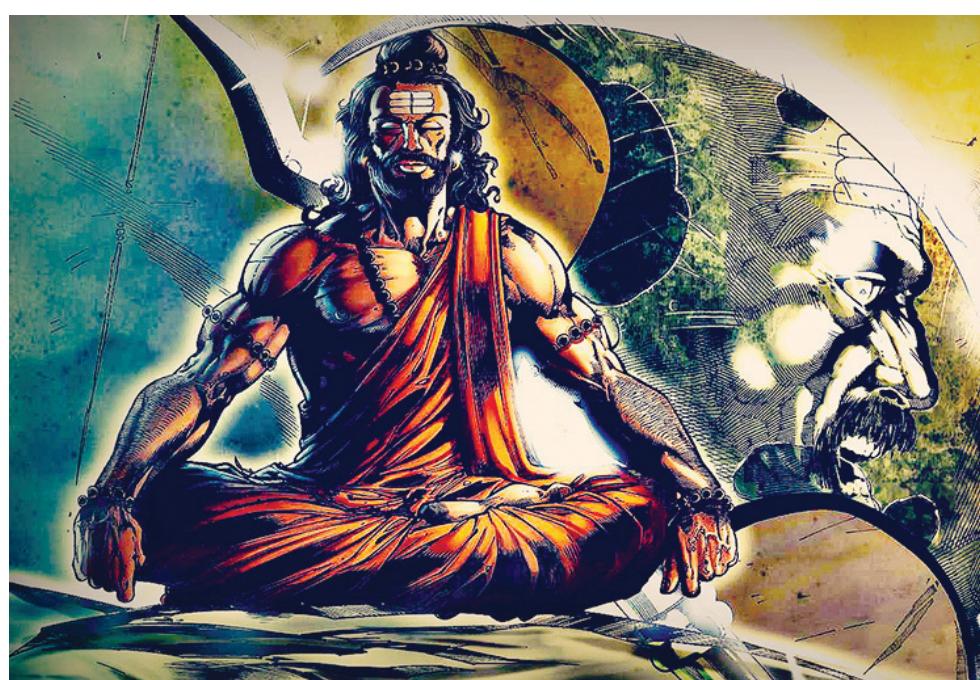


her chest twenty one times in agony.

#### PARASHURAM SETS OUT WITH HIS MISSION

Highly troubled by his mother's sorrow, Parashuram vowed to clean the earth by slaughtering the unlawful Kshatriya rulers.

He toured the whole of the sub-continent by foot twenty-one times and slaughtered the kings who did not perform their duties or indulged in evil acts. Finally his grandfather sage Ruchika appeared in front of him and asked him to put a full stop to his killings and Parashurama complied with his advice.



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**contd from page 1**

### Row over the film...

Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh pronounced the decision in Sikka's absence. He appealed to the Sikh community to boycott the film and stage peaceful protests.

The Jathedar said members of the SGPC sub-committee that had endorsed the film in 2016 would be summoned to the Akal Takht. When Sikka had approached the SGPC for clearance, it had formed a sub-committee headed by SGPC executive member Rajinder Singh Mehta. The other members included Bavinder Singh Jaura, Diljit Singh Bedi, Simarjeet Singh and the then Chief Secretary Harcharan Singh.

Calling Sikka "stubborn", the Jathedar said despite protests, the filmmaker was adamant on releasing the film by taking the legal route.

Meanwhile, the Jathedar sought to clear the air surrounding a 2015 "congratulatory" letter by the Takht addressed to Sikka. "It was misinterpreted in English, whereas the one issued in Punjabi never approved of the film," he claimed. Sikh organizations, owing allegiance to Damdami Taksal have issued threats to theater owners that they will be responsible for any losses to their theaters in case they exhibited the movie. Similarly, threats have been given to viewers who have been cautioned against going to theaters to watch the movie. to exhibit the film. The film is due for release on the day of Vaisakhi, April 13. (*Source: TNS*)

### Suozzi Meets with...

The formal talks were conducted as part of a high-level delegation of Congressional leaders that met with their Indian counterparts to discuss trade, strategic partnerships, immigration and security

coordination.

"Our relationship with India is based upon shared values, including the rule of law and respect for diversity, and has never been stronger. It is driven, in part, by our vibrant Indian-American community, one of the most industrious and successful diaspora populations in the world. As the world's oldest and largest democracies, we have a shared interest in promoting global security and economic prosperity through trade, investment and communications," said Congressman Suozzi.

Other members of the bipartisan delegation included Representatives Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Pete Olson (R-TX), Terry Sewell (D-AL), Dina Titus (D-NV), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), and Drew Ferguson (R-GA).

Along with Modi, the delegation also met with Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prahbu, Minister of Communications and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad, and Minister of State for External Affairs M.J. Akbar. The delegation also attended the India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum where they discussed trade tariffs, immigration issues, and the India-U.S. strategic partnership, identifying ways to strengthen it further.

### The Truth Behind...

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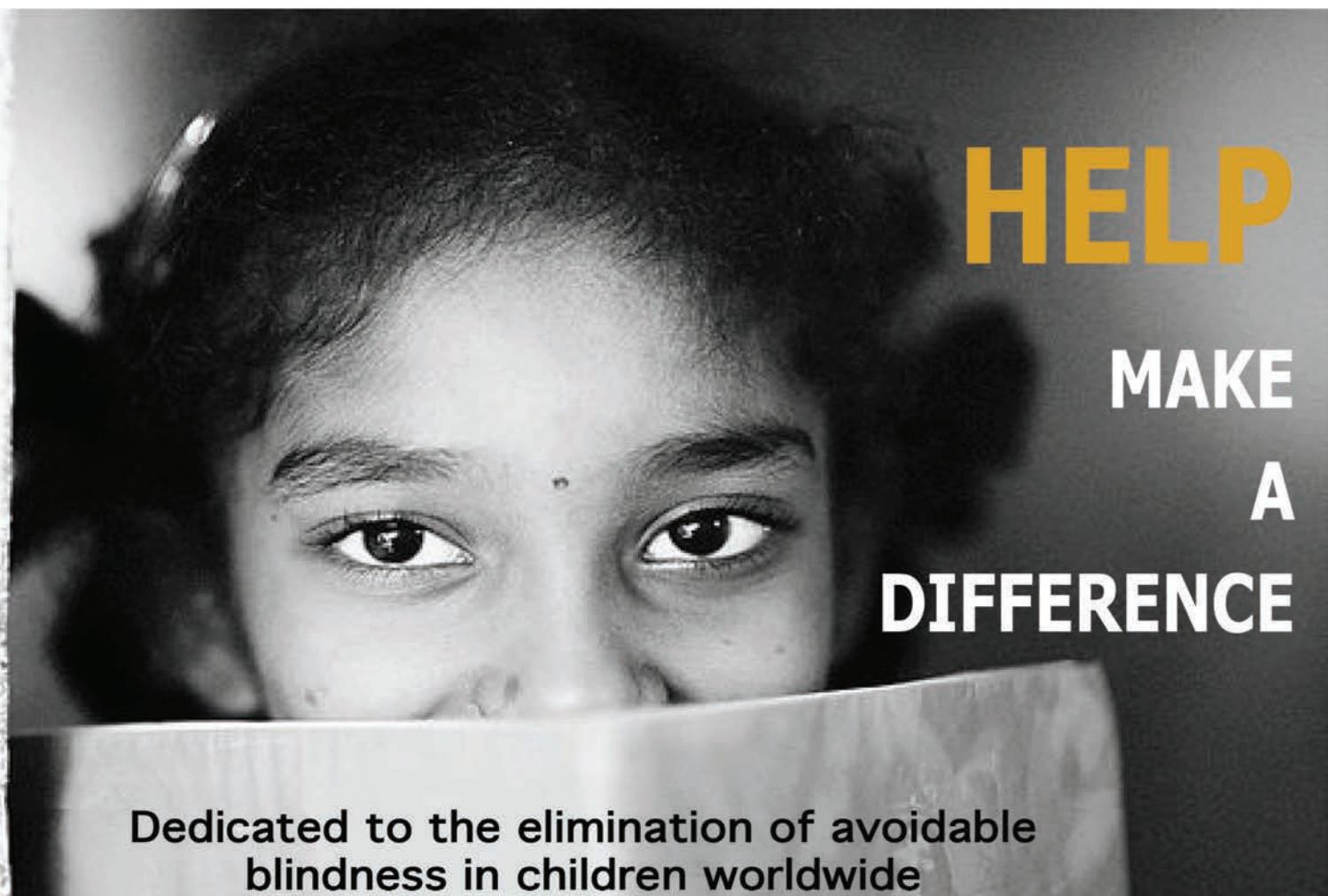
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PACHRANGA





# COME, FALL IN LOVE WITH NATURE AT CHIKMAGALUR

**C**hikmagalur is a town located in the Chikmagalur district in the Indian state of Karnataka. Located in the foothills of the Mullayanagiri range, the town with its favorable climate and coffee estates attracts tourists from around the state. Home to the highest mountain range of Karnataka, Mullayanagiri, Chikmagalur is also a popular trekking option from Bangalore (245 km).

Whatever you do in Chikmagalur, you are bound to fall in love with nature all over again.

If you are planning to visit this coffee-heaven, these are the experience you must take:

## The Mullayanagiri Trek

Standing tall at 1930 Metres, Mullayanagiri is the highest peak in Karnataka. It is, without a doubt, the best place to view a sunrise from. It is a part of the famous Bababudangiri Range, 25 Km away from Chikmagalur. The peak is almost always covered with clouds and surrounded by a chilly breeze. Travelers can take their vehicles very near to the peak and then climb close to a 100 steps to reach the peak. All the effort seems worth when one reaches the top. There is nothing all around other than mist and you literally feel at the top of the world!

## A walk through the coffee plantations

Let's admit it. Chikmagalur is all about coffee. No matter where you are or in which direction you look, you either see a coffee plantation, a person savouring his coffee drink, or people in general talking about coffee. If you are a nature lover and a coffee enthusiast, there is no way you can resist a walk through the coffee plantations. The best time to visit the coffee plantations is from Mid-December to Mid-January. This is when the coffee beans are plucked and the plantations can be viewed in all their beauty.

## Kudremukh National Park

Literally translated to 'Horse's Face', Kudremukh hill is named after the shape of the peak. It is the second largest National Park in Karnataka and covers an area go 600 Square Kilometres. At a distance of 96 Kilometres, although it is a bit away from the town of Chikmagalur, its rich diversity of both flora and fauna attracts thousands of traveler every year.

## Kalhatti Falls

The Kalhatti falls are located around 50 Km from the main city of Chikmagaluru. Like a lot of destinations in India, this waterfall has its place in myths and legends as it said a renowned sage prayed here for a long time and the water flowing here has healing powers of its own. That's why it has a temple built right next to it.

You can climb the slippery rocks leading to the waterfall to enjoy the cool, cascading water. Stop here for some time to enjoy the wilderness around you.

## Bababudangiri hills

Capable of mesmerising even the seasoned travelers with their beauty, Bababudangiri hills are the not-to-be-missed-at-any-cost destination near Chikmagalur. The best time



to visit is from September to March. The beautiful grasslands on these hills will make you want to build a little hut for yourself and stay here forever!

Although going on picnics is a thing of past, Bababudangiri hills will make you want to revive the picnic culture. You will want to take out your food and sit on the soft grass, trying to find words to admire the beauty around you.

The most interesting fact about them is that India's first coffee plantation was established on the slopes of Bababudangiri hills.

## Ayyanakere Lake

The second-biggest lake in Karnataka, Ayyanakere, is located 20 Km away from Chikmagalur. After you have watched the sunrise at Mullayanagiri peak and descended to Chikmagalur, you should visit the lake in the evening to relax and watch the sunset. If you are too mesmerised by the sunset and don't wish to leave, you can also set up camps alongside the lake for the night. Catch some fishes from the lake and cook under the moonlight.

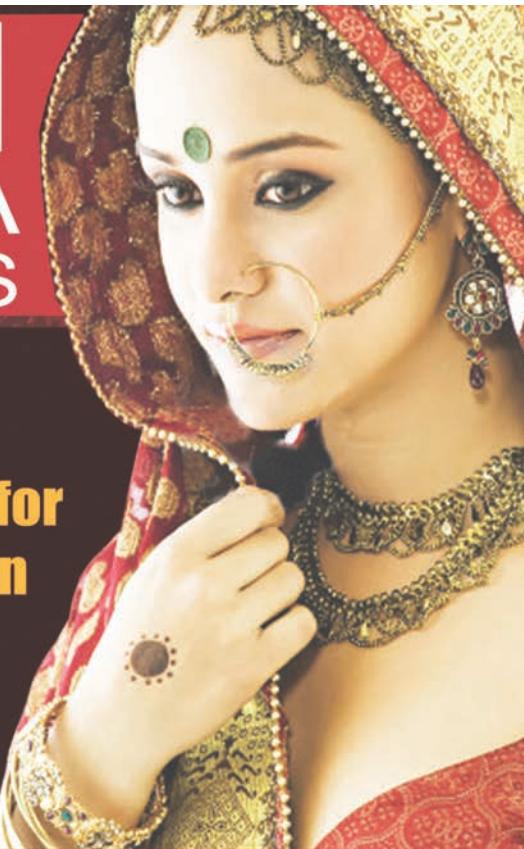


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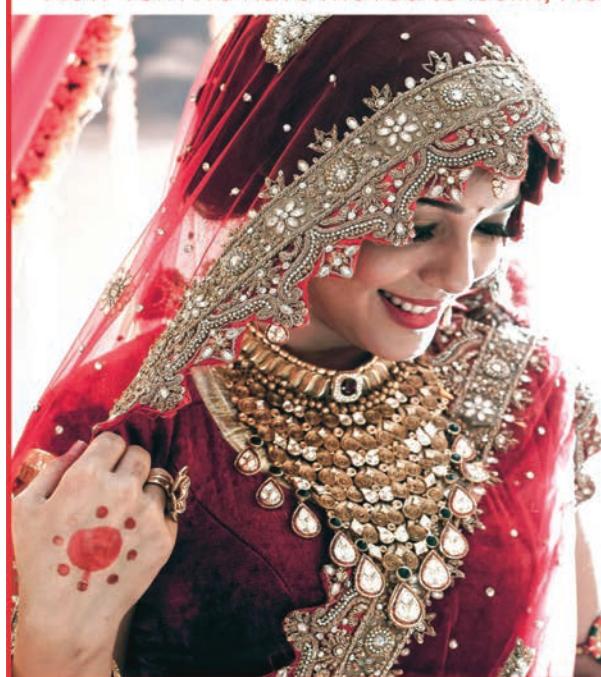
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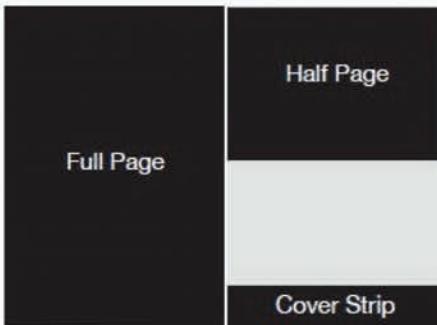


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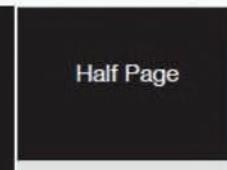


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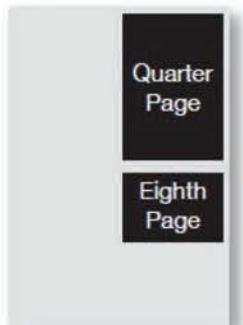
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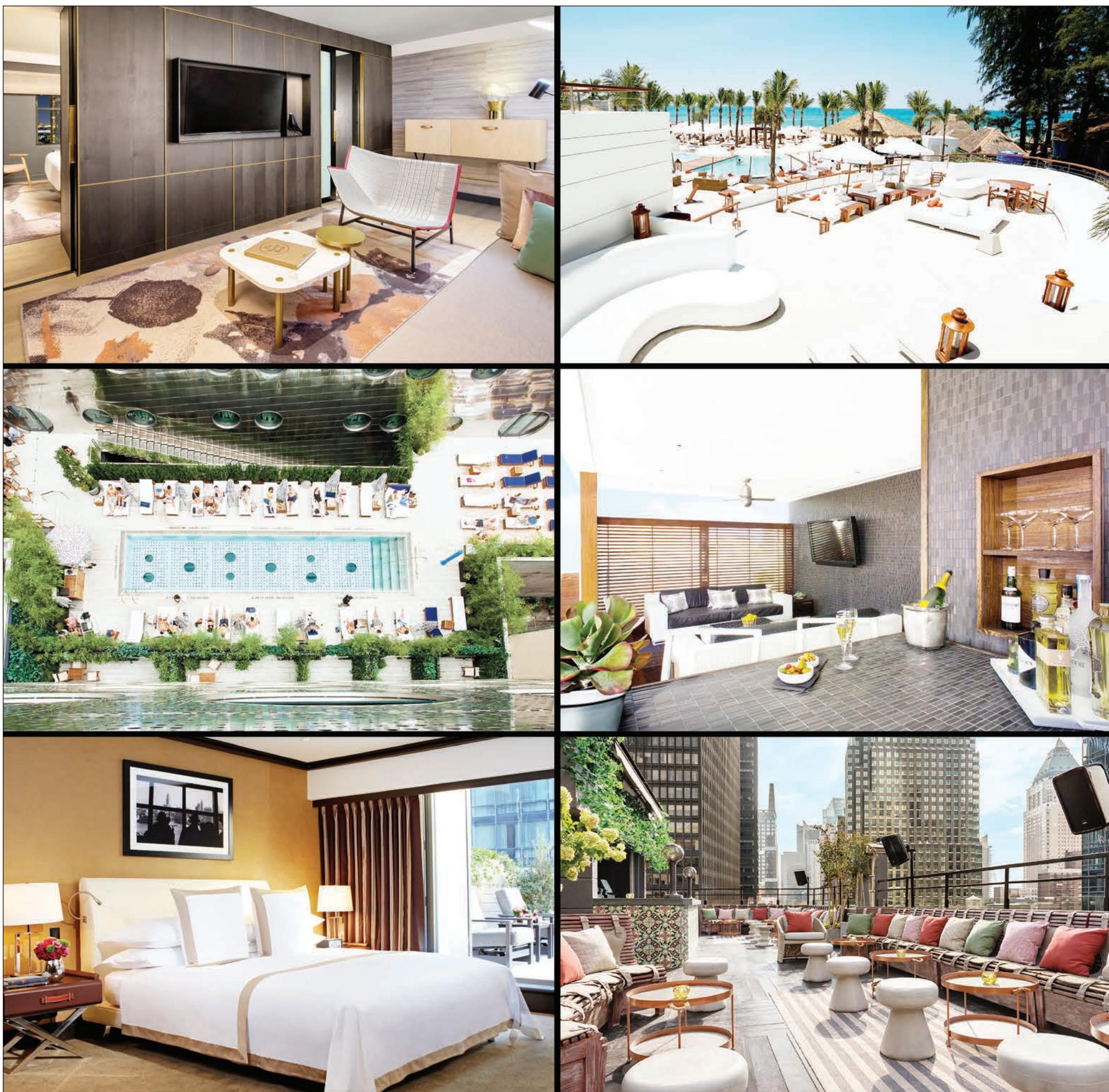
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