

## The INDIAN PANORAMA EVER TRUTHFUL

### REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA SPECIAL EDITION

Articles and advertisements are invited for the Republic Day of India special edition by January 21, 2019. Please email to [salujaindra@gmail.com](mailto:salujaindra@gmail.com). For any question, please call 646-247-9458

## Trump Mocked India's PM Modi: India responded to Trump's 'Afghan library' dig



**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US President Donald Trump, on January 2, mocked the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for funding a library in Afghanistan. *contd on Page 32*  
*US President Trump took a dig at India's Prime Minister Modi for making no significant contribution in Afghanistan in funding a library. India promptly responded. In picture, Modi and Trump at the White House. (File photo)*

# Trump threatens to declare national emergency over border wall

## Eyes unused Army Corps money to fund the wall

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** A determined US President Donald Trump on Thursday, January 10, threatened to declare a national emergency that would pave the way for him to construct a wall along the US-Mexico border without necessary funding approval from the Congress, as negotiations on the issue between the administration and opposition Democrats to end a partial government shutdown collapsed.

"If we don't make a deal, I would say 100 per cent, but I don't know what is a 100 per cent," Trump said at the White House when asked about the chances of declaring a national emergency if there is no deal with the Democrats on funding for a border wall. Trump has asked for USD 5.6 billion from the *contd on Page 32*



President Donald Trump is adamant on funding for wall. Indications are he will declare emergency and use the unused Army Corps money Photo / CNN Screenshot

## Former Trump Lawyer Michael Cohen to Testify to Congress: New York Times



Michael Cohen who once claimed he will take a bullet for Trump, is ready to go against him before US Congress in an open testimony. Photo / CNN Screenshot

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former lawyer who has implicated the president in campaign finance crimes, will testify before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on Feb. 7, setting the stage for a blockbuster public hearing, the Times reports. Mr. Cohen's decision threatens to further damage the president's *contd on Page 32*



## New Indian Ambassador to US Harsh Vardhan Shringla Assumes Charge: Will present credentials on Jan 11

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla has assumed charge as Ambassador-designate to the United States on January 9, 2019. He will present his credentials on January 11, 2019.


Ambassador Shringla succeeds Ambassador Navtej Sarna who has retired. The 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service diplomat was given a rousing welcome on arrival by the Indian embassy staff who he addressed and exchanged views with. *contd on Page 12*

Harsh Vardhan Shringla assumed charge as Ambassador-designate to the United States on January 9, 2019 Photo / Courtesy Indian Embassy

## 10% EWS reservation Bill challenged in Supreme Court

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** It was expected. A plea challenging the Bill to provide 10 per cent reservation to the general category poor in jobs and education was on Thursday, January 4 filed in the Supreme Court.

The petition, filed by Youth For Equality organization and Kaushal Kant Mishra, sought the quashing of the Bill, saying that the economic criterion cannot be the sole basis for reservation. The plea said the Bill violates basic feature of the Constitution as reservation on economic grounds cannot be limited to the general categories and the 50 per cent ceiling limit cannot be breached. *contd on Page 32*






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Karamvir Dahiya

# Arya Samaj of Long Island extends a friendly hand to foster children

UNIONDALE, NY (TIP): On Dec 27, 2018 Arya Samaj of Long Island Youths, Arya Mahila group and senior citizens celebrated Holiday season by undertaking a humanitarian project of monetary donation \$500.00 and hand knitted blankets for the foster children, who are cared by Nassau County's Department of Social Services.

Lynne Campbell, Department of Social Services volunteer coordinator and John E Imhof, Commissioner invited Members of Arya Samaj at the Marriott Hotel of Long Island in Uniondale to celebrate this event with the foster children. It was great joy to see children receiving presents on our behalf from Santa Claus and sing holiday carols

Dr. Anila Midha Chairperson and Mrs Suda Sharma, Coordinator of this project received Proclamation from Commissioner on behalf of Arya Samaj and assured him of Arya Samaj's continued support in the future as well.



Dr. Anila Midha Chairperson and Mrs Suda Sharma, Coordinator of this project with Lynne Campbell, Department of Social Services volunteer coordinator and John E Imhof, Commissioner, and foster children



Mrs Suda Sharma receiving a Proclamation from John E Imhof

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# AAPI to host Global Healthcare Summit in July 2019 in Hyderabad



Dr. Suresh Reddy, President-Elect of AAPI announced in a press conference in Hyderabad that the 13th edition of the AAPI Global Healthcare Summit will be held in Hyderabad from July 19th to 21st, 2019

**HYDERABAD / NEW YORK (TIP):** (Hyderabad, India. January 4th, 2019) "The 13th edition of the annual Global Healthcare Summit will be held in Hyderabad in India in July 19th to 21st, 2019," Dr. Suresh Reddy, President-Elect of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), during a Kick Off Dinner Event, here at the Hotel Daspalla, Kavuri Hills, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad on January 2nd.

Dr. Suresh Reddy, Chair, Global Health Summit 2019, urged all AAPI leaders, local organizers and sponsors to fully participate in order to make the next edition of AAPI's Global Healthcare a more effective one, serving the many healthcare needs of our mother India. Dr. Reddy, who will assume charge as the President of AAPI in July this year at the convention in Atlanta, USA, said, the GHS 2019, planned to be organized by AAPI in collaboration with BAPIO & GAPIO, as well as Host Alumni Chapters, including OGKTMA, ATMGUSA, KAMCOSA, and GMC GA, will focus on preventive health, targeting Rural Health, Women's Health, and providing special CPR Trainings, that will equip First Responders to help save life.

Dr. Raghu Lolabhattu, Co-Chair, Global Health Summit 2019, in his felicitation address, said, "We flew away from India decades ago. However, our hearts are still in India." He said, GHS 2019 will focus on several relevant issues to serve the many healthcare needs and delivery of healthcare in India. For the first time, AAPI will organize Medical Jeopardy with cash prizes to winners, he said. He praised the local community and organizers for their

enthusiastic support.

Anwar Feroz Siddiqui, Chief Strategic Advisor, AAPI, in his address, complimented Dr. Suresh Reddy for his great leadership, especially his ability to choose and delegate responsibilities to top AAPI leaders. Mr. Siddiqui, who has been working with GHS since its beginning a dozen years ago, lauded AAPI and its members for their willingness, passion, and generosity to give back to their motherland. Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, Vice-President 2018-19, pointed to the uniqueness of the next

GHS, pointing to the 1st ever GHS to be held in the state of Telangana, after the state attained full statehood. "AAPI has capped the voluminous achievements of the past 37 years with a clear vision to move forward taking this noble organization and its vision for better healthcare to newer heights," he said. He said, under his leadership, the 14th edition of GHS 2020 will be held in Visakhapatnam in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, AAPI's Secretary 2018-19, and a key organizer of the event, reminded the audience of the passion and dedication for their motherland that brings them back to India every year. She enumerated several contributions/outcome from the past 12 GHS organized by AAPI across several cities in India.

Dr. Gotimukula said, "AAPI has made significant contributions towards addressing several issues affecting the healthcare system in India. We have addressed the issue of Traumatic Brain Injury - the scourge of young India, and helped with the development of management guidelines thereby helping prevent deaths due to road traffic accidents, raising the importance and awareness on smoking cessation.

Adopt a Village program and taking the initiatives to make quality healthcare accessible universally to village and taluka and district levels, and most recently a strong collaborative on making India TB Free with the signing of a MOU with USAID. Ten city pilots are well under way and significant progress is being made," he told a captive audience," she said. **contd on Page 6**



Sadaf Jaffer was sworn in as mayor of Montgomery township, Jan 3

## New Jersey gets its first South Asian American woman Mayor

**EDISON, NJ (TIP):** On January 3, New Jersey got its first South Asian-American Woman Mayor when Pakistani-American and Montgomery Committeewoman, Sadaf Jaffer was sworn in as mayor of Montgomery township. She is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies.

Jaffer, first elected to the township committee in 2017, was sworn into office by state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal at the township's annual reorganization meeting.

Sadaf Jaffer is a scholar of South Asian, Islamic and gender studies. She aims to understand Muslim communities by looking beyond religious authorities to shapers of film, literary, and popular culture. She is currently working on a book entitled Lady Genghis Khan: Ismat Chughtai, Progressive

Literature and Secularism in Modern India, which offers new perspectives on Islam in India through the lens of celebrated Urdu writer and cultural critic Ismat Chughtai.

Jaffer is also conducting research for a second book project on South Asian social media. Based on preliminary research, she has published a reflection paper in the Journal of Women's History entitled "Women's Autobiography in Islamic Societies: Towards a Feminist Intellectual History" in which she explores the ways women use dynamic online texts to emphasize national belonging to Pakistan while rejecting Islam as promulgated by the state. Jaffer is a graduate of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and earned her Ph.D. from Harvard University. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Global Studies at Stanford University.

## NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission Head Meera Joshi to Step Down



The Chair and CEO of the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Meera Joshi who was appointed as Commissioner in April 2014, plans to step down from her post in March this year.

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** The Chair and CEO of the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Meera Joshi plans to step down from her post in March this year, said Mayor Bill de Blasio, January 5, noting that she will be leaving behind "an unparalleled legacy."

Joshi was appointed TLC Commissioner by de Blasio in April 2014. She is the second woman and first Indian American to head the commission.

Created in 1971, the Taxi and Limousine Commission is a Charter-mandated agency, the purpose of which is the continuance, further development and improvement of taxi and for-hire service in the City of New York. The Commission is also responsible for licensing and regulating for-hire vehicle, commuter van and wheelchair accessible van services as it relates to the overall public transportation network of the city; to establish taxicab rates, standards of service, standards of insurance and minimum coverage; standards for driver safety; standards for equipment safety and design; and standards and criteria for the licensing of vehicles, drivers and operators engaged in such services.

"It has been an honor to serve New York City through the effective regulation of almost 200,000 drivers in over 130,000 vehicles moving over a million people each day. Thanks to a skilled and principled TLC staff, a Commission dedicated to doing the right thing and engaged industry members and advocates, through public debate and data we increased accountability, safety, access, modernized taxi regulation, protected drivers and increased consumer protections. I am deeply grateful to the TLC community that made this possible", she said in a statement.

As the Commissioner of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), Joshi oversees the largest private for-hire ground transportation industry in the United States. Under her leadership, the agency has fostered tremendous diversity, growth and innovation in the taxi, car service, ride-hailing, and commuter van industries while maintaining the highest standards of public safety and consumer protection.

Before serving as Commissioner, Meera Joshi was TLC's Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs and General Counsel. Prior to that, she served as the First Deputy Executive Directors of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, the agency tasked with investigating complaints of police misconduct. She also served as an Inspector General for the New York City Department of Investigation and was responsible for the investigation of alleged criminality and corruption at New York City's Department of Correction, Probation, Juvenile Justice and the TLC.

## Indian-American Economist Gita Gopinath Becomes First Woman Chief Economist of IMF



Gita was John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath has joined International Monetary Fund last week as its chief economist, becoming the first woman to occupy the top IMF post. In October 2018, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde appointed Gita Gopinath as Economic Counselor and Director of the IMF's Research Department.

"Gita is one of the world's outstanding economists, with impeccable academic credentials, a proven track record of intellectual leadership, and extensive international experience," Ms. Lagarde said that time. "All this makes her exceptionally well-placed to lead our Research Department at this important juncture. I am delighted to name such a talented figure as our Chief Economist."

Ms. Gopinath is co-editor of the American Economic Review and co-director of the International Finance and Macroeconomics Program at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). She is co-editor of the current Handbook of International Economics with Former IMF Economic Counsellor Kenneth Rogoff. She has authored some 40 research articles on exchange rates, trade and investment, international financial crises, monetary policy, debt, and emerging market crises.

Ms. Gopinath was born and grew up in India. She is a U.S citizen and an Overseas Citizen of India. She received her Ph.D. in economics from Princeton University in 2001 after earning a B.A. from the University of Delhi and M.A. degrees from both the Delhi School of Economics and University of Washington. She joined the University of Chicago in 2001 as an Assistant Professor before moving to Harvard in 2005. She became a tenured Professor there in 2010. She was John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University.

## Indian man from Telangana Shot in Detroit Battling for his life

**DETROIT (TIP):** An Online fundraiser has started for Indian Engineer from Telangana Sai Krishna who was shot in Detroit on January 3 and is battling for life. He is in a critical condition and doctors mentioned that he has to go through numerous surgeries and very complicated procedures. *(Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))*

# Indian American Susheela Jayapal Sworn in as Oregon's County commissioner

**PORTLAND, OREGON (TIP):** Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal's sister Susheela Jayapal was sworn in on January 3 as a Multnomah County commissioner, making her the first Indian American to hold an elected county office in Oregon. Jayapal will represent District 2, the seat representing North and Northeast Portland.

Susheela was born in India. She came to the United States when she was 16, to go to college. In 1983, at the age of 20, Susheela earned her undergraduate degree in economics from Swarthmore College. After two years as a financial analyst at an investment bank, Susheela went to law school, earning her law degree from the University of Chicago Law School. She was a litigator at law firms in San Francisco and Portland, and then became the General Counsel at adidas America, serving as the member of the senior executive team



Susheela Jayapal sworn in as Multnomah County Commissioner

responsible for the legal affairs of what was then a \$1 billion company.

As an attorney, Susheela represented the government in taking on corrupt and negligent bank officers during the fiscal crisis of the 1980s; provided free legal services to people seeking political asylum in the U.S.; and worked on improving labor conditions at factories in Southeast Asia, developing and implementing adidas' first set of labor standards.

She has dedicated her time and energy to Planned Parenthood of the Columbia-Willamette, Portland Schools Foundation, All Hands Raised, Literary Arts, Metropolitan Family Service, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. She has also been a grant evaluator for the Oregon Community Foundation and served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children in foster care.

# Indian American Varun Rai Named New UT Energy Institute Director

**AUSTIN, TX (TIP):** Indian American Varun Rai, an Assistant Professor of Public Affairs & Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the university of Texas at Austin, assumed the chair of director of the Energy Institute at the University on Jan. 1, 2019.

Rai succeeds Michael Webber, who has served as the institute's acting director since September 2018 when Director Tom Edgar returned to his research and teaching.

"Professor Rai's strong background in engineering, his expertise in energy policy research and his administrative experience as an associate dean make him the ideal choice to take on the leadership of UT's Energy Institute," said Vice President for Research Daniel Jaffe. "I look forward to working with him to strengthen the institute's role as a front door to energy research on our campus."

Rai's research examines the underlying components of energy systems - social, institutional, economic and technological - and how they affect the adoption of clean energy technologies.



Varun Rai is an Assistant Professor of Public Affairs & Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the university

In addition to teaching courses in statistical analysis and energy innovation at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, Rai established the UT Energy Symposium, a weekly guest

lecture series hosted by the Energy Institute that's open to the public. In 2016, Rai won the David N. Kershaw Award and Prize, given by the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management, "to honor persons who, at under the age of 40, have made a distinguished contribution to the field of public policy analysis and management."

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to shape the Energy Institute into a valuable asset for supporting and elevating path-breaking energy research at UT for a better Texas, a better United States, a better world," Rai said in a release. Among Rai's achievements is the establishment of UT Energy Symposium, a weekly guest lecture series hosted by the Energy Institute. The symposium is open to the public.

In 2016, Rai won the David N Kershaw Award and Prize, which is given by the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. The award recognizes people under 40, who have made an outstanding contribution in the field of public policy analysis and management.

## Indian-American appointed to San Francisco County Superior Court



Vedica Puri is the first Indian-American appointed to the San Francisco County Superior Court

**SAN FRANCISCO (TIP):** Indian-American lawyer Vedica Puri, 47, of San Francisco, who has been a partner at Pillsbury & Coleman LLP since 2005 and was a senior associate there from 2002 to 2005, was appointed to the San Francisco County Superior Court.

Gov. Jerry Brown, who left office on Jan 7, appointed six new superior court judges to Bay Area courts on January 3, including two in Alameda County and one each in Contra Costa, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Solano counties.

Puri is the first Indian-American appointed to the San Francisco County Superior Court. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Xavier's College and received her law degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law. She fills the vacancy created by the elevation of Judge Tracie Brown to the Court of Appeal.

Puri is an experienced trial attorney with an expertise in high-stakes builder's risk, property and technology errors and omissions claims. As Bay Area native, she has a greater understanding of the new and emerging risks inherent to Silicon Valley businesses and universities. Ms. Puri has counseled many companies and risk managers on issues involving protection against technology failures, cyber liability, directors' and officers' liability as well as handling claims under these policies. Her in-depth experience involves coverage disputes arising from catastrophic natural disasters, most recently the San Bruno pipeline explosion (2010) and the North Bay Wildfires (2017).

## Indian American business tycoon Rajat Gupta's appeal rejected

**NEW YORK (TIP):** A federal appeals court in Manhattan declined to throw out former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. director Rajat Gupta's 2012 insider-trading conviction, upholding a lower-court ruling. Indian American business tycoon Gupta, who was released from prison in 2016 after serving 19 months, argued that the conviction should be thrown out because US prosecutors failed to prove he got a personal benefit for passing tips to his friend, billionaire hedge fund manager Raj Rajaratnam. Rajaratnam, a founder of the Galleon Group, would end up getting convicted in 2011. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison and is due to be released in July 2021. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals, in an order issued on January 7, said: "We have considered all of Gupta's arguments on this appeal and have found them to be without merit. The judgment of the district court is affirmed."

A federal jury in New York found Gupta guilty of passing tips to Rajaratnam about Berkshire Hathaway Inc.'s \$5 billion investment in Goldman Sachs and the bank's financial results for two quarters in 2008. While Gupta has already served his prison term, a ruling in his favour would have cleared the conviction from his record.



Gupta was released from prison in 2016 after serving 19 months



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# Mayor de Blasio Announces Plan to Guarantee Health Care for all New Yorkers



Mayor Bill de Blasio announcing the health care for all New Yorkers, including undocumented residents. Also seen (extreme left) is the First Lady Chirlane McCray

Photo / NYC Care

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** Mayor Bill de Blasio announced, January 8, his administration will launch the largest, most comprehensive plan in the nation to guarantee health care for every New Yorker. The plan will serve the 600,000 New Yorkers without insurance by strengthening NYC's public health insurance option, MetroPlus, and guaranteeing anyone ineligible for insurance - including undocumented New Yorkers - has direct access to NYC Health + Hospitals' physicians, pharmacies and mental health and substance abuse services through a new program called NYC Care. All services will be affordable on a sliding scale. The programs will include customer-friendly call lines to help New Yorkers - regardless of their insurance - make appointments with general practitioners, cardiologists, pediatricians, gynecologists and a full spectrum of health care services.

"Health care is a right, not a privilege reserved for those who can afford it," said Mayor de Blasio. "While the federal government works to gut health care for millions of Americans, New York City is leading the way by guaranteeing that every New Yorker has access to quality, comprehensive access to care, regardless of immigration status or their ability to pay."

"With today's announcement of NYC

Care, New York City takes another leap ahead of the rest of the nation in providing mental health services," said First Lady Chirlane McCray. "Guaranteed health care means guaranteed MENTAL health care and alcohol/drug addiction treatment. No other city or state provides these comprehensive services to ALL residents."

"We have the tools and opportunity to guarantee health care for all New Yorkers," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio. "New Yorkers who can't enroll in or afford health insurance will now be able to access comprehensive, patient-centered services through NYC Care. At the same time, we will amplify our efforts to increase enrollment into MetroPlus. Today we celebrate our City's relentless commitment to accessible, high-quality health care."

"Expanding access to care is a key step in eliminating health disparities in our city," said Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot. "The Affordable Care Act started us down this path, but it is time to finish the job. New York City is proud to lead the way. I stand with Mayor de Blasio today in declaring health care is a right for all, not a privilege for only those who can afford care."

"NYC Care will be the biggest and most comprehensive health coverage program in

## State of the City 2019: Most comprehensive, universal coverage in nation will guarantee primary and specialty care to 600,000 uninsured New Yorkers

the country," said Dr. Mitchell Katz, President and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals. "Building on the great work of our doctors, nurses and staff, and working collaboratively with community partners, NYC Health + Hospitals will help give all New Yorkers the quality care they deserve."

"In the fairest big City in America, everyone, no matter where they came from, or when they got here, has a right to be healthy and get the care they need to thrive," said Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. "We know that there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizen New Yorkers, - including undocumented immigrants - where nearly 94% of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared with just 69% of non-citizen New Yorkers. Today's announcement brings us one step closer to realizing a truly inclusive vision of healthcare for all."

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 8 million New Yorkers now have health insurance, and the uninsured rate is about nearly half of what it was in 2013. In the last two years, New York City's Public Engagement Unit coordinated signing up more than 130,000 New Yorkers for plans through the exchanges created by the law. However, about 600,000 New Yorkers remain without insurance, because they do not or cannot enroll. Through this new initiative, New York City will create a bigger, better, more comprehensive program for guaranteed health care. The City aims to better connect people to more effective and affordable health care in one of two ways:

### NYC Care

The city will connect hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are ineligible for health insurance - including undocumented New Yorkers and those who cannot afford insurance - to reliable care. Anyone will be able to access comprehensive care across NYC Health + Hospitals' more than 70+ locations, once the program is fully ramped up. NYC Care is open to anyone who does not have an affordable insurance

option and will be priced on a sliding scale, to ensure affordability. NYC Care will provide a primary care doctor and will provide access to specialty care, prescription drugs, mental health services, hospitalization, and more.

### NYC's Public Option

The City will double down on efforts to boost enrollment in MetroPlus, the City's public option. MetroPlus provides free or affordable health insurance that connects insurance-eligible New Yorkers to a network of providers that includes NYC Health + Hospitals' 11 hospitals and 70 clinics. MetroPlus serves as an affordable, quality option for people on Medicaid, Medicare, and those purchasing insurance on the exchange. The City is committed to strengthening MetroPlus and connecting more independent workers, City vendors and City workers to that option. It also will improve the quality of the MetroPlus customer experience through improved access to clinical care, mental health services, and wellness rewards for healthy behavior.

The City is taking an unprecedented approach to health care services by tackling mental and physical issues holistically. Through both programs, New Yorkers will be able to access addiction services and opioid treatment, mental health counseling, and counseling services for trauma victims. New Yorkers will be able to call MetroPlus or 311 to be screened for health insurance eligibility and get connected to their best coverage option.

As part of this initiative, H+H will be significantly enhancing 24/7 customer service to seamlessly connect patients to healthcare.

NYC Care will launch in summer 2019 and will roll out geographically, starting in the Bronx. It will be fully available to all New Yorkers across the five boroughs in 2021. The program will cost at least \$100 million annually at full scale. Additionally, MetroPlus will announce a series of enhancements throughout the year.

(Based on a press release)

contd from page 3

## AAPI to host Global Healthcare...

Dr. Sanku Rao, a past President of AAPI presented the 37 year old history of AAPI and the evolution of GHS in the past dozen years and the many accomplishments /contributions in the delivery of healthcare in US and in India. AAPI is the largest ethnic medical organization in the United States, and has been in existence for nearly four decades. The Association has almost 130 local chapters, specialty societies and alumni organizations under its purview, and represents the interests of over 70,000 physicians and 15,000 medical students and residents of Indian heritage in the United States, Dr. Rao said.

Sreeni Gangasani, Chair of AAPI Convention, provided an overview of the upcoming AAPI Convention in Atlanta, GA, and urged all to join in to experience a historic at the next annual convention. "To be attended by over 2,000 delegates from across the United States, the 37th Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) will be held at the fabulous Omni Atlanta at CNN Center and Georgia World Congress Centre (GWCC) in Atlanta from July 3 to 7, 2019," he said. Dr. Satish Kathula, referred to the highly impactful ADOPT A VILLAGE Program, spearheaded by Dr. Jagan Ailinani, a past President of AAPI, and Dr. Alok

Aggarwal, who has adopted a village in the state of Telangana as examples of the good work done by AAPI. He said, AAPI provides a platform for many individuals who want to give back to their motherland.

Dr. Manoj Jain, Chair and spearheading the TB-Free India Movement, spoke about AAPI's collaborative efforts with several non-governmental organizations and the USAID, with a commitment to strengthen its initiatives to "make every city, every district, every village in India TB free." Dr. Jain pointed to the planning/review session held during GHS in Mumbai on Building on Local Roadmaps for a TB-Free India - A Combined effort of AAPI and CETI under guidance of Government of India, USAID, where the progress in the 10 cities, where the program has been on for several months, was reviewed through a live webcast from each of these 10 cities. He said, Hyderabad will be joining the efforts to make its citizens TB-Free. Dr. Dwarakanatha Reddy, Overseas Convener, AAPI Global Health Summit 2019-20 and several Alumni Medical School leaders from the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were felicitated at the kick off event. Dr. Sushma Nakka, President of KAMCOSA- USA served as the MC for the evening, while Dr. Ravi Kolli delivered the vote of thanks.

A Press Conference at the famous Hyderabad Press Club was organized on January 3rd to officially announce the Global Healthcare Summit planned to be held in Hyderabad from July

19th to 21st this year. Attended by dozens of local and national reporters from the media world, the Press Conference was addressed by the top leadership of AAPI and local organizing committee members. Packed with strategic planning sessions such as the much anticipated CEO Forum, Women's Forum, Launching of Free Health Clinic, First Responders Training, CMEs, promote Emergency Medicine and Family Medicine Education, Research Contest, Medical Quiz, Fashion Show, Cultural Events, pre and post visits for delegates, the GHS 2019 is expected to be one with the greatest impact and significant contributions towards harnessing the power of international Indian diaspora to bring the most innovative, efficient, cost effective healthcare solutions to India, Dr. Suresh Reddy said.

One in seven Americans is touched by a physician of Indian origin. There is an equally large percentage of medical residents, fellows and students in the USA serving millions of Americans. AAPI's GHS has provided a venue for medical education programs and symposia with world-renowned physicians on the cutting edge of medicine.

Representing the interests of the over 100,000 physicians of Indian origin, leaders of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the largest ethnic organization of physicians, for 37 years. For more details, please visit: <https://aapisummit.org/www.aapiusa.org>

(Press Release issued by Ajay Ghosh)

# GOPIO Convention Prior to PBD January 19-21 in Varanasi: Announcing GOPIO Honor Roll and Community Service Awards

NEW YORK CITY, NY (TIP): January 11, 2019 - After holding conventions in Bahrain, Bengaluru, New York, London, Paris, Zurich, Trinidad, South Africa, New Jersey, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai, Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) International (www.gopio.net), is holding its 2019 Annual Convention in Varanasi from January 19th to 21st. This event is being held in conjunction with the 15th Indian Government Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) Convention which starts on January 21st and concludes on 23rd, 2019. The theme of GOPIO's conference is: "Strengthening Global Connections of Diaspora: India 2030 - An Economic Powerhouse". This convention in Varanasi will start with an inauguration on January 19th evening, followed with a full day conference on Jan. 20th and end up with a Valedictory Session & Finale Awards Banquet on Jan. 20th evening at the Taj Gateway Hotel, Varanasi. Conference sessions will continue on Jan. 21st from morning to afternoon.

Three ministers from the central government cabinet are participating at the Convention. While the chief guest at the Final Banquet on Jan. 20th evening is General V.K. Singh - Minister of State for External affairs, the keynote address will be delivered by Tourism Minister Alphons Kannanthanam. Earlier in the afternoon, Minister of State for Human Resources Dr. Satya Pal Singh will chair and deliver the keynote address at the session Indian Academic Conclave on Indian Diaspora, and Maharashtra Minister Raj Purohit will deliver the keynote address at the session Opportunities, Development, Business and Investment in India and UP. GOPIO will induct three political leaders who have participated and helped in GOPIO activities to its Honor Roll.



Honor Roll

Union Ministers attending



GOPIO Community Service Awardees

They are New Zealand Member of Parliament Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi, Maharashtra Minister Raj K. Purohit and South Africa Member of the Parliament Aumsensingh (Omie) Singh. Past recipients include former Prime Minister Inder Gujral, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Lord Bhikhu Parekh. They will be honored at the Valedictory Session on Jan. 20th evening.

Every year, GOPIO honors those who have done outstanding work. This year's GOPIO Community Service Awards will be presented at the Final Banquet after the Valedictory Session. This year's awardees are: Veena Khosla from France, Parsram Punj from Australia, Dr. Indrani Rampersad from Trinidad, K.V. Shamsudheen from Sharjah, UAE and Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas from Saint Louis, USA. GOPIO will also honor two people with special awards, GOPIO Associate Secretary and community volunteer



Recipients of special awards. Jaswant Mody (left) and Smita Shrivastava




Jaswant Mody from the US and Confluence Founder Smita Shrivastava from New Delhi, India.

The conference, chaired by Dr. Asha Samant, will include the following plenary topics:

- Strengthening India's Relations with Global Community Through Indian Diaspora
- Opportunities, Development, Business and Investment in India and UP
- Indian Academic Conclave on Indian Diaspora
- Empowering Indian and Diaspora Women
- Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Investment and Start Up India

For additional information on this convention please contact GOPIO International officers: Chairman - Dr. Thomas Abraham, President - Sunny Kulathakal, Secretary - Dr. Rajeev Mehta, Treasurer - Kewal Kanda, or visiting: <http://www.gopio.net>

Please direct any media inquiries to: J. Nami Kaur at 914-476-2082, or [namique@gmail.com](mailto:namique@gmail.com).




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## COMMENT

Prof I.S. Saluja

## Think of the billions who are hungry

Government of India does not tire of boasting about the country's economic growth rate. It has fanciful narratives of its glorious achievements. Enthused with the idea of introducing the most modern bullet trains while it cannot maintain safe and timely services on existing tracks, making tall promises to provide housing to all in the next few years, they do not probably want to face the reality that the country is still way behind in providing food to billions who either go hungry or are underfed and malnourished.

The Global Hunger Index 2018 ranks India at 103rd out of 119 countries on the basis of three leading indicators - prevalence of under-weight children under five years, under-five mortality rate, and the proportion of undernourished in the population.

15% of population is undernourished; 195 million people go hungry daily; 30% of children under 5 are under-weight; 58% of children stunted before they are two; one in four children malnourished; 3000 children die every day due to lack of food; 24% under 5 deaths in India; 30% of neo-natal deaths in India.

It is paradoxical that despite India producing more than sufficient food to feed its population, it is unable to provide access to food to 300 million poor. The amount of food wasted, almost 40% is mind boggling.

Wholly engrossed in the politics of religion, region and caste, the rulers have forgotten their primary duty as rulers. Their Rajdharma centers around grabbing power to rule, not to rule well. What a shame on the country which is billed to be one of three most powerful economies of the world by 2050!

What a shame on the rulers who live like princes, wearing designer clothes costing thousands of dollars, live in palatial houses, protected by scores of security men, riding the best of cars, and flying the best airlines in the world, making big money by hook or by crook, all at the cost of the common people of India who do not get the basic food to survive, not to speak of leading a decent life.

Indian media need to focus on this issue almost on a daily basis, as they do on non-issues, to create a public opinion to put pressure on the government to take revolutionary decisions to remedy the situation.

Every time, there are elections at hand, all sorts of promises are made to the people by all political outfits. People are lulled in to a dreamworld, only to get the rude shock, post poll, that they were taken for a ride.

Will there ever be a change for the better?

## AS I SEE IT

## Imran Khan's performance so far as PM: Still nothing to show for



By S. Akbar Zaidi

In each of the three recent elections in Pakistan, in 2008, 2013 and last year in July, a different political party won and formed the government. The Pakistan People's Party in 2008, following Benazir Bhutto's assassination, had two Prime Ministers in its five-year tenure; but with Asif Zardari as President of Pakistan, this five-year tenure is better known as Mr. Zardari's government. Similarly, after 2013, the Pakistan Muslim League's Nawaz Sharif made a remarkable reappearance in Pakistan's political scene and became Prime Minister for the third time, only to be debarred and removed from office, and subsequently imprisoned, and was replaced by one of his party members as Prime Minister. The 2013 government, even with Mr. Sharif behind bars, was known as his government. The third transition, or 'experiment' as it has been called since last year well before the elections took place, was for Pakistan's military and judiciary, the so-called 'establishment', to work together and ensure an electoral victory for the third political party in as many elections, with Imran Khan winning.

The electoral results in 2008 and 2013 were not unexpected. After Benazir Bhutto's killing, a sympathy wave led to her party winning enough seats to form a coalition government, but with its particularly poor performance in its five-year tenure, Mr. Sharif's victory was also not unexpected. Despite the incarceration of Mr. Sharif and the multiple cases against him in 2017 and 2018, the general perception was that his party would probably get re-elected, albeit with a smaller majority. Mr. Khan's victory followed on a multi-month strategy by the establishment to ensure that he would win, with ample evidence suggesting that he was ushered in with much help from behind the scenes. His shell-shocked victory speech a few hours after the elections suggested that even he was taken aback when victory was handed to him.

## Five months on

Five months is a long enough time to be able to assess what a new government has done and the direction it intends to follow. Both the Zardari government of 2008 and the Sharif government in 2013 quickly went into taking numerous decisions soon after being elected. In 2008, with support from the Opposition led by Mr. Sharif, Mr. Zardari and his government worked together to jointly address issues concerning the economy, and to remove the then President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, by initiating a process to have him impeached, leading to his resignation. Differences emerged between Mr. Sharif and

**"In October last year, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in a public address stated that Pakistanis should stop worrying, 'Ghabrain nahin, hausla rakhain (do not worry, have fortitude).'" But after five months of waiting for the government to deliver on its numerous promises, perhaps it is now time to really start worrying", says the author.**



Imran Khan appears to be banking on the establishment to help him and Pakistan out of its economic crisis

Mr. Zardari over issues about an amnesty granted to political leaders and about the reinstatement of members of the judiciary dismissed while General Musharraf was President. Nevertheless, the main purpose apparent from the beginning had been served and was clear from the start, to reclaim popular political space from the military, and to reassert the sovereignty of the law. Mr. Sharif, when he was elected in 2013, from the very first moment, started work on addressing Pakistan's biggest problem at that time, the electricity crisis which was crippling the economy. After taking several decisions within days of assuming power, he started to put the economy on some track, and agreed to an International Monetary Fund program.

The most noticeable demonstration of Mr. Khan's government over the last five months has been best reflected in its ineptitude, indecision, bumbling, sanctimoniousness. For the past five months, we have been waiting for some major policy direction, vision, even just a simple decision on what to do next, but nothing so far has emerged. Other than the 'we will put all the corrupt politicians in jail' mantra, this government has been lacking in foresight and a sense of purpose. It is not inexperience which is the cause for this. Although Mr. Khan has not held a job for many years - his last paid job was probably as Pakistan's cricket captain - most of his Ministers and advisers have been in government with one political party or another. In fact, many worked with General Musharraf when he was President. The many claims that Mr. Khan makes about strong leadership seem to be undermined with him in charge of Pakistan's government.

Perhaps the most urgent and pressing problem facing Pakistan today is that of an economy quickly going into a crisis state, largely on account of inaction and uncertainty created by the Finance Minister. Pakistan's growth rate in the fiscal year ending in June 2018 was 5.8%, the highest in

13 years. For the current fiscal year the expectations are that it will be closer to 3%. Inflation today is the highest in six years, and interest rates have been driven to double-digit levels with the Pakistani rupee depreciating 34% in 12 months. There is a growing balance of payments crisis, with exports stagnant and imports still rising, along with a fiscal deficit of more than 6% of GDP. The stock market has fallen, as have investor confidence and ratings of the economy. Foreign direct investment has fallen drastically since early 2018. The China Pakistan-Economic Corridor (CPEC), which was touted as Pakistan's 'Marshall Plan', seems to have completely gone off the radar for now, as the Chinese rethink their strategy for Pakistan. Knowing all this, Mr. Khan and his finance and economic team have done little to stabilize Pakistan's economy, to draw a strategy to address these exacerbating problems. Other than begging for loans from the only three friends Pakistan is left with - Saudi Arabia, China and the UAE - there has been an absence of ideas about what to do. The populist promises of the election manifesto of Mr. Khan, of making Pakistan a model welfare state on the lines of the Prophet's Medina, of providing millions of jobs and houses to Pakistanis, will all come undone unless the economy is first fixed.

## A controlled democracy

The single most prominent feature of Mr. Khan's five months has been his repeated pronouncements that he and his government are 'on the same page' with Pakistan's military and judiciary. Unlike Mr. Zardari and Mr. Sharif, both fairly astute and experienced politicians, and not having had any government experience, Mr. Khan probably doesn't realize the consequences of what this means and how being on the same page with dominating and powerful unelected institutions undermines and stifles the agency of elected governments. Rather than having used the short breathing space following his electoral victory by taking some resolute decisions, his inactions may not only reflect his inability to understand how to run a government but might simply be because he expects others on this 'same page' to do his bidding. In many ways, with a media that is strangled, and politicians of the Opposition being hounded in the name of 'accountability', Pakistan may be back to its tried and trusted model of controlled democracy.

*(The author is a political economist based in Karachi. He teaches at Columbia University in New York, and at the IBA in Karachi)*

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# THE PARADOX OF INDIA: 360 Million Poor Starve while 40% of Food is wasted



By Ven Parameswaran

**The Global Hunger Index 2018 ranks India at 103rd out of 119 countries on the basis of three leading indicators-prevalence of under-weight children under five years, under-five mortality rate, and the proportion of undernourished in the population.**

India has been independent for 72 years. From 1947 to 1967, for 20 years, India, as a young democracy, had too many problems to deal with. One, it had a severe shortage of food. During this period, USA helped India by exporting food under what is known as PL-480. The law provided for India paying to the US in rupee. US also helped India's green revolution project, even as Mexico helped India grow high yield varieties of wheat. It helped India attain food self-sufficiency.

The Green revolution modernized Indian farms resulting in tremendous increase in food production. India has been not only a net exporter of food but also one of the leading exporters competing with the US and Australia. India has proved the fallacy of English Economist Malthus's theory that food production cannot overtake

**15% of population is undernourished; 195 million people go hungry daily; 30% of children under 5 are under-weight; 58% of children stunted before they are two; one in four children malnourished; 3000 children die every day due to lack of food; 24% under 5 deaths in India; 30% of neo-natal deaths in India.**

**It is paradoxical that despite India producing more than sufficient food to feed its population, it is unable to provide access to food to 300 million poor. The amount of food wasted, almost 40% is mind boggling.**

overpopulation. There is every reason for India to be proud to produce food for its 1.3 billion people and also export, making sizeable foreign exchange earnings. India should be commended for creative and hard work to achieve it.

It is paradoxical that despite India producing more than sufficient food to feed its population, it is unable to provide access to food to 300 million poor. The amount of food wasted, almost 40% is mind boggling.

The Global Hunger Index 2018 ranks India at 103rd out of 119 countries on the basis of three leading indicators-prevalence of under-weight children under five years, under-five mortality rate, and the proportion of undernourished in the population.

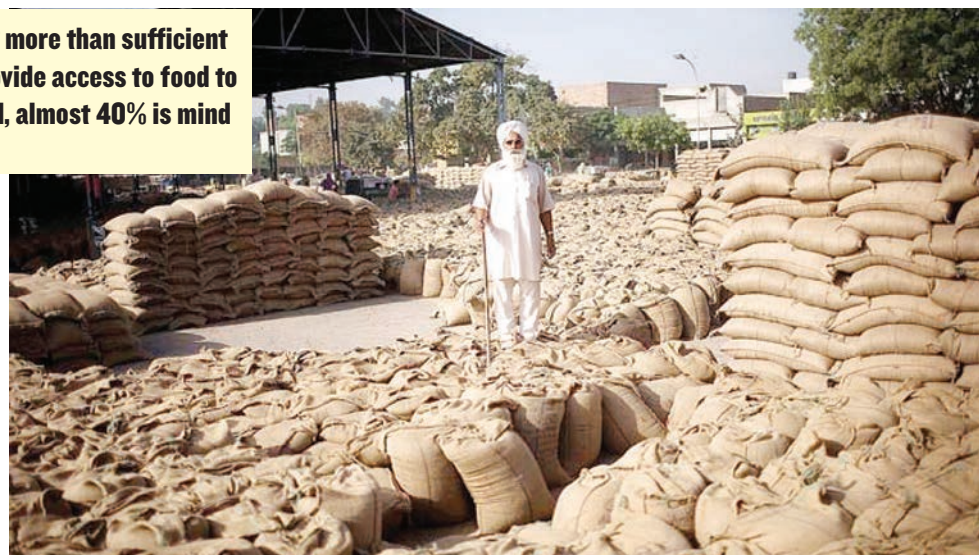
It is estimated that nearly 40 per cent of the fruit and vegetable, and 20 per cent of the food grains that are produced, are lost due to inefficient supply chain management.

It is a shame that India has the largest undernourished and hungry population in the world. 15% of population is undernourished; 195 million people go hungry daily; 30% of children under 5 are under-weight; 58% of children stunted before they are two; one in four children malnourished; 3000 children die every day due to lack of food; 24% under 5 deaths in India; 30% of neo-natal deaths in India.

**DESPITE BEING A FOOD SURPLUS COUNTRY, INDIA HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO CURB FOOD GRAIN WASTAGE. TOPPING IT ALL, THE PRODUCED FOOD, TOO IS WASTED.**

Each year, wheat equivalent to Australia's annual grain production is wasted in India. The magnitude of the problem is unacceptable. In Australia 0.75% of grain was wasted. India is wasting 67 million tons yearly. THAT IS MORE THAN NATIONAL OUTPUT OF THE U.K. AND ENOUGH FOOD FOR BIHAR. The value of lost food -Rs.92,000 crore-nearly two-thirds of what it costs the Government to feed 600 million poor Indians. This results in lower supplies and add to the inflation, thus reducing the farmer's income. The farmers of India have already started a revolution to protest and it is an important election issue.

One million tons of onions vanish on their



An estimated 61,824 tons of food grains have been damaged between 2011-12 & 2016-17.

way from farms to markets, as do 2.2 million tons of tomatoes. Overall, 5 million eggs crack or go bad due to lack of cold storage.

**THE MAGNITUDE OF WASTE IS MINDBOGGLING AND UNACCEPTABLE.**

A report in a Punjab media said: "Over 95,000 bags of rotten wheat lying in the statehouse of the Haryana State Warehousing Corporation at Bani village will fetch the corporation much less than one rupee per kg. The highest bid received is 62 paise per kg.

Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Assam do not have the capacity to handle stocks for more than 13-75 days. Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Assam cannot even handle their stocks for a month.

Indian media reports that the bureaucracy claims to solve problems on files, raising queries after queries and so called inter-departmental consultations. Rather than looking and rectifying this issue, the leaders have lost touch and are busy with foreign trips. Instead of conducting unnecessary delaying tactics of investigations, the Government of India must place this huge problem on its front burner. India has been neglecting the 300 million of its poor for too many years. Political parties come and go but the problem is aggravated.

**COOKED FOOD MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE POOR. THE GOAL SHOULD BE TO DELIVER TWO NUTRITIOUS MEALS PER DAY.**

The villages have no facilities to cook food and serve the poor. India must start discussing how best to prepare and deliver food. Streamlining and distribution should be scientific and modern marketing. The Government officials have failed and proved that they are not competent to handle this problem existing all these years.

Food Corporation of India, a public sector corporation should be privatized immediately. No excuses can be accepted like given for not being able to find a buyer for Air India. Feeding the poor is an emergency because every day too many are perishing due to lack of food.

**INDIA CANNOT CALL ITSELF A DEMOCRACY IF IT FAILS TO FEED THE POOR.**

We strongly recommend that India consults leading management and marketing consultants such as McKinsey Consulting and others to get professional recommendations

for discussion by the Indian Parliament and make decisions.

**Indian media need to focus on this issue almost on a daily basis, as they do with non-issues, to create a public opinion to put pressure on the government to take revolutionary decisions to remedy the situation.**

**CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS:**

1. Identify the problem of Food Waste and suggest solutions. Identify the problem of distribution of food grains from the farmer to the consumers. Identify the entire process that delivers food from the farmers to the consumers including storage, warehousing, transportation by refrigerated trucks and trains, retailing, etc.
2. Privatize the Food Corporation of India - this is prerequisite to solve No.1 above.
3. Consult with internationally reputed professional Management and Marketing Consultants for solutions.
4. Come up with necessary legislation to ensure food is not wasted and that every single Indian gets two square meals, at the least. Prime Minister should present recommendations to the Parliament for decision and approval
5. Entrust the project to the private industry that has replaced the FCI.

Today, India as the largest democracy should be ashamed for not doing anything to solve the ever-nagging problem for several years. By taking the right steps without delay India can eliminate waste and feed the 300 million poor of India. This will also answer the complaints and protests of the farmers receiving low prices for their production.

It is important that Prime Minister Modi attaches top priority to this critical problem of great magnitude. This is not a time for blame game for the failure of various administrations. Indian media need to focus on this issue almost on a daily basis, as they do with non-issues, to create a public opinion to put pressure on the government to take revolutionary decisions to remedy the situation. Tell Prime Minister Modi his bullet train can wait until a population of India is not forced to go without food.

(Ven Parameswaran, MBA, Columbia Business School, was President & CEO, First Asian Securities Corporation, New York; Senior Adviser to Imagindia Institute, a think tank in New Delhi. Email: vpwaren@gmail.com)



Millions of tons of wheat rots in the open as India runs out of warehouse space to store its growing grain stockpile

## Afghanistan: More than 30 security men killed in Taliban attack

**KABUL (TIP):** The Taliban launched a series of attacks on security checkpoints in four Afghan provinces early on January 10, killing 32 members of the security forces and pro-government militias, provincial officials said.

Both sides in Afghanistan's 17-year war have kept up attacks this winter, with the Taliban inflicting a heavy toll on government forces, and the US military and their government allies killing Taliban field commanders with air strikes.

At the same time, tentative peace efforts have been under way with US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad holding three rounds of talks with the Taliban, although the insurgents called off a fourth round this week.

The latest Taliban attacks came in the northern provinces of Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, and Badghis in the west.

Ahmad Fahim Qarluq, the chief of the Qala-e-Zal district in Kunduz, said a large number of Taliban attacked security checkpoints in the early hours, killing 10 soldiers and police and wounding 11. Qarluq said 25 Taliban fighters were killed.

In neighbouring Baghlan and Takhar provinces, the Taliban killed 16 members of pro-government militias in attacks on outposts, officials said. They also said the Taliban suffered heavy casualties.

To the west, in Badghis province, Jamshid Shahabi, spokesman for the governor, said six members of the security forces were killed and 10 wounded in clashes. (Reuters)

## Bangladesh man jailed for 'photoshopping' pictures of Sheikh Hasina, Manmohan Singh

**DHAKA (TIP):** A 35-year-old Bangladeshi man has been sentenced to seven years in prison for circulating photoshopped images of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other politicians including former Indian premier Manmohan Singh, amid criticism that her government is using tough internet laws to silence dissent. Monir Hossain from Tangail was jailed by Bangladesh Cyber Tribunal judge Mohammad As-Shams Joglul Hossain on Wednesday. Monir had been on bail and appeared in court for the verdict, bdnews24.com reported.

Alamgir Hossain and Subrata Shil — two others accused in the case started under the the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act — were acquitted as charges against them were not proved, the report said.

Monir used to run his 'Monir Telecom' shop at Tangail's Nagarpur. He had sent doctored images of Hasina, late president Zillur Rahman and former Indian premier Singh to mobile phones of users in 2013, said the verdict. Sauria Police arrested Alamgir after finding out that he was showing around the vulgar 'photoshopped images' on his phone. Following his arrest, Alamgir told police he got the images from Monir Telecom. Rights groups have criticised the government for using the ICT laws to silence criticism. Critics have lashed out at the government for cracking down on free speech and an increasingly authoritarian rule. (PTI)

# Pakistan Wants To Reform Madrassas. Experts Advise Fixing Public Education First

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Youths sporting peach fuzz sway as they chant parts of the Quran. They sit in the courtyard of a sprawling Islamic seminary, or madrassa, on the outskirts of the village of Meer Muhammad, in Pakistan's rural heartland in Punjab.

By graduation, these students should have memorized Islam's holiest book and finer points of Islamic law. They will have mastered little else.

They need little else, argues Muhammad Saleem Asif, a religious scholar and the principal of the madrassa, the Roza Tul Quran Al Kareem school. These students, repeating the words of God, raise the spirits and morals of their community, he says.

"The seminaries deal with man's spiritual issues," Asif says. "They bless the communities around them."

But in the village, just around the corner from the madrassa, the principal of a government-funded girls' high school worries about the seminary's influence, and its lack of basic education. "This is a matter of concern for our entire society," says Abida Akram. "I try [to] keep my students and my kids away from the madrassas. They contaminate the students' minds, and if they remain unchecked, it will lead to disaster."

Akram gestures toward a muddy lane, where the madrassa keeps another compound for its female students. It is dank and dirty, in contrast with the well-lit compound reserved for older boys, which features new computer equipment.

Many of the madrassa's female students



and teachers wear long robes and face veils, a style of dress imported from Saudi Arabia, which follows a harsh interpretation of Islam. Akram says her school takes in the madrassa's female dropouts, whom she describes as poorly educated.

"I don't think they have learned anything in the seminaries," she says.

These scenes and tensions play out across Pakistan, where madrassas flourish. From an estimated 150 at Pakistan's independence in 1947, there are now some 32,000 madrassas attended by some 2.5 million students,

according to Azmat Abbas, author of *Madrassah Mirage: A Contemporary History of Islamic Schools in Pakistan*. (Other estimates range as high as more than 60,000 madrassas).

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has said he wants the madrassas to produce better-qualified students. "Seminary students should also become engineers and doctors," Khan said last August, in his first public address. He called on madrassas to introduce a core curriculum including subjects like math, English and science. (NPR)

## Alleged war criminal named second-in-command of Sri Lanka army

**COLOMBO (TIP):** Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena has appointed a general accused by the United Nations of war crimes to the country's second-highest army ranking, evoking an outcry from rights groups.

Major General Shavendra Silva was accused of committing war crimes during the civil war in Sri Lanka, which ended after 37 years in 2009.

Silva took part in a massive assault on Tamil Tiger separatists in the war, during which the Sri Lankan army committed gross abuses against civilians.

Silva formally assumed the duties of his new position on Thursday, the army said in a statement.

Human rights organisation International Truth & Justice Project (ITJP), which has focused its work on atrocities committed during the Sri Lankan civil war, called the appointment "a shocking new low for Sri Lanka".

"Major General Shavendra Silva was named by a United Nations investigation for his part in commanding the 58 Division, which was the unit responsible for repeated and deliberate attacks on hospitals, food distribution queues and displacement camps in 2009, resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths in a matter of months," a statement by the organisation said.

According to Yasmin Sooka, the executive director of ITJP, Silva could and should be arrested if he ever travels abroad in his current role.

"Sri Lanka now has a chief of army staff who risks arrest every time he travels abroad, if any country is foolish enough to give him a visa," said Sooka.

The statement added that "there is more than enough evidence to charge him for international crimes should the opportunity arise".

"This is arguably the most wanted man in Sri Lanka. A decade on, tragically, he is being promoted instead of standing trial."

A number of Sri Lankan army generals have been denied visas to travel to Western nations over their alleged role in attacks against civilians.

President Sirisena said Silva's "experience and leadership will bring strength and courage" to Sri Lanka's armed forces. According to rights groups, at least 40,000 ethnic Tamils were killed by government forces during their final push to defeat the separatist rebels.

Sri Lanka's successive governments have resisted calls for an independent investigation into the conduct of troops during the final months of the conflict. President Sirisena came to power in January 2015, promising justice for war victims but his administration has been accused of dithering ever since.

Sirisena, unlike his predecessor Mahinda Rajapaksa, agreed to investigate war crimes but no generals have stood trial or been brought to justice. (Alzazeera)

## Police raid 'Buddha boy' ashram in Nepal

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** Authorities in Nepal raided one of the ashrams of a spiritual leader -- whose supporters believe he is the reincarnation of Buddha -- while investigating the disappearance of four of his followers.

Uma Prasad Chaturvedi, a spokesman for Nepal's Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), said police began searching the ashram, a type of spiritual monastery, north of the capital, Kathmandu, after getting a tip that a body was buried there.

The police search of the premises failed to uncover any human remains. The four people missing, two men and two women, worshipped at other ashrams associated with Ram Bahadur Bomjan, according to Chaturvedi. Their families have not heard from them in more than two years, he said.

"We don't have complaints specifically against Bomjan," Charurvedi said. "Since these missing people are missing from his ashram, we may have to question him eventually. But we haven't done that just yet."

He said followers who live at the ashram are being questioned. Bomjan could not be reached for comment. Officials with Bodhi Shrawan Dharma Sangha, the organization that manages Bomjan's ashrams, issued a statement that didn't address the disappearances, but said, "we are sad and disappointed about the recent media reports." The statement made no specific mention of the four missing individuals. The case has thrown Bomjan, 28, into the spotlight more than a decade after he first gained international attention. (CNN)

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## President Trump talks to family of slain Fijian Indian American police officer Ronil Singh



*Singh was shot to death Dec. 26 during a traffic stop by an alleged Mexican national Paulo Virgen Mendoza*

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** President Donald Trump has spoken to the family and former colleagues of the Newman police officer Ronil Singh who was shot to death during a Dec. 26 traffic stop by an alleged Mexican national Paulo Virgen Mendoza.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders says Trump praised slain Fijian Indian American police officer's service and offered condolences to his wife, Amanika "Mika" Chand-Singh, during a phone call on January 3.

A statement released by White House spokesperson Sarah Sanders about the President's call to Ronil Singh's family read: "This afternoon, President Trump spoke with the family and law enforcement colleagues of fallen Newman, California, police officer Ronald [sic] 'Ron' Singh. The President praised Officer Singh's service to his fellow citizens, offered condolences, and commended law enforcements, rapid investigation, response and apprehension of the subject. Included in the President's call were Corporal Singh's wife Amanika [sic] 'Mika' Chand Singh; Newman California Police Chief Randy Richardson and sheriff Andy Christianson of Stanislaus County California."

People waving American flags lined up along the streets of the Central Valley town of Newman, where a viewing was held for Singh. On January 5 hundreds paid tribute to the slain officer at CrossPoint Community Church in Modesto during the funeral service.

## US lawmakers demand accountability for killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** In December, several of Trump's Republicans joined Democrats to defy the president and pass Senate resolutions to end US military support for the Saudi-led coalition in the war in Yemen and blame Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for Khashoggi's murder. US lawmakers called on January 10 for Washington to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at one of the country's consulates in Turkey and vowed that Congress would act if the Trump administration did not. More than a dozen senators and members of the House of Representatives. (Reuters)

# Trump-Modi discuss bilateral cooperation in Afghanistan

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump discussed a range of bilateral issues including reducing the U.S. trade deficit with India and increasing their cooperation in Afghanistan in a telephone call on Monday, January 7, the White House said.

"The leaders agreed to strengthen the U.S.-India strategic partnership in 2019 and exchanged perspectives on how to reduce the U.S. trade deficit with India, expand security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, and increase cooperation in Afghanistan," the White House said in a statement.

In Afghanistan, Trump is planning to withdraw more than 5,000 of the 14,000 US troops from there, a US official said last month.

The statement issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs did not mention the subjects discussed between the two leaders.

"The two leaders took positive note of growing bilateral cooperation in defence, counter-terrorism and energy and coordination on regional and global issues. They agreed to continue to work together for further strengthening India-US bilateral relations in 2019", the MEA said in their statement.



*Modi and Trump discussed a range of bilateral issues over telephone*

*Pic tweeted by @narendramodi.in*

**contd from page 1**

## New Indian Ambassador to US Harsh Vardhan Shringla Assumes Charge: Will present credentials on Jan 11

Prior to his present posting, Ambassador Shringla was India's High Commissioner to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Incidentally, Ambassador Shringla's successor in Dhaka, Ambassador Riva Ganguly Das was Consul General of India in New York from March 2016 to July 2017. In the course of a diplomatic career spanning 35 years, Ambassador Shringla has held a variety of



*Ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla chairing a meeting of the embassy staff at the Embassy of India in Washington on Jan 9 Photo / Courtesy Indian Embassy*

positions in New Delhi and abroad. He has served as High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh and Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Thailand. He has also served in France (UNESCO); USA (UN, New York); Vietnam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City); Israel and South Africa (Durban).

Ambassador Shringla has served in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi as Joint Secretary (Director General) responsible for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Maldives. He has also headed the United Nations Political and SAARC Divisions in the Ministry. Earlier, he served as Director of the Northern Division dealing with Nepal and Bhutan and as Deputy Secretary of the Europe West Division.

Ambassador Shringla has graduated from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University and has worked in the Corporate and Public Sectors in India prior to joining the Indian Foreign Service. He has pursued courses and published papers on conflict prevention, economic diplomacy, the Indian diaspora and India-Bangladesh relations.

Ambassador Shringla speaks French, Vietnamese and Nepalese apart from English and Indian languages. He is married to Hemal Shringla and has one son.

## US Troop withdrawal from Syria will happen, says Mike Pompeo



*Mike Pompeo said Thursday, January 10, that a full US troop withdrawal from Syria announced by President Donald Trump last month will happen (File photo)*

**CAIRO (TIP):** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Thursday, January 10, that a full US troop withdrawal from Syria announced by President Donald Trump last month will go ahead despite widespread criticism.

The US top diplomat made his remarks while on a whistle-stop tour of the Middle East to address the concerns of regional allies about the surprise pullout plan.

"President Trump's decision to withdraw our troops has been made. We will do that," Pompeo told a joint press conference in Cairo with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

Earlier this week, US National Security Advisor John Bolton laid out conditions for the pullout, including the defeat of the Islamic State group in Syria and guarantees for the safety of Washington's Kurdish allies in the campaign, who have been threatened with an imminent offensive by Turkey.

Bolton's comments were widely seen as backtracking on Trump's announcement.

"There is no contradiction whatsoever. This is a story made up by the media," said Pompeo, underscoring Washington's continuing commitment to preventing any resurgence by IS.

From Cairo, Pompeo is scheduled to head to the capitals of the six Gulf Arab states to make the US case.

# Do not make any changes at Kartarpur Sahib Complex: American Sikhs Urge Pakistan

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Sikh groups in the US have urged Pakistan government not to make any structural changes at the Kartarpur Sahib Complex to accommodate the upcoming influx of visitors from around the world. Kartarpur Sahib is the place where the founder of the Sikh Faith Guru Nanak Dev Ji, spent 18.5 years of his life.

The appeal has been made by the American Sikh Council (ASC) and the Sikhs in America (SIA).

In November, both Pakistani and Indian governments agreed to open Kartarpur Corridor for Sikhs to visit the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Kartarpur Sahib can be called the first Gurdwara which was established in 1521. Bhai Duni Chand donated 100 acres to Guru Nanak Sahibji where he started to till the land and use it for farming.

"Any structural changes and/or additions to accommodate upcoming huge visitors either coming from India, Pakistan or Sikh diaspora living across globe for lodging to restrooms and more must be done at a distance, away from the main Kartarpur Sahib Complex, so that the Kartarpur Sahib original farms, natural areas spread around 100 acres of land that belonged to Guru Sahibji, and the forest areas around the River Ravi can retain as much of its originality as



*Kartarpur Sahib, the place where the founder of the Sikh Faith Guru Nanak Dev Ji, spent 18.5 years of his life*

possible. This needs to be preserved in its original landscape for posterity," a message on the ASC's website said.

"ASC reiterates its plea to keep the Kartarpur Sahib complex in its current simplicity as that is what Guru Baba Nanak Sahibji insisted on his entire life. Sikhs everywhere yearn to visit the Kartarpur Sahib and see the fields that our wondrous 'Guru' tilled with his own hands, the place

where he lived, the trees he sat under and feel and touch their forehead on the same dusty soil that our 'Guru' walked on!", it further added.

ASC also thanked the Pakistan government for opening the Kartarpur corridor and taking this proactive step towards peace and amity of two people who have so much in common, from language to food, from poetry to clothes and so much more.

## Congressman Krishnamoorthi requests to withhold his salary for the period of Government Shutdown



*Rep. Krishnamoorthi wrote a letter to Philip G. Kiko, the Chief Administrative Officer, requesting his salary be withheld from January 1st through the remainder of the shutdown*

**CHICAGO (TIP):** Indian American Congressman from Illinois Raja Krishnamoorthi has requested that his salary from January 1st through the remainder of the shutdown be withheld, delaying his pay until the government reopens, in solidarity with workers who aren't being paid while also donating his pay from the December portion of the shutdown to local charities.

"The federal shutdown would end immediately if President Trump chose to stop holding federal workers hostage to his demand for billions in taxpayer dollars for an unnecessary wall. I am actively working and voting to restore funding and provide pay to the Border Agents, TSA staff, tax refund processors, federal loan administrators, and other workers who are doing their jobs in service to the American people. In solidarity with government employees working for the American people without pay, furloughed workers, and taxpayers denied government services because of this shutdown, I've requested that my salary be withheld until the conclusion of the shutdown. I'm donating my pay from the December portion of the shutdown to charity. It is my hope that the President embraces our efforts to reopen the government and finally agrees to bring this shutdown to an end" he said in a statement.

In his letter to Philip G. Kiko, the Chief Administrative Officer, requesting his salary be withheld from January 1st through the remainder of the shutdown, Krishnamoorthi wrote, "As with the previous two shutdowns that have occurred during my time as a Member of Congress, I know that in the event of a lapse in appropriations, Members will continue to receive their salary despite the government shutdown.

"I respectfully request that my pay be withheld during the current lapse in government appropriations starting on January 1st, 2019, and ask it continue to be withheld until this shutdown ends."

# Embassy of India Celebrates Christmas

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** A Christmas celebration was organized at Embassy of India on January 4, 2019. The event was attended by a large number of guests from Indian diaspora, including members of the Indian Christian community and representatives from media. Chargé d'affaires Ambassador Santosh Jha addressed the gathering. The program included invocation by Rev Binoy Akkalayil Lucka, Parochial Vicar, St. Lawrence Catholic Church.

Dr. Graceson Kannamplave of the Evangelical Order highlighted the significance of Christmas and its relevance to India.

The celebration featured singing of Christmas carols by the choir of Memorial First India Methodist Church Choir.

*(Source: Indian Embassy)*



*The event was attended by a large number of guests*

# Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein 'plans to resign'



*Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein is reported to have plans to resign*

*Official portrait*

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Top justice department official Rod Rosenstein, who oversaw the inquiry into alleged Russian meddling in 2016, is planning to quit, according to media reports.

The deputy attorney general reportedly made the decision to step down and was not forced out by the White House. But he has been a frequent target of President Donald Trump's criticism.

Rosenstein had reportedly considered resigning last fall after a report emerged that he suggested secretly recording Mr Trump.

The no 2 US Department of Justice official plans to stay on until the confirmation of attorney general nominee William Barr, sources say.

Senate hearings for Mr Barr's confirmation are scheduled to begin on 15 January.

If confirmed, Mr Barr will succeed acting attorney General Matthew Whitaker, who replaced former Attorney General Jeff Sessions after he was fired by Mr Trump.

There is no set timeline for Mr Rosenstein's departure, however.

CBS News reports that Mr Rosenstein will depart in the next few weeks, after Mr Barr is expected to take over, in order to ensure a smooth transition.

According to Fox News and ABC News, Mr Rosenstein had long planned to leave after two years as deputy attorney general. White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told Fox News on Wednesday, January 9, that she knew "the deputy attorney general has always planned to roughly stay around two years".

"My guess is that he is making room for the new attorney general to build a team that he wants around him," she added. Rosenstein has spent his career at the Department of Justice, and most recently served for 12 years as the US Attorney General for the state of Maryland before beginning his current role in April 2017.

## Ayodhya hearing on 29th as judge recuses

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The hearing in the politically sensitive Ayodhya dispute was deferred to January 29 after Justice UU Lalit, part of a five-judge Constitution Bench set up to decide the case, today recused himself.

The development took place after senior counsel Rajiv Dhavan, representing a Muslim party in the case, pointed out that Justice Lalit had as a lawyer represented a contemnor in a contempt matter relating to the Ayodhya case against former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh in 1997.

While pointing out the possible conflict of interest at the outset of the hearing, Dhavan said he was not seeking Justice Lalit's recusal. But the judge showed "disinclination" to participate in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case hearing any further.

Led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, the Bench had Justice SA Bobde, Justice NV Ramana and Justice DY Chandrachud on it.

## If talks can be held with Taliban, why not Hurriyat: Farooq

**KOLKATA (TIP):** Referring to Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat's comments on holding talks with the Taliban for peace in Afghanistan, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on Thursday asked why the centre was not initiating a dialogue with the Hurriyat leaders in the Valley.

Speaking at a seminar entitled 'J&K-The Road Ahead' in Kolkata, Mr Abdullah said leaders like former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee held talks with the separatist leaders to end the cycle of violence in the state.

General Rawat had on Wednesday said there should be talks with the Taliban to bring peace in Afghanistan, but asserted that the engagement must be without any preconditions.

National Conference president Abdullah also emphasised that Army and force can never solve the internal crisis in Kashmir and hoped that dialogues to solve the issues would be reinitiated after the Lok Sabha polls.

## BJD to fight Lok Sabha polls on its own

**BHUBANESWAR (TIP):** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today said the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls on its own and identified rising fuel prices, growing agrarian distress and unemployment as three major issues which will dominate the elections.

Soon after the poll results in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the four-time Odisha chief minister had said that the Bharatiya Janata Party lost after ignoring farmers' plight and not implementing the MS Swaminathan Committee recommendation.

While participating in an interactive programme of India Today's Mind Rocks, 2019, Mr Patnaik indicated that the same agrarian distress will play a key role in the upcoming elections in the country.

"Rising fuel prices, growing agrarian distress and unemployment are the three major issues to dominate the 2019 general elections," he said.

# Alok Verma removed as CBI chief by PM Modi-led selection committee

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A three-member committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday by a majority vote removed Alok Verma as CBI Director, two days after the Supreme Court scrapped a government order and reinstated him.

The committee, which also included Mallikarjun Kharge, the Congress party's leader in the Lok Sabha, and Supreme Court Justice A K Sikri, removed Verma after considering the Central Vigilance Commission's (CVC) investigation of corruption charges against the officer.

There were eight counts of charges of corruption and dereliction of duty against him in the CVC report. Modi and Sikri, who appeared as a nominee of Supreme Court Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, agreed with the CVC's report and Kharge dissented.

Verma has been posted as Director General Fire Service, Civil Defence and Home Guards, under the Union Home Ministry. Nageshwar Rao will be in charge of the CBI.

The Congress party said on Twitter the committee hadn't given Verma a chance to defend himself and this showed Modi was "too afraid" of an independent investigation of allegations of corruption against his government.

The Supreme Court reinstated Verma on Tuesday as CBI Director and set aside the CVC's and the government's October 23 order removing him but said he will not take any policy decision till the PM-led committee goes into the issue afresh.

Verma, a 1979-batch IPS officer, will retire at the end of this month.



## TRIED TO UPHOLD CBI INTEGRITY: VERMA

Alok Verma, who was removed from the post of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director two days after resuming office, has claimed that he was transferred on the basis of "false, unsubstantiated and frivolous allegations".

Talking about the issue, Verma said that the CBI must function without external influences. "I have tried to uphold the integrity of the institution while attempts were being made to destroy it," he said.

He also said, "I have been transferred to another post pursuant to the orders of the committee which was assigned the task of deciding my future course of action as Director CBI. I have stood up for the integrity of the institution, and if asked, will do it again in order to uphold the rule of law."

## Govt plans basic income for poor, aid for farmers

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** With its legislation on a 10 per cent quota for the general category poor in jobs and education getting parliamentary backing in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-led government is now exploring the possibility of providing direct benefit transfers to those below the poverty line (BPL) through a universal basic income (UBI) and for farmers through direct investment support.

According to sources, the government may announce a UBI of Rs 2,500 per month initially to families below the poverty line. The money would be directly transferred to this section while ending other sops such as food and LPG subsidy to them, the sources said.

The UBI dole is expected to take care of half the nutritional requirements of a family of five in rural areas and one-third requirement of those who make the urban poor. The government is expected to budget around Rs 32,000 crore for April-June 2019.

Sources said the actual number of beneficiaries would depend on the funds that the Reserve Bank of India transfers to the national exchequer. Persons below poverty line are estimated to be 27.5 per cent of the country's population.

The 2017 Economic Survey had flagged the UBI scheme as "a conceptually appealing idea" and a possible alternative to social welfare programmes targeted at reducing poverty.

The UBI was signalled in the BJP manifesto for the assembly elections in Rajasthan where the party said it would arrive at the income figure "after taking into consideration (the beneficiary's) income from various sources and the government benefits (he receives)".

For the farmers, who comprise 47 per cent of



the country's population, the government is considering an adaptation of Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme where farmers tilling less than an acre of land would be given Rs 4,000 per acre, or a proportion thereof depending on the size of land holding, for each of the two cropping seasons — Rabi and Kharif.

The money for transfers to farmers would be shored up by discontinuing the subsidies on fertilisers and seed, the sources said, indicating that a clear picture of the scheme would emerge in July — the start of the cropping season.

Transfers to farmers would be dispensed with after an updation of land records with recognised tenancy by the state to ensure that it does not go to the landowner. The states, in turn, would be encouraged to establish lease farming as an integral part of index of Ease of Doing Agri-Business.

## NCW notice to Rahul Gandhi over remark against Nirmala

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday issued a notice to Congress president Rahul Gandhi for his "extremely misogynistic, offensive and unethical" remarks against Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a rally in Jaipur.

In the notice, the women's panel said it has taken suo motu cognisance of news reports which appeared in various print and electronic media dated January 9, "wherein it is reported that you have allegedly made remarks insulting against a woman minister".

"What is @rahulgandhi trying to imply with his misogynistic statement- "... ek mahila say kaha meri raksha kijiye?" Does he think women are weak? The irony- calling an accomplished defence minister of the largest democracy a weak person. @nsitharaman @narendramodi @ncwindia," NCW chief Rekha Sharma tweeted. The Congress chief at the farmers' rally on Wednesday had said, "The watchman with a 56-inch chest ran away and told a woman, Sitharaman ji, defend me. I won't be able to defend myself, defend me."

The NCW in the notice said, "It has been reported that you allegedly said "..... the PM ran away and asked a 'mahila'— a veiled reference to Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman — to defend him".

# Mayawati, Akhilesh may announce alliance for 2019 Lok Sabha election

LUCKNOW (TIP): Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj party (BSP) chief Mayawati have called a joint press conference in Lucknow on Saturday where they are expected to formally announce their alliance for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

National secretary of SP, Rajendra Chaudhary as well as BSP's, Satish Chandra Mishra issued a statement today about the joint press conference.

"Yes, what else could the joint press conference will be about since the alliance has been in works since March last year," said an SP leader when asked about the event.

The two parties first publically spoke about the alliance in March last year and then experimented with it in three Lok Sabha bypolls and one state assembly bypolls. The BJP lost all those seats to the alliance. The SP-BSP alliance can be a formidable opposition to the BJP which won 71 Lok Sabha seats in UP in 2014.

Akhilesh is also likely to call on Mayawati on Friday.

The two leaders, in a recent meeting in Delhi, discussed the modalities of seat sharing for the 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, according to sources.

The talks, sources said, did not account for the Congress. It was proposed that both



parties will equally distribute between them 78 Lok Sabha seats. They won't field candidates in Amethi and Rae Bareilly, the Lok Sabha constituencies of Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi, respectively, sources added.

Akhilesh and Mayawati have so far ruled out Congress as a partner of the alliance, because the grand old party is looking at contesting more than a dozen seats, which the SP and the BSP are not ready to concede, said

another leader familiar with negotiations.

When asked to comment, Congress president Rahul Gandhi in an interview to Gulf News said that the party has the ability to surprise people with results in UP. "There are very interesting things that the Congress party can do in Uttar Pradesh... the Congress idea is very powerful for Uttar Pradesh. So, we are very confident of our ability in Uttar Pradesh and we will surprise people," he said.

Source: HT

## At 80, Sheila Dikshit back to steer Delhi Cong in LS polls

NEW DELHI (TIP): In a political development in the national Capital ahead of the Lok Sabha polls this year, former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit was on Thursday appointed as the chief of the Delhi Congress.



Her name was cleared by none other than party chief Rahul Gandhi following a brainstorming meeting of State Congress leaders on Thursday.

Dikshit is an old war horse and a favourite among the party workers for her experience of being three-time Chief Minister of Delhi. In view of her age and health concerns, the Congress has appointed three working presidents to assist her.

Dikshit, 80, makes a comeback into Delhi politics ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The longest serving Chief Minister of Delhi — from 1998 to 2013 — Dikshit stayed away from active politics following the Congress' defeat in Assembly elections. Dikshit had represented Gole Market constituency of New Delhi thrice and was one of the most successful Chief Ministers who is credited for adorning the landscape of Delhi.

Interestingly, she replaces Ajay Maken, who is known as her protégé-turned-bête noire. Maken had been appointed president of the Delhi Congress following the party's defeat in the Assembly elections in 2014, when Dikshit was vanquished by Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal.

AICC incharge of Delhi Congress PC Chacko announced Dikshit's appointment at a Press conference at the party headquarters.

The three working presidents who will assist Dikshit are: Devendra Yadav, a two-time MLA and AICC secretary, Rajesh Liloithia, also a two-time MLA, AICC secretary and known Dalit leader, and Haroon Yusuf, who was a Minister in the Dikshit Government.

Maken had earlier conveyed to the party leadership, his inability to continue as the DPCC chief in view of the serious health issues he is facing. He is suffering from a spinal ailment, said sources close to the Delhi leader.

Despite being perceived as having worked hard to revive the party in Delhi, Maken met with little success electorally. The party failed to win any of the three municipalities in Delhi, and could not register a victory in the by-elections. According to sources, he was unhappy with a section of party leaders who want to forge an alliance with the AAP in Delhi.

With just months to go for the general elections, this is Dikshit's third major assignment from the party after ruling Delhi for 15 consecutive years. She served as Kerala Governor and then Congress had named her the chief ministerial candidate during the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

During her three terms, she became the face of development of Delhi but the rise of Kejriwal due to corruption against the Congress led to her downfall after 15 years in the saddle. After her loss she was appointed Governor of Kerala in 2013 but she resigned after Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. She was briefly given charge of Uttar Pradesh but quit for health reasons.

## Regional parties back in game; Congress regains confidence

NEW DELHI (TIP): The political weather in India is going to be the hottest like never before as we go for the national election, in which political powerhouse Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be taking on the reenergised opposition led by Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and a slew of regional satraps. Overall, the 2019 election may not be a repeat of 2014 as the lost out opposition regains the ground focused on the line of attack.

The picture became clearer after two years of back-to-back state assembly elections and by elections as 2017 showcased the victory streak of Modi-led BJP while the juggernaut got halted after the resurgent Congress fought back under the leadership of Gandhi in 2018. Congress has recaptured power in major states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and rested power in Karnataka in alliance with HD Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular) or JDS. It inched scarily closer to BJP in the December 2017 assembly election in Gujarat. Another fear for BJP is the rise of regional parties, especially when its NDA allies are busy ending the ties.

In Uttar Pradesh, where BJP and its allies won 73 Lok Sabha seats out of the 80 in 2014, Mayawati's Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) and Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi party (SP) have decided to go together. The scene is murky in Maharashtra, where BJP and Shiv Sena together won 41 out of 48 seats. At present, BJP and Sena are at loggerheads, attacking each other. Sena chief Udhav Thackeray earlier said that the party would contest election alone. BJP is looking to patch up when PM visits the state next week, while the reports say that Congress and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) have almost concluded seat sharing.

BJP went ahead in seat sharing in Bihar, dividing the seats equally with Nitish Kumar's JDU after giving six seats to Ram



Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP). BJP, which won 22 seats in the state in 2014, will be contesting from only 17 seats. JDU is a big gainer in the game as it got 17 seats in place of the 2 seats it won in 2014.

Congress and its ally Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) are yet to finalise its seats.

Seating sharing for Congress in Tamil Nadu (with DMK), Andhra Pradesh (with TDP), Karnataka (with JDS) and Jharkhand (with JMM) may not be a tough task as the partners agreed upon the common agenda of removing the BJP government from the power. But BJP's equations with alliance partners are not presently in good terms as we have seen it broke relations with PDP, TDP, Upendra Kushwaha's RLSP and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), besides many smaller parties. Its traditional allies Shiv Sena and

Apna Dal appear disappointed with BJP. But BJP under Modi-Shah duo had proved earlier that it is capable to pull off victory even in difficult situations— for instance the victories in north eastern states, including Tripura.

It is going to be a direct fight between BJP and Congress in at least five major states— Gujarat, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Haryana, while in others the regional parties will wield its powers. The non-BJP and non-Congress parties like Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal (BJD), K Chandrashekar Rao's Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), YS Jaganmohan Reddy YSR Congress, the left parties including CPM and CPI, Aam Admi Party and NC and PDP in Jammu and Kashmir will be other major regional forces who can challenge the national biggies in their respective regions.

# NJSO presents 'Music Speaks' 2019 Winter Festival

By Mabel Pais

NJSO's three-week Winter Festival, led by Xian Zhang, is headlined by Emanuel Ax, Dawn Upshaw and Daniil Trifonov.

Concerts feature works by Mahler, Maria Schneider, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, Schumann, Strauss. NJSO Accents include performances by dancer Maurice Chestnut and poet Kurtis Lamkin, NJSO Music and Wellness Program panel Jan 10-27 in six New Jersey venues

A trio of renowned guest artists with distinct musical voices-pianists Emanuel Ax and Daniil Trifonov and soprano Dawn Upshaw-headline the NJSO's Winter Festival, "Music Speaks" this month. The Orchestra's signature artistic event takes place across three weekends, January 10-27, in six New Jersey venues.

"For the Winter Festival, the NJSO brings in three of the top living artists," Zhang says. "Personally speaking, it's a highlight of my career to conduct these three soloists in three consecutive weeks."

The music director says: "The Winter Festival is the main highlight of our season theme, and this year's theme-Music Speaks-is about music inspired by great poetry, stories and



NJSO with Xian Zhang in performance Photo/ Fred Stucker

**"The Winter Festival is the main highlight of our season theme, and this year's theme-Music Speaks-is about music inspired by great poetry, stories and myths."**

**"Personally speaking, it's a highlight of my career to conduct these three soloists in three consecutive weeks."**

- Xian Zhang, Music Director

A fusion of movement, music and spoken word: dancer Maurice Chestnut and poet Kurtis Lamkin entertain in the lobby before the performance.

Additional concert information and artist bios are available at [njsymphony.org/ax](http://njsymphony.org/ax).

## WEEK II: Dawn Upshaw & Xian Zhang

Fri, Jan 18, at 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton  
Sat, Jan 19, at 8 pm | Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Sun, Jan 20 at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark  
Xian Zhang, conductor  
Dawn Upshaw, soprano  
Jay Anderson, bass  
Frank Kimbrough, piano

STRAUSS Also sprach Zarathustra  
SCHUMANN Piano Concerto  
SCRIABIN Poem of Ecstasy (NJSO Premiere)

## NJSO ACCENTS

Poetry in Motion - Fri, Jan 25, at 7 pm

A fusion of movement, music and spoken word: dancer Maurice Chestnut and poet Kurtis Lamkin entertain in the lobby before the performance.

Prelude Performance - Sat, Jan 26, at 7:15 pm

Come early and hear the extraordinary Anne Lieberman Ensemble from the NJSO Youth Orchestras in a special performance in the Heldrich Room.

For more information on the Winter Festival and related events, visit [njsymphony.org/winterfestival](http://njsymphony.org/winterfestival).

For Concert tickets, visit [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

Additional concert information and artist bios are available at [njsymphony.org/trifonov](http://njsymphony.org/trifonov).

## NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by The Wall Street Journal, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang - a "dynamic podium presence" - praised by The New York Times for her "technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"-continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra,



NJSO with Xian Zhang at NJPAC Photo/ Fred Stucker

myths. Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* was inspired by Nietzsche; Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* was inspired by Lord Byron. Scriabin wrote the music for his *Poem of Ecstasy*, then wrote 300 lines of poetry to accompany the music."

Ax performs Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 22 on a program featuring Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony*, based on Lord Byron's epic poem of doomed love (January 10-13 in Englewood, Newark and New Brunswick).

Upshaw sings Maria Schneider's *Winter Morning Walks*, which draws from former Poet Laureate Ted Kooser's collection of poetry written during his cancer recovery, and Mahler's Fourth Symphony, which finds wisdom in a child's vision of heaven (January 18-20 in Princeton, Red Bank and Newark).

Trifonov performs Schumann's Piano Concerto on a program that also includes Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy* and Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* (January 25-27 in Newark, New Brunswick and Morristown).

NJSO Accent events include pre-concert performances by dancer Maurice Chestnut and poet Kurtis Lamkin, panel discussions with NJSO musicians who perform in hospital settings through the NJSO Music and Wellness Program, and a prelude performance by the Anne Lieberman Ensemble from the NJSO Youth Orchestras. More information on NJSO Accent events is available at [njsymphony.org/accents](http://njsymphony.org/accents).

## Program

WEEK I: Emanuel Ax & Xian Zhang  
Thu, Jan 10, at 7:30 pm | bergenPAC in Englewood  
Sat, Jan 12, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark  
Sun, Jan 13 at 3 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Xian Zhang, conductor  
Emanuel Ax, piano  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
MOZART Piano Concerto No. 22  
TCHAIKOVSKY Manfred Symphony

## NJSO ACCENTS

Poetry in Motion - Sat, Jan 12, at 7 pm



Xian Zhang Conducts The Orchestra Photo/ Fred Stucker

Scott Robinson, clarinet  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
MARIA SCHNEIDER Winter Morning Walks (NJSO Premiere)  
MAHLER Symphony No. 4

## NJSO ACCENTS

Music and Wellness - Fri, Jan 18, at 7 pm and Sun, Jan 20, after the concert

Join NJSO musicians who perform in hospital settings through the Orchestra's Music and Wellness Program, as well as special guests, for a discussion about healing and the arts.

Additional concert information and artist bios are available at [njsymphony.org/upshaw](http://njsymphony.org/upshaw).

## WEEK III: Daniil Trifonov & Xian Zhang

Fri, Jan 25, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark  
Sat, Jan 26, at 8 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Sun, Jan 27 at 3 pm | Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown  
Xian Zhang, conductor  
Daniil Trifonov, piano  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra



Emanuel Ax, pianist Photo / Maurice Jerry Beznos

the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People; NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez; and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners program.

For more information on NJSO, visit [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org). Tickets for NJSO events in general are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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



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## MALAIKA ARORA AND ARJUN KAPOOR ARE IN A RELATIONSHIP: KARAN JOHAR

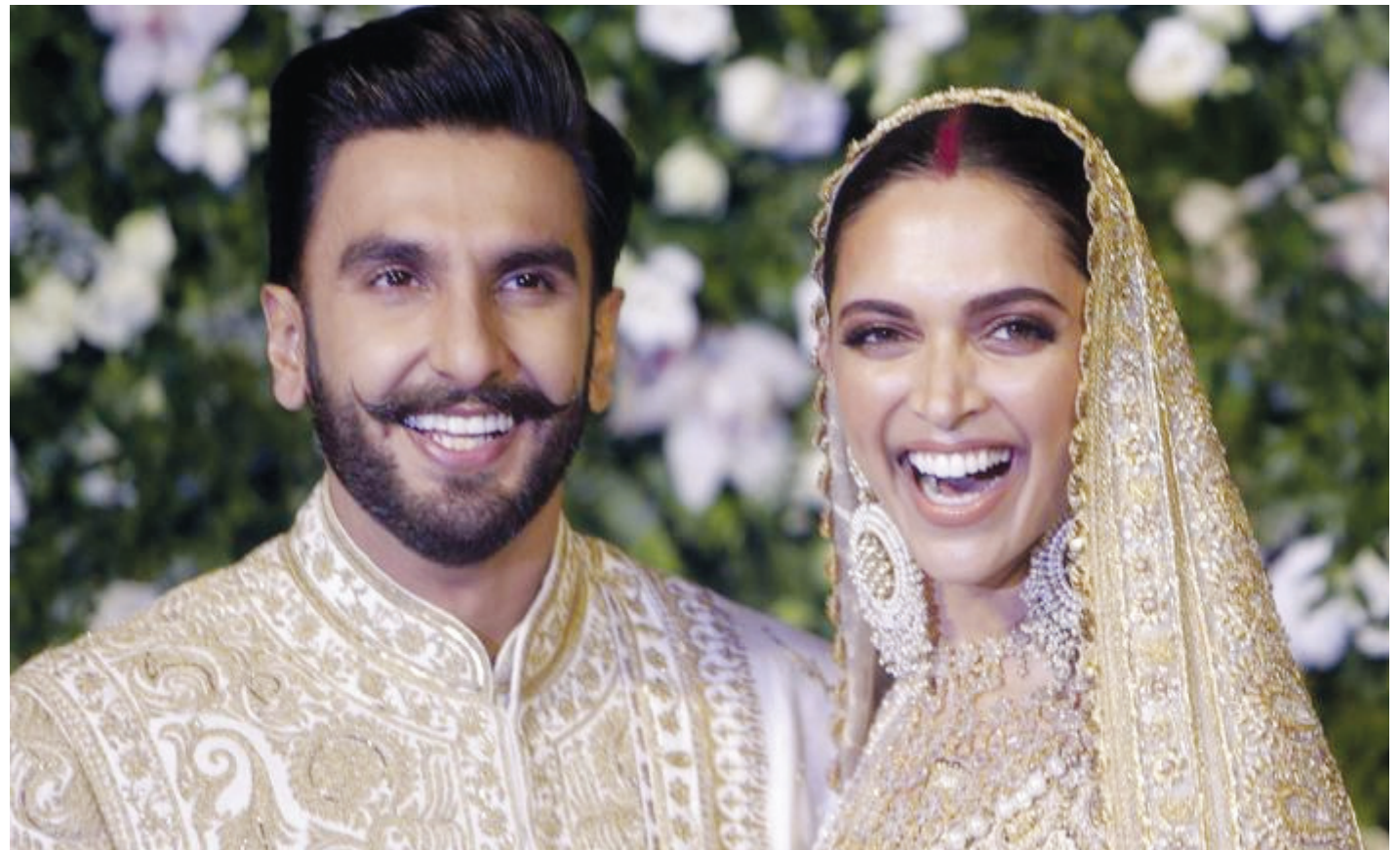
**W**hile having candid conversations, Bollywood stars tend to share some exclusive details from their personal lives on Koffee With Karan. However, this time it wasn't a Bollywood couple that confirmed their relationship on the show, but Karan himself.

In the recent episode with KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya, Karan revealed that Arjun Kapoor and Malaika are dating. When the director-producer asked Rahul about his celebrity crush from Bollywood, the cricketer replied saying that he doesn't have any. To this Karan asked if it was Malaika, but the cricketer said that she was his crush but not anymore. Karan asked if it was because she was dating Arjun Kapoor?

Confirming the rumours, this is how Karan revealed that Arjun and Malaika are dating.

In one of the previous episodes, Arjun confirmed that he wasn't single but didn't confirm whom he was dating. He also said that he was open to marriage as he wants stability in life. He said, "Last six months have taught me more about life than I imagined. I was just doing the right thing at one point of time and then I realised it snowballed into something being more relevant and important in my life. I finally fell like I have a sense of belonging and a family."

# DEEPIKA IS SO GHARELU, I LOVE IT: RANVEER SINGH



**R**anveer Singh is in high spirits these days as his latest film Simmba draws closer to the Rs 200 crore mark. The actor looked super excited as he arrived like a king while waving to the crowd from the sunroof of his car at the success bash of the film. On the personal front too, Ranveer is in a happy state of mind and has been praising his wife Deepika Padukone in all his interviews. In a recent interview with Famously Filmfare, Ranveer can be seen calling her 'gharelu' and how he just loves this side of hers.

The actor who wears his heart on his sleeve says in the interview, "She is so gharelu...I love it...I love it." He can also be

seen singing praise of himself by saying, "I am telling you I am going to be the husband of the millennium. I am going to glide and breeze through it."

The small clip also shows him talking about flirting as he says, "Having a polite conversation with a person for a moment is not flirting."

The actor is overwhelmed after working with Rohit Shetty in Simmba.

The film got good response from the critics and continues to hold fort ever since it hit the theatres on December 28. Simmba is Ranveer's highest opening film as well. Talking about the film, the actor says, "Everything I was born to do, I have done in

Rohit Shetty's film from running at high speed, dialogues, fights to larger-than-life projection from a low angle on a huge canvas."

Ranveer has also made a few visits to the movie theatres to witness the reaction of the audience.

He was recently spotted by the paparazzi with his face covered with a muffler at the Gaiety Galaxy movie theatre.

The actor is now gearing up for the release of his next flick Gully Boy. He plays a rapper in the film based on the life of rapper Divine. The film has been directed by Zoya Akhtar and stars Alia Bhatt as the leading lady.

## Bipasha Basu turns 40: Raaz co-star Dino Morea wishes the actress on her birthday

**"I**m one of those people who loves birthdays," says Bipasha Basu Singh Grover who turns 40 today. As the actor plans to celebrate the day with her family, she says that her birthdays have always been memorable.

"Though no life-changing events have happened around the day, but it's one of the most important days in my life because thanks to this day, I can experience such a beautiful life. I am only grateful," says the actor. On Bipasha Basu's birthday on Monday, apart from her husband and actor Karan Singh Grover sharing a heart-warming message on social media, Dino Morea, her co-star from the movie Raaz has also wished the actress on Twitter along with other Bollywood celebrities.

He shared a picture and wrote, "Happiest birthday Bipasha wish you loads of love and happiness."

A string of Bollywood celebrities also took to Twitter to wish Bipasha.

Karan Singh Grover tweeted on Sunday night: "It's the best day of the year again! Happy birthday my love Bipasha. Thank you for being born and making my life so beautiful and complete!" The Raaz actress took to her Instagram account where she shared a video of herself blowing the candles.

She captioned the video: "I love my birthdays. I live this awesome life full of love, thanks to this day. Well all the emotions do kick in on my birthday.. but the focus continues to stay on the cakes and the biriyani(rice). It's a ritual."

On the work front, Bipasha is returning to the big screen after four years with husband Karan Singh Grover with Bhushan Patel's Aadat.

**Bipasha Basu shared pictures and videos from her birthday celebrations with friends and family.**





## MYSTERIOUS FIJI WATER GIRL PHOTOBOMBS STARS AT GOLDEN GLOBES

When nobody was looking, a mysterious brunette managed to become first viral sensation of 2019 by photobombing almost every red carpet shot at the Golden Globes 2019. From Nicole Kidman to Jim Carrey to Idris Elba to Richard Madden, the woman holding a tray of Fiji Water bottles and wearing a blue dress photobombed all the leading stars.

While the internet is still deciding if it was a savvy model or a brazen publicity stunt, internet can't have enough of the woman – now revealed to be a Los Angeles-based model Kelleth Cuthbert. She looked directly into the camera as she walked into the photos of the stars before the 76th Golden Globes ceremony.

She posted the photos on her own account, with one photo bearing caption, "Not the worst way to spend a Sunday... #goldenglobesfijigirl #fijiwatergirl." The photos soon spawned memes and even a spoof Twitter account.

Fiji Water tweeted from its official handle, "We're so glad everyone is talking about our water! \*senses ominous presence\* She's right behind us, isn't she? #FIJWatergirl".

Talking to CNet, she said, "I've been photobombing since I was a kid. My family ... we're all a bunch of hams." She called the photo where she appeared behind Carrey her favourite. "It went by super fast. It's a split second. [The actors] are all on a mission."

# GWYNETH PALTROW REVEALS WHY BRAD PITT LOOKS SIMILAR TO HIS EXES

It was in the '90s when a young Brad Pitt and Gwyneth Paltrow were madly in love and engaged to get married. However, the couple broke off their engagement in 1997. Unlike his other exes, Gwyneth and he are on amicable terms now and every so often, the Avengers: Endgame actress would openly speak about Pitt and their relationship. Brad went on to get married to Jennifer Aniston and then Angelina Jolie. Whereas, Gwyneth was first married to Coldplay lead singer Chris Martin, and recently got married to Brad Falchuk.

There was a recent newspaper clipping from an edition of Daily Express, dated back to 2006, featuring Brad Pitt, which was going viral. The headline read, "Brad: the man who likes to look like his girlfriend," with photos of Brad posing with Jennifer, Angelina and Gwyneth. Twitterati went berserk with the similarities but they too could not solve the puzzle piece of Brad's obsession. Leave it to one of his exes to clear the air and solve the riddle. And no, it's not Angie!

When the clipping was shared on Instagram, Gwyneth went on to comment on the same revealing, "Or we like to look like him, let's face it." Note the use of "we," and we wonder if Jennifer and Angelina feel the same way as Gwyneth.

Hilarious, indeed!

Last year, while talking to Wall Street Journal magazine, Gwyneth got candid about her ex-fiance and how during her breakup with him in 1997, the level of scrutiny by the paparazzi was not that intense in comparison to today's times.

"Cameron Diaz and I talk about this all the time. We're like, 'Thank God in the early '90s there were [so few] paparazzi. Thank God.' We cry in gratitude that no one was following us around and seeing what we were doing. I remember when Brad Pitt and I broke up, it was on the cover of the New York Post and there was no one outside my house. That would never happen today," the actress shared.



## Margot Robbie will portray Barbie in upcoming movie about the child's toy

Australian actor Margot Robbie will play Barbie in the first live-action feature film about the iconic and controversial doll, who has enjoyed multiple careers in her 60-year lifetime.

Toymaker Mattel and movie studio Warner Bros announced on Tuesday that they were partnering to make the film, which will star the Oscar-nominated actress.

Robbie, 28, will also co-produce the film.

No plot, title or release date was announced for the film, which comes 60 years after the adult-figured Barbie fashion doll was launched in March 1959.

However, a statement from Robbie published by Mattel hints the film will aim to inspire audiences and focus on the positive aspects of the doll.

"Playing with Barbie promotes confidence, curiosity and communication throughout a child's journey to self-discovery," Robbie said. "I'm so honoured to take on this role and produce a film that I believe will have a tremendously positive impact on children and audiences worldwide."

Barbie has adopted more than 200 careers in her lifetime,

including robotics engineer, astronaut and teacher.

She is the best-known doll in the world and a cultural icon celebrated by the likes of Andy Warhol, the Paris Louvre museum, and the 1997 song Barbie Girl by Scandinavian pop group Aqua.

But critics said her curves and tiny frame promoted an unrealistic image for young girls, and sales began dropping in 2014, leading California-based Mattel to add a wider variety of skin tones, body shapes, hijab-wearing dolls and science kits to make the products more educational.

Originally from Dalby in Queensland, Robbie was given her big break in acting playing Donna Freedman on Neighbours in 2008.

She went on to appear in films such as Wolf of Wall Street in 2013 and the 2016 superhero movie Suicide Squad.

Robbie was nominated for an Academy Award for her starring role in the 2017 biopic I, Tonya.

She founded her own production company, LuckyChap Entertainment, in 2014 with her husband Tom Ackerley and some close friends.



# GURU GOBIND SINGH

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND LEGACY OF THE 10TH GURU

**G**uru Gobind Singh became tenth guru at a young age after his father's martyrdom. The Guru engaged in warfare fighting the tyranny and oppression of Islamic Mughal rulers who sought to suppress all other faiths and obliterate the Sikhs. He married, raised a family, and also founded a spiritual nation of saint soldiers. Though the tenth guru's lost his sons and mother, and countless Sikhs to martyrdom, he established a method of baptism, a code of conduct, and a sovereignty which survives until today.

Born at Patna in 1666, Guru Gobind Rai became tenth guru at age 9 following the martyrdom of his father, Ninth Guru Teg Bahadar.

This year, the birth anniversary of the guru will be observed on January 13.

At age 11 he married and eventually became the father of four sons. The guru, a prolific writer, compiled his compositions into a volume known as Dasam Granth.

At age 30, the tenth guru introduced the Amrit ceremony of initiation rites, established the Khalsa, and took the name Singh. Guru Gobind Singh fought important historic battles which robbed him of his sons and mother and eventually his own life at age 42, but his legacy lives on in his creation, the Khalsa. Before his death, he compiled the entire text of Adi Granth Sahib from memory. He infused the scripture with his light passed to him from First Guru Nanak through the succession of subsequent gurus, and ordained the scripture his everlasting successor Guru Granth Sahib.

### Birth and Early Life in Patna

Guru Gobind Singh, the only child of Guru Teg Bahadar and his wife Gujri, was named Gobind Rai at birth. Guru Teg Bahadar settled his family in Patna under the protection of the local Raja while he toured Assam and Bengal, and was not present at the birth. \*A Muslim mystic Saiyid Bhikhan Shah journeyed 800 miles and fasted in a prophetic quest to have darshan, and get a glimpse, of the infant prince.

The Raja's wife, Maini, had no child of her own and became very fond of Gobind Rai. Every day she prepared chole and poori (spicy chickpea curry and crispy flatbread) for him and his playmates. She later built a gurdwara in her home where she also fed the worshipers chole and poori. This custom still exists today and the gurdwara is now known as Maini Sangat.

### Education and Travel in Lakhnaur

Leaving his family in the care of Kirpal Chand. Guru Teg Bahadar resumed his duties went to Chak Nanki (Anandpur) ahead of his family. In 1670 The Guru sent word requesting Gobind Rai to be brought to Chak Nanki. Gobind Rai was tutored along the way astounding all who taught him with his brilliance. His early education included martial exercise and training.

In 1671, Prince Gobind Rai journeyed with his family through Danapur where the elderly Mai Ji, fed him khichri (khichdi) from her Handiclay kettle. Mai Ji, saved from her own meager stores until she stockpiled enough to feed the guru's entire family, and all of his entourage. When Mai Ji, wished for Gobind Rai to remain with her, he advised her to feed the hungry in his name. Gurdwara Handi Sahib, of Danapur, Bihar, has maintained the khichri tradition ever since. Prince Gobind Rai reached Lakhnaur on September 13, 1671, C.E. where his formal education of Gurमुखी and Persian began and the Muslim saint Arif-ud-Din came to meet him. The Pir proclaimed afterward to his Muhammadan disciples that darshan of the young prince had revealed to him the mysteries of the universe, unveiling the secrets of infinity.

### Childhood in Anandpur

When Gobind Rai was about six years old when, at last, he and his mother joined his father in Anandpur where his education continued. When Gobind Rai was about nine years old, a delegation of Hindu Pundits appealed to Guru Teg Bahadar for help resisting in forced conversion to Islam. Gobind Rai entered the council and asked what the meeting was about. His father explained, and the boy asked how a solution could be found. His father told him it would require the sacrifice of a great man. Gobind Rai told his father, that as a guru, he was the greatest of men.

### Inauguration and Father's Martyrdom

**Guru Gobind Singh who founded Khalsa in 1699 holds a unique place in the history of this country. Many historians look upon him as the savior of the Hindus. He was only 9 when he advised his father Guru Tegh Bahadur to make the supreme sacrifice for the Brahmins from Kashmir who were being forcibly converted to Islam. When he found all peaceful ways failing to persuade the Moghul rulers to stop atrocities on the Hindus and desist from forcible conversion, Guru Gobind Singh took to arms and waged a relentless struggle to protect the Hindus. He created a group of fearless fighters who did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the Guru and the cause. The struggle cost him his family - mother, wives and four young children. His is a saga of supreme sacrifice for the people, and for the faith. There is none in world history to match his courage of conviction and the spirit of sacrifice.**

**We, at THE INDIAN PANORAMA, on the occasion of the 353rd birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, pay our respectful tribute to the beloved Master.**



Guru Teg Bahadar made arrangements to leave Anandpur in order to intervene on behalf of Hindus who were being forcibly converted to Islam at sword point. Guru Teg Bahadar appointed his nine-year-old son Gobind Rai to be his successor and tenth guru of the Sikhs. Mughal officers acting under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb arrested and imprisoned the Guru and his companions. The Mughals employed all manner of atrocities and torture in an unsuccessful effort to coerce Guru Teg Bahadar and his companions to convert to Islam. Guru Teg Bahadar and his companions remained true to their faith until their final breath.

### Warrior

Gobind Rai engaged in martial training from early childhood. He had a child-sized arsenal of weapons. Games with his playmates took the form of mock battles. After his father's martyrdom, Guru Gobind Rai raised a guard, built a fortress, and practiced military maneuvers.

A number of minor conflicts arose with local adversaries over petty jealousies of neighboring kingdoms. After founding the Khalsa order, Guru Gobind Singh fought a series of major battles attempting to protect his Sikhs and Anandpur from assault by Mughal forces. Vastly outnumbered, courageous Khalsa warriors defended their holdings to the last breath.

### Poet

Guru Gobind Singh wrote prolifically while at Fort Paonta in Sirmour. He completed the Guru Granth, adding the compositions of his father Guru Bahadar, but including only one of his own. His remaining compositions are compiled in the Dasam Granth. Portions of his most important works appear in the five prayers, or Panj Bania, of the Sikhs daily prayer book, Nitnem and include:

- Jaap Sahib
- Tev Prasad Swayee
- Akal Ustat

### Other important works are:

- Shabad Hazaray, which some Sikhs include with their nitnem.
- Bichitra Natak, considered by many to be his autobiography.
- Chandi di Var, a rousing description of the battle.

### Guru Gobind Singh's Langar Legacy

When living in Patna as a toddler, Gobind Rai had a favorite food prepared for him daily by a childless queen who fed him while holding him on her own lap. Gurdwara Bal Lila of Patna, built as a tribute to the queen's kindness, is a living langar legacy and serves the tenth guru's favored langar of Chole and Poori to visiting devotees every day. A very old poor woman shared all she had saved to cook a kettle of Khichri for the Guru's family. The tradition of Mai Ji's selfless service is continued by Gurdwara Handi Sahib.

### Historic Battles

Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa warriors fought a series of battles between 1688 and 1707 against Mughal imperial forces advancing the Islamic policies of Emperor Aurangzeb. Though vastly outnumbered valourous Sikh men and women fearlessly served their Guru's cause with an undying devotion to their last breath.

### Personal Sacrifices of Guru Gobind Singh

Tyranny and warfare exacted a tremendous and tragic toll personal on Tenth Guru Gobind Singh. His father Ninth Guru Teg Bahadar was absent his birth and away ministering to Sikhs during much of the boys' childhood. Guru Teg Bahadar was martyred by Islamic Mughal leaders when Guru Gobind Singh was merely nine years of age. All four of the tenth guru's sons and his mother Gujri were also martyred by the Mughals. A great many Sikhs also lost their lives at the hands of the Mughal empire.

# INTRODUCING THE KHALSA & THE FIVE K'S TRADITION

In 1699, the Guru asked the Sikhs to assemble at Anandpur on Vaisakhi. The Guru with a sword in hand called for a volunteer from among the crowd who is ready to sacrifice his head. On his third call one Sikh named Daya Ram (later called Bhai Daya Singh) came forward. The Guru took him in a tent and returned alone to the crowd with blood dripping from his sword. Another volunteer was called by the Guru who was again taken inside the tent and after some time the Guru returned alone with the bloody sword. He continued the process with three more volunteers but after the fifth volunteer went inside the tent, the Guru came out with all the five volunteers unharmed. The Guru blessed the five volunteers namely Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh and called them the Panj Pyare (the five beloved ones) and the first Khalsa in the Sikh tradition. The Guru then took an iron bowl and prepared a solution of water and sugar stirring it with a double-edged sword calling it Amrit (nectar). The five volunteers then received the nectar from the Guru amidst recitations from the Adi Granth. With this the khande ka pahul (baptization ceremony) of the warrior community of Khalsa was initiated. A new surname of "Singh" meaning lion was given to them by the Guru. The Guru then asked the five baptized Sikhs to baptize him as a Khalsa and with this the Guru became the sixth Khalsa and from this time he came to be known as Guru Gobind Singh.

The Guru commanded the Sikhs to wear five items all the time which included Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (a comb made of wood), Kara (a bracelet made of iron), Kachera (a tieable undergarment made of 100% cotton) and Kirpan (a large iron dagger for self-defense). A code of discipline was introduced by him for the Khalsa warriors. These included prohibition of tobacco, eating 'halal' meat that is slaughtered as per Muslim ritual, fornication and adultery. The Khalsas consented never to communicate with followers of the rivals or their successors. The principle of equality was institutionalised in Sikhism with initiation of both men and women from different castes as Khalsas. The Guru played an instrumental role by institutionalising Khalsa in Sikhism thus strengthening the Sikhs in their resistance on the continuous persecution of the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb. He came up with different concepts that posed indirect challenge to the biased tax system of the Islamic authorities.

The Sikhs had a system of Masands before the Khalsa was initiated. In this system the Masands were the representatives and tithe collectors in Sikhism who led the local Sikh communities and temples, and accepted donations and wealth for the Sikh cause. The Guru concluded that the Masands system had corrupted with time and abolished it while initiating a centralised system which would be directly supervised by him. The new developments however gave rise to disagreements within the Sikh community during the 18th century, especially between the Nanakpanthis and the Khalsas.

## Guru Granth Sahib & other Sikh Scriptures

Adi Granth, the first official edition of the Sikh scripture was compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan. It contained hymns of previous Gurus and of other saints. Adi Granth was eventually expanded into the Guru Granth Sahib. In 1706, Guru Gobind Singh released the second rendition of the religious scripture with addition of one salok, dohra mahala 9 ang, 1429 and all the 115 hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The rendition came to be known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib composed by Guru Nanak Dev and other Sikh Gurus including Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Ram Das, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh and also containing traditions and teachings of Indian sants (saints), like Namdev and Kabir as also two Muslim Sufi saints Sheikh Farid and Bhagat Bhikan was declared as the eternal living guru for Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh.

Many of the texts of the religious text Dasam Granth are traditionally attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. Considered an important religious scripture of the Sikhs after the Guru Granth Sahib, it includes compositions like Benti Chaupai, Tav-Prasad Savaiye and Jaap Sahib that form part of daily prayers (Nitnem) as also part of the baptism ceremony (Khande di Pahul or Amrit Sanchar).



The voluminous scripture Sarbloh Granth that encompasses over 6,500 poetic stanzas also includes writings of the Guru.

## Sikh-Muslim Conflicts & the Zafarnama

Hostility between the Sikhs and the Muslims increased following execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Guru Gobind Singh believed in a Dharam Yudh that is to fight to defend righteousness and fought thirteen wars against the Mughal Empire and the kings of Siwalik Hills but never held captive or destroyed place of worship of other religions. Among the conflicts, the Second Battle of Anandpur (1704) witnessed a fierce battle and towards its end Aurangzeb offered a safe passage out of Anandpur for the Guru, his family and followers which the Guru accepted. However the two batches of the Sikhs were attacked while they were leaving Anandpur and the one including the Guru's mother Mata Gujari and his two sons Zorawar Singh aged 8 and Fateh Singh aged 5 was captured. The two sons died after they were buried live into a wall when they refused to convert to Islam while Mata Gujari died hearing her grandsons' death. The Guru lost two of his other sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, along with other Sikh soldiers during the Battle of Chamkaur (1704).

In 1705 following the Battle of Chamkaur where Aurangzeb and his army betrayed after making a promise the Guru wrote a defiant letter to Aurangzeb in Persian language titled Zafarnama (literally, "epistle of victory"). In the letter the

Guru sternly censured and accused Aurangzeb and his commanders for being immoral, both in governing and in war conduct and predicted end of Mughal Empire in near future due to its immorality, persecution and untruthfulness.

## Last Years & Death

The Guru and his soldiers stayed at different places following the Second Battle of Anandpur in 1704 including hiding in the Machhiwara jungle of southern Panjab. Following a succession struggle after death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Bahadur Shah, the official successor wanted to meet the Guru in person in the Deccan area of India to reconcile with him. While the Guru camped at Nanded on the banks of Godavari River two Afghans, Jamshed Khan and Wasil Beg managed to enter his vicinity and Jamshed Khan stabbed the Guru. The Guru retaliated and killed Jamshed Khan while Wasil Beg was killed by the Sikh guards. The Guru succumbed to the wounds of the assault on October 7, 1708 which was followed by resurgence of the Sikh-Mughal war. While it is considered that Muslim army commander and the Nawab of Sarhandh Wazir Khan sent the assassins to kill the Guru, some scholars opine that they were sent by the Mughal army stationed nearby.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh built the Takht Sri Hazur Sahib in Nanded to commemorate the place of assassination of the Guru.

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was a Hindu monk and one of the most celebrated spiritual leaders of India. He was more than just a spiritual mind; he was a prolific thinker, great orator and passionate patriot. He carried on the free-thinking philosophy of his guru, Ramakrishna Paramhansa forward into a new paradigm. He worked tirelessly towards betterment of the society, in servitude of the poor and needy, dedicating his all for his country. He was responsible for the revival of Hindu spiritualism and established Hinduism as a revered religion on world stage. His message of universal brotherhood and self-awakening remains relevant especially in the current backdrop of widespread political turmoil around the world. The young monk and his teachings have been an inspiration to many, and his words have become goals of self-improvement especially for the youth of the country.

National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas or Swami Vivekananda Birthday) is celebrated with the great joy and enthusiasm in India every year on 12th of January. It is celebrated to commemorate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, maker of the modern India. It was first declared by the Government of India in the year 1984 to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda as the National Youth Day. Since then (1985), it is started celebrating as the National Youth Day all over the country.

## NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

It is well known that the Government of India had declared to observe the National Youth Day every year on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda on 12th of January. It was decided by the Government of India in order to inspire all the youths of country towards the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and his ideals. The birthday of the Swami Vivekananda was decided to be celebrated as the National Youth Day to complete the aim of making better future of the country by motivating the youths through the way of life and ideas of the Swami Vivekananda.

It is the aim of great importance of distributing the ideas and ideals of the Swami Vivekananda among the youths of India. It is the great way to wake up the eternal energy of the youths as well as their big efforts to make the country developed.

## YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS

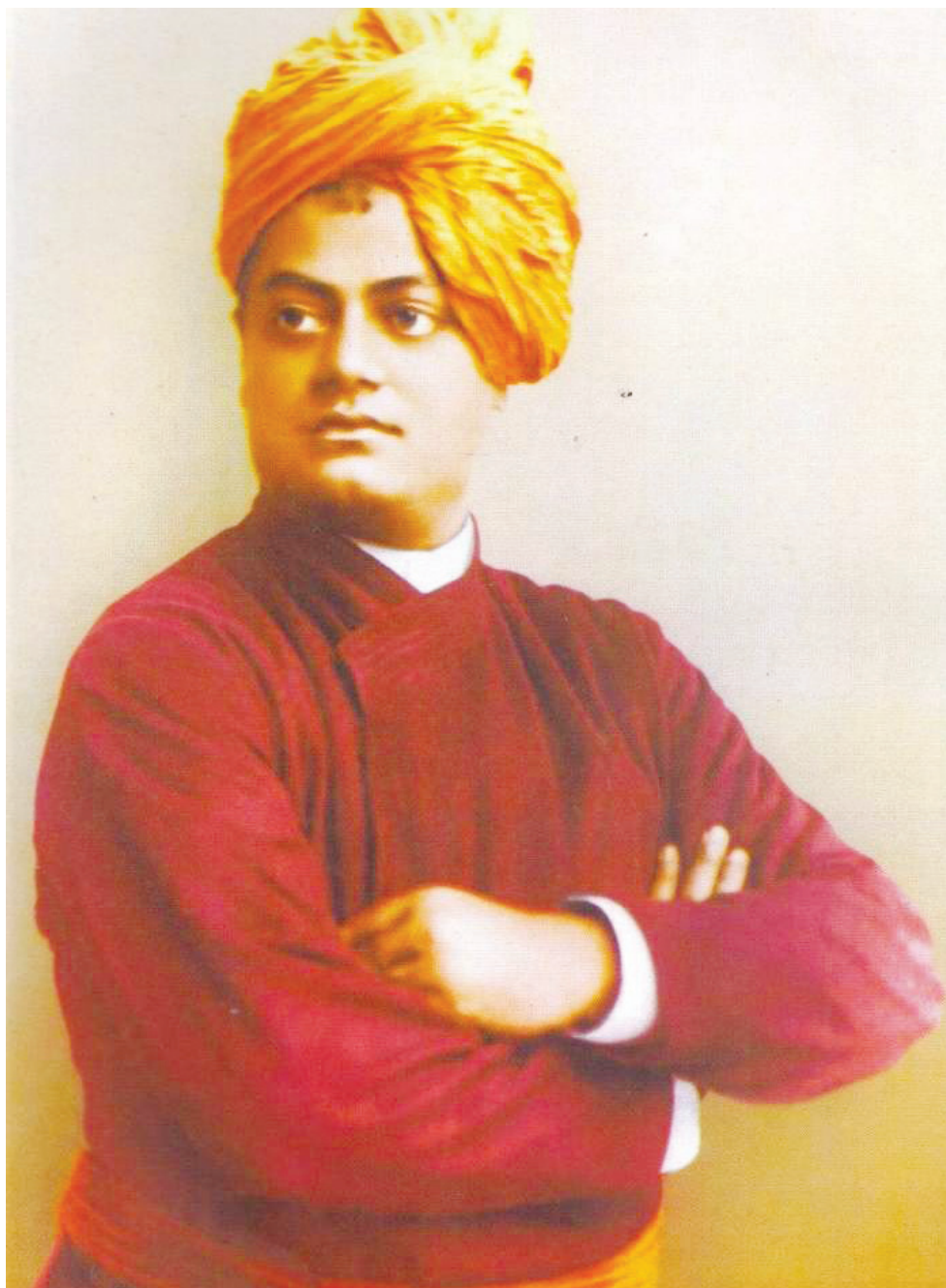
Swami Vivekananda was born on 12th of January in the year 1863 in the Pausha Krishna Saptami tithi. The birthday of the Swami Vivekananda is celebrated every year at many centres of the Ramakrishna Math, Ramakrishna Mission and their branch centres according to the Indian culture and tradition. A great mangal aarti, hoom, devotional songs, meditation, religious speech as well as the sandhya aarti is performed while celebrating the birthday of the Swami Vivekananda.

## ACTIVITIES

National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas or Swami Vivekananda Birthday) is celebrated by the youths at all the schools, colleges by performing the parade, speech on Swami Vivekananda, recitations, music, songs, conventions, Yogasanas, presentations, competition for essay-writing, seminar, sports and etc. Lectures and writings related to the ideas of Swami Vivekananda are also performed by the students to inspire the Indian youths.

Variety of other performances are also carried out by the people participated in the event all over the India as well as outside the

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY FALLS ON JANUARY 12 AND IS CELEBRATED AS NATIONAL YOUTH DAY ACROSS INDIA



country in order to promote education, art, way of life, trust among youths inspire their inner soul.

An event for two days for all the age group is organized by the Mission Bhartiya in Uttar Pradesh. This event includes dozen of activities and named as the Basti Yuvo Mahotsav. The day is celebrated by the government, non-profit organizations as well as corporate groups in their own way.

The event celebration is started in the early morning with the pooja of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda. A great hoom is performed after the pooja by the Monks and devotees. Then devotees offer pushpanjali and aarti to the statue of Swami Vivekananda. In the end, distribution of Prasad takes place.

## WHY YOUTH DAY CELEBRATED

Philosophies, teachings and ideas of the Swami Vivekananda are the great cultural and traditional assets of India. Youths are the most important part of the country who leads the country ahead, that's why youths are selected to be inspired first by the ideas and ideals of the Swami Vivekananda. So, the National Youth Day is started celebrating every year to encourage and inspire the honorable youths of the India. Schools and colleges are delightfully adorned to enthusiastically celebrate the event.

Ramakrishna gave up his mortal body.

After the demise of Sri Ramakrishna, around fifteen of his disciples including Narendranath began to live together in a dilapidated building at Baranagar in North Calcutta, which was named Ramakrishna Math, the monastic order of Ramakrishna. Here, in 1887, they formally renounced all ties to the world and took vows of monkhood. The brotherhood rechristened themselves and Narendranath emerged as Vivekananda meaning "the bliss of discerning wisdom".

The brotherhood lived off on alms donated voluntarily by patrons during holy begging or 'madhukari', performed yoga and meditation. Vivekananda left the Math in 1886 and went on a tour of India on foot as a 'Parivrajak'. He travelled the breadth of the country, absorbing much of the social, cultural and religious aspects of the people he came in contact with. He witnessed the adversities of life that the common people faced, their ailments, and vowed to dedicate his life to bring relief to these suffering.

## Lecture at the World Parliament of Religions

During the course of his wanderings, he came to know about the World Parliament of Religions being held in Chicago, America in 1893. He was keen to attend the meeting, to represent India, Hinduism and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna's philosophies. He found assertion of his wishes while he was meditating on the rocks of Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India. Money was raised by his disciples in Madras (now Chennai) and Ajit Singh, Raja of Khetri, and Vivekananda left for Chicago on May 31, 1893 from Bombay.

He faced insurmountable hardships on his way to Chicago, but his spirits remained as indomitable as ever. On 11 September 1893, when the time came, he took the stage and stunned everyone with his opening line "My brothers and sisters of America". He received a standing ovation from the audience for the opening phrase. He went on to describe the principles of Vedanta and their spiritual significance, putting Hinduism on the map of World Religions. He spent the next two and a half years in America and founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. He also travelled to the United Kingdom to preach the tenets of the Vedanta and Hindu Spiritualism to the western world.

## Teachings

Vivekananda returned to India in 1897 amidst warm reception from the common and royal alike. He reached Calcutta after a series of lectures across the country and founded the Ramakrishna Mission on May 1, 1897 at Belur Math near Calcutta. The goals of the Ramakrishna Mission were based on the ideals of Karma Yoga and its primary objective was to serve the poor and distressed population of the country. The Ramakrishna Mission undertook various forms of social service like establishing and running school, collages and hospitals, propagation of practical tenets of Vedanta through conference, seminars and workshops, initiating relief and rehabilitation work across the country.

His religious conscience was an amalgamation of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual teachings of Divine manifestation and his personal internalization of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. He directed to achieve the divinity of the soul by undertaking selfless work, worship and mental discipline. According to Vivekananda, the ultimate goal is to achieve freedom of the soul and that encompasses the entirety of one's religion.

Swami Vivekananda was a great person who always believed in the youth power to lead and nourish the historical culture of the country and carry some advancement required by the country to be developed.

## Spiritual Awakening

In 1884, Narendranath underwent a considerable financial distress due to the death of his father as he had to support his mother and younger siblings. He asked Ramakrishna to pray to the Goddess for the financial welfare of his family. On Ramakrishna's suggestion he himself went to the temple to pray. But once he faced the Goddess he could not ask for money and wealth, instead he asked for 'Vivek' (conscience) and 'Bairagya' (reclusion). That day marked the complete spiritual awakening of Narendranath and he found himself drawn to an ascetic way of life.

## Life of a Monk

During the middle of 1885, Ramakrishna, who had been suffering from throat cancer, fell seriously ill. In September 1885, Sri Ramakrishna was moved to Shyampukur in Calcutta, and a few months later Narendranath took a rented villa at Cossipore. Here, he formed a group of young people who were ardent followers of Sri Ramakrishna and together they nursed their Guru with devoted care. On 16 August 1886, Sri

# UK opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn calls for election to break Brexit impasse

**LONDON (TIP):** British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn called on lawmakers on Thursday to help his opposition party “break the deadlock” over Brexit and support his call for a motion of no confidence in the government to trigger an election. Pledging to vote against Prime Minister Theresa May’s deal next week, Corbyn said only a Labour government could secure an accord with the European Union that would re-unite Britain, a move that would, he acknowledged, most probably require an extension of the Brexit talks with Brussels.

Parliament is deadlocked over how to proceed with Brexit, Britain’s biggest shift in foreign and trade policy in more than 40 years, and is expected to vote against May’s deal on Tuesday plunging the departure from the EU into deeper uncertainty. With less than three months before Britain leaves the EU, May has warned lawmakers if they do vote down her deal, they would be opening the way for a disorderly exit or for Brexit not to happen at all. Corbyn said if May had confidence in her deal, she should “call that election and let the people decide”. “If the government cannot pass its most important legislation then there must be a general election at the earliest opportunity,” he told journalists and workers in the northern English city of Wakefield. “Clearly, Labour does not have enough MPs in parliament to win a confidence vote on its own. So members across the House (of Commons) should vote with us to break the deadlock,” he said, adding Labour would call a vote of no confidence when it had the greatest chance of success.

## ‘AGAINST THE CLOCK’

He said only an election would give the winning party “a renewed mandate to negotiate a better deal” that could pass through parliament, adding an election and



renegotiation would most probably mean an extension to Article 50, which began Britain’s divorce proceedings in March 2017. Any extension would require the agreement of the other 27 EU member states. “Moving into office at a period right up against the clock, there would need to be time for that negotiation,” Corbyn said. “An extension would be a possibility, because clearly there has to be time to negotiate.”

Outright victory for either party in an election is far from certain, and some Labour lawmakers have cautioned against holding another vote at a time when Brexit passions are rising and the country remains deeply divided. A survey by pollster YouGov in late December and early January showed Labour six points behind the Conservatives after the two parties have been almost neck-and-neck for weeks. For now, May is sticking to her guns. Even with opposition from hardline Brexit campaigners strengthening in her Conservative Party, May, who heads a

minority government, has refused to retreat from both her deal, which envisages close trading ties with the EU, and the timetable for Britain to leave the bloc on March 29. Trying to persuade parliament to back her plan, a source said May was “minded” to accept a proposal from Labour lawmakers to add reassurances on workers’ rights and environmental protections.

But critics say her efforts will fall short and with no majority in the parliament, lawmakers are increasingly trying to force a plan B, with suggestions ranging from leaving without a deal to staging a new referendum. Corbyn has been lukewarm in his support of a second vote on Britain’s membership of the EU. “If a general election cannot be secured then we will keep all options on the table, including the option of campaigning for a public vote,” he said on Thursday. “But an election must be the priority. It is not only the most practical option, it is also the most democratic option.” (Reuters)

## Argentina: Thousands march against President Macri’s austerity measures

**LIMA (TIP):** Thousands of Argentines marched through downtown Buenos Aires on Thursday in the first of a series of demonstrations to protest the soaring costs of public utilities and transportation under President Mauricio Macri’s austerity program.

Macri has slashed government subsidies for public utilities to reduce the country’s chronic fiscal deficit, pushing electricity and gas rates up more 2,000 per cent since the start of his term, local media have estimated.

“The only way to stop this is to peacefully protest,” union leader Pablo Micheli said on local TV channel America TV.

Inflation neared 50 per cent and the peso lost close to 50 per cent of its value against the dollar last year. The IMF announced a \$50 billion lifeline for Argentina in June.

The crisis has dimmed Macri’s chances of being re-elected in an election scheduled for the last quarter of the year.

Protesters on Thursday carried effigies of Macri and signs that read “Enough of the Macri/IMF austerity program” as they marched past the city’s obelisk monument toward Congress. (Reuters)

## President Nicolas Maduro to start new term as Venezuela isolation grows

**CARACAS (TIP):** Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro begins a second term in office on January 10, shrugging off international criticism that his reelection last year was illegitimate but facing further isolation as an economic crisis fuels a humanitarian emergency.

Leaders from the ruling Socialist Party have disavowed criticism of Maduro’s inauguration, which will keep him at the helm of the OPEC member until 2025, and called for rallies in his support. Opposition leaders, however, have portrayed the inauguration as the moment at which Maduro will be internationally branded a dictator following a widely boycotted 2018 election that many foreign governments described as a farce.

But continued support from the military, a fractured opposition and a relentless crackdown on opposition critics means that Maduro appears to face few serious challenges at home, despite the international outcry.

“They’ve tried to turn a constitutional swearing-in ceremony into a world war,” Maduro said during a news conference on Wednesday. “But whether there’s rain, thunder or lightning, we’re going to triumph.” He will be sworn in by the Supreme Court rather than the opposition-run congress, which has been stripped of its powers since the Socialist Party lost control of it in 2016 – a move that underpins opposition criticism that Maduro has consolidated a dictatorship.

Maduro will then head to a ceremony at Venezuela’s military academy, signaling the importance of the armed forces in his governing coalition. His triumphalist discourse echoes that of his predecessor, late socialist leader Hugo Chavez, who used abundant oil revenues to flood Venezuela with consumer goods while providing heavily subsidized food and medicine. (Reuters)

## Russia accuses Japan of distorting prospects for peace deal

**MOSCOW (TIP):** Russia slapped down Japanese assertions that a deal was in the offing to resolve a decades-old dispute over a chain of islands, accusing Tokyo of distorting agreements struck with Moscow to break the deadlock. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is making a push towards a treaty with Russia over the islands and is due to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin this month, but Moscow has shown no willingness to concede control over the islands.

Russia and Japan have been in dispute for seven decades over island territories captured by Soviet troops in the last days of World War Two. They are known in Russia as the Southern Kuriles and in Japan as the Northern Territories. Russia’s foreign ministry said late on Wednesday it had summoned Japan’s ambassador in Moscow to complain about comments made by Tokyo that it said “crudely distort the essence of agreements between Russia and Japan’s leaders on accelerating the negotiation process...”

“Such statements cannot be regarded except as an attempt to artificially aggravate the atmosphere around the problem of the peace treaty, to impose one’s own scenario for its resolution on the other side,” it said.

The ministry drew attention late on January 9 to comments made by Japan about the need to reach an understanding with Russians living on the islands about their transfer to Japanese control.

The ministry also protested comments it said that Tokyo had made about Moscow refusing to pay compensation to Japan for “occupying” the islands.

Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said on January 10 that Tokyo had already conveyed its stance to Moscow, but declined to comment on details. (Reuters)

## Tennis fixing probe: Spain arrests 83 people, including 28 players

**MADRID (TIP):** Spanish police say 28 professional tennis players, including one who participated in last year’s US Open, have been linked to an international organized group accused of fixing matches. Authorities said on Thursday the players tainted results after taking bribes from an Armenian ring that was dismantled in October. Fifteen people were arrested at the time, including some of the tennis players.

Eleven houses were raided and police seized luxury vehicles, a shotgun, credit cards, and 167,000 euros (\$191,000) in cash. It wasn’t clear if the player who took part in the U.S. Open was among those detained.

Police accused Spaniard player Marc Fornell-Mestres, whose highest career singles ranking was 236th in 2007, of acting as the link between players and the Armenian ring that bribed them for betting purposes. No other names had been immediately disclosed by authorities.

The 36-year-old Fornell-Mestres was provisionally suspended from professional tennis at the end of last year, according to the Tennis Integrity Unit, which said the suspension related to an investigation into “alleged breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program.” Fornell-Mestres was ranked 1007th in singles and 772th in doubles at the end of 2018.

It was a warning by the Tennis Integrity Unit in 2017 that prompted Spanish authorities to begin the investigation.

Police said the organized group bribed the players to guarantee predetermined results and used the identities of thousands of citizens to place international bets on the matches. Authorities said members of the Armenian ring attended the matches to ensure the players complied with what was previously agreed.

European Union law enforcement agency Europol, which supported the operation led by Spanish authorities, said at least 97 matches from lower-tier Futures and Challenger tournaments were fixed.

In total, 83 people were implicated in the probe, including the alleged leaders of the Armenian group. More than 40 bank accounts used by those allegedly involved with the ring were blocked by authorities. (AP)

# ANTI-AGEING MYTHS WE NEED TO STOP BELIEVING

**G**reen juices are blood cleansers that can help your face glow and having a certain quantity of water will help you attain clean skin are some of the anti-aging myths that people are following blindly.

Aakriti Kochar, beauty and make-up expert, Oriflame India, debunks some of the anti-aging myths.

- A daily green juice is essential to get glowing skin: Green juices are blood cleansers which help in giving glowing and radiant skin. It is one of the best things to follow in a beauty regime to help your skin look youthful, but it is not necessarily the only thing one has to do get glowing skin. CTM (Cleansing, toning, moisturising) routine, using a sunscreen, exercising, having a balanced diet are essential too. It is about the complete lifestyle and not one particular habit.
- Water is the fountain of youth and three litres is essential for everyone: Water helps keep your body and skin hydrated and helps release toxins in your body. Having three litres of water is good for us but then again it's more than just consuming water that our body needs.
- A moisturiser will help eliminate all wrinkles: A moisturiser helps hydrate your skin from the outside. A nourished skin works longer to keep skin youthful, but to reduce appearance of wrinkles one needs the correct day or night creams, serums, oils in terms of cosmetics and a healthy lifestyle.
- You should start using anti-ageing products as a teen: One should start anti-ageing products as you see the signs. First signs being dull and dehydrated skin which results in loss of elasticity or wrinkles. Ideally, the age when one sees the need to use anti-ageing products is 30+, but then it may vary by skin type and lifestyles of people.
- You don't need sunscreen when it's cloudy: One needs to wear sunscreen when there is light, i.e. day time, because UV rays are present when there's day light/sun light even if it's cloudy.
- Ageing is linked to our genes: Not necessarily, if your



parents/grand parents lead a healthy lifestyle and you do not, your skin age will be different than theirs. Climate, pollution, stress, skin care, lifestyle are the factors governing your skin age.

- The more expensive a product, the better the results: Not necessarily, stress more on the ingredients and quality than the price range. Sometimes expensive products have rich ingredients which might be the reason for its higher price, but not always.
- Frowning or smiling gives you wrinkles: Frowning and Smiling are just facial exercises, in no way can they give someone wrinkles. Being stressed, smoking, dry skin, dehydration can be some of the reasons that can give you wrinkles.
- Your diet is the cause of how much you age: Your overall lifestyle, including your diet of course, but also exercising, stress, etc., are responsible
- Makeup with SPF is as good as a sunscreen: Makeup with sunscreen is a good alternative to using too many products and layering it up. It is good to keep your skin light and protected but can't be as powerful as an individual sunscreen. *Source: IANS*

## Natural moisturisers in your kitchen

**B**eauty in its most natural of forms is not only the easiest to achieve but also the most accessible. All-natural beauty treatments revitalize your skin and body, and are both effective and affordable. We suggest a few all-natural beauty treatments for all skin types that you can find inside your very own kitchen cupboards and refrigerators.

### Oily skin

If your skin tends to get oily, let these all-natural, readily available products be your new best friends:

**AVOCADO:** Many beauty and health experts recommend the avocado juice for soft, glowing skin. Avocado is rich in Vitamin A that essentially offers clear, beautiful skin. Apart from this it is loaded with several other minerals like potassium, iron and copper that can collectively work wonders in giving your skin the right kind of moisture. You can simply mash up an avocado or two and apply it on your skin and rinse it off after 15-20 minutes. Avocado juice is also a complete energizer and can boost you up completely.

**BANANAS:** They are rich in Vitamin A as a result of which, bananas help immensely in restoring dull and damaged skin. To give your skin some natural moisturizer, mash a banana and apply it gently all over your face, keep it on your face for around twenty minutes and wash it off with some lukewarm water. Additionally the Vitamin C present in bananas can help in giving your skin that natural glow.

### Normal skin

For those who're blessed with normal skin that is between dry and oil and habituates well with any climate, try these:

**GRAPES:** The Vitamin E present in grapes retains the moisture in the skin and also helps in the rejuvenation of dead skin cells. Mash a handful of grapes and use cotton to apply it across your face. Wash after a while. For best results, apply it a few times a week. Also, due to the presence of antioxidants, grapes can act as a natural sunscreen.

**CUCUMBER:** Cucumbers restore moisture and maintain



supple, healthy skin apart from several other benefits.

"Cucumbers act as a good moisturizer for the body and skin. Antioxidants delay ageing of the skin and thus keep the skin rejuvenated. Simply by keeping cucumber slices on the eyes at night can relieve the puffiness better than any medication as it contains vitamin C.

### Dry skin

If you have skin that generally lacks moisture, here are a few natural treatments that won't only retain moisture but also keep it there:

**COCONUT OIL:** Not only is it a natural moisturizer, it also acts as a make up remover, and a body scrubber. It sinks deep inside the pores, softens and moisturizes the skin completely, and also cleans away dirt and grime. Additionally, a coconut oil massage is recommended for strong and healthy hair.

**PAPAYA:** These are best known for retaining water and removing dead skin cells thus giving way to supple, glowing skin. If you have dry skin, mash a papaya with some honey for instant skin moisturizing and hydration. Papaya is very helpful in combating dry skin problems. Raw papaya pulp is rich in antioxidants especially vitamin C which helps in moisturizing and brightening the complexion.

## FOOD CORNER



## Chicken Biryani

### Ingredients

Chicken - 750 gms, chopped to bite sized pieces Onions - 3, finely sliced Cashewnut Paste - 1 tblsp Tomatoes - 3 to 4, pureed Basmati Rice - 2 to 3 cups, soaked for 10 minutes Ghee - 1 tblsp Ginger Garlic Paste - 2 tsp Poppy Seeds - 1 tblsp, coarsely powdered Salt as per taste Saffron Strands - 1/4 tsp, soaked in 2 tblsp milk Oil - 2 to 3 tblsp Fried Onions - 1 cup, to garnish, For the marinade: Curd - 2 cups, beaten Coriander Leaves - 1 tblsp, chopped Red Chilli Powder - 2 tsp Garam Masala Powder - 2 tsp Turmeric Powder - 1/2 tsp Salt - 1 1/2 tsp

### Method

Mix all the marinade ingredients and rub all over the chicken pieces.

- Keep aside for 10 to 20 minutes. - Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and onions.
- Saute well for 3 to 4 minutes or until onions turn light golden brown. - Add the cashewnut paste, tomato puree and poppy seeds. - Stir well and simmer for a minute or two.
- Add the marinated chicken pieces and cover the pan with a lid.
- Reduce flame to low and cook till the chicken is tender.
- Drain the rice and rinse well. - Pressure cook till 3/4ths done and remove.
- Place a large, deep pan over low flame.
- Spread a layer of rice at the bottom followed by a layer of the chicken.
- Repeat until all the rice and chicken have been used up, finishing up with a layer of rice on top.
- Sprinkle the saffron strands with the milk and ghee on top. Cover the pan with a tight fitting lid and cook for 45 to 60 minutes.
- Remove when the rice is cooked and chicken pieces are tender. - Gently fluff up the rice using a fork. - Garnish with the fried onions.

## POTATO ONION FRY

### Ingredients

Potatoes - 500 gms, Onions - 4 to 5, depending on size, Green Chillies - 2, chopped, Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 to 2 tsp, Mustard Seeds - little, Urad Dal - little, Asafoetida Powder - 1/2 tsp, Turmeric Powder - 1/2 tsp, Sambar Powder - 1 tsp, Red Chilli Powder - 2 tsp, Salt as per taste, Curry Leaves - few, Oil - 2 1/2 tblsp

### Method

- Boil, peel and chop the potatoes.
- Finely chop the onions and keep aside.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Add the mustard seeds, urad dal, curry leaves and asafoetida powder.
- Fry for 20 seconds.
- Add the ginger garlic paste, green chillies and stir-fry for a minute.
- Add the onions and saute until golden.
- Add the potatoes, turmeric powder, salt, sambar powder and red chilli powder.
- Stir well and cook for 2 to 4 minutes.
- Remove and transfer to a serving dish.



# 2 DRINKS DAILY MAY UP IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT RISK

Even moderate alcohol consumption, described as intake of two drinks daily or 14 per week, could increase the risk of irregular heart rhythm condition, warn researchers.

The team from the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, Australia, found that regular moderate alcohol consumption (an average of 14 glasses per week) results in more electrical evidence of scarring and impairment in electrical signalling compared with non-drinkers and light drinkers.

Alcohol consumption is therefore an important modifiable risk factor for atrial fibrillation—an abnormal heart rhythm characterised by rapid and irregular beating of atria—upper chamber of the heart, the researchers said.

"Regular moderate alcohol consumption, but not mild consumption, is an important modifiable risk factor for atrial fibrillation associated with lower atrial voltage and conduction slowing," said lead investigator Peter Kistler, Professor from the Heart Centre at Alfred Hospital.

"These electrical and structural changes may explain the propensity to atrial fibrillation in regular drinkers. It is an important reminder for clinicians



who are caring for such patients to ask about alcohol consumption and provide appropriate counselling in those who over-indulge," he added.

In the study, published in the journal *HeartRhythm*, the team determined the impact of different degrees of alcohol consumption on atrial remodelling

using high-density electroanatomic mapping.

They performed detailed invasive testing on the atria of 75 patients with atrial fibrillation, 25 in each of three categories: life-long non-drinkers, mild drinkers and moderate drinkers.

Source: IANS

## For weight loss, diet more important than exercise. Here's why

For those planning to hit the gym to lose weight, take note. A new study suggests that diet is far more important than physical activity including walking, fidgeting and formal exercise. The reason is because exercising increases appetite especially with prolonged endurance exercise or with weight lifting that can ultimately sabotage the best of intentions, CNN reported.

People who lose weight gradually (about 1 to 2 pounds or upto 1 kg per week) are more successful at keeping weight off, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 10% of our calories are burned digesting the food we eat and roughly 10% to 30% are lost through physical activity, the study said.

"It could not be more true. What you omit from your diet is so much more important than how much you exercise," nutritionist Lisa Drayer was quoted as saying to CNN. All of your "calories in" come from the food you eat and the beverages you drink, but only a portion of your "calories out" are lost through exercise, according to Drayer.

The average person — excluding professional athletes — burns 5% to 15% of their daily calories through exercise, said Alexxai Kravitz, Investigator at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in the US. It is not nearly equal to food intake, which accounts for 100% of the energy intake of the body, said Kravitz.

All this is not to say that exercise does not have its place. It is certainly important for building strength and muscle mass and flexibility and can help manage diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. But although exercise can help with weight loss, diet is a much more important lifestyle factor, Drayer noted.

### Foods to Eat for Weight Loss

**AVOCADOS** are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, dietary fiber, potassium and phytochemicals. People who eat avocados tend to have lower BMI, body weight and waist circumference than people who skip this green superfood, per a study in *Nutrition Journal*. While avocados are higher in calories than other fruits and vegetables, their satisfying fat and fiber combo may help you slim down. Add some to your salad,



sandwich or taco night for a burst of creaminess and flavor.

**EGGS** are rich in high-quality protein, fats and essential nutrients, like vitamin D and choline. It's the protein, and the time of day we tend to eat them, that especially makes them a powerhouse for weight loss. Eating a high-protein breakfast promotes weight loss, because protein increases satiety while regulating hunger and appetite hormones, helping fend off your hunger until lunchtime.

**BEANS** are high in fiber, which is your friend when you're trying to lose weight because it helps you feel fuller longer, thus controlling hunger. Eating beans and legumes has also been linked with various other health benefits, including lowering blood pressure, reducing LDL cholesterol and reducing risk of cardiovascular disease. Beans are fairly low in calories and deliver protein as well. Try them in homemade veggie burgers, soups and salads.

**YOGURT** is protein-packed and full of probiotics, which are good for gut health and may help your weight-loss efforts. Your gut health can impact your weight, and eating more fiber and probiotics helps keep your gut bacteria happy, which can be good for your metabolism (read more about your gut-weight connection).



## AN EGG A DAY MAY KEEP DIABETES AWAY

Eating an egg daily can have a beneficial effect on the blood metabolite profile that is related to a lower risk of Type-2 diabetes, a new study shows.

The findings showed that the blood samples of men who ate more eggs included certain lipid molecules that positively correlated with the blood profile of men who remained free of Type-2 diabetes.

"The study explored potential compounds that could explain this association using non-targeted metabolomics, a technique that enables a broad profiling of chemicals in a sample," said lead author Stefania Noerman from the University of Eastern Finland.

Eggs remain one of the most controversial food items. High intake of eggs has traditionally been discouraged, mainly due to their high cholesterol content.

However, eggs are also a rich source of many bioactive compounds that can have beneficial effects on health. This means that the health effects of consuming eggs are difficult to determine based solely on their cholesterol content, the researchers said.

For the study, published in *Molecular Nutrition and Food Research*, 239 serum samples were analysed in four groups: men with higher (mean intake one egg per day) or lower (mean intake two eggs per week) egg intake who developed Type-2 diabetes (cases) or remained healthy (controls) during the mean follow-up of nearly 20 years.

The study suggested some plausible mechanisms which could at least partly explain the inverse association between egg intake and the previously observed lower risk of developing Type-2 diabetes.

In addition, the researchers identified several biochemical compounds in blood that predicted a higher risk of developing Type-2 diabetes, including the amino acid tyrosine.

"Although it is too early to draw any causal conclusions, we now have some hints about certain egg-related compounds that may have a role in Type-2 diabetes development.

"Further detailed investigations with both cell models and intervention studies in humans that use modern techniques, such as metabolomics, are needed to understand the mechanisms behind physiological effects of egg intake," Noerman noted.

Source: IANS

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## TWITTER PLANS TO TEST NEW CONVERSATION FEATURES

Twitter is planning to allow users to try out new features such as status updates to encourage conversations among its users, a media report said.

In an interview to Engadget at Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2019, a top Twitter executive said that the social media platform would try to involve its users in testing the features before formally rolling them out for all.

"We want to develop a service for the people that are using it, and we have to involve people in that way," Sara Haider, Director of Product Management at Twitter, was quoted as saying.

"We have a platform that the world uses to speak their mind, why not use that as part of our development process?" Twitter is set to start testing the programme in the coming weeks, and while anyone will be able to apply to join, only a few thousand users are actually going to get in, the report said.

Those who participate in the test programme would be able to share their feedback with Twitter.

"We're making some pretty big changes to the way conversations look and feel on Twitter, and we don't want to just unveil that one day and what if you don't like it or it's not working for you?," said Haider.

"We really want to bring our community along for this journey and be a part of this. We want to do this kind of thing more often," Haider added. *Source: IANS*

## Hubble's most advanced camera shut down: NASA

The operations of the Hubble Space Telescope's most technologically advanced camera have been suspended after it encountered a hardware problem, NASA said.

However, the telescope will continue to perform science observations with its other three active instruments, while the Wide Field Camera 3 anomaly is investigated, the US space agency said in a statement.

The Hubble Wide Field Camera 3 was installed by spacewalking astronauts during Servicing Mission 4 in 2009.

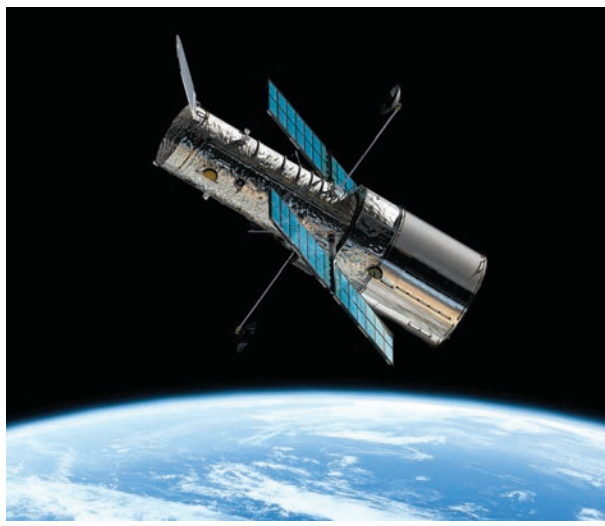
NASA said that the camera is equipped with back up electronics that can be called to action should they be needed to recover the instrument.

Hubble is the first major optical telescope to be placed in space, providing an unobstructed view into the universe.

Launched in 1990, the world's first space telescope helped confirm the theory that the universe is expanding, lending credence to the Big Bang theory.

Hubble has made more than 1.3 million observations since its mission began in 1990, taking pictures of stars and galaxies of as it whirls around the Earth.

Astronomers using Hubble data have published more than 15,000 scientific papers, making it one of the most productive scientific instruments ever built. *Source: PTI*



# MYSTERIOUS FAST RADIO BURST LINKED TO ALIEN SOURCE DISCOVERED

Scientists have detected the second repeating fast radio burst (FRB) ever recorded, a discovery that may help determine the origin of these mysterious signals which have been linked with advanced alien technology in the past.

Some scientists also believe that FRBs emanate from powerful astrophysical phenomena billions of light years away. However, the source of these signals, originating from far outside our Milky Way galaxy, are not well understood.

In 2017, Harvard scientists have speculated that these FRBs might be leakage from planet-sized transmitters powering interstellar probes in distant galaxies.

They said that since a natural origin cannot be identified, an artificial or alien origin can be contemplated.

"Whatever the source of these radio waves is, it's interesting to see how wide a range of frequencies it can produce. There are some models where intrinsically the source can't produce anything below a certain frequency," said Arun Naidu of McGill University in Canada, who was part of the team that detected the signal.

The discovery of the extragalactic signal is among the first, eagerly awaited results from the Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment (CHIME), a radio telescope inaugurated in 2017.

"Until now, there was only one known repeating FRB. Knowing that there is another suggests that there could be more out there," said Ingrid Stairs, a member of the CHIME team.

"And with more repeaters and more sources available for study, we may be able to understand these cosmic puzzles—where they're from and what causes them," said Stairs, an astrophysicist at University of British Columbia in Canada.

The repeating FRB was one of a total of 13 bursts detected over a period of just three weeks during the summer of 2018, while CHIME was in its pre-commissioning phase and running at only a fraction of its full capacity.

Additional bursts from the repeating FRB were detected in



following weeks by the telescope, which is located in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley.

Of the more than 60 FRBs observed to date, repeating bursts from a single source had been found only once before—a discovery made by the Arecibo radio telescope in Puerto Rico in 2015.

The majority of the 13 FRBs detected showed signs of "scattering," a phenomenon that reveals information about the environment surrounding a source of radio waves.

The amount of scattering observed by the CHIME team led them to conclude that the sources of FRBs are powerful astrophysical objects more likely to be in locations with special characteristics.

"That could mean in some sort of dense clump like a supernova remnant," said Cherry Ng, an astronomer at the University of Toronto in Canada.

"Or near the central black hole in a galaxy. But it has to be in some special place to give us all the scattering that we see," said Ng.

Ever since FRBs were first detected, scientists have been piecing together the signals' observed characteristics to come up with models that might explain the sources of the mysterious bursts and provide some idea of the environments in which they occur. *Source: PTI*

## Google rolls out activity cards to make search more useful

Google has started rolling out a new feature called activity cards to make it easier for users to pick up the threads to past searches and continue exploring a topic.

"Activity cards will roll out today on mobile web and the Google app in English in the US," Andrew Moore, Google's Product Manager for Search wrote in a blog post on Wednesday.

So when you revisit a query related to a task you had started in the past, Google will show you a card with relevant pages you had already visited and previous queries you had done on this topic.

"As you're looking to build new habits or pick up new tasks in the new year—whether sticking to an exercise regimen, sprucing up your winter wardrobe, or collecting new ideas for your home—we hope this new feature helps you along your way and makes your search history more accessible and useful," Moore said.

"If you're logged into your Google account and search for topics and hobbies like cooking, interior design, fashion, skincare and beauty, fitness, photography and more, you may find an activity card at the top of the results page that provides easy ways to continue your exploration," Moore added.

Users will also be able to add or delete items to their activity cards.

If you want to mark a page to read or



**When you revisit a query related to a task you had started in the past, Google will show you a card with relevant pages you had already visited and previous queries you had done on this topic.**

reference later, just touch and hold the link to quickly add items on your activity card to a collection.

You can access your collections by tapping the menu on the top left of the Search page (on mobile web), or through the bottom bar of the Google app.

Users will be able to control what appears in their activity card by pressing to delete an item or turn off cards by tapping the three-dot icon, Google said. Moore did not reveal if the feature would be rolled out globally any time soon. *Source: IANS*

# WITH MORE TARIFFS, US-CHINA TRADE OUTLOOK LOOKS GRIM, SAYS DATA

With seven weeks to go until a deadline that could see the U.S. ramp up tariffs on Chinese goods once again, the economic damage wrought by the months-long trade war is becoming clearer even as a pathway to a lasting resolution remains muddled.

While Chinese goods going to the U.S. initially held up in the face of higher tariffs due to so-called front-loading, their value slumped in the final quarter of 2018, according to the latest available data. For sales going the other direction, the crunch was more immediate. In both cases, further declines are on the cards if the talks fail to produce a resolution.

Negotiators from both the U.S. and China expressed optimism after mid-level talks wrapped in Beijing this week, boosting sentiment across global markets. Still, the path forward remains unclear: Another round of talks hasn't been scheduled, and the government shutdown in the U.S. has dominated President Donald Trump's attention.

Both Trump and Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan were slated to appear later this month at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, providing an opportunity for high-level dialogue. But the shutdown may yet prevent Trump's appearance, according to a report in the Wall Street Journal.

Companies in both countries just want to see a deal get done.

"We urge both governments to use the time remaining in the 90-day negotiating period to make tangible progress on the important issues at the core of the current dispute: equal treatment of foreign companies in China, as well as



China's intellectual property and technology transfer policies," said Jake Parker, vice president of China operations at the U.S.-China Business Council in Beijing. "Uncertainty is bad for business."

As evidence mounts by the day that the slowdown in China's economy is worsening, policy makers in Beijing are focusing on getting rid of the duties that Trump has leveled on Chinese goods since last year, according to a former high-level official briefed on the government's thinking. U.S. officials appear to want to maintain the pressure of tariffs, the official said.

China and the U.S. will move ahead with trade talks as scheduled, Ministry of Commerce Spokesman Gao Feng told reporters in Beijing at a regular weekly briefing Thursday, without giving any

further details over when they would take place. He wouldn't confirm reports that Vice Premier Liu He will visit the U.S. soon to meet U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

Meanwhile, the economic risks are growing. Economists now see the threat of deflation in China after producer price inflation slowed sharply in December, to the weakest pace since 2016.

That would not only squeeze corporate profitability at home, but also put pressure on global price gains, as export prices usually follow those at factory gate. With industrial output and retail sales growth both at the weakest levels in a decade, China's woes would also mean softer demand for imports, hurting other economies including the U.S. *Source: Bloomberg*

## TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES POSTS RECORD QUARTERLY PROFIT OF RS 8,105 CRORE



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, India's biggest listed company by market capitalisation, reported a record quarterly net profit, helped by gains in Banking, Financial services and Insurance (BFSI) segment.

In a seasonally weak quarter for Indian IT firms due to year-end holidays, TCS posted a profit of 81.05 billion rupees (\$1.15 billion) for the Oct-Dec period, up from 65.31 billion rupees a year earlier.

That missed an average estimate of 82.19 billion rupees from 25 analysts, Refinitiv data shows.

TCS, one of the flagship companies of the salt-to-software behemoth Tata Group, said its income from operations grew 20.8 percent while revenue from the BFSI segment surged 23 percent.

Sequential revenue growth was led by the U.K. and Europe, which rose 25.1 percent and 17.6 percent, respectively, TCS said in a statement.

The Mumbai-based company kicks off the December-quarter corporate earnings period for Indian businesses with rival Infosys Ltd scheduled to report on Friday.

TCS shares closed fractionally higher compared with the broader Mumbai market which ended down 0.31 percent.

*Source: Reuters*

## India-born Gita Gopinath joins IMF as 1st female chief economist

**WASHINGTON (TIP):**

Mysore-born Gita Gopinath has joined International Monetary Fund as its chief economist, becoming the first woman to occupy the top IMF post.

Gopinath's joined last week at a time, when she believes the world is experiencing a retreat from globalisation, posing challenges to multilateral institutions.

The John Zwaanstra professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University, Gopinath, 47, succeeds Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld as Economic Counsellor and Director of the IMF's Research Department. Obstfeld retired December 31.

Announcing her appointment on October 1, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde described her as "one of the world's outstanding economists with impeccable academic credentials, a proven track record of intellectual leadership and extensive international experience." *Source: PTI*



## Tata's Jaguar Land Rover cuts 4,500 jobs worldwide on weak China demand

**LONDON (TIP):** Buffeted by weak demand in China and other uncertainties in the motor industry, the Tata-owned Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) on Thursday confirmed shedding 4,500 jobs in addition to the 1,500 jobs it terminated in 2018.

The announcement raised further Brexit-related concerns by MPs and others in constituencies where JLR operates in the UK. Motor companies are among several who have deplored lack of certainty on the way forward on Brexit scheduled for March 29.

JLR said its next phase of 'Charge and Accelerate' transformation programme aims to deliver £2.5 billion in cost reductions and cashflow improvements over 18 months as well as long-term strategic operating efficiencies.

The next phase of the programme is expected to begin with a voluntary redundancy programme in the UK with a view to creating a leaner, more resilient organisation with a flatter management structure.

Ralf Speth, CEO of JLR, said: "We are taking decisive action to help deliver long-term growth, in the face of multiple



geopolitical and regulatory disruptions as well as technology challenges facing the automotive industry".

"The 'Charge and Accelerate' programme combines efficiency measures with targeted investment, safeguarding our future and ensuring that we maximise the opportunities created by growing demand for Autonomous, Connected, Electric and Shared technologies".

The company said its 'Charge and Accelerate' programme has identified over £1 billion of improvements, with more than £500 million already realised

in 2018. The savings and improvements achieved will enable Jaguar Land Rover to fund vital investments into technology to safeguard its future, it added.

Speth said: "The next chapter in the story of the Jaguar and Land Rover brands will be the most exciting - and challenging - in our history. Revealing the iconic Defender, investing in cleaner, smarter, more desirable cars and electrifying our facilities to manufacture a future range of British-built electric vehicles will all form part of building a globally competitive and flourishing company". *Source: HT*

## World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announces resignation

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced Monday he would step down next month, more than three years before his current term was due to expire.

"It has been a great honor to serve as president of this remarkable institution, full of passionate individuals dedicated to the mission of ending extreme poverty in our lifetime," Kim said in a statement. Kim, who took over leadership of the global lender in 2012, is to join an as-yet unnamed firm focusing on investments in developing countries.

World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva will serve as interim president upon Kim's February 1 departure, the bank said in a statement.





### 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@bejandaruwala.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwala.com) and on phone **011-91-8141234275** [www.bejandaruwala.com](http://www.bejandaruwala.com)**

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE JANUARY 14 - JANUARY 20, 2019

### Aries:

Ganesha says there are pending domestic issues to deal with, like the health of children, spouse and parents. There are expenses and indulgences. There could also be emotional issues to resolve. There could be break-up, separations, divorce and few other related issues. There are powerful energies at play. As the period ends, you are at peace with yourself. There are several unfinished projects and your hands are full. You are on overdrive and pushing hard.

### Taurus:

You look for mentally stimulating relationship and interesting activities that keep you charged and challenged. As the period progresses, there is powerful intensity in all your endeavors. There could also be several affairs of the heart. There is an independent and rebellious streak. There are strong ego drives and you refuse to take anything lying down. The best solution is to avoid situations that are inflammable.

### Gemini:

Your inner world is playing with demons. Relationships are a real casualty here. You will find it unusually difficult to relate to others, even at the platonic or cordial level. There could be separations and breakdowns. As the period ends, there are maudlin moments and flashbacks to a life well lived, even if not appropriately at all times. This is a great time for creative folks. There are money and honey, rewards and awards, applause and accolades. There is also new love.

### Cancer:

You party, shop, eat, drink, indulge. You buy beautiful things and surround yourself with them. There may be holidays, and you take off to exotic locales. The period started slowly and now it is hotting up. This is a powerful phase. You work hard, earn money and fame. As the period progresses expenses skyrocket. You are in overdrive, on a fantastic bull run. There could be a new home as you gather several luxuries in your kitty.

### Leo:

The grand times continue. You have the Midas touch. You simply cannot do anything wrong. You are charged, and want to be a person of consequence. There could also be minor scrapes, accidents, or health issues. By mid period, you power your way ahead. You make money, spend, but expensive things, make excellent investments and your portfolio grows. There could be international holidays, business expansion, new collaborations, money and honey.

### Virgo:

There is a purpose in what you do. You put all of your attention and energy into getting ahead and attaining your goals. There are significant encounters and you grow as a person. There is a lot of family bonding, fellowship and love. You run through the opposition with ease. There are rewards and awards, plaudits and applause. As the period progresses you love for the arts is stimulated. There could be profitable travel, celebrations and festivities.

### Libra:

You could be scattered and undisciplined, wanting to be everywhere all the time. You look for new experiences and want to break from routine. As the period progresses you are riding high. There could also be unnecessary expenses and several emotional challenges. There are many domestic issues to sort out. There are love and lust, money and honey, life and death, coming together and breaking up, marriages, engagements and separation.

### Scorpio:

You are emotionally excitable and easily irritated or angered. There could be fissures in relationships. You look for happiness but it is elusive. There are domestic issues to handle, and medical emergencies. There is new intensity. You are powered and charged. There is money to be made as well as new deals to be signed. Despite this, you sign big deals and succeed in important negotiations. There could be festivities and celebrations at home, marriages and engagements.

### Sagittarius:

This is a powerfully creative phase. You express yourself in every possible way. You have lofty ambitions and you do all that it takes to achieve your target. Someone from another culture will enter your life and play a significant role. There is stability during the middle of the period. You are optimistic, energetic, joyous, happy, affirmative, eager and friendly to everyone. This is also a good time for inheritances and games of chance.

### Capricorn:

You take a break from routine and do anything that is different from the ordinary. This will revitalize and rejuvenate you. There are expenses of all kinds and some misunderstandings to clear up. You may also join yoga classes, go for meditation, try alternative therapy, and do everything you can to reinvent yourself. There could also be new love. Take care of your health.

### Aquarius:

You want to change the status quo; you want the world to sit up and notice your unique achievements. There are lucky breaks and windfalls and money flows out of your fingers. You excel in group discussions, contractual negotiations and conferences during the middle of the period. There could be international travel too. As the period ends, you are at your creative best. You are imaginative, and sensitive to the world around you.

### Pisces:

You are the wings of inspiration and there is no holding you back. You dazzle like a meteor across the night sky. There is travel too. You are ideating in a hurry. By mid period, your energies flow easily and you enjoy the company of others. This is a great time for group activities. You are filled with vitality and pumped up with new ideas about life and living. There are happy moments with the family. There is intense bonding.

# MAKAR SANKRANTI: THE WAY IT IS CELEBRATED ACROSS INDIA

**M**akar Sankranti is celebrated across the country in different ways and the cultural significance of the festival varies geographically as we move from one state to another, with every state celebrating and welcoming the new season of harvest in their own indigenous manner.

What makes the festival stand apart from the other Indian Hindu Festivals is the fact that the date of Makar Sankranti is fixed. Makar means Capricorn and Sankranti is transition.

There is a sankranti every month when the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac to the next. The popular Indian festival "Makar Sankranti" is the first Indian festival falls in New Year.

## Significance

The significance of the Makar Sankranti festival is that it marks the day where there is a significant movement in the zodiac – the arrangement of the earth's dial around the sun – and this movement brings about a new change in the way we experience the planet itself. There are many sankrantis through the year; the two significant ones being Makar Sankranti, and right opposite, after summer solstice is Karka Sankranti. In between, there are many Sankrantis – every time the zodiac sign changes, it is called a Sankranti to suggest the movement of the planet, to understand that our life is sustained and nourished by this movement. If this movement ceases, everything about us will cease. On the 22nd of December, the solstice happened, that means in relation to the sun, the movement or the tilt of the planet reaches its maximum. Now, from this day onwards, the northern movement is strong. Things really start changing upon the earth. From Makar Sankranti onwards, winter is being relieved step by step.

This movement is also a significant aspect in the way we reap from this planet. There was a time when human beings could eat only what the earth offered. Then we learned how to get what we wanted from the earth; this is called agriculture. When we were hunting and gathering, we only picked up what was there. It is like when you were an infant, you ate or swallowed whatever your mother gave you. When you became a child, you asked for what you wanted. So we grew up a bit and started demanding and getting what we wanted, but still, you can only get what you want to a point that She is willing. If you stretch it beyond that, you will not only not get it, you will get something else. That is called industrialization. Agriculture is coaxing the Mother to give what you want. Industrialization is ripping her apart. I am not speaking against something. I want you to understand the way our minds are transiting, the way human activity is transiting from one level to another.

So this is a day when we remind ourselves that everything that we are is what we take from this planet. I see everywhere in the world, people are talking about giving. I don't know from where they give. You can only take – either you take gently or you grab. Did you come with your own property from somewhere? What is there to give? You can only take. Everything is offered. Take sensibly, that is all there is.

## The harvest festival

The Makar Sankranti festival is also known



and referred to as the harvest festival because this is the time when harvesting is complete and there are big celebrations. This is the day we acknowledge all those who assisted in making the harvest. The farm animals play a huge role in harvesting, so the following day is for them and is called Mattu Pongal. The first day is for the earth, the second is for us and the third is for the animals and livestock. See, they are placed a little higher than us because we exist because of them, they do not exist because of us. If we were not here, they would all be free and happy. But if they were not here, we couldn't live.

It is one of the major Indian harvest festival celebrated on 14th of January of every year. It's an important festival of the Hindus and celebrated almost everywhere in the country in myriad cultural forms and different names. Every region celebrate it in innumerable ways, according to the localization, culture and traditions.

## Delhi and Haryana

Delhi and Haryana and many neighbouring states consider Sakraat or Sankranti to be a main festival of the year.

Churma of ghee, halwa and kheer are cooked specially on this day. One brother of

every married woman visits her home with a gift of some warm clothing for her and her husband's family. It is called "Sidha". Women used to give a gift to their in-laws, and this rituals called "Manana". The recipient will sit in a haweli (main palace where men sit together and share hookka). Women go to haweli to sing folk songs and give gifts.

## Punjab

In Punjab, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as Maghi. Bathing in a river in the early hours on Maghi is important. Hindus light lamps with sesame oil as this is supposed to give prosperity and drive away all sins. A major mela is held at Sri Muktsar Sahib on Maghi which commemorates a historical event in Sikh history.

Culturally, people dance their famous "bhangra". They then sit down and eat the sumptuous food that is specially prepared for the occasion. It is traditional to eat "kheer", rice cooked in milk and sugarcane juice. It is also traditional to consume khichdi and jaggery. December and January are the coldest months of the year in the Punjab. Maghi represents the change of the season to warmer temperatures and increase in daylight.

## Rajasthan and West MP

"Makar Sankranti" or "Sankrat" in the Rajasthani language is one of the major festivals in the state of Rajasthan. The day is celebrated with special Rajasthani delicacies and sweets such as pheeni (either with sweet milk or sugar syrup dipped), til-paati, gajak, kheer, ghevar, pakodi, puwa, and til-laddoo.

Specially, the women of this region observe a ritual in which they give any type of object (related to household, make-up or food) to 13 married women. The first Sankranti experienced by a married woman is of significance as she is invited by her parents and brothers to their houses with her husband for a big feast. People invite friends and relatives (specially their sisters and daughters) to their home for special festival meals (called as "Sankrant Bhoj"). People give out many kind of small gifts such as til-gud (jaggery), fruits, dry khichadi, etc. to Brahmins or the needy ones.

Kite flying is traditionally observed as a part of this festival. On this occasion the sky in Jaipur and Hadoti regions is filled with kites, and youngsters engage in contests trying to cut each other's strings.

## Tamil Nadu

Pongal is a four-day festival in Tamil Nadu: Day 1 marks Bhogi Pandigai, Day 2 is Thai Pongal, Day 3 Maattu Pongal and Kaanum Pongal is celebrated on day 4.

The festival is celebrated four days from the last day of the Tamil month Maargazhi to the third day of the Tamil month Thai.

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**"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"**

**"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"**

**"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."**

Jodhpur is the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan, India. It is called the Gateway to Thar, as it is literally on the edge of the Thar desert. It is also called the Sun City as the sun shines (very bright and hot!) almost every day of the year.

### Udai Mandir

Udai Mandir is an architectural beauty. If you are an appreciator of architectural brilliance and quality then this place is for you. Half of the temple entrance gate is made from the carved sandstone (Jodhpur is the hub of sandstone). The main temple stands on a huge raised platform and is supported by 102 pillars.

Inside Udai Mandir there are beautiful wall paintings with 84 Yogasanas and the pictures of Nath Yogis made up with gold.

The temple has a Garbh Griha. The upper portion of the Garbh Griha is kept covered with cloth and is surrounded by gold pots. The gold polishing in Udai Mandir still has its original shine and quality.

### Siddhant Shiv Temple

Siddhant Shiv temple is situated between Takhat Sagar hills and Kalyana Lake. Its way is on Chopasani Road and it is about 10 Kms away from Jodhpur. You can reach the temple only after crossing the hundreds of stairs made up by cutting rocks.

Once upon a time the place, exactly where the temple now stands, was completely a deserted area.

Siddhant Shiv temple is believed to be built by GauriShanker (also called Nepali Baba, his real name was Veetrage Narain Swami) himself by cutting stones.

He was a handicapped saint who had only four fingers in each of his hand and foot.

### Masuria Hill Garden

Masuria hill garden is located on the Masuria hills of Jodhpur. It has the Asia's largest TV tower in it. It is green lush garden with full and clear view of Jodhpur. Earlier Mehrangarh fort was proposed to be made on Masuria hills but due to lack of water (at that time) Mehrangarh was made where it is at present.

### Arna Jharna

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### Mehrangarh Fort

Mehrangarh Fort of Jodhpur is one of the largest and most popular forts in India. The fort is located at the centre of the city and appears to command Jodhpur. Every visit to Mehrangarh is as exciting as before.

### Jaswant Thada

Jaswant Thada lies to the left of the Mehrangarh fort complex. It is a royal memorial made up of white marble and wonderful architecture piece of art.

### Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park

Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park was created in 2006 and is situated next to Mehrangarh Fort.

There are plants in this park that are adapted to growing in arid, rocky areas of the Thar Desert.

Rao Jodha Park is open throughout the year from 9 AM to 5:15 PM every day.

### Ram Dwara

This is a temple of great Hindu god and leader of the epic Ramayana 'Shree Ram'. It is located in the Chandpole (near Soorsagar) of Jodhpur. Here the sages preach and practice principles of Hindu Dharma.

Umaid Bhawan Palace

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# JODHPUR: THE GATEWAY TO THAR



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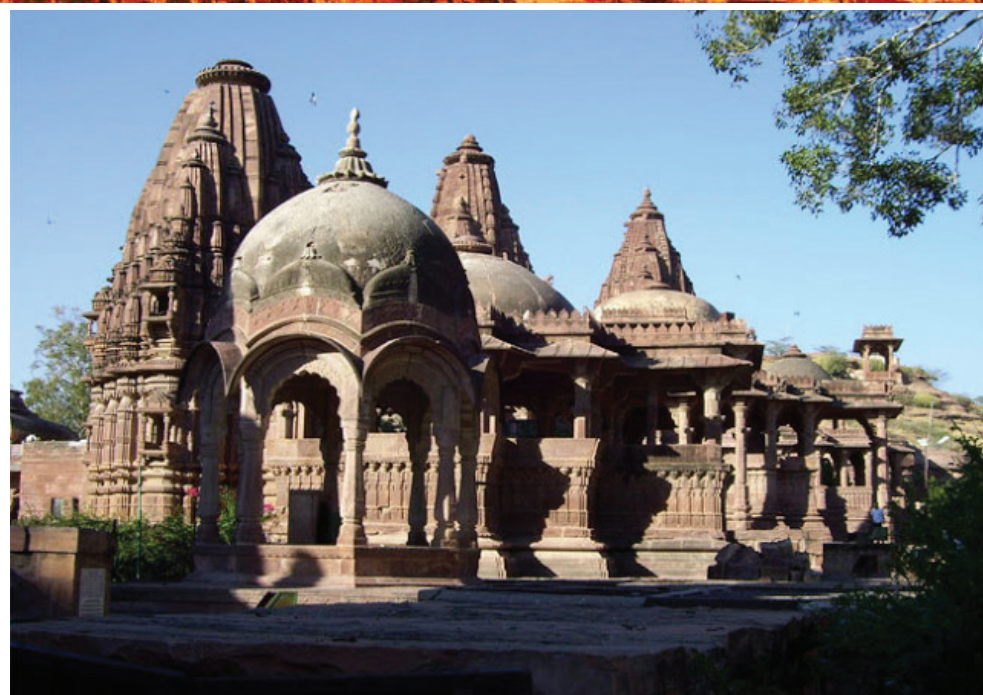
It was named after Maharaja Umaid Singh, grandfather of the present Maharaja Gaj Singh II, this monument has 347 rooms and serves as the principal residence of the Jodhpur royal family.

### Ghanta Ghar or Clock Tower

Ghanta Ghar also known as the clock tower. Beside the tower, there in the Sardar Market that is trusted by tourists for shopping. From this market, you can purchase Rajasthani textiles, clay articles, miniature camels and elephants, marble inlay work and classic silver and gold jewelry.

### Sachiya Mata Temple

The Sachiya Mata Temple is located in Osian, near Jodhpur. Osian is 60-65 kms from Jodhpur. In this Temple mother goddess Sachiya (Also called Indrani) is worshipped by many castes living in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and North India.



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## Drought-hit Australia has third-warmest year on record in 2018

**MELBOURNE (TIP):** Australia had its third warmest year on record in 2018, a year marked by severe drought in parts of the country and a prolonged bushfire season, the Bureau of Meteorology said, with the dry conditions expected to persist in coming months. Maximum temperatures across Australia were the second-warmest on record at 1.55 degrees C (2.8 degrees F) above average, just behind the hottest year in 2013.

The average temperature across Australia in 2018 was 1.14 degrees C above the average for 1961 to 1990, making nine of the past 10 years hotter than average, the bureau said in its annual climate statement.

Annual rainfall was the seventh lowest on record over the southeastern quarter of the country. "It was a tough year for people dealing with the drought," Bureau senior climatologist Lynette Bettio said in a statement. The bureau sees little change in the near term.

"The next three months look like a continuation of the warm and dry conditions that we've seen actually over the last 24 months or so," Karl Braganza, the bureau's head of climate monitoring told reporters. El Nino-like weather conditions that have prevailed in the Pacific Ocean could also suppress rainfall this year, although it was unclear yet how that would develop.

El Nino is usually associated with lower than usual rainfall in eastern Australia. For 2018, Australia's rainfall was 11 percent below the average for 1961 to 1990 at 413 millimetres (16.3 inches), which the bureau said was due to natural variability as well as climate change.

The warmer temperatures and a windy winter also meant more evaporation, which led to a rapid and intense drying of the landscape, the bureau said.

Global warming is largely to blame for Australia's bushfire season tending to start earlier in spring and extending into autumn, as opposed to just being during the hottest months in summer, Braganza said.

"The shift in the seasonalities and the severity of the fire weather is largely driven by increases in surface temperature, and that in turn is related to global warming," he said. (PTI)

# Grisly Mexican gang battle near US border leaves 21 dead

**MEXICO (TIP):** The charred remains of 21 people killed in a suspected gang battle have been found in a Mexican border town, just over the river from where US President Donald Trump was seeking to win support on January 10 for his plan to build a border wall. Officials in the notoriously violent border state of Tamaulipas said they were investigating the incident, which took place in Ciudad Miguel Aleman, after discovering the bodies on Wednesday. Seventeen of the bodies were burned.

Trump visited McAllen, Texas on Thursday afternoon, about 90 kilometers (56 miles) from Ciudad Miguel Aleman. He threatened to use emergency powers to bypass Congress and get billions of dollars to pay for the wall.

He has justified that demand by saying that undocumented migrants, criminals and illegal drugs have been pouring across the border. Statistics show illegal immigration has fallen to a 20-year low, while many drugs are believed to enter through legal ports of entry.

In Tamaulipas, turf wars between the local Gulf Cartel and its chief rival, the Zetas, have been a key source of bloodshed over recent years.

One body found was wearing the remains of a baseball cap bearing the letters and logo of the Gulf Cartel, while others wore the remains of bullet-proof vests with the same insignia, according to the photos.

Luis Rodriguez, a spokesman for state police, said in a statement that it appeared gunmen from the Gulf Cartel had fought with members of the Northeast Cartel, a group that split off from the Zetas. Irving Barrios, the state's attorney general, said in a radio interview that authorities found semi-automatic weapons and bulletproof vehicles at the site.

The area is "greatly fought over" by traffickers of arms and drugs as well as those who help undocumented migrants to cross to the United States, he said.

Another confrontation on January 10 morning between an armed group and military forces in Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, also in Tamaulipas, left five people dead and one military officer injured, said a representative from the state's peace coordination group.



contd from page 1

## Trump threatens to declare national emergency over border wall

Congress to construct a wall along the US-Mexico border, which he said is crucial to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and smuggling of drugs into the country.

The Democrats who support border security measures, argue that constructing a wall is not the best use of taxpayers' money. A day earlier Trump walked out of a Situation Room meeting with Congressional leaders on border security after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said no to his proposal for a border wall.

The meeting further deepened the political crisis in the country and there seems to be no end to the ongoing partial government shutdown, which is all set to break the old record of 21 days on Saturday.

The Democrats have said that funding for a border wall is out of the question.

"This is a national emergency," he said adding "I would like to do the deal through Congress because it makes sense to do it through Congress. The easy route for me would have been to declare a national emergency to do it. I will tell you, this is a tremendous crisis at the border," he added.

"Look at President Obama's statements from the past, numerous statements where he calls it a crisis. This is a crisis. You have human traffic, you have drugs, you have

them coming in, you have gangs. MS-13 (gang), we're taking them out by the thousand and bringing them back. This is a crisis," Trump said.

"And they don't come in through the checkpoints, which they do also. They go in between the checkpoints, where you don't have any barriers," he told said.

"If we don't make a deal, I would say it would be very surprising to me that I would not declare a national emergency and just fund it through the various mechanisms," said the president before leaving for a visit to the southern border in Texas.

"And by the way, there's more than one mechanism, there's various mechanisms and the lawyers tell me 100 per cent," he said.

The Washington Post reported Thursday, January 10, that Trump administration was laying groundwork to declare national emergency to build wall, eyeing unused Army Corps money.

The Post quoted two officials saying that the administration is searching for unused money in the Army Corps of Engineers budget. President Trump has urged the Army Corps to determine how quickly contracts could be signed and whether construction could begin within 45 days, according to an official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The administration is specifically eyeing a disaster spending bill passed by Congress last year that includes \$13.9 billion in funding allocated for a variety of projects but not spent. Trump reiterated Thursday, January 10 that he may declare a national emergency if Democrats don't give him what he wants. (With inputs from PTI)

## Trump Mocked India's PM Modi: India responded to Trump's 'Afghan library' dig

Trump suggested the contribution was of no use to reconstruction efforts in the country and that India's contribution to development in Afghanistan was minimal.

"That's like five hours of what we spend," the US president mocked.

"And we're supposed to say, 'Oh, thank you for the library.' I don't know who's using it in Afghanistan," Trump said.

India has rejected US President's comments saying New Delhi has provided \$3bn in development assistance to the war-torn country.

A statement provided to media by government sources in New Delhi said: "India plays a significant role as a development partner," in Afghanistan, with projects aimed at achieving "a tangible improvement in the lives of its people".

As the "largest donor in the region", New Delhi has helped with infrastructure projects, humanitarian assistance and economic development, the statement said.

The projects include a 218-kilometre road, a dam providing irrigation to farmers and training programs for more than 3,500 Afghans in India.

New Delhi has also provided 1.1 million tons of wheat to Afghanistan as well as a 400-bed children's hospital built in 1972 and renovated after the fall of the Taliban in 2002.

## Former Trump Lawyer Michael Cohen to Testify to Congress: New York Times

image and could intensify his legal woes.

Mr. Cohen, a close confidant of Mr. Trump when he was a real estate developer and presidential candidate as well as informally as president, was privy to all kinds of information and goings on in Trump's diverse circles, including the innermost circle.

It is too well known that Mr. Trump's inner circle and key moments are under scrutiny by both the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, and federal prosecutors in New York.

One may not be taken by surprise if there are some fireworks when Mr. Cohen appears on national television under oath.

## 10% EWS reservation Bill challenged in Supreme Court

The Rajya Sabha passed it with 165 voting in its favor and 7 against on Wednesday, a day after the Lok Sabha had approved The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Fourth Amendment) Bill, 2019.

The Bill was approved after the House rejected five amendments moved by Opposition members.

The quota will be over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation to SCs, STs and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). (With inputs from PTI)



# LOHRI: THE BONFIRE FESTIVAL

Like most other festivals in India, Lohri is also related to the agricultural activities of the farmers. It marks the harvesting season in Punjab and the end of the winter season. Lohri usually falls on the last day of the month of Paush, a day known as Makar Sankranti in most parts of the country. According to the English calendar, Lohri falls on 13th January every year.

Lohri 2019 is just around the corner and it's time to indulge in all the festive foods of this harvest festival. Lohri is the festival that marks the beginning of the harvest season, which calls for a celebration in many states of north India, including Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The festival is mainly celebrated by the Hindu and the Sikh communities, wherein they light a holy bonfire, which signifies passing of the winter solstice. There are a number of traditions related to this Punjabi festival other than lighting of the holy bonfire like offering ceremonial prayers and even preparing delicious food. Moreover, before harvesting the crops, people offer their thanks to the God.

## HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?

Lohri traditions and festivities are quite vibrant and soulful. The festival is characterised by a tradition of lighting of a holy bonfire, which signifies 'Agni', the God of Fire. People in the community gather around the bonfire, warm up to the sparkling flames, offer prayers, sing songs, dance and throw in foods like gajak, chikki, jaggery, popcorn, sesame seeds (til), rewari and peanuts to pay homage to their roots, in a matter of speaking.

Preparation to celebrate Lohri begins way before the actual festival day. Right through the winter days, village women and children collect dry twigs and branches to make a huge bonfire on the day of Lohri-the bigger the better.

On the day of the festival, with the setting of the sun, the bonfire is lit with people singing and dancing to the tune of Lohri songs.

The munching of seasonal goodies like popcorn, reori, peanuts and sugar cane forms an integral part of the celebration. Fistfuls of these goodies also find their way into the fire, as an offering to the Sun God, the giver of all life. Interestingly, the next day of Lohri is known as Maghi, a day that signifies the beginning of the month of Magh.

According to common belief, this is an auspicious day to take holy dip and give away charity. Kheer is prepared in sugar cane juice to mark the day.

## THE FIRST LOHRI

Lohri, the bonfire harvest festival of Punjab celebrated in the month of Magh, is symbolic of new beginnings. The first time Lohris are especially celebrated with pomp and grandeur. Friends and relatives gather around the fire and perform Gidda and Bhangra to the beat of Dhol, the drums of Punjab.

### The First Lohri of a Bride

The celebration takes place in the in-law's house with a grand feast for family and friends. The bride dresses in traditional attire with solah sringar, 16 things that a bride generally wears. The new bride and groom sit in a central place together as people approach them with wishes and gifts. The parents-in-law present the bride with new clothes and jewellery.

### The First Lohri of a New-born

The first Lohri of a new-born is of immense significance where the family and friends participate to bless the child with a



prosperous and a healthy future.

Many conduct an elaborate get-together at the paternal home, where invitation cards are sent in advance. Family and friends bring along gifts for the child as well as the new mother. The maternal and paternal grandparents shower the child with gifts.

## Lohri Rituals

Lohri is primarily the harvest festival of the Punjabis. This festival denotes the harvesting of the Rabi crops and hence all the farmers get together in order to thank god for giving them such a wonderful harvest.

The rituals related to Lohri symbolize the attachment of the people with Mother Nature. A few days before the festival, youngsters get together in groups and go round their localities singing folk songs.

Doing this they also collect firewood and money for the bonfire that is scheduled on the

night of Lohri. On the special day, offerings of phulley (popcorn), moongphali (peanuts) and rewri (a sweet delicacy made out of jaggery and sesame seed) are offered to the fire.

The men and women go round the fire and bow before it in reverence. Lohri holds special importance when there is a special occasion in the family like marriage or childbirth.

## Lohri Legends

Like all Indian festivals, Lohri also has some legends and lore attached to it.

One of the many interesting legends has it that in a place that lies between Gujranwala and Sialkot, there was a thick forest known as Rakh.

The forest was the home of Dulla Bhatti, a dacoit who was considered as the Robin Hood of Punjab.

This brave and generous man was always helpful to the needy.

During the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, a jealous Hindu spread a rumour that his niece was very beautiful and would do credit to the Muslim harem.

On hearing this, the Mughal officers wanted to carry her off forcibly. The girl's father was extremely worried and sought the protection of Dulla Bhatti.

Dulla at once got her married to a young Hindu boy at a simple ceremony in the forest. He lit the sacred fire in keeping with the Hindu custom. Since there was no priest to chant the holy mantras, he broke into a hilarious song composed extempore to add cheer to the occasion. This song is sung even today on the occasion.

The best way of celebrations in this chilly whether could be to sit around a bonfire and enjoy. Well, Lohri Celebrations would be the best festival to celebrate and spread the warmth of love and happiness among all your near and dear ones in this chilly weather. Lohri is majorly celebrated in Punjab and north Indian states on 13th January and is considered to be the harvesting festival of Punjab. Lohri is not just a festival for people of Punjab but it is a symbol of life. Several hopes of farmers are associated with this festival of Lohri as the fields promise a golden yield to the farmers.

Newly wed couples and all those couples who have a newborn baby celebrate Lohri but nowadays it is seen that most of the people celebrate this festival of Lohri as an occasion of get together, to spend some time with their near and dear ones and enjoy the celebrations.

Children start collecting firewoods and wooden twigs one week before the festival that are used for burning Lohri.

On the Lohri day all the firewoods are arranged in a circular manner in such a way that it makes a huge bonfire.

Children visit each and every house of their locality inviting all the people for the Lohri celebrations and asking for their contributions. While visiting every house children sing a Lohri song, making everyone feel that the festival of Lohri is around the corner.

The traditional food cooked on the Lohri day is sarson ka saag and makki ki roti and rau di kheer is served as a dessert.

People dress themselves in new clothes and in the night they gather around the bonfire to light it. People pray in front of the burning bonfire and put til (gingelly), moongphali (peanuts), popcorns and chirwa (beaten rice) in it, as all these eatables are considered as the Lohri prasad.

People greet each other wishing a very happy Lohri and spread the feeling of love and happiness all around.

night of Lohri. On the special day, offerings of phulley (popcorn), moongphali (peanuts) and rewri (a sweet delicacy made out of jaggery and sesame seed) are offered to the fire

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Doing this they also collect firewood and

# Indian team does not support inappropriate comments: Virat Kohli on Pandya, Rahul row

**SYDNEY (TIP):** Indian captain Virat Kohli has said it out loud and clear that it has been made clear to Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul that their controversial comments made on Koffee with Karan are not acceptable. He also mentioned that their personal opinions are not the view of the Indian cricket team.

"From the Indian cricket team point of view, any inappropriate comments that are made in that scenario are something that we definitely don't support and the two concerned players felt what has gone wrong and they have understood the magnitude of what's happened," Kohli said at the SCG ahead of the opening ODI against Australia.

"Definitely it has to hit anyone hard, they will definitely understand the things that have not gone right," he added.

The captain also said that although they are waiting for the verdict to come out, it does not change the way the Indian team thinks and plays the sport.

"We, definitely, as the Indian cricket team do not support views like that and that has been communicated. I can definitely say that as the Indian cricket team and responsible cricketers we definitely don't align with those views and those are purely individual views," he said.

"We are still waiting for a decision to be made but from the Indian cricket team point of view, this changes nothing in terms of our beliefs in the change room. It does nothing to the spirit that we've been able to create within the change room and these are purely individual opinions and something as I said which is inappropriate," Kohli added.

## Hardik Pandya, KL Rahul set to be suspended

Barely 24 hours to go before India line-up their playing eleven for the first of the three One-day Internationals against Australia in Sydney, captain Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri are clueless if they can pick all-rounder Hardik Pandya and batsman KL Rahul in the team.

Reason: BCCI has been forced to seek legal advice on the matter because CoA member Diana Edulji, who first advocated a two-match ban for the cricketers before sending them a showcause notice, has now asked for one.

The matter pertains to Pandya and Rahul's comments on filmmaker Karan Johar's show 'Koffee With Karan' that was streamed four days ago. The comments have largely been deemed - in the mainstream and social media - as "cringeworthy" and "disgusting". Insiders say "this is not a legal issue at all. This is about BCCI's own Code of Conduct for cricketers. This is simply waste of time." Clause 17 & 18 of the BCCI's constitution, although, call for either the Apex Council or an ombudsman to intervene in such matters.

Kohli and Shastri, are meanwhile kept waiting. Until a reply comes in writing from BCCI's legal team, the CoA is in no position to take any action. The board's



## 'APOLOGY DOESN'T APPEAR SINCERE'

Soon after receiving the replies, Rai wrote to Edulji and Johri, saying: "The apology has obviously been drafted by the agency. Doesn't appear sincere. I am inclined to suggest a penalty. But since I have not seen the clip, maybe Diana would like to suggest some penalty. There should be a penalty? What do you feel? Could be different for both players depending upon what they have said in the show."

Sources say his views were based on the logic that Rahul remained relatively guarded while Pandya did most of the talking.

Rai then went through the excerpts of what was spoken on Johar's show and replied again: "I have seen the remarks made by these two players on the show in print today. Very crass. No apology can cover it. I had asked Diana to suggest a penalty because I had not seen the clip. I think we need to give both of them a two-match suspension. If Diana agrees, Rahul please draft an appropriate instruction and issue today as their explanations have come in. Separately please prepare an advisory to all BCCI contracted players and support staff."

However, Edulji, who had earlier advised the two-match ban, retracted from her earlier statement and instead wrote back to Rai and Johri, saying: "The (BCCI) secretary and legal (Amarchand Mangaldas) may kindly opine". Sources say BCCI's legal team Amarchand Mangaldas is clear that this is not a legal matter but one that involves the BCCI's own Code of Conduct.

Board secretary Amitabh Choudhary said: "Suspension must happen immediately." BCCI's acting president CK Khanna wrote: "Comments are crass and highly irresponsible. I suggest strict action." Board treasurer Anirudh Chaudhry too wrote a lengthy email, recalling how Cricket Australia acted with a sense of urgency in the case of Steven Smith and David Warner. He added that agents of players need to be regulated and as far as the punishment is concerned, "a two-match suspension seems to be only a stop-gap arrangement."

"The comments such as the ones that have been made would definitely have painted a large, red target on the back of the players for potential recruiters for the organized syndicates who attempt to indulge in match-fixing across the globe," stated Chaudhry in his email and suggested a sensitisation process. "The entire team and support staff must go through a sensitisation process. The (BCCI) CEO (Rahul Johri) may join them in the sensitisation as well as recommended by Ms. Veena Gowda, advocate."

inability to take the call stems from a series of e-mails that have been exchanged between members of the CoA and Edulji's refusal to agree with CoA chairman Vinod Rai on all matters concerning BCCI. Below is a trail of e-mails that present a detailed scenario of what transpired.

On Wednesday, January 9, at 10.38am, hours after Twitter had feasted on Pandya and Rahul's talk show with Johar, BCCI CEO Rahul Johri wrote an e-mail to Rai and Edulji, stating: "It is been brought to our notice that (Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul) made a few statements which have not been well received in the media. We would suggest that a notice be sent seeking explanation

within 24 hours. Please advise."

To this, Rai replied at 11.26 am and said: "Only within 24 hours."

At 11.29 am, Edulji replied to both stating (verbatim): "Strict action should be taken against both as they can't speak about women in such a manner. They should be banned for a match or two to show we respect women and won't allow players to be disrespectful."

To this, Rai replied an hour later, insisting notices should be sent, and said: "Send the notice. We can decide the action today."

Pandya then went on to tweet an apology before drafting his reply to the showcause notice. Rahul sent a separate e-mail.

## TEST SERIES WON, NOW INDIA SET SIGHTS ON LIMITED-OVERS CONTEST

**India become first Asian team to win a Test series in Australia. It took 71 years for an Indian team to realise a dream no one else could**



**SYDNEY (TIP):** While the Test team is still savouring the maiden Test series win in Australia, the limited-overs specialists, including veteran MS Dhoni, hit the nets at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday. With the 2019 ODI World Cup on the horizon, the focus has firmly shifted to white-ball cricket. India have a long white-ball season lined up ahead of the marquee tournament in England this summer, with three ODIs in Australia and another five ODIs in New Zealand along with a three-match T20I series.

Australia will then visit India for a return leg of five ODIs and two T20Is, before the 2019 Indian Premier League season gets underway on March 23.

Dhoni, along with Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Dinesh Karthik and Khaleel Ahmed, have joined the Indian team here. On Wednesday, four members of the newly arrived bunch trained at the SCG. Dhoni, Dhawan, Jadhav and Rayudu went through the paces ahead of the first ODI in Sydney on Saturday.

Meanwhile, former Australia and Netherlands pacer Dirk Nannes complimented Jasprit Bumrah for his 'tough' step up from limited-overs to Test cricket without any disruption in rhythm or fitness. "I think the change from white ball to Test cricket is easier when you have got the skills, and he certainly does have that. But the challenge is to be able to do it consistently - hitting the same spot time and time again, and he does that exceptionally well," Nannes said.

"I think his dismissal of Shaun Marsh in Melbourne was absolutely magnificent. I cannot think of many other situations where a batsman was set up so beautifully, and the bowler executed a T20 skill in a Test to dismiss him. That was something special," he added.

Source: PTI



## Aaron Finch and Co to wear retro kit in ODI series

**A**ustralia take on India in the three-match ODI series starting Saturday and the hosts are all set to turn back the clock and wear the jersey similar to what Alan Border and his troops wore against India in the 1986 series. The first ODI will be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) and the Aussie players will be seen wearing the colours of their yesteryear heroes.

Aussie pacer Peter Siddle, who is making his comeback into the ODI team, said that the players are excited with this new look. "I might just pull out the headband," Peter Siddle was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. "I will have to ask Zamps (Adam Zampa) to borrow one of his and go with the DK (Lillee) headband. We'll see what we pull out on Saturday."



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