

## The INDIAN PANORAMA

Invites advertisements and articles for a profusely illustrated New Year special edition by December 26, 2019.

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# Trump Impeached, Faces Senate Trial

## Third President in US History to be impeached

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): Donald Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives on Wednesday, December 18, charging the unfazed US President with abuse of power and obstructing Congress. He has become the third US President to face the ignominy of a bruising Senate trial, months before he stands for re-election.

**“After three years of sinister witch hunts, hoaxes, scams, the House Democrats are trying to nullify the ballots of tens of millions of patriotic Americans”.**

**Donald Trump, US President**

After some 11 hours of fierce arguments between Opposition Democrats and the ruling Republicans

contd on Page 30



President Trump accused the Democrats of "trying to nullify the ballots of tens of millions of patriotic Americans".

## Delhi gridlocked over anti-CAA protests

**Serpentine jams on arterial roads, 700 flights delayed, 20 cancelled at Delhi's IGI Airport, 19 metro stations shut, Internet suspended at multiple locations**

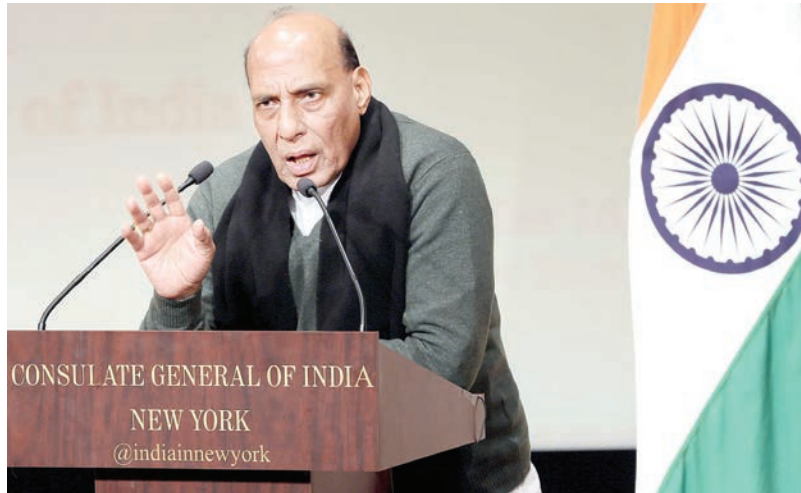


Protesters raise anti-CAA slogans in New Delhi  
Photo / Courtesy MR Bhui

NEW DELHI (TIP): Commuters across the National Capital Region (NCR) faced a harrowing time during the morning rush hour as police barricading at border areas to prevent citizens from reaching venues of several protests against the Citizenship

contd on Page 30

## Rajnath Singh Applauds Contribution of Indian American Community



Defense Minister of India Rajnath Singh addresses the gathering at the Indian Consulate in New York, December 16

Photo / Jay Mandal-on assignment

NEW YORK (TIP): Defense Minister of India Rajnath Singh arrived in New York Dec 16 on his way to Washington for the 2+2 dialogue, the highest institutionalized bilateral dialogue between India and the US.

While in New York, he attended a reception for the Indian Community and Friends of India organized by the Consulate General of India at the

prestigious Asia Society. India's Ambassador to the US, Harsh Vardhan Shringla also attended the event.

Attending a gathering of almost 300 persons, the Minister spoke about the importance and contributions of the Indian American Community and their role in the success of Howdy Modi.

contd on Page 3

## Drag Musharraf's body to central square in Islamabad, hang for 3 days: Pak court

**Pak government to appeal the verdict; Pak military supports Musharraf**



Pervez Musharraf says he has been victimized (File photo)

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's special court which sentenced former military ruler Pervez Musharraf to death in its detailed judgment on Thursday, December 19, said his body should be dragged to the central square in Islamabad and hanged for three days if he dies before his execution.

contd on Page 30



Andy Singh

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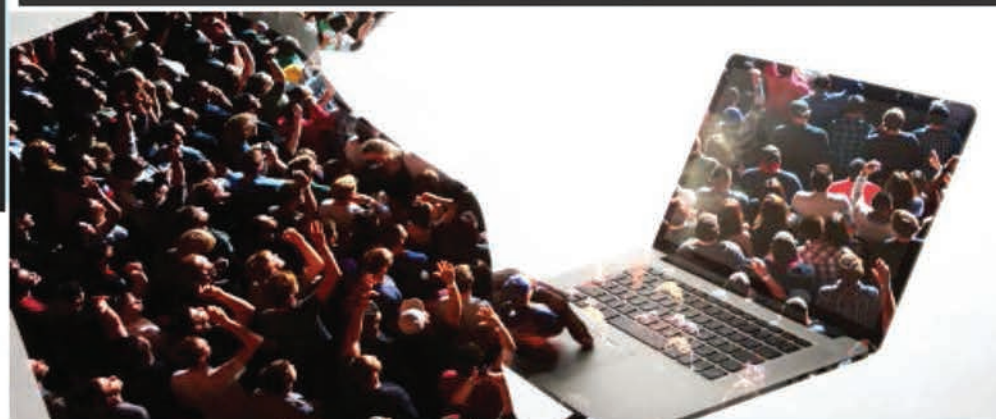
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# Federal judge clears way for New York lawsuit challenging ICE on courthouse arrests

**NEW YORK (TIP):** A federal judge on Thursday rejected a motion from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials to dismiss a New York lawsuit challenging the federal agency over courthouse arrests.

"Courts cannot be expected to function properly if third parties (not least the executive branch of the government) feel free to disrupt the proceedings and intimidate the parties and witnesses by staging arrests for unrelated civil violations in the courthouse," U.S. District Judge Jed Rakoff wrote in a ruling.

Rakoff also said that ICE agents should not be allowed to make arrests "while witnesses or parties are coming in and out of court proceedings."

The 36-page ruling dealt another immigration blow to the Trump Administration, which has pushed for ICE agents to make arrests at state courts.

At issue is a lawsuit that was filed by state Attorney General Letitia James and Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez in September charging that ICE's courthouse arrests violate the law and disrupt the state legal system.

The lawsuit claims that defendants, victims and witnesses have failed to show up at court because they are afraid of being arrested and deported.

Nearly 400 immigrants have been arrested in and around courthouses in New York state since Trump took office in 2017 - a jump of 1,700 percent, according to James' office.

The lawsuit is asking for a 2018 ICE



Attorney General Letitia James speaks about a lawsuit filed in federal court that will aim to bar ICE from making arrests in and around New York state courts. Letitia James alongside DA Eric Gonzales filed a motion in federal courts to prevent ICE from making arrests in and around NY state courts. At Foley Sq. in Manhattan, NY on September 25, 2019.

Photo / Courtesy Wes Parnell/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

directive that authorizes such arrests to be thrown out.

"Today's ruling ensures we will get our day in court to make the case that ICE's policies are nothing more than illegal maneuvers that harm our state's ability to provide justice through the court system," Letitia James said in a statement. "Our state courts cannot function with ICE

attempting to arrest parties, witnesses, and victims who rely on our courts for relief. While the president and his administration continuously look for new ways to intimidate immigrants and punish New York's sovereign status, we will continue fighting to ensure justice and public safety for all New Yorkers."

"This policy has a chilling effect in

immigrant communities and discourages cooperation with law enforcement - thus jeopardizing public safety," Eric Gonzalez said. "I look forward to continuing litigation of this case, so this misguided practice by the federal government is halted once and for all."

(Source: Daily News)

## Rajnath Singh Applauds Contribution of Indian American Community

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

"Had a wonderful interaction with the dynamic Indian community in New York. During my interaction I appreciated the contribution of the Indian American Community and also lauded their role in the super success of 'Howdy Modi' event earlier this year in Houston", Rajnath Singh wrote on social media.

He also dealt with several contemporary issues in his address including the abrogation of Article 370, CAB and the importance of friendly relations with neighbors. Hon'ble Minister also held a Q&A session and answered questions at length from audience including on India-US relations and the Indian economy.

In response to a question on the Sikh community, Singh said India will never be able to forget the contributions of the Sikh community. "No one has given the kind of sacrifices that the Sikh community has made to protect the culture of India."



Defense Minister of India Rajnath Singh flanked by India's Ambassador to the US, Harsh Vardhan Shringla (L) and Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty (R) with the Indian Consulate staff  
Photo / Jay Mandal-on assignment

## Indian American CEO of Self-Storage Firm Receives Entrepreneur Award



Sheth has 15 years of experience as an owner and manager of commercial real estate assets

**ATLANTA (TIP):** Rajen Sheth, The CEO and founder of Boardwalk Development Group LLC, a private-equity investment company focused on self-storage, received a "2019 Top Entrepreneur Award" recently from the Atlanta chapter of TiE (The IndUS Entrepreneurs) Global, which supports entrepreneurs through funding, mentoring and networking.

The TiE awards are based on a company's culture, innovation, leadership, profitability, revenue growth and sustainability. To be considered, recipients must have been in business since 2015 and earned a minimum revenue of \$2 million, but no more than \$100 million, according to a press release.

"I am truly honored to be awarded TiE Atlanta's 'Top Entrepreneurs Award.' I owe this award to the encouragement I received from my parents, the support of investors, many of whom are TiE charter members, and to the TiE Atlanta organization," Sheth said. "Without TiE, I would never have had the guts to become an entrepreneur."

Sheth has 15 years of experience as an owner and manager of commercial real estate assets. In 2007, he founded ValueSpace Storage Fund I, a self-storage investment fund focused on acquiring existing storage assets in Metro Atlanta. The brand was sold in 2015 to SecurCare Self Storage, a participating regional operator of National Storage Affiliates Trust, a self-administered and -managed real estate trust headquartered in Greenwood, Colo.

## Indian American Ophthalmologist indicted for Healthcare Fraud

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Dr. Ameet Goyal an ophthalmologist with practices in Rye, Mt. Kisco, and Wappingers Falls, New York, and Greenwich, Connecticut, has been indicted last month for healthcare fraud. Specifically, the Indictment charges GOYAL with fraudulently billing patients, Medicare, and private insurance programs millions of dollars, between 2010 and 2017, for complex eye surgeries that GOYAL had not actually performed. The Civil Complaint further alleges that GOYAL and his Practice engaged in widespread healthcare fraud by consistently "upcoding" these and other surgical procedures, examinations, and tests in fraudulent billings submitted to Medicare and Medicaid. (Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# Indian American Congressman Ami Bera Named Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The House Foreign Affairs Committee Dec 13 selected Rep. Ami Bera (CA-07) to serve as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation.

"I am honored to chair the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation. Asia is one of the most important and consequential regions of the world and the United States has deep and enduring ties to the continent" Bera said.

"As Chair, I will work to ensure that the U.S. is utilizing all of our political, military, cultural, and economic tools to support our interests, and maintain and enhance U.S. commitments in Asia and the Pacific. The subcommittee will explore how effectively those tools are being used, including how to strengthen our allies and partners within the region. Finally, we need to remember that when we engage with the nations of Asia and the Pacific, our values and interests move hand-in-hand; countries which respect human rights and create space for civil and nongovernmental



Congressman Ami Bera is the longest-serving Indian American lawmaker

actors are those that prosper and guarantee long-term stability", he further added.

Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX-20) was voted to succeed Rep. Bera as Chair of the

Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Bera continued: "It was a tremendous privilege to serve as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. I'll continue to be a forceful advocate for smart and strong diplomacy and development, which includes supporting and strengthening the State Department, USAID, and our diplomats and career officials. I have full confidence that Rep. Castro will be an excellent Chair of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee moving forward."

In addition to its regional jurisdiction, the subcommittee will provide critical oversight of U.S. nonproliferation policy and will work to prevent the spread of dangerous nuclear and missile technologies, including nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction.

Bera also serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea and previously chaired the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans.

## Indian American Beena Patel Sentenced to Two Years in Prison for Lying to Federal Grand Jury

**CHICAGO (TIP):** A former associate clerk in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County was sentenced Dec 12 to two years in prison for lying under oath to a federal grand jury.

Beena Patel, 58, of Chicago, was convicted earlier this year of making false declarations before a grand jury. The grand jury was conducting an investigation of possible criminal violations in connection with the purchasing of jobs and promotions in the Clerk's office.

U.S. District Judge Sara L. Ellis imposed the two-year sentence after a hearing in federal court in Chicago.

The sentence was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Patrick M. Blanchard, Cook County Inspector General; and Emmerson Buie, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago office of the FBI. "Defendant not only had answers to the questions the grand jury was asking but had information that went to the very heart of its investigation," Assistant U.S. Attorneys Heather McShain and Ankur Srivastava argued in the government's sentencing memorandum. "Witnesses who lie during the course of a grand jury investigation not only violate their



Beena Patel is a former associate clerk in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois

solemn oath to tell the truth, but also impede the grand jury's ability to gather evidence."

According to evidence at trial, the grand jury was conducting an investigation of possible criminal violations in connection with the purchasing of jobs and promotions in the Clerk's office. Patel sold campaign fundraiser tickets on behalf of the Clerk to colleagues in the office and knew that other employees did the same. Yet when asked about it during grand jury testimony on Oct. 15, 2015, Patel denied selling the tickets to employees and denied knowing that other employees had done the same. The jury at trial found that Patel's statements were false.

(Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Indian American Surabhi Gupta Named 40 Under Forty Alumni Honoree by Stony Brook University

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Surabhi Gupta, Director of Engineering, Airbnb has been named by Stony Brook University as one of the honorees for the fifth 40 Under Forty awards celebration, recognizing an exceptional group of alumni under forty years old who have



Surabhi Gupta, Former software engineer at Google, is Director of Engineering, Airbnb

demonstrated both excellence in their chosen professions and outstanding advocacy for their community.

This year's 40 Under Forty class consists of world-class athletes and leaders in medicine, education, government, communications and the arts. Surabhi Gupta, director of engineering for Airbnb, was named to Business Insider's list of Most Powerful Female Engineers in 2017. Gupta also started an event series for female engineers called Taking Flight.

"The extraordinary talent demonstrated by these individuals in their early careers is a testament not only to the high-quality education they received at Stony Brook University, but also to the caliber of our entire student community," said Interim University President Michael Bernstein. "We applaud the achievements of this year's 40 Under Forty honorees." A celebration will be held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at Current, located at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan.



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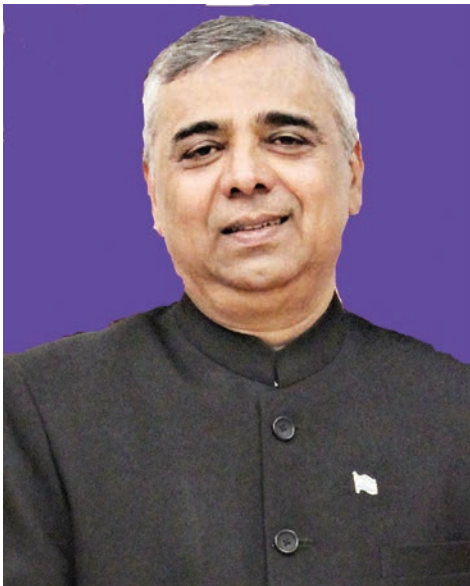
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# Indian American community gives a warm farewell to Mr. Devadasan Nair



*Devadasan Nair, Consul Community Affairs, Indian Consulate, New York is getting back to India after having put in a little over 3 years during which period he became the darling of the Indian American community*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Indian Community in 10 States under the administrative jurisdiction of Consulate General of India, NY will be missing the dynamic and popular Consul for Community Affairs Mr. Devadasan Nair, as he is moving back to India on completion of his tenure of 3 years in Indian Consulate. The individuals and organizations of Indian Community in and around New York State got an easier approachability and accessibility to the Indian Consulate by the active involvement and intervention of Mr. Nair in their different issues and problems. The cordial relationships developed by Mr. Nair with the leaders of Indian Community helped them to bring common problems of Indian origin citizens of America and Indian citizens living in America and to resolve the issues as far as possible. Due to his dedicated intervention in such issues many Indian Community people got relief in their problems.

The Indian ladies who suffered indomestic violence, Indians who were attacked and shot dead in hatred crimes or looting, Indian students who were detained by the Customs and Border Protection Agency, the missing students, the Indians and students who lost their home and documents on fire were all the beneficiaries due to the

timely and sincere intervention of Mr. Nair in his capacity as the Community Affairs Consul of the Consulate. He helped many Indians who met with accidents and helped many families to take the dead body of their dear ones to India, supported them with financial aid who were in need, coordinated with different organizations to provide support to the suffering Indians. All these activities and support to needy Indians by Mr. Nair, made him so popular in the Indian Community around New York State and neighboring states and created a very good image of the Indian Consulate. All the Indian organizations appreciated his dedicated services to Indians and honored him during their meetings. His active participation in their meetings and interaction with them communicated good messages on the activities of the Indian Consulate and promoted Indian culture and heritage. He was accessible always, friendly, helpful and empathetic in dealing with NRI issues brought before him.

Dr. Neeta Jain, President and Founder of International Ahimsa Foundation Inc. and District Leader in Assembly District 25, Queens said "His zeal in bringing communities together was successful. We are going to miss his calm, pleasant and positive approach. I am hoping to see the same from our new Consul of Community Affairs Mr. Vijay Krishnan. My best wishes to both".

Ajit Abraham, President, Kerala Cultural Association of North America Inc remembered him as "Mr. Devadasan Nair has done all that he could do above and beyond his position as Indian Consular for Community Affairs in U.S. to sort out our community issues and resolve them. He is one of a kind who has been always present during most of the Indian organizations and associations events for any good cause. I recognize Mr. Devadasan Nair as a great promoter of our culture and heritage".

Mr. Nair used to coordinate with the non-profit community organization TEAM Aid (www.teamaid.org), that provides emergency assistance to the Non Resident Indian families in their disastrous incidents such as Accidents, homicides and sudden deaths. The



*Mr. Nair at Jackson Heights Merchants Association farewell function. Seen in the picture, among others, from L to R: Helen Sears (Former Council Member), Council Member Daniel Dromm, Mohinder Verma, Harshit Chugh, Shiv Dass President JHMA (seated left) and M. Devadasan Nair (seated right).*

Founder Chairman of TEAM Aid said, "We are fortunate to have a nice officer Mr. Nair in the Indian Consulate for the last few years. He is not only a dedicated officer, but also have compassion to serve the needy. He assisted us in many community issues and has been always available in case of emergencies. When hundreds of Indian students were detained by INS/CBP, he worked rigorously, traveled between state to meet those students in the detention centers and give them moral support. When a government officer really thinks that his/her duty is "service", he/she will be admired lot longer than their tenure. Mr. Nair is certainly is certainly one of those admirable officers that we have seen".

Indian Overseas Congress Vice Chairman Mr. George Abraham said "Mr. Devadasan Nair has exceeded all expectations in performing his duties as a community relationship officer of the Indian Consulate. He was accessible always, friendly, helpful and empathetic in dealing with NRI issues brought before him. His ability to connect with the diverse Diaspora was simply extraordinary. Moreover, he is knowledgeable of all issues affecting our community and including the historical context and its current political dynamics. The community will truly miss him, and his successor may have big shoes to fill in order to be equally effective wish him farewell and bon voyage".

Senator Kevin Thomas, the first Indian US Senator in New York State appreciated the dedicated service of Mr. Devadasan Nair and all his support to the Indian Community.

Among many Indian Community organizations, the Indian Community in Buffalo, NY also gave Mr. Devadasan Nair a warm farewell. Mr. Sibu Nair, the Vice President of Hindu Cultural Society of Western New York, Buffalo and the Board Member of Kairali

Buffalo remembered him as a great Diplomat of Indian Consulate who for the first time got in contact with Indian Community in Buffalo. Almost all the officers and VIP guests of the Indian Consulate in New York used to visit Niagara Falls for the past many years, but the Indian Community in Buffalo had no connection with any of them. It is Mr. Devadasan Nair who developed a cordial relation with the Indian Community in Buffalo, and they are grateful to him for such a wonderful coordination.

Mr. Harish Thakkar, the President of The Association of Indians in America (AIA) said "He did excellent job to bring all Indian community together. He is very humble and respectful family man".

Mr. Devadasan Nair started his career at the age of 22 years in Indian Government Service under Ministry of Finance as Inspector of Customs and Central Excise in Kochi, Kerala and subsequently promoted and moved on deputation to another Ministry of Government of India and continued his service in Delhi and Mumbai. Before his transfer to Indian Consulate, New York, he served as the Second Secretary in Indian Embassy in Myanmar. His dedicated service in Myanmar resulted him to receive meritorious award from the Government of India. He is moving back to Delhi after completion of his dedicated service in New York and will retire from Indian Government Service in January 2020 on superannuation.

A number of organizations including FIA, the AIA and Jackson Heights Merchants Association organized impressive farewell functions for Mr. Nair.

**The Indian Panorama has had a special relationship with Mr. Nair. The editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja and the Assistant editor Bidisha Roy wish Mr. Nair all the best as he leaves for India.**



*Buffalo Indian American community gave a warm farewell to Mr. Nair*

# Tirloak Malik Shared his concept of Happy Life Yoga with Seniors at Goddard Riverside Senior Center

**NEW YORK (TIP):** HAPPY LIFE YOGA, created by Tirloak Malik, is the yoga of life. This educational platform offers a unique holistic approach to health and happiness using tools from Ayurveda, Indian Philosophy, and Yoga to help better manage modern day challenges such as work, finances, relationships, family and other social pressures and ultimately guides you towards a happier life.

Tirloak Malik believes India has always been a spiritual teacher of the world and that Indian Philosophy provides the blueprint of how to live a happy life. Indian Philosophy teaches that we must practice balance in all four aims of human life: Artha, Dharma, Kama and Moksha. These philosophical concepts can be applied to all cultures.

An asana yoga practice and healthy



Tirloak Malik is seen sharing teachings of HAPPY LIFE YOGA with seniors at the Goddard Riverside Senior Center in New York.

eating alone will not make us healthy. Kama, the world of all our desires, can be a double edge sword and we must understand and manage this part of the four aims of human life to be healthier and happier. According to Indian Philosophy we can have it all, but as Tirloak Malik says "Fix your Kama, and be happier!"

Tirloak Malik created HAPPY LIFE YOGA as well as Ayurveda Cafe in Manhattan. He is a happy lifestyle speaker and a New York Emmy Nominated Filmmaker. He is a proud Upper Westsider. He has promoted Ayurveda for the last 20 years and now he and the team bring the gifts of India through HAPPY LIFE YOGA.

HAPPY LIFE YOGA provides workshops, excursions, events and more. A unique mix of tools and exercises are used in our workshops to apply these philosophical concepts in everyday life.

## Jackson Heights Merchants Association organizes Holiday Party



President of Jackson Heights Merchants Association Shiv Dass addressing the gathering



Seen in the picture, among others, from L to R: Helen Sears (Former Council Member), Council Member Daniel Dromm, Mohinder Verma, Harshit Chugh, Shiv Dass President JHMA (seated left) and M. Devadasan Nair (seated right).

**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Jackson Heights Merchants Association, the leading organization of merchants in Jackson Heights organized a grand holiday party at which the new committee members were announced.

The association also gave a warm send off to Mr. Devadasan Nair, Community Consul at the Indian Consulate, New York.

At a gathering of more than a hundred guests and members of the

association, Mr. Shiv Dass, president of the association introduced the team

and spoke briefly about the future plans of the association.

Present, among others were Council Member Daniel Dromm, former Council Member Helen Sears, Gujrati Samaj President, Harshad Patel, Miss Kim, Elmhurst Hospital Community Board Director, Ms Reneta English, Community Board Queens 3 Chair, Ms Giovana Reed, District Manager, and five community board members. Also present were District leader Taj Kumar, Ajit Modi of Rajbhog Sweets, INC President George Abraham, Chairman Bellrose Business Association Subhash Kapadia, Film maker Tirloak Malik and The Indian Panorama Chief Editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja



Guests and JHMA members



By Ven Parameswaran

**Air India failed miserably because it has been run as a public sector corporation. It has failed to formulate a professional marketing strategy and compose the right marketing mix to reach the market targets.**

17 million foreign tourists went to India in 2018. 90% of the tourists were Overseas Indians including foreign citizens and Indian citizens who were immigrants in foreign countries. Indians visiting India have noticed on the plane that 90% of passengers are of Indian origin. The overseas Indians visit India to renew family relationship and also to introduce India to their children and grandchildren. Air India should consider itself very lucky that it has the most comparative advantage over other international airlines. It is reported that India earned \$100 billion thru tourism.

There are approximately 30 million people of Indian origin living outside India. 10 million Indians are working in the Arab countries in the Middle East and they visit India at least once a year. 10 million Indians live in the USA, Canada and South America. Approximately 6 million live in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, South Africa and Kenya. 4 million live in Western Europe, Russia, Fiji, Madagascar and Diego Garcia.

### **WHY DID AIRINDIA FAIL TO COMPETE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES?**

Singapore, a City State with 4 million people has created the Singapore Airlines. How did Singapore Airlines become one of the most popular and successful airlines? The Gulf States of U.A.E., Qatar and others have several successful airlines that have appealed to Indians. Lufthansa, Swiss Air, British Airways, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Scandinavian Airlines, Air France, United Airlines, Delta, Air Canada and so many others have succeeded in

## AS I SEE IT

# WHAT AILS AIR INDIA ?

With 30 million overseas Indians as built in market Air India could have been Numero Uno International Airline



carrying Indian passengers to India.

It is now well known that the CEO's of Indian origin manage the largest corporations and are highly successful. Microsoft, Google, PepsiCo, Mastercard, Fedex, United Airlines and USAir have had CEO's of Indian origin. Dutta and Lonjewar were CEO's of United Airlines and the USAir respectively at one time. They were highly successful CEO's.

Air India failed miserably because it has been run as a public sector corporation. It has failed to formulate a professional marketing strategy and compose the right marketing mix to reach the market targets. A government official cannot be expert on everything. Air India officials have served their career well by being 100% loyal to the government officials, ignoring the principle that CONSUMER IS THE KING. Many Indians have told me that they just do not like the ATTITUDE of Air India officials at the counter and on the plane. They look down on Indians.

I have been living in the USA for the past 65 years and have travelled by different airlines including Air India. A friend of mine living in Chicago was travelling to Bangalore once a week in First Class. He, as a patriotic Indian was going by Air India. Once when he had his first-class ticket and confirmed reservation was asked to sit in Economy Class or fly the next day. In order to meet the business deadlines he compromised and travelled in Economy holding a

First-Class ticket. After that he gave up Air India. Another friend of mine working for a leading Wall Street firm went to New Delhi airport with a confirmed First-Class reservation but was told by the counter staff that there was no vacant seat in the First Class and he should travel by Economy! What I am reporting is not isolated examples. The counter staff was expecting bribes and they have exploited the passengers at the eleventh hour.

Air India has operated all these years without a professional marketing strategy. This is one of the main reasons Air India has been unable to compete with well-established international airlines that treat their consumers as Kings.

### **INTERNATIONAL TOURIST MARKET IS GROWING AND INDIA NEEDS ITS OWN EFFICIENT AIRLINES MANAGED BY TOPNOTCH PROFESSIONAL CEO's.**

I wish to congratulate Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, now Minister for Civil Aviation for his decision and ultimatum regarding Air India. I agree with him 100% Air India must be privatized at any cost if it has to survive. If there is no buyer by a certain date Air India should be declared bankrupt. Once the Government of India gives up airline business, there will be many



*Civil Aviation Minister of India Hardeep Singh Puri recently stated in Parliament that if a customer for ailing Air India is not found by March 31, 2020, government may simply call it a day for the national carrier*

private businessmen interested in starting international airline to compete with the marketplace. India need not just rely on the business of overseas Indians only. Any airline that can compete with the Singapore Airlines or the Lufthansa will be highly successful.

Prime Minister Modi has earned the mandate of the people. He should be bold and courageous to privatize almost all public sector corporations of India. The Food Corporation of India is another villain. It is responsible for wasting 25% of food production and also starving 300 million poor of India. India is losing \$25 billion per year because of the waste of food. I am sure Prime Minister Modi will undo the bad policies of the Congress administration and follow up on Minister Puri's excellent initiative and idea. It is about time India gives up socialism for good and embark on capitalism.

*(Ven Parameswaran, Scarsdale, NY, was formerly President & CEO, First Asian Securities Corporation, NY. His email: vpwaren@gmail.com)*



## COMMENT

Prof I.S. Saluja

The state Thruway Authority proposed the first toll increases for the newly opened Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, with the cost growing from \$4.75 to \$5.75 by 2022 for E-Z Pass users. The news has been well received, without anybody feeling unhappy over the increase. The Thruway Authority has given ample notice to users of the Bridge.

While nobody will mind this increase, the present structure of "violations fee" being imposed by Bridges and Tunnels Authority of

## Port Authority Bridges & Tunnels

NY/NJ is a worrisome issue. At present, a violation fee of \$100.00 is imposed for a delay in a payment, regardless of the amount of toll. It is ridiculous to be imposing \$100.00 "violation fee" on a toll bill of \$1.25. Many did not get to know what the

## Thruway Authority should Withdraw the Unreasonable and Unjust "Violation Fee"

"violation fee" is. Public is largely unaware of the fee. In the first place, the Thruway Authority should have first publicized any penalty it proposed to impose for late payment of tolls. Secondly, the penalties should have been reasonable, not the way these are that a toll of \$1.25 invites a "violation fee" of \$100.00.

On behalf of the people who have been hit hard by the unreasonable and unjust "violation fee", we urge Governor Cuomo to order discontinuation of the imposition of

the present "Violation fee". Also, Governor is requested to waive the "Violation fee" imposed on all toll bills. Next, the Governor may reconsider the whole issue of "Violation fee" and decide afresh on a reasonable and just penalty as in the case of violations in other departments, including DMV.

We very strongly feel the present "Violation Fee" structure is painful, unreasonable and unjust and needs to be demolished with one stroke of Governor Cuomo's pen.



# TIME TO DEFEND INDIA'S SECULARISM



By Pinarayi Vijayan



The agenda of Hindutva and its ultimate goal of establishing a "Hindu Nation" underlie the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, is well established both by past experience and the present actions of the BJP-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. We mentioned earlier the absence of the forces of Hindutva from the freedom movement. It was in this period that M.S. Golwalkar propounded his theory of India as a "Hindu Nation," where other religious communities had no rights of citizenship. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is the latest blow by the BJP to the secular nature of our polity.



## The Citizenship (Amendment) Act has imperiled the nation's constitutional values, and no one can afford to be silent

India's secular structure faces a profound crisis. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, must be rejected for three reasons. First, it is against the letter and spirit of our Constitution. Second, it is divisive, deeply discriminatory and violative of human rights. Third, it seeks to impose the politics and philosophy of Hindutva, with its vision of a "Hindu nation", on our entire people and on the basic structure of our polity. Our constitutional values are in peril, and no person who has faith in our democracy can afford to be silent and uninvolved in what is happening around us.

### Against common citizenship

Let us understand each of these three points. The first is that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is against the letter and spirit of our Constitution. Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution deal with citizenship, and the Citizenship Act, 1955, lays down criteria for citizenship based on birth, descent, registration, naturalization, and citizenship by incorporation of territory. By setting new criteria, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act goes against the premise of common citizenship regardless of differences of caste, creed, gender, ethnicity and culture. Further, Article 14 of the Constitution lays down that the "State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India". It bears emphasis that Article 14 applies not only to citizens but to "all persons within the territory of India".

What do we mean by the spirit of the Constitution? We associate the drafting of our Constitution with the rich debates of the Constituent Assembly, and the wisdom of its members, amongst whom Babasaheb Ambedkar stands tall. It is often not recognized, however, that it was the heroism of millions of unsung freedom fighters that made our Constitution a reality. These men and women, who came from the working class, peasantry, and socially marginalized groups - whatever their religious persuasion - challenged the colonial authorities in their struggle for human rights and economic justice. This struggle had broader aims than the overthrow of colonial rule. These torchbearers of modern Indian history played a crucial role in creating the demand for social justice, and a Constitution with democratic and secular values in a society in which discrimination and inequality were deeply ingrained. Although the framing of the Constitution did not mark the end of the struggle for civil liberties and for an egalitarian society, it, nevertheless, was a milestone in our history.

Our freedom fighters were also conscious that theirs was a struggle for a society free of caste and religious deprivation and discrimination, and free of the deep social and economic inequalities that characterize Indian society. This was true of the manifestos of the Left from the early 1920s; this aspiration was also reflected in the resolution of the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931, held after the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Confronted by the radical mass upsurge of the time, the Congress passed resolutions on the freedom of speech, press, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and equality before the law.

The national movement in British India was further strengthened by movements in the erstwhile princely States. Our forebears dreamt of an independent India where communal prejudice would be alien to the polity. It is not surprising that the threat to those parts of our Constitution that defend secularism, democracy, social equality, federalism, and individual and social diversity, should come from that section of the polity that did not participate in the freedom struggle. The surrender to British imperialism by the precursors of today's forces of Hindutva, is a chapter of India's history that is cast in stone. No amount of denial can change that unheroic past.

### Violative of rights

Our second point is that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is divisive, deeply discriminatory and violative of human rights. As I have written before, our national unity was won through struggle; the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is one of the many threats to its survival. Our hard-won Constitution recognizes individual and social differences, and that we must weave the cord of unity by creating a sense of belonging and



inclusiveness for all.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act attempts to create and deepen communal division and social polarization in the country. The Act gives eligibility for citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, and specifically excludes Muslims from that list. In granting citizenship on the basis of religion, it discriminates against Muslims and rejects the basic concept of secularism.

That the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is discriminatory and violative of human rights has been recognized by those who have come out on the streets in many States, in opposition to the Act. It is noteworthy that university and college students figure so prominently in the upsurge against the Act. Though pushed through in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies, these young citizens of India have come together - much as students did during the anti-colonial struggle - to reject the attempt to divide India along religious lines. They have denounced this Act as discriminatory and violative of human rights.

### The Right's agenda

Our final point, that the agenda of Hindutva and its ultimate goal of establishing a "Hindu Nation" underlie the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, is well established both by past experience and the present actions of the BJP-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. We mentioned earlier the absence of the forces of Hindutva from the freedom movement. It was in this period that M.S. Golwalkar propounded his theory of India as a "Hindu Nation," where other religious communities had no rights of citizenship. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is the latest blow by the BJP to the secular nature of our polity.

When the Left has been in Government we have made every effort to use the machinery at our command to preserve communal harmony; elsewhere, we have organized the masses to ensure such harmony.

### Notes from Kerala

Kerala's struggle for secularism and social equality has much to teach us. Historically, the different strands of Kerala's social renaissance and, subsequently, the forces of the Left and other progressive sections, fought hard against social discrimination and communalism, and for social and economic equality.

All political parties and social groupings of different types in Kerala, other than the parties and organizations of Hindutva, have come together against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The peaceful satyagraha held in Thiruvananthapuram on December 16, attended by political parties, religious leaders, and cultural leaders is a symbol of our united determination to uphold constitutional values and basic human rights, and to oppose discrimination.

We cannot postpone our protest and united resistance against this assault on secularism and democracy.

*(The author is the present  
Chief Minister of Kerala)*

## Nawaz Sharif diagnosed with complicated heart disease

**LONDON/ KARACHI (TIP):** Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who is currently in London for treatment, has been diagnosed with a complicated coronary disease and will undergo further scans, his personal physician said.

In a tweet, doctor Adnan Khan said on Dec 19: "Former PM #NawazSharif underwent comprehensive Cardiovascular evaluation & investigations at Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospital, London. He's diagnosed of complicated Coronary Artery/Ischemic Heart Disease with significant disease burden. Cardiac Perfusion Scans scheduled," Dawn news reported.

Sharif continues to undergo a range of tests for his cardiac and haematology complications, as doctors move to diagnose the reason for his low platelet count.

The former leader arrived in London on November 19 along with his brother Shahbaz Sharif after the government and courts granted him permission to travel abroad on medical grounds.

He came to London three weeks after he was granted bail by the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Azizia corruption case on medical grounds. A delegation of senior PML-N leaders visited Sharif in London last week, but some members of the team told Dawn news that no political discussion took place. IANS

## 14 killed as bus veers off road in Nepal

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** A passenger bus veered off the road and fell some 100 metres along the Araniko Highway in Nepal's Sindhupalchok on Sunday, killing at least 14 people and injuring 18 others. The bus was heading towards Bhaktapur from a Hindu temple in Kalinchok in Dolakha district when it skidded off the highway and plunged down from Chha Kilo area, police said.

Three children and 11 adults were killed in the accident, the Kathmandu Post reported, quoting police. "Of them, 12 people died on the spot," police said. The injured have been rushed to nearby hospitals, Police Inspector Nawaraj Neupane said, adding that six of them are in critical condition. The bus was ferrying pilgrims back from Kalinchowk Temple to Bhaktapur.

The police are yet to ascertain the identity of the victims, the paper said.

Meanwhile, a search is underway for the driver of the bus who is on the run following the accident. The police have suspected overspeeding and rash driving on the under-construction road section as the reasons behind the accident. Police with the help of locals carried out the rescue operation soon after the incident. This was the second major road accident in the district within a month. — PTI

# Bangladesh marks 49th Victory Day



**DHAKA (TIP):** Bangladesh on Monday celebrated its 49th Victory Day that marks its liberation from Pakistan, as the country showcased its military might at a parade which included spectacular aerobatics and display of defence acquisitions.

For the first time, a band contingent of the Indian Army also took part in the parade watched by Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as well as ministers, diplomats and other dignitaries here.

The Indian Army band contingent drew loud cheers from the crowd as it marched past playing the tune of 'Saare Jahaan Se Achcha' with the announcer acknowledging India's contribution in Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971.

A delegation of 20 Indian students

belonging to the National Cadet Corps (NCC) was also present among the audience at the Parade Ground here along with DG NCC Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das was also among the guests.

President Hamid took the salute and accompanied by Parade Commander Major General Mohammad Akbar Hossain, riding an open jeep, reviewed the Victory Day Parade. Prime Minister Hasina was seen excitedly applauding the march-past, the flypast, aerobatics display, armoury acquisitions of different regiments and contingents of the armed forces, on the parade ground.

The parade showcased the development of the different civil and

## Indian Army band draws cheer

**For the first time, a band contingent of the Indian Army also took part in the parade watched by Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina**

**The contingent drew loud cheers from the crowd as it marched past playing the tune of Saare Jahaan se Achcha with the announcer acknowledging India's contribution in Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971.**

military organisations over the years as well as socio-economic progress of the country through tableaux.

The intricately decorated tableaux of various ministries were also part of the parade showcasing the development activities, religious harmony in the country and specific government programmes such as 'Digital Bangladesh'. An eye-catching flypast and an aerobatic display in the skies by a MIG-29, other aircraft of Army aviation, Navy aviation and Rapid Action Battalion helicopter and parachute landing by Army paratroopers, drew loud cheers from the audience.

Latest military hardware of the Bangladesh armed forces such as self-propelled guns, state-of-the-art ammunition plant, armoured personnel carrier, armoured recovery vehicles, Medium Tank T-69, among others, were showcased at the parade. Earlier, President Hamid and Prime Minister Hasina paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar. — PTI

## Pakistan appoints Foreign Office spokesperson as its envoy to Germany

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** In a major diplomatic reshuffle, Pakistan has appointed 20 ambassadors and consul generals in its various missions abroad that also included Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal who was named as the country's new envoy to Germany.

According to a notification issued by the Foreign Office dated December 13, Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved appointments of 17 ambassadors and three consul general, Dawn reported.

Faisal, who was also serving as Director General for South Asia and SAARC, will be replacing Pakistan's Ambassador to Germany Johar Salim, who has been posted to Italy.

It is not immediately known who will replace Faisal as Foreign Office spokesperson.

Rahim Hayat Qureshi, currently serving as ambassador to South Korea, will now be Pakistan's ambassador to Iran and Shafqat Ali Khan, the ambassador to Poland, has been transferred to Russia.

Maryam Madiha Aftab has been made ambassador to Bulgaria, while Zahid



Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal. Image: Twitter/@DrMFaisal

Hussain, currently posted as a minister in Budapest, will take over as consul general in Frankfurt.

Some retired military officers have also been appointed to the diplomatic posts. Maj Gen (ret'd) Umar Farooq Burki has been appointed as Ambassador to Jordan, while Vice Admiral (ret'd) Ather Mukhtar will serve as ambassador to the Maldives. —PTI

## B'desh publishes list of 'Razakars' who sided with Pak Army during 1971 war

**DHAKA (TIP):** Bangladesh on Sunday published a list of 10,789 Razakars (volunteers) who collaborated with the Pakistani forces during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque released the list at a press briefing here and said the initiative has been taken to introduce the anti-liberation forces to the new generation, the Daily Star reported.

According to the historic documents, the Razakar force— an auxiliary group of then Pakistan army—targeted Hindus and Bengali nationalists during the 1971 liberation war.

AKM Yusuf, one of the top leaders of the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami, was believed to be the founder of the Razakar force. He was arrested in May 2013 and charged with crimes against humanity. However, he died of cardiac arrest in 2014 while in detention.

Haque said that the number of genuine freedom fighters is not more than 2.1 lakh and their complete list will be published on the Independence Day (March 26). —PTI

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## Indian American West Philadelphia Pharmacy Employee Convicted in Illegal Oxy Pill Mill Scheme

**PHILADELPHIA (TIP):** United States Attorney William M. McSwain announced that Anmol Singh Kamra, 27, of Upper Darby, PA was convicted November 27 at trial with conspiracy to distribute oxycodone outside the usual course of professional practice and with no legitimate medical purpose.

Kamra, a pharmacy technician at Campus Pharmacy in West Philadelphia, conspired with George Fisher, a physician, and Frank Brown, both charged separately, to illegally distribute thousands of oxycodone pills to people suffering from addiction. From about December 2012 through about March 2016, Kamra, Fisher, and Brown orchestrated and executed a scheme to turn the pharmacy into a "pill mill" in which Kamra knowingly filled fake oxycodone prescriptions written by Fisher in sham "patient" names, and gave the oxycodone pills to Brown to sell in street level drug deals.

At times, Kamra would sell drugs without a prescription and then request that Fisher backdate a fake prescription in an attempt to cover the tracks. At trial, Kamra testified that this backdating of prescriptions was a mere "courtesy" on behalf of the doctor so patients could receive their prescriptions in a timely manner, but undercover video evidence showed otherwise. This small pharmacy in West Philadelphia sold so many opioids that some were hidden some under the sink for fear that their distributor would notice the over-abundance and cut them off for exceeding the allowable limit.

"Kamra was operating nothing more than a corrupt pill mill," said U.S. Attorney McSwain. "The misuse of opioids is killing our citizens, and this defendant significantly contributed to our region's crippling opioid epidemic. We have to do everything possible to stop the illegal distribution of these deadly drugs, especially by professionals entrusted to prescribe and monitor their use."

"Kamra diverted thousands of oxycodone pills to the street, taking advantage of those struggling with addiction amid our area's devastating opioid crisis," said Michael T. Harpster, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Philadelphia Division. "Yet another medical professional, looking to profit from someone else's misery. The FBI will never stop working to put pill mills out of business, and the people who run them behind bars."

# IRS seeks applications for the Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee for 2020

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service is seeking qualified applicants for nomination to the Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee (ETAAC).

The ETAAC is an organized public forum for discussion of electronic tax administration issues, such as prevention of identity theft and refund fraud in support of the overriding goal that paperless filing should be the preferred and most convenient method of filing tax and information returns. ETAAC members work closely with the Security Summit, a joint effort of the IRS, state tax administrators and the nation's tax industry, to fight identity theft and refund fraud.

The IRS is looking for approximately 10 qualified individuals who will serve three-year terms beginning in September 2020. Applicants should have experience in such areas as state tax administration, cybersecurity and information security, tax software

development, tax preparation, payroll and tax financial product processing, systems management and improvement and implementation of customer service initiatives.

The IRS also strongly encourages representatives from consumer groups with an interest in tax issues to apply.

Applications will be accepted through



Feb. 14, 2020. Nominations of qualified individuals may be made by letter and received from organizations or the individuals themselves. Applicants should complete the ETAAC application and include a short statement of interest and a resume. Applicants should describe and document their qualifications, past and current affiliations, and dealings with cybersecurity and electronic tax administration. More information is available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

Applicants must complete and submit a tax check waiver form and pass both an IRS practitioner background check and FBI criminal background check.

ETAAC is a Federal Advisory Committee established by the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998.

Questions about the ETAAC and the application process can be e-mailed to [publicliaison@irs.gov](mailto:publicliaison@irs.gov).

(Press Release)

## Indian Origin Pittsburgh-area Lab Owner Charged with Paying Kickbacks

**PITTSBURGH PA (TIP):** An Indian origin resident of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, was charged in federal court with three conspiracy counts and one substantive count related to the payment of unlawful kickbacks, United States Attorney Scott W. Brady announced last month.

Ravitej Reddy, 52, was charged by criminal Information with two counts of conspiracy to pay and receive kickbacks, one count of conspiracy to pay kickbacks, and one count of offering and paying kickbacks. "In less than a year, Ravitej Reddy and his partners in crime were responsible for more than \$125 million in genetic testing claims submitted to Medicare as the result of a sophisticated, nationwide kickback scheme," said U.S. Attorney Brady. "Together with our law enforcement partners, we will stay vigilant in the fight against unscrupulous players in the health care market who pursue personal profit at the expense of critical public programs."

According to the Information, the defendant owned two testing laboratories—Personalized Genetics, LLC, d/b/a Personalized Genomics (PGL), located in Pittsburgh, and Med Health Services Management, LP (MHS), located in Monroeville. Beginning as early as May 2018, and continuing through approximately April 12, 2019, the Information alleges that the defendant participated in three separate conspiracies related to Medicare billing

for two types of genetic testing: cancer genomic testing (CGx) and pharmacogenetic testing (PGx). CGx testing used DNA sequencing to detect mutations in genes that could indicate a higher risk of developing certain types of cancers in the future. CGx testing, however, was not a method of diagnosing whether an individual presently had cancer. PGx testing detected specific genetic variations in genes that impacted the metabolism of certain medications. In other words, PGx testing helped determine, among other things, whether certain medications would be effective if used by a particular patient.

As alleged, the defendant and a group of co-conspirators comprising business consultants, marketers, and the operator of a telemedicine entity, among others, acquired thousands of testing samples from Medicare beneficiaries located throughout the United States, as well as the corresponding prescriptions that PGL and MHS needed to bill Medicare for CGx and PGx testing. For their part, the marketers used targeted campaigns to induce beneficiaries to submit CGx and PGx specimens by means of cheek swabs sent to their homes or provided to them at purported "health fairs" held throughout the United States. Marketers, in turn, were paid percentage-based kickbacks depending upon the Medicare reimbursements for beneficiaries whose samples they had obtained and submitted to PGL or MHS. Likewise, the operator of a Florida-based telemedicine entity

allegedly was paid kickbacks in connection with obtaining CGx and PGx prescriptions from physicians who were contracted by his company to review the beneficiaries' personal and familial medical histories. As alleged, contract physicians authorized testing for greater than 95% of beneficiaries despite the fact that the doctors did not conduct a proper telemedicine visit, were not treating the Medicare beneficiaries for cancer or symptoms of cancer, did not use the test results in the treatment of the beneficiaries, and generally were not qualified to understand and interpret the test results.

According to the Information, the defendant and his co-conspirators took advantage of PGL's and MHS's physical locations within the Medicare coverage area that offered the highest reimbursement rates in the United States. As alleged, the co-conspirators used PGL and MHS as the billing laboratory despite the fact that the labs did not possess properly validated equipment to conduct any CGx testing on-site and, as such, were forced to send samples for proper testing by a so-called reference laboratory that was located outside of the lucrative coverage area. The three charged conspiracies involve similar conduct related to the acquisition of CGx and PGx specimens. The first conspiracy, however, allegedly involved billings only through PGL, while the second and third conspiracies involved billings through MHS. (Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# US wants Pak to take immediate and irreversible action on terrorism: Jaishankar

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Trump administration has a very clear position on Pakistan and wants Islamabad to take immediate, sustained and irreversible action on reining in terror groups and to ensure that its soil is not used for terrorism, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, a day after the conclusion of the second India-US 2+2 dialogue.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper hosted Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh for the second 2+2 dialogue in Washington DC on Wednesday, December 18. Jaishankar and Singh left the US on Thursday, December 19.

Jaishankar told a group of Indian journalists here on Thursday that the relationship between India and the US had expanded both in its scope and content.

He said the regional issues—including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and South East Asia—were discussed during the talks.

"With regard to Pakistan, what we heard was very



India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar File photo

clear position from the American side which was for them to take immediate, sustained and irreversible action regarding the fact that the territory under their control is being used for terrorism," he said.

The External Affairs Minister said important decisions were taken on space situational awareness

and technical cooperation on water resources management during the talks.

The US has supported several Indian initiatives, including Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

The natural focus for the discussions was foreign policy, defense and national security policies, he said.

In a major decision, the 2+2 ministerial decided to have Indian liaison officers with Bahrain-based US Naval Forces Central Command and possibly with the Special Operations Command, he said.

On the other hand, a US liaison officer is likely to be stationed at the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), Jaishankar said.

The center has been established by India to advance cooperation on maritime security across the region. According to the joint statement, they also discussed ways to enable closer Army-to-Army and Air Force-to-Air Force ties and to explore cooperation between Special Operations Forces, he said. (Source: PTI)

## Indian Envoy Highlights Shared Values and Beliefs of People of India, US, and Israel at Capitol Hill Hanukkah Celebration

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Embassy of India hosted an event Dec 12 to celebrate Hanukkah at the Capitol Hill. Ambassador Harsh V Shringla, along with the representatives of Jewish organizations and the Indian-American community, lighted the Menorah.

While extending his greetings to the Jewish community, Ambassador highlighted the shared values and beliefs of the people of India, the United States, and Israel and the longstanding Jewish presence in India. "The tradition of celebrating Hanukkah by the Embassy of India, in partnership with our friends from the Jewish community, goes back to 2002. This event celebrates the Jewish heritage linking the people of India with the Jewish diaspora across the globe - a link that goes back thousands of years when the first Jews landed on India's south-western coastline. Since then, the Jews have flourished, and their traditions and practices have thrived in India", he said.

"The Indian Jewish tradition,



Ambassador Harsh V Shringla, along with the representatives of Jewish organizations and the Indian American community, lighted the Menorah Picture / courtesy Embassy of India

reflected in the invocation you just heard, is a living embodiment of this shared history. India is one of the few countries with no record of anti-Semitism, either historically or in modern times. It is because Indian

society is known for its openness and compassion, embodying the core principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", meaning the world is one family. Since the upgradation of diplomatic relations in 1992, India-Israel relations have achieved great heights with the first ever visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel in 2017. In recent years, relations have seen rapid growth across a broad spectrum of areas and the future of vision of a strong hi-tech partnership as befits two knowledge economies" he further added.

The Co-Chair of the House India Caucus Congressman Brad Sherman addressed the gathering.

The event also featured the traditional Hanukkah invocation and presentation of Hanukkah songs by the Makela Jewish Young Professionals group. More than 100 guests, comprising Congressional staff, representatives of the Jewish organizations and members of the Jewish and Indian American communities, attended the event.

## Holiday Health and Camaraderie at the Chicago Medical Society

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** The medical community enjoyed an evening of good cheer, delectable hors' d'oeuvres, and soothing drinks at the Chicago Medical Society's Annual Holiday Reception on December 5, 2019. Held at the elegant old-world Standard Club of Chicago, the event was a perfect way to thank all the hardworking physicians, administrators, attorneys, lawmakers, and friends of medicine who together comprise the local healthcare community. More than 200 attended.

This festive Chicago Medical Society tradition also allows members and guests to relax and, for newcomers, it provides a

friendly welcome to the Society. The diverse guest list ensures lively and informed conversation about issues related to healthcare in Illinois.

Founded in 1850, the Chicago Medical Society is one of the oldest and largest medical societies in the United States. But its mission remains as vital as ever. In addition to improving public health locally, programs educate physicians of all specialty areas while encouraging professional interaction and unity. The Society's grassroots political advocacy benefits all 17,000 physicians in Cook County.

(Photograph and Press release / Asian Media USA)



Physicians, administrators, attorneys, lawmakers, and friends of medicine at Chicago Medical Society's Annual Holiday Reception



## Pinaka missile test successful

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Thursday successfully flight-tested the Pinaka Missile System from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Odisha coast.

Pinaka is an artillery missile system capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 km with high precision. The Pinaka MK-II rocket has been modified into a missile by integrating it with the Navigation, Control and Guidance System to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.

The navigation system of the missile is aided by the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). The mission achieved all the objectives including enhancing the range, accuracy and sub-system functionality. The missile was fired from Pinaka launcher system in deployment configuration.

## J&K, Ladakh would have 15 year residency norm for job seekers



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Government is considering a 15-year residency norm in order for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to obtain government jobs among other benefits. The norm would be applicable to get seats for professional courses in public colleges and ownership of land.

This would mean that for an outsider to attain domicile status in the two Union Territories, he or she would have to fulfill the 15-year minimum residency norm. This condition would however not apply to industrial houses to buy land to set up business ventures and also construct homes for their employees. While it is not final as yet, the government is discussing various other issues, sources tell OneIndia. The norm is being proposed after locals raised concerns about outsiders taking away the jobs. The concerns were raised in the aftermath of the Abrogation of Article 370 which withdrew the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir.

## High-level MHA meeting called off at last minute

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A scheduled high-level meeting to review the security situation across the country didn't take place even as senior officials met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a briefing that sources said was routine. Though sources in the MHA didn't specify reasons for not holding the meeting, they said the ministry had been "closely monitoring" the situation in the wake of protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy had claimed the ministry was in touch with all states and keeping tabs on the situation.

Claiming the situation in Delhi was "handled well" by police, Reddy alleged political parties were trying to exploit the situation and spreading rumours for vested interests.

# Mamata Banerjee wants referendum on CAA

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** As the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) raged across the country, the Opposition parties on Thursday hit out at the government accusing it for taking 'draconian' measures to muzzle the voice of the people.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi warned that "the more the government tries to suppress the voice of people, the louder it will become".

She said that the government has shut metro stations and internet services in Delhi and have imposed CrPC Section 144, which prohibits assembly of four or more people.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "This government has no right to shut down colleges, telephones and the Internet, to halt metro trains and to impose Section 144 to suppress India's voice and prevent peaceful protests. To do so is an insult to India's soul."

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addressing a rally challenged the Central government to have a UN-monitored referendum she said, "Just because the BJP has got the majority doesn't mean that they can do whatever they want. If



the BJP has guts, it should go for a United Nation-monitored referendum on the issue of Citizenship Amendment Act and the NRC. Let there be an impartial organisation like the UN or the Human Rights Commission conduct it."

NCP leader Nawab Malik lashed out at Union home minister Amit Shah over the police action against those protesting against the CAA, comparing him to "General Dyer".

Attacking the high handedness of the Central government, CPM

general secretary Sitaram Yechury said, "Today's protests showed the determination of youngsters to not let democracy be butchered. This was not a one off protest, such protests will continue."

CPI general secretary D. Raja said citizenship cannot be based on religion.

"The BJP is working against the legacy of Sardar Patel and citizenship cannot be based on religion. The CAA is an undeclared subversion of the Constitution," he claimed.

## WHERE WILL YOU SETTLE HINDUS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES: UDDHAV ASKS BJP



**MUMBAI (TIP):** Continuing his attack on the BJP in the Maharashtra Assembly on Thursday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray asked the Narendra Modi government at the Centre where it planned to settle Hindus from other countries who were being given Indian citizenship.

"By all means rescue Hindus from other countries. But have you thought where you intend to put them up? I don't think you have a plan at all," Thackeray said while replying to the address of Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari.

The Shiv Sena leader went to link the long-pending border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka over Belgaum.

"You have not done justice to Hindus in Karnataka. Is Belgaum-Karwar in Pakistan? Why are Hindus there suffering? What's the point of the Citizens Amendment Act when the sons of the soil do not get justice," Thackeray asked.

Responding to the BJP's attack on Thackeray for not breaking up with the Congress over Rahul Gandhi's attack on VD Savarkar, the chief minister questioned the BJP's adulation of the Hindutva ideologue.

"Do you accept his views on the cow?" Thackeray asked while referring to Savarkar's objection to the worship of the cow. "You have introduced beef ban here but not in other states," Thackeray said and reminded the BJP that beef continues to be available in neighbouring Goa.

"Why these double standards?" he asked.



## CAA will be implemented, so will be NRC: Nadda after meeting refugees from Afghanistan

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Amid protests against the amended Citizenship Act, BJP working president JP Nadda on Thursday asserted that the law will be implemented and the National Register of Citizens will also be brought in.

JP Nadda made these remarks here after meeting Sikh refugees from Afghanistan, who under the amended act will become Indian citizens. He also slammed the opposition for protesting against the new legislation. He said BJP's rivals are protesting for vote bank politics while ignoring the plight of minorities of three neighbouring countries living in India.

"Those who are opposing the citizenship law should meet them. These people have been living in India for 28-30 years but can't admit their children in schools or buy a house as they do not have citizenship. Our rivals cannot see anything beyond their vote bank politics," Nadda said.

"India is marching ahead under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will continue to do so. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act will be implemented, so will be the NRC in future," he told reporters.

A delegation of these Sikhs met Nadda at the BJP headquarters here and thanked the party for bringing changes in the citizenship law, which will now grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jains and Buddhists from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they arrived in India by December 31, 2014, due to religious persecution.

# India, US agree to expand bilateral cooperation at second 2+2 dialogue

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** India and the US have agreed to deepen their bilateral cooperation in areas of defence, counterterrorism and trade, and to work with like-minded countries for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

The decisions were taken as the second India-US 2+2 dialogue concluded in Washington. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo along with Defense Secretary Mark Esper hosted their Indian counterparts External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for the dialogue at the State Department's headquarters.

The first 2+2 dialogue was held in New Delhi in September last year after the mechanism was approved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.

In the second such dialogue, India and the US agreed to further expand their defence ties. Singh told reporters here that strong defence ties were an integral component of the strategic bilateral partnership.

"In the last few years, we have made a conscious decision to diversify and indigenise our arms acquisitions. This increased defence trade with the US is one important aspect of this," he said.

"We are also working to encourage greater collaboration between defence manufacturing sectors in India in the US. The conclusion of the industrial security annex with the US will provide the necessary framework for pursuing the co-development and co-production linkages in the defence manufacturing centre," Singh said.

Cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan featured during the 2+2 ministerial talks. Singh said India shared its assessments of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri



(From left) Indian ministers Rajnath Singh and S Jaishankar with their American counterparts Mike Pompeo and Mark Esper.

Lanka, and the Indian Ocean region in general.

"We conveyed that the extreme rhetoric and belligerent statements and incitement to anti-Indian violence by Pakistani leaders is not conducive to peace," he said.

Secretary Pompeo, during a joint news conference in the presence of the other three leaders, spoke about cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.

"We understand the concerns that India has, rightful concerns that they have about terrorism emanating from Pakistan, and we assured them that we would take that into account," he said.

"We are determined to protect the American people on the threat of terrorism, and we're determined to work with our great democratic friends like the Indians to protect the people of India as well. And we'll continue to work on it," Pompeo said.

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar said counterterrorism efforts have been boosted by a

growing consensus on the nature of terror threats in the region and the dangers of cross-border terrorism and sanctuaries.

"We discussed ways to address these challenges, including by working closely together at the FATF. We also took note of exchanges between our judicial academies for appreciation of challenges and evolving practices and adjudicating counter-terrorism cases and agreed to further facilitate such exchanges in areas of criminal jurisprudence," Jaishankar said.

"This is an area where the two countries actually have a very strong history of cooperating. I can only say this in terms of public record, that I am very satisfied with the discussions we've had today," Jaishankar said.

Pitching strongly for H-1B visa holders, Jaishankar reiterated the significant contribution made by movement of persons in a fair and non-discriminatory manner to the deepening of bilateral ties between India and the US.

## NIRBHAYA RAPE CASE: COURT HC DISMISSES CONVICT'S PLEA CLAIMING HE WAS JUVENILE

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Delhi High Court has dismissed a plea from one of Nirbhaya's rapists claiming he was a juvenile when he and five others gangraped the paramedic student in December 2012.

The petition had been rejected by the trial court and wasn't raised before the Supreme Court.

A fine of Rs 25,000 was imposed on the convict's lawyer, AP Singh, for failing to appear despite repeated calls. Four of Nirbhaya's rapists are on death row. Another killed himself in jail and the sixth, a juvenile, was released from a reformation home after serving a three-year term.

### SUPREME COURT REJECTS FINAL REVIEW PLEA

The Supreme Court rejected a review plea filed by Akshay Kumar Singh, another convict on death row, who made the absurd argument that air and water pollution in Delhi somehow made the death penalty pointless. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said yesterday that the convicts were making concerted efforts to delay the "inevitable".

Meanwhile, the Patiala House court adjourned for January 7 a hearing on the issuance of death warrants against the convicts.

The city court gave a week's time to know whether the four convicts were filing mercy petitions.

## Pakistan to pay India costs in Hyderabad Nizam case

**LONDON (TIP):** In a consequential hearing on Thursday, the high court of England and Wales ordered Pakistan to pay India and the two princes party to the long-drawn dispute 65% of their legal costs. In October, the court had ruled in favour of India and the two descendants of the late 7th Nizam of Hyderabad, who sent £1million to a London bank in 1948, now estimated to value at least £35 million.

The court ordered that Prince Muffakham Jah be paid £1,835,445.83, the government of India £2,802,192.22 and Mukarram Jah, the VIIIth Nizam £795,064.63 (65% on account of their costs).

Paul Hewitt, representing the VIII Nizam, said: "Today's hearing brings this litigation, which started in 2013 but where the underlying dispute dates back to in 1948, to an end at long last."

"We are pleased that Pakistan has decided not to contest Mr Justice Smith's judgment. Our client His Exalted Highness the VIII Nizam will now have access to the funds which his grandfather, HEH the VII Nizam, intended him to have."

The historic case has gone through several twists and turns with India and the descendants — Mukarram Jah and Muffakham Jah — on one side and Pakistan on the other.

# NITI Aayog to start drafting roadmap for population stabilisation



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Taking the first step, the Aayog is organising a national consultation on 'Realising the vision of population stabilization: leaving no one behind' on Friday.

"The recommendations from the consultation will contribute to a NITI Aayog working paper to help achieve India's vision of attaining population stabilization, as voiced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 August 2019," said an official statement by the Aayog.

"The consultative meeting being organised in partnership with Population Foundation of India (PFI) will bring together senior officials, experts and subject matter specialists to discuss ways and means of strengthening India's population policy and family planning programmes," said the statement.

NITI Aayog's move comes four months after the Prime Minister voiced concern over the issue. Modi said in his Independence Day speech, "This rapidly increasing population poses various new challenges

for us and our future generations."

"Time has now come that we should take challenges head-on. Sometimes decisions are taken keeping in mind political advantage but they come at the cost of growth of the future generation of our country. I would like to highlight the issue of population explosion...," Modi had said.

Modi said, "In our society, there is a section which is very well aware of the consequences of the uncontrolled population growth. They all deserve accolades and respect. This is also their expression for their love for the nation...We should learn from them. We need to worry about the population explosion."

India with a current population size of 1.37 billion is the second-most populous country in the world. India's birth rates are falling but the population continues to grow due to the fact that more than 30 per cent of the population is young and in the reproductive age group.



## NORA FATEHI ALL SET FOR A DANCE BATTLE IN NEW STREET DANCER 3D POSTER

Nora Fatehi, who was last seen in John Abraham-starrer *Batla House*, is all set to mesmerise her fans with her dance moves -- yet again -- in the upcoming film *Street Dancer 3D*. A new poster from the film featuring her has been released. The film, directed by Remo D'Souza also stars Varun Dhawan, Shraddha Kapoor and Prabhudeva in lead roles.

Nora Fatehi shared her look from the film on Instagram and wrote, "It's time to put your best move forward! The battle is about to begin #StreetDancer3D trailer out on 18th Dec."

"The dance level in the film is something that I have never touched before. The film has dance styles that I have never attempted before. I will also be acting in the film and there are various emotional angles to the story that I am a part of as an actor. That is going to be exciting," she had earlier said about her role in the movie.

# METOO MOVEMENT CAME AND WENT, BUT LITTLE CHANGED: RADHIKA APTE

Actor Radhika Apte believes the #MeToo movement just came and went in Bollywood with many things in the industry still remaining unchanged. The movement gained momentum in India last year with women calling out actors, filmmakers, comedians, authors and journalists.

When asked what were the things she liked or hated about the decade, Radhika said, "Me Too movement came and went. It is disappointing. A lot of things that should've changed, have not changed. A lot of things have not come out, have not changed. That's really disappointing."

The actor said another issue which still hasn't changed, is that of pay disparity. "There's no pay parity at all. We don't need to talk about pay parity like 'should this A list actress get few more crores than a male A list actor.' It's not just that. If an A list actor is getting you that sure shot three crore of money, he should be getting paid more money, talking in broader strokes. But apart from the A-lister, the rest of the cast and crew is also made up of men and women. We don't have parity there. There's no excuse to not have parity there. They don't affect your box office at all," she said at the Times Network India Economic Conclave.

Giving an example, the *Sacred Games* actor said, "Suppose somebody plays someone's father and mother, still the father gets paid more money than the mother! There's absolutely no logic to that."

Radhika said one of the wonderful things to have happened is more female representation on set. "What has changed, is a lot of women behind the camera as technicians. Directors, writers, producers, editors, cinematographers. The crew has a lot of women and that's a very good sign," she added.



## SALMAN KHAN CALLS DABANGG, TERE NAAM SMALL FILMS

Bollywood star Salman Khan, whose stardom is based mostly on entertainers, has said content-driven cinema works when commercial elements are added. He also labelled his films *Dabangg* and *Tere Naam* as small films that worked purely on their content.

Speaking to *Bollywoodlife* in an interview, Salman said, "I think they're talking about a different kind of content. I think they're talking about the smaller movies, the web, that kind of content. You know that kind of parallel cinema that used to not work earlier, like what we used to call art cinema, which used to be a different chain of cinema, has now become a part of standard cinema. A bit of commercialism has now been added to it; earlier they used to be very small-budgeted films -- now the budget has increased a bit and they've been shifted here now is what I feel, and it's a good thing."

"So *Dabangg* was that film. The first *Dabangg* was a 2-crore film. *Tere Naam* was also that film. But since they happened with me, they happened like this, now what to do? Nobody remembers that they were small films that worked completely on content."

He also said, "Till the time the content doesn't click, the film won't click, it doesn't matter how big a star you are. You can get the Friday, Saturday and Sunday numbers, but beyond that, it won't hold. No matter how good you're looking or how good your body's looking, nobody's going to sit and watch your film. Even if they are ready to pay for tickets and stuff like that, no one's going to go and sit there for two-and-a-half hours."



## ZOYA AKHTAR'S GULLY BOY OUT OF OSCAR RACE

Zoya Akhtar directorial *Gully Boy*, starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in lead roles, is out of the Oscar race. It was India's official entry to the 92nd Academy Awards -- in the International Feature Film category. The movie failed to make the cut in the top ten movies that will advance to the next round of voting. At the onset, 91 films were eligible in the Oscar's International Feature Film category. In the nominations round, Academy members from all branches are invited to opt-in to participate and must view all 10 shortlisted films in order to cast a ballot. Nominations for the 92nd Academy Awards will be announced on January 13, 2020.

*Gully Boy* chronicles the journey of a budding rapper in the bylanes of Mumbai slums. Ranveer Singh recently won the Star Screen Awards for his role in the film.

Apart from Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Vijay Varma, and Vijay Raaz were widely praised for their stellar act in the movie.





## Rihanna's documentary sold for \$25 million

Singer Rihanna's documentary has been reportedly sold to Amazon for a whopping \$25 million.

Sources say Amazon paid \$25 million for the untitled film's rights in a move that reflects last week's \$25 million Apple TV+ deal for an Eilish documentary directed by and produced in collaboration with Eilish's label, Interscope Records.

Amazon declined to comment, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

The untitled documentary, which Berg began working on years ago, is dubbed an unfiltered look into Rihanna's life, providing a glimpse into the evolution of one of the world's most well-known pop artists.

With unparalleled access to the singer's life and more than 1,200 hours of footage, the documentary offers private insights into Rihanna's personality, sense of humour, work ethic, family and love.

# WHAT MADE TOM HOLLAND SAY YES TO SPIES IN DISGUISE

Actor Tom Holland says he got attracted towards the animation action comedy *Spies In Disguise* because of the endearing qualities of his role, and his will to make everyone happy and positive. *Spies In Disguise* is about superspy Lance Sterling (voiced by Will Smith) and scientist Walter Beckett (Holland), as they team up to save the world amid chaos, even as Walter turns Lance into a bird.

"Walter is a really happy go lucky kid. He's really positive, he's really excited about using his brain for good and to make a difference in his workplace. And then he's really excited by the idea of a challenge and a mission and going into the field. But what's most endearing about him is that he's trying to change The Agency's way of thinking and instead of blowing people up and killing people he's trying to make everyone be happy and positive and safe. So it's quite nice," Holland said.

How's his character different from Smith's Lance?

"One of the cool differences about our two characters is that Lance is obviously so into action and beating people up and fighting and being a super spy. Whereas Walter is very much more the guy who wants to help people and, yes, get the job done, but do it in a way with no casualties and he has this one device called the Kitty Glitter which basically explodes glitter everywhere and calms people down to the point where they don't want to do bad stuff anymore.

"Whereas Lance just wants a grenade. So it's quite fun to see the banter back and forth with Will and I where we're arguing about using a grenade or oil slick or kitty glitter or the inflatable hug--all these different kinds of quirky, amazing gadgets--so it's a lot of fun," he said.



## COLIN FIRTH AND WIFE LIVIA GIUGGIOLI SPLIT AFTER 22 YEARS



British actor Colin Firth and his Italian wife on Friday announced they had split up after 22 years of marriage. Firth, 59, known for playing stiff-upper-lipped Englishmen in films like *Love Actually*, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and a television version of *Pride and Prejudice*, married documentary film producer Livia Giuggioli in 1997.

"Colin and Livia Firth have separated. They maintain a close friendship and remain united in their love for their children. They kindly ask for privacy. There will be no

further comment," representatives of the couple said in a joint statement.

Firth, one of Britain's most beloved actors, won an Oscar and a Golden Globe in 2011 for his lead performance as a stuttering King George VI in *The King's Speech*.

The couple's decision to split follows an unpublicized separation several years ago, during which Livia Firth in a 2018 statement said that she had a relationship with an Italian journalist. The couple later reunited.

Colin and Livia Firth have two sons.



## KRISTEN STEWART NOT GUTTED BY CHARLIE'S ANGELS LOW BOX OFFICE

Kristen Stewart is not feeling "gutted" over middling performance of her latest *Charlie's Angels* as she is really proud of the film. The actor featured as one of the titular Angels in the reboot of the iconic action franchise made famous by Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu in the early 2000s.

However, unlike its predecessors, the Elizabeth Banks-directed movie could not do wonders at the box office. But Stewart is not bummed out by the lack of financial success as she is content in the fact that they made a really good film.

"Well, to be honest with you, I think if I had made a movie that wasn't good and one that I wasn't proud of and a lot of people saw it, I would be devastated.

Luckily I'm not feeling gutted because I really am proud of the movie," she told *The Playlist*. Stewart also said that it has become difficult to promote a film these days.

"I think that the kind of the climate that we're living in right now is polarising and it's weird and it's kind of hard to promote a movie like that. And I think trying to have a really complicated, overly politicized feminist conversation in a five minute TV interview about *Charlie's Angels*... I'm like, 'Dude, we just wanted to have a good time'," she said.

Also starring Naomi Scott, Ella Balinska, Djimon Hounsou and Patrick Stewart, *Charlie's Angels* released in November this year.

# NJSO's Seasonal Masterwork 'Messiah'

By Mabel Pais

## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL and 'MESSIAH'

Born in 1685 in Halle, Germany, Handel composed his 2 hour 45 minute most famous oratorio in 24 days in 1741 in London, England. The World premiere of the Oratorio was presented in 1742 in Dublin, Ireland. Handel was educated in Germany and Italy but spent his mature career in his adopted home, England.

Certain works of classical music belong to everyone, regardless of cultural background. Handel's 'Messiah' has universal appeal not only because of its association with the holiday season but also because Handel's lovely arias and bubbling choruses lift us up. They are, collectively, a cause for celebration. The joining together of large performing forces—a modern phenomenon that would have amazed Handel—with unfailingly enthusiastic audiences is among the most convivial traditions in our society.

Turning his energies in the 1730s to a series of sacred oratorios, 'Messiah' is the crown jewel among them. After 1750, when a performance was presented in London to benefit a Foundling Hospital, 'Messiah' became an annual event. That tradition has taken firm hold in many countries besides England.

Handel's librettist for 'Messiah' was Charles Jennens, a wealthy Englishman with whom he had collaborated on the 1738 oratorio Saul. Jennens selected his texts primarily from the Book of Common Prayer, also drawing on the Book of Isaiah and the Gospels. Far from being exclusively Christmas-season texts, Jennens' words also have relevance to Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. As English music administrator and writer Nicholas Kenyon has observed: "Messiah' is an oratorio which celebrates the whole of Christ's work, from its anticipation in the prophecy of the Old Testament, through his life, suffering, death and Resurrection, to his future second coming in glory."

During his Italian years, Handel's path crossed that of Vivaldi, Albinoni, Caldara, Corelli and both Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. He cultivated a variety of vocal music—including operas, oratorios and chamber cantatas—and he mastered important instrumental forms like the concerto and sonata.

English Musicologist, Winton Dean, says, "The greatness of 'Messiah'—Handel's only sacred oratorio in the true sense and therefore untypical—derives on one level from its unique fusion of the traditions of Italian opera, English anthem and German passion, and on another from the coincidence of Handel's personal faith and creative genius to express, more fully than in any other work of art, the deepest aspirations of the Anglican religious spirit."

More than 270 years after that first performance, Handel's music is still capable of transporting us to a higher plane.

"Together, orchestra, chorus, conductor and soloists brought out (in the past) the work's many shades, and delivered that one particular seasonal requirement, a rousing 'Hallelujah.'"

- The Star Ledger

"Cox is a trailblazer ... a conductor who will be in the vanguard,"

- The Minnesota Star Tribune

Do not miss Roderick Cox—one of today's most exciting young American conductors—leading Handel's classic.

His choice of soloists and the fantastic Montclair State University Singers are an inspiration.

Montclair State University Singers, Quartet of Vocal Soloists Join members of NJSO for Christmastime Masterwork

More than 270 years after that first performance, Handel's music is still capable of transporting us to a higher plane.

The audience is invited to stand and enjoy this singular moment in the choral tradition.

## Roderick Cox conducts

Dec 20 at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Dec 22 at Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark

Members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) perform Handel's 'Messiah' with the Montclair State University Singers and a quartet of vocal soloists.

Performances take place on December 20 at 8 pm at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton and December 22 at 7 pm at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

Mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges returns to NJSO stages for Handel's masterwork—a Christmastime tradition in concert halls and churches across the world. Conductor Roderick Cox, soprano Sarah Shafer, tenor Frederick Ballentine and bass-baritone Douglass Williams make their NJSO debuts.

"Cox is a trailblazer ... a conductor who will be in the vanguard," The Minnesota Star Tribune writes of the Minnesota Orchestra associate conductor.

'The Star-Ledger' has praised the NJSO's past performances of the masterwork with the Montclair State University Singers, writing: "Together, orchestra, chorus, conductor and soloists brought out the work's many shades, and delivered that one particular seasonal requirement, a rousing 'Hallelujah.'"

To purchase Concert tickets, visit [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476). Discounted Student tickets, purchased in advance, are also available at [njsymphony.org/students](http://njsymphony.org/students).

## The Venues

For location and directions to

1. The Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, visit

[Richardson.Princeton.Edu](http://Richardson.Princeton.Edu) or call 609 258 9220.

2. The Cathedral Basilica Of The Sacred Heart, visit [CathedralBasilica.Org](http://CathedralBasilica.Org) or call 973 484 4600.

## NJSO ACCENTS

NJSO Accent events include a pre-concert carol sing with the Montclair State University Singers and Heather J. Buchanan on December 20 at 7 pm. Learn more at [njsymphony.org/accents](http://njsymphony.org/accents).

To learn more about the Concert, visit [njsymphony.org/messiah](http://njsymphony.org/messiah)

## CONCERT PROGRAM

Handel's 'Messiah'

Friday, December 20, at 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton  
Sunday, December 22, at 7 pm | Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark

RODERICK COX conductor

SARAH SHAFER soprano

J'NAI BRIDGES mezzo-soprano

FREDERICK BALLENTINE tenor

DOUGLAS WILLIAMS bass-baritone

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU) SINGERS | Heather J. Buchanan, conductor

Members of the NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HANDEL'S "Messiah"

To learn more about Roderick Cox, visit [roderickcox.com](http://roderickcox.com)

To learn more about Sarah Shafer, visit [sarahshafersoprano.com](http://sarahshafersoprano.com)

To learn more about J'Nai Bridges, visit [jnaibridgesmezzo.com](http://jnaibridgesmezzo.com)

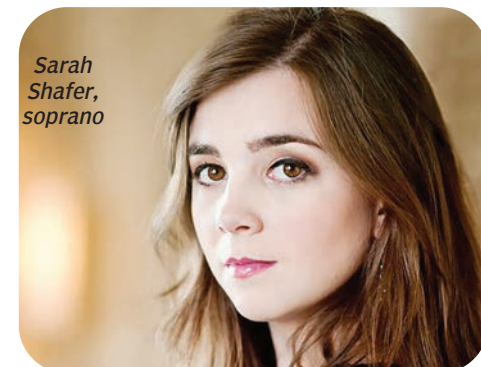
To learn more about Frederick Ballentine, visit [frederickballentine.com](http://frederickballentine.com)

To learn more about Douglas Williams, visit [douglaswilliams.com](http://douglaswilliams.com)

To learn more about The MSU Choir and Heather Buchanan, visit [montclair.edu/john-j-cali-school-of-music/about-the-cali](http://montclair.edu/john-j-cali-school-of-music/about-the-cali)



Roderick Cox, conductor



Sarah Shafer, soprano



J'Nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano



Frederick Ballentine, tenor



Douglas Williams, bass-baritone  
school/performing-ensembles/choir/

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



MSU Singers

Photos / Courtesy, NJSO

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## 5 killed in shooting at Moscow security HQ

**MOSCOW (TIP):** An man opened fire near the headquarters of Russia's FSB security service in Moscow on Dec 19, killing five and wounding several others. The Russian Intelligence Services said the shooter had been neutralised and qualified the incident as "an act of terror". — Reuters

## Canada citizenship confirmed for son of Russian spies



**OTTAWA (TIP):** Canada's Supreme Court on Thursday confirmed the right to Canadian citizenship for the son of Russian spies, whose case inspired the TV series "The Americans".

Alexander Vavilov was born Alexander Foley in Canada in 1994, four years after his brother Timothy.

Their parents Donald Heathfield and Tracey Ann Foley were among 10 Russian spies expelled from the United States in 2011.

Canada's highest court upheld a June 2017 ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal that Alexander had the right to Canadian citizenship.

The government had stripped Alexander of citizenship after he applied for a Canadian passport in 2014. Ottawa argued that he was ineligible because his parents worked for a foreign government.

A child born in Canada automatically becomes a citizen except if one of the parents is a diplomat.

In 2017 the Federal Court of Appeal said his parents did not have diplomatic privileges or immunities in Canada, leaving him eligible for citizenship.

Canadian media reported that the Supreme Court ruling on Alexander's case would automatically apply to his brother who had begun a similar court challenge.

Their parents lived in Toronto when Alexander was born but left for France the following year, before eventually landing in the United States.

The then-teenager's life unraveled in 2010 when FBI agents arrested his parents at their Boston area home.

Heathfield and Foley would admit to being Andrey Bezrukov and Elena Vavilova. According to an affidavit, the young Vavilov did not know his parents were Russian agents.

In court documents, Alexander said he has "always and will always consider myself to be Canadian. It is the only culture I can associate with, and has been a cornerstone of my identity, even after these events." — AFP

# Ring of fire: Australian state declares emergency as wildfires approach Sydney

**SYDNEY (TIP):** Australia's most populous state declared its second emergency in as many months on Dec 19 as extreme heat and strong winds stoked more than 100 bushfires, including three major blazes on Sydney's doorstep.

A day after Australia recorded its hottest day on record, thick smoke blanketed the harbour city, shrouded the Opera House and brought many outdoor activities to a halt.

The state of emergency declaration gave firefighters broad powers to control government resources, force evacuations, close roads and shut down utilities across New South Wales, which is home to more than 7 million people.

Authorities said nearly 120 fires remained ablaze by late afternoon, more than half of which are uncontrolled, and with temperatures forecast to top 45 degrees Celsius (113°F) in some areas, officials warned residents to be on high alert.

"The firefront has been spreading very quickly and intensely," NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons told reporters in Sydney, adding that two firefighters had been airlifted to hospital with burns to their faces and airways. "It's still a very difficult and dangerous set of circumstances."

Days out from Christmas, a time when many Australians head to the coast for the holidays, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian advised people to make sure "you are prepared to change your plans should circumstances change."

In Shoalhaven, a popular coastal destination some 190 km (120 miles) south of Sydney, local mayor Amanda Findley said people were poised to evacuate.

"There is a large amount of smoke looming over the city, which shows how close the fire is," Findley told Reuters by telephone. "It is extremely hot and windy now so we are all worried the fire could spread. People are really worried that they may lose everything."

The RFS posted footage on its official Twitter account showing firefighters tackling one of the three blazes ringing



Sydney. A waterbomber aircraft was dwarfed by thick grey and black billowing cloud as it attempted to douse flames in bushland just metres away from homes.

Australia has been battling wildfires across much of its east coast for weeks, leaving six people dead, more than 680 homes destroyed and nearly 3 million acres (1.2 million hectares) of bushland burnt. Berejiklian said as many as 40 homes had been destroyed on Thursday.

## Smoky Sydney

Australia on Wednesday broke all-time heat records for the second day running, with maximum temperatures reaching an average of 41.9 degree Celsius, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

Some 1,700 firefighters have been deployed across NSW, but officials warned that was still not enough to cover every potential danger and urged people in high risk areas to evacuate while it was still safe to do so.

The current state of emergency will last for seven days, while a total fire ban that has been in place since Tuesday will remain until midnight on Saturday.

The major fires around Sydney, which is home to more than 5 million people, have resulted in days of heavy pollution

in the city usually known for its sparkling harbour and blue skies.

One megafire in the Kanangra Boyd National Park to the city's southwest had crept to the very outskirts of Campbelltown, a suburb of 157,000 people.

By late afternoon, Sydney was sitting at No.4 on the IQAir AirVisual live rankings of pollution in global cities, above Dhaka, Mumbai, Shanghai and Jakarta.

Many commuters have donned breathing masks in recent weeks as air quality has plunged to hazardous levels not previously seen in the city.

NSW Ambulance Commissioner Dominic Morgan said the service had experienced a 10% surge in call-outs for patients suffering respiratory conditions over the past week and urged susceptible people to remain indoors and keep their medication close.

## Political storm

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has weathered a storm of criticism on social media in recent days for going on an overseas holiday during the emergency, adding to criticism that his government is failing to deliver adequate climate change policies. Reuters

## Stabbing at Oregon shopping centre kills 1, wounds 3 others

**BEAVERTON (TIP):** An attacker carried out a series of stabbings and carjackings at a suburban Portland shopping centre and in nearby town on Wednesday, killing one person and wounding three others before being arrested, authorities said.

Police in the city of Beaverton said two people were stabbed inside a Wells Fargo bank and a man was stabbed at a

gym next door.

After the stabbings, the assailant stole the man's car and drove into the suburb of Tigard, where he stole another woman's car and stabbed her. He eventually got out of the car and ran from officers before being caught, police said.

A woman was killed inside the bank, another woman was critically injured

there and the two people whose cars were stolen had serious injuries, authorities said.

Noushin Luluvachi from nearby Bella Salon told The Oregonian/OregonLive that police cars flooded the plaza and authorities ordered businesses to keep their doors closed.

The bank and salon are part of a shopping centre that also includes a credit union, Planet Fitness, Safeway and Starbucks, among other businesses.

Beaverton is known for being Nike's headquarters. AP

# Philippine court finds massacre masterminds guilty of 57 murders

**MANILA (TIP):** A Philippine court found top members of a political clan guilty on Dec 19 of masterminding a 2009 massacre of 57 people, among them 32 journalists, in the country's worst single instance of election violence.

Members of three generations of the influential Ampatuan family were among those sentenced to life imprisonment on multiple counts of murder, in a complicated verdict involving 101 defendants.

The trial had been a crucial test of impunity in country where provincial power is often decided by corruption, intimidation and violence.

The Ampatuan family, a dynasty in the southern province of Maguindanao, had been accused of conspiring to ambush the convoy of a rival clan as it travelled to register its candidate for a gubernatorial election, an attack that spiralled into a bloodbath orchestrated by their own private army.

Among the casualties were the wife and relatives of the rival candidate, lawyers and 32 media workers, who were executed beside a rural road in a volley of gunfire, before being buried with their vehicles in a huge pit dug by an excavator.

A court official read out a long list of names of those of the 101 defendants who were convicted but some were acquitted due to lack of evidence. Some Ampatuan clan members were among those acquitted.

The judge and lawyers decided to read only the last part of the verdict, agreeing



that the 700-page decision could take an entire day.

It was one of the world's single, biggest attacks on journalists and has been the most anticipated verdicts in the Philippines given the notoriety of the Ampatuan family and political ties that went all the way up to then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

It was closely watched as a test of whether democratic institutions in the Philippines could withstand pressure from money and powerful interests.

"Justice prevailed, no one can claim that 'I am politically powerful and therefore above the law'," Soledad Mawis, dean of Lyceum of Philippine College of

Law, told a television channel.

"That to me is one of the most moving things. You knew these and their alliances connected to the highest places." The attack, known as the "Maguindanao Massacre", was chilling even by Philippine standards, where political assassinations are commonplace in elections for mayors, governors and even congress.

Several witnesses in the case have been killed. The New York-based Human Rights Watch this week said that regardless of the verdict, the dozens of suspects at large must be arrested, to ensure the safety of witnesses and victims' families. Reuters

## 12 inmates dead in shootout at Panama prison

**PANAMA CITY (TIP):** Twelve inmates were killed and about a dozen more were wounded in a gunfight Tuesday inside a prison in the capital, Panamanian authorities said. The shooting occurred in a cell block that holds inmates who belong to a single local gang. Five pistols and three rifles were found after the shooting.

The weapons appeared to have been smuggled in to the La Joyita prison in Panama City. — AP

## Xi in Macau for China handover anniversary bash

**MACAU (TIP):** Chinese President Xi Jinping landed in Macau on Dec 18 as the city prepares to mark 20 years since the former Portuguese colony was returned, a celebration that stands in stark contrast to months of unrest in neighbouring Hong Kong.

Security has been ramped up ahead of Xi's three-day visit which culminates on Friday's anniversary. China's authoritarian leadership is keen to showcase Macau as a successful example of its "one country, two systems" model, with party leaders heaping praise on a pliant city of 700,000 that has grown rich on gambling and deference to authoritarian rule.

"The Chinese people and the central government are proud of the achievements and progress Macau has made in the past 20 years since its return to the motherland," Xi said on arrival at the city's airport, a troupe of schoolchildren waving Chinese and Macau flags behind him. Since the 1999 handover by Lisbon, Macau has witnessed little of the dissent that has exploded in Hong Kong during six months of often violent pro-democracy protests as large chunks of the population seethes under Beijing's rule. — AFP

## Death toll rises to 16 in southwest China coal, gas outburst

**GUIYANG (CHINA) (TIP):** Sixteen miners were killed after a coal and gas outburst happened at a coal mine in southwest China's Guizhou Province.

The accident happened on Dec 17, local authorities said on Dec 18, reported Xinhua news agency.

At the time of the mishap 23 workers were working underground in the Guanglong Coal Mine in Anlong County.

Seven workers have been lifted to safety. — IANS

# 16th-century anchors found off Mexican coast offer clues into Spanish conquest

**MEXICO CITY (TIP):** Archaeologists have discovered two iron ship anchors off Mexico's Gulf Coast that they say date back 500 years and could have belonged to Spaniard Hernan Cortes' fleet, which landed in 1519 before overthrowing the Aztec empire.

The anchors, found on the ocean floor near the former Spanish settlement of Villa Rica in southeastern Veracruz state, are well preserved and resemble those made in the 1500s, Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) said on Monday.

Their discovery, along with an anchor believed to be from the 15th century that was found last year, has reassured archaeologists that they are on track to find more artifacts documenting the European invasion of Mexico.

They have identified 15 other sites that may also turn up anchors, which could help pinpoint the spot where other Spanish galleons under Cortes'

command might have sunk and increase the odds of finding wooden hulls and other remnants.

Cortes famously burnt the first ships he and his crew used to sail to Mexico, forcing his small army of treasure-hunters to march inland.

"The conquest of Mexico was a seminal event in human history, and these shipwrecks, if we can find them, will be symbols of the cultural collision that led to what is now the West," marine archaeologist Frederick Hanselmann said in a statement.

Archaeologists dragged magnetometers through the ocean to search for the artifacts, finally finding the two anchors at a depth of 10 to 15 meters (33-49 feet), buried beneath a thick layer of sediment.

The largest anchor measures nearly 4 meters long and is about 1.6 meters wide.

Interest in the Spanish conquest of Mexico is surging as this year marks

the 500th anniversary of Cortes' arrival, two years before he and his native allies overran the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, where Mexico City would later rise.

Earlier in the year, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who has written several history books, publicly asked Spanish King Felipe VI and Pope Francis to apologize to indigenous Mexicans for the death and destruction unleashed by the conquest.

Two new television series are also stirring new interest in the history, one released last month by TV Azteca called "Hernan," and another planned to be developed by famed Hollywood director Steven Spielberg entitled "Cortes" that stars Oscar-winner Javier Bardem.

The anchors, once documented, were returned to where they were found to ensure continued preservation in the deep sediment, INAH said. Reuters



# PREVENT WINTER DRYNESS WITH NATURAL HOME REMEDIES

Here's a few basic and accessible home remedies to overcome dryness, along with some healthy habits to keep them away.

## Avoid chemical moisturisers

Use natural moisturisers like: Butter, olive oil, coconut oil, milk, honey and yoghurt rather than the same old chemical moisturisers. Where milk and butter exfoliate and softens our skin, yoghurt acts as an excellent hydrating agent and prevents itchiness and dryness. Honey is considered an excellent moisturisers loaded with antioxidants which makes our skin soft and smooth.

## Whip winter toning

Ditch all those cosmetics that lead to dryness and discover handmade toning and scrubs. Mash banana with two tbsp of honey and two tbsp of oats. Let the pack dry. Scrub it off in a circular motion. Mix two tbsp of sugar with 4-5 drops of olive oil in it. Use it to exfoliate and nourish your skin. Mix two tbsp of cocoa powder with two tbsp of sugar. Add some drops of lemon and almond oil to it. Mix it well and apply this pack all over your face and hands. Keep on scrubbing until the mixture dries. Now wash it off with cold water. This will work as a good scrub in winter.



## Revamp your makeup

Add tinted lip balms and hydrating foundation to your cosmetic bag. Opt for cream based blush and hydrating mist to lock your skin's softness. Also, avoid using mousse foundation, powder or pancakes in winter.

## Eat oil, drink water

In winters, our body loses moisture often. Even a touch of cold air can make your skin go dry. Oils are a good moisturising element in winter. Olive oil, coconut oil, almond oil, avocado oil are some of the useful products that ensure your skins softness and smoothness in winter.

Eating healthy oils also internally rejuvenates your skin and makes it healthy. In winters, our body needs double the amount of water we intake normally. To keep ourselves hydrated both internally and externally we should drink lots and lots of water.

## Healthy showers

Bath in winters has to be very careful and planned in order to avoid dryness. First and foremost, minimise your bath time to avoid skin exposure to air and water. Massage your face and body with olive, coconut oil or even milk. This will moisturise and soften your skin.

## REMOVE NAIL POLISH WITHOUT A REMOVER

**THE TOOTHPASTE METHOD:** Believe it or not, you can quite literally brush your nails clean with toothpaste. This method of removing nail polish without remover is not only simple and safe, but will leave your nails with a little extra shine—not to mention smelling minty fresh. Just soak your nails in warm water for a little while, a few minutes should do, just to soften them up a bit, which makes scrubbing the polish off much easier. Then, take a toothbrush (preferably not the one you use to brush your teeth though), squeeze on a line of toothpaste, and brush your nails just like you would your teeth. If you're a vigorous tooth brusher, of course, you should take it easy, but you do want to make sure you get the toothpaste nice and foamy as you scrub. Then, just wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water to get any sticky toothpaste feeling off of them, and admire your clean, freshly brushed nails.

**HAIR SPRAY METHOD:** Acetone is generally the most effective nail polish remover, which is why it's the primary, if not sole, ingredient in most removers. However, if you understand how this process works, you'll see that many household items can actually work for removing nail polish without remover. The short version is, any household products with sufficient alcohol content will function as a solvent for the nail polish, dissolving the nail color and ingredients in the polish itself, which makes it easy to simply wipe off. If you're lacking a bottle of remover, check the ingredients on your hair spray bottles. Most of them will contain alcohol, and as a result, should be able to dissolve the polish quite easily.

**ALCOHOL METHOD:** Is there anything rubbing alcohol can't do? Well, in terms of cleaning, not much. That's because it's a concentrated alcohol; and therefore, able to work as a solvent—exactly what you want to look for when removing nail polish without remover. Although acetone and acetate are the most effective solvents, rubbing alcohol—and other alcohol based products—will suffice with just a little extra work. To make things easier, always soak your nails in warm water for at least a couple of minutes first, then use a cotton ball or cotton pad and rubbing alcohol to scrub off the polish.

## Healthy drinks for glowing skin and hair

**ALOE SHOT:** If you crave glowing skin, just one shot of this superfood infused drink can give your day a fabulous start! The super-hydrating aloe vera is a well-known skin saviour. When applied topically, this succulent can help heal as well as moisturise your skin. But few know it works even better from the inside. Its phytonutrients are great for a body and skin cleanse while the amino acids help repair them.

**ALMOND TEA:** This tea brew finds its origins in Kashmir, where it is called Kahwa. The traditional Kashmiri Kahwa, however, has many more spices and a combination of nuts, meant to provide warmth to the body in the extremely cold Kashmiri climate, making it a little unsuitable for warmer climates and temperature-controlled spaces. So we adapted this Indian classic to make it more suitable for every weather, while keeping all its goodness intact.

**TURMERIC TEA:** This golden combination of turmeric, ginger, cinnamon and lemon is literally wellness in a glass. From a sore throat to cracked heels to damaged skin, turmeric can fix just about anything. The same holds true for ginger, which has as many as 40 different kinds of antioxidants, each with a different skin benefit, from preventing acne to smoothening out blemishes to easing out fine lines. Ginger also helps manage glucose levels, which is fantastic for those with glycation-related pigmentation—too much sugar can show up as dark, scaly skin around the neck.

**POMEGRANATE MOCKTAIL:** According to studies, the juice of one pomegranate can meet up to 40% of your daily requirement of vitamin C, the holy grail of antioxidants and skin food. Important in maintaining skin elasticity and a clear complexion, vitamin C also helps stave off fine lines and wrinkles, and boosts your immunity, which helps your skin fend off environmental damage from dust, pollution and sun. It is also a rich source of vitamins E and K, folate and potassium, which help keep your skin's moisture intact and protect your hair follicles against breakage and split ends.

## FOOD CORNER



### HERBED YOGHURT SALAD SANDWICH

#### Ingredients

- Low-fat yoghurt 1 cup
- Parsley, minced 1 tbsp
- Garlic, minced 1 tbsp
- Chive, minced 1 tbsp
- Dried oregano 2 pinches
- White pepper powder 1/8 tsp
- Salt to taste
- Mixed salad green (lettuce, cucumber etc.) 2 ½ cup
- Whole wheat bread
- Carrot, cut into microcubes 1 cup
- Small red onion, sliced and separated

- into rings ½
- Cherry tomatoes halved 5
- Cooking oil (Sunflower, Olive) ½ tbsp

#### Method

- Spoon yoghurt into a medium bowl and stir in garlic, parsley, chive, oregano, white pepper and salt. Mix until well blended.
- After that, mix the salads, carrot and onion.
- Take a slice of bread and spread the yoghurt mixture on it. Add some halved cherry tomatoes, and cover with another slice of bread on top.
- Heat oil in a nonstick pan and toast the sandwich. (Cook it on both sides on a medium flame for 2 - 3 minutes.)



# EGG INTAKE DOESN'T UP HEART DISEASE, STROKE RISKS, SAY RESEARCHERS

**H**eat-healthy diets are naturally low in dietary cholesterol and can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, say researchers, adding eating one egg a day is not associated with the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Too much cholesterol in blood contributes to formation of thick, hard deposits in arteries, a process that underlies most heart diseases and strokes.

Reducing dietary cholesterol by focusing on overall heart-healthy diets that replace saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats remains good advice for keeping artery-clogging LDL (low-density lipoprotein) levels healthy, according to the scientific advisory from the American Heart Association.

"Saturated fats—mostly found in animal products such as meat and full fat dairy, as well as tropical oils—should be replaced with polyunsaturated fats like corn, canola or soybean oils," said Jo Ann S. Carson from UT Southwestern Medical Center in the US.

"Foods high in added sugars and sodium (salt) should be limited," Carson said.

The meta-analysis included in the advisory included randomised, controlled, dietary intervention trials designed to prove cause and effect.



According to the study, published in the journal *Circulation*, there is a dose-dependent relation between dietary cholesterol and higher levels of artery-clogging LDL when the range of dietary cholesterol tested was beyond that normally eaten.

This relationship persists after adjustment for dietary fat type. As per the advisory, in general, egg intake was not significantly associated with the risk of cardiovascular disease in the studies that were examined.

According to researchers, it's reasonable to eat one whole egg (or its equivalent such as 3 ounces of

shrimp) daily as part of a heart-healthy diet for healthy individuals.

"Consideration of the relationship between dietary cholesterol and CVD risk can't ignore two aspects of diet. First, most foods contributing cholesterol to the US diet are usually high in saturated fat, which is strongly linked to an increased risk of too much LDL," Carson said.

"Second, we know from an enormous body of scientific studies that heart-healthy dietary patterns, such as Mediterranean and DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diets are inherently low in cholesterol," Carson said.



## MYSTERIOUS CIRCULAR DNA LINKED TO PEDIATRIC CANCER: STUDY

**M**ysterious rings of DNA—known as extrachromosomal circular DNA—may contribute to cancer development in children, according to a study which may lead to better diagnosis methods for pediatric cancer.

Chromosomes are threadlike structures of DNA and protein found in the nucleus of most living cells, and carry genetic information in the form of genes.

The current study, published in the journal *Nature Genetics*, probed into enigmatic rings of DNA that is not present in the chromosomes.

While cancer is associated with the gradual accumulation of defects in the genetic material Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) over time, and is considered an age-related disease, the researchers, including those from the Charite-Universitätsmedizin Berlin in Germany, sought to know why children develop the malignant disease.

According to the researchers, a range of external factors such as tobacco smoke and radiation, may cause damage to the DNA within cells.

Accumulation of these damages over many years, they said, may lead to cells losing control over their replication and growth, resulting in cancer.

However, the current study noted that extrachromosomal DNA can disrupt the genetic information, contributing to cancer development.

While scientists have known about these circular DNA for years, the current study noted that relatively very little has been understood about their functions due to the lack of sufficient technology to analyse them.

As part of the study, the researchers applied advanced techniques to analyse the chemical structure and sequence of these mysterious DNA molecules using leading bioinformatics algorithms.

In the process, they have obtained the first-ever detailed mapping of circular DNA in neuroblastoma—a deadly childhood tumour.

Analysing neuroblastoma tissue samples from a total of 93 children, the researchers revealed that the prevalence and diversity of circular DNA is far greater than previously anticipated.

According to the study, each tissue sample contained on average 5,000 circular DNA copies.

# EXERCISING BEFORE BREAKFAST BURNS MORE FAT

**S**hould you eat before or after exercise in the morning? The debate has raged for years.

The eat-first camp says food before exercise boosts blood sugars, giving the body fuel to increase the intensity and length of a workout. It also keeps you from being fatigued or dizzy.

The eat-after camp says you burn more fat if you fast before exercise.

A small UK study published Friday supports the latter point of view: In 30 obese or overweight men, those who exercised before breakfast burned twice the fat as men who ate breakfast before they worked out.

That's because exercising with no fuel forces the body to turn to stored carbs, and when those are quickly gone, to fat cells.

Unfortunately the eat-after group didn't lose more weight than the eat-before group during the six weeks of the study, but it did have "profound and positive" effects on the health of the group that fasted, researchers said.

Skipping the meal before exercise made the men's muscles more responsive to insulin, which controls high blood sugars, thus reducing the risk for diabetes and heart disease.

"The group who exercised before breakfast increased their ability to respond to insulin, which is all the more remarkable given that both exercise groups lost a similar amount of weight and both



gained a similar amount of fitness," said exercise physiologist Javier Gonzalez, an associate professor in the department for health at the University of Bath, in a statement.

"The only difference was the timing of the food intake," Gonzalez added.

A 2017 study from the University of Bath, also co-authored by Gonzalez, looked at 10 men and found the same results -- because of lower blood sugar levels after fasting, the men burned more fat.

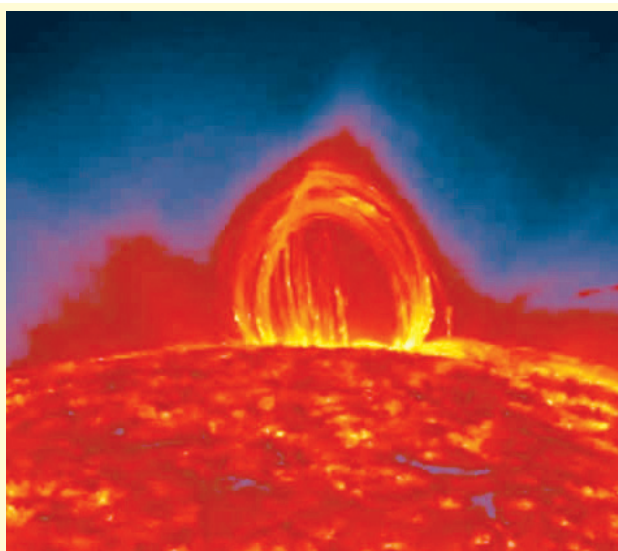
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## INDIAN SCIENTISTS SEE NEW TYPE OF MAGNETIC EXPLOSION ON SUN

Using images from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, a team of scientists including those from the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi and the Indian Institute of Astrophysics in Bengaluru has observed a magnetic explosion the likes of which has never been seen before.

The observation, which confirms a decade-old theory, may help scientists understand a key mystery about the Sun's atmosphere, better predict space weather, and may also lead to breakthroughs in the controlled fusion and lab plasma experiments, according to the study published in the *Astrophysical Journal*.

"This was the first observation of an external driver of magnetic reconnection," said Abhishek Srivastava, solar scientist at the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU).

"This could be very useful for understanding other systems. For example, Earth's and planetary magnetospheres, other magnetised plasma sources, including experiments at laboratory scales where plasma is highly diffusive and very hard to control," Srivastava added.

## GOOGLE GIFTS BUDDY PASS TO STADIA FOUNDER'S EDITION OWNERS

Google's game streaming platform Stadia has been live for more than a month and now, Stadia Founder's Edition users are going to receive a holiday surprise, with an extra Buddy Pass that can be gifted to a friend or family member so they can test out Stadia for themselves.

The Buddy Pass gives a friend three months' free use of the Stadia Pro service.

"In the spirit of the holidays, we have an early surprise gift for Stadia Founders: an extra Buddy Pass. Give it to a friend, a family member... anybody you know who loves games," the company tweeted on Tuesday.

This is the second Buddy Pass that Google is giving them for the holidays and as a part of its marketing campaign to promote Stadia.

As per report, the Buddy Pass needs to be activated within three months of being gifted, once it expires, the user will be charged \$9.99/month for Stadia Pro unless the subscription is cancelled.

Recently, Google Store listing has revealed that the Stadia controller will get wireless support for laptops, desktops, phones and tablets in 2020, but did not announce an exact launch date for the same.

Wireless functionality for the Stadia controller is a big deal as it uses built-in Wi-Fi to directly connect to Stadia servers when users are playing games, meaning it will be able to reduce input lag.

Google Stadia is currently available in 14 countries around the world, including the US, UK, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

# GOOGLE EARTH SATELLITE IMAGES COVER 98% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION

Google Maps have captured more than 10 million miles of Street View imagery—a distance that could circle the globe over 400 times.

The company announced on Friday that Google Earth now lets people browse more than 36 million square miles of high definition satellite images from various providers—covering more than 98 per cent of the entire population—to see the world from above.

The idea of Street View started as a side project more than 12 years ago as part of a goal to map the entire world.

The company collects street imagery via a fleet of Street View cars, each equipped with nine cameras that capture high-definition imagery from every vantage point possible.

"These cameras are athermal, meaning that they are designed to handle extreme temperatures without changing focus so they can function in a range of environments," Escobar added.

Each Street View car includes its own photo processing center and lidar sensors that use laser beams to accurately measure distance.

There's also the Street View trekker, a backpack that collects imagery from places where driving



isn't possible.

These trekkers are carried by boats, sheep, camels, and even scout troops to gather high quality photos from multiple angles, often in some of the hardest-to-map places around the world.

In 2019 alone, Street View images from the Google Maps community have helped the company assign addresses to nearly seven million buildings in previously under-mapped places like Armenia, Bermuda, Lebanon, Myanmar,

Tonga, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe.

Once Google collects photos, it uses a technique called photogrammetry to align and stitch together a single set of images.

"These images show us critically important details about an area—things like roads, lane markings, buildings and rivers, along with the precise distance between each of these objects. All of this information is gathered without ever needing to set foot in the location itself," said Google.

## FACEBOOK LAUNCHES NEW PILOT PROGRAMME TO HELP FACT CHECKERS

In a bid to address fake content faster, Facebook has announced a new pilot programme to allow fact-checkers quickly see whether a representative group of Facebook users found a claim to be corroborated or contradicted.

The programme will have community reviewers work as researchers to find information that can contradict the most obvious online hoaxes or corroborate other claims.

Facebook said it is partnering with YouGov, a global public opinion and data company, for the pilot project.

"These community reviewers are not Facebook employees but instead will be hired as contractors through one of our partners," the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

"They are not making final decisions themselves. Instead, their findings will be shared with the third-party fact-checkers as additional context as they do their own official review," it added.

For example, if there is a post claiming that a celebrity has died and community reviewers don't find any other sources reporting that news, "or see a report that the same celebrity is performing later that day", they can flag that the claim isn't corroborated.

Fact-checkers will then see this



information as they review and rate the post.

The pilot project is currently live in the US.

Facebook said it is working with experts and partners across many fields to understand how it can better support fact-checking partners in their effort to review content faster.

According to the social networking giant, its machine learning model identifies potential misinformation using a variety of

signals.

These include comments on the post that express disbelief, and whether a post is being shared by a Page that has spread misinformation in the past.

"If there is an indication that a post may be misinformation, it will be sent to a diverse group of community reviewers," said Facebook.

These community reviewers will be asked to identify the main claim in the post.





# FIAT CHRYSLER, PEUGEOT SIGN DEAL FOR 50-50 MERGER

**MILAN (TIP):** Fiat Chrysler and Peugeot are joining forces to create the world's fourth-largest carmaker by volume, signing a 50-50 merger deal that will unite some of the most recognizable automobile brands under one company, from Dodge and Jeep to Maserati, Citroen and Opel.

The combined company will generate revenue of nearly 170 billion (\$189 billion) annually, which is projected to be the third-most of any automaker. The merger will allow the two companies, which currently hover around the edge of the world's top 10 car companies, to leapfrog over Honda, GM and Ford in terms of revenue, placing it behind only Volkswagen, Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi and Toyota.

In the all-stock transaction, shareholders of the two companies will receive stock in the combined firm. As for what the new entity will be called, a spokesperson for Fiat Chrysler says it is "too early in the process to discuss the combined company name."

In a joint press release, the carmakers say they won't be shutting down any auto plants because of the merger. They expect to sell 8.7 million vehicles annually.

Peugeot's Groupe PSA CEO Carlos Tavares will be the new company's CEO, while Fiat Chrysler's FCA Chairman John Elkann will become its chairman.

"Our merger is a huge opportunity to take a stronger position in the auto industry," Tavares says, "as we seek to master the transition to a world of clean, safe and sustainable mobility and to



provide our customers with world-class products, technology and services."

"This is a merger between two healthy companies," Tavares says, noting the profitability both Peugeot and Fiat Chrysler have reached after enduring a recession. The challenge now is to make the combined entity more competitive, he adds.

The two companies aim to reduce costs by sharing vehicle platforms, engines and other technologies across their lines. Their combined balance sheet will also reflect their geographic diversity: Because of Fiat Chrysler's strong standing in the Americas and Groupe PSA's

standing in Europe, the merged firm expects to collect 46% of its revenues in Europe and 43% in North America.

The new company will be based in the Netherlands — but because of the wide scope of the merger, the transaction isn't expected to be finalized until at least a year from now, as the deal will need approval from shareholders and multiple government agencies.

Fiat Chrysler currently has its corporate headquarters in Amsterdam, while Groupe PSA is based outside of Paris. Their new parent company will be listed on stock exchanges in Paris, Milan and New York City.



## INDIA MUST LOWER TARIFFS ON US PRODUCTS, SAYS WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The United States is "engaged" with India on trade issues but wants India to lower its tariffs, White House trade and economic adviser Peter Navarro said.

"We're engaged with India," Navarro told Fox Business Network in an interview.

"We've got to get India ... to lower their tariffs and make nice with their trade," he added.

The two countries have been locked in trade disputes for months, slapping higher tariffs on each other's products, including steel.

India's trade minister in October said the broad outlines of a deal had been worked out, but Navarro on Wednesday gave no details about where talks or any US-India trade agreement stood.

## India Inc draws govt attention on ease of doing business

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Industry leaders, including Bharti Enterprises chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal, CII president Vikram Kirloskar and Assocham president Balkrishna Goenka, on Thursday asked the government to take measures to augment ease of doing business to "create more freedom for the industry to perform".

In a pre-Budget meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the corporate leaders highlighted several issues, including certain income tax matters which were coming in the way of mergers and acquisitions or slowing them down and roles that need to be played by state businesses to prosper at the ground level. "I have come here today to discuss only one thing — make doing business easy in the country. That was what my thrust was," Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal told reporters after the meeting.

## Tata Motors unveils Nexon EV with over 300-km range

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Tata Motors on Dec 19 unveiled its first electric SUV Nexon EV that will be commercially launched within weeks.

The SUV, built on its most popular SUV Nexon, is the first electric vehicle (EV) powered by Ziptron technology and offers "a range not less than 300 km per charge" and can accelerate to 100 kmph in just 9.9 seconds. Bookings for the car will start from Friday, the company said, without revealing the price or delivery date. On pricing, the company said it will be around 20% more than the AMT version of Nexon and thus will come between Rs 15-17 lakh and will be 'launched within weeks'.



## RBI to buy and sell bonds worth Rs 10,000 cr via open market

**MUMBAI (TIP):** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously buy and sell government bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore each on December 23, through Open Market Operations (OMOs), signalling its intent to lower yields on long-term bonds.

On a review of the current liquidity and market situation and an assessment of the evolving financial conditions, the RBI has decided to buy government bonds maturing in 2029 and sell four securities aggregating Rs 10,000 crore which will mature in 2020.

Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings, said through such operations the RBI is trying to smoothen the yield curve and signalling correction in yield at the long end (especially 10-year bonds).

The concept is similar to Operation Twist used by the Federal Reserve in 2011-2012. It had swapped short-term treasury securities for longer-term government debt, which reduced the gap between two- and 10-year yields.

ICICI Bank in a market round-up report said government bonds ended lower on Thursday as market participants booked profits after a sharp rise in prices over past two days.

## Former top BOJ economist warns about Japan's recession

**TOKYO (TIP):** Japan's economy may already be in mild recession and will rebound only modestly next year, forcing the central bank to maintain its huge stimulus despite the rising costs, former Bank of Japan executive Hideo Hayakawa has said.

Given its dwindling ammunition, the BOJ is likely to hold off on expanding stimulus unless an external or market shock deals a more severe blow to the economy, said Hayakawa, who retains close contact with incumbent central bank policymakers.

Prolonged economic stagnation, however, will also prevent the central bank from normalising crisis-mode policies any time soon, he said. "With inflation very distant from the BOJ's 2% target, the BOJ won't be able to dial back stimulus any time soon," Hayakawa said. "The best it can probably do is to 'stealth' normalise," or to continue quietly tapering asset purchases, he told Reuters. The BOJ is set to keep policy steady on Thursday, as signs of progress in U.S.-China trade

talks take some pressure off the central bank to tap its depleted policy tool-kit.

Japan's economy grew by an annualised 1.8% in the third quarter, marking the fourth straight quarter of expansion, GDP data showed. But the strong GDP figure contradicts other data painting a weaker picture of the economy, such as slumping exports and output blamed on slow global demand, said Hayakawa, now a senior economist at private think tank Fujitsu Research Institute.

While Japan's economy is expected to rebound next year, any pick-up will be modest as lingering overseas uncertainties and slow wage growth weigh on exports and consumption, he said.

Capital expenditure is also unlikely to strengthen much as many firms already spent years ramping up spending, he added.

"It's quite clear Japan is already in mild recession," said Hayakawa, a former top BOJ economist. "The economy will rebound sometime in the first half of next year, but in such a small way that very few in the public would feel it."



### Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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



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

**The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope from the World's most trusted astrologer Bejan Daruwalla. Latest correct prediction: Modi's historic victory**

## Weekly Horoscope December 23 - December 29, 2019

**ARIES:** Ganesha says there are many roadblocks but you manage to get past them with skill. Boulders are thrown in your path. You will know instantly how to make the right moves, say and do the right things! It's a good idea, cautions Ganesha, once again, to keep your arrogance and impatience under control. Your social skills bring you a time of respite from your demanding lifestyle this period.

**TAURUS:** There is a lot on your plate and you slog away. It may be a bit of a struggle at times, but you rise to the occasion. You strive to conquer many new peaks. Your self-appraisal of last period sets you on the path to true creativity. Those in the media make their presence felt with an extra dollop of creativity, dash and josh! In this period there could be emotional, sentimental and maudlin moments in this soft phase.

**GEMINI:** You will express deep feelings of love. This is a period of innovation, creativity and original ideating. Your soul-searching has set you well and truly on a deep spiritual and fulfilling path. But as the period ends, one of the best phases will begin. There are material, spiritual and emotional gains. I feel that this is a purple patch and you should make the most of it.

**CANCER:** You are in the throes of success. There could be a few problems if you are travelling, moving to a new house, buying / selling, but the end result will be positive. The health of parents, elders and in-laws will cause anxiety. All your ties will be joyous and filled with hope. There is bonding, romance and passion. In addition to your job / business / profession, there will also be room for research and philosophy, justice, law and order.

**LEO:** You display rare insights along with determination, creativity, imagination and style. The growth trajectory continues. You are aware that this is the right time to make the world your oyster. You continue to be on a roll. It is a great way to be. You pursue success and all doors open to your magic touch. The luck of the draw will be with you, and that's half the battle won!

**VIRGO:** You will find yourself quite convinced of the need to project your personality, the image of your company, forcefully and effectively. In this period, you seek out and improve on the flaws you perceive not only in your persona and personality, but also in your environment. It ensures a marvellous period of joy and achievements and a high happiness quotient.

**LIBRA:** You are giving off your best at work and socially. Now you will be totally absorbed in the domestic scene, the house and home, along with working at a punishing phase. There is a lot on your plate. Try not to go under with this monumental burden. Learn to make time to relax, to pursue hobbies, pleasure activities, sports and exercise. You may get carried away with excesses. There is a kind of careless rapture pervading your life and pursuits.

**SCORPIO:** Ganesha says that the health of loved ones may cause some concern but it is all going well for you on the work front. You may even be looking at entirely new vistas of work and employment. New assignments should fall into your lap, aiding your progress. You are also determined to give off your best. In the midst of all this work is also love, passion, and affection. You're still on the upward spiral of life and determined to make the most of it.

**SAGITTARIUS:** This period finds you pursuing your goals aggressively and confidently. It also gives you just that amount of energy and enthusiasm to conquer all obstacles. The period sees many domestic demands. As the period ends, you look for more freedom in whatever you do. But this is a significant period because you can reach out to people and taste new areas of life and have several varied and rewarding experiences.

**CAPRICORN:** This is a period that will be important for contacts, contracts, communication and hi-tech computerization; you could be looking at new trends in technology for both personal and professional benefit. There could be a bonding on the personal level too. There will be a fine-tuning of existing ties and relationships, especially marital and emotional ones.

**AQUARIUS:** You will also be wining, dining and hosting parties. The end of the period mood may have set in early. This is an excellent time for all financial matters and you plunge into them. You will feel like making your surroundings appear more elegant, and you may spend quite a lot of money too. Expenses soar but along with this concern with material acquisition, there also some very real possibilities for inner growth.

**PISCES:** The mood is good and you are seriously planning ahead. You have the heart to take on both extra work and some calculated risks that may pay off soon. Follow your hunches, says Ganesha, but do not go overboard. You may be making big plans and signing documents. Watch your intuition and go with the flow. Do not get obsessive and keep away fanatical thought processes. There are maudlin and soft moments mid period and you meet with family and friends.

### Birthday Horoscope December 23 - December 29, 2019

**Dec 23:** Ganesha says secrets or deeply stirred feelings move you to create something artistic or express your more profound thoughts. If it's within an attraction, it could raise the passion levels.

**Dec 24:** The period plays up the closeness between you and loved ones, like a romantic companion or a beloved child. If there's some excess in today's recreation, sometimes that's okay.

**Dec 25:** Your senses of intuition and imagination are subtle and psychic. Be artistic. Remember forgiveness if there's a tiff tonight.

**Dec 26:** Feel the generous, fruitful, abundant side of Jupiter in your love and pleasure zone. Maybe a baby, a new lover, or an old one with new tricks.

**Dec 27:** A family or spousal relationship is at odds, or negative feelings try to push

or dissuade. Fortunately, recovery through insightful words is possible.

**Dec 28:** It takes you awhile to get comfortable with people, and tonight may offer you both roads to take: the genial bond or the following negative comment.

**Dec 29:** Especially this morning, you can tune into your psychic energies and receive emotional information, which percolates into right action.

# LORD GANESHA REPRESENTS SUPREME INTELLIGENCE

Worshipped by millions of Hindu followers across the world, Ganesha is one of the popular Hindu gods. It might be surprising to say that Ganesha has played a great role in unifying the religious sentiments of Hindus in India during the British rule and also symbolized the national aspiration in the critical time of Indian history. During Hindu festivals today where Ganesha is worshipped, Hindus across the world gather and participate in the public festival.

Ganesha in some way also symbolizes intelligence in the body. According to Hindu dharma, he represents Mahat, the highest form of Prakriti in the process of creation. In the modern parlance, intelligence represents the higher mind and is crucial for reasoning and discernment. "Ganapati is the lord of universal intelligence (mahattattva)," says Bhagavata Tattva.

Sanatana Dharma has it that intelligence is the first and highest form of finite realities in nature. However, finite realities are perishable compared to the infinite, indestructible realities. Next to Shiva and Parvati, Ganesha is also considered to be first among to gods who embody intelligence.

Intelligence, as per the Hindu dharma, is the reflection of the self or the Isvara in the body. The self-represents Shiva and the body represent nature or Parvati. Only when both of them are present, intelligence can exist. Otherwise, it disappears when the self departs from nature. Intelligence can manifest in creation only when Purusha and Prakriti are together. Just as Ganesha, that is the true child. So, what does intelligence do? It has the capacity to distinguish gods and humans from animals. Intelligence provides the discerning power and the ability to participate in God's creation. In case, it gets clouded by earthly desires, attachments, ignorance, then one becomes deluded to the cycle of births and deaths. One can attain siddhi - the perfection - through yoga and self-transformation where the intelligence is purified and perfected.

In the scriptures, Ganesha is considered to be the one who can clear obstacles, and it is because he personifies intelligence that is key in problem-solving skills to overcome problems and difficulties. Without it, a person remains stuck in the unending cycle and cannot achieve liberation.

Should you seek success, peace, and happiness, Ganesha can grant us those wishes. Ganesha is also associated with other deities - Buddhi and Siddhi. Buddhi refers to pure intelligence that can guide us in darkness, and assist us to discern things and dualities. Siddhi is perfection, success, and attainment of yoga and supernatural powers. Siddhi can only be achieved with Buddhi. This is why Ganesha is associated with them. Since Ganesha is the son of Shiva, Ganesha has the traits of manifested Brahman. The intelligence of Brahman is transcendental, self-existent and beyond the realm of physical mind and body. Just how the



sun can be reflected on water, the intelligence of living being can be reflected in the body. Hence, intelligence is reliant on soul and body. Intelligence is where nature manifests the power of the mind (chit-shakti) and the power of will (Atma-shakti). Intelligence separates humans from animals, and it is because of intelligence that a human awakens from the animal body and transforms to human, later into a god.

Ganesha also plays an important role in spiritual transformation and moksha (liberation). In the material world, we require this role to achieve the aims of dharma (duty), Artha (wealth) and kama (enjoyment) by performing actions with intelligence. In the higher life of spirituality, we need it to free ourselves from ego, attachment, delusion so that we can achieve liberation.

Ganapati is the doorkeeper in the chamber of Prakriti, whereby the soul (Shiva) cannot communicate with Parvati (body). The soul can communicate only through intelligence, and the connecting link is the child Ganesha. Ganapati is the creation of Parvati, which she had made with material that she had gathered herself. Thus, the legends of the birth of Ganapati symbolizes him

as the true and only creation of Parvati. The conflict between Shiva and Ganesha during the birth is also a symbol and reaction of Shiva (the light of the chidakasam) in the eld of creation (materiality of the earth). This goes on to prove that intelligence arises in the field of Prakriti only.

Since Ganesha is the son of both Shiva and Parvati, he represents both the eternal realities. He is the lord of an internal organ (Antahkarana) that operates our perception, cognition, and

awareness. These are the operations that personify the gods in heavens. The supporting power is the breath and soul (Shiva and the resting place is the body (nature). The action can only be, however, controlled by intelligence. At the highest level, Ganesha signifies human intelligence, and as a son of Parvati, Ganesha represents all tattvas or realities. Anyone can worship him if they want to solve the problem, achieve goals, success and find happiness and peace.

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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."**

# AN ARCHITECTURAL TOUR THROUGH MP EMPIRES

Stuck in the middle of the mighty Indian subcontinent, Madhya Pradesh was always a prime target for conquest. Every empire worth its arrows made incursions into these dusty plains, leaving an indelible mark on the region's architecture, culture and people.

There are stories here to rival the romance of Rajasthan and the siren song of the Indian south, but most travellers zip through the state, pausing just long enough for a tiger safari in one of the state's famous national parks but missing its myriad human marvels.

## Gwalior

The empires to rise and fall on the plains of Madhya Pradesh left an unusually rich imprint on the cities they left behind, creating a stone-hewn map of their ideas and identity. In the ancient city of Gwalior, a short hop across the state border from Agra, that identity was all about grandeur and power. The Hindu kings of the powerful Tomar dynasty raised mighty Gwalior fort to project their status, but they soon attracted the attention of the sultans of Delhi, who stormed into town and remodelled the fort in their image in 1517.

Wandering around Gwalior fort, the Islamic influence is obvious from the brilliant turquoise tiles set into its crumbling sandstone walls and the fort's minaret-like towers, capped by elegant domes. Gazing out from the bastions over the dry and dusty city, it's easy to imagine how the sultans, and later the Mughals, must have felt invincible in their hilltop citadel, only to be rudely awakened when the Marathas seized Gwalior in 1754 and restored the fort's Hindu magnificence.

The last owners of Gwalior fort were the fabulously wealthy Scindia family, who still reside in the gleaming, bone-white Jai Vilas palace just south of the walls. Living up to every expectation of Indian maharajas, the Scindias filled their lavish home with stuffed tigers, flattering family portraits and chandeliers so heavy that elephants had to be dangled from the ceiling to prove it could take the weight.

## Khajuraho

Just down the road or rail tracks in Khajuraho, it was Hindu culture that flexed its creative muscles, creating some of the most extravagant and provocative temples ever seen in India. While the Muslim rulers of Gwalior were obsessed with power, at Khajuraho, the focus was on communing with the divine.

The temples of the Western Group, clustered together in a dry park just west of the main market, resemble a 3D representation of the Kama Sutra – which as a Hindu philosophical text, was almost certainly an influence on its sculptors and architects. Temples such as the graceful Lakshmana Mandir are covered with exquisite carvings of sensuous dancing girls, and cavorting couples in positions of surprising variety and physical dexterity. Orgies, three-ways, oral sex, bestiality – it's all



there, carved in intricate detail in glowing yellow sandstone.

This isn't just stone pornography. The carvings at Khajuraho are physical representations of the concept of kama – the celebration of love, desire and pleasure of the senses – one of the four

goals of life in Hindu philosophy, along with dharma (virtuous living), artha (the search for prosperity) and the pursuit of moksha (liberation from ignorance and the cycle of rebirths). Compared to the stern outlook of Madhya's Muslim rulers, the unabashed

joie de vivre of Khajuraho's risqué temples couldn't be more pronounced.

## Sanchi

Rolling west across the plain towards the once-regal, now scarred city of Bhopal, an alternative vision of India awaits at Sanchi, where the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka raised a mighty stupa as penance for the suffering he wreaked on the people of Kalinga in Odisha during his empire-building rampage. The historical Buddha lived and died on the plains between Nepal and northern India, but it was Ashoka who did the heavy lifting to spread Buddhism to every corner of the subcontinent.

In contrast to the militaristic bombast of Gwalior, and the erotic abandon of Khajuraho, Sanchi was built from a position of introspection. Haunted by his legacy, the repentant Ashoka raised one of the first Buddhist stupas in India, adorning the gateways surrounding the stone-faced dome with panels telling the life story of the Buddha and his own righteous reinvention as a Buddhist convert. The carvings of back-to-back lions supporting the southern gateway became the state emblem of India at Independence in 1947.

This wasn't just an architectural statement of Ashoka's commitment to living a better life. If you wander through the gardens around the great stupa, you'll find the remains of temples, monasteries, assembly halls and shrines, recalling Sanchi's status as a great centre for spiritual learning. Sanchi's end, however, was no more dignified than that of Madhya's Hindu and Muslim empires; resurgent Hinduism eclipsed Buddhism and the site was left to ruin in the 12th century. Reports from just a few decades later described a handful of devotees clinging on amidst the fallen columns and collapsed masonry.

## Rich ruins in Mandu

India is awash with ruined cities that expose the vain glory of empire. Karnataka has Hampi, where Hindu Vijayanagar fell to the Deccan sultanates in 1565, and Uttar Pradesh has Fatehpur Sikri, the once-grand capital abandoned by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1585. Not to be outdone, Madhya Pradesh serves up its own achingly atmospheric lost city at Mandu, perched atop a green-capped plateau rising between rocky ravines.

Founded by the Afghan governor Dilawar Khan on the site of a vanquished Hindu fortress, Mandu rose as an independent kingdom in the early 15th century, and its rulers filled the plateau with palaces, mosques and mausoleums of striking grace and sensitivity. Predictably for those tumultuous times, Mandu was the setting for a centuries-long game of king-of-the-castle between rival Afghan, Mughal, Gujarati and Maratha armies, before finally being abandoned to the monsoon rains in the 1730s.

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contd from page 1

## Trump Impeached, Faces Senate Trial

over Trump's conduct with his Ukrainian counterpart, lawmakers voted almost entirely along party lines to impeach the 73-year-old Trump, who appeared defiant. The first article of impeachment, abuse of power, was on party lines with 230 to 197 votes. The second article of impeachment, obstruction to Congress, was passed by 229-198 votes.

Trump now joins a small club of presidents who have been impeached by the House for "high crimes and misdemeanors" cited in the Constitution: Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998. Richard Nixon quit in 1974 before impeachment proceedings against him could reach the House floor.

Trump said the Democrats were trying to impeach him from day one. "While we're creating jobs and fighting for Michigan, the radical left in Congress is consumed with envy and hatred and rage, you see what's going on," Trump said at a campaign rally in Battle Creek, Michigan.

The White House described impeachment as one of "most shameful" political episodes in the history of the US. All four Democratic Indian-American members of the House of Representatives voted for impeachment. The impeachment now moves to Republican-controlled Senate where Supreme Court Chief Justice would preside over the trial. (With inputs from PTI)

## Delhi gridlocked over anti-CAA protests

Amendment Act (CAA) here on

Thursday, December 19 triggered serpentine jams on arterial roads.

Metro trains ran packed, Internet services were suspended at multiple locations across Delhi, and offices and shops were shut in central Delhi as police personnel cracked down on protesters. At Red Fort, hundreds of protesters were detained, including student leader Umar Khalid and Swaraj India's Yogendra Yadav. Buses filled with protesters were sent away to different locations in the capital.

Scores of police officials on law and order duty made sure they did not let anyone come at the protest site in front of the Red Fort without asking them about the purpose of the visit. The markets remained opened near the Red Fort but commuters faced problems as they had to walk about a kilometer two because the road was blocked by police.

'War zone': The police only allowed those who claimed to be crossing the area to do so; protesters who reached the site were detained within minutes. "You can create a war zone and we can't even scream?" a protester yelled as she was whisked away from Red Fort. "If your children get admission in Delhi University they will also have to bear batons on their chest like us," she added.

Several protesters expressed discontentment over the authorities' attempts to disrupt the protests. While some took to presenting police personnel with roses, others chose to express their discontentment through placards. 'Shut Down Fascism Not The Internet' read one placard; another bore the Bharatiya Janata Party's symbol, a saffron lotus, adjacent a Swastika with the caption 'Orange is the New Black'.

Slogans such as 'Jo Hitler Ki Chaal Chalega Woh Hitler ki Maut Marega' were chanted by protesting students at

Jantar Mantar. At around 12 p.m., a large chunk of protestors, some of whom who had escaped detention at Mandi House, gathered at the Barakhamba Metro Station Gates 1 and 6.

Crowd gathers: There was initially talk of the protest march starting from the Nepal Embassy but the police officials present at Barakhamba informed the public that a protest had begun at Jantar Mantar. The protesters then began moving towards Jantar Mantar at around 12.50 p.m. where hundreds had already gathered and the crowd was increasing by the minute.

Anti-CAA protests: Students from various universities took part in the protest in addition to professors, lawyers, political parties, members of civil society and locals alike. There was heavy sloganeering demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in addition to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The movement of traffic from Gurgaon to Delhi and Noida to Delhi was among the worst affected as police has barricaded the roads to detect movement of protesters. Ritu Raj, a DLF Phase-3 resident, went to drop his relative at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. She left at 8 a.m. from U Block and remained caught in a jam till 9.15 a.m. The relative's flight to Chennai at 9.30 a.m. was missed.

The jam extended from Rajokri flyover to IFFCO Chowk, which is around 5 km from the point of barricading by the Delhi Police on the Delhi-Gurugram border. It then spread a further 5 km till the Signature Towers on the Gurugram side due to restriction on entry to Delhi.

Detained, released: Commuters took to Facebook and Twitter to share their experiences and caution fellow drivers headed towards Delhi. By the end of the day, over 250 people who had been held from protest venues across the city and detained at the Surajmal Stadium in Nangloi and the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Bawana were allowed to leave.

Those allowed to walk out of preventive custody included Sandeep Dikshit, D. Raja, Sitaram Yechury, Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav. No arrests, the police said, had been made. At Rajghat, however, hundreds of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan were allowed by the Delhi Police to carry out a demonstration in support of the CAA.

Police deployed drones in sensitive areas of east Delhi to keep a watch on the area as part of precautionary measures. Internet services remained suspended in certain areas of central, south and outer Delhi between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Following protests across the city, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation

(DMRC) shut as many as 19 stations across the network.

Commuters stranded: Metro stations, including the Central Secretariat, Jamia Milia Islamia, Munirka, Lal Quila, Chandni Chowk, ITO, Mandi House, Udyog Bhawan, Patel Chowk and Vishwavidyala among others, were closed for commuters. Rajiv Chowk, which is one of the busiest stations on the Delhi Metro network, was closed for nearly two hours.

Several commuters stranded at the Central Secretariat and Rajiv Chowk metro stations complained about the inconvenience to the public by the closing of metro stations. While some denounced the move as "draconian", others said that the government was within its rights to impose restrictions to maintain security. (Source: The Hindu)

## Drag Musharraf's body to central square in Islamabad, hang for 3 days: Pak court

The 167-page detailed judgment was authored by Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth, who headed the three-member court that sentenced Musharraf to death on Tuesday for subverting the Constitution.

"As a necessary corollary to what has been observed we find the accused guilty as per charge. The convict be hanged by his neck till he dies on each count as per charge," the verdict said.

Justice Seth wrote that Musharraf should be hanged even if he dies before his execution.

"We direct the law enforcement agencies to strive their level best to apprehend the fugitive/convict and to ensure that the punishment is inflicted as per law and if found dead, his corpse be dragged to the D-Chowk, Islamabad, Pakistan and be hanged for 3 days," he wrote.

The verdict was split by 2-1 as Justice Shahid Karim of the Lahore High Court supported the death sentence while Justice Nazar Akbar of the Sindh High Court disagreed and wrote a dissenting note.

Musharraf, who has been undergoing medical treatment in Dubai, was sentenced to death in absentia Tuesday, December 17 on charges of high treason stemming from his decision to suspend the constitution and detain judges in 2007. His lawyers have said they will appeal the verdict.

Meanwhile, Pakistan government has indicated that it will appeal the verdict. Pakistan military has made it known that it supports Musharraf and said he can never be a traitor. (With inputs from PTI)

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## IPL 2020 AUCTION

# Pat Cummins, Maxwell headline big IPL pay day

**KOLKATA (TIP):** Australian cricketers hit pay dirt at the IPL players' auction with pacer Pat Cummins becoming the most expensive foreign buy ever in the league by fetching Rs 15.50 crore from two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders here today. All-rounder Glenn Maxwell, who was not considered for the upcoming ODI series against India in January, returned to Kings XI Punjab with a price tag of Rs 10.75 crore after an intense bidding war with Delhi Capitals. KXIP went into the auction with the biggest available purse of Rs 42.70 crore.

The 31-year-old Maxwell has been on his way back to cricket after taking a sudden break to deal with mental health issues earlier this year.

Nathan Coulter-Nile also enjoyed a million dollar payday at the auction as Mumbai Indians shelled out Rs 8 crore for the pacer.

Australia's limited-overs captain Aaron Finch went for Rs 4.40 crore to Royal Challengers Bangalore. Finch, who had opted out of the 2019 IPL, also attracted a bid from KKR. All-rounder Marcus Stoinis was sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 4.8 crore, while pacer Kane Richardson will go home richer by Rs 4 crore after being bought by RCB.

Australia's big-hitting all-rounder Chris Lynn, who was released by KKR ahead of the auction, was bought for his base price of Rs 2 crore by defending champions Mumbai Indians, whose opening bid became the winning bid. Similar was the case of seamer Josh Hazlewood, who went for his steep



base price of Rs 2 crore to Chennai Super Kings.

## Bidding war

A bidding war for the 26-year-old Cummins was on expected lines as he has been in top form with the ball and at times has also proved his worth with the bat.

"Can't wait," tweeted Cummins after KKR head coach Brendon McCullum posted a welcome message for him on the micro-blogging site.

Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore were engaged in an intense bidding war for the Australian before KKR joined the battle at Rs 15 crore and eventually outbid the two franchises. Cummins has taken 32 wickets in 25 IPL matches so far with an economy of just over 6. He is also the No. 1 bowler in ICC Test rankings and has 92 wickets in 77 career T20 matches at an economy

of little above 7. With the price he fetched, Cummins broke the record for the most expensive foreign buy held by Ben Stokes. England all-rounder Stokes was bought by Rising Pune Supergiant for Rs 14.5 crore in the 2017 auction. It also marks Cummins' return to KKR. The pacer has also played for Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals.

## Caribbean flavour

Another big buy at the auction was South African Chris Morris, who was sold for Rs 10 crore to Royal Challengers Bangalore. West Indies pacer Sheldon Cottrell, with a base price of Rs 50 lakh, fetched a winning bid of Rs 8.50 crore from Kings XI Punjab.

Another Caribbean star, Shimron Hetmyer, was expectedly a sought-after entity for his big-hitting abilities and went to Delhi Capitals for Rs 7.75 crore. The left-hander had a base price of Rs 50 lakh.

## 'Can't think of better captain than Dhoni': Piyush Chawla reacts on being costliest Indian

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** "There can't be a better team than CSK to play for and better captain than MS Dhoni," said veteran leg-spinner Piyush Chawla after the Chennai Super Kings bought him for Rs 6.75 crore, making him the costliest Indian buy at the IPL auction. Chawla's long-time association with Kolkata Knight Riders ended last month when he was released by them.

He was no more a certainty in the KKR playing eleven with Kuldeep Yadav and Sunil Narine being ahead of him in the pecking order.

"As a player, you always want to be with a good team, play under a good captain and you can't have a better team than CSK and a better leader than Mahi bhai. I can't ask for more," Chawla told PTI from his hometown Moradabad.

The Aligarh-born cricketer, who was part of India's World Cup winnings squads in 2007 (T20) and 2011 (ODI), experienced butterflies in the stomach ahead of the auction but he was not at home to catch the action on television. He played three Tests, 25 ODIs and seven T20s for India.

His last international game was in December 2012. Chawla revealed that KKR communicated of their decision to release him well in advance and he has no hard feelings towards the franchise.

## K L Rahul appointed KXIP captain for IPL 2020

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India opener KL Rahul was on Thursday named captain of the Kings XI Punjab franchise for the 2020 Indian Premier League with co-owner Ness Wadia calling him the "unanimous choice".

"We are happy to appoint Rahul as our captain for the upcoming season. He has been through a lot in the last year or so and has now come back strongly," Wadia told PTI on the day of the IPL auction in Kolkata.

"He has silenced his critics. You will get to see his ability not just as a batsman but also as a captain. He was our unanimous choice," he added.

KXIP had bought Rahul for a whopping Rs 11 crore ahead of the 2018 season.

Rahul's ascendancy to captaincy was expected after Ravichandran Ashwin was traded to Delhi Capitals last month.

# Rohit, Rahul score hundreds; Kuldeep takes hat-trick in India's big win against West Indies

**VISAKHAPATNAM (TIP):** Rohit Sharma captivated with his languid brilliance in company of an equally graceful KL Rahul before Kuldeep Yadav topped it up with a hat-trick in India's series-levelling 107-run victory against the West Indies in the second one-dayer here on Wednesday.

The Indian vice-captain hit his 28th ODI hundred -- 159 off 138 balls -- and added 227 for the opening stand with fellow centurion Rahul (102 off 104 balls) as India put up an imposing 387 for 5 in 50 overs. Rishabh Pant (39 off 16 balls) and Shreyas Iyer's (53 off 32 balls) thoroughly entertaining 72-run stand in only four overs also provided the impetus required during a final flourish.

In reply, the West Indies, who looked good at 192 for 3 in the 30th over, were bowled out for 280 in 43.3 overs.

It was Mohammed Shami (3/39 in 7.3 overs), who removed the dangerous Nicholas Pooran (75 off 47 balls) and skipper Keiron Pollard (0) off successive deliveries to spark a West Indies collapse.

Kuldeep (3/52 in 10 overs) then removed the dogged Shai Hope (78 off 85 balls), Jason Holder (11) and Alzarri Joseph (0) off successive deliveries to seal the issue in favour of India. This was his second hat-trick in ODIs. He became the first Indian player to claim two



hat-tricks in international cricket.

On a shirtfront of a track, West Indies was never going to make a comeback after losing five wickets for 18 runs and it was only a matter of time before India ended their four-match losing streak at home. The decider will now be played at Cuttack on December 22.

Rohit, as usual, batted at his own pace and looked like the bandmaster of an orchestra, who made the Caribbean bowlers dance to his tune.

Sheldon Cottrell (2/83 in 9 overs) was punished with such ferocity that he didn't have energy to do a customary 'Cottrell Salute' once Iyer was out and it was more or less similar for all others like Alzarri Joseph (0/68 in 9 overs) and Keemo Paul (0/62 in 9 overs).

It was also a perfect demonstration on how to press the accelerator in this format -- first 50 off 67, the next off 40 balls and the last off only 25.

The innings had 17 boundaries and five sixes and Rohit played the same shot again and again. It was a swivel off his hips between fine leg and deep fine leg to rising deliveries.

The West Indies bowlers were wary of pitching it up to him fearing his drives but ended up bowling short on the hips and the Indian gleefully played the shot again and again.

At times, they did realise the mistake and pitched it up but then 'Retro Rohit' came out from nowhere playing 1980s slog shots, shuffling towards leg-stump and making room to hit over cover boundary.

There was a bowler's back-drive off Joseph to show who is the boss.

Incidentally, Rohit was much behind Rahul in the race for half-century but reached the three-figure mark before the Karnataka batsman.

**Vayavyam****Esanyam****Nairuti****Agneyam**

## Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam



12 hours before the supreme court verdict on the Babri Masjid/Rama Janma Bhumi controversy, a friend from India suggested that the land under dispute may be divided into 5 equal parts and five temples representing 5 major religions -Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism, be built, which will truly reflect the spirit of "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" in Maha Upnishad, inscribed in front of India's Parliament.

President of India should be inaugurated in the presence of the high priests of all 5 religions and 5 young girls from the 5 faiths.

**Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the British historian and philosopher says: "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which has a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race..."**

**"At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way-Emperor Ashoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family-and, in the Atomic Age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves".**



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