

# The INDIAN PANORAMA



EVER TRUTHFUL

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**The INDIAN PANORAMA**  
EVER TRUTHFUL

Will bring out a profusely illustrated special edition to mark India's 71st Republic Day. Articles and advertisements may please be emailed to [salujaindra@gmail.com](mailto:salujaindra@gmail.com) by January 20, 2020.

## US House votes to curb Trump's ability to take military action against Iran



US President Donald Trump said "I don't have to" when asked whether he would seek congressional approval for more military action against Iran.

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US lawmakers concerned about rushing to war with Iran adopted a measure on Thursday, January 9, aimed at reining in President Donald Trump's ability to take military action against the Islamic republic.

The resolution was introduced by Democrats after Trump's order to kill an Iranian commander and retaliatory missile strikes by Tehran dramatically escalated tensions and raised fears of a devastating war between the two foes.

The mostly symbolic but politically charged vote, 224 to 194, was largely along party lines, with three members of Trump's Republican Party joining Democrats in approving the measure demanding the President not engage in military action against Iran unless authorized by Congress. *contd on Page 32*

## Internet fundamental right, says Supreme Court of India

J&K told to review within a week all curbs imposed after Aug 5

**NEW DELHI (TIP)** The Supreme Court on Friday, January 10, asked the J-K administration to review all orders of suspension of the Internet.

The court said the right to access the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

Trade and commerce through the Internet is protected under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution which guarantees the fundamental right to trade, business, occupation or profession, it said. On prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, the court said it could not be used as a tool to suppress difference of opinion.

*contd on page 32*



Kashmiri journalists display laptops and placards during a protest demanding restoration of internet service, in Srinagar on November 12, 2019.  
*File photo*

## Trump admin hits Iran with new sanctions, targets 8 officials involved in 'destabilizing activities'



As long as Iran's outlaw ways continue, we will continue to impose sanctions," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said as he announced the measures along with Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin at a press conference.

*Photo / Courtesy Adam Edelman*

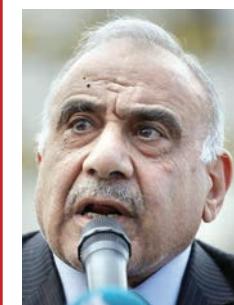
**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Iran launched more than two dozen ballistic missiles Tuesday night targeting Iraqi military bases hosting U.S. and coalition forces in response to the U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani last week. Pompeo and Mnuchin said the sanctions would target individuals involved in Iran's construction, manufacturing, textile and mining

sectors, including its largest steel and iron manufacturers. The administration also is issuing sanctions against eight Iranian officials involved in "destabilizing activities" as well as the ballistic missile attack on Iraqi airbases, Pompeo said. "The president has been very clear: We will continue to apply economic sanctions until Iran stops

*contd on page 32*

## Iraq asks U.S. for team of delegates to prepare troop pullout

**Nearly 5,200 U.S. soldiers are stationed at bases across Iraq**



Iraq's caretaker prime minister Abdel Mahdi has requested US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to send delegates to Iraq to set the mechanisms to implement Parliament's decision for the secure withdrawal of (foreign) forces from Iraq."

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Iraq's caretaker premier Adel Abdel Mahdi has asked the United States to send a delegation to Baghdad to begin preparing for a troop pullout, his office said on Friday, January 10.

In a phone call late on Thursday, January 9 with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Mr. Abdel Mahdi "requested that delegates be sent to Iraq

*contd on page 32*



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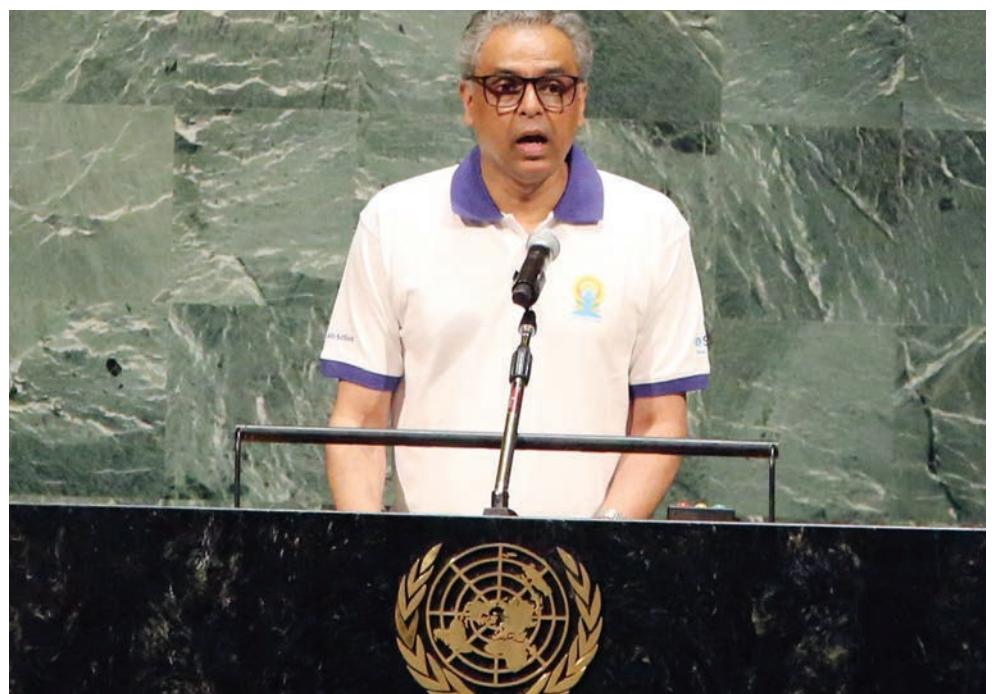
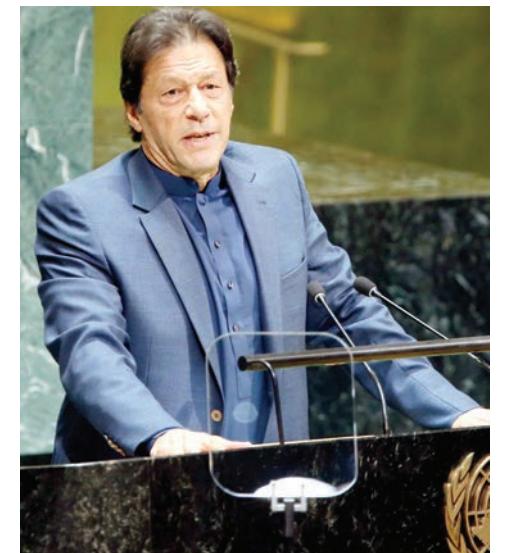
# Ace Photographer Jay Mandal Captures Memorable Events in 2019

Ace photographer Jay Mandal, a globetrotting photojournalist, in mid 70s, took a challenging task, circumnavigating the world on a bicycle. Spent 17 years, logged 387000 kms through 154 nations. His journey has not ended with

the bicycle tour. The mode of transportation has changed. Now he flies between destinations across the world. His passion for photography seems to intensify with each passing day.

**Here is a look back at selected events in 2019 at the United Nations, the Consulate General of India, New York and some Mixed Events**

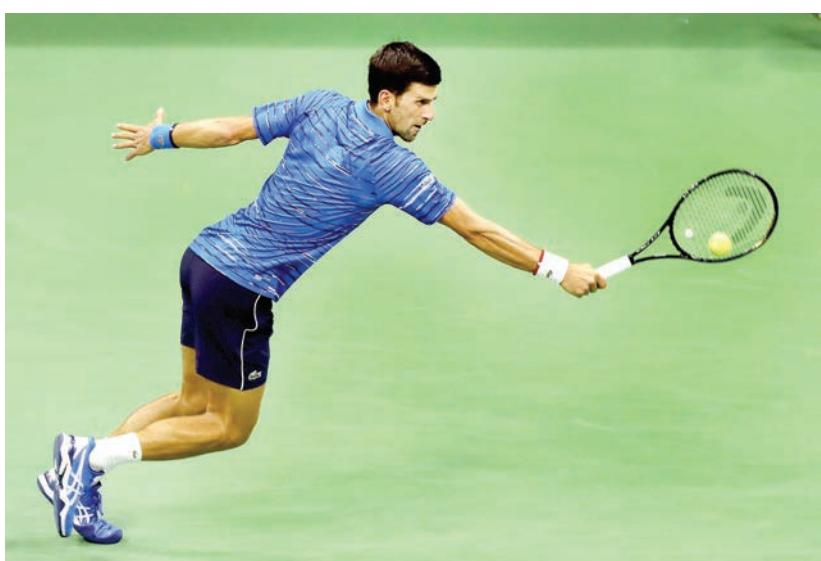
## At the United Nations



## At the Consulate General of India



## Mixed Events



ALL PICS / JAY  
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ASSIGNMENT

## Indian American Durga Agrawal Appointed to University of Houston System Board of Regents



Durga D. Agrawal is the founding president of the IACCGH and India House, Inc.

**AUSTIN, TX(TIP):** Texas Governor Greg Abbott has reappointed Durga Agrawal, Ph.D. to the University of Houston (UH) System Board of Regents for terms set to expire August 31, 2025.

Durga Agrawal of Houston is the president and CEO of Piping Technology and Products. He currently serves as the chair of the UH System Board of Regents Endowment Committee. He is a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, Texas Society of Professional Engineers, and the Expansion Joint Manufacturers Association Management Committee and a former member of the Industry Trade Advisory Committee and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Additionally, he is member of the UH Engineering Leadership Board, UH Advisory Board, and India House, Inc. He also serves as an advisor and past president of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston, director for the Agrawal Association of America, and as a volunteer for the M.D. Anderson Board of Visitors.

Durga D. Agrawal is the founding president of the IACCGH and India House, Inc. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Friedman Industries.

Dr. Agrawal was selected as the 2001 U.S. Small Business Person of the Year for the State of Texas by the U.S. Small Business Administration; chosen as the Entrepreneur of the Year by the Asian Chamber of Commerce of Houston in 2006; and awarded the Texas Industrial Engineering Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. He is a member of the University of Houston's Industrial Engineering Advisory Board and Cullen College of Engineering Leadership Board. Dr. Agrawal was also appointed to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by Governor Rick Perry in August of 2009.

Dr. Agrawal received a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Delhi, India, and Master's and Doctorate degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Houston.

# Nita Ambani Becomes First Indian Elected to Board of MET Museum

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Educationist, philanthropist, and businesswoman Nita Ambani has been named an Honorary Trustee of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, as was announced Nov 12 by Daniel Brodsky, the Museum's Chairman. Mrs. Ambani's election took place at the November 12 meeting of the Board.

Mr. Brodsky commented: "Mrs. Ambani's commitment to The Met and to preserving and promoting India's art and culture is truly exceptional. Her support has an enormous impact on the Museum's ability to study and display art from every corner of the world. It is a pleasure to welcome Nita Ambani to the Board."

Nita Ambani is the Founder and Chairperson of the Reliance Foundation, an Indian philanthropic organization that has supported The Met since 2016, beginning with the exhibition Nasreen Mohamedi. That presentation was the first museum retrospective of the artist's work in the United States and was also one of The Met Breuer's inaugural exhibitions. In 2017, the Reliance Foundation committed to support exhibitions that explore and celebrate the arts of India. The first exhibition to benefit from this gift was Modernism on the Ganges: Raghbir Singh Photographs (October 11, 2017-January 2, 2018), followed by Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee (June 4-September 29, 2019), which marked the first comprehensive display of Mukherjee's work in the United States. Other exhibitions that will benefit from this sponsorship include the upcoming Tree and Serpent: Early Buddhist Art in India, 200 B.C.-A.D. 400, opening November 10, 2020, at The Met Fifth Avenue, along with exhibitions that will cover such topics as 17th-century Mughal art and contemporary Indian sculpture.

In 2017, the Museum honored Mrs.



Nita Ambani, Daniel Brodsky, Chairman of the Board, Daniel Weiss, President & CEO, and Max Hollein, Director, on the occasion of Ambani's election to the Board of Trustees

Ambani at The Met Winter Party, an event celebrating the achievements of those who foster greater diversity and inclusion in the world of art. Generous with her time and expertise, Mrs. Ambani is also a member of The Met's International Council.

Mrs. Ambani is especially committed to preserving and promoting India's art, culture, and heritage. Reliance Foundation has sponsored key cultural events such as The Elephanta Festival, and Abbaji, the annual concert of master musician Ustad Zakir Hussain, among the many efforts to recognize the cultural legends of India and ensure their relevance to a younger generation. In its initiatives to advance knowledge of Indian arts internationally, the Foundation has supported not only the series of exhibitions at The Met but also presentations such as Gates of the Lord: The Tradition of Krishna Paintings at the Art Institute of Chicago.

In her role as Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation,

Mrs. Ambani has impacted the lives of more than 34 million people across India through the organization's initiatives in rural transformation; health; education; sports for development; disaster response; arts, culture and heritage; and urban renewal. The Foundation's education program pays special attention to gender equity to increase much-needed opportunities for girls and young women. The Foundation's Dhirubhai Ambani Scholarship has so far provided financial support to 12,000 students to pursue graduation in any institution of their choice—nearly half of these scholarships are given to girls.

In 2017, Mrs. Ambani received the prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Award from the President of India for the work of Reliance Foundation in the area of sports for development. In 2016, Forbes listed Mrs. Ambani as one of the 50 most powerful businesswomen in Asia. She is a member of the International Olympic Committee and is the first Indian woman to serve in that role.

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

**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.

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





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## Mayor de Blasio Administration secures nearly \$500,000 in Restitution for 4,500 Home Health Aides

**New settlements part of Department of Consumer and Worker Protection's major investigation into industry compliance with the New York City Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) Commissioner Lorelei Salas on January 9 announced settlement agreements with 11 home care agencies to resolve violations of the New York City Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law that had previously been filed at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). The settlements require the agencies to pay nearly \$450,000 in restitution to more than 4,100 home health aides. These settlements also require the agencies to pay nearly \$122,000 in civil penalties, identify and implement a compliance officer, train managerial staff, and post and distribute the Notice of Employee Rights to all employees.

The cases are part of DCWP's major proactive enforcement initiative to examine the industry's compliance with the NYC Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law, wage and hour requirements, and other workplace standards. As a result of the investigation, DCWP has now entered into settlement agreements with 32 agencies. These settlements require the agencies to pay a total of nearly \$500,000 in restitution to more than 4,500 workers, pay \$145,000 in civil penalties, and comply with the Law going forward.

"In New York City, we fight to protect all workers, regardless of whether they work in an office or in someone's home," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "Home health care workers are vital to ensuring our loved ones are cared for, and they are equally as deserving of Paid Safe and Sick Leave. To any company in New York City that thinks they can get away with withholding workers' rights and violating our laws: we will hold you accountable."

"We want to make it clear to home care agencies across the city that lack of compliance with the law will not be tolerated," said DCWP Commissioner Lorelei Salas. "Home care workers are vital workers who care for our loved ones, and we will continue working to ensure that this rapidly growing industry is held accountable for past violations and comes into compliance going forward. We urge any worker who believes they have been treated unjustly to reach out to us so we can take the necessary steps to help protect their rights under the Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law and connect them to other resources."

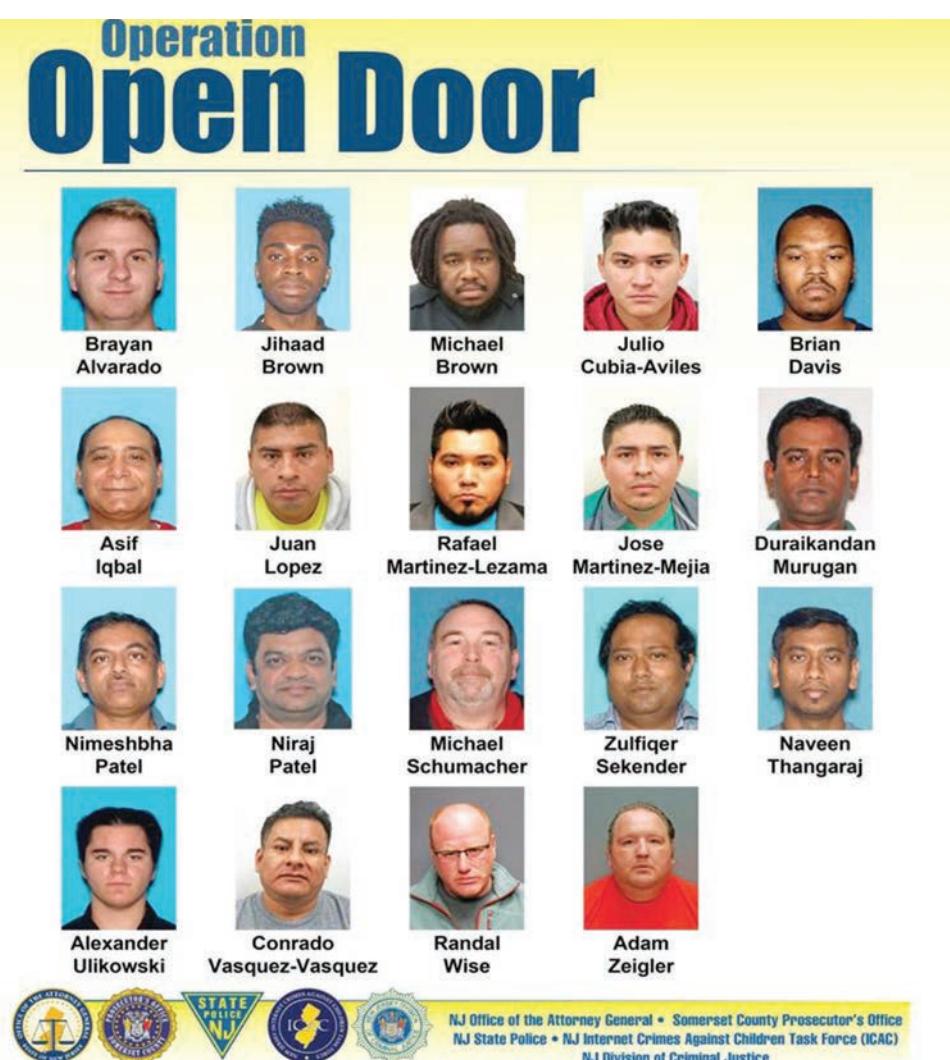
*Read full story at  
[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)*

# Four Indian Americans among 19 alleged child predators arrested in 'Operation Open Door' in New Jersey

**TRENTON (TIP):** New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal, Somerset County Prosecutor Michael H. Robertson, Somerset County Prosecutor's Office Chief of Detectives John W. Fodor, New Jersey State Police Colonel Patrick J. Callahan and Division of Criminal Justice Director Veronica Allende announced the arrests of 19 alleged child predators including four Indians in "Operation Open Door".

- THEY ARE:** DuraikandanMurugan, 40 of Jasper, Indiana (14) Murugan is unemployed. Charges are 2nd degree Luring, 2nd degree Attempted Sexual Assault, and 3rd degree Attempted Endangering the Welfare of a Child.
- Nimeshbha Patel, 48 of Piscataway, N.J. (14) Patel is a retail worker. Charges are 2nd degree Luring, 2nd degree Attempted Sexual Assault and 3rd degree Attempted Endangering the Welfare of a Child.
- Niraj Patel, 46 of Somerset, N.J. (14) Patel is a printer. Charges are 2nd degree Luring, 2nd degree Attempted Sexual Assault and 3rd degree Attempted Endangering the Welfare of a Child.
- Naveen Thangaraj, 36 of Edison, N.J. (14) Thangaraj is a system engineer. Charges are 2nd degree Luring and 2nd degree Attempted Sexual Assault.

Prosecutor Robertson stated that "Operation Open Door" was a multi-agency undercover operation that sought individuals using social media applications to lure underage girls and boys for sexual activity. These "underage children" were actually undercover law enforcement officers who are specially trained members of the New Jersey Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. The defendants arrested in this operation-initiated contact based on profiles posted by the undercover law enforcement officers on social media platforms. Once chatting



N.J. Office of the Attorney General • Somerset County Prosecutor's Office  
N.J. State Police • N.J. Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)  
N.J. Division of Criminal Justice

began, the undercover officers clearly identified themselves as underage girls or boys. Despite that information, the defendants engaged the "children" in conversations about sex and made arrangements to meet the "children" for sex. Most defendants were arrested when they arrived at one of two residences in Somerset County, where they expected to find their victims home alone.

The arrests in "Operation Open Door" were made over a six-day period from October 23 through October 28. One defendant travelled to one of the

undercover houses from Pennsylvania. Two of the defendants lived out-of-state and were in New Jersey for work when they decided to travel to meet with a "child" for sex. The defendants are variously charged with first-degree promoting prostitution of a child under the age of 18, second-degree luring, second-degree attempted sexual assault of a minor, third-degree attempted endangering the welfare by debauching the morals of a child, and third-degree attempt to promote obscene material to a child. The defendants will be prosecuted by the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office.

## NYCEDC and New Lab Launch 2020 Edition of Circular City to Accelerate New York's Sustainability Vision

**In this expanded edition of the program, startups will apply technologies to reuse and recycle resources, eliminate waste, and improve energy efficiency through pilots across New York City**

**BROOKLYN, NY (TIP):** New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and New Lab announced Jan 9 the launch of the 2020 edition of the Circular City program to test and pilot solutions designed to address the increasingly complex and urgent challenges facing cities. New Lab and NYCEDC partnered to create the Urban Tech Hub in 2017 and the Circular City represents a key part of the vision to make New York City a global leader in urban innovation.

This year, the focus is on New York

City's transition to a circular economy and the future of energy efficiency in the built environment. The call to action for startups is to apply for the opportunity to pilot their products or technologies in real urban environments to help New York City work toward a more sustainable, equitable, and accessible future. "Innovation and the growing tech sector are key not only to New York City's economy, but also to our efforts to stop climate change and safeguard the environment," said NYCEDC President and CEO, James Patchett. "The Circular City program shows what can happen when the private and public sector team up with civic groups and academic experts to tackle the biggest challenges

facing New York City. We are excited to see how the new solutions emerging from the 2020 Circular City Program can benefit all New Yorkers."

"New Lab's unique model for bringing together frontier tech startups, local government stakeholders, academic institutions, and private sector investors is a powerful platform for addressing critical real-world urban challenges," said New Lab CEO Shaun Stewart. "The 2020 edition of Circular City will build on the success of our initial program, exploring new solutions for meeting New York City's broader sustainability goals."

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

# Stony Brook Is Going to Flow with Tamil in Near Future

**NEW YORK (TIP):** "The Future of Tamil Studies" was the topic of a two-day symposium recently held by the College of Arts and Sciences at Stony Brook University that culminated with the launch of a search for an endowed professor in Tamil. Featuring scholars and experts in practice, language, history and culture from around the world, the interdisciplinary symposium offered an in-depth discussion of how studying the ancient yet still relevant Tamil language and its art and literature offers scholars insights into humankind's earliest worldview, providing context for our life today and our collective, global future.

Made possible through The Anandavalli and Dr. G. Swaminathan Endowed Research Professorship in Tamil Fund - generously established by Dr. Bala and Prabha Swaminathan in honor of Bala's mother and father - the symposium opened with a local group of Tamil drummers, followed by a preview film screening of *Sakthi Vibrations*, an ethnomusicological documentary produced and directed by Zoe Sherinian, University of Oklahoma. The participatory ethnomusicological documentary, which will debut at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2020, reveals and analyzes Sakthi's outstanding model for Dalit women's development that



CAS Interim Dean Nicole Sampson with Bala and Prabha Swaminathan

integrates folk arts performance with social analysis, micro-economic sustainability, self-esteem and community development.

Creating the Anandavalli and Dr. G. Swaminathan Endowed Research Professorship in Tamil at SBU was a natural step in the Swaminathan's quest to help sustain the Tamil language and culture; they purposefully established the professorship in the College of Arts and Sciences to leverage

interdisciplinary, scholarly research collaborations. The professorship aligns with the forthcoming Globalization Studies and International Relations BA launching in Fall 2020, designed to educate leaders in globalization issues, international service, diplomacy and activism. The program will also prepare students to pursue graduate study in a wide variety of fields, from diplomacy and consulting to research journalism and social entrepreneurship.

# Indian American Con Artist Sentenced to Prison for Defrauding Brokers

**TRENTON, NJ (TIP):** A New Jersey man of Indian origin was sentenced to prison last month for orchestrating an elaborate shipping scam by which he defrauded five freight brokers out of \$2.6 million. The defendant fled the country and was a fugitive for eight years after being indicted in 2011, but he returned in July 2019 and surrendered to the Division of Criminal Justice.

Rajendra Patel, 62, who previously resided in Jersey City, N.J., was sentenced seven years in state prison by Superior Court Judge Mitzy Galis-Menendez in Hudson County. Patel pleaded guilty on Aug. 9, 2019 to second-degree theft by deception. He must pay full restitution to the victims.

Deputy Attorney General Thomas Huynh prosecuted the case and handled the sentencing for the Division of Criminal Justice Financial & Cyber Crimes Bureau.

"Thanks to the work of our prosecutors and detectives, this longtime fugitive is going to prison for perpetrating a multimillion-dollar fraud scheme targeting the freight industry," said Attorney General Grewal. "Con artists like this defendant harm honest business operators and impose huge costs which ultimately impact

consumers as well."

"I commend the attorneys and detectives in our Financial & Cyber Crimes Bureau who exposed this elaborate scheme and secured this sentence," said Director Veronica Allende of the Division of Criminal Justice. "We will continue to use our expertise to aggressively prosecute financial fraud and seek restitution for victims."

Freight brokerage companies are paid a fee for serving as "middlemen" between companies that need freight moved and carriers that agree to move the freight. They arrange for shipment of goods, collect payment from the company shipping the goods, and pay the carrier that moves the goods. Such brokers will extend credit to companies that regularly ship goods through them. Patel ran a scam, similar to what is known as a "bust out," in which he built up a line of credit with the brokers and then used that credit to defraud the brokers. It is alleged that two co-conspirators who remain fugitives assisted Patel.

What was unusual about this scheme was that the defendants engaged in transactions in which one of their companies - Prime Time Freight or

Diamond Freight Solutions - contracted with the freight broker to ship goods from California to New Jersey, and another one of their companies - PRP Enterprises - responded to the internet job notice posted by the broker and was hired as the freight carrier that moved the goods. The brokers were unaware of the connection between the companies. Because of the line of credit, the broker would pay PRP before the broker was paid by Prime Time or Diamond Freight.

Patel and his alleged co-conspirators initially gained the confidence of the brokers and built up a line of credit by moving some actual freight using independent drivers and major freight carriers. But PRP eventually stopped moving actual freight, while continuing to submit and be paid for fictitious invoices with falsified supporting documentation. Prime Time and Diamond Freight contracted with the brokers for a total of 1,217 shipments. The defendants allegedly laundered the illicit proceeds through a complex scheme involving moving money between the companies and making payments to relatives and other individuals to whom they had ties.

## Indian American Doctor in NJ Charged with Selling Prescriptions for Opioid Pain Pills

**TRENTON, NJ (TIP):** New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (OIFP) announced that a Passaic County doctor was charged with selling prescriptions for highly addictive prescription painkillers without a legitimate medical purpose.

Dr. Mahesh Mehta, 65, who practices family medicine in Paterson, was indicted on a charge of second-degree unlawful dispensing of controlled dangerous substances. The indictment was handed up by a state Grand Jury in Trenton.

Mehta allegedly sold prescriptions for Percocet, a Schedule II opioid pain medication.

Second-degree crimes carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a criminal fine of up to \$150,000.

Deputy Attorney General Fernando D. Maldonado presented the case to the grand jury. Detective Celeste Dowd coordinated the investigation.



Rajendra Patel, 62, who previously resided in Jersey City, N.J., was sentenced seven years in state prison

Part of the money paid to PRP by the five freight brokers was transferred through a series of transactions to Prime Time and Diamond Freight and ultimately used by those companies to, in essence, pay the brokers with their own money. However, ultimately, Prime Time and Diamond Freight failed to pay \$2,630,613 that they owed to the five freight brokers. The brokers paid approximately \$3.9 million to PRP. They received only about \$2.1 million in payments from Prime Time and Diamond Freight out of the total of about \$4.7 million which the two companies owed under their contracts.



By Patrick J. Buchanan

**F**ifteen years after the U.S. invaded Iraq to turn Saddam Hussein's dictatorship into a beacon of democracy, Iraq's Parliament, amid shouts of "Death to America!" voted to expel all U.S. troops from the country.

Though nonbinding, the expulsion vote came after mobs trashed the U.S. embassy in an assault that recalled Tehran 1979.

### What provoked Iraq's Parliament into demanding the ouster of all U.S. troops?

First, the five December U.S. strikes on Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces in retaliation for a dozen Kataib Hezbollah rocket attacks on U.S. bases, which killed a contractor and wounded four U.S. soldiers.

Then came President Donald Trump's decision to launch a drone-strike and kill Iranian General Qassem Soleimani at Baghdad International Airport. Killed in the same strike was the Shiite Iraqi leader of Kataib Hezbollah.

During his return flight to Washington Sunday, Trump warned Iraq: Follow through on your demand that all U.S. troops get out, and we will insist that Baghdad repay the money we just spent on a major air base.

Moreover, said Trump, if Iraqis expel U.S. troops, then we will impose upon them "sanctions like they've never seen before, ever. It'll make Iranian sanctions look somewhat tame."

### Where do we stand now in Iraq?

Though Sunnis and Kurds abstained, the Iraqi parliament has voted to expel all our troops. The State Department has urged U.S. civilians to flee Iraq. 82nd Airborne units have moved into the region to protect the U.S. embassy. U.S. troops fighting ISIS alongside Iraqi troops have separated themselves and stood down. In Iraq, the war on terrorism is on hold.

Across the Middle East, U.S. diplomats, soldiers and civilians are on alert. The acting prime minister of Iraq, in an echo of Tehran and radical Shiites, is demanding that all 5,200 U.S. soldiers in Iraq depart.

How can our troops, detested by the PMF militias and their thousands of fighters,

"Perhaps, rather than sending troops into Iraq and Kuwait to defend U.S. troops already there, we should accede to the local nationalist demands, start bringing our troops home, and let Iranians, Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, Yemenis and Afghans settle their quarrels."

unwanted by the Iraqi Parliament majority, the acting prime minister, and much of the Shiite majority, remain safely inside the capital city of Baghdad or the country?

### What a difference a presidential decision can make.

Two months ago, crowds were in the streets of Iraq protesting Iran's dominance of their politics. Crowds were in the streets of Iran cursing that regime for squandering the nation's resources on imperial adventures in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen. Things were going America's way.

### Now it is the Americans who are the targets of protests.

Over three days, crowds numbering in the hundreds of thousands and even millions have packed Iraqi and Iranian streets and squares to pay tribute to Soleimani and to curse the Americans who killed him.

As emotions are running high and America's friends in the region are mute, the twin goals of Iran and its militia allies appear clear:

Tehran wants to avoid a war with the



## AS I SEE IT

# If Baghdad Wants Us Out, Let's Go!

United States, but to direct the passions of the moment toward forcing an expulsion of the Americans from the Middle East, beginning with their ouster from Iraq.

Thus, Tehran has signaled that its retaliation, its revenge for the death of Soleimani, a military man, will be proportionate. Tehran is telegraphing an attack on the U.S. military. Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah in Lebanon, has called on his followers not to attack innocent Americans in the region but to zero in on U.S. military targets.

Oddly, what the America-haters of the Middle East seek is what Soleimani wanted, and what Trump promised in his campaign of 2016 - an end to U.S. involvement in the forever wars of the Middle East.

Perhaps, rather than sending troops into Iraq and Kuwait to defend U.S. troops already there, we should accede to the local nationalist demands, start bringing our troops home, and let Iranians, Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, Yemenis and Afghans settle their quarrels.

Despite the rage in Iran over the killing of Soleimani, the political imperatives that existed before last Friday's drone strike remain.

Iran does not want war with the United States. And Trump wants no war with Iran.

But Iran made a mistake in its extrapolation from that truth.

Assuming that because Trump did not want war, he would recoil from a fight, Soleimani believed he could kill Americans with impunity, as long as his fingerprints were not on the murder weapon.

Killing Soleimani was just. But what is just is not always wise.

Yet, his killing restores Trump's credibility as a Jacksonian who avoids wars but who, wounded, will stab the enemy who cut him. Trump has a red line. It is not shooting at American drones but shooting at American soldiers, the drawing of American blood.

The message the rulers of Iran should have received.

If they retaliate for Soleimani by killing American soldiers, diplomats or civilians, using either Iranian troops or proxy militias, Trump will retaliate against Iran itself. Otherwise, "Come Home, America," George McGovern's slogan from the 1972 presidential campaign, has rarely seemed more relevant.

(Source: Buchanan.org)

## GUEST COMMENT

### While ruling against indefinite Internet bans, SC fails to decide on the validity of J&K curbs

If enunciating the law and laying down norms for the exercise of executive power were the only functions of a constitutional court, the Supreme Court's verdict on the prolonged lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is indeed admirable. However, the apex court is also a court of justice, one duty-bound to enforce fundamental rights. It cannot limit itself to opinions on the extent to which those rights can be restricted. It has to give effect to the principles it enunciates and rule whether the state violated the fundamental rights of its citizens. The disappointing aspect of the verdict is the court's failure to give a ruling on the validity of the government's

## Eloquently reticent: On validity of J&K curbs

actions. It fails to hold the government to account for the manner in which it exercised its powers. It states categorically that an indefinite ban on the Internet is impermissible, but fails to direct the restoration of services. When it says Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure "cannot be used as a tool to prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights", it makes a comment worthy of being treasured in these times of frequent resort to that section. Yet, the court does not go beyond directing the authorities to review all their orders and restrictions forthwith.

There are indeed valuable takeaways from the judgment. A key holding is that the use of the Internet as a medium for

free speech as well as for trade and commerce is constitutionally protected. It also lays down that any reasonable restriction on fundamental rights, be it an Internet ban or a Section 144 order, will have to survive the test of proportionality, that is, the restriction should be proportionate to the necessity for such a measure. At the same time, it cautions against the "excessive utility" of the proportionality doctrine in matters of national security. Of great value to future challenges to executive action is the principle that there can be no 'secret orders'. The government is bound to publish all orders it passes regarding such restrictions so that they can be challenged in a court of law. It is here that the verdict acquires another unusual

character. Having rejected the government's stand that it could not produce all the orders on the restrictions imposed since August 4, 2019, the court fails to strike them down on that ground. After all, it concurrently says every order imposing a restriction should state the reason, the exigency that necessitated it and the features that make it clear that it is the least intrusive measure. The absence of such order in the public domain is evidence that the state failed to demonstrate its necessity. It is a sign of the success of the 'national security' narrative that undergirds the government's position on J&K that an apex court judgment in a fundamental rights case appears to have the character of an advisory opinion. (The Hindu)

# India As A Leading Power



By Sandeep Chakravorty

“

We are at a rare moment, at a specific juncture in history, when I feel the conditions are propitious for India to emerge as a leading power. India has already been a leading power of sorts for quite a while. With our size, population, GDP in PPP terms and also in dollar terms, we have significant power projection capability in our immediate region, some nuclear capability, impressive space capability, an increasingly influential 35 million and more strong Diaspora, it can hardly be denied that India is not a leading power. But more has to be done, particularly in improving the lives of our people and providing services for the global good and to the global commons. But transformation of India is on and we have to work on this assiduously”.

”

The University of Chicago historian William McNeil has described the nature of power and its relationship with notions of fairness and ethics in the following words: "It seems unlikely that recent and prospective enlargement of human capacities to organize and exert power will be permanently arrested by scruples against its use. Power in short ingests weaker centers of power or stimulates its rival centers of power to strengthen themselves.

This fact has dominated the whole history of mankind. This represents the realist school of international relations where any ethical anchor is dispensable but does reflect current geopolitical reality substantially. In aspiring to be a leading power India too is placing its bet on sinews of power, current and prospective.

In India's case the likelihood of being 'ingested' by a more powerful entity can be rejected. The question is whether India can be or is stimulated to emerge as a center of power.



McNeil has described how such a transference of power may take place from an established to an aspiring one: "No population can overtake or surpass the rest of the world without using the most efficient and powerful instruments known anywhere on earth, and by definition such instruments are located at the world centers of wealth and power wherever they may be. Thus, any geographical displacement of world leadership must be prefaced by successful borrowing from previously established centers of the highest prevailing skills. We have several examples of this from history. The Roman empire borrowed heavily from the Greek civilization and culture in its march towards pre-eminence. During the pursuit of dominance the Arabs borrowed heavily from the Indians, Chinese, Central Asians and Persians, particularly in mathematics, astronomy and medical science. The numerals that are commonly known as Arabic numerals are in fact of Indian origin.

In more contemporary times we have seen US building its strengths on the basis of skills and technology originating in Europe. The Meiji restoration of Japan is yet another example.

But the most recent example is a spectacular one, i.e. of China. In its 4 decades of opening up it has soaked in Western knowledge and technology not unlike a giant sponge. During this time it has been a student and a good apprentice. It has bided its time.

In McNeil's terms, a geographical displacement of power from the trans-Atlantic to the trans-Pacific is happening with China at the center of power. The most obvious and consequential manifestation of the shift in power from the West to the East is the geopolitical competition between the United States and its challenger China. While the US remains the predominant power, China is obviously not satisfied with the status quo and intends to displace the US from its preeminent position.

## Let us try to understand how the displacement of power happens:

- 1) Countries borrow knowledge systems and advanced technologies from apex centers and adopt them.
- 2) this is followed by a phase of assimilation, mastering and internalizing of borrowed technologies and knowledge systems.
- 3) the emerging center of power is able to generate new knowledge and technologies in a relatively autonomous manner.

This is when the displacement of power becomes a reality and contestation between the established center of power and the emerging or emergent center of power begins to become

acute.

China is probably in the second phase going to the third phase. In some areas it may well be in the third phase such as AI or quantum computing among others.

Where is India? In my personal view, I think India is mostly in the first phase while we have our centers of excellence in the second phase be it in our space programme, computing, nuclear technology among others. Our aspiration is to graduate comprehensively to the second phase and have our presence felt in the third phase.

Geopolitical factors favor the emergence of India as a leading center of power, co-existing, collaborating and competing with other major powers. India's Indo-Pacific vision exemplifies its ambition of being a "leading power". At the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the "destiny of the world will be deeply influenced by the course of developments in the Indo-Pacific region". Sheer numbers alone elevate the importance of the Indo-Pacific and its influence across the world. It is now home to more than 65% of the world's population who collectively produce more than 60% of global GDP. Over half the world's trade passes through this region, and it hosts the fastest-growing armada of naval fleets along with seven nuclear powers. This region will also have a disproportionately high contribution to global growth in the decades ahead and will therefore script the new terms of trade, financial flows and investments, growth, humanitarian assistance, peace and security.

China, which was the first mover, now finds itself having to deal with pushback of several kinds to its own expansive plans. There is little doubt that new pathways to a new order needs to be discovered soon.

India accepts this reality and is willing to embrace greater responsibility in anchoring a "rules-based democratic order" in the region. India's geostrategic vision for the Indo-Pacific is unique. We are against pitting against any country or participate in zero-sum competitions "between free and repressive visions of world order". We also do not accept propositions which creates perverse dependencies through economic statecraft and military coercion in a manner better suited to the Cold War era.



Instead, India is positioning itself to take a different path - one that does not see the world in binaries, bifurcated between partners and allies on one side, and competitors and adversaries on the other. India offers an opportunity for engagement and dialogue to all states, big and small, democratic and authoritarian, advanced or developing.

The new vision moves away from conceptions of non-alignment or strategic autonomy, tools of foreign policy that may have outlived their corresponding geopolitical utility. When Prime Minister Modi stated that "the Indo-Pacific region is not a limited club of members", he signaled India's intention to lead a new configuration of states, guided by communities that yearn for development, markets that require connectivity and nations that seek security. Despite its aversion of alliances, India is a keen player in the evolving security architecture in Asia. The new American focus on Indo-Pacific has brought India at the center.

To put in place a vision that shapes the region and attracts others, India needs to script its own expectations from four key relationships i.e. with China, US, India's Neighbors and the Global Institutional Networks.

CONT'D ON PAGE 10

## CONT'D FROM PAGE 9

The Asian story cannot be scripted by China alone, whether it is on infrastructure connectivity or managing security disputes. The economic prosperity of the region will be implicated by the strength of the India-China partnership. It is in this context that the engagements with China embodying the Wuhan and the Malappuram spirit need to be seen.

The US is a key partner and will be instrumental in making India a \$ 5 Tn economy. There is enormous ballast, momentum and dynamism in this relationship, and this will be the key to India's emergence as a leading power. I will not get into details of the transformation that has taken place in our relationship in the last two decades. Suffice to say it is a mature relationship bringing benefits to the people of both countries.



India is actively engaging with its neighbors and except for Pakistan, India is now scripting new chapters in cooperation with all of them. A good example is the transformation in India-Bangladesh ties, of which I speak from personal experience.

Our multilateral engagement is also vigorous with the global institutional framework. So, while we will be patient for getting a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, our participation in other forums be it G-20, BRICS, SCO or IBSA is active and purposeful. A particularly appealing product of our multilateral engagement is India's leadership in the Paris Climate Change Accord and the setting up of the International Solar Alliance.

The world has a stake in India fulfilling its immense potential. This needs to be critically leveraged to encourage a critical mass of capital and technology to flow into India to accelerate the Indian growth. As a vibrant and pluralist democracy, India shares political values of its more powerful partners and this is an advantage. The cosmopolitan temperament of India's people and their ability to handle immense diversity and adversity are unparalleled civilizational assets in dealing with a globalizing world.

We are at a rare moment, at a specific juncture in history, when I feel the conditions are propitious for India to emerge as a leading power. India has already been a leading power of sorts for quite a while. With our size, population, GDP in PPP terms and also in dollar terms, we have significant power projection capability in our immediate region, some nuclear capability, impressive space capability, an increasingly influential 35 million and more strong Diaspora, it can hardly be denied that India is not a leading power. But more has to be done, particularly in improving the lives of our people and providing services for the global good and to the global commons. But transformation of India is on and we have to work on this assiduously.

### Let us see what could be, inter alia, the factors in the transformation of India:

- Ruling political dispensation enjoys unprecedented political capital.
- Strong, charismatic, focused leadership. Absence of dissidence which used to plague previous governments.
- Ambitious goal setting: making India a \$5 Tn economy in the next five years, 100 million toilets by 2019, drinking water to all homes in next 5 years, all homes electrified by 2019.

### Economy

- India is a \$ 3tn economy and about to become the



3rd largest economy in the next 5 years.

- There is a willingness to make difficult choices-demonetization, GST, IBC, corporate tax reduction, ambitious social sector spending, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Universal Health Care for 500 Mn Indians under the Ayushman Bharat program, Housing For All, Electricity for All, Connecting All villages, Financial Inclusion as part of the Jan Dhan Program among others (India's Finance Minister recently said in New York that the huge mandate given to the Government provided the basis to the government to make deep and far reaching economic reforms. A bold step was taken in terms of reducing corporate taxation to 15% for new companies which is the lowest in the world).
- Frontal attack on corruption in high places, reduction in mega scams.
- Demographic Dividend: in 2020, the average age in India will be 29 years old (compared to 37 in China)
- Making India a compliant society - making India an honest country.
- Cleaning up the banks, balance sheets, saying no to crony capitalism.
- A problem-solving approach of the Government. Bringing closure to issues, Ayodhya verdict, changing the narrative and trying out a new development-oriented approach in Kashmir



### Military:

- Strong military, third largest in manpower, strong in defense acquisitions, creating relationships with major powers such as the US. Has power projection capabilities in HADR roles. The 2004 Tsunami was a good example.

### Technology:

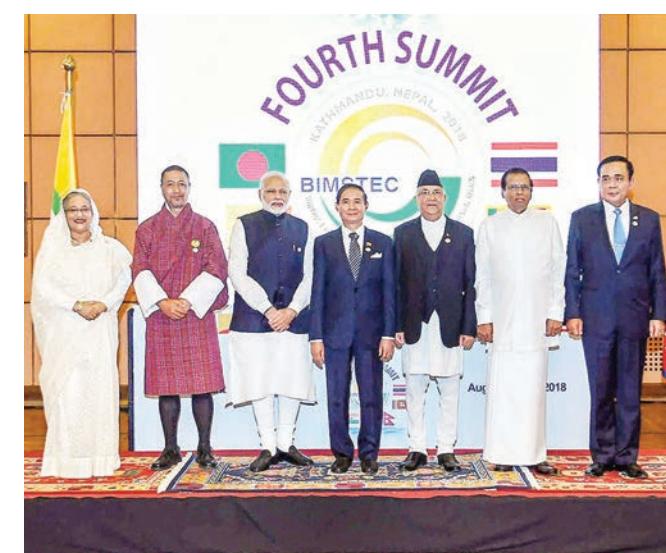
- India has been a target of technology denial regimes such as NSG, MTCR, Australia Group and Wassenaar Arrangements. We have now become signatory to all except NSG. India is now in a more comfortable position with respect to accessing technologies. Greater IPR protection also available.
- Domestic Technology and Innovation is being given impetus. There are several pioneering initiatives in place and India's world ranking in innovation is rising.

### Soft Power:

- India has unparalleled soft power attributes. Whether it is Yoga, Indian Cinema, Music, Cuisine. It generates tremendous goodwill and

support for India all over the world. In Soft Power I daresay we have a big advantage over several world powers. Our challenge of course is our ability or inability to monetize it to the advantage of our peoples as efforts are sporadic and insufficient.

- The scenario that will emerge as this transformation is underway is illuminating. In economic power there are or will be only two countries ahead of us i.e. US and China and there are much ahead so we are not in competition. In fact, with the US our aspiration is to work closely with the US to achieve our ambitions as there are remarkable coincidence of values and views on how we see the world. Russia, and Japan are witnessing demographic decline and Europe, too, is a fast ageing continent. Africa, the LAC, ASEAN and are competition but may lack India's depth of strength in terms of economy, market size, demography, technological and innovation prowess.
- In the ultimate analysis it is how the country concerned grows strong internally and is thus enabled to project its strength externally that matters. How this happens and how it is done has to be discussed ad nauseum everywhere. It is like being on a cycle. We need to keep pedaling for not stalling and falling down. There is no leading from behind. Even so, it is merely the beginning of a decadal journey, which will see India shoulder the expectations that befit the world's largest democratic economy.



### Conclusion

After independence India had the choice to be satisfied with economic progress and leave its security questions to be addressed by other major powers. Countries like Australia, Canada and Japan followed this model. India could not accept this for the simple reason that its economic, political and security interests are a function of its unique history, geography, polity and society. India's ambitions of shaping the international order to its own advantage are driven by the desire to transform India into a modern country and abolish poverty, hunger and illiteracy. The strategic elite sees foreign policy primarily in light of domestic priorities.

India, as a rising power, has a different set of interests, capabilities and strategic culture from other major powers. Former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon summarizes the Indian way of conducting foreign policy "as a combination of strategic boldness in conception and tactical caution in implementation, by a fundamentally realistic approach masked by normative rhetoric, by comfort in a plural and diverse world and by a consciousness of India's destiny as a great power". Till the time India becomes a great power, the world will see an India focused on increasing its power as well as taking more responsibilities globally.

*(The author is an Indian diplomat, currently Consul General of India in New York)*

# Hell and ice water: Glacier melt threatens Pakistan's future

## SHISPER GLACIER (PAKISTAN)

(TIP): The villagers of Hassanabad live in constant fear. Above them the vast Shisper glacier dominates the landscape: A river of jagged black ice moving towards them at as much as four metres per day.

Climate change is causing most glaciers worldwide to shrink, but due to a meteorological anomaly this is one of a few in the Karakoram mountain range in northern Pakistan that are surging.

This means hundreds of tonnes of ice and debris are pushing down the valley at ten times the normal rate or more, threatening the safety of the people and homes below.

"People's lives, properties and animals are in danger," warns villager Basir Ali.

Flash floods caused by glacial lakes, ice and rock falls, and a lack of clean and accessible water are all serious risks for those close to its path.

"When a glacial lake bursts there is an enormous amount of not only ice, water and debris that falls through, but also mud and this has devastating effects, it basically destroys everything that comes in its way," said Ignacio Artaza of UNDP Pakistan.

But repercussions of the Shisper glacier surge extend far beyond its path: The mighty Indus river is reliant on seasonal melt for more than half of its flow and changes in Pakistan's ice fields affect this.

That has implications not just for those living in its basin, but for the whole nation, which relies on it for much of its food. Shifting water levels also have implications for the fragile relationship between nuclear-armed neighbours Pakistan and India. Already ranked among the planet's most water-stressed nations according to the World Resources Institute, both need the Indus and its



tributaries.

Their access to the water is governed by the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, which aims for fair usage.

The Karakoram, which contains some of the world's tallest mountains including K2, is just one of the mountain ranges that criss-cross the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.

Sometimes called The Third Pole, the region holds more ice than anywhere other than the Arctic or Antarctica.

But a third of the glaciers here are expected to melt by 2100, endangering the lives of hundreds of millions, according to this year's Hindu Kush-Himalaya Assessment Report.

Rising in Tibet, the Indus crosses through India and Pakistan fed by a multitude of tributaries before it reaches the Arabian Sea. The waterway's basin produces 90 per cent of Pakistan's food,

according to the UN, and agriculture is dependent on irrigation from the river, which heavily relies on meltwater from the ice sheets.

With its surging population experts warn the nation faces "absolute water scarcity" by 2025, with the loss of the Himalayan glaciers a key threat.

While scientists cite climate change and topography, it's not clear exactly what causes the Karakoram anomaly where glaciers are surging and in some cases growing. But many say these changes will also impact the Indus because they alter meltwater patterns, causing flash flooding or water shortages that are difficult to predict and manage.

"The Shisper glacier is increasing its length and width, furthermore it is also moving downhill," explained Shehzad Baig of the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority. AFP

## Arrest warrant issued against Bangladesh's 1st Hindu Chief Justice for alleged graft

DHAKA (TIP): An arrest warrant was issued against Bangladesh's first Hindu chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha on charges of embezzling 40 million taka, court officials said on Sunday.

Sinha, 68, who lives in the US, has been described as a "fugitive" by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in its charge sheet.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Dhaka's Senior Special Judges' Court took cognizance of the graft charges brought against Sinha and 10 others by the ACC.

"The judge ordered his (Sinha's) arrest along with 10 others as the ACC accused him of misappropriating and laundering about 4 crore taka (USD 4,71,993) in 2016," public prosecutor Taposh Kumar Pal told reporters. The rest of the accused are former senior officials of the Farmers Bank, including its ex-managing director. The ACC in its charge sheet

described all the 11 to be "fugitives". It alleged that Sinha and 10 others embezzled 40 million taka from the Farmers Bank, which was later renamed as the Padma Bank Limited, Pal said.

The development came nearly three months after the ACC said it found evidence of fraud involving transactions of 40 million taka borrowed with fake documents by two businessmen from the bank while the amount was deposited in Sinha's account. Sinha, who is said to have sought asylum in the US, served as the 21st Chief Justice of Bangladesh from January, 2015, to November, 2017.

The case came days after Sinha's newly-launched autobiography brought him in political spotlight over two years after he was forced to quit amid a row with the government.

The ACC earlier said if required it would quiz Sinha by bringing him back

home, but "interrogation is not a mandatory provision for investigations".

In his autobiography "A Broken Dream: Rule of Law, Human Rights and Democracy", Sinha said he was forced to resign in 2017 following intimidation and threats, drawing a sharp reaction from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who accused some anti-government newspapers of backing him.

In a media interview after the book launch in Washington, Sinha urged India to support the rule of law and democracy in Bangladesh, calling the incumbent Awami League government as an "autocratic" one. Sinha, Bangladesh's first Chief Justice from the minority Hindu community, alleged that he was forced to resign because he opposed Bangladesh's incumbent "undemocratic" and "authoritarian" regime. PTI

## 16 killed in Pak mosque blast

KARACHI (TIP): A powerful blast at a mosque during January 10 evening prayers killed at least 16 persons, including an Imam and a senior police officer, and left 20 others injured in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, three days after a bomb explosion claimed two lives in Quetta.

The nature of the explosion, during Maghrib prayers in Ghousabad neighbourhood, was not immediately known, Dawn newspaper reported.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amanullah was among the 16 people killed in the incident, Quetta Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Abdul Razzaq Cheema said.

According to some media reports, the slain police officer was the likely target.

Last month, unidentified gunmen killed the DSP's son in Quetta, The Express Tribune reported. Twenty others were also injured in the blast, the report said.

Law enforcement agencies have cordoned off the area to investigate the incident.

The mosque in a densely-populated Pashtun-majority area was being searched by the bomb disposal squad and security personnel. Meanwhile, an emergency has been declared at all hospitals in the area. — PTI

## 2 pilots killed in Afghan military chopper crash

KABUL (TIP): Two military pilots were killed on Wednesday when their Mi35 helicopter crashed in the western Afghan province of Farah due to a technical fault, the defence ministry said. They had been delivering supplies to Afghan security forces in the area, it said in a statement. In a separate incident, the ministry said a Mi17 helicopter had made an "emergency landing" in the eastern Afghan province of Paktia, also as a result of a technical fault, but said nobody had been hurt. — Reuters

## Imran to visit Kuala Lumpur to placate Malaysia

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Prime Minister Imran Khan will be travelling to Malaysia this month to placate Kuala Lumpur after Pakistan skipped a summit of Muslim nations reportedly under pressure from Saudi Arabia, according to a media report.

Khan had confirmed Pakistan's participation in the December 19-21 summit hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, but skipped the event at the 11th hour due to pressure exerted by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - key financial backers of the cash-strapped country. The summit in Kuala Lumpur was seen by Saudis as an attempt to create a new bloc in the Muslim world that could become an alternative to the dysfunctional Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) led by the Gulf Kingdom. — PTI

# Direct deposit fastest way to receive federal tax refund

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** With tax season beginning soon, the Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers that choosing to have their tax refund directly deposited into their checking or savings account is the fastest way to get their money.

It's simple, safe and secure. Taxpayers can also get their refund deposited into one, two or three different accounts, if desired.

Eight out of 10 taxpayers get their refunds by using direct deposit. The IRS uses the same electronic transfer system to deposit tax refunds that is used by other federal agencies to deposit nearly 98% of all Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits into millions of accounts.

Direct deposit also avoids the possibility that a refund check could be lost or stolen or returned to the IRS as undeliverable. And it saves taxpayer money. It costs more than \$1 for every paper refund issued, but only a dime for each direct deposit.

## Easy to use

A taxpayer simply selects direct deposit as the refund method when using tax software or working with a tax preparer, and then types in their account and routing number. It's important to double check entries to avoid errors.

The IRS reminds taxpayers they should only deposit refunds directly into accounts that are in their name, their spouse's name or both if it's a joint account.



## Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

### Split refunds

By using direct deposit, a taxpayer can split their refund into up to three financial accounts, including a bank or Individual Retirement Account. Part of the refund can even be used to purchase up to \$5,000 in U.S. Series I Savings Bonds.

A taxpayer can split their refund by using tax software or by using IRS Form 8888, Allocation of Refund (including Savings Bond Purchases), if they file a paper return. Some people use split refunds as a convenient option for managing their money, sending some of their refund to an account for immediate use and some for future savings.

No more than three electronic tax refunds can be deposited into a single financial account or prepaid debit card. Taxpayers who exceed the limit will receive an IRS notice and a paper refund will be issued for the refunds exceeding that limit.

### E-file plus direct deposit yields fastest refunds

The IRS also encourages taxpayers to file electronically. While a person can choose direct deposit whether they file their taxes on paper or electronically, a taxpayer who e-files will typically see their refund in less than 21 days. Taxpayers can track their refund using "Where's My Refund?" on IRS.gov or by downloading the IRS2Go mobile app.

"Where's My Refund?" is updated once daily, usually overnight, so there's no reason to check more than once per day or call the IRS to get information about a refund. Taxpayers can check "Where's My Refund?" within 24 hours after the IRS has received their e-filed return or four weeks after receipt of a mailed paper return. "Where's My Refund?" has a tracker that displays progress through three stages: (1) Return Received, (2) Refund Approved, and (3) Refund Sent.

Whether through IRS Free File or commercially available software, electronic filing vastly reduces tax return errors, as the tax software does the calculations, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information.

## U.S. Census Bureau Launches First 2020 Census Ads

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The U.S. Census Bureau launched its first set of advertisements for the 2020 Census in Alaska ahead of the kickoff to the 2020 Census in remote Alaska in January 2020. The advertisements will inform those living in approximately 220 Alaska Native villages that a census taker will soon visit their home to count them in the 2020 Census. For the rest of Alaska, and the rest of the country, the 2020 Census begins in mid-March.

On January 21, the count officially begins in Toksook Bay, an Alaska Native village located on the Bering Sea west of Bethel. Locally hired census takers get a head start in rural Alaska when the ground is frozen, allowing for easier access to remote villages.

This will be the first time the Census Bureau has aired ads targeted at remote Alaska audiences for a decennial census. Aimed primarily at reaching Alaska Native people, the advertising creative includes full-page print ads, commercial signage, posters, radio ads and digital content.

"We are working hard with state and tribal leaders as well as community organizations to make sure that the Alaska Native population and everyone in Alaska - no matter where they live - receive information about the 2020 Census and why it is so important to be counted," said Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham. "Residents of remote Alaskan villages have limited internet connectivity and no at-home mail delivery, so conducting the count with census



takers going door-to-door is critically important. By responding to the census, you can help shape your village's future for the next decade."

The Census Bureau has long been planning the most robust marketing and outreach effort in Census history for the 2020 Census. The newly released advertisements are part of the Census Bureau's \$500 million communications campaign to increase awareness and participation in the 2020 Census.

In January, paid advertising in support of the 2020 Census will begin running in the rest of the country in print and digital outlets, on television and radio, on billboards, and at transit stations. The integrated campaign will feature advertising in 13 languages and be in market from January through June. For more information, visit the Census Bureau's 2020 Census Paid Media Campaign.

Most households in the United States will start receiving invitations by mail to respond to the 2020 Census in mid-March. For more information, visit 2020census.gov.

## Senator Liu Votes to Strengthen and Expand New Yorkers' Voting Rights

**ALBANY, NY (TIP):** Senator Liu, together with the Senate Majority Conference, passed major legislation that will build on the historic voting reforms passed under the Senate Democratic Majority during the 2019 Legislative Session. The bills passed on Jan 9th will expand voting rights in New York and empower more voters to get to the polls.

"Voting is everyone's civic duty, and today we expand upon the progress we made last year in making voting easier and more accessible for New Yorkers. These commonsense reforms will allow voters to readily exercise this fundamental freedom and participate in our democracy," Senator Liu said. "As public servants, it is our responsibility to empower more eligible New Yorkers to exercise their right to vote. The legislation we advanced builds on the historic progress we made last year in reforming our electoral system. I will continue my efforts to empower eligible New Yorkers to have their voices heard," Senator Liu added.

### The additional voting reforms passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- Ensuring Access to Early Voting for New York's Population Centers: This bill, S.6754A, sponsored by Senator Neil Breslin requires that in each county, the municipality with the largest population contain at least one early voting location.
- Voter Notifications: This bill, S.6805, sponsored by Senator ZellnorMyrie authorizes state and local transportation departments to provide important voting registration and Election Day information on message signs on highways.
- Early Voting on Long Island: This bill, S.6922, sponsored by Senator Anna Kaplan will require that each town and city on Long Island have at least one early voting polling location.



*"Voting is everyone's civic duty, and today we expand upon the progress we made last year in making voting easier and more accessible for New Yorkers", said John Liu.*

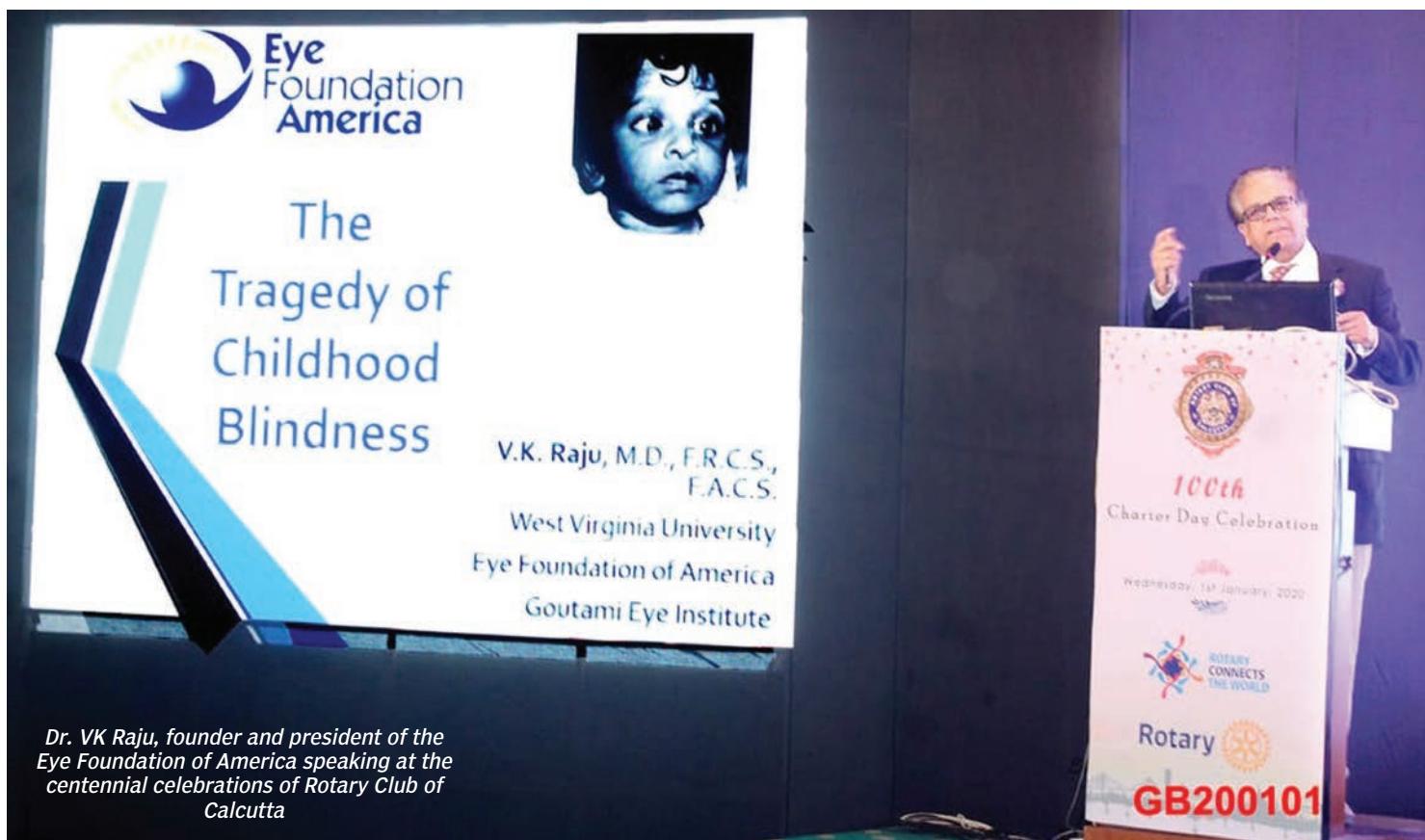
not be drawn partly on or off a college campus. It also requires a polling location on the grounds of the college or university when there are 300 registered voters or more on the campus.

- Automatic Voter Registration (AVR): This bill, S.6457B, sponsored by Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris, creates a system of automatic voter registration (AVR) within designated agency applications at the Departments of Health and Motor Vehicles.
- College or University Provided Polling Place: This bill, S.4378, sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, provides that election districts shall

*(Read full story on  
www.theindianpanorama.news)*

# Eye Foundation of America with Goutami Eye Institute Rajahmundry Gifts Retinal Camera to Rotary Club of Calcutta

Dr. VK Raju emphasizes the need to prevent childhood blindness



Dr. VK Raju, VV KumarSecretary and chief operating officer of Goutami Eye Institute, and Mr. Shiva Kumar, ROP Technician with Goutami Eye Institute gifting the Retinal camera to Rotary Club of Calcutta.

**KOLKATA (TIP):** Rotary Club of Calcutta at its centennial celebrations from December 31, 2019 to January 2, 2020 received a unique gift from US based Eye Foundation of America and its Rajahmundry, India based Goutami Eye Institute on the first day of the year 2020.

The Retinal camera screens premature baby for retinopathy. Retinopathy of prematurity is a vascular proliferative disorder of the retinal blood vessels of premature infants.

World Health Organization 2012 report says that 3.5 million infants are born

premature in India annually.

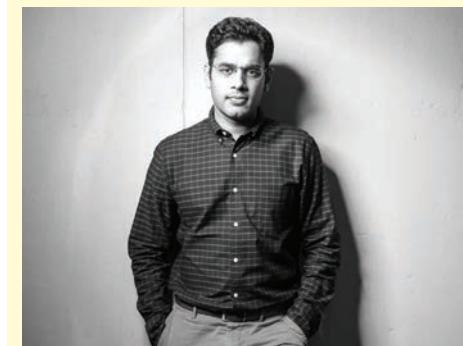
ROP is a leading cause of preventable infant blindness in India. Incidence of ROP is increasing in India due to improved neonatal survival.

Presenting the gift of Retinal Camera to Rotary Club of Calcutta, founder and president of the Eye Foundation of America Dr. VK Raju said he hopes the retinal camera will help the eye surgeons offer appropriate treatment of retinopathy,

Accepting the gift, Club president Purnendu Roychowdhury expressed his

gratitude to the Eye Foundation of America and Goutami Eye Institute and said the gift of retinal camera will greatly help in carrying out diagnostics for appropriate treatment of retinopathy. Mr. Roychoudhary was joined by the Centennial celebrations committee chair Mr. Saumen Ray and others while Dr. VK Raju was joined by Mr. VV Kumar, Secretary and chief operating officer of Goutami Eye Institute and Mr. Shiva Kumar, ROP Technician with Goutami Eye Institute.

Indian American MIT Economist's Endeavor for More Efficient Kidney-Donation System



Agarwal joined the MIT faculty in 2014 and began publishing papers on a range of topics

**BOSTON (TIP):** For Optimizing kidney donation, MIT economist Nikhil Agarwal analyzes the efficiency of markets that match suppliers and consumers but don't use prices.

In the last year, a new method he and some colleagues formulated for a more efficient kidney-donation system has been approved for implementation by the Alliance for Paired Donation, the second-largest platform for such transplants in the U.S. Currently there are about 800 kidney exchange transplants in the U.S. annually; by Agarwal's estimation, a more efficient exchange market could increase that number by 30 to 60 percent.

In a series of papers examining the inefficiencies of kidney transplant systems in the U.S., Agarwal and a variety of co-authors looked at the numbers and came back with solutions. One major source of inefficiency, Agarwal has discovered, is a lack of scale. Bigger networks of hospitals could better match donors and recipients. Right now, 62 percent of kidney donor-and-recipient pairings consist of patients at the same hospitals; that number would be lower in a more efficient system.

One reason for this: Donors and recipients must have matching blood types. People with type O blood can donate kidneys across blood types, but they can only receive kidneys from other type O people. Due to the timing of when people enter kidney markets, a bigger network is more efficient in this regard. In single-hospital networks, 22.8 percent of type O donors give a kidney to a non-type O recipient (for whom other donors might be found), while in the biggest U.S. kidney network, just 6.5 percent do, meaning its type O participants are connecting more optimally.

Agarwal's research also suggests that hospitals tend to be very concerned about the financial and administrative costs they incur while handling the transplant process - although such costs are small compared to the overall social value of transplants. Well-crafted subsidies and mandates, as he has detailed, can help address this particular problem.

(Source: MIT News)

## INDIAN GOVT CONSIDERING DOMICILE RIGHTS FOR J&K



**SRINAGAR (TIP):** To protect the domicile rights of the People of Jammu and Kashmir, the Central Government is considering to give other states like domicile benefits to people living in the Union Territories.

Senior Home Ministry official claimed that Jammu and Kashmir administration and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) are considering a proposal regarding framing rules to protect domicile rights in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are examining whether a Union Territory can issue the rules and Himachal and Uttrakhand type of restrictions on the purchase of land to protect domicile rights," a senior MHA official claimed.

Sources from the MHA also claimed that the government may also give some benefits in government jobs to locals.

"It is unclear that who will frame the rules, whether it will be through MHA of UT can frame it. Also, the government is yet to decide the number of years required to live in Jammu and Kashmir to get domicile status," they said.

Once the government will finalise the rules of domicile status, locals and people who lived in Jammu and Kashmir for a long time will be able to get benefits of different schemes from Jobs and land purchases.

It is expected that the government will frame the rules to give domicile rights in the next few months, they added.

In Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, there is a restriction on purchasing land. In these states, one has to get a domicile certificate to get benefits from various government schemes and to purchase agriculture land.

## Foreign envoys conclude Jammu and Kashmir visit



15 Foreign envoy poses for a photograph on the banks of Dal Lake during their visit to Srinagar on January 9,

**SRINAGAR (TIP):** The 16-member delegation of foreign envoys concluded their two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, reported IANS.

On Friday, they met representatives of the civil societies and political groups in Jammu.

The delegation also went to the Jagti Migrant Township for the Kashmiri Pandits, 20 km from Jammu, to meet members of community.

The Kashmiri Pandits briefed the delegation about the terror in Kashmir and problems that they were facing since their enforced migration from the valley in early 1990s. On Thursday, the delegation met with member of civil societies and some journalists in Srinagar. They were also given briefing about the security situation by the Army at the Corp headquarters in Srinagar.

This was the second foreign delegation visiting the valley after the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5. This visit was arranged by the government as well like the previous delegation of Members of European Parliament in October, facilitated by an NGO, reported IANS.

# Delhi Police identifies JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, 8 others as suspects in JNU violence

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Delhi Police on Friday said it has identified nine people, including JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, as suspects in the JNU violence case. Most of the other people identified so far by the police are members of Left-wing students organisations.

Addressing a press conference, DCP (crime) Joy Tirkey disclosed nine names and also released their photographs.

"Unfortunately the CCTV footages were not available to us as the server room was vandalised a day before. We have identified some people based on viral videos and other investigations," Joy Tirkey said.

DCP Tirkey said the police have not detained anyone so far. "We will serve notices to the identified people and ask them about their presence during the violence," he said.

He, however, said more names may be revealed in subsequent press conferences as investigation proceeds.

Meanwhile, responding to the development, JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh said, "Delhi Police can do their inquiry. I also have evidence to show how I was attacked."

The names disclosed today by the police are of those it suspects were involved in the violence at Periyar Hostel on Sunday afternoon. However, the police did not give much information whether they have identified any of the masked people who attacked students and teachers at JNU on Sunday evening.

In the violence that took place on Sunday evening, Aishe Ghosh suffered head injuries. Nearly 30 students and teachers



DCP (Crime) Joy Tirkey releases photographs of suspects in JNU violence as Delhi Police PRO MS Randhawa (R) looks on, during a press conference in New Delhi.

were injured in the violence that marred the Jawaharlal Nehru University when a mob of several masked people stormed into hostels in JNU and attacked students and teachers with rods, sticks and stones.

The students so far identified as suspects by the Delhi Police which it claims were involved in Sunday's violence are:

- Aishe Ghosh, JNUSU president
- Vikas Patel, MA Korean Studies
- Pankaj Mishra, School of Social Science
- Chunchun Kumar, former JNU student
- Yogendra Bhardwaj, PhD Sanskrit
- Dolan Samanata, School of Social Science

- Sucheta Talukdar, School of Social Science
- Priya Ranjan, School of Language and Cultural Studies
- Vaskar Vijay

According to the Delhi Police, most of them are members of Left-wing students' organisations.

Delhi Police PRO, MS Randhawa said, "The investigation regarding the criminal cases filed in connection with the JNU violence incident is being carried out by the Crime Branch. But it has been observed that a lot of misinformation related to these cases is being circulated."

The Delhi Police, however, did not take questions from the media during the press conference.

## Govt warned of spike in violence in J&K, no troop withdrawal

**New Delhi (TIP):** The government is gearing up for a hot summer in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The government has been warned by security agencies of a possible spike in violence after the meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) concludes. Pakistan is in the Grey list of the FATF for money laundering and terror financing.

Agencies are apprehensive that there will be fresh attempts to push in terrorists especially those from Afghanistan who are not only well-trained but battle-hardened as well.

"There are very credible inputs about terrorists from Afghanistan trying to infiltrate March onwards and the area of infiltration may not be limited to J&K only and could take place through areas such as Punjab and Rajasthan as well," a senior ministry of home affairs (MHA) official said on condition of anonymity.

In addition, there are about 350 and 400 terrorists already in the valley, according to estimates of the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), a platform headed by the Intelligence Bureau which collates, evaluates and shares information among users.

To address the possible threat, MHA decided against pulling out any more troops.

The Jammu and Kashmir security grid was strengthened with nearly 850 companies of paramilitary forces – each company comprising 100 men – apart from the military and police prior to August 5, when Parliament passes laws and resolutions to bifurcate the state into two Union territories and scrapped constitutional provisions that gave the region special status. Of the 850, only about 100 companies have been withdrawn since.

This summer, at least 700 companies of the paramilitary forces will continue to be positioned in J&K. *Source: HT*

## CITIZENSHIP ACT COMES INTO EFFECT

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 that grants citizenship on the basis of religion came into force on Friday.

In a gazette notification, the Union home ministry said the act under which non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan will be given Indian citizenship, will come into force from January 10.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of the section 1 of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (47 of 2019), the Central government hereby appoints the 10th day of January, 2020, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force," the notification said.

The CAA was passed by parliament on December 11 last year.

Critics say that the Act is discriminatory and violates Article 14 of the Constitution, however, PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have on several occasions underlined that it only provides a refuge to the six communities who have faced religious persecution in the three countries mentioned above. Amid raging protests across the country over the Act, the home minister made it clear that the government won't move back even an inch on the Act. The government has been saying that the minority groups from the three countries have no other option but to come India when they face religious persecution there.

# India's curb on import may raise palm oil prices, hit trade

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India, the world's biggest importer of edible oils, has curbed inbound shipments of palmolein or palm oil, whose main exporter is Malaysia, a move that can alter global trade in these items and can stoke inflation.

According to people aware of the developments, the decision was aimed at squeezing key supplier Malaysia because of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of a new citizenship law and New Delhi's actions in Kashmir, people familiar with developments said on Thursday.

On January 8, the directorate general of foreign trade, the country's foreign trade regulator, had issued a notification amending the foreign trade policy and putting three categories of refined palm oil from "free" to "restricted". This means that while there is no ban on imports, importers have to apply for licences for importing palm oil, which will be first vetted by DGFT authorities.

This is a classic case of a non-tariff barrier to free trade, which follows India's deep resentment of what it sees as "undue interference" by a foreign country in its internal political matters.

"Despite our repeated efforts to convey to Malaysia it shouldn't interfere in these matters, their prime minister has continued to speak on these issues. It is surprising this has continued even after members of the Malaysian government have spoken out against the position taken by their



prime minister," said an official who declined to be named.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar told a regular news briefing on Thursday the new notification was product-specific and not country-specific. "Imports are decided by two factors - commercial decisions and trade policy... Certain procedures will be put in place, and imports of palm oil are not prohibited," he said.

Indian importers will now naturally look at substitute markets, such as Indonesia, Nepal, Ukraine and Argentina, a second official said.

Nepal, however, has expressed concerns because it is a major refiner of Malaysian palm oil, which it exports to India. The country's total import of crude edible oils was 12.4 million tonne in 2018-19 valued at Rs 8,227 million, according to official figures.

India imports more than nine million tonnes of palm oil every year, mainly from Indonesia and Malaysia, the two biggest exporters. The import of crude edible oil in fact had a negative growth of 14.17% in 2018-19 over 2017-18 and negative growth of 18.82% in 2019-20 (April to September) as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, the data show.

In 2016-17, crude palm oil import from Malaysia stood at 1.9 million tonne, while in 2017-18, inbound shipments were 1.7 million tonne. Indian authorities and traders are looking for quick substitutes, without which prices of edible oils can see an upswing.

"Indonesia is ready to sell us and fill the gap of palm oil. If Indonesia can ramp up its exports, then there will be no problem. Otherwise, prices could go up," said Mayur Raheja, an Indore-based trader. *Source: HT*

## Govt appoints 2 joint secretaries, 13 deputies to assist CDS

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The newly-created department of military affairs, headed by the chief of defence staff (CDS), will be staffed with two joint secretaries, 13 deputy secretaries and 25 under secretaries, a government official said on condition of anonymity, adding that the officers would be a mix of civilians and uniformed personnel.

The new department, under CDS General Bipin Rawat, is an addition to the four existing verticals in the defence ministry: the departments of defence, defence production, defence research and development, and ex-service welfare. As CDS, Rawat is the principal military adviser to the defence minister on all matters related to the tri-services.

He took over as the country's first CDS on December 31.

In his first official directive after taking over as CDS, Rawat last week asked top officials of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff to prepare a proposal to create an Air Defence command to enhance military synergy and optimally utilise the resources of the armed forces. Rawat



has set a June 30 deadline for the proposal to be submitted. In the last few days, he held series of meetings with important functionaries of the defence ministry and the three services exploring ways to bring in inter-service synergy and jointness in a time bound manner.

The government expects the CDS to bring about jointness among the three services within three years.

He is expected to prepare an annual report for the defence minister on achievements in improving jointness.

One of the key objectives behind so-called jointmanship is the setting up of joint or theatre commands for the best use of military resources to fight future battles. While the army and the navy have been open to the idea, the Indian Air Force has concerns about theaterisation.

The new department will also work towards promoting the use of indigenous equipment by the services at a time when the armed forces are heavily dependent on imported military hardware.

## SC stays NCLAT order restoring Cyrus Mistry as executive chairman of Tata Group

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Supreme Court on Friday said there were "basic errors" in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)'s observations and stayed the tribunal's order reinstating Cyrus Mistry as executive chairman of Tata Sons.

"Our first impression is not good about the order of the tribunal," said a bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde. "The tribunal granted the prayer which was not prayed for."

The bench, also comprising justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant, said the matter needs to be heard in detail, and issued notices to Cyrus Investments Pvt. Ltd and Mistry for a hearing after four weeks.

Last month, NCLAT said that Mistry was illegally ousted in October 2016 at the behest of Ratan Tata, the chairman-emeritus of the group, and that the actions were "oppressive" for minority shareholders. It also restrained Tata and his representatives from taking any decision that would require a majority vote on the board of Tata Sons.

As part of its order, the tribunal had ruled that the appointment of Natarajan Chandrasekaran as chairman of Tata Sons in early 2017 and the subsequent transition from a publicly-held company to a private entity were also illegal. It further ordered that Tata Sons be restored as a public company to give minority shareholders more autonomy to sell their shares.

## Cong, BJP's incomes surged ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha polls



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress saw the highest annual growth in their incomes in financial year 2018-19 ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, according to financial audit reports filed by the parties with the Election Commission of India (ECI) and figures from their previous audit reports compiled by election watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms.

The BJP reported an income of Rs 2410 crore in 2018-19, nearly 135% more than its income in the previous financial year. The Congress reported Rs 918 crore of income in 2018-19, which is 361% more than its income in the previous financial year. The income of both the parties in 2018-19 was the highest they received in 18 years for which the data is available and this was the highest annual growth in their incomes in this period.

The figures suggest that the Congress party, which had been reporting a drop in its annual incomes for four consecutive years, recovered on this front. Not only did its income rise in absolute terms but its share in income received by the two parties also rose for the first time after falling for five consecutive years. The Congress had a majority share in the income of the two parties up to 2012-13. Its share fell below 50% in 2013-14 and then dropped every year, reaching just 16% in 2017-18. It has now grown to 28% in 2018-19.

Electoral bonds, which allow anonymous donations to political parties, were among the largest sources of income for these two parties. More than 60% of the BJP's income came through electoral bonds, a total of about Rs 1451 crore. The Congress received Rs 383 crore through this instrument, comprising nearly 42% of its total income.

# 'The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership' Celebrated

By Mabel Pais

**"As the Apollo kicks-off this new decade, it will continue to uplift and celebrate bold leaders such as Dr. King, whose lasting influence and significance still remain"- Jonelle Procope, President and CEO, Apollo Theater**

**"Leadership is as much about strategy as it is about inspiration." "King's impressive command of these strategic leadership disciplines led to truly historic success and made him the transformational leader we celebrate today."-Jami Floyd, WNYC Radio Host**

## The Apollo Theater and WNYC Announce the 14th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration

### "THE STRATEGIC KING: MLK'S VISIONARY LEADERSHIP"

Co-Hosted by WNYC's BRIAN LEHRER and JAMI FLOYD With WQXR's TERRANCE McKNIGHT as Master of Ceremonies

Guests Include the Honorable John Lewis (D-GA), The Washington Post's Jonathan Capehart, Artist Carrie Mae Weems, and former Representative Bakari Sellers

Co-Presented by The March on Washington Film Festival Sunday, January 12, 2020, 3PM -5PM

Event to be recorded for broadcast on NPR's 1A, airing on Monday, January 20, 2020

**W**NYC and the Apollo Theater will present WNYC's 14th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, "The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership", aspart of the Apollo's Uptown Hall series, on Sunday, January 12 at 3pm.

Hosted by WNYC's Peabody Award-winning host Brian Lehrer and All Things Considered host Jami Floyd, this annual gathering convenes artists and activists, journalists and change-makers to deeply engage with Dr. King's legacy and how his actions and teachings speak to and inform the social justice matters of our own time.

This year's event, "The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership," will focus on Dr. King and his colleagues' skillful use of the media and politically strategic tactics to influence politicians and helped pass key legislation in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The event will consider how those strategies continue to inform and inspire contemporary social justice movements, especially as some of those very protections are under attack today.

#### Featured guests include:

- o Herb Boyd - Journalist, educator, and author
- o Taylor Branch - Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian
- o Rev. Canon Kelly Brown Douglas - Dean, Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary
- o Jonathan Capehart - Washington Post Opinion Writer
- o Dorothy Butler Gilliam - journalist Mary-Pat Hector - National Youth Director for National Action Network
- o Khalil Gibran Muhammad - Professor of History, Race, and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and the Radcliffe Institute
- o Rashad Robinson - President of Color Of Change
- o Bakari Sellers - Former South Carolina State Representative, attorney, political commentator and politician

The program will be complemented by music and special spoken-word performances by artist and MacArthur Fellow Carrie Mae Weems, Pulitzer Prize-winner and U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, and playwright and producer Jessica Care Moore. WQXR's Terrance McKnight will serve as Master of Ceremonies.



Dr. ML King with President LB Johnson

Photo / wnyc.org

For the first time since its inception, this year's event will take place one week before the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday, and will be recorded for national broadcast to over 300 stations on NPR's 1A on the actual holiday, Monday, January 20. Locally in New York, WNYC's The Brian Lehrer Show will air the special on Monday, January 20, 2020, as well.

"This year's Uptown Hall partnership with WNYC explores a different more in-depth view of Dr. King, and gives us a chance to take a deeper dive into the political and media strategies that helped shape the core of the Civil Rights Movement. As the Apollo kicks-off this new decade, it will continue to uplift and celebrate bold leaders such as Dr. King, whose lasting influence and significance still remain," said Jonelle Procope, President and CEO, Apollo Theater.

"Dr. King often gets celebrated for his high ideals - as he should be - but at this moment of renewed activism for equality and social justice, it's also good to recognize his practical side," said Brian Lehrer. "We can learn today from how he organized for change, and how the strategic King had success."

To that end, we're thrilled to have the mix of long-time movement leaders and younger activists that we do, and excited to bring it to a national audience via our colleagues at NPR and 1A."

"Leadership is as much about strategy as it is about inspiration," said Jami Floyd. "Dr. King anticipated the strategies needed to bring about change. He employed powerful unconventional tactics to challenge the status quo. By recognizing and interpreting political undercurrents, moral awakenings in the North, and changing social mores -especially among younger Americans - King strategically set out to redirect political forces at local and national levels."

Whether Marching on Selma or composing his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Dr. King was driven by an uncompromising vision of social justice, he always approached tactical decisions with a seasoned eye for risks, unintended consequences, and symbolic value. King's impressive command of these strategic leadership disciplines led to truly historic success and made him the transformational leader we celebrate today."

"The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership" is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are mandatory at: [apollotheater.org/uptownhall](http://apollotheater.org/uptownhall).

Request Tickets now. The event presented in collaboration with the March on Washington Film Festival.



The Apollo Theater (Inside)

Photo / apollotheater.org

#### About WNYC

With an urban vibrancy and a global perspective, WNYC is New York's public radio station, broadcasting and streaming award-winning journalism, groundbreaking audio programming, and essential talk radio to the city and beyond. WNYC is a leading member station of NPR and also broadcasts programs from the BBC World Service, along with a roster of WNYC-produced local programs that champion the stories and spirit of New York City and the surrounding region. From its state-of-the-art studios, WNYC is reshaping audio for a new generation of listeners, producing some of the most-loved nationally-syndicated public radio programs including "Radiolab," "On the Media," "The Takeaway," and "Snap Judgment." WNYC broadcasts on 93.9 FM and AM 820 to listeners in New York and the tri-state area, and is available to audiences everywhere at [WNYC.org](http://WNYC.org), the WNYC app and through major digital radio services, all made possible through the generous support of its members, donors and sponsors.

#### About Apollo Theater

The legendary Apollo Theater - the soul of American culture - plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo's programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes special programs such as the blockbuster concert "Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo," "100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella," the annual "Africa Now! Festival," and the New York premiere of the opera "We Shall Not Be Moved." The Apollo is a performing arts presenting organization that also produces festivals and large-scale dance and music works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo's legacy through a contemporary lens; global festivals including the "Women of the World (WOW) Festival and Breakin' Convention," international and U.S.-based artist presentations focused on a specific theme; and Special Projects, multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first Amateur Night contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres-including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, Miri Ben Ari, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, and Stevie Wonder; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy.

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

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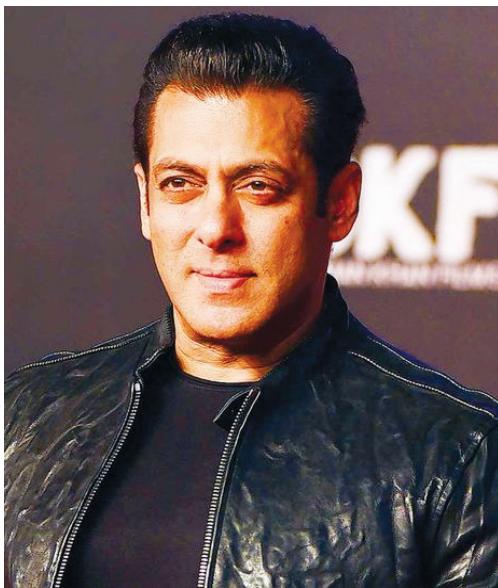
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## Salman Khan's next titled Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who is basking in the success of Dabangg 3, has booked the Eid 2021 slot. The actor on Friday announced his new film titled Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali, which will be helmed by Farhad Samji and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala.

Salman tweeted, "Announcing my next film... KABHI EID KABHI DIWALI .... STORY & PRODUCED BY SAJID NADIADWALA ...DIRECTED by FARHAD SAMJI...EID 2021 ... #SajidNadiadwala @NGEMovies @farhad\_samji @WardaNadiadwala @SKFilmsOfficial"

This year, fans of Dabangg Khan will get to watch him in Prabhudheva's Radhe. Also starring Disha Patani, Randeep Hooda and Jackie Shroff, the film will be produced by Sohail Khan, Atul Agnihotri and Salman Khan.

Farhad Samji has earlier directed and written Akshay Kumar starrer Housefull 4. He is currently working on Akshay's Bachchan Pandey which will be out in theaters on Christmas 2020.

# DON'T REMEMBER A LIFE WHEN I HAVE BEEN OUT OF LOVE, SAYS KANGANA

**T**here is finally a man in Bollywood who inspired Kangana Ranaut to settle down in marriage, and he is married! Before you jump to conclusions that Kangana has found the man of her dreams, let us clarify: Kangana was merely talking about filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari, who is the husband of Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, who has directed her upcoming film, Panga.

"Undeniably, I have always felt it is difficult to find someone who will be on the same level. However, after having met Nitesh Tiwari, and noticing them so amicable and loving in their marriage, my opinion on marriage has changed. He supports his wife so wholeheartedly. Marriage seems possible to me now," Kangana told Deccan Chronicle, reports filmibeat.com.

Kangana also revealed how her dream man should be. "He should be someone more intelligent, beautiful (handsome), and more talented than me," she declared, adding that she does "have a romantic side".

"I don't remember a life when I have been out of love. I have had bad experiences with love, but I move on quickly," she said.

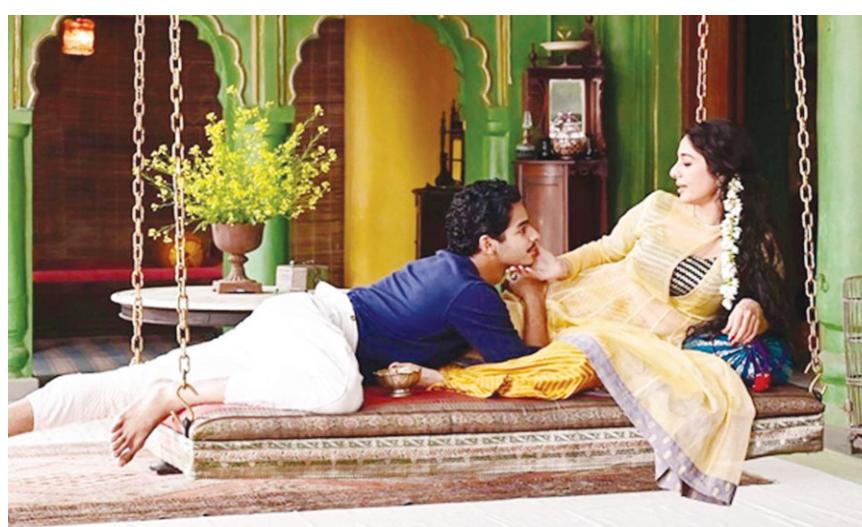
Uh...huh! Wedding bells around the corner, Kangana?!



## ISHAAN KHATTER ON WHY IT WAS 'EASY' ROMANCING TABU IN A SUITABLE BOY

Ishaan Khatter, who will be seen playing Maan Kapoor, who is infatuated with a courtesan named Saeeda Bai (played by Tabu) in Mira Nair's A Suitable Boy, says that was "easy" for him to romance Tabu on screen. During an episode of Neha Dhupia's talk show No Filter Neha, Ishaan was asked if it was easy romancing the veteran actress on screen, to which he replied by saying, "Because that person is Tabu, it really does half the job for you. The 24-year-old actor added, "I have said this before and I have said this in Dhadak as well, it is always easy for me to play the besotted lover. Because she's mesmerising, she is and especially in this character. I am really excited for people to see Saeeda Bai," news agency IANS stated.

The Beyond the Clouds actor added that he has a nickname for the AndhaDhun actress. "It is Tabasco. Tabasco for Tabassum. I came up with it. She's mirchi," said Ishaan. When asked what he would like to gift her, Ishaan said, "My heart! I would like to gift her. I think I am very much in possession of my heart. I would gift her a book of



Ghalib's poetry," IANS quoted Ishaan as saying.

The series will be shot across a variety of locations in India, including Lucknow and Maheshwar. The series also features accomplished actors like Randeep Hooda, Shefali Shah, Rasika Dugal, Namit Das, Gagan Dev Riwar, Danesh Razvi, Mikhail Sen, Mahira Kakkar, Vijay Varma and Vijay Raaz. Tanya Maniktala will play Lata in the

series. The web-series will be distributed by BBC Studios.

A Suitable Boy is based on Vikram Seth's novel of the same name. It showcases the stories of four families, set in post-independence era. The story is centered around Rupa Mehra, who, during the process of finding a suitable boy for her 19-year-old daughter Lata, embarks on a journey of self-discovery.



## JAWAANI JAANEMAN: SAIF IS BACK TO DOING WHAT HE DOES BEST

**T**he trailer of Saif Ali Khan starrer Jawaani Jaaneman is out, and it looks like Saif is back to doing what he does best – playing the man-child. The trailer introduces us to Saif's character who appears to hop from party to party and dresses like he is in his 20s. Amid all this partying, he is introduced to a 21-year-old woman who is, in fact, his daughter.

Debutante Alaya F has Saif as her father and Tabu as her mother in the film. Tabu plays a carefree woman who is simply nonchalant about everything.

The trailer also features appearances by Kubbra Sait, Farida Jalal, Kumud Mishra and Kiku Sharda. Jawaani Jaaneman seems like a coming-of-age film, but this time it's not centred around a 20-something person but a grown man.

The trailer features the remix version of Saif Ali Khan's hit number "Ole Ole" and also a remixed version of Jazzy B's song "Jinhe Mera Dil Luteya".



## Justin Bieber diagnosed with Lyme disease

Singer Justin Bieber has revealed he was recently diagnosed with Lyme disease and a "serious case" of chronic mono, something he said, will be explored further in his upcoming docuseries.

The singer, who was on a hiatus for five years, confirmed the news on Wednesday on Instagram, where he shared a photo of an article about his health.

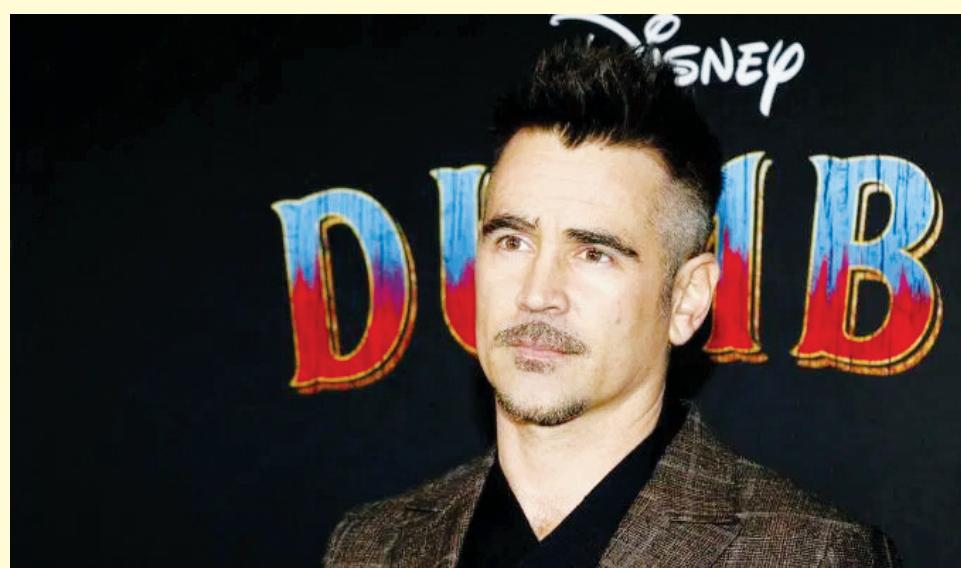
Justin, 25, called out trolls for jumping the gun about how he "looks" these days.

"While a lot of people kept saying Justin Bieber looks like sh\*\*, on meth etc. they failed to realise I've been recently diagnosed with Lyme disease, not only that but had a serious case of chronic mono which affected my skin, brain function, energy, and overall health," he wrote in the picture's caption.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection, which leads to redness on the skin in addition to fever, headache and tiredness.

"These things will be explained further in a docu series I'm putting on YouTube shortly. You can learn all that I've been battling and OVERCOMING!!" the singer added.

## COLIN FARRELL TO PLAY PENGUIN IN THE BATMAN



Director Matt Reeves recently confirmed that Colin Farrell will be playing Oswald Cobblepot aka Penguin in The Batman.

Rumours of Farrell being involved in the film have been floating around since November last year. Reeves took to Twitter where he shared a gif of Farrell and captioned it: "Wait, is that you, Oz?"

Farrell joins the cast that already has Robert Pattinson as Batman/Bruce Wayne, Zoe Kravitz as Selina

## WE'RE ON THE RIGHT PATH, SAYS SALMA HAYEK ON WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD

Actress Salma Hayek is very hopeful about the future for women in Hollywood. She said that the women in the industry are on the right path and are not going to stop.

"What I can tell you is that a lot more women are directing and acting and writing and producing. And there are a lot more movies made about women and for women because the audience was neglected," Hayek told variety.com at the premiere of her new comedy "Like a Boss" in New York on Tuesday night.

"We're on the right path. And we're not going to stop," Hayek added.

The Oscar nominee was joined by her costars Tiffany Haddish and Rose Byrne.

"Like a Boss" follows best friends Mia and Mel who join forces to run their own boutique cosmetics company. When the prospect of a big buyout offer from a notorious titan of the beauty industry tempts them, their lifelong bond - and their business - is put in jeopardy.

She said: "For once this is a movie that is not about a woman looking for a man or needing a man. I hope that a lot of people go to see it because the more that they see movies about women, the more that it empowers women."

The comedy comes on the heels of a banner year in cinema that featured female protagonists in films like "Little Women" and "Captain Marvel."



## CHESTER BENNINGTON'S WIDOW TALINDA REMARRIES



## CHESTER BENNINGTON'S WIDOW TALINDA REMARRIES

late Linkin Park's frontman Chester Bennington's widow Talinda has reportedly remarried, two years after his death.

Talinda, 42, announced she was engaged to Los Angeles County firefighter Michael Fredman in September last year, five months after he proposed. The duo tied the knot in Hawaii. Talinda and the three children she shared with

Bennington, son Tyler and twins Lilly and Lila, were among the wedding party guests as well as friends and other family members. Sources say Bennington's family are reportedly happy for Talinda and Fredman's new chapter as husband and wife, and believe he's had a positive impact on the children. The wedding comes two years after Bennington, 41, committed suicide on July 20, 2017.

Kyle/Catwoman, Paul Dano as Edward Nashton/The Riddler, John Turturro as Carmine Falcone, Jeffrey Wright as Commissioner Gordon, and Andy Serkis as Alfred Pennyworth.

Danny DeVito is the last actor to have played the Penguin on the big screen, in Tim Burton's 1992 film Batman Returns. Robin Lord Taylor, who was recently seen in the second season of You, played Penguin in Fox's series Gotham.

# Astrophysicist Tyson Unravels Mysteries of Universe

By Mabel Pais

"The most popular scientist in the world."

- **Sunday Times (UK)**

"Sexiest Astrophysicist Alive"

- **People Magazine (2000)**

*Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson unravels the mysteries of the universe in a cosmically entertaining evening At NJPAC on January 16, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.*

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) presents An Evening with Neil deGrasse Tyson on Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Certain things in life we know for sure: The sun will rise every morning. The stars will shine at night. And astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson will return to NJPAC to unravel the mysteries of the universe in this cosmically entertaining evening.

Currently the head of NYC's Hayden Planetarium, Dr. Tyson will fill you with wonder (and laughter) with his unique insights into space and science. Have a question about how the world works? He just might answer it in the interactive Q&A session.

## About Neil deGrasse Tyson

He is considered "The most popular scientist in the world" by "The Sunday Times."

What is the nature of space and time? How do we fit within the universe? How does the universe fit within us? Today, few of us have time to contemplate the cosmos. 'Astrophysics for People in a Hurry' will reveal just what you need to be fluent and ready for the next cosmic headlines: from the Big Bang to black holes, from quarks to quantum mechanics, and from the search for planets to the search for life in the universe.

A New York Times best-selling author, Neil deGrasse Tyson has written most recently 'Letters from an Astrophysicist.' Other titles are 'Death by Black Hole,' 'Space Chronicles,' 'Welcome to the Universe,' 'Astrophysics for People in a Hurry,' and 'Accessory To War,' of which he is co-author, besides dozens of professional publications.

Tyson is the fifth head of the world-renowned Hayden Planetarium in New York City and the first occupant of its Frederick P. Rose Directorship. He is also a research associate of the Department of Astrophysics at the American Museum of Natural History. Tyson's professional research interests are broad, but include star formation, exploding stars, dwarf galaxies, and the structure of our Milky Way.

Tyson is the recipient of twenty honorary doctorates and the NASA Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest award given by NASA to a non-government citizen. His contributions to the public appreciation of the cosmos have been recognized by the International



Neil deGrasse Tyson



Photo/ courtesy NJPAC

Choice awards, as well as a dozen other industry recognitions.

**'COSMOS':** Possible Worlds' will translate the revelations of science into a lavishly transporting experience, taking audiences on a series of spiritual voyages of exploration.

Neil deGrasse Tyson, born and raised in New York City, was educated in the public schools clear through his graduation from the Bronx High School of Science. Tyson went on to earn his BA in Physics from Harvard University and his PhD in Astrophysics from Columbia University.

To learn more about Neil deGrasse Tyson, visit <https://www.haydenplanetarium.org/tynon>

## Tickets

For Tickets to see Neil deGrasse Tyson visit [NJPAC.org](http://www.njpac.org) or the NJPAC Box Office or call 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

## NJPAC

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, N.J., has the most diverse programming and audience of any performing arts center in the country, and is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey - where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 9 million visitors (including over 1.7 million children and families) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents.

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YouTube: NJPACtv

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

# Consulate General of India, New York Recognizes Community leaders at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas



Honorees with Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of India in New York at PBD celebrations on January 9 at the Indian Consulate, New York

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** The Consulate General of India in New York organized the PBD here on January 9 and recognized a few community leaders

from the states under its jurisdiction. Even though the lion's share went to New York and New Jersey States, other States in New York Consulate General's

jurisdiction also got a fair representation.

Ambassador Chakravorty lauded the role of Indian Americans and exhorted

them to continue their best efforts to promote better relations between India and the United States.

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## Prince Harry, Meghan to step back as 'senior' royals

**LONDON (TIP):** Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan will step back as senior members of the royal family and spend more time in North America, the couple said in a historic statement January 18.

"We intend to step back as 'senior' members of the royal family and work to become financially independent, while continuing to fully support Her Majesty The Queen," they said in a statement released by Buckingham Palace.

"After many months of reflection and internal discussions, we have chosen to make a transition this year in starting to carve out a progressive new role within this institution," they added. "We now plan to balance our time between the UK and North America." The shock news follows a turbulent year for the royal family.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex spent Christmas in Canada after speaking of the pressure of being in the spotlight following their wedding and son Archie's birth in May.

They had previously announced they would miss Christmas with Queen Elizabeth and the rest of the royal family. — AFP

## After slapping incident, pope kisses nun who vows not to bite

**VATICAN CITY (TIP):** Pope Francis, who last month angrily slapped the hand of a woman who yanked him toward her, gave a light-hearted reaction more typical of his papacy on Wednesday when a nun asked him for a kiss. He said yes, although only after she promised not to bite him. The good-natured exchange took place at the start of Francis' weekly general audience. As he was walking into the large hall where thousands of people were waiting, an excited nun asked if he would kiss her, shouting in Italian "Bacio, Papa!" (A kiss, pope!) Francis responded: "Oh, (but) you bite!", prompting laughter from the people.

Reuters

## Facebook, eBay to tackle fake reviews better

**LONDON (TIP):** Facebook and eBay have promised to better identify, probe and respond to fake and misleading reviews, Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said on Wednesday after pressing the online platforms to tackle the issue. Customer reviews have become an integral part of online shopping on several websites and apps but the regulator has expressed concerns that some comments may not be genuine. Facebook has removed 188 groups and disabled 24 user accounts whilst eBay has permanently banned 140 users since the summer, according to the CMA. Reuters

# Iran says it 'unintentionally' shot down Ukrainian jetliner

**TEHRAN (TIP):** Iran announced on Saturday that its military "unintentionally" shot down the Ukrainian jetliner that crashed earlier this week, killing all 176 aboard, after the government had repeatedly denied Western accusations that it was responsible.

The plane was shot down early on Wednesday, hours after Iran launched a ballistic missile attack on two military bases housing US troops in Iraq in retaliation for the killing of Iranian Gen Qassem Soleimani in an American airstrike in Baghdad. No one was wounded in the attack on the bases.

A military statement carried by state media said the plane was mistaken for a "hostile target" after it turned towards a "sensitive military centre" of the Revolutionary Guard.

The military was at its "highest level of readiness", it said, amid the heightened tensions with the United States.

"In such a condition, because of human error and in an unintentional way, the flight was hit," the statement said. It apologised for the disaster and said it would upgrade its systems to prevent future tragedies.

It also said those responsible for the strike on the plane would be prosecuted.

Iran's acknowledgement of responsibility for the crash was likely to inflame public sentiment against authorities after Iranians had rallied around their leaders in the wake of Soleimani's killing.

The general was seen as a national icon, and hundreds of thousands of Iranians had turned out for funeral processions across the country.

But the vast majority of the plane



victims were Iranians or Iranian Canadians, and the crash came just weeks after authorities quashed nationwide protests ignited by a hike in gasoline prices.

"A sad day," Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted. "Human error at time of crisis caused by US adventurism led to disaster. Our profound regrets, apologies and condolences to our people, to the families of all victims, and to other affected nations."

The jetliner, a Boeing 737 operated by Ukrainian International Airlines, went down on the outskirts of Tehran shortly after taking off from Imam Khomeini International Airport.

Iran had denied for several days that a missile caused the crash. But then the US and Canada, citing intelligence, said they believed Iran shot down the aircraft

with a surface-to-air missile, a conclusion supported by videos of the incident.

The plane, en route to the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, was carrying 167 passengers and nine crew members from several countries, including 82 Iranians, at least 57 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians, according to officials. The Canadian government had earlier lowered the nation's death toll from 63.

"This is the right step for the Iranian government to admit responsibility, and it gives people a step towards closure with this admission," said Payman Parseyan, a prominent Iranian-Canadian in western Canada who lost a number of friends in the crash.

"I think the investigation would have disclosed it whether they admitted it or not. This will give them an opportunity to save face." AP

# Iranian missile brought down Ukrainian airliner, says Canada PM Justin Trudeau

**OTTAWA (TIP):** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday said multiple intelligence sources indicated that Iran shot down the Ukrainian airliner after it took off from Tehran, killing all 176 on board, including 63 Canadians.

Trudeau's comments came as video emerged that appeared to show the moment the airliner was hit.

That and other footage posted on social media increasingly pointed to a catastrophic mistake by Tehran's air defence batteries in bringing down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 early on Wednesday.

The video, which The New York Times said it verified, shows a fast-moving object rising at an angle into the sky before a bright flash is seen, which dims and then continues moving forward. Several seconds later an explosion is heard.

Citing information from allies as well

as Canada's own intelligence, Trudeau said the plane appeared to have been hit by an Iranian surface-to-air (SAM) missile.

"We know this may have been unintentional. Canadians have questions, and they deserve answers," Trudeau told reporters.

He was backed by other Western leaders, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said mounting evidence supported a missile strike, which "may well have been unintentional". US President Donald Trump indicated that Washington officials believed the Kiev-bound Boeing 737 was struck by one or more Iranian missiles before it ditched and exploded outside Tehran.

The US National Transportation Safety Board on Thursday night said it had received formal notification of the crash from Iran and would send a representative to join the crash probe.

Iran's foreign ministry earlier invited the US plane maker Boeing to "participate" in the inquiry.

The flight went down in the dark just minutes after takeoff, with no radio message from the pilot to indicate distress, according to the Iranian Civil Aviation Organisation.

It was carrying 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans and three Britons. With tensions high between the United States and Iran, the disaster unfolded just hours after Tehran launched ballistic missiles towards bases in Iraq housing US troops.

Iran retaliated for the January 3 US drone strike in Baghdad that killed a top Iranian general. The Iranian government said the missile strike scenario made "no sense"; however, arguing that several internal and international flights had been sharing approximately the same airspace. AFP

# Britain lawmakers finally clear historic Brexit deal

LONDON (TIP): Britain's parliament finally approved Brexit on Thursday, allowing it to become the first country to leave the European Union by the end of this month, ending years of arguments that toppled two governments and divided a nation.

The House of Commons erupted in cheers after MPs ratified Prime Minister Boris Johnson's divorce deal with Brussels 330 votes to 231, drawing a line under an extraordinary era of political drama and chaos.

For much of the time since the 2016 Brexit referendum, lawmakers have been at each others' throats over how, when or even if Britain should leave its closest trading partners after nearly 50 years.

Some viewed Brexit with horror, fearing that it stripped them of their European identities and turned Britain into an insular, less important nation. Others embraced it with fervour, viewing it as a chance to "take back control" from officials in Brussels and see Britain regain some of its past might. Businesses and governments in Europe, puzzled by Britain's struggles over what they viewed as a self-inflicted wound, hoped that Brexit could still somehow be undone.

But Johnson's comprehensive victory in last month's general election brought an abrupt end to the turmoil, giving his Conservatives a parliamentary majority



with which to push it through.

MPs gave their initial blessing to the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill before Christmas, and the government set aside just three days this week for detailed scrutiny of the complex text.

But few MPs even bothered to turn up on Tuesday and Wednesday, with both sessions ending early, while the government easily saw off opposition attempts to amend the text. The momentous day on which Johnson effectively gets permission to abandon the European integration project was all but ignored in Thursday's media. "We will be leaving the EU on January 31. We

will have delivered on the PM's commitment to get Brexit done," a government spokesman said, echoing Johnson's election mantra.

## How Britons view it

For much of the time since the 2016 Brexit referendum, lawmakers have been at each others' throats over how, when or even if Britain should leave its closest trading partners after nearly 50 years. Some viewed Brexit with horror, fearing that it stripped them of their European identities and turned Britain into an insular, less important nation. — AFP

# Australia bushfire crisis: 24 killed, over 6 million hectares of land burned

MELBOURNE (TIP): Australia's raging bushfire crisis, one of the worst in its history, has killed 24 people, burned over six million hectares of land, reduced to ashes hundreds of homes and pushed many species towards extinction, officials said on Thursday.

Authorities on Thursday issued fresh warnings and evacuation orders in the country's southeast as hot and windy conditions threatened to regenerate huge bushfires.

Around 23 fires were still burning in Victoria, according to the state's emergency management commissioner Andrew Crisp.

Premier of Victoria Daniel Andrews on Thursday announced extending state's first-ever state of disaster ahead of "significant fire activity" forecast for the next two days.

"We have forecast conditions of extreme danger, very significant fire activity is likely off the back of a hot day today, a hot day tomorrow and a change not coming through in the east of the state until late afternoon tomorrow and in the northern part of the state not until the evening on Saturday," he said.

"This means that we have every reason to believe there will be significant fire activity over the next 48 hours and that



means it is appropriate that we continue the state of disaster," Andrews said.

There will be messages going out to communities in the fire zone on Thursday and those messages will indicate to people that they are in the fire zone and that if they can leave, they should leave, the Premier of Victoria said, adding that "we will not be able to guarantee their safety".

There was a possibility of another round of dry lightning and a wind change which could trigger fires across the state from Friday.

"This is a really significant challenge for us. We don't underestimate it. We don't lightly extend the state of disaster. We have done it because we believe that it will save lives and that, after all, is the most important thing," Andrews said.

## Amid spat with China, Indonesia deploys warships to patrol islands

JAKARTA (TIP): Indonesia has deployed fighter jets and warships to patrol islands near the disputed South China Sea, the military said Wednesday, escalating tensions with Beijing after a diplomatic spat over "trespassing" Chinese vessels.

President Joko Widodo also headed Wednesday to the fishing-rich waters around the Natuna islands, which border the South China Sea, most of which is claimed by China despite competing claims from other Southeast Asian nations including Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia.

The Indonesian military said it had deployed eight warships and four jet fighters ahead of Widodo's visit in an apparent bid to assert its sovereignty over the region.

"I have said many times Natuna is our sovereign territory," Widodo told reporters.

"There is nothing to be debated... I hope this is clear." A Chinese coast guard vessel was spotted in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone Wednesday, the government said.

"We have deployed eight warships," said Navy spokesman Fajar Tri Rohadi. The air force said fighter jets had also been deployed. "(But) our personnel have been told that we are not going to make provocations but rather protect our territory," said Air Commodore Ronny Irianto Moningka. AFP

Victoria's emergency management commissioner Crisp said that in the state, 244 homes were lost or damaged and another 400 'significant' structures impacted.

"We know those numbers will grow," he said.

Meanwhile in New South Wales, state premier Gladys Berejiklian announced an additional 1 billion Australian dollar over the next two years into bushfire management and recovery for rebuilding and rehabilitating the fire ravaged zones.

This season saw the worst damages across the state with almost 2000 homes damaged so far and 20 deaths.

Berejiklian said the new funding would prioritise infrastructure repair and help stimulate fire-ravaged NSW communities.

"The bushfire season is far from over but we know how important it is for communities to start the recovery process where possible," Berejiklian said in a statement. She said the funding was on top of 231 million dollar already committed to disaster assistance funding. In its latest tweet, NSW Rural fire services said: "Over 2,500 firefighters in the field, prepare for worsening conditions Friday. Currently 122 bush & grass fires, half uncontained". PTI

# WAYS TO INSTANTLY MAKEOVER A ROOM

## Choose some new window treatments

Tired curtains and blinds instantly let a room down. While they can be expensive to replace, it's worth the investment as they add value to a home. If you're on a budget, there are many readymade options that can be used cleverly and positioned correctly to make a space feel bigger and brighter. While window treatments aren't normally focal points and are generally kept neutral, adding a decorative trim, tassel or fabric panel to plain curtains can work wonders.

## Add interest to your entranceway

The entryway is a makeover opportunity that's often overlooked. This space is the first and sometimes only part of your home visitors see. Add a potted plant, buy some nice house numbers and get a new doormat. Instantly your entrance will feel more polished and welcoming.

## Spruce up the bathroom

Bathrooms can get dirty and dingy quite quickly. The fastest way to spruce up this space is to give it a thorough cleaning. Once the room is clean, identify any outdated knobs, light fixtures, faucets, shower curtains or vanities. By simply changing out one or two of the most outdated items, you can make your bathroom look modern



and new. A coat of paint can transform a bathroom, too.

## Update your cushions

For instant gratification, switch out the throw pillows in your living room or family room. Try adding a round cushion to the mix and play with different sizes, patterns and colours. Getting new cushions is the quickest and most cost-effective makeover trick for your living space and will automatically change the appearance of the room.

## Create a gallery wall

Have a spare blank wall in your home that you're not sure what to do with? Consider creating a gallery wall of framed prints, your fave holiday snaps or treasured pictures of family and friends.

Depending on the style of your home, buy either a random assortment of frames in different shapes and sizes, or the same frames for a polished look. Gallery walls are a great talking point when people come to visit, and can be updated over time with new pictures and prints.

## Choose the right lighting

Good lighting can truly bring a room to life. A poorly lit room looks small, dark and cramped; while a brightly lit room appears open, airy and welcoming. The key is to layer light at different levels. Strategically place a couple of tall floor lamps in dark corners and watch your room come alive. If your budget allows, replace any outdated ceiling fixtures with modern lights.

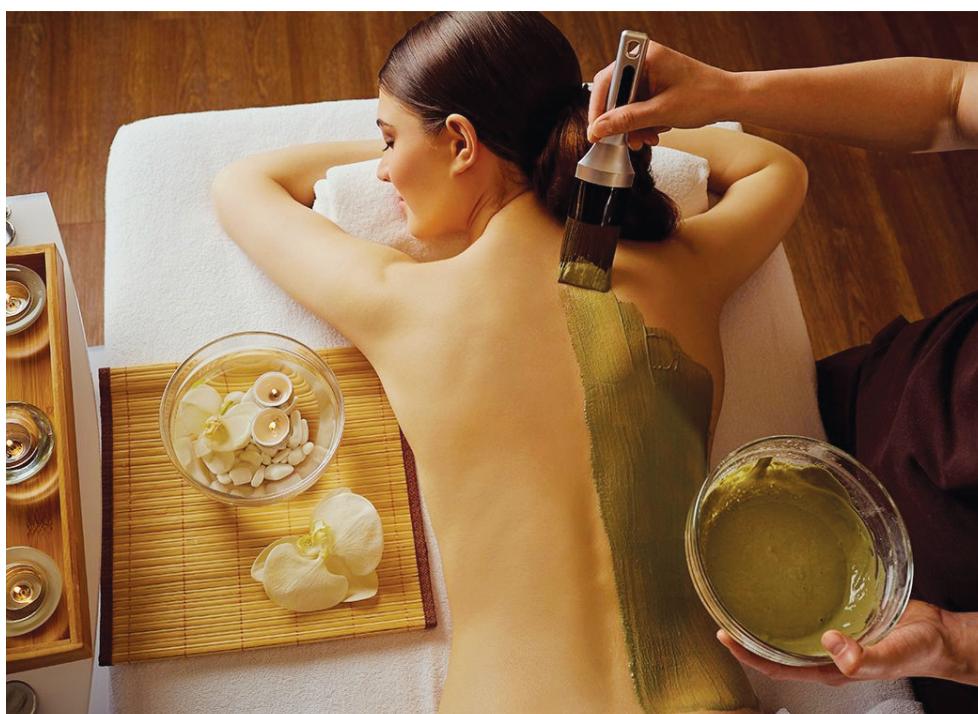
# WHY YOU SHOULD GET A BODY TREATMENT AT THE SPA

**B**ody treatments are essentially a facial for your whole body and leave your skin feeling velvety smooth and soft. The idea behind a body treatment is that it is just as important to cleanse, exfoliate, and hydrate the skin on your body as it is the skin of your face. This wellness procedure is good for your body no matter what time of year, but it can especially be helpful in the winter as it moisturizes skin when it is typically dry and flaky.

## Body Scrubs

The most popular body treatment is a body scrub, sometimes called a body polish, salt glow or sea-salt scrub. This is an exfoliating treatment that takes place on a massage table covered with a sheet and a large, thin piece of plastic. You will either be asked to remove all your clothing or may be given disposable underwear to cover parts of your body. As you lay on your stomach, the massage therapist rubs a mixture of sea salt, oil, and aromatics (like lemon) into your skin. This exfoliates the skin and leaves it feeling fresh and soft.

Once your whole body is scrubbed, which takes maybe 10 or 15 minutes, you shower it all off without soap, leaving a nice coating of oil. It's an invigorating treatment, and it's a good idea to get your scrub before your message if you choose



to have both. Various essential oils or scrub materials are used. You might get an orange blossom/peppermint salt glow or a cucumber salt glow, or a body scrubs done with coffee grounds, finely ground pecan shells or Napa Valley grape seeds. Sometimes a hydrating lotion is applied

afterward.

## Body Masks and Wraps

A body mask and body wrap often takes place after a scrub. After rinsing off the salt and returning to the treatment table, the aesthetician will

## FOOD CORNER

### EGG FRIED RICE

#### Ingredients

Basmati Rice - 2 cups, Eggs - 10, Onions - 2, Spring Onions - 1 bunch, Beans - 10, Carrot - 2, Capsicum - 2, Cabbage - 100 gms, Pepper Powder - 1/2 tbsp, Green Chillies - 2, Tomato Puree - 2 to 3 tbsp (or as required), Ajinomoto - 3 tsp (optional), Soy Sauce - 4 tbsp, Salt as per taste, Oil - 3 tbsp, Coriander Leaves - few, chopped

#### Method

- Pressure cook the rice until 1 whistle and remove.
- Chop all the vegetables finely and keep aside.
- Grind together the green chillies and mix well 2 tbsp water.
- Heat oil in a pan.
- Sauté the onions for a minute.
- Add the chopped vegetables one by one and cook for a minute or two.
- Add the green chilli paste and tomato puree. Add salt and ajinomoto.
- Mix well and add soy sauce.
- Break the eggs into the pan and stir-fry for 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add the cooked rice and mix until all ingredients are combined.
- Garnish with coriander leaves. Serve.



slather you with mud, algae, or seaweed and wrap you in a thermal blanket. This is a "detoxifying" treatment that stimulates your metabolic system, speeding its ability to carry away waste products. If the product is a cream or lotion, it's a "hydrating" treatment

A body wrap can also be a wrapping treatment used to treat cellulite. It sometimes has a diuretic effect that aids in temporary weight reduction.

#### What to Do After a Body Treatment

Your skin may be a bit tender after a body treatment—especially if it involved a deep body scrub. However, it is perfectly fine to shower after a body treatment as long as you remember to lather your body with soap, then gently rub your washcloth or loofa in circles to remove any dead skin or leftover lotion.

#### Benefits of Body Treatments

Body treatments may help prevent wrinkles, decrease cellulite, and slow physical signs of aging, leaving your skin looking fresher and younger. Seaweed, salt, mud, charcoal, and mineral wraps are also excellent ingredients to exfoliate your skin and remove toxins. As with other spa services, body treatments help with your mental health too as they reduce stress, soothe tired muscles, and relax both your body and mind.

# SMOKING MAY COST YOU YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

There is no denying the fact that cigarette smoking addiction can be quite dangerous. Not only can it cause respiratory issues, heart-related problems, and cancers, but a recent study has revealed that it might result in poor mental health as well. Yes, you read that right!

According to a study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, the research team from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Belgrade and University of Pristina together, surveyed more than 2,000 students enrolled at Serbian universities with differing socio-political and economic environments.

The findings of the study revealed that students who smoked had rates of clinical depression, which were two to three times higher than their non-smoking peers.

"Our study adds to the growing body of evidence that smoking and depression are closely linked," while it may be too early to say that smoking causes depression, tobacco does appear to have an adverse effect on our mental health," said study lead author Hagai Levine at Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel.

As per the findings of the study, specifically from the researchers at



the University of Pristina, 14% of smokers suffered from depression as opposed to the 4% of their non-smoking peers.

The numbers were 19% to 11%, respectively at the Belgrade University.

Further, irrespective of their economic or socio-political backgrounds, students who smoked also had lower mental health scores and higher rates of depressive symptoms compared to non-smoking students.

"I urge universities to advocate for their students' health by creating 'Smoke-Free Campuses' that not only ban smoking on campus but tobacco advertising, too," Levine said.

"Combined with policies that prevent, screen and treat mental health problems, including addiction, these steps would go a long way towards combating the harmful effects that smoking has on our physical and mental states," Levine added.

## KETONE DRINKS MIGHT HELP KEEP YOUR DIABETES IN CHECK: STUDY

Everyday lifestyle habits have led to an increase in number of diabetes and pre-diabetes patients across the globe.

With more people looking out for ways to control blood sugar, a recent study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, suggests that ketone monoester drinks—a new food supplement—may help to it.

"There is mounting evidence that a low carbohydrate ketogenic diet is very effective in controlling blood sugar and even reversing type-2 diabetes," said study lead author Jonathan Little, associate professor at University of British Columbia in Canada.

"We wanted to know what would happen if artificial ketones were given to those with obesity and at risk for type-2 diabetes but who haven't been dieting," Little added.

When the body is unable to control the level of sugar in the blood due to defects in the functioning of a hormone called insulin, it is called type-2 diabetes.

"While type-2 diabetes can be controlled with medications or injectable insulin, many people are looking for options that don't require taking pills every day or that are less invasive," Little added.

For the analysis, the researchers asked 15 people to consume a ketone drink after fasting overnight. After



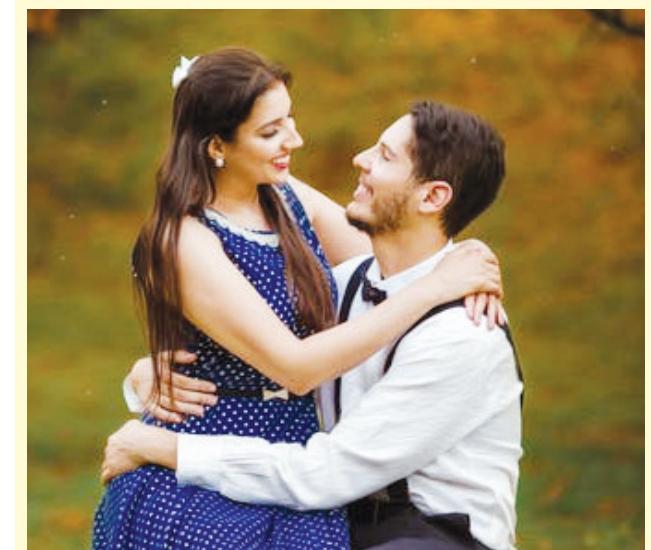
30 minutes, they were then asked to drink a fluid containing 75 grams of sugar while blood samples were taken.

"It turns out that the ketone drink seemed to launch participants into a sort of pseudo-ketogenic state where they were better able to control their blood sugar levels with

no changes to their insulin," Little explained.

"It demonstrates that these supplements may have real potential as a valuable tool for those with type-2 diabetes," he said.

The researchers conclude that the long-term effects of consuming ketones are still unknown.



## WOMEN ARE LIKELY TO HAVE MORE POOR SEXUAL HEALTH THAN MEN, STUDY CLAIMS

Just like hair care and skin care, it is important to look after your sexual health too. This goes for all the ladies in the house, especially.

According to a study, published in the journal BMC Public Health, poor sexual health is more common in women and affects them in more diverse ways than men.

The study participants included 12,132 people, both men and women. The researchers found out that 47.5% of women and 17% of men in the UK reported poor sexual health.

"Sexual health is an umbrella term that covers several different health risks, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancy, sexual function problems and sexual coercion," said study lead author Alison Parkes from the University of Glasgow in the UK.

"A greater understanding of how these risks are patterned across the population is needed to improve the targeting and delivery of sexual health programmes," Parkes added.

To better understand the situation, the researchers investigated patterns of sexual health markers, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or sexual function problems, in 12,132 sexually active men and women, aged 16-74 from England, Scotland and Wales, who were interviewed between 2010 and 2012.

Other than this, the associations of sexual health with socio-demographic, health and lifestyle characteristics, as well as with satisfaction or distress with a person's sex life were also examined.

As part of the findings of the study, the researchers identified sexual health classes, four of which were common to both men and women.

Good Sexual Health (83% of men, 52% of women)  
Wary Risk-takers (4% of men, 2% of women)  
Unwary Risk-takers (4% of men, 7% of women)  
Sexual Function Problems (9% of men, 7% of women)

Two additional sexual health classes were identified in women only; a low sexual interest class, which included 29% of women and a highly vulnerable class, reporting a range of adverse experiences across all markers of sexual health, which included 2% of women.

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## GOOGLE PIXEL 4 USERS COMPLAIN OF FACE UNLOCK FAILURE ISSUES

Google Pixel 4 users seem to be facing issues with Face Unlock, wherein the phone isn't recognising their faces. For some users, a notification to re-register their face is appearing even with their face data already enrolled. People took to Google Forum as well as Reddit to complain about the Face Unlock issue on Pixel 4.

A Reddit user said that the Face Unlock on his Pixel 4 stopped working suddenly. He wasn't also able to delete his face unlock data in Settings as he kept getting the message that read, "Cannot verify face." Some users also got a message, "Can't verify face. Hardware not available."

For others, the issue appeared after the January security update. In this case, the user kept getting a message after the update that face unlock might stop working and re-enrollment was needed. However, Face Unlock didn't work even after the user re-enrolled face data. The message, "Can't verify face. Try Again," was displayed.

Doing a factory reset seems to have worked out for some users, however, Face Unlock continued to show error for others even after a factory reset. The issue doesn't seem to have resolved also after resetting the smartphone in safe mode.

## Features that make Telegram more interesting than WhatsApp

Telegram is an online messaging app similar to WhatsApp. Users can send text messages and media files through this app. Telegram is cloud-based and claims that it prioritizes security and speed. It was launched in 2003 and has around 200 million active monthly users.

We take a look at five features that are available on Telegram, but not on WhatsApp.

### Dark Mode

Telegram offers two types of dark modes on its mobile app -- night and tinted night. The app automatically switches to the dark mode if the phone is put on the same, else the user can also independently switch the interface theme to night mode or tinted night mode.

The interface in night mode appears in black colour. In the tinted night mode, the interface can be seen in a dark tinted shade of the colour chosen.

In order to enable the dark mode on Telegram, follow these steps:

Open Telegram app, Tap on the Settings icon, Go to Appearance, Select between night or tinted night mode.

### Secret Chat

There is a separate Secret Chat section on Telegram, which as the company claims leaves no trace on its servers. The user can set self-destruct timers on messages that range from one second to one week. The messages sent on a secret chat cannot be forwarded. If a screenshot of the chat is taken then a notification will pop in the chat window. To chat in the secret chat mode, following steps need to be followed: Open Telegram App, · Select the person with whom you want to chat, · After the chat window opens, click on the name banner of the recipient, A dropdown will appear, choose the 'i' icon, Info page will open, tap on 'start secret chat', · You will be taken on a new chat window where a 'lock' symbol can be seen before the name of the recipient, which means that the message you will send or receive in that window will be in the secret chat mode.

# GOOGLE REMOVES OVER 1,700 APPS AFFECTED BY JOKER MALWARE FROM PLAY STORE

Google back last year removed 24 apps infected with the 'Joker' malware from its Play Store. The apps before being removed had amassed over 5,00,000 downloads. At the time Google did not details what the malware did. Now, the company has opened up a bit and provided us with more details regarding it.

It claims that the 'Joker' malware is a harmful "large-scale billing fraud family", which tried a lot to get past the company's security walls and charge users unethically.

The malware started back in 2017, where it indulged in SMS fraud. After Google restricted use of SMS permission, it moved to toll billing fraud. Google in a blog post, claims that the Joker malware family has used every cloaking and obfuscation technique to go undetected.

Under the toll billing fraud, the family made the user visit a URL to complete billing and enter their phone number. It used injected clicks, custom HTML parsers and SMS receivers to automate the billing process without the user noticing. It has also tried using



standard crypto libraries, custom-implemented encryption algorithms, some obfuscation methods utilizing JavaScript in WebViews and several commercially available packers to go undetected. Moreover, the malware affected apps had fake contact information and the billing process started even without the user confirming it. Google stated that these apps were uploaded as

clean apps and after being confirmed added the malicious code via an update. At times there are 23 different apps being uploaded to the Play Store under this malware family, whereas, sometimes there are no apps being uploaded for weeks. Google says it has detected and removed 1,700 unique apps from the malware family on its Play Store, even before being downloaded by a single user.

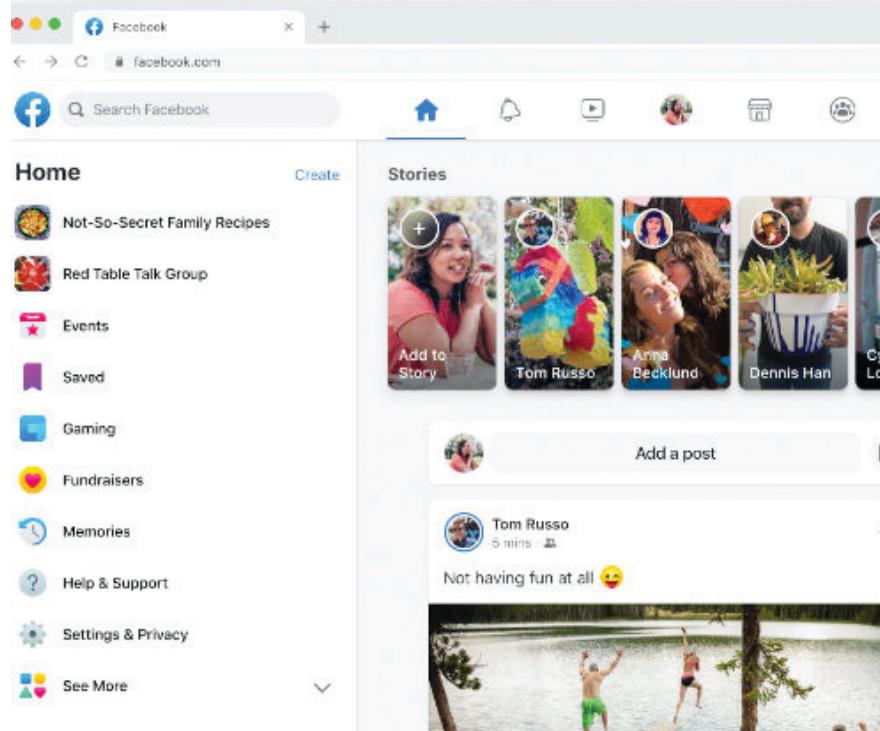
# FACEBOOK ROLLS OUT DESKTOP REDESIGN FOR SOME USERS, BROADER RELEASE SOON

Facebook has started to roll out its new desktop design for a small percentage of users, according to a CNET report. The redesign, which was announced at the Facebook F8 annual developer conference last year in April, will be released for more users broadly before spring.

Facebook is calling the redesign "The New Facebook" and users will have the option to choose between white and bright color backgrounds for the Facebook desktop site or a dark-mode background under the redesign. Facebook is said to be collecting feedback on the new features and there's also the option of switching back to the older design as well.

Facebook's new design is supposed to be simpler, faster, more immersive. It puts communities at the center and also makes it easier for users to find the features that they might be interested in. At the time of the launch, Facebook said that the new desktop site will be rolled out in the next few months.

Prior to this, Facebook redesigned its mobile app with a focus on Groups, as the company believes that they are more of a private space for like-minded



individuals or friends rather than a public space. The desktop revamp will be on similar lines, which will retain some of the features of the mobile app as well.

Facebook recently unveiled its new company logo, which has been

placed across all its products including Instagram and WhatsApp. The new logo is supposed to distinguish Facebook the company from the Facebook app and also make it clear which products come from Facebook.

# ED attaches assets worth Rs 78 crore of Chanda Kochhar, her husband

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday turned up the heat on former ICICI Bank CEO and managing director Chanda Kochhar, attaching moveable and immovable assets belonging to her and her husband, Deepak Kochhar.

With the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) accusing Kochhar of money laundering, receiving illegal gratification, cheating and criminal conspiracy when she was at the helm of affairs at the private bank, the spotlight has increasingly been on financial crimes involving top executives of banks.

The ED has now provisionally attached a flat, land, cash, plant and machinery of Windfarm Projects located in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, worth Rs 78.15 crore, which were "in possession of accused Chanda Kochhar, Deepak Kochhar and the companies owned and controlled by Deepak Kochhar, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, (PMLA) in the ICICI Bank loan case", the probe agency said on Friday.

"ED had initiated the investigation under the PMLA, on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI, for alleged illegal sanctioning of loans amounting to Rs 1,875 crore to Videocon group of companies. Investigations revealed that loans were refinanced and new loans aggregating to Rs 1,730 crore was sanctioned to M/s Videocon Industries Ltd, and its group companies. These loans became non-performing assets (NPA) for ICICI Bank on 30.06.2017," the ED said in a statement.

The probe agency added that further investigations revealed that ₹64 crore, out of the loan of Rs 300 crore sanctioned by a committee headed by Chanda Kochhar to Videocon International Electronics Ltd, was transferred to Nupower Renewables Pvt. Ltd.

"Investigation also revealed that Chanda Kochhar and her family acquired the apartment at Mumbai, owned by one of the Videocon group companies, by way of acquiring that company through her family trust at a nominal price by creating book entries," the



agency added.

While Kochhar was quizzed several times by the ED last year, the agency also questioned her husband Deepak Kochhar and Videocon Group managing director Venugopal Dhoot as part of the investigations in the ICICI Bank-Videocon loan case.

Last March, the ED carried out searches at the residence of Kochhar.

In January 2019, the CBI also booked Deepak Kochhar and Dhoot for criminal conspiracy and cheating.

The CBI had started a preliminary inquiry against Deepak Kochhar and Dhoot in March 2018 to investigate irregularities in the Rs 40,000-crore loan made by a consortium of lenders to the Videocon group. It pointed to an alleged conflict of interest in a Rs 3,250-crore loan made to the Videocon group by ICICI Bank.

## INDIA'S GROWTH PROJECTED TO 'DECCELERATE' TO 5% IN 2019-2020: WORLD BANK

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The World Bank has projected a five per cent growth rate for India in the 2019-2020 fiscal, but said it was likely to recover to 5.8 per cent in the following financial year. The growth rate for Bangladesh has been projected to remain above seven per cent through the forecast horizon and, in Pakistan, it is projected to languish at three per cent or less through 2020 as macroeconomic stabilisation efforts weigh on economic activity, the bank said in its latest edition of the Global Economic Prospects.

"In India, where weakness in credit from non-bank financial companies is expected to linger, growth is projected to slow to five per cent in fiscal year 2019/20, which ends March 31, and recover to 5.8 per cent the following fiscal year," the World Bank said on Wednesday.

The global economic growth is forecast to edge up to 2.5 per cent in 2020 as investment and trade gradually recover from last year's significant weakness, but downward risks persist, it said.

The US' growth is forecast to slow to 1.8 per cent this year, reflecting the negative impact of earlier tariff increases and elevated uncertainty. The Euro area's growth is projected to slip to a downwardly revised one per cent in 2020 amid weak industrial activity, the bank said in the report.

"With the growth in emerging and developing economies likely to remain slow, policymakers should seize the opportunity to undertake structural reforms that boost broad-based growth, which is essential to poverty reduction," World Bank Group Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions, Ceyla



Pazarbasioglu, said.

"Steps to improve the business climate, the rule of law, debt management, and productivity can help achieve sustained growth," Pazarbasioglu said.

In the report's India section, the World Bank said tighter credit conditions in the non-banking sector are contributing to a substantial weakening of the domestic demand in the country.

"In India, activity was constrained by insufficient credit availability, as well as by subdued private consumption," the report stated.

The bank said the regional growth in South Asia is expected to pick up gradually, to six per cent in 2022, on the assumption of a modest rebound in domestic demand.



## BOEING SUPPLIER TO LAY OFF 2800 EMPLOYEES IN NEW RISK FOR 737 MAX FUTURE

**B**oeing Co.'s largest supplier for the grounded 737 Max is laying off 2,800 employees, potentially complicating the future of the planemaker's best-selling jetliner.

Spirit AeroSystems Holdings Inc. said the job cuts are needed to reduce costs as Boeing prepares to halt output of the Max indefinitely. Once Boeing production starts up again, production of the Max will probably be lower than in 2019, Spirit said by email Friday.

Spirit's move signals that the company, which makes 70% of the narrow-body jet's structure, expects a lengthy suspension in production. The supplier had continued to make parts for the aircraft after a global flying ban began in March after two fatal crashes. Spirit currently has 100 Max shipsets in storage.

The layoffs indicate the worsening impact of the grounding on the US economy as well complications that will face Boeing as it looks to restart production amid the tightest US job market in decades. The planemaker had held Spirit to the pre-crash production rate until December, when it decided to shut down the final assembly line with more than 400 undelivered jets in storage and no clear timeline for gaining clearance to resume flights.

## Singh brothers stole funds over eight years: ED's charge sheet

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Enforcement Directorate on Friday filed a charge sheet against Fortis Healthcare founders Shivinder Mohan Singh and Malvinder Mohan Singh alleging that the brothers used two sets of "conduit companies" to funnel funds from finance company Religare Finvest Ltd over a span of eight years, two investigating officials said. A large part of this money was used to buy property and there was no intention of repaying the money, they added.

The agency has accused the brothers of money laundering. Apart from the Singh brothers, the agency has named Sunil Godhwani, ex-Chairman and managing director (CMD) of Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) and holding company RHC Holdings Pvt Ltd in its charge sheet.

Special ED Prosecutor Nitesh Rana informed the court that there was systematic layering and evergreening of loans processed under the CLB (corporate loan book) portfolio of Religare Finvest to make sure these were not categorized as non-performing assets (NPAs). The court took cognizance of the charge sheet and asked that all accused be produced before it on January 20.

The agency has claimed that out of a total of Rs 47,968 crore of loans given to 115 companies by Religare, Rs 2,036.69 crore was moved to 19 companies, which defaulted. Most of these funds were used for the personal gain of the Singhs, the charge sheet claims.





## 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 January 13 - January 19, 2020

**ARIES:** Ganesha says there is a lot of buying and selling. You have decided to make your home and personal life as positive as possible. You may take to Feng Shui and Vaastu seriously and make the necessary alterations and changes or simply make your home more comfortable and elegant. Many people will drop in too and this is the time for festivities. You may also go away on holiday.

**TAURUS:** You think of the past and all its happy times. School friends drop in or connect with you on the net. This is the time for social networking as near and dear ones from all over the world tweet in to say 'hi'. You love all the camaraderie and bonhomie. Ganesha is happy for you. Your mind shifts to work-related issues and you ink new projects.

**GEMINI:** You are in luck and receive assistance from a lot of people. You are more self-sufficient now and slog away. There is some tension too and you will have to watch your health. Take care not to get too indulgent and try to bring about some discipline into your life. You are burning the candle at both ends. The right diet, workouts, maybe even a short stint at a spa or health resort can work its magic.

**CANCER:** There is restructuring and progress in all your endeavours. Ganesha wishes you well. There is stability and progress now. You are energetic, optimistic and confident and the mood is upbeat. You are all geared up to take on new challenges and work wonders. You are filled with enthusiasm and zeal as several time-consuming projects may be coming to a head the same time.

**LEO:** You may be pushed and you have your back to all but you come out firing with all guns blazing like a shootout at the OK Corral. This can also be a time of restlessness; you want to do big things and feel that you are not being given the opportunity. Your success may breed enemies and there will be roadblocks placed on your path. Ganesha wants you to compromise and take a middle path and to not get arrogant.

**VIRGO:** This is a good time for expansion. With a little fine-tuning and a little care and restraint, you can convert this into an excellent period. You can be very successful professionally. There is sustained growth and many fruitful contacts made. This is a particularly good time for dropping the solo moves and to get into partnership mode which will be mutually beneficial.

**LIBRA:** In your personal life, you may become romantically involved with a business associate or colleague. This is a good phase to solve all pending domestic and work-related issues. Litigation, if any, will be in your favour and old medical problems may find a solution. If not cured, the problem will be arrested and you will have to learn to live with it. Just remember that what cannot be cured will have to be endured.

**SCORPIO:** There is love and passion in the air. You will fall headlong for someone you have just met. A marriage or intimate relationship should work better than usual now. You and your partner will help each other grow in every way and will make it a profitable alliance. This will be a beautiful relationship with great scope for self-expression and individual freedom.

**SAGITTARIUS:** You grow in leaps and bounds and revel in the unique bonding it offers so effortlessly and marvellously. You are romantic and charming, with dollops of sex appeal. Conquests are easy. But this time there will also be a new, spiritual dimension to the relationship which will be altogether different from all that you have ever experienced in the past.

**CAPRICORN:** Your mind wanders off in different directions like a puppy that has lost its leash. You may become involved in unrealistic schemes as you could be blinded by extreme optimism. You may want to gamble and take risks but please remember that speculations could leave you bankrupt. This is a huge risk; gambling can also lead to major profits and you know it.

**AQUARIUS:** You are goaded on by the profit motive. Ask Ganesha for help if you may! If you are keen on this, go ahead and take bold steps with calculated risks. You may also find it difficult to distinguish between the real and the ideal. This is an extremely spiritual influence and you look for escapes from the real world. You could also get obsessed with abstract speculations or high ideals that are difficult to actualise.

**PISCES:** You live in fantasy, in a dream world. This is okay once in a while as long as the implications are not detrimental. There will soon be a reality check and you will get back to good old terra firma. Ganesha will ensure that. It is also not in your temperament to be far removed from reality for too long. There are many influences beckoning you now.

## Birthday Horoscope January 13 - January 19, 2020

**Jan 13:** Ganesha says joining forces with others, particularly those who make you feel stable and grounded, should be on the agenda today. Some variation on a teacher / student dynamic will play out.

**Jan 14:** If you're not dealing with some emergency this morning, the sense of urgency that you or others have about activities will make it seem like there is. It would be better if everyone could just calm down.

**Jan 15:** The Moon is good for romance and friendship and could spell a fresh and exciting start, but one is initially disruptive, too. A break with the past paves the way for something new.

**Jan 16:** The work scene gets mixed reviews. There's a possibility of good teamwork early, but then, regarding this and other issues, the reliability factor is absent, and distractions abound.

**Jan 17:** Faithful friends are a source of much satisfaction. There's comfort to be derived from

doing what feels old, familiar, reliable, and traditional. An intimate gathering feels better than a crowd.

**Jan 18:** If you want to spare yourself disappointment, don't get lost in unrealistic expectations for others and yourself and what you can accomplish.

**Jan 19:** A new job assignment or work development can seem like a dream come true. Unlike yesterday, job inspirations and aspirations now should heed.

**G**anesha is one of the most distinctive Hindu deities with his large elephant head and pot-bellied human body. He plays a dual role of a supreme being powerful enough to remove obstacles and ensure success or create obstructions for those whose ambition has become destructive.

Ganesha is an archetype who you might call upon when you're about to embark on a new endeavor. As the Remover of Obstacles and the god of success, Ganesha is honored throughout Indian and in Hindu cultures, at both secular and religious ceremonies. When someone launches a new business or moves into a new home, for example, the elephant-headed god is invoked to bless the venture.

Revered for his cleverness and wisdom, Ganesha is also known as the patron of letters and learning. Ganesha is the scribe who wrote down the legendary Indian epic the Mahabharata, dictated to him by the ancient sage Vyasa, according to some scholars of Hindu literature. It is said that Ganesha agreed to transcribe the epic only if Vyasa would recite the poem without pausing.

In many depictions of Ganesha, he is shown holding a broken tusk in his lower right hand like a pen, perhaps symbolizing the sacrifice he made in feverishly writing the Mahabharata. Another interpretation of the broken tusk is that it's a symbol of the truth that outward imperfections have nothing to do with inner perfection.

Ganesha is typically the first deity contacted in prayers in Hinduism. Those who seek wisdom and prosperity often call for him.

### The Story of Ganesha

The Hindu tradition contains many different versions of Ganesha's origins. Some stories say that Ganesha was born with an elephant head. Most say that he was born with a human head that was later replaced with the elephant head.

In one version of the story, Ganesha's mother, the goddess Parvati, created Ganesha from the dirt off her body while she was bathing. She then had Ganesha guard the entrance to her bathroom. When her husband, Shiva, came home, he was angry that a stranger blocked his access and cut off Ganesha's head in a fit of rage. Parvati was struck with grief, and to console her, Shiva restored Ganesha to life, giving him an elephant head.

### The Vahana of Ganesha

Everything in the universe is created by one infinite, divine consciousness known as Brahman. It's why Hindus see divinity in all living creatures, including animals. As a result, deities are associated with a particular animal or bird that acts as a vehicle—or vahana—to transport the gods and goddesses wherever they need to go.

Ganesha's vahana is a mouse, which he rides. The mouse is an extension of Ganesha's powers. It can gnaw through all barriers and it can slide into crevices too tiny for Ganesha to enter. Together the elephant deity and his vahana ensure that obstacles of all sizes can be removed.

### Inspiration from Ganesha

When you're setting goals or seeking wisdom as you pursue them—call upon Ganesha as your guide. Ganesha can be especially helpful for:

- Any big or small endeavor in which you want to succeed.
- Writing and artistic projects.

# GANESHA: THE REMOVER OF OBSTACLES



- Seeking wisdom before making a big decision such as deciding whether to leave a job or change careers.
- Any situation where an obstacle is preventing you from success.
- Cultivating a peaceful household. Ganesha is loving and polite, yet strong.

### Agasthyar

During the wedding of Siva with Parvathi in the Mount Kailas, the entire population, Devas and Rishis had gathered & hence the Northern land dipped down, unable to bear the weight.

Lord Siva asked Sage Agasthiar to go to the Podhigai ranges in the Southern land in order to balance the weight. (Agasthiar was very short in stature but his might was so great). Agasthiar was sad that he could not stay & witness the Lord's wedding. Siva granted that he would still be able to see the wedding from the South. From within his matted locks, he took river Cauvery & filled it in Agasthiar's kamandalam (spouted pot), bidding Cauvery to flow wherever Agasthiar pointed. Agasthiar reached the south & travelled to various Siva Sthalams.

Surapaduman was an asura, who had immense power. Indra had run away in fear from his Indralogam, reached Sirgazhi in the southern regions of India & prayed to Lord Siva. He created a beautiful garden & worshipped Lord Siva with the flowers from his garden.

But soon, Lord Varuna in fear of Surapaduman did not shower rains & Indran's garden & in fact the whole land suffered from lack of water. Sage Narada, told Indran of the river Cauvery that Lord Siva had once filled in Agasthiar's kamandalam. Indran prayed to Lord Ganesha for his help.

Ganesha took the form of a crow & sat on Agasthiar's kamandalam & toppled it. Agasthiar lifted his hands to shoo off the crow. River Cauvery, took it as a signal for her & began to flow.

The crow took the form of a small boy. Agasthiar started chasing the boy trying to strike him on his head with his

knuckles. Ganesha took his original form. Agasthiar was saddened that he had tried to strike Lord Ganesha. He started striking his forehead with his knuckles. Ganesha stopped him & granted that everybody who worshipped him in this manner would be blessed with wisdom.

Another version of the same story - Ponni, as Cauvery was originally called, was disrespectful to Agasthiar when he came down south. To teach her a lesson, Agasthiar imprisoned the entire river in his kamandalam.

Ganesha on sage Narada's request came in the form of a crow and toppled the kamandalam & set the river free. Ponni was then given a new name, Cauvery (Kaveri).

### Story of Gajamugasuran

There was an asura called Gajamugasuran. He did deep penance and worshipped Lord Siva, who granted him several boons, by which he became extremely powerful. He put the Devas and rishis to great trouble. He forced the Devas to do 1008 Thoepukaranams in the morning, 1008 in the afternoon and 1008 in the evening. (Thoepukaranam means to sit down and stand up holding one's ears with crossed hands, left ear with right hand & right ear with left hand).

The Devas prayed to Lord Siva to rescue them from this evil asura. Lord Siva sent Lord Vinayaga to overcome Gajamugasuran. Vinayagar went with several weapons such as bow & arrow, sword, axe, etc. However, since Gajamugasuran had been granted the boon that he be destroyed by no weapon, none of these weapons used by Lord Vinayaga were effective. Vinayagar broke off his right tusk and used it to kill Gajamugasuran. Gajamugasuran still rushed at Vinayaga in the form of a mooshikam (small mouse). Vinayagar crushed the ego and vanity of Gajamugasuran and sat on the mooshikam. The humbled Gajamugasuran bowed before Vinayagar, who accepted the mooshikam as his vahana.

Lord Vinayaka is the source of everlasting wisdom. He crushed ego and vanity and reduced it to the size of a mooshikam and used it as his vahana. Lord Vinayagar can be pleased by doing Thoepukaranam.

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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."**

# LOHRI: THE BONFIRE FESTIVAL

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

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

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

The munching of seasonal goodies like popcorn, reori, peanuts and sugar cane forms an integral part of the celebration. Fistfuls of these goodies also find their way into the fire, as an offering to the Sun God, the giver of all life.

Interestingly, the next day of Lohri is known as Maghi, a day that signifies the beginning of the month of Magh.

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

## The First Lohri

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

## The First Lohri of a Bride

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

## The First Lohri of a New-born

The first Lohri of a new-born is of immense significance where the family and friends participate to bless the child with a prosperous and a healthy future. Many conduct an elaborate get-together at the paternal home, where invitation cards are sent in advance. Family and friends bring along gifts for the child as well as the new mother. The maternal and paternal grandparents shower the child with gifts.



## Lohri Rituals

Lohri is primarily the harvest festival of the Punjabis.

- This festival denotes the harvesting of the Rabi crops and hence all the farmers get together in order to thank god for giving them such a wonderful harvest.
- The rituals related to Lohri symbolize the attachment of the people with Mother Nature. A few days before the festival, youngsters get together in groups and go round their localities singing folk songs.
- Doing this they also collect firewood and money for the bonfire that is scheduled on the night of Lohri. On the special day, offerings of phulley (popcorn), moongphali (peanuts) and rewari (a sweet delicacy made out of jaggery and sesame seed) are offered to the fire.
- The men and women go round the fire and bow before it in reverence. Lohri holds special importance when there is a special occasion in the family like marriage or childbirth.

## Lohri Traditions

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## Lohri Legends

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

One of the many interesting legends has it that in a place that lies between Gujranwala and Sialkot, there was a thick forest known as Rakh. The forest was the home of Dulla Bhatti, a dacoit who was considered as the Robin Hood of Punjab. This brave and generous man was always helpful to the needy.

During the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, a jealous Hindu spread a rumour that his niece was very beautiful and would do credit to the Muslim harem. On hearing this, the Mughal officers wanted to carry her off forcibly. The girl's father was extremely worried and sought the protection of Dulla Bhatti. Dulla at once got her married to a young Hindu boy at a simple ceremony in the forest. He lit the sacred fire in keeping with the Hindu custom.

Since there was no priest to chant the holy mantras, he broke into a hilarious song composed extempore to add cheer to the occasion. This song is sung even today on the occasion.

# Makar Sankranti

Makar Sankranti is one of the most auspicious day for the Hindus, and is celebrated in almost all parts of the country in myriad cultural forms, with great devotion, fervor & gaiety. Lakhs of people take a dip in places like Ganga Sagar & Prayag and pray to Lord Sun. It is celebrated with pomp in southern parts of the country as Pongal, and in Punjab is celebrated as Lohri & Maghi. Gujarati's not only look reverentially up to the sun, but also offer thousands of their colorful oblations in the form of beautiful kites all over the skyline. They may be trying to reach upto their glorious God or bring about greater proximity with the one who represents the best. It is a day for which Bhishma Pitamah kept waiting to leave his mortal coil.

Makar Sankranti is the day when the glorious Sun-God of Hindus begins its ascendancy and entry into the Northern Hemisphere. Sun for the Hindus stands

for Pratyaksha-Brahman - the manifest God, who symbolizes, the one, non-dual, self-effulgent, glorious divinity blessing one & all tirelessly. Sun is the one who transcends time and also the one who rotates the proverbial Wheel of Time. The famous Gayatri Mantra is directed to Sun God to bless them with intelligence & wisdom. Sun not only represents God but also stands for an embodiment of knowledge & wisdom.

## The Sikh Festival: Maghi

Maghi is the occassion when Sikhs commemorate the sacrifice of forty Sikhs, who fought for Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Maghi, Makara Sankranti, the first day of the month of Magh. The eve of Maghi is the common Indian festival of Lohri when bonfires are lit in Hindu homes to greet the birth of sons in the families and alms are distributed. In the morning, people go out for an early-hour dip in nearby tanks. For Sikhs, Maghi means



primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh. The action took place near a pool of water, Khidrane di Dhab, on 29 December 1705. The bodies were cremated the following day, the first of Magh (hence the name of the festival), which now falls usually on the 13th of January. Following the custom of the Sikhs to observe their anniversaries of happy and tragic events alike, Maghi is celebrated with end-to-end recital of the Guru Granth Sahib and religious divans in almost all gurdwaras.

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CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

## Internet fundamental right...

It said the administration could not refuse to produce the orders issued after scrapping of Article 370.

The Bench headed by Justice NV Ramana said the test of proportionality needed to be satisfied. The freedom could be restricted only after relevant factors were considered and only if there were no other options. The apex court ordered forthwith review of orders suspending the Internet in Jammu and Kashmir, saying such suspension could not be for an unlimited period. It could only be for a limited period and was subject to judicial review, it added.

Internet suspension without a particular duration and indefinitely is a violation of the Telecom Rules, the top court said. It ordered the J-K administration to produce all orders invoking Section 144 of the CrPC.

While issuing restrictive orders under Section 144, a magistrate should apply his/her mind and apply doctrine of proportionality to strike a balance between danger to national security and liberty of citizens. Repetitive orders under Section 144 without assigning reasons and without being based on material facts would violate citizens' right to various freedoms, the court noted. SC's observations on Internet access happy news, say people in Kashmir Valley. The Supreme Court's observation on Friday that access to the Internet is a fundamental right has come as happy news for people in the Kashmir Valley with many expressing the hope that services will be resumed soon.

Internet access was snapped five months ago when Jammu and Kashmir's special status was revoked and the state bifurcated into union territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

**A SIGH OF RELIEF IN THE VALLEY :** The Supreme Court's ruling asking the Jammu and Kashmir administration to review within a week all orders imposing curbs in the union territory and saying that internet access is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution led to a sigh of relief in the Valley.

"It is a piece of very happy news for us, a huge relief, as the Internet has been suspended for over five months now. We really hope that services will be resumed soon," said Ishtiyaq Ahmad, a businessman in Lal Chowk area of the city. He said trade and business had been badly affected since August 5 when authorities cut all Internet services in the Valley.

"Every sector has been badly affected. This has been the worst phase for business in the Valley. The Internet is a basic tool on which everyone, especially people associated with business, depend. We have struggled a lot without Internet services," Ahmad said.

Another businessman associated with the tourism sector in the Valley is hoping the Internet-dependent business will get a fillip.

"This will give a boost to the sector which is highly dependent on the Internet. Everything in the sector depends wholly on Internet services, from ticketing enquiries to reservations.

"Tourists also were wary of the suspension of the services and showed little interest in visiting the Valley. We are hopeful that this will give a fillip to tourism," he said. Afreen Mushtaq, a student living on the outskirts of the city, said the student community had suffered the most and the apex court's criticism of the Internet ban, though late, is a breath of fresh air.

"The Internet should have been restored long ago. We have been deprived of the services for far too long. It has affected our education. It has especially affected those who had to seek admissions and to take part in

various examinations," she said.

A journalist in Srinagar, who did not wish to be identified, said the Supreme Court had rightly observed that Internet access is a fundamental right which could not be curtailed and expressed the hope that services to media houses would be restored so they could operate freely. "This is what we had been saying all along. The Supreme Court has rightly slammed the government. We now hope the services, especially to media houses, will be resumed soon and better sense prevails so that the services are not disrupted for so long in future," the journalist said.

Historic judgment, this time court did not come under any pressure: Azad on SC's J-K ruling

Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Friday hailed the Supreme Court order on Jammu and Kashmir, saying the government had tried to mislead the people and this time the apex court did not come under any pressure. "We welcome this judgment. This is the first time the SC has talked about how people of J-K feel. I would like to thank the SC for a very historic decision and the people from across the country were waiting for it, especially the people of JK," he said. (Agencies)

## US House votes to curb Trump's...

Among them was Matt Gaetz, one of Trump's staunchest supporters in Congress who noted in a floor speech that the measure did not criticize Trump but said that "engaging in another forever war in the Middle East would be the wrong decision".

"If the members of our armed services have the courage to go and fight and die in these wars, as Congress we ought to have the courage to vote for them or against them," Gaetz said.

As lawmakers launched a scalding day-long debate over presidential authority, Trump insisted he needed no one's blessing to launch attacks, essentially scorning existing legal requirements for consulting with Congress.

"I don't have to," Trump said when asked whether he would seek congressional approval for more military action against Iran.

"And you shouldn't have to," he added, "because you have to make split-second decisions sometimes". Trump signaled on Wednesday he was stepping back from the brink of war with Iran after a US drone strike that killed commander Qasem Soleimani was followed by Iranian missile volleys against bases housing American forces in Iraq.

But on Thursday he fought back against criticism that he'd ordered the killing, risking all-out conflict, without real justification.

At a re-election campaign rally in Toledo, Ohio, Trump insisted, without providing any evidence, that Soleimani was "actively planning new attacks", including against US embassies, "and we stopped him cold". He ridiculed his Democratic opponents in Congress, calling them insulting names and claimed that if he had consulted with them, they would have leaked the secret operation to the "fake news". "You should get permission from Congress," he said mockingly to mimic the Democratic speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi.

But Democrats, and some Republicans, have expressed deep skepticism about the administration's rationale for Soleimani's killing, and are demanding Congress reassert its power over a commander-in-chief's use of American military might against another nation. (Source: AFP)

## Trump admin hits Iran with new...

terrorist activities and commits to never having nuclear weapons," Mnuchin said.

Trump, in a statement delivered after Mnuchin and Pompeo spoke, said the sanctions "will have a major impact on the Iranian economy" and that they "will remain until the Iranian regime changes its behavior."

"The United States will continue to counter the Iranian regime's destructive and destabilizing behavior," Trump said.

Trump said Thursday that Soleimani had been plotting attacks on multiple embassies and suggested the Iranian commander had been planning specifically to blow up the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He specified in a Fox News interview released Friday that four embassies were targeted for attack.

Earlier this week, Pompeo said classified U.S. intelligence showed that Soleimani had been involved in planning an imminent attack on Americans.

Pressed Friday for more details about those claims, Pompeo said, "We had specific information on an imminent threat, and those threats included attacks on U.S. embassies ... period, full stop."

"I don't know completely which minute, we didn't know exactly which day it would've been executed," Pompeo said. "But it was very clear: Qassem Soleimani himself was plotting a broad, large-scale attack against American interests, and those attacks were imminent - against American facilities, including American embassies, military bases, American facilities throughout the region."

"This was going to happen," he continued. "We would have been culpably negligent had we not recommended to the president to take this action against Qassem Soleimani." (Source: NBC News)

## Iraq asks U.S. for team of...

to set the mechanisms to implement Parliament's decision for the secure withdrawal of (foreign) forces from Iraq."

Some 5,200 U.S. soldiers are stationed at bases across Iraq to support local troops preventing a resurgence of the Islamic State group.

They make up the bulk of a broader U.S.-led coalition, invited by the Iraqi government in 2014 to help combat the jihadists. Their deployment was based on an executive-to-executive agreement never ratified by Iraq's Parliament.

But on Sunday, Iraq's Parliament voted in favor of rescinding that invitation and ousting all foreign troops.

The following day, U.S. commanders sent a letter to their counterparts in Baghdad saying they were preparing for "movement out of Iraq".

The letter said the coalition would "be repositioning forces over the course of the coming days and weeks to prepare for onward movement".

The Pentagon said the letter was a draft sent by mistake, but Mr. Abdel Mahdi disputed that account, saying his office had received signed and translated copies. He has demanded clarification from Washington of its intentions, while the U.S.-led coalition said on Thursday that it too was seeking clarity on the legal ramifications of Parliament's vote.

(Source: AFP)

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# JODHPUR: GATEWAY TO THAR

**A**lso known as the "The Blue City", "Sun City" and "Gateway to Thar", Jodhpur is famous for its Mehrangarh fort, blue houses, temples, sweets and snacks. Apart from the fort, there are multiple temples, lakes, shopping streets that are like a mirage from a bygone era.

The former capital of Marwar, Jodhpur is one of the most enchanting cities of Rajasthan, with its mighty Mehrangarh fort overlooking the city. The city is called the Blue City as it looks completely blue in colour from an aerial view because of its blue walls and blue houses. Nearby Jaswant Tada and Umaid Bhawan Palace are also among the top attractions in Jodhpur. However, the magic lies in the old city itself with hundreds of shops, guesthouses, eating joints and vendors make it a chirpy bustling city, especially near the landmark clock tower and Sardar Market.

Seen in the backdrop of the movie, The Dark Knight Rises, Jodhpur attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world. Jodhpur is conveniently located in the centre of Rajasthan making it easier for people visiting Jodhpur to explore other destinations of the state.

## Places to Visit In Jodhpur

### Udai Mandir

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

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

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

### Siddhanth Shiv Temple

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

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

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

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

### Masuriya Hill Garden

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



Mehrangarh was made where it is at present.

### Arna Jharna

Arna-Jharna is a unique to approach to the way museums should be. Instead of being enclosed in a box, it enjoys the open space of the desert. Here you learn by exploring and enjoying with visuals.

### Mehrangarh Fort

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

### Jaswant Thada

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

### Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park

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

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

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

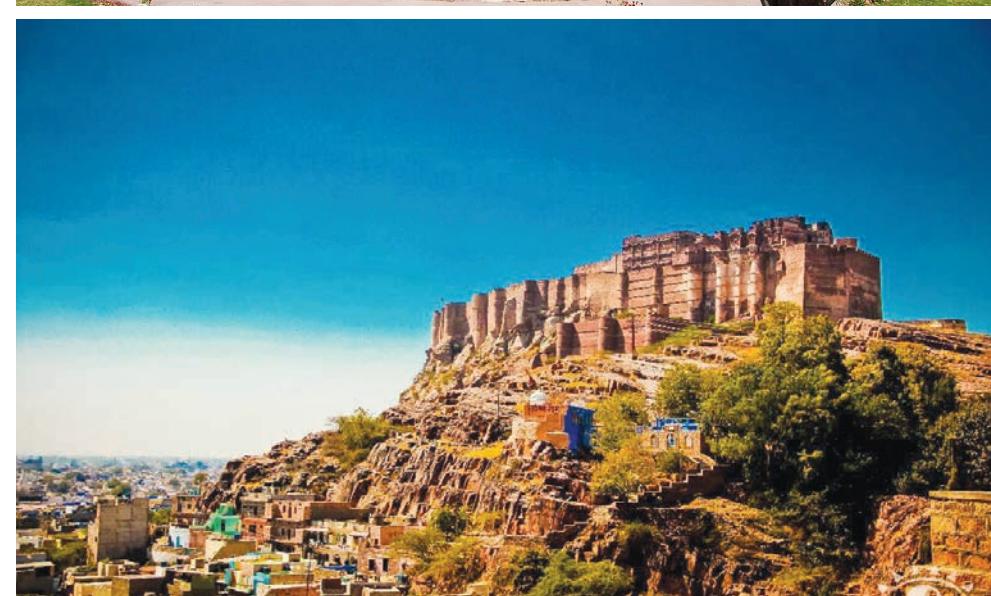
### Ram Dwara

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

### Umaid Bhawan Palace

Umaid Bhawan Palace is one of the world's largest private residences. Taj Hotels manage a part of the palace.

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



### Ghanta Ghar or Clock Tower

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

classic silver and gold jewelry.

### Sachiya Mata Temple

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

# India beat SL by 78 runs in 3rd T20I to secure series 2-0

**PUNE (TIP):** After losing the toss, India skipper Virat Kohli spoke about the need to do well after batting first. The reason was India's dismal record while defending. From the start of 2019 till before this match, India had won just three and lost five while bowling second. On Friday however, that wasn't the case as India rode early strikes by Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini to record a comprehensive 78-run win over Sri Lanka and clinch the three match T20I series 2-0.

Chasing a target of 202, Sri Lanka's chase was effectively over in the Powerplay after being reduced to 31/4. Their demise started in the very first over when left-hander Danushka Gunathilaka (1) attempted a pull off a Bumrah short delivery, the ball landing safely in the hands of Washington Sundar at mid-on. His opening partner Avishka Fernando (9) perished in the next over, hitting straight at Shreyas Iyer standing at covers off the bowling of Thakur. Oshada Fernando (2) was run out in the fourth over following a mix up while Kusal Perera (7) couldn't keep out a peach of a yorker from the ever-improving Saini.

A 68-run stand for the fifth wicket between Angelo Mathews (31) and Dhananjaya de Silva (57) briefly raised Sri Lanka hopes as batting



became relatively easier with dew and spinners finding it difficult to grip the ball. But Mathews got carried away after hitting Sundar for a six off the first ball of 12th over, holing out at mid-on a ball later. That ended any hope Sri Lanka had harboured of mounting a dramatic comeback. The batsmen who followed didn't put up much of a fight as their innings was folded in 15.5 overs.

Saini was India's most successful bowler with figures of three for 28 while Sundar and Thakur took two wickets each. Earlier, the duel between Shikhar Dhawan and KL Rahul to be Rohit Sharma's opening

partner continued with both matching each other shot for shot. Dhawan got a reprieve in the second over and then just took off, looking much more assertive than he was in the Indore game. He matched Rahul's drives and punches with his own array of flicks and pulls. They stitched a 97-run partnership for the opening wicket, providing the launch pad for India to post huge total.

Dhawan holed out at mid-wicket soon after reaching his half-century. The 36-ball 52 knock was laced with seven boundaries and one six and couldn't have come at a better time for Dhawan, who is returning from an injury.

## Virat Kohli shatters Ricky Ponting's world record

**PUNE (TIP):** Indian cricket team skipper Virat Kohli is no stranger to breaking records in the shortest format of the sport and the right-hander added another major accolade to his name during the 3rd T20I encounter against Sri Lanka in Pune on Friday. Kohli became the second Indian cricketer to complete 11,000 international runs as skipper - a feat achieved only by MS Dhoni. Overall, he became the sixth international skipper to reach the mark.

Kohli reached the milestone in the 13th over after taking a single off Lakshan Sandakan.

Kohli also became the fastest captain to reach the milestone as he was able to achieve the feat in 169 matches (196 innings). Kohli beat former Australia captain Ricky Ponting, who had taken 252 innings to achieve the same. Kohli is also the first to reach 11000 international runs as captain under 200 innings. The other captains to have achieved this unique distinction and scored over 11,000 international runs are Stephen Fleming, MS Dhoni, Allan Border, and Graeme Smith.

Ponting's tally of 15,440 runs came in 324 matches, Smith's 14,878 runs came in 286 matches, Fleming's 11,561 runs came in 303 matches, Dhoni's 11,207 runs came in 332 matches and Border's 11,062 runs came in 271 matches.



By Prabhjot Singh

**CHANDIGARH (TIP):** Hockey girls from Shahabad Markanda in Haryana have done enough to bring this small township on National Highway 1 on the world horizon. This small town has produced more international woman hockey players than any other single town in the country. Now is the time for Rani Rampal, captain of Indian women's hockey team, to shower more praise on her hometown as she has been named among World's top 25 athletes in run for the World Athlete award.

Rani, who helped India qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games with a face-saving goal against the USA in the Olympic Qualifier at Bhubaneshwar late last year is all set to lead the country in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. After being nominated, Rani has to get more public votes than any of her rivals to earn the prestigious award.

Meanwhile, Hockey India on Friday congratulated Rani on being nominated for The World Games Athlete of the Year 2019. This will be the 6th edition of the IWGA initiative that recognizes and honors an athlete or a team for their outstanding performance in 2019, or for their social commitment or particularly fair behavior.

The 25 athletes nominated for this award from 25 sports have been recommended by their International

## Rani Rampal among top 25 athletes nominated for World Athlete award



Rani Rampal of Shahabad Markanda may well bag the World Athlete award.

Federations and in Rani's case, the FIH has recommended her name for the award for her outstanding performance and her ability to lead by example. She was instrumental in India qualifying for the first time in back-to-back Olympic

Games.

Last year, the Acrobatic Gymnastics couple Mariia Chernova and Georgii Pataraia (Russia) won the title with 159,348 votes, just ahead of American Powerlifter Jennifer Thompson with

1,52,865 votes.

"We at Hockey India are elated by the news of Rani being nominated for the World Games Athlete of the Year 2019. She indeed is a huge inspiration to many in the country and has made her own mark in the sport. We are very proud of her achievements and contribution to women's hockey in India. We hope this nomination comes as an inspiration to many other aspiring players who wish to emulate Rani's success. We urge all hockey fans to vote for Rani and continue to support Rani and the Indian Women's Team as they prepare for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," stated Mohd. Mushtaque Ahmad, President Hockey India.



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