

The INDIAN PANORAMA

EVER TRUTHFUL

VOL 14 ISSUE 4 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • JAN 24 - 30, 2020 • ENQUIRIES: 646-247-9458

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January

Republic Day



India's New Citizenship Law Threatens Its Democracy, Says NJ Governor



"India's new citizenship law threatens its long and proud history as a secular and diverse democratic nation by establishing a religious test for migrants", said Governor Murphy

TRENTON, NJ (TIP): As the largest democracy in the world, India could set an example by abandoning 'restrictive and intolerant' new citizenship law, said New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy.

contd on page 40

WUHAN (TIP): China locked down two major cities in a province at the center of a deadly virus outbreak on Thursday, January 23, banning planes and trains from leaving in an unprecedented move aimed at containing the disease which has already spread to other countries.

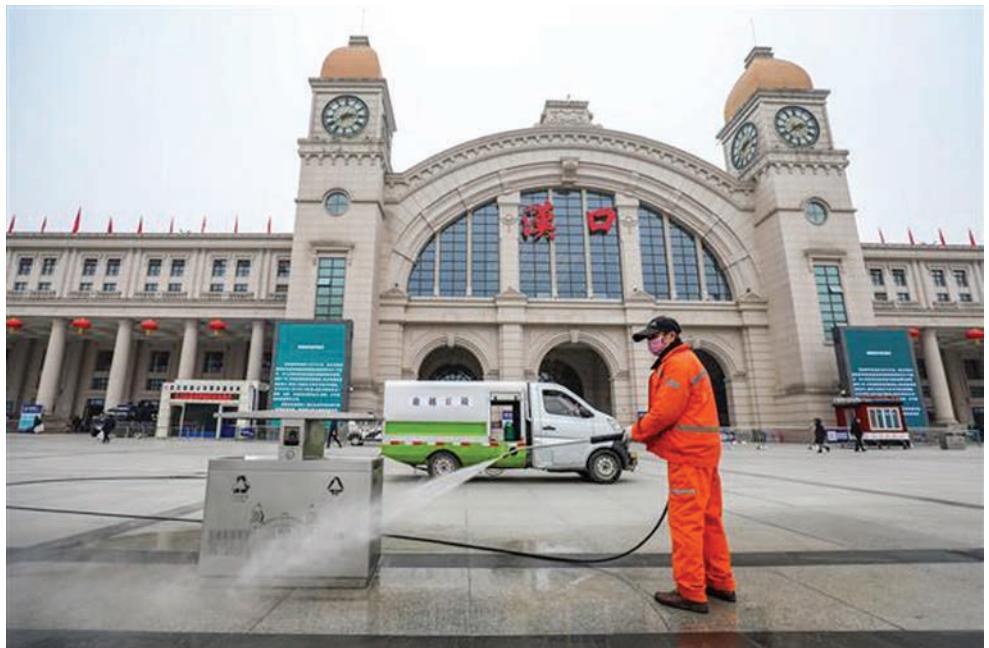
The respiratory virus has claimed 17 lives since emerging from a seafood and animal market in Wuhan, infected hundreds of other people nationwide and been detected as far away as the United States.

Residents in Wuhan, a major port city in central Hubei province with a population of 11 million people, were told Thursday not to leave "without a special reason", and the order was backed by a transport shutdown. Trains and planes out of Wuhan were indefinitely suspended, toll ways on roads out of the city were closed,

contd on page 40

We wish our Readers a
Happy Republic Day of India

China locks down two cities to curb virus outbreak



More than 570 people have been infected with the virus across China-with most cases found in Wuhan, where a seafood market that illegally sold wild animals has been identified as the epicenter of the outbreak.

Genocide of Kashmiri Pandits Recalled



Lamp lighting. Indian Americans For Kashmir organizers and steering committee members, and speakers at the Jan. 18, 2020, meeting to commemorate the 30th anniversary of genocide of Kashmiri Pandits at TV Asia auditorium in Edison, N.J.

EDISON, NJ (TIP): More than 20 organisations in the Tri-state area and a number of Indian and American dignitaries, local politicians and mainstream personalities joined the Indian Americans For Kashmir (IAFK), on Jan. 19, 2020, in the TV Asia auditorium in Edison, N.J. to "(a) Commemorate the

contd on page 18

More Shaheen Baghs are coming up across country: Actress Nandita Das

JAIPUR (TIP): Lauding the efforts of students and common people who have been protesting against the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), actress Nandita Das said on Thursday, January 23, that more places like Shaheen Bagh are coming up across the country. Das also exhorted people to speak up against the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

contd on page 40



Women all over India are up against CAA and NRC



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Sandeep Chakravorty
Consul General of India
Consul General of India,
New York



चलो CONSULATE

MESSAGE

On behalf of the Consulate General of India in New York, I convey my greetings to all the readers of 'The Indian Panorama' for a very happy Republic Day. I am pleased to know that The Indian Panorama is bringing out a Special Edition to commemorate the 71st Republic Day of India. In the Tri-State area of NY, NJ and CT, The Indian

Panorama is one of the leading Newspaper which serves as a link between India and the Indian Community in USA.

The Indian Panorama has been instrumental in publicizing the events organized by the Consulate, in association and in partnership with various Community organizations. To bridge the gap between the Indian Community and the Consulate and to get to know each other better, the Consulate has launched a new initiative called 'Chalo Consulate' under which we encourage Community Organizations to come to the Consulate and have a lively interaction including presentation of culture and cuisine. We also give an opportunity to the community members to know more about the working of the Consulate and our new initiative 'Pramit' which is a powerful web application to connect to the people. Community members are also briefed on programmes of Government of India and feedback obtained. We propose to make 'Chalo Consulate' a regular feature of our activities. The inaugural event was on January 13, 2020 when Team Consulate interacted with the GOPIO members on the use and popularization of our innovative web application 'Pramit', an easy and faster way of redressal of queries.

I would like to urge The Indian Panorama to give wide publicity to 'Chalo Consulate' and 'Pramit'. I take this opportunity to invite all the Community organizations under the jurisdiction of Consulate General of India in New York to avail of the 'Chalo Consulate' initiative and visit the Consulate.

Once again, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the Republic Day of India and hope that the newspaper keeps on disseminating objective news and connecting people with South Asia and a New India.

Sandeep Chakravorty

Syed Akbaruddin



INDIA



संयुक्त राष्ट्र सिथत भारत का स्थायी प्रतिनिधि
न्यूयॉर्क

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

17 January 2020

I am delighted to note that the Indian Panorama is bringing out an illustrated edition to commemorate the 71st Republic Day of India. I compliment the Chief Editor Indrajit Saluja and his team for their efforts.

2. 2020 will witness the Indian Constitution celebrating its 71st anniversary. As a living document, the Indian Constitution reflects India's ancient wisdom and celebrates its resplendent culture and its vibrant and diverse traditions. The Constitution has always encompassed a universal dream which, in a way, explains our deep and strong engagement with the UN.

3. The drafting of the Indian Constitution was a monumental feat of democracy for which the framers deserve immense respect. Despite being a diverse set of individuals from various communities, they collectively committed to achieving the historic task of establishing a democratic republic in India. The foremost of whom was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, whose role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Assembly has earned him the moniker of 'Father of the Indian Constitution'.

4. 2019 was a monumental year for India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UN, during the High-Level Week in September 2019, was a landmark event. Prime Minister's participation in several high-level events, including the Climate Action Summit, Universal Health Coverage, and the Leaders Dialogue on Countering Terrorism was well appreciated. Prime Minister also hosted a high-level event to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and inaugurated the Gandhi Solar Park at the UN Headquarters.

5. Speaking in the General Assembly during the General Debate, Prime Minister called upon the member states to give a new direction to multilateralism. He said that India's message to the international community is that of Peace and Harmony.

6. In 2020, India will continue to be at the forefront in addressing universal challenges like sustainable development, climate change, terrorism, human rights, clean energy, etc. As we enter the 75th anniversary of United Nations, India is committed towards strengthening its fraternity among nations and welfare of the world in line with the key objectives of the United Nations. Also, we hope to gain the support of the United Nations membership to serve on the Security Council for a 2-year term during 2021-2022.

7. I seek the blessings and support of the readers of Indian Panorama, as we surge ahead at the United Nations in 2020.

(Syed Akbaruddin)

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Asoke Mukerji,
Author, Strategic
Analyst and Former
Diplomat
New Delhi

MESSAGE

India's Republic Day on 26 January 2020 is a significant milestone, marking the 70th year of the entry into force of the Constitution of India. Under her Constitution, India has an elected President as the Head of State with universal franchise general elections. Through general elections to India's multi-party parliament held regularly since 1952 India is today the most populous democracy in the world.

The challenges facing India in the international area in 2020 are many. On the threshold of her expected election in June 2020 in the UN General Assembly to the non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for 2021-22, it is useful to look back to 1950 to see how India responded to similar challenges as she charted her multilateral diplomacy 70 years ago.

India became a founder-member of the United Nations on 26 June 1945. After winning the UN General Assembly elections on 20 October 1949, she began her first two-year term as a non-permanent elected member of the UN Security Council in January 1950. Throughout her term, India faced a sustained attempt by major powers in the Security Council to interfere in her domestic affairs in Jammu and Kashmir. As a non-permanent member, India could only abstain on the Council's vote in March 1950 on this matter and not change the decision taken by the permanent members (China, France, the UK and USA).

On 1 April 1950 India became the first non-socialist country to recognize the communist government of the People's Republic of China. During 1950 India joined the USSR and Yugoslavia in unsuccessfully seeking to seat the communist government of the People's Republic of China in both the United Nations and its Security Council.

It is ironical that in 2020, India faces a convergence of challenges to her interests in the former state of Jammu and Kashmir in the UN Security Council led by the People's Republic of China, a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council.

On the occasion of India's Republic Day 2020, it is clear that India's objective of "reformed multilateralism", aimed at making India an equal participant in global decision-making will dominate the thrust of India's multilateral diplomacy as she participates in commemorating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations on 21 September 2020.

Wishing the readers of "The Indian Panorama" a very happy Republic Day! Jai Hind!

Asoke Mukerji

V.K.Raju, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S.

Ophthalmologist, Regional Eye Associates (Photo of Raju here)
President and Founder, Eye Foundation of America
President and Founder, Goutami Eye Institute
Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, West Virginia University
Director, International Ocular Surface Society

MESSAGE

I am honored to write this note on the occasion of Republic Day of India 2020. Professor Rostow of the University of Texas at Austin has expressed his conviction that the most important phenomenon of the post-war era is the survival of the Indian democracy. The English historian, E.P.Thompson has said, "India is not an important, but perhaps the most important country for the future of the world. All the convergent influences of the world run through this society - Hindu, Moslem, Christian, secular, Stalinist, liberal, Maoist, democratic socialist and Gandhian. There is not a thought that is being thought in the West or the East which is not active in some Indian mind. If that sub-continent should be rolled up into authoritarianism, if that varied intelligence and creativity should disappear into conformist darkness, then it would be one of the greatest defeats in the human record, sealing the defeat of penumbra of the other Asiatic nations."

These quotations give some idea of the momentous destiny which we are called upon to fulfil.

We all know that there is a cavernous gap between India's tremendous potential and depressing reality, such as - air pollution, water pollution, fuel adulteration, lack of sewage treatment operations, environmental degradation, lack of public health, loss of biodiversity, loss of resilience in ecosystems and livelihood insecurity for the poor. I am aware of the great strides India has made since 1990s.

India's sacred Ganges river is so polluted (what is not dumped in the river?) that many fear for its future. Sadly someone said that Ganges is a holy river from hell (many types of cancer are common along the Ganges river from the eastern side of UP, through Bengal and Bihar and people in these areas are more prone to develop cancer than any other areas in the country). The Prime minister, Narendra Modi, has promised to clean it up. Can he do it? We hope!

If we develop a mind set of "so little done; so much to do", sky is the limit for India as we have the greatest and largest natural resource that no other country has - 530 million of young people below the age of 34. We USE it or LOSE it!

- I often visit India (which gave me stellar medical education almost for free). Our foundation (EYE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA/WORLD WITHOUT CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS) is committed to combat avoidable blindness in India and beyond. People call this charity and I see our work as investment.

I extend my best wishes to readers of the Indian Panorama on the auspicious Republic Day of India.

VK Raju

Indian American Psychiatrist Sentenced to Prison for Healthcare Fraud Scheme

NORFOLK, Va. (TIP): Udaya K. Shetty, a Virginia Beach doctor was sentenced Jan 16 to 27 months in prison for defrauding Medicare, Medicaid, and Tricare, and other health care benefits programs out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Additionally, Udaya K. Shetty, 64, agreed to pay over \$1 million to settle related civil claims.

According to court documents, was a licensed psychiatrist practicing medicine at his own practice, Behavioral & Neuropsychiatric Group. Beginning in 2013, Shetty created a scheme by which he could overbill healthcare benefit programs by seeing patients for only five to 10 minutes, but then billing for services that were on average 41 to 63 minutes long. Shetty instructed his staff to often double, triple, or even quadruple book appointment times. The fraud became apparent when investigators discovered that on dozens of instances Shetty would need more than 24 hours a day of working to perform the services for which he billed.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian National Indicted for international money laundering schemes

NEWARK, NJ (TIP): Amit Agarwal, an Indian national who operates a wholesale consumer electronics business in East Hanover, New Jersey, has been indicted along with 6 Colombian Nationals

for offenses relating to various international money laundering schemes and the operation of unlicensed money transmission businesses.

U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: "The illegal drug trade depends on shadow financial networks to move drug traffickers' profits into our banking system and across our borders. As alleged, these defendants ran those types of networks in both the United States and Colombia. Today's arrests demonstrate that this Office, along with our partners here and abroad, will bring the operators of such networks to justice wherever in the world they may hide."

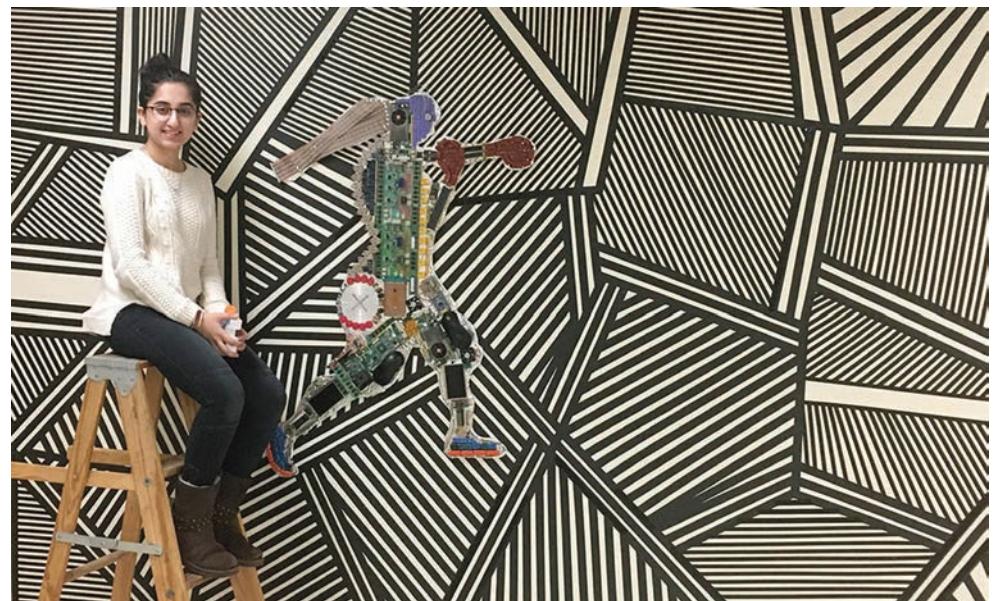
DEA Special Agent in Charge Eduardo A. Chavez said: "Today's arrests serve as notice to those who participate in any aspect of the global drug trade - whether it be selling drugs on a street corner or moving illicit profits through our banking system - the DEA along with our global partners, will hold you responsible and bring you to justice."

Indian American SBU Student Creates Mural Celebrating Women Engineers

NEW YORK (TIP): A striking new mural on the second floor of the Light Engineering building, designed by Stony Brook University's computer engineering student Sejal Mehra, pays tribute to women in engineering. Entitled Luna the Future, the mural uses a stylized boxer to suggest the power of women scholars and the challenges faced by women in the field.

"I chose to depict Luna as a fighter, specifically a boxer, because as a female in engineering, every day is a fight, whether it is to be heard, seen, or even taken seriously," Mehra '21 said. "She is often overlooked and is rarely taken seriously for her accomplishments."

Mehra, part of the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Honors Program, created Luna the Future as her final project for the course ARS 205, Foundations: Idea and Form, taught by Maya Schindler. Her vision behind this piece was to show the connection



Sejal Mehra's mural Luna pays tribute to women in engineering

between technology and arts, bridging the two together to show the creative, analytical side of technology.

(Courtesy SBU)

Indian American Doctor Settles Civil Fraud Allegations in Adult Homes Investigation

NEW YORK (TIP): Dr. Rajendra Bhayani, an otolaryngologist, has agreed to pay the United States \$1,109,000 to resolve civil allegations that he and his practice - New York Otolaryngology & Aesthetic Surgery, P.C. in Brooklyn and Queens - paid kickbacks and submitted false claims to federal healthcare programs for services provided to residents in adult homes in violation of the False Claims Act.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and William F. Sweeney Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), announced the settlement.

"The disabled and elderly residents of adult homes are among the most vulnerable members of our society, and doctors who treat these residents as commodities by paying kickbacks so they can administer medically unnecessary services at taxpayer expense will be held accountable by this Office," stated United States Attorney Donoghue. Mr. Donoghue expressed his grateful appreciation to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), for their assistance with the case.

"Elderly citizens without the means to care for themselves should be given the best treatment possible by everyone involved in their care. Exposing them to unnecessary medical testing and services because they're deemed an easy target is disgraceful behavior," stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney. "Putting one's self interests above the welfare of others isn't the way



We are pleased to have resolved this matter with the federal government", said Dr. Bhayani.

to do business, and in this case, it came with a hefty penalty."

Adult homes are privately owned residential facilities licensed by the State of New York to provide long-term care and supervision to adults with disabilities or mental illnesses. An investigation by the FBI revealed that from 2012 through 2016, Bhayani allegedly paid cash tips, excessive rent and other improper remuneration to medical management companies in adult homes in the Eastern District of

New York to obtain exclusive access to bill for allergy testing and other medical services to residents in violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute. Bhayani then obtained payment for these services from Medicare and the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program, although the services were actually performed by his nurse practitioner, and some of the services performed were medically unnecessary.

The Indian Panorama contacted Dr. Bhayani to seek a clarification from him. Here is what he said in the email sent to Prof. Saluja, editor , January 23 at 6 PM ET.

"We are pleased to have resolved this matter with the federal government. To make it very clear, No admission of liability or wrongdoing was made as part of this negotiated resolution, which eliminated the time, resources and uncertainty that would be entailed in litigating these claims in court."



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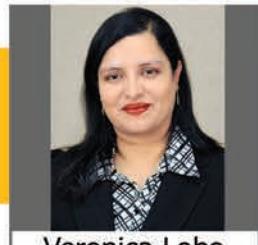
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Albert Baldeo of Queens among recipients of 4th Congressional Award For Civil Rights Leadership



The awardees with families and friends. Albert Baldeo, Golam Khan, Dr. Zeenat Nabi, Shayla Azeem, Hasanuzzaman Malik, Helal Ul Karim, Shah Nawaz and Techfios IT Consultants received the award for civil rights activism, community leadership, and business entrepreneurship.

QUEENS, NY (TIP): The New American Democratic Club, headed by Morshed Alam and Ahnaf Alam, held its 9th Annual Celebration and Dinner last Saturday, January 11, 2020 at the Taj Mahal Hall on Hillside Avenue, Queens, NY. US Senator Chuck Schumer, Congresswomen Grace Meng, Yvette Clark, Public Advocate Jumanee Williams, State senator John Liu, Council member Donovan Richards, and many Democratic Party, labor and community officials attended the event, and acknowledged the contributions of new Americans at the event which drew over 800 activists, leaders, officials and supporters.

All of the elected officials spoke of the

indelible and essential roles immigrants play in the US economy, safety, heritage and growth, and criticized President Trump for implementing a series of anti-immigrant measures which have divided the country, even as the President's impeachment trial continues. "America owes its greatness to the contributions of immigrants," they reiterated.

Awards were given to Albert Baldeo, Golam Khan, Dr. Zeenat Nabi, Shayla Azeem, Hasanuzzaman Malik, Helal Ul Karim, Shah Nawaz and Techfios IT Consultants for civil rights activism, community leadership, and business entrepreneurship.

The club also vociferously endorsed



R to L: Council member Donovan Richards is endorsed by Shireen Kamal (Women's Forum), Ahnaf Alam (Youth Forum Leader), Moin Choudhury (District Leader), Morshed Alam (Club Chairman), Donovan Richards, June Phelps (State Committeewoman), Al Baldeo (former District Leader) and Ahmed Shakir, P.E. and DC 37 delegate.



Albert Baldeo receives his 4th Congressional award from Congresswoman Clarke and Senator John Liu.

candidate Councilman Donovan Richards for the Queens Borough President and pledged to get him elected as the person most qualified to empower new Americans in Queens. "You deserve not only a seat at the table, but a table

itself, and I will deliver that to you if elected," he promised, in answer to attendees' concerns that no person of South Asian or Guyanese heritage has ever been elected to city, state or federal government. (Based on Press Release)

New Jersey Governor Signs Tuition Equality Legislation for Children of H-1B Visa Holders

TRENTON (TIP): NJ Governor Phil Murphy on Jan 21 signed S2555, allowing New Jersey students who are children of H-1B visa holders to qualify for in-state tuition at public institutions of higher education.

"New Jerseyans deserve equal access to higher education, and today we are taking another step toward making that possible," said Governor Murphy. "I'm proud to sign the legislation to help our students achieve their education goals, pursue a successful future, and live their dreams here in their home state."

S2555 exempts dependent students whose parents or guardians hold H-1B visas from paying out-of-state tuition provided they meet certain criteria, including having graduated from a New Jersey high school and having attended a New Jersey high school for at least three years. "We are working to make college affordable for New Jerseyans and the Governor's action today will expand postsecondary opportunities to more residents, such as dependents of H-1B visa holders," said Secretary of Higher



Education Zakiya Smith Ellis.

"Leveling the playing field by making higher education more affordable for children of H-1B visa holders is not only the right thing to do, but also makes sense from an economic development standpoint," said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan. "This bill signing comes less than a week after the Governor

unveiled his JOBS NJ talent plan and will help to bolster New Jersey's workforce. Talent is the 21st century's most precious commodity and the Garden State's highly knowledgeable workers and world-class universities are among our biggest assets as we work to create a stronger and fairer New Jersey economy."

"We applaud the enactment of this

legislation, which will make college more affordable for talented students who attended a New Jersey high school for at least three years and graduated, by enabling them to enroll in a New Jersey public college or university at the same in-state tuition rate that is charged to their classmates," said David Socolow, Executive Director of the NJ Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

Primary sponsors of the legislation include Senators Vin Gopal and M. Teresa Ruiz, and Assemblymembers Raj Mukherji, Daniel Benson, and Robert Karabinchak.

"When someone comes to New Jersey on an H-1B visa, they're bringing their own unique expertise, intellect, and insight to the challenges and opportunities our state faces," said Senator Gopal. "But when we deny their children the opportunity to access an affordable college education right here at home, we're shutting the door on a whole new generation of brilliance and talent. When we make higher education more affordable for these kids, we're supporting their academic pursuits while encouraging them to cultivate and apply their skills right here in the Garden State."

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Hum Hindustani Reaches Milestone 10

10th Anniversary of the Publication Celebrated in Style



Jasbir Jay Singh & Bhavna Sharma, Founders of Hum Hindustani



Officials presenting citations to publishers of Hum Hindustani. L to R: Kamlesh Mehta, Nassau County Presiding Officer Richard Nicolello, Satinder Kaur, Jay Singh, Legislator Arnold Drucker, Mukesh Modi, Bobby Kalotee, Bhavna Sharma, Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino



L to R: Jay Singh, Satinder Kaur, Bhavna Sharma, NYS Senator Kevin Thomas, Mukesh Modi, Sudha Modi, Herman Singh

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): Hum Hindustani Hindi News Weekly, initiated on August 31st, 2011 with the first issue, celebrated its First edition of Volume 10 and it's "Person of the Year 2019" Mukesh Modi, on January 17th, 2020 in Hicksville.

Hum Hindustani is the Hindi News weekly published every week on Friday and website is updated at least once a day. It's widely read in North America and other parts of world outside of India claimed as only Hindi Newspaper in North America. As this publication have the Personality of the Week, which is favorite of its readers, a Person of the Year which includes, Bobby Kalotee 2011, Pam Kwattra 2012, Bill de Blasio 2013, Narinder Modi 2014, Virat Kohli 2015, Beena Kothari 2016, Dilip Chauhan 2017.

The event took place at Antun's by

Minar, with all the supporters, sponsors, dignitaries, community leaders, friends and family of Jay Singh & Bhavna Sharma, the founders of Hum Hindustani.

The event started with short & sweet prayers to almighty by Dr. Jay Sarkar. Then Indian National Anthem sung by Anju Sharma, (who was also MC of the event), Amita Karwal, Neeru Bhambri and American National Anthem by Nipun Marwaha. The NYS State Senator Kevin Thomas, Nassau County Presiding Officer Richard Nicolello, Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and NYS State Senator's Representatives Dilip Chauhan and Sohail were present with their good wishes and proclamations. Human Rights Chairman Bobby Kalotee

also represented the Nassau County Executive for honoring with the Citation.

Mukesh Modi, the Personality of the Year 2019, Philanthropist, Community Leader, Successful Businessman, President of India Day Parade, President of Rotary Club, was presented by Jay Singh and also with a AV. He spoke about his affiliation with the people, community and organizations, his journey from rags to riches. As an emerging film maker, Mukesh released his first teaser of his first Hollywood movie "The Elevator".

Kamlesh Mehta, Dr. Urmilesh Arya, Penny Sandhu, Pinky Jaggi and Deepak Bansal was among some of the community leaders who spoke at the event giving their good wishes to the Newspaper.

The Media present there and who always support each other, especially

Hum Hindustani, Penny Sandhu with Anchor Harkirat Singh Ahluwalia from Jus Punjabi, with their big crew, Publisher Kamlesh Mehta The South Asian Times, Gurinder Singh Hothi PTC Punjabi, TV Asia, Balwant Singh Hothi from 5aab TV, Munish Byala, Preet Kaur from Preet Nama, Raj Dhingra from India Republic and Ratna & Varinder Bhalla from Bollywood Insider.

Jay Singh mentioned how he and Bhavna got inspired from Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja, publisher and editor of The Indian Panorama, and started this Newspaper, about his journey, his ups and down and finally on that evening his joy after such a big support by all present there and other well-wishers who are always there but couldn't make that evening.

(Based on a Press Release)



A beaming Indu Gajwani with the award

Indu Gajwani gets Melvin Jones Fellowship for Dedicated Humanitarian Services for Lions Clubs International Foundation

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): President of Long Island Indo American Lions Club Indu Gajwani was presented the prestigious award of Melvin Jones Fellowship for Dedicated Humanitarian Services for Lions Clubs International Foundation, January 16. District Governor Lion Jose Pastrana and 1st Vice District Governor Lion Terri Oster attended the ceremony.

Long Island Lions club has completed the project of donating 5000 Eyeglasses to the needy people and also organized a health fair.

The Club donated to the Hempstead Inn 50 boxes of food and \$3000.00 check to for the Homeless. This past Christmas, the club donated warm winter clothing and toys at the Middle School in Long Island. The club has undertaken a new project to provide daily provisions for the victims of domestic violence.

The club plans to host First Anniversary /Fund Raising Dinner on 14th June. Funds raised at the gala will be used for renovation of an underprivileged school in India.



By G Parthasarathy

The recognition by the US and Iran that military confrontation would be counterproductive has caused them to pull back from the brink. But given Trump's inclinations, Iranian ambitions and Israeli imperatives, the jockeying for power will continue.

One of the most destabilizing factors in India's relationship with countries across its western Indian Ocean neighborhood has been the continuing tensions in Iran-US ties. There was a brief thaw when President Obama succeeded in forging a global consensus in negotiations to end sanctions on Iran, while halting what was evidently a quest for nuclear weapons capability by the Islamic republic. The UN-backed negotiations involved all permanent members of the Security Council, Germany and the EU. The world heaved a sigh of relief when Iran accepted intrusive IAEA inspections and the crippling international economic sanctions on Iran ended.

India was relieved, as the end of sanctions gave it an opportunity to move ahead with work on the Chabahar Port. This facilitated India's access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. It led to India diversifying its sources of oil imports by the resumption of substantive oil imports from Iran. All these gains were nullified when the mercurial Donald Trump took over as US President. Egged on by his close aide and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and by Israel, Trump embarked on a policy of uncompromising hostility towards Iran and the reimposition of sanctions in 2018. The entire West Asian region, extending from the Straits of Hormuz to the Suez Canal, has now become the most unstable and violence-prone region in the world. This will impact our oil import costs and energy security adversely.

The timing of the US drone strike, in which Iran's General Soleimani was killed, was particularly disastrous. The US made a huge mistake in killing Soleimani, as he was, at that time, visiting Iraq to seek some understanding with Saudi Arabia to reduce tensions. With over a million Iranians attending his funeral in Tehran, Soleimani has etched his name in the annals of the history of the Shia-dominated region, where martyrdom is revered. Ever since he took over as head of Iran's National Guard, Soleimani emerged as a brilliant strategist, as Iranian influence increased across



Wrong move: US made a huge mistake in killing Soleimani, as he was, at that time, visiting Iraq to seek some understanding with Saudi Arabia to reduce tensions.

West Asia. He armed and trained Shia militias in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, and created serious problems for Israel on its borders with Syria and Lebanon.

He also played a major role in backing Shia militias in Syria and joining hands with Russia to ensure that US-led efforts to unseat the Assad regime in Syria were defeated. This upset US and Israeli aims in Syria and Lebanon. Iran has succeeded in building a virtual 'Shia crescent' in partnership with Iraq, Syria and the Hezbollah in Lebanon, thereby challenging a powerful US-Saudi alliance. But, Soleimani also overplayed his hand in dealing with Iraq, the only other Shia-dominated major power. While he played a brilliant role in helping Iraq defeat the IS, the Sunni minority and large sections of nationalist Shias resented his dominating behavior.

Iraq's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Sistani condemned Soleimani's killing and criticized the overbearing approach of both the US and Iranian leaders, including Soleimani. He noted: 'The latest dangerous aggressive acts, which are repeated violations of Iraqi sovereignty, are part of the deteriorating situation.'

West Asia has now become a center of internal squabbling and rivalries, with civilizational (Arab-Persian) and sectarian (Shia-Sunni) dimensions, even as Turkey flexes its muscles with Imperial Ottoman pretensions. While China has made deep inroads economically into Iran and Iraq, the Gulf monarchies are pro-US. Russia has made inroads into Saudi Arabia and established its presence, with decisive actions in

Syria, where the US had to beat an ignominious retreat. New Delhi has persuaded most Arab countries to delink their relations with India and Pakistan. Intra-Arab rivalries, however, continue, as Qatar resists Saudi domination. How do all these developments affect India's vital interests in a region where there is high regard for India?

The first reality is that the Gulf and West Asian regions will remain areas of rivalries, together with the complexities of the Israel-Palestinian issue. Secondly, the US is showing some understanding that while its military presence is important, it is also enhancing rivalries and violence. Iraq, with a substantial Sunni population, is finding the military presence of Iran and the US divisive. Saudi Arabia appears to be realizing the perils of military misadventures. Its military intervention in Yemen has undermined even its internal security. The most encouraging initiative, which was undermined by Soleimani's killing, was the diplomatic effort to promote dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia through Iraq.

The recognition by the US and Iran that military confrontation would be counterproductive has caused them to pull back from the brink. But given Trump's inclinations, Iranian ambitions and Israeli imperatives, the jockeying for power will continue. The redeeming feature has been that despite these tensions, world oil prices have remained below \$70 a barrel. Sharp rises in prices will have an adverse impact on our already sluggish economy. Despite Russian efforts to work with Saudi Arabia and others to get higher returns from oil sales, the rapid growth in production of shale oil and gas in the US has protected oil-importing countries like India from rapidly rising oil prices.

India's focus will remain on the welfare of 7 million Indian nationals living in the region, assured supply of oil at reasonable prices and finalizing agreements on investments by Gulf countries -of around \$100 billion - in its petroleum and petrochemicals industries. Moreover, the security situation has to be continuously assessed, as China and Pakistan hold extensive naval exercises, just after China, Russia and Iran held joint exercises across the Straits of Hormuz.

(The author is Chancellor, Jammu Central University & former High Commissioner to Pakistan)

AS I SEE IT

THE CAULDRON THAT IS GULF

General Soleimani's killing will further aggravate the all too volatile region

COMMENT



Prof I.S. Saluja

I am more likely to think as a common man rather than come out with a scholarly and pedantic analysis. I shall not go in to the nitty gritty of figures or make a presentation through graphs to exhibit gains and losses because these have only confounded the common man. I leave that to a Narendra Modi or a Nirmala Seetharaman. I shall be more interested in talking about where India stands when it comes to the people of India and their rights as human beings.

For every Indian it was a bliss to be alive on 26th January 1950 when the Constitution of Secular India came in to being. For him it was a day when he was promised certain fundamental rights. Readers may please look into the Preamble to the Constitution of India. It is a day when every Indian felt he was going to see a new sunrise. It is a day that promise devery single man, woman and child in India end of in equality and exploitation. It is a day that held the prospect of end to bigotry. It is the day that spoke of end of illiteracy. It is a day our leaders described as the day of a new awakening. It is a day

70 years as Republic- where does India stand today?

of new life of liberty and freedom-the most cherished goals of every human being anywhere in the world. Indians bowed their heads in gratitude before the framers of the Constitution, led by the brilliant Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar. They felt they were just about to enter the Promised Land.

Behind the veil of all external growth, all seeming progress, there is decadence in India. To the common people, equality is a word in Dr. Ambedkar's Constitution of India, not the practice. How can one claim there is equality in India when the majority still is caught in the grinding machine of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty? How can one feel proud of the growing economic stature of the country (India will be a 5 Trillion economy by 2024 and an economic super power by 2050 or even earlier) when one does not get two square meals, is without a home and has neither a present nor a future?

70 years of Republic and we still have not been able to ensure justice to our people. "Might is Right" holds true in the land of the Buddha, Nanak and Gandhi. From far flung hamlets to the city, it is the might that rules. Even the politicians who are supposed to act as the custodians of the

Constitution subscribe to the dictum. Dalits and minorities are at the receiving end. A case in point is the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and elsewhere in India. Ten thousand Sikh men, women and children were butchered in cold blood then. Thousands of Sikh women became widows. Thousands of children became orphans.

And, imagine, 36 years after the horrendous crime was committed against humanity, the perpetrators of crime have managed to go scot free and move freely. The prosecutors have turned in to defense lawyers. I am referring to CBI that gave a "clean chit" to Jagdish Tytler, the prime accused in 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi. On top of it, the accused like Jagdish Tytler enjoy the comfort and power of ministerial gaddis. "Might is right".

Another case in point is detention of hundreds in various jails in India who were picked up during the dark days of militancy in Punjab. They have been held prisoners for years together without a trial. One never knows whether they will ever experience freedom from the frightening four walls of the prisons they have been put in to.

Look at all the cases being reported every day of rape of dalit women, the police brutality, the gangsters' reign, the high handedness of government officials, the loot the politicians engage in day in and day out. Law seems to have taken leave of the country.

The Non-resident Indians have been voicing similar concern at the lawlessness in the country when many pointed out that their property in India was being grabbed by unscrupulous elements and many had been framed in false criminal cases. They pointed accusing finger at the police and civil officials who connived with criminals to rob the NRIs of their legitimate property. How can government of India expect the NRIs to come forward to invest in the country when they feel insecure? Law is on leave, probably a long leave?

Where is Equality promised in the Constitution of the Republic of India? Where is Freedom? Where is Justice? Let us on this Republic Day ask ourselves these questions, for the sake of the Republic of India.

SATYAMEV JAYATE!

Thirty Years on, Still no Spring for the Pandits



By Amitabh Mattoo

"Make no mistake; the Kashmiri Pandits are individually members of arguably the most successful ethnic minority in the country; collectively, however, they are confronted with a loss that is painfully difficult to fathom or describe to those who do not share that sense of anomie. Returning home then is not just about atavistic roots of longing, but as much about reclaiming an intellectual space of belonging. In this sense, both personal triumph and collective tragedy face them in almost equal measure, with no signs of an actionable plan for their return."

After three decades of exile, the promise and possibility of the dignified return of the Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley seems as elusive today as it was in 1990. And yet, it is clearer than ever before, the secure presence of the Pandit minority would be an (if not the most) important marker of sustainable peace in the Kashmir Valley. Much has happened since those cataclysmic days of the 1990s, including the restructuring of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the dilution of Article 370, and the repeal of Article 35-A; and yet other than schadenfreude, the events have brought little joy to the Pandits or indeed increased the possibility of them returning home.

Triumphs and obstacles

Make no mistake; the Kashmiri Pandits are individually members of arguably the most successful ethnic minority in the country; collectively, however, they are confronted with a loss that is painfully difficult to fathom or describe to those who do not share that sense of anomie. Returning home then

is not just about atavistic roots of longing, but as much about reclaiming an intellectual space of belonging. In this sense, both personal triumph and collective tragedy face them in almost equal measure, with no signs of an actionable plan for their return.

Indeed, the intriguing history of the Kashmiri Pandit community is an anomaly in contemporary times that has privileged stories of ideological clashes, confronting cultures and competing nationalisms. Where else would you find an educated (with 100% literacy) mostly professional, materially successful, religiously liberal, politically flexible, totally non-violent, microscopic minority inhabiting one of the most conflicted and contested parts of the country? They lived, in retrospect, fairytale lives; and that charmed life turned into a nightmare in the 1990s.

Forgotten episode

Sadly, for most liberal political analysts and thinkers, the Kashmiri Pandit exodus became part of the larger tragedy of the Kashmiri issue and was forgotten or marginalized. Meanwhile, the Kashmiri Pandits struggled, adapted, built new lives, in the midst of adversity, in India and abroad, and succeeded. Apart from those who live in camps or makeshift accommodation, they are today a model of material success. But in many ways, the continuing displacement of the Kashmiri Pandits represents not just the continuous failure of successive governments but is also a stark shortsightedness of the failures of the liberal Indian state.

It is profound irony that in the 1990s, during the worst years of displacement, the Pandits, then one of the most liberal and accommodative of minorities, found succor only in the Shiv Sena's Balasaheb Thackeray who ensured reservations for them in professional colleges in Maharashtra. As analyst Rishi Razdan put it in a recent social media post, "a persecuted Hindu minority from a Muslim-majority state within a Hindu-majority country [was] a damning validation of all the fears that Hindutva had been peddling for decades". And one of the great failures of the Indian liberal Left was "losing the moral courage to speak loudly and clearly for those who needed their aid".

But what next?

In the summer of 2015, the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Mufti Mohammad Sayeed tasked me, as his adviser, to coordinate with Ram Madhav, the Bharatiya Janata Party's general secretary for J&K, to organize a meeting with Kashmir Pandit leaders, primarily from the Sangh Parivar.

It was intended as the first step in building trust that would eventually help in the dignified return of the Pandits. The Chief Minister spelt out his policy and vision to the Pandit leadership: "You do not need us. We need you. Aap aabad hain, jahan bhi hain (you have shown your mettle, wherever



you have gone). But we, without the diversity you contributed to the Valley, without our syncretic culture, are the ones really exiled." Mufti reiterated these ideas, in my presence, over breakfast with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Parivar's sah sarkaryavah, Krishna Gopal. That meeting and those dreams faded with the passing away of Mufti and the manner in which his political legacy was frittered away.

A diasporic transition

In February this year, like every year for nearly three decades, more than 50 families will gather in Mount Martha, in the breathtaking Mornington Peninsula, about an hour's drive from Melbourne in Australia. They will perform the "vatuk puja" for Shivaratri: symbolizing the wedding of Lord Shiva and his consort, Parvati, with the Bhairavas in attendance.

All these 50-odd families belong to the Pandit community, most of them are outstanding professionals; almost all have moved to Australia in the last three decades of the troubles in Kashmir. They are cosmopolitan in almost every sense: they can adapt and be part of any professional culture across the world. They are liberal in a practical sense: they are not bound by dogmas or driven by orthodoxies of the past. They put a premium, as they have done for generations, on education; the younger generation is full of "toppers" even while their values and their accent may increasingly be Australian. Like with many diasporic communities, memories of the past continue to haunt the present. The Kashmiri Pandits can neither forget their beloved Kashmir nor the circumstances under which most of them have had to leave the Valley in 1990-1991.

The families in Melbourne symbolize a microcosm of the world of the Pandits. Most Pandits who left J&K have flourished materially. From Sydney to the Silicon Valley we find stories of Pandit success. In almost every field of human endeavor, the KPs (as they are popularly known) have carved a niche for themselves and made a place in the world they inhabit. They are seen as model law-abiding citizens.

Those who stayed

It is difficult to get reliable evidence of

numbers, but even by the most generous demographic figure, the Kashmiri Pandit community, across the globe, would count for less than a million. A little over 600 families continue to live in the Valley: they never left and these "non-migrants" have a "privileged" position with the Muslims in the Valley. A few thousand employees (through a special package) have been given jobs in the Valley and live in special enclaves in Haal, Vesu, Matan, Sheikhpura, Baramulla and Kupwara, many with their families. Their story is mixed: they have returned for jobs, but whether they will stay on in what are mostly cramped, isolated conditions is debatable. Another 3,500 jobs will be soon made available under the package, but they are mostly at a lower clerical level.

The Kashmiri Pandit professionals seemed to have vanished from the State. Not even one doctor and only a few engineers applied for the jobs advertised by the Public Service Commission in the last few years. Outside the Valley are about another 5,000 internally displaced families who live in the township of Jagti (built in the most disgusting Stalinist style of architecture) and the frightening camps in Nagrota, Purkhu and Muthi: all in the Jammu region.

A meeting point?

Is there a prospect of reconciliation with the past and returning back to the Valley? In the Manichaean worlds that Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims inhabit today, their narratives are almost diametrically opposite. While most Pandits view their departure as part of a systematic "ethnic cleansing" by a section of the Kashmiri Muslims, most Muslims see in the departure of the Kashmiri Pandits a deliberate conspiracy of the Indian state with two objectives; to give them a bad name and simultaneously give a free repressive hand to the security forces.

This divide shows few signs of being bridged. Under these circumstances, the prospects of reconciliation seem bleak unless there is a common project like a new Sharada Peeth University that could bring them together and recreate the bonds of interdependence that had held them in good stead over much of history.

(The author is Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

After forced marriage, Pak girl sent to protection centre

KARACHI (TIP): A 15-year-old Hindu girl, who was forcibly converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man in Pakistan's Sindh province, has been sent to a women protection centre following a court order, officials said.

She was allegedly abducted from Jacobabad district on January 15 by Ali Raza Solangi. Her father filed an FIR, claiming Solangi had abducted and married her forcibly. A local court also directed the Chandka Medical College Hospital to submit a report on her age by February 3. Sindh Minorities Affairs Minister Hari Ram Kishori Lal is said to have assured her family of full support.

— PTI

Migrant boat sinks in Indonesia; 10 rescued, 9 missing

JAKARTA, (TIP): A boat carrying 20 Indonesian migrant workers sank two days ago on its way to Malaysia, and rescuers have found 10 survivors and were searching Thursday for nine still missing. They recovered one body.

The boat began leaking and sank about an hour after leaving Rupat island in the Bengkalis regency late Tuesday, Pekanbaru rescue spokesperson Kukuh Widodo said.

The 10 survivors, mostly from North Sumatra, were rescued with life jackets, Kukuh said. Bengkalis Local Police Chief Sigit Adiwuryanto said later Thursday one passenger's body had been recovered. Rescuers including the Indonesia navy and local water police were using an inflatable boat to search the area where the boat sank. The chief said the survivors told the police the trip was illegal and the workers were undocumented. Boats and ferries are popular means of transportation in the archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands. Accidents caused by overcrowding and poor safety standards are common.

In 2016, an overcrowded boat carrying 101 Indonesian migrant workers and their families home from Malaysia capsized in stormy weather off Batam island, near Singapore, killing at least 60 people. One of the worst ferry sinking occurred off Sulawesi island in 2009, killing more than 330 people. — AP

Peace with India important for Pakistan's economic growth: Imran Khan

DAVOS (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on January 22 said the world will realise the true strategic economic potential of his country when the relationship with India becomes normal. He said his vision is to make Pakistan a welfare state and asserted that economic growth is not possible without peace and stability. In a special address at the WEF 2020, Khan also said Pakistan has decided to partner any other country only for peace and named the partnership with US as the one. PTI

Pak conducts successful training launch of nuclear-capable ballistic missile

ISLAMABAD (TIP) Pakistan on January 23 conducted a successful training launch of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Ghaznavi', which can strike targets up to 290 kilometers.

"The training launch was part of Field Training Exercise of Army Strategic Forces Command aimed at rehearsing operational readiness procedures during day and night," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army, said in a statement.

The 'Ghaznavi' missile is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads upto a range of 290 kilometers, the statement said.

The launch was witnessed by Lt Gen Nadeem Zaki Manj, Director General Strategic Plans Division, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of the strategic organisations, according to the state-run Radio Pakistan.

Director General Strategic Plans Division appreciated the operational preparedness of Army Strategic Forces Command for displaying a very high



The 'Ghaznavi' missile is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads upto a range of 290 kilometers.

standard of proficiency in handling and operating the weapon system," the statement said.

He also "expressed full confidence in the robust Strategic Command and Control System and the capability of Strategic Forces", it said.

President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Imran Khan and the three services chiefs "congratulated the nation on this landmark achievement," it added.

Pakistan test-fired 'Ghaznavi' on August 29, 2019 also, days after India revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5.

India and Pakistan have been at odds after New Delhi abrogated the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated it into two union territories.

Pakistan reacted strongly to India's decision and downgraded bilateral ties and expelled the Indian envoy.

India has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 was an internal matter. It has also advised Pakistan to accept the reality and stop all anti-India propaganda.—PTI

US airstrike killed 10 civilians in Herat: Afghan officials

KABUL (TIP): A drone attack carried out by US forces earlier this month in western Afghanistan that apparently targeted a splinter Taliban group also killed at least 10 civilians, including three women and three children, an Afghan rights official and a council member said on January 22.

According to the Afghan official, who is on the country's Human Rights Commission, the strike took place in western Herat province, in the district of Shindand.

Five other civilians, including two children, were wounded, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

There was no immediate comment from the Afghan military or the US forces. But Wakil Ahmad Karokhi, a provincial council member in Herat, said the January 8 strike also killed the commander of a Taliban splinter group, known as Mullah Nangyalia, along with 15 other militants.

The commanders funeral the following day was held in the Herat provincial capital's Guzargah neighborhood, and was attended by dozens of militants.

Karokhi criticised the strike as "huge mistake" saying the commander had been a useful buffer against the Taliban in Shindand district, taking up arms with his fighters against the insurgents "when no one else would do it" and leaving the area's civilians in peace.

The Taliban today control nearly half of Afghanistan, and continue to stage near-daily attacks targeting Afghan and US forces, even as they hold peace talks with Washington and have given a US peace envoy a document outlining their offer for a temporary cease-fire in Afghanistan.

Scores of Afghan civilians have also been killed in the crossfire and by roadside bombs planted by militants or in anti-Taliban operations undertaken by government forces assisted by American troops. — AP

Five get death penalty for attack on Hasina convoy

DHAKA (TIP): Five former police officials were sentenced to death by a Bangladesh court on Monday for opening fire on a motorcade of then Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina in 1988 that killed her 24 supporters during an anti-government rally.

As many as 53 witnesses testified in the court over the attack. Hasina was attacked while she was going to address a rally in the port city against the regime of then military dictator HM Ershad. She had a narrow escape. — PTI

Nepal govt resumes search operation for 4 South Korean trekkers, 3 guides

KATHMANDU (TIP): The Nepal government on Monday resumed the search operation for four South Korean trekkers and their three guides who went missing since an avalanche swept a popular trekking route in the mountains.

The operation to rescue the seven people missing has become difficult due to heavy snowfall in the area. On Sunday, a rescue team had to abort their operation due to adverse weather.

The trekkers were en route to a Himalayan mountain near a base camp in the Annapurna region when the avalanche struck after heavy snowfall on Friday last.

The avalanche happened at an altitude of 3,230 m (10,600ft) about 150 km (93 miles) north-west of Kathmandu.

"The government is sending a well-equipped high-tech team to rescue seven missing trekkers in the Annapurna area of Kaski district on Monday," the Department of Tourism (DoT) said in a statement. The rescue team comprises members from the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) and the Nepal Army, it said.

The missing trekkers include two women, Kim Sookja and Choi Hyowon. The two other South Korean nationals were identified as Lee Min Su and Jeong Pil Bong. The missing guides were identified as Sarj Pariyar, Chhiring Bhote and Min Bahadur Lama. PTI

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UN COURT ORDERS MYANMAR TO PREVENT ROHINGYA GENOCIDE

THE HAGUE (TIP): In a sweeping legal victory for members of the Rohingya Muslim minority, the United Nations' top court on Thursday, January 23, ordered Myanmar take all measures in its power to prevent genocide against the Rohingya people, says an AP report.

The court's president, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, said the International Court of Justice "is of the opinion that the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable."

The court added that its order for so-called provisional measures intended to protect the Rohingya is binding "and creates international legal obligations" on Myanmar.

At the end of an hour-long sitting in the court's wood-paneled Great Hall of Justice, judges also ordered Myanmar to report to them in four months on what measures the country has taken to comply with the order and then to report every six months as the case moves slowly through the world court.

Rights activists immediately welcomed the unanimous decision.

"The ICJ order to Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the genocide of the Rohingya is a landmark step to stop further atrocities against one of the world's most persecuted people," said Param-Preet Singh, associate international justice director of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

"Concerned governments and UN bodies should now weigh in to ensure that the order is enforced as the genocide case moves forward."

The world court order for what it calls provisional measures came in a case brought by the African nation of Gambia on behalf of an organization of Muslim nations that accuses Myanmar of genocide



President of the International Court of Justice, Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (C), speaks during the ruling of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Photo / Courtesy AFP

in its crackdown on the Rohingya.

At public hearings last month, lawyers for Myanmar's accusers used maps, satellite images and graphic photos to detail what they call a campaign of murder, rape and destruction amounting to genocide perpetrated by Myanmar's military.

The hearings drew intense scrutiny as Myanmar's former pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi defended the campaign by military forces that once held her under house arrest for 15 years.

Suu Kyi, who as Myanmar's state counselor heads the government, was awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for championing democracy and human rights under Myanmar's then-ruling junta. She wasn't present in court for Thursday's hearing. Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya to be

"Bengalis" from Bangladesh even though their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless. They are also denied freedom of movement and other basic rights. In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched what it called a clearance campaign in northern Rakhine state in response to an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group. The campaign forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh and led to accusations that security forces committed mass rapes, killings and burned thousands of homes.

Suu Kyi told world court judges in December that the exodus was a tragic consequence of the military's response to "coordinated and comprehensive armed attacks" by Rohingya insurgents.

She urged judges to drop the genocide case and allow Myanmar's military justice system to deal with any abuses.

Thursday's ruling came two days after an independent commission established by Myanmar's government concluded there are reasons to believe security forces committed war crimes in counterinsurgency operations against the Rohingya, but that there is no evidence supporting charges that genocide was planned or carried out.

The report drew criticism from rights activists. Pending release of the full report, Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch's deputy Asia director, said the panel's findings were "what would have been expected from a non-transparent investigation by a politically skewed set of commissioners working closely with the Myanmar government."

At December's public hearings, Paul Reichler, a lawyer for Gambia, cited a UN fact-finding mission report at hearings last month that said military "clearance operations" in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state spared nobody.

"Mothers, infants, pregnant women, the old and infirm. They all fell victim to this ruthless campaign," he said.

Gambia's Justice Minister Aboubacarr Tambadou urged the world court to act immediately and "tell Myanmar to stop these senseless killings, to stop these acts of barbarity that continue to shock our collective conscience, to stop this genocide of its own people."

The world court's orders are legally binding but it relies on the United Nations to add political pressure, if necessary, to enforce them. The court is expected to take years to issue a final ruling in the case. (Agencies)

Indian Origin Couple Convicted for Marriage/Immigration Scheme

DENVER (TIP): Four defendants were found guilty, Jan. 17, after a nine-day jury trial for conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and making false statements regarding that fraud to the government. Rajesh Ramcharan, 45, Diann Ramcharan, 37, Sergeant Galima Murry, 31, and Pastor Ken Harvell, 60, were the four defendants in the case.

The purpose of the conspiracy was to obtain immigration benefits for Rajesh Ramcharan, Diann Ramcharan and one of their minor children. The Ramcharans, a married couple, came to the United States from Trinidad & Tobago on visitor visas in 2007. They overstayed their visitor visas and settled in Colorado where they devised a scheme to defeat United States immigration laws and stay in the country illegally.

The scheme had several steps. First, in 2010, the couple was married by Pastor Ken Harvell, who signed a marriage certificate for the Ramcharans. The couple then filed for a divorce. Five days after that divorce was finalized, Pastor Harvell signed a new marriage certificate for Diann Ramcharan and Sergeant Galima Murry. Sergeant Murry is a citizen of the United States

and at the time was a soldier at Fort Carson. Diann Ramcharan and Sergeant Murry entered into this marriage for the purpose of evading immigration laws and enabling Diann Ramcharan to stay in the United States. In addition, Sergeant Murry separately obtained military benefits by claiming to be married to Diann Ramcharan.

Several months later, Rajesh Ramcharan entered into a marriage with Angelica Guevara, who also is a citizen of the United States. Pastor Harvell, whom the jury found knowingly and voluntarily participated in the conspiracy, also signed the marriage certificate between Guevara and Rajesh Ramcharan. During the time of both the Ramcharans' fraudulent marriages to Murry and Guevara, the Ramcharans lived with each other and otherwise presented themselves to the world as a married couple. "As the defendants in this case learned, marriage fraud to gain citizenship is a crime," said U.S. Attorney Jason Dunn. "There are lawful ways for individuals to become citizens of the United States. Those who try to circumvent those laws will be held accountable." *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

Indian Origin Pittsburgh-Area Lab Owner Pleads Guilty to Multiple Kickback Conspiracies

PITTSBURGH, PA. (TIP): An Indian origin resident of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty in federal court to three conspiracy counts and one substantive count related to the payment and receipt of unlawful kickbacks, United States Attorney Scott W. Brady announced January 10.

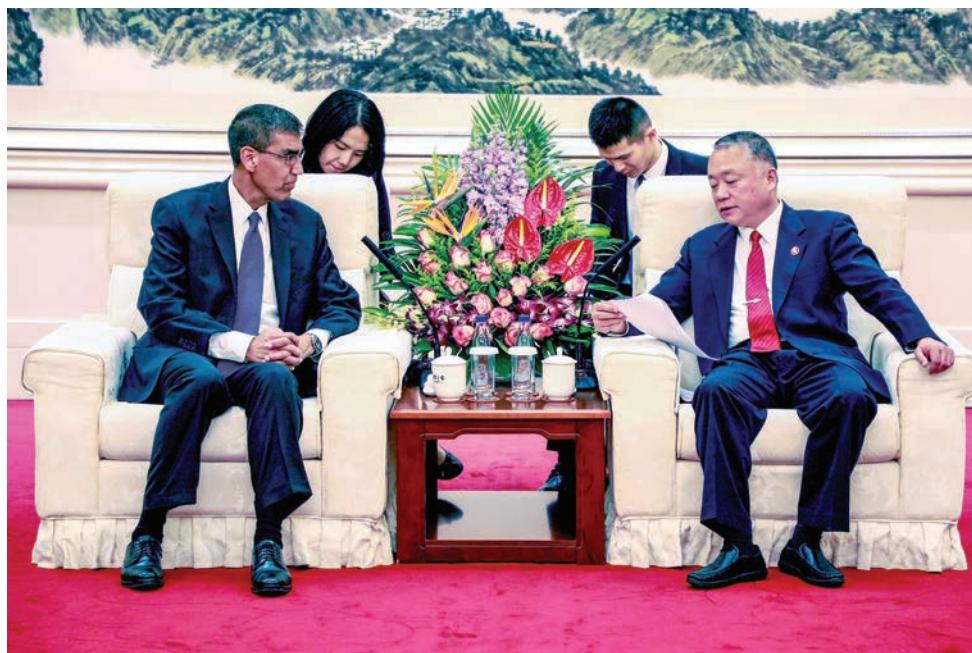
Ravitej Reddy, 52, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge William S. Stickman IV. During his plea hearing, the defendant admitted that he owned two testing laboratories-Personalized Genetics, LLC, d/b/a Personalized Genomics (PGL), located in Pittsburgh, and Med Health Services Management, LP (MHS), located in Monroeville. Beginning as early as May 2018, and continuing through approximately April 12, 2019, the defendant admitted that he participated in three separate conspiracies related to Medicare billing for two types of genetic testing: cancer genomic testing (CGx) and pharmacogenetic testing (PGx). CGx testing used DNA sequencing to detect mutations in genes that could indicate a higher risk of developing certain types of cancers in the future. CGx testing, however, was not a method of diagnosing whether an individual presently had cancer. PGx testing detected specific genetic variations in genes that impacted the metabolism of certain medications. In other words, PGx testing helped determine, among other things, whether certain medications would be effective if used by a particular patient.

As part of his guilty plea, the defendant admitted that he and a group of co-conspirators-comprising business consultants, marketers, and the operator of a telemedicine entity, among others-acquired thousands of testing samples from Medicare beneficiaries located throughout the United States, as well as the corresponding physician-ordered prescriptions that PGL and MHS needed to bill Medicare for CGx and PGx testing. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

DEA Acting Administrator Uttam Dhillon Visits China

WASHINGTON (TIP): Last week, DEA Acting Administrator Uttam Dhillon visited Beijing, China. Acting Administrator Dhillon met with Chinese officials from the General Administration of Customs, the National Narcotics Laboratory, and the National Narcotics Control Commission, including Vice Commissioner Liu Yuejin. As a welcome to China, the Ministry of Public Security International Cooperation Division representatives hosted Acting Administrator Dhillon.

U.S.-China counternarcotics cooperation was a common theme throughout all of the bi-lateral meetings. DEA hopes to strengthen partnerships in the region by opening offices in Guangzhou and Shanghai. Both Vice Commissioner Yeujin and Acting Administrator Dhillon stressed the importance of their continued working relationship and noted that it should serve as a stabilizing force. Liu requested assistance in sending Ministry of Public Security officers to the United States for technical training in order to develop MPS counternarcotics capacities, and to enhance information sharing and collaboration between DEA and the National Narcotics Control Commission. NNCC Deputy Director



DEA Acting Administrator Dhillon met with Chinese officials from the General Administration of Customs, the National Narcotics Laboratory, and the National Narcotics Control Commission, including Vice Commissioner Liu Yuejin

Tsang Wai-Hung (former Hong Kong police commissioner) intends to lead the requested MPS delegation to the United States, likely in late March.

Acting Administrator Dhillon expressed support of the visit and committed to facilitating the delegation. In addition to meeting with high-level officials, Acting Administrator Dhillon

had the opportunity to tour the Chinese National Narcotics Lab in Beijing with U.S. Ambassador Branstad. Acting Administrator Dhillon commends the steps China continues to take to enforce its law and combat illicit drugs.

This was Acting Administrator Dhillon's first trip to China and the Far East Region.

IRS warns against 'ghost' tax return preparers



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

- o Invent income to qualify their clients for tax credits.
- o Claim fake deductions to boost the size of the refund.
- o Direct refunds into their bank account, not the taxpayer's account.

The IRS urges taxpayers to choose a tax return preparer wisely. The Choosing a Tax Professional page on IRS.gov has information about tax preparer credentials and qualifications. The IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications can help identify many preparers by type of credential or qualification.

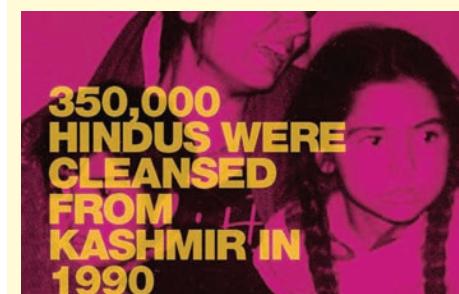
Free basic income tax return

preparation with e-file is available to qualified individuals from IRS-certified volunteers at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites across the country. For more information and to find the closest visit Free Tax Return Preparation for Qualifying Taxpayers on IRS.gov

No matter who prepares the return, the IRS urges taxpayers to review it carefully and ask questions about anything not clear before signing. Taxpayers should verify both their routing and bank account number on the completed tax return for any direct deposit refund. And taxpayers should watch out for ghost preparers inserting their bank account information onto the returns.

Taxpayers can report preparer misconduct to the IRS using IRS Form 14157, Complaint: Tax Return Preparer. If a taxpayer suspects a tax preparer filed or changed their tax return without their consent, they should file Form 14157-A, Tax Return Preparer Fraud or Misconduct Affidavit.

Hindu American Foundation Hosts 30th Anniversary of Kashmir Exodus Day Commemorations across US



WASHINGTON (TIP): The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) hosted over a dozen candlelight vigils and events organized by different community organizations in ten states across the United States to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Kashmir Exodus Day on January 19, 2020.

"Kashmir is in the news a lot these days, but all of the reporting glosses over or ignores entirely what happened to Kashmiri Hindus and why."

"After months of discussion, organizing, and planning with community partners we are humbled to announce a series of candlelight vigils that are taking place, from coast to coast, on the same day to raise awareness of and properly commemorate our martyred Hindu brothers and sisters and all of the families who were affected thirty years ago. Independent events by other community organizations are doing the same," stated Suhag Shukla, Esq. Executive Director of the Hindu American Foundation. "Kashmir is in the news a lot these days, but all of the reporting glosses over or ignores entirely what happened to Kashmiri Hindus and why. Their stories of loss, human suffering, and forced exile, for simply being Hindu, needs to be told," said Shukla.

Thirty years ago, Kashmiri Hindus (known as Kashmiri Pandits) experienced unimaginable devastation when they were cleansed from their ancestral homeland. The Pakistan-sponsored insurgency launched a terror campaign of targeted killings, rape, threats, and destruction of Hindu properties and religious sites that spanned over many years. But events on January 19, 1990 reached a fevered pitch and culminated in mass panic and the forced displacement of over 350,000 people, or 95% of the Kashmiri Hindu population.

Ghost tax return preparers may also:

- o Require payment in cash only and not provide a receipt.

INDIAN EMBASSY IN CHINA CALLS OFF REPUBLIC DAY FUNCTION FOLLOWING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

NEW DELHI (TIP): In view of the evolving situation due to the coronavirus outbreak in China as well as the decision of Chinese authorities to cancel public gatherings and events, the Indian Embassy in China on Friday decided to call off the Republic Day reception scheduled to be held at the Embassy on January 26.

The Embassy announced this on its Twitter account in the morning.

"We take this occasion to wish all the Indian expatriate community in China a very happy Republic Day," an Embassy statement said.

Coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan City in China and has since spread to neighbouring countries.

WHO emergency meeting is under way to discuss whether the outbreak needs to be designated a public health emergency of international concern.

644 MILITANTS GIVE UP ARMS IN ASSAM

GUWAHATI (TIP): In one of the largest surrenders of militants in Assam, 644 members of eight insurgent groups formally laid down arms on Thursday.

The members of the insurgent groups — United Liberation Front of Assam-Independence (ULFA-I), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Rava National Liberation Front (RNLF), Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), CPI (Maoist), National Santhal Liberation Army (NSLA), Adivasi Dragon Fighter (ADF) and National Liberation Front of Bengali (NLFB) — joined the mainstream in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal at a programme here.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said, "People are happy that you have returned to the mainstream for the development of Assam. You have inspired all those who believe in democracy."

LT GEN JOSHI IS CHIEF OF NORTHERN COMMAND



NEW DELHI (TIP): Lt Gen YK Joshi, a hero of the Tiger Hill battle during the 1999 Kargil conflict, was appointed next Northern Command chief on Thursday. He will replace Lt Gen Ranbir Singh.

Lt Gen Joshi, in the past, commanded Leh-based 14 Corps. As a Lt Colonel, he led his unit —13 JAFRIF — to victory over Pakistan in 1999 and captured Tiger Hill.

He was awarded Vir Chakra, the third highest battle honour in the country. Then Army Chief Gen VP Malik had personally congratulated the unit. He has served in the Directorate General of Military Operations, handling China, and has served in Beijing as India's defence attache.

Capt Vikram Batra laid down his life in the battle. Gen Joshi, then a Lt Col, was commanding his battalion. The battalion under him earned two PVCs, eight Vir Chakras (including for himself), 14 Sena Medals and the title of the "Bravest of the Brave".

Gen Joshi has a rare distinction of having commanded a brigade and a division in eastern Ladakh, facing China, under 14 Corps.

Nepal invites Modi, Imran Khan for Sagarmatha dialogue

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the first Sagarmatha Sambaad forum to be held here in April to deliberate on the most prominent issues of global, regional and national significance, Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said on Friday.

The first edition of the 'Sagarmatha Sambaad' is scheduled to be held from April 2 to 4 on the theme 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity', he told a group of visiting Indian reporters.

"We have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and are awaiting the confirmation," Gyawali said.

He said leaders of all SAARC countries, including Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, had been invited and Nepal would be happy to host all the regional leaders so that they could have discussions amongst themselves on the challenges facing the region.

The Sambaad (dialogue) is named after the world's tallest mountain Sagarmatha (Mt Everest) which is also a symbol of friendship, Gyawali said.

Gyawali said the main objectives of the first edition of the Sambaad are to forge a common consensus among countries on the impending climate crisis and encourage political leaders to mobilise their political willpower to tackle its menace.



It also hopes to create awareness among participants and the world about the direct relation that exists between the climate change and mountain ecology.

Nepal has the icy peaks of some of the world's highest mountains.

The dialogue would make an effort to promote and demonstrate its resolve to make it a welcoming ground for all stakeholders for impartial, transparent, open discussion and free flow of thoughts and ideas, officials said.

To be held biennially, the Sambaad hopes to draw global leaders, including heads of state/government, parliamentarians, policymakers, leaders from the inter-governmental organisations, the private sector, the civil society, think-tanks, women and the media to discuss on the ways of cooperation, exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences on prominent global issues.

The member states of SAARC are



Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In the last three years, India has been distancing itself from the SAARC, citing security challenge facing the region from terror networks based in Pakistan, which is also a member of the grouping.

The last SAARC Summit in 2014 was held in Kathmandu. The 2016 SAARC summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the Islamabad meet.

SAARC summits are usually held biennially and hosted by member states in alphabetical order.

In MP, Congress govt makes reading of Preamble mandatory in schools

BHOPAL (TIP): The Madhya Pradesh government has made the reading of the Preamble to the Constitution in schools mandatory as per an order issued by the education department.

The order issued on Wednesday evening by the department, said, "The Preamble to the Constitution will be read out by the head master/teacher in all the primary and middle schools after prayer on every Saturday. The same will be read out by the students later. Similarly, the principals of high and higher secondary schools will get the same done by the students after Balsabha."

There are more than 1.20 lakh schools - from primary to higher secondary - in Madhya Pradesh with more than 63 lakh students, as per education department officials.

Earlier, the Maharashtra government made reading of the Preamble to the Constitution mandatory for school students. In fact, in Maharashtra a resolution to the effect was adopted by the government in 2013, but it was not implemented, as per education department officials.

The government's order, however, has not gone down well with the Opposition BJP in Madhya Pradesh.

State BJP spokesperson Rajneesh Agrawal said, "Any innovative practice in the schools to enhance the knowledge of students is always welcome. But in Madhya Pradesh the state government has introduced the practice as a political gimmick."

Act fast on projects in J-K: PM Modi to ministers

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked his Cabinet colleagues to ensure all projects related to Jammu and Kashmir that are underway or have recently been announced should be completed on a war footing to ensure that the Union territory's people do not lose faith in the government, according to two people aware of the matter.

The people cited above said Modi is learnt to have told the ministers that in the absence of elected representatives in the erstwhile state, it is imperative that the central leadership monitors the projects.

Jammu and Kashmir has been without an elected government since the summer of 2018 when chief minister Mebooba Mufti's government collapsed after the BJP withdrew its support to it.

One of the two cited above said the PM specifically mentioned that the government cannot lose the trust of people.

Beginning last week, a group of over 30 Union ministers began an outreach campaign in J&K. They have been tasked to meet people in both Kashmir and Jammu regions and to visit far-flung areas to assess people's problems.

The outreach comes five months after the nullification of the Constitution's Article 370, which gave special status to J&K.

The government has maintained that Article 370 was an impediment to the region's development in the face of much criticism over the communication blackout and lockdown that were imposed ahead of the nullification in August. J&K was also bifurcated into two Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The people cited above said Modi has told the ministers to steer clear of political messaging and instead focus on the development agenda.

SC reserves verdict on referring Art 370 pleas to 7-judge Bench

NEW DELHI (TIP): Should petitions challenging the nullification of Article 370 of the Constitution be referred to a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court?

A five-judge Bench headed by Justice NV Ramana on Thursday reserved its verdict after hearing arguments from senior advocates Zaffar Ahmad Shah, CU Singh, Dinesh Dwivedi, Rajeev Dhavan, Sanjay Parikh and Gopal Sankaranarayanan for petitioners and Attorney General KK Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on behalf of the government.

The Bench — which also included Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Justice R Subhash Reddy, Justice BR Gavai and Justice Surya Kant — is seized of petitions challenging the nullification of Article 370 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, which divided the state into two union territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. On Wednesday, Shah — representing Kashmir Bar Association — and Parikh — representing People's Union for Civil Liberties — had requested the Bench to refer the matter to a seven-judge Bench, contending that the Supreme Court delivered conflicting verdicts on Article 370 in Prem Nath Kaul versus Jammu and Kashmir (1959) and Sampat Prakash versus Jammu and Kashmir (1970). The Bench had said it would refer the matter to a seven-judge Constitution Bench only if it was



satisfied that there was a direct conflict between the two verdicts.

On Thursday, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General Tushar opposed the idea of sending the matter to a larger Bench of seven judges.

Senior advocates Dhavan and Singh — representing some of the petitioners — supported the government's view on this limited point even as they said they didn't agree with the government's interpretation of the case law. There might be a minuscule discrepancy between the verdicts in the two cases but they were not so wide so as to require referring the matter to a seven-judge Bench, they said.

Almost all advocates representing various petitioners emphasised that powers under Article 370(3) could be invoked only if the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was in existence.

Shah had on Wednesday sought to

draw a distinction between accession and merger and contended before the Supreme Court that Jammu and Kashmir didn't merge with India like other states. "The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir can never be subordinate to the Constitution of India. We have full authority to make laws. The vestige of sovereignty is not vested with any state in India, except ours," Shah had said.

Dwivedi, representing Prem Shankar Jha, had on Tuesday said Article 370 was the only "tunnel of light" between India and J&K. The Constitution (Application to Jammu & Kashmir) Order, 2019, was introduced to supersede the Constitution (Application to J&K) Order, 1954. The 2019 Order provided that all provisions of the Constitution of India would apply to the state of Jammu & Kashmir, with a few exceptions and modifications.

After Donald Trump offers help, India says no third party mediation in Kashmir

NEW DELHI (TIP): Reacting to US President Donald Trump's statement in Davos that the US is willing to help with ties between India and Pakistan, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Thursday reiterated that there is "no role" for any third party to mediate in Indo-Pak bilateral ties.

MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar also said Pakistan makes "alarmist" statements on the Kashmir situation but it has "failed", as the global community has understood its "double standards".

Kumar told the media, "We have reacted to similar statements in the past, (and) our position on the Kashmir issue and third-party mediation has been very clear and consistent. Let me reiterate that there is no role for any third party in this matter."

He said if any bilateral



issue needs to be discussed, it should be done between the two countries under provisions of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. But, he added, "the onus is on Pakistan to create such conducive conditions, free from terror, hostility, and violence".

During his meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Davos earlier this week, Trump had said, "...We are talking about Kashmir and the relation to what is going on with Pakistan and India. If we can help, we certainly will be helping..."

Court sends DSP Davinder Singh accused of terror links to 15-day NIA remand

NEW DELHI (TIP): Suspended Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Davinder Singh, who was arrested for helping terrorists, was produced in a special court in Jammu on Thursday and was sent to 15-day NIA custody with four co-accused, officials said.



They said the suspended officer was produced in the special NIA court along with the two terrorists, who he was helping travel out of Jammu and Kashmir, and their two associates.

Syed Irfan, brother of a Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist arrested along with Singh, was also produced in the court by the NIA after it arrested him on Thursday.

The NIA sought 15-day custody to interrogate the five, officials said, adding the court granted the request.

The accused were brought to the court in bullet-proof vehicles with their faces covered.

A battery of mediapersons was seen outside the court complex.

The NIA, which took over the investigations into the case last weekend, brought them on Wednesday on a transit remand from Kulgam in south Kashmir.

A CONDEMNED MAN CANNOT FIGHT DEATH PENALTY ENDLESSLY, SAYS CJI

NEW DELHI (TIP): Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Thursday said a condemned person cannot fight the death penalty endlessly and it was important for the capital punishment to reach its finality.

The death penalty, he noted, cannot be questioned at every turn by the convict. "One cannot go on fighting endlessly for everything."

The CJI said it was not for a judge to forgive a crime. The cardinal duty of a judge was to see if the punishment was proportionate to the crime. The law applied whether the criminal was a first-timer or a hardened one.

"Courts punish crime. If you go by the innocence of a human being, the worst criminal would have an innocent heart. There is nobody who is a criminal at the depth of their heart... It is not the judge but the law that deals with a criminal. A judge, being a human being, cannot forgive a murderer. The law and the judge act for society. Imagine a situation when a judge tells a murderer 'yes, I forgive you!'. Imagine the impact!" Chief Justice Bobde observed.

The CJI asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta whether a condemned person, who reforms after the award of the death sentence by a court, should be spared the noose.

Mehta replied, "If that is accepted, there will be no death penalty. You can't kill your parents and then claim mercy saying you are an orphan".

The oral remarks came a day after the Centre filed an application, in the background of the Nirbhaya case, to modify a 2014 judgment of the Supreme Court in the Shatrughan Chauhan case. The 2014 verdict had issued guidelines, which primarily held that an unexplained delay in carrying out an execution would lead to commutation of the death penalty to life imprisonment.

On his maiden visit to LoC, Army chief asks troops to remain prepared for all contingencies

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Mukund Naravane on Thursday flew to the Krishna Ghati along the Line of Control (LoC) where he reviewed the prevailing situation and operational readiness of the units of the White Knight Corps.

While interacting with the troops, the Army chief stressed the need to remain prepared for all contingencies.

This was the first visit of Gen. Naravane to the sensitive areas along the LoC after taking charge of the Army chief. These areas were witnessing frequent mortar shelling by Pakistani troops.

He visited Headquarters of the Northern Command at Udhampur where he was briefed by Lt General Ranbir Singh, Army Commander Northern Command on the prevailing situation along the LoC and also in the hinterland.

The Army Chief was appreciative of the efforts put in by Northern Command to meet the challenges posed by inimical elements.

The Army Chief, accompanied by Lt General Ranbir Singh, Army Commander, visited troops on the LoC to review the prevailing situation and operational readiness of the units of White Knight Corps. He was briefed and updated by Lt General Harsha Gupta, General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps and commanders on the ground.



FORBIDDEN BROADWAY

By Mabel Pais

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to move our brand-new *Forbidden Broadway* to The York Theatre and honored to be part of their 50th Anniversary season. I'm excited to bring the laughter to the York stage!" - Gerard Alessandrini: Playwright, Director.

As part of The York Theatre Company's 50th Anniversary Season The Return Engagement of the hit Off-Broadway production of *Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation*. The Hilarious Musical Spoof of All Things Theatre Choreography by Gerry McIntyre Created, Written and Directed by Gerard Alessandrini Featuring Immanuel Houston, Aline Mayagoitia, Chris Collins-Pisano, Jenny Lee Stern, Joshua Turchin, with Fred Barton on piano.

The York Theatre Company (YTC) (James Morgan, Producing Artistic Director; Evans Haile, Executive Director), dedicated to the development of new musicals and rediscovery of musical gems from the past, presents the return engagement of the hit Off-Broadway production of Gerard Alessandrini's hilarious musical spoof of all things theatre *Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation*.

Performances began Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at The York Theatre Company at Saint Peter's (entrance on East 54th Street, just east of Lexington Avenue).

Opening Night was Sunday evening, January 19, 2020. *Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation* will play until February 16, 2020.

Alessandrini continues to lampoon The Great White Way's biggest shows and stars in this new edition, which he directed. *Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation* features spoofs of *Hadestown*, *Moulin Rouge*, the current *Oklahoma!* revival, *The Ferryman*, *Tootsie*, *Beetlejuice*, *Frozen*, the Yiddish *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Dear Evan Hansen*; the new generation of Broadway stars including *Billy Porter*, *Santino Fontana*, *Karen Olivo*, and *Alex Brightman*; exciting turns by *Bette Midler*, *André De Shields*, *Bernadette Peters*, and *Lin-Manuel Miranda*; and several surprises. Gerry McIntyre (Spamilton) is the choreographer. The return engagement is presented in association with *John Freedson*, *Harriet Yellin*, *Peter Brash*, *David Zippel*, and *Gerard Alessandrini*, with *Tzili Charney*.

The cast features *Immanuel Houston*, *Aline Mayagoitia*, *Chris Collins-Pisano*, *Jenny Lee Stern*, and *Joshua Turchin*, with *Fred Barton* on piano. "I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to move our brand-new *Forbidden Broadway* to The York Theatre and honored to be part of their 50th Anniversary season," remarked Alessandrini. "Transferring the show from a tiny cabaret space to a legitimate theatre gives us much-needed breathing room, as well as a chance to expand



Left to Right: Jenny Lee Stern, Fred Barton, Chris Collins-Pisano, Immanuel Houston in "Forbidden Broadway."

the choreography and add some sparkling lighting. Also, in the classic tradition of *Forbidden Broadway*, I'll have the chance to add some new spoofs on the current theatre season. I'm excited to bring the laughter to the York stage!"

Performance Schedule

For the schedule, visit www.yorktheatre.org

Tickets and Memberships

To purchase Regular Tickets, for Seniors, Students, and those 35 and under visit yorktheatre.org or in person at the box office or call (212) 935-5820. Groups of 10 or more, contact Great White Way at 212-757-9117, or GreatWhiteWay.com.

To learn more memberships, and the York Theatre Company Gift Cards, visit www.yorktheatre.org or call the Box Office at (212) 935-5820 during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Forbidden Broadway

Forbidden Broadway has been a theatrical institution since 1982, when Gerard Alessandrini created the first edition, lampooning the Broadway shows and stars of the day, who often stopped by to laugh at themselves alongside the public. In the 38 years since, *Forbidden Broadway* has garnered international acclaim and awards that include 7 Drama Desk Awards, an Obie, a Drama League Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, 2 Lucille Lortel Awards, and a Special Tony Award.

Gerard Alessandrini (Creator, Writer and Director). Several productions of *Forbidden Broadway* have



Left to Right: Aline Mayagoitia, Fred Barton, Immanuel Houston, Chris Collins-Pisano, Jenny Lee Stern, Joshua Turchin in "Forbidden Broadway."

Photos / Carol Rosegg

been produced over the years by Alessandrini. Several Awards have been garnered so far: Drama League Lifetime Achievement Award, Obie Award, 2 Lucille Lortel Awards, 7 Drama Desk (2 Best Lyrics, 2 Special Achievement, 3 Best Musical Revue), and a Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in Theatre.

The York Theatre Company

The York Theatre Company is the only theatre in New York City - and one of very few in the world - dedicated to developing and fully producing new musicals and preserving neglected, notable shows from the past.

For over four decades, York's intimate, imaginative style of producing both original and classic musicals has resulted in critical acclaim and recognition from artists and audiences alike. Under the guidance of Producing Artistic Director James Morgan since 1997, The York has focused on new musicals in its Mainstage Series - most of them world, American, or New York premieres - by some of the field's most esteemed creators and has also helped launch the careers of many talented new writers.

The York is the recipient of a special Drama Desk Award for "Developing and Producing New Musicals" and, more recently, a special Outer Critics Circle Award for "50 Years of Producing New and Classic Musicals."

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Nai-Ni Chen's Chinese New Year Celebration

By Mabel Pais

"A thrilling display of artistry! With their intriguing choreography of traditional and modern Chinese dance, elaborate costuming, and a variety of music, this company succeeds in delighting people of all ages." - BROADWAYWORLD.COM

Saturday, January 25, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

NJPAC : Lizzie & Jonathan Tisch Stage at Victoria Theater, One Center Street, Newark, NJ

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) presents Nai-Ni Chen Chinese New Year Celebration on Saturday, January 25, 2020 and Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

NJPAC's Lizzie & Jonathan Tisch Stage at Victoria Theater will be transformed into a stunning garden of flowers, along with majestic dragons, acrobatic lions, elegant peacocks, twirling ribbons and much more to

dazzle your senses.

Acclaimed choreographer Nai-Ni Chen and her exquisite dancers are known for fusing American modern dance with the grace, splendor and discipline of Asian art. This production will transport you beyond cultural boundaries to a place where tradition meets innovation. "A thrilling display of artistry! With their intriguing choreography of traditional and modern Chinese dance, elaborate costuming, and a variety of music, this company succeeds in delighting people of all ages." - Broadwayworld.com

Tickets to see Nai-Ni Chen Chinese New Year Celebration can be purchased by visiting NJPAC.org or the NJPAC Box Office or calling 888.GO.NJPAC



Dance Performers.



Photos / Courtesy NJPAC.

(888.466.5722).

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

Dr. Frederick M. Ruffen Audiologist



*Hearing Aid Evaluation * Hearing Aid Repair
*Tympanometry * Ear Wax Removal

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- Tympanometry and Acoustic Reflex Testing
- Hearing Aid Evaluations
- Advanced Ear Mold Selection Skills
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IELTS

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2020 Celebrated at the Consulate General of India in New York

21 individuals from various organizations/fields recognized for their outstanding service to the community

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): New York was one of the eight stations selected by the Ministry of External Affairs for celebration of Global Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on Thursday January 09, 2020. On this occasion, Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister (EAM) addressed the Indian diaspora and interacted with the Indian community through video conferencing located in Consulate General of India, New York, selected for the interaction with EAM. The interaction began with the EAM paying tribute to the late Smt. Sushma Swaraj by recognizing her unique contribution and tireless work for the Indian diaspora and those working and traveling abroad. EAM also emphasized the role of the 30 million Indians living in various countries around the world and how their contributions have enhanced India's standing in the world.

After his initial remarks, EAM has interacted with members of India diaspora. Each selected Mission was requested to ask two questions to the EAM. From New York, Mr. Vivek Patel, who raised US\$ 1.1 million through Facebook to help families of martyrs of Pulwama terror attacks and Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman GOPIO, asked the questions. Mr. Vivek Patel asked that, "How can we transfer charitable donations from members of Indian Diaspora to India? Is it possible for Indian Embassy or Consulate to facilitate this transfer of donations to India? We have been facing several hurdles in doing so". Replying to this question, EAM has conveyed that as of now the best and safest way to transfer any donation to India is through the Indian Embassies and Consulates. He also added that, he will discuss this matter with Ministry of Finance for availability of better option in future.

Dr. Thomas Abraham asked that - "Government of India has taken several



Honorees with Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of India in New York

steps to reach out to Indian Diaspora overseas. However, there is lot of misperception and misunderstanding about the Sikh community abroad? Can you please elaborate on what steps Government of India is taking to address the issues related to Sikh community?" To which the EAM replied that Government of India has no misperceptions about the Sikh community, they are extraordinary intelligent, hardworking and patriotic Community in India and abroad. He praised the community and highlighted various initiatives taken by Government of India such as issue Passport and Consular services to political asylees of Sikh origin as well as their family members and removing hurdles which prevent them to visit India. The EAM also highlighted the recent steps taken to preserve the sanctity of the Sikh faith such as restoration of the historic town of Sultanpur Lodhi, worldwide celebrations on the occasion of 550th Birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji being organized by Missions and Posts abroad, new train which runs across the historic places linked to Guru Nanak Devji, development of the Kartarpur Sahib

Corridor etc. He also assured that present Govt. is committed to bring perpetrators of atrocity of 1984 to Justice. Some cases of 1984 anti-Sikh riots which were closed have now been reopened and re-investigated. Govt. is also looking at the aspect of compensation as well as extending legal aid to the affected people of 1984 violence. Followed by interaction with EAM, CGI, New York has organized a PBD celebration in which twenty-one individuals from various organizations/fields were recognized for their outstanding service to the community. They are - Mr. Niraj Antani (State Representative Columbus Ohio); Mr. Sanjay Chaubey (Lawyer, President of the Indo-American Lawyers Association); Mr. Avinash Gupta (Shree Siddhivinayak Temple of USA/ Indian Cultural & Community Center); Mr. Manish Ingle (Council of Indian Organizations in Greater Philadelphia); Dr. Neeta Jain (Member of Indian Community, Democratic District Leader, New York Assembly District 25 Part B, Queens); Mr. Ramakrishna Kasarla (FIA, Central Ohio); Ms. Sushma Kotahwala (AIA); Dr. ReneeMehrra (Media

personality); Mr. Lal Motwani (GOPIO); Mr. Mohan Nannapaneni (TeamAid); Friends of MP NYNJ (Community organization); Mr. Harinder Singh Panaser (President, US South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation (SAARK) Business Forum); Mr. Minesh C. Patel (Former President of Gujarati Samaj of NY); Mr. Vivek Patel (Member of Indian Community, He collected about USD\$1.1 million on Facebook for the families of the Pulwama terror attack); Mr. Daniel Rajiah (Former Executive Director, Indian American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky); Mr. Jitesh Rohatgi (Member of Indian Community, Founder Member of the Indian American Political Action Committee of Lehigh Valley); Mr. Jagdish Sewhani (American India Public Affairs Committee, NY); Mr. Nikhil Shah, (India Association of Rhode Island); Dr. Prasad Srinivasan (MILAN); Mr. Ankur Vaidya (FIA, NYNJCT); Mr. Nitin Vyas (World Vegan Vision). More than 110 prominent members of the Indian diaspora attended the event.

(Based on Press Release)

Genocide of Kashmiri Pandits Recalled

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Kashmiri Pandit (Hindu) Genocide that began on January 19, 1990 and (b) To recognize the resiliency and noble spirit of the survivors of that community", a press release from IAFK said.

The Press release said the event "presented the truth, data and factual stories as well as current events and progress" in restoring peace in Kashmir state of India. More than 300 hundred attendees participated in event.

Dr Raj Bhayani, the chairman of the IAFK emphasized the need for Indian Americans to come together and educate mainstream Western media, non-Indian Americans, politicians from both parties and understand what he called, the dangers facing West Bengal and Kerala in the future. Dr. Bhayani emphasized that the lesson learned from Kashmir "should make us all more proactive and be ready



A view of the gathering

for dealing with jihadist evil at the doorsteps of India, USA and all over the

community and the Indian American community in general, consider the Western media coverage of Kashmir as one-sided, including hearings on Capitol Hill, which have not adequately covered the plight of Kashmiri Hindus over the last 30 years.

Now with the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which did away with the Special Status of former Jammu & Kashmir, "the backlash" this "one-sided" coverage inspired members of the Indian American community to come together and form the organization - Indian Americans For Kashmir. Mohan Wanchoo, a Kashmiri Pandit and co-founder of IAFK, narrated the atrocities Kashmiri Pandits faced in 1990 starting on this day, showing a video of emotional stories of survivors who fled the Kashmir Valley under threat. (Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

Photos/ courtesy IAFK
world," the press release said.
Members of the Kashmiri Pandit

Dr. Raj Bhayani Assumes Charge as President of AAPI-QLI in Jubilee Year



President Dr Raj Bhayani receiving Gavel from Dr Himanshu Pandya



Dr Raj Bhayani with National AAPI TEAM AND AAPIQLI Executive Committee

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): Nearly 500 people from across the country came together to celebrate the contributions, achievements and growth of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin of QUEENS and LONG ISLAND (AAPI-QLI) during the 24th annual convention here at the Hilton Huntington, Long Island, NY on Wednesday, January 22nd, 2020.

In his presidential address, Dr. Rajendra Bhayani, President of AAPI-QLI, describing of AAPIQLI as "One of most prestigious organizations in the country today," gave an overview of how the organization, and its trajectory of growth over the past 24 years and how it has become today to be one of the most powerful ethnic Physician organizations in the country. "Today I start my presidency with deep sense of gratitude and appreciation. You all esteemed members of AAPIQLI have given me tremendous opportunity to be your president during this very special year a silver jubilee year of AAPIQLI. It is my pleasure and very special privilege to serve your president during this landmark year of AAPIQLI."

Dr. Raj Bhayani, Treasurer of national AAPI expressed his gratitude and appreciation to: "Dr Ajay Lodha, past President of AAPI for helping "make me a member of National AAPI;" Dr. Vajinath Chakote, Board of Trustee, AAPIQLI, who introduced him to become a member of the AAPIQLI; Dr. Shashi Shah, Dr. Bagla, Dr. Satish Anand Ahuja, Dr. Rakesh Dua, Dr. Jagdish Gupta, Dr. Himanshu Pandya, and Dr. Abhay Malhotra for showing me how to stand for what is right and to stand for the organization which is the most important."

Enumerating some of the major achievements of the Chapter, Dr. Bhayani said, "AAPI-QLI has been providing a forum for monthly meetings for Continuing Medical Educations on Sunday, monthly sessions with discussions on current trends and changes on a range of topics in healthcare, wealth management, and practice management issues on

Wednesday. AAPI-QLI is also engaged in charitable activities for the benefit of our community at large in the form of donations to several charitable organizations every year.

Dr. Raj Bhayani, an accomplished Neurosurgeon, social activist, entrepreneur, leader, and the first ENT surgeon in India, was the Co-Chair of AAPI GHS 2018 and 2019 had completed training in Neurosurgery and had a Fellowship in Facial Plastic & Microvascular Surgery in India. He is currently practicing in New York, has come a long way since he began his professional practice in New York decades ago. He served as director of ENT on several major Hospitals in New York.

Dr. Bhayani is grateful to American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), which he has come to love and adore in recent years. He says, "AAPI has given me the opportunity to work with people of high intellect. It has helped me develop relationships with many, without which I would not have I have met many people whom I look upon as role models. And, AAPI helps me grow as a person and continues to mentor me in several ways."

Dr. Bhayani says, having worked in the inner circles of AAPI, he has come to recognize "AAPI as the most united, strong, vibrant and transparent organization. We do have differences of opinion, which is the beauty of democracy in AAPI. When needed, AAPI members have always come together to support AAPI and its many initiatives. We have always connected and have given our best for common causes."

Dr. Bhayani has held several positions in AAPI and has grown with the organization. He has served as a past president of AAPI Metro New York City. He has served successfully as the Convention Chair of National AAPI Convention in 2017 Atlantic City with a record profit of more than \$300,000. He had served as the Young Generation AAPI Leadership Conference Co-Chair 2018 and 2017, AAPIQLI Convention Chair 2015, AAPI QLI Diwali Gala Chair

2018 and a member of the Board of Trustee AAPI NYC METRO. Dr. Bhayani has been an active member of AAPI CPR Council; AAPI Publication Committee; AAPI ADOPT A VILLAGE PROGRAM ; and the Co-Chair of AAPI India Day parade in New York. He is Founder of New Jersey State AAPI.

His accomplishments in the professional world are well known. During the duration of his medical profession, more than 50 research papers have been published and presented by him, which has resulted in inclusion of his name in the Marquis 'Who's Who in America in Medicine and Healthcare' acknowledging his achievements in the medical field.

Not satisfied with his professional accomplishments, Dr. Bhayani has devoted his life to being actively involved in the philanthropic sector. He currently serves on the boards, and is an active member, of over 20 communities and associations that are involved in philanthropic activities.

In addition, he has also served on the Board of Trustees of Save Life Foundation, which has helped in the implementation of Good Samaritan Law and Road Safety Bill to help roadside accident victims and to improve road safety in India.

He is trustee of Mahila Swarojgar Sanstha Varanasi empowering its 50000 women members to be financially independent.

Passionate about giving back to the larger society, Dr. Bhayani says, "Inspired by many individuals, who lead by example. Cause is the driving than actual person." His life has been an example of how to give back to the community, which has given him much. "Even since childhood, I had the desire to be someone, who wanted to contribute to the common good."

Recently, he was the chief organizer for 'Football for Nation' initiative, in Delhi, by bringing Parliamentarians and Film stars together to play a game of football to raise funds for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Proceeds from that program were donated for Beti Bachao Beti

Padhao program empowering girl children in India.

Besides, his significant contributions in organizing several health and blood donation camps as well as fund raisers for Akshayapatra, helping millions of kids with Mid-day meal program in India, have earned him great respect and appreciation in the society. He is grand Patron for India Day Parade for celebrating India's Independence Day in New York.

Imbibed with this passion, Dr. Bhayani did not have to look for opportunities. They actually came his way. "In the society we live in, there are ample of opportunities to do good," he says. "I always look upon in my friends who do larger good and have tried to join them or find noble causes that I can support or initiate, with the objective of doing little acts of kindness. I believe small acts of kindness by many of us can achieve tremendous impact on humanity than individual acts."

The unassuming Dr. Bhayani was instrumental in organizing Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's historic address to the Indian - American community at Madison Square Garden, during his maiden visit to New York in September 2014.

A distinguished Guest Speaker, as a proponent of the Honorable Prime Minister's vision for India, on popular regional TV shows in USA. His work is an exemplary example of his commitment towards India's progress.

His outstanding support to the society in his roles as a physician, a leader, and as a philanthropist have not gone unnoticed. Dr. Bhayani has received dozens of awards, recognition and scholarships. He has been felicitated on several platforms and his list of accolades includes Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award at House of Lords in London, Bharat Gaurav Puraskar and Delhi Ratan Award, Hind Ratan Award, Asian American Heritage Honoree of the year 2016, New York City as well as State Proclamation Award.

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

US journo arrested in Indonesia for visa violation

JAKARTA (TIP): An American journalist, Philip Jacobson (30), who has covered stories exposing environmental destruction in Indonesia, has been arrested on Borneo island for alleged visa violations, his lawyer and the environmental news outlet he works for said on Wednesday, January 22. Jacobson had entered Indonesia using a business visa for a series of meetings. He has been ordered to remain in the city pending an investigation. Reuters

US refuses to extradite diplomat's wife over teen's death: British govt

"We are disappointed in this decision, which appears to be a denial of justice," a spokeswoman for the Home Office said.



LONDON/ WASHINGTON (TIP): The United States has rejected a request by the UK government to extradite the wife of a diplomat who was involved in a car accident that killed a teenager, the British government said on Friday, January 24.

The case of Anna Sacoolas, 42, has been a thorn in London's close relations with Washington, stirring up debates over the limits of diplomatic immunity in cases unrelated to national security.

"We are disappointed in this decision, which appears to be a denial of justice," a spokeswoman for the Home Office said. "We are urgently considering our options." Briton Harry Dunn died in August when his motorbike collided with a car driving on the wrong side of the road near an airbase in Northamptonshire, central England, which is used by the US military as a communications hub.

Sacoolas admitted in October to being the driver but has cited immunity while refusing to return to Britain to face justice, as Dunn's parents demand.

The parents of the 19-year-old were informed of Mike Pompeo's decision in a phone call with their MP on Thursday, a family spokesman said.

The US State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment. (Source: AFP)

Trump's policy towards India is abdication of leadership: Ami Bera

WASHINGTON (TIP): As election season gets under way in the U.S., Congressman Ami Bera called the Trump policy towards developments in India such as Kashmir and the "citizenship test" an "abdication of American leadership". Mr. Bera's remarks were made during a call with reporters as part of outreach to the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community for former Vice-President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign for the presidency - which Mr. Bera is supporting.

As the new head of the important U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and Nonproliferation, Mr. Bera's comments have significance for U.S.-India relations. The Subcommittee, under its former chairman Brad Sherman, held a hearing on Kashmir following Parliament's abrogation of Article 370 last year.

"The Trump administration has been wholly silent on some of what's happened in Kashmir as well as some of what's happening with the citizenship test. Under a normal administration, America would be using its influence and dialogue in opening those channels of communication," Mr. Bera said, reiterating that India's strength is its secular democracy.

"I would argue that India should not lose that secular democracy because that is what separates it from other states and other countries. You don't hear Donald Trump out there talking about it or even Secretary Pompeo. I think it's not up to us to tell other countries what to do but with strong allies, we certainly can have those conversations and that dialogue," he said.



"The Trump administration has been wholly silent on some of what's happened in Kashmir as well as some of what's happening with the citizenship test", says Ami Bera.

The Congressman also confirmed that he had conveyed his concerns - particularly on Kashmir being opened up to the press and diplomats - to the Indian government privately, in addition to using public channels.

Criticism from the U.S. has rankled India, which views the Kashmir issue and citizenship-related policies and legislation (the National Register of Citizens or NRC and the Citizenship Amendment Act or CAA) as internal matters. While in Washington last month for the India-U.S. 2+2 dialogue, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had cancelled a meeting with Democrat

Mr. Bera's remarks were made during a call with reporters as part of outreach to the AAPI community for former Vice-President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign for the presidency - which Mr. Bera is supporting.

Congresswoman of Indian origin, Pramila Jaypal. Who had introduced a resolution in the House asking India to lift the restrictions in Kashmir that had been instituted following the abrogation of Article 370.

He also said that there was bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress for a strong U.S.- India relationship.

"Vice-President Biden, President Obama talked about... the U.S.- India relationship potentially being the defining relationship in the 21st Century," Mr. Bera said.

On Biden

Mr. Bera said the Trump administration family immigration - an important issue for the AAPI community. Mr. Biden would "probably reverse" some of the policies that the Trump administration put in to restrict the spouses of H-1b workers from working, as per Mr Bera.

Certain H1-b spouses (H4 visa holders) were allowed to apply for work permits under the Obama administration. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the Trump administration has proposed restricting the ability of H4 visa holders to work, although a final rule on this is yet to be published.

US to put visa curbs on pregnant women

The applicants will have to prove they are coming to the country for medical treatment



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Trump administration is coming out with new visa restrictions aimed at restricting "birth tourism," in which women travel to the US to give birth so their children can have a coveted US passport. The rules will take effect on Friday, Jan 24.

Visa applicants deemed by consular officers to be coming to the US primarily to give birth will now be treated like other foreigners coming to the US for medical treatment, according to State Department guidance released on Wednesday, January 22. The applicants will have to prove they are coming for medical treatment and they have the money to pay for it.

The State Department planned to publicize the rules on Thursday, Jan 23, according to two officials with knowledge of the plans. The practice of coming to the US to give birth is fundamentally legal, although there are scattered cases of authorities arresting operators of birth tourism agencies for visa fraud or tax evasion. (AP)

Trump to add a 'couple of countries' to US travel ban

DAVOS (TIP): US President Donald Trump said his administration was preparing to add a "couple of countries" to the controversial list of states whose citizens are subject to travel bans or severe restrictions on entry to the United States.

"We are adding a couple of countries to it. We have to be safe. Our country has to be safe," he said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, adding that the names of the new countries would be announced "very shortly".

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that the administration planned to add seven countries including Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, and others in Africa and Asia.

It said the other nations being considered for new rules were Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Sudan and Tanzania. The first package of travel bans and restrictions — targeting mainly Muslim majority countries — were announced shortly after Trump took office in January 2017 and outraged his critics. — AFP

In Spain, toll rises to nine as Storm Gloria ebbs

BARCELONA (TIP): The death toll from a violent storm which has wrought havoc on huge swathes of Spain's eastern and southern coastline rose to nine on January 23 as rescuers pressed the hunt for at least five missing people.

The latest death was that of a man whose body was found in a flooded river near Jorba, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) northwest of Barcelona, the emergency services said.

Rescuers in Catalonia had been searching for a missing person in the same area but said it was too early to confirm if it was him.

Catalan rescuers had late on Wednesday found another body of a man who died after falling into the water in Palamos, a port town about 100 kilometres up the coast from Barcelona.

They are also searching for a man who went missing from a merchant ship in the same area, as well as a person in Cadaques near the French border.

Earlier on Thursday, regional officials confirmed the death of a 75-year-old woman whose house collapsed because of heavy rain in Alcoi, a town in the eastern Alicante region.

Storm Gloria hit the region on Sunday, bringing strong winds, torrential rains and heavy snow, battering Spain's southern and eastern flanks before moving north.

Gale-force winds and huge waves smashed into seafront towns, with dramatic images showing massive flooding that has damaged shops, houses and restaurants. National weather agency Aemet had on Wednesday said the storm was starting to abate although it kept Catalonia and the Balearic Islands on alert. As the storm eased, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was on Thursday visiting some of the worst-hit areas, overflying parts of Catalonia before heading to the Balearic Islands which on Jan 22 were hit by record waves.

Canadian air tanker fighting Australia bushfires crashes, killing three Americans

SYDNEY (TIP): A Canadian-owned C-130 Hercules air tanker crashed while fighting bushfires in Australia's alpine region on January 23, killing all three of its crew, authorities said.

The victims were American residents, Australian authorities said, adding that they did not immediately know why the plane crashed while carrying a load of fire retardant.

"Tragically, there appear to be no survivors as a result of the crash down in the Snowy Monaro area," said Shane Fitzsimmons, the chief of rural fire services for the southeastern state of New South Wales.

"(The tanker) impacted heavily with the ground and initial reports are that there was a large fireball associated with the impact of the plane as it hit the ground. There is no indication at this stage of what's caused the accident." (Reuters)

Queen gives formal assent to Brexit Bill



LONDON (TIP): Queen Elizabeth II gave her formal assent on Thursday for Britain to end its decades-long involvement in the European Union and seek a more independent but uncertain future at the end of the month.

The head of state's ceremonial approval of the withdrawal legislation allows Britain to leave its closest neighbours and trading partners after years of bickering and three delays. Two top EU officials in Brussels are expected to sign the separation treaty on Friday and Prime Minister Boris Johnson — the pro-Brexit figurehead of Britain's seismic 2016 referendum — will put his name on it in the coming days.

"At times it felt like we would never cross the Brexit finish line, but we've done it," Johnson said after both houses of the British parliament ratified the

withdrawal bill on Wednesday.

"Now we can put the rancour and division of the past three years behind us and focus on delivering a bright, exciting future." The January 31 split caps a remarkable political comeback for Johnson at one of the most difficult points in Britain's post-war history.

He quit former PM Theresa May's government in 2018 in protest at what he viewed as her pro-European separation terms. Johnson returned as May's successor in July and has since managed to negotiate his own deal with Brussels and regain the government's control of parliament in a risky early election last month.

The rest was a formality. Lawmakers barely debated the withdrawal agreement before passing it — even though critics called it worse for Britain than the one reached by May. — AFP

Germany bans neo-Nazi group Combat 18, launches raids

BERLIN (TIP): Germany has banned the neo-Nazi group Combat 18 and raided the homes of its leading members across the country, the Interior Ministry said on January 23.

Two hundred officers seized phones, laptops, weapon-related objects, clothing and Nazi relics, the ministry said in a statement.

Last year, Walter Luebcke, a senior local conservative politician known for pro-migrant views, was shot dead, and a man believed to be a far-right sympathiser was arrested on suspicion of murdering him.

Germany was also shocked when two people were shot dead last year near a synagogue in Halle in eastern Germany, while two years ago leaders of the neo-Nazi group NSU were convicted of killing immigrants in a spree that lasted years.

"Today's ban gives a clear signal: right extremism and anti-Semitism have no place in our society," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said in a statement.

"The terror attacks of the NSU, the terrible murder of Walter Luebcke and the act of terror in Halle last year have given us a brutal illustration of the real danger that right-wing extremism poses to our free society," he added.

Combat 18 originated in Britain in the early 1990s. Regional interior ministers in Germany have been calling for a ban for at least a year.

The ministry said the group had been carrying out activities that contravened Germany's constitutional order. It is the 18th extreme right group to have been banned there.

World leaders, including German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, gathered in Israel on Thursday to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi German death camp at Auschwitz. Reuters

North Korea names sharp-tongued army figure as foreign minister



In this Jan. 9, 2018, file photo, head of North Korean delegation Ri Son Gwon speaks during a meeting with South Korea at the Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone in Paju, South Korea. Photo / Courtesy AP

SEOUL (TIP): North Korea on Friday, Jan. 24, 2020, confirmed that it has named the former senior army officer with little experience in dealings with the United States as its new foreign minister in a possible indication that it will take a harder line on Washington installed nuclear negotiations, Associated Press said.

In this Jan. 9, 2018, file photo, head of North Korean delegation Ri Son Gwon speaks during a meeting with South Korea at the Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone in Paju, South Korea. North Korea on Friday, Jan. 24, 2020, confirmed that it has named the former senior army officer with little experience in dealings with the United States as its new foreign minister in a possible indication that it will take a harder line on Washington installed nuclear negotiations.

Ri Son Gwon's new title as foreign minister was disclosed on Friday in a Korean Central News Agency dispatch that said he attended a reception for foreign diplomats in Pyongyang the previous day.

North Korea has named a sharp-tongued former army officer with little foreign policy experience as its top diplomat, in a possible indication it will take a harder line with Washington installed nuclear negotiations.

Ri Son Gwon's new title as foreign minister was disclosed Friday in a Korean Central News Agency dispatch that said he attended a reception for foreign diplomats in Pyongyang the previous day.

South Korean and other outside media outlets have recently reported North Korea informed foreign diplomats in Pyongyang, of Mr. Ri's job last week.

In his speech at the banquet, Comrade Ri Son Gwon said that the Korean people have turned out in the general offensive to break through head-on the barriers to the advance of socialist construction by dint of self-reliance ... and made public the foreign policy stand of the (North Korean) government," KCNA said. Mr. Ri, an outspoken retired army colonel who previously headed a government body responsible for relations with South Korea, has taken part in numerous inter-Korean military talks over the past 15 years. But Mr. Ri, who is also an alternate member of the ruling Workers' Party Central Committee, lacks experience in negotiations with the United States and other countries.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

INDIA CELEBRATES 71ST REPUBLIC DAY

India celebrates 71st Republic Day on January 26, 2020. One of the three national holidays in India, Republic Day is celebrated with great pomp and show throughout the nation each year.

Preparations begin almost a month before for the actual day. A massive parade is held which reflects a touch of modernity in the display of might and technology and the capabilities of growth in various sectors. While the parade symbolizes the power and force, the different regional tableaus reflect the cultural themes and motifs. Republic Day has a very significant place in the Indian history as India became a Republic from a British Dominion on this very day. Browse through the following lines to know all about the history and origin of Republic Day.

India became independent from the British Rule on 15th August, 1947. However, the country did not have its own constitution and wholly depended on the modified colonial Government of India Act, 1935. Also, India was headed by King George VI, until the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950. Prior to this, the seeds of a republican nation were sowed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lahore session at the Indian National Congress at the midnight of 31st December, 1929 - 1st January, 1930.

The tri-color flag was unfurled by the nationalists present who took a pledge to celebrate "Purna Swaraj" (complete Independence) Day every year on 26th January, while continuing to fight for the establishment of a Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. The independence was achieved in 1947 while the professed pledge was redeemed on 26th January, 1950.

The Indian Constituent Assembly was called together on 9th December, 1946, where a committee was formed. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar became the chairman of the committee, who along with the other members drafted the Constitution. The Indian Constitution included 395 Articles and 8 Schedules. The Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949. In the following year on 26th January, 1950, the Constitution of India came into force and became a sovereign democratic republic of India, 894 days after the withdrawal of British Rule in 1947, which is why, it is said that India achieved its true independence on this day. Next, elections were held and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the first President of free India.

He took the oath at the Durban Hall in the Government House, which was followed by the Presidential drive along the five-mile route to the Irwin Stadium. He unfurled the National Flag at the stadium. This transition of India into a sovereign democratic republic nation is indeed a historical event. The two-decade long journey, right from the conceptualization of the dream in 1930 to its actual realization in 1950, is certainly worth a grand celebration. Today, the Indian Constitution is the longest in the world, consisting of 397 articles and 12 schedules, providing a single citizenship for the whole nation. The national holiday is celebrated with festivities and patriotic fervor across the whole nation.

Republic Day Parade

The grandeur of the Republic Day of India is visible in the



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE REPUBLIC DAY PARADE IN 2020

REPUBLIC DAY 2020 CHIEF GUEST

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to the Republic Day celebrations in 2020. During his meeting with Bolsonaro on the sidelines of 11th BRICS Summit held in Brasilia, PM Modi invited him to be the chief guest at the Republic Day in 2020. Bolsonaro accepted the invitation with pleasure.

REPUBLIC DAY PARADE 2020 FACTS

The Republic Day parade, held annually on 26th January, starts from Rajpath and ends at Red Fort in Delhi. Presided by the President and Prime Minister of India, the armed forces march their way saluting the freedom fighters and the eminent personalities on the dias. The horse-march is another important part of the celebration of Republic Day in New Delhi. National Cadet Corps (NCC) and selected scout boys are part of the event. The parade is followed with regional dances, patriotic songs, and military bike shows.

On Republic Day of India, every year, a 21-gun salute is given to the National Flag and the President, during the Flag Hoisting Ceremony. When a foreign head of State or head of

government visits India, a formal reception is held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and the head of state is given a 21-gun salute, with a 19-gun salute given to a foreign head of government.

This year the Ministry of Defence has selected 22 tableau out of 56 proposals for the Republic Day parade. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will see its tableau, depicting its humanitarian efforts during catastrophes such as cyclones and floods, rolling down the Rajpath for the first time this Republic Day Parade. The force was raised in 2006 for specific tasks of relief and rescue during natural and man-made disasters or similar life-threatening situations.

This will be the very first time when the woman army officer will be seen leading the Army Day Parade. Tania Shergill is a fourth-generation Indian army officer who joined the armed forces in 2017 after graduating from the Officers Training Academy in Chennai. Captain Tania Shergill will be the first woman parade adjutant for the Parade this year.

The Air Force's new Apache attack and Chinook heavy lift helicopters will be participating in the fly past for the first time.

grand parade that is held along Rajpath, beginning from Raisina Hill near the Rashtrapati Bhavan (President's Palace) and moving on to Rajpath past India Gate and proceeding to the Red Fort.

The occasion witnesses the presence of the President, the Prime Minister and several other high-ranking officials of the country. The parade starts with the arrival of the President of India, who is escorted by a group of bodyguards on horses. Next, the Prime Minister of India offers wreaths at the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate in memory of the martyrs of the Indian army. The national flag is unfurled by the President of India, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces. This is succeeded by the cheerful tune of the National Anthem and a 21-gun salute. Led by three different divisions of the armed forces viz: Navy, Army and Air Force; the Republic Day Parade has all of them displaying their might along the Rajpath, saluting the President. The Armed Forces staff performs motorcycle rides whereas the staff of the Indian Air Force performs flying parade in fighter planes.

The rich and colorful culture of India is showcased

in the parade of the Republic Day. Traditional as well as cultural performances are given by professionals belonging to different regions. School children in picturesque costumes also participate in the display of different aspects of the glorious history of the country on this big day.

The real heroes of the nation are honored with the bravery awards and medals. National Awards are given to children for selfless sacrifice and bravery.

A row of IAF jets marks the end of the grand celebration, leaving behind a trail of colored smoke. It bids goodbye to the gathered audience by lavishing rose petals on them.

Beating the Retreat Ceremony

The Republic Day celebration ends officially with the Beating the Retreat ceremony, which is held on the 29 January every year. The event symbolizes retreat after a day on the battlefield and features remarkable performances by the Indian Air Force, the India Navy, and the Indian Army. Held at the Raisina Hill, New Delhi, Beating the Retreat Ceremony has its tickets available at the same outlets as the Republic Day Parade.

REPUBLIC@70: PEOPLE WHO STEERED INDIA'S FOUNDING DOCUMENT

B. R. Ambedkar

A scholar of law, economics, sociology and political science, BR Ambedkar was born in 1891 in the Central Provinces at a time when people from oppressed castes faced formidable barriers in education and jobs. Nevertheless, Ambedkar earned doctorates from Columbia University and the London School of Economics before plunging into Indian politics and organising the lower castes. Often called the Father of the Constitution, Ambedkar was the head of the drafting committee and India's first law minister.

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar

Born in 1883 in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, Ayyar was responsible for key sections of the Constitution, and on whom praise was heaped by BR Ambedkar.

The son of a priest, Ayyar studied history and then law, quickly becoming a leading member of the Madras bar.

He was knighted in 1932 and was the advocate general of the Madras Presidency from 1929 to 1944. He was invited to the Constituent Assembly by Jawaharlal Nehru for his legal expertise.

He was part of nine committees, including the drafting committee.

"There were in the drafting committee men bigger, better and more competent than myself such as my friend Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer," Ambedkar said about him.

K. M. Munshi

The lawyer, educationist and writer was born in 1887 in Gujarat and spent his initial years as a lawyer before jumping into politics.

In the Constituent Assembly, he was a member of 11 committees—the highest number for any person.

After Independence, he became the agriculture minister and then the governor of Uttar Pradesh. A prolific writer in Gujarati, English and Hindi, he founded the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and was one of the founding members of Swatantra Party.

Jaipal Singh

A politician, writer and athlete, Jaipal Singh Munda was born in 1903 near Ranchi and emerged as one of the most vocal advocates for India's tribal communities in the Constituent Assembly.

Singh spent his childhood looking after cattle but academic brilliance saw him graduate from the University of Oxford, before joining the Indian Civil Services.

He was also a gifted hockey player and part of the Indian team that lifted the Olympic gold in 1928. He became president of the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1939 and was among the first to articulate the demand for a separate tribal homeland of Jharkhand.

In the Constituent Assembly, he was part of three committees and called for greater representation from tribes, and said the government



should concentrate on welfare of the marginalised community.

Jawaharlal Nehru

India's first prime minister and one of its tallest leaders of the freedom struggle, Jawaharlal Nehru was a barrister. He was among MK Gandhi's closest associates and one of the leading members of the Constituent assembly who chaired three important committees. As prime minister for 17 years, he steered the country's economy and foreign policy, while also giving direction to its education policy. But his handling of Kashmir conflict and relations with China were controversial.

Begum Aizaz Rasul

The only Muslim woman member of the Constituent Assembly, Rasul was born in 1909 in Lahore to a branch of the royal family of Malerkotla in Punjab.

She was one of a handful of women to fight the 1937 election and get elected from present day Uttar Pradesh.

She was staunchly against separate electorates for Muslims and is credited with having turned the opinions of some more conservative members; and a great believer in the Constitution.

"As a woman, I have very great satisfaction in the fact that no discrimination will be made on account of sex...I am sure women can look forward to equality of opportunity under the new Constitution," she said in a speech in November 1948. Rasul also headed the Indian Women's Hockey Federation for two decades.

Vallabhbhai Patel

The first deputy prime minister and home minister of India was born in 1875 in Gujarat. He practised as a top barrister in Ahmedabad before taking the plunge in the freedom struggle. Patel was one of MK Gandhi's trusted lieutenants who led the Salt Satyagraha from the front, and was one of the most vocal proponents of the Quit India Movement. Patel was chairman of two committees, and member of two others. He was also credited with uniting 565 princely states into the Union.

Kazi Syed Karimuddin

Born in 1899 in Maharashtra, Karimuddin studied

at the Aligarh Muslim University and became a noted criminal lawyer.

He was a prominent member of the Congress and was a member of legislative assembly of the erstwhile Central Provinces. He was also a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1954 to 1958.

He is remembered for having articulated the need for protecting the privacy of an individual by moving an amendment to protect individuals from unreasonable search-and-seizure, on the lines of the American Constitution. This was probably the first time that the right to privacy was articulated in the Constituent Assembly. His amendment received some support from BR Ambedkar but the right to privacy did not find an explicit place in the Constitution at the time.

Rajendra Prasad

The staunch Gandhian and Congress stalwart from Bihar was the president of the Constituent Assembly and the first President of independent India.

Born in Siwan in 1884, he spent his college years in Calcutta before returning home and nurturing a student movement.

He was an ardent follower of MK Gandhi, going to jail several times. In the Constituent Assembly, he was the president and also chaired four important committees.

K. T. Shah

A leading advocate and economist, Shah was appointed by the Congress as the general secretary of the National Planning Committee in 1938 under the chairmanship of Nehru. The committee aimed to tackle unemployment and focus on industrialisation.

In the Constituent Assembly, he was a part of two committees and two sub-committees.

He is remembered for two attempts at including the word 'secular' in the Constitution – both of which were rejected by the assembly.

He was a strong votary of states' rights and argued that states should not be seen as secondary to the Union government. He also argued that the freedom of the press be explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. Shah was also the principal opponent of Rajendra Prasad in the first presidential election of India in 1952.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN 2020

In December 2019, India and Japan were scheduled to hold a prime ministerial summit meeting in Guwahati. However, due to the protests in Assam over the issue of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the meeting had to be cancelled. Moreover, owing to the controversies related to the nature of the CAA, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen also decided to call off his upcoming visit to India.

Meanwhile, in Washington DC, India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar was slated to meet the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States' (US) House of Representatives.

However, citing the presence of Pramila Jaypal, a well-known critic of India on Kashmir, Jaishankar decided to not attend the meeting. India and its foreign minister came under a lot of criticism for skipping the meeting.

Besides, as the US goes through the impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump and approaches presidential elections in November 2020, managing the India-US strategic relationship also remains a challenge. India's economic slowdown and a perceived majoritarian political turn have made it difficult for pro-India voices in the US to support India's policies such as CAA.

All of these developments point towards three upcoming challenges for India's foreign policy: CAA and its fallout over India's neighborhood policy; international troubles related to Kashmir and managing the relationship with the big powers like the US.

All these challenges are interrelated and are likely to test India's diplomatic capacity in 2020. Citizenship tangle Protests over the nature of CAA and its fallout in India's neighborhood policy is likely to present India's foreign policy establishment with considerable challenges in 2020.

Citizenship Tangle

The CAA specifically mentions three Muslim-majority nations in South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and their non-Islamic minorities. It affects India's South Asia policy, provides ammunition to India's detractors in these countries and is likely to inject religion as a significant factor in its dealings with neighbours. Bangladesh is long considered as a bright spot for foreign policy. However, the CAA is likely to adversely impact India-Bangladesh relations as the Bangladeshi leadership has to respond to its domestic political compulsions.

Kashmir back on the table

Moreover, abrogation of Article 370 and its negative international impact is also hard to miss. India's actions have re-hyphenated it with Pakistan, undone diplomatic efforts of the last 20 years and put Kashmir back in international diplomatic discussions. Sensing this, China has tried to create troubles for India in the United Nations (UN) and



is likely to do so in 2020.

US Congress too discussed Kashmir and many influential voices in the West, including the likes of the US presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren, are critical of India. Kashmir is likely to feature in international discourse in the coming year more prominently than it did in 2019.

Farooq Abdullah and restrictions over political activities in the region have not made it any easier for Indian diplomats abroad to argue India's case convincingly.

A case in point here is the latest tussle within the bloc of Islamic nations to organize meetings for criticizing India's actions related to Kashmir. So far, India did not face harsh criticism from the traditional leader of the Islamic bloc, Saudi Arabia.

However, as Malaysia, Turkey and Qatar took the lead, with the tacit support of Iran, in criticising India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are finding it difficult to stay quiet. India has invested considerable diplomatic capital in cultivating relationship with these two West Asian countries in the last few years. However, they too will be constrained to be seen as taking action to chastise India over CAA and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir was the only Muslim majority state in India. Coupled with CAA's focus over non-Islamic minorities and Ayodhya verdict in the favor of Hindus, international observers believe that India seems to have taken a decisive turn towards right-wing, majoritarian politics.

Fallout of India's 'rightward' turn

It does not augur well for India's foreign policy as it dents India's image as a liberal, secular democracy. Owing to this, India is likely to face difficult times in Western capitals because influential human rights groups, religious organizations and pro-democracy activists are likely to pressurize their governments and international agencies like the UN Human Rights Commission. India's invitation to a leader like Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, who proudly harbors controversial opinions about women, minorities, climate change and democracy, for Republic Day celebrations in January 2020 further erodes India's credibility as a liberal democracy.

Breaking down of the bipartisan consensus over foreign policy in the US is likely to lead to hardening positions and tough language over issues like Kashmir. India's recent actions, including



organizing events like 'Howdy Modi' in Texas, which has emerged as a political swing state, have not gone down well within the US political establishment.

As a result, many leaders from the Democratic Party are criticising India and cancellation of the meeting by Jaishankar has not helped in softening the criticism. In 2020, Kashmir-related troubles will only make it imperative for Indian diplomats to engage with the US lawmakers including those from the Democratic Party.

In fact, inflexible stance over the issue of CAA-related protests, images of police brutality and inability to revive economic growth means that Indian diplomats are likely to be asked tough questions abroad and hence have lots of explaining to do. Therefore, tough days are ahead for Indian diplomacy in 2020.

As India struggles to explain its positions and manage the diplomatic impact of its actions, the Chinese challenge in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) only gets tougher. While the Indian government was busy in passing CAA and dealing with domestic protests, the Chinese navy along with the Russian navy has held military exercises with South Africa and Iran in the Western Indian Ocean.

Therefore, the growing Chinese footprint in the IOR should be the real challenge for India in 2020. But can India focus on it? And does India want to focus on it? These are the questions to watch out for.

THE NATIONAL AMBITION: BUILDING A \$10 TRILLION ECONOMY

If India continues on its present growth course, it could have a US\$5.6 trillion economy in 20 years. To create a US\$10 trillion economy, India will need to accelerate its growth to 9% CAGR over the next 20 years.

The government has laid out the path to a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 in the recently released National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) report.

Hover over the keyword to read more about the topic without leaving this page!

While giving a projection of the total infra capital outlay and the budgetary support till 2024-25, the central government has projected the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be around Rs 365.5 lakh crore by the end of that financial year. At Rs 71 a dollar exchange rate, as assumed by the government, the country's GDP in dollar term would be \$5.15 trillion. Even if the dollar exchange rate is around Rs 73, the economy would still be at \$5 trillion.

The government expects the GDP to grow at an average nominal rate of 12.2% over the next five years to 2024-25, an uphill task given that by the government's own admission the economy is likely to grow at nominal rate of 8% in the current financial year, a sharp climb-down from its own budget target of 12% nominal growth rate.

For the next financial year (2020-21), the government is aiming at 10.5% nominal rate of growth of the economy, and from 2021-22 onwards, it expects the growth rate to be upwards of 12%, touching 13% in 2024-25.

Even considering 4.5% inflation, the government expects the real GDP growth rate to be around 6% in the next financial year, touching 8.5% in 2024-25.

The nominal GDP is calculated on the current prices of the goods and services instead of the price of the base year (real GDP growth), thus taking into account the inflation.

This is a bold statement by the government despite economists and analysts across the board raising doubt over the \$5-trillion economy target by March 2025. The latest to cast aspersions on the ambitious target is Chairman of State Bank of India Rajnish Kumar.

Answering media query on the sidelines of an event in Hyderabad, Kumar said: "We will definitely achieve (the \$5 trillion target), there is no doubt. Timeframe, I am not certain. Whether we'll achieve in five years, it is like, a very difficult question to answer."

In an interview to Business Today, former Finance Minister P Chidambaram even said that economy is growing at merely 3-3.5% (real rate of growth) instead of the official figure of 4.5%.

In the first two quarters of the current financial year, the GDP has grown at a real rate of 5% and 4.5% respectively. The nominal growth in the second quarter was 6.1% down from 8% in the first quarter.

The government had earlier



budgeted for the country's GDP to grow from Rs 190 lakh crore at the end of 2018-19 to Rs 211 lakh crore. However, in the NIP report it has revised its GDP target to Rs 205 lakh crore.

The NIP report spells out the government's Rs 102 lakh crore infrastructure spending plans by 2024-25 to achieve the target of \$5 trillion economy by that year.

How Indian Economy Fares Globally

India is bracing for its third budget in 12 months as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to present her second Union Budget on February 1. This is a good time to take stock of where India stands as an economic powerhouse and how the country is placed among its global peers.

India was the world's fastest growing major economy until as recently as 2018. But things have gone drastically downhill in the past one year with its gross domestic product (GDP) expanding at a more than six-year low pace in the July-September period. The government has in its recent estimate pegged the weakest pace of annual growth for the economy in 11 years. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has attributed the slowdown to a variety of factors, including decline in consumption and fall in investments.

The United States is the largest economy in the world today and has been so since 1871. It still constitutes almost a quarter of the global economy, backed by its leadership in science and technology, advanced infrastructure and abundance of natural resources. The size of the US economy, measured in terms of nominal GDP, was \$21.44 trillion in 2019 and is estimated to reach \$22.32 trillion in the year 2020, according to the International Monetary Fund.

China, known as the world's factory because of its exponential growth in manufacturing and exports, is fast closing in on the US. China's nominal GDP stood at \$14.14 trillion in 2019, trailing behind the US by a mere \$7 trillion, and the GDP difference between the two economic giants is set to contract to \$5.47 trillion by the year 2023, according to the IMF.

Japan is the third largest economy in the world, with its nominal GDP surpassing the \$5-trillion mark to \$5.15 trillion in 2019. Germany, Europe's largest economy, is at the fourth position in the list of the

world's largest economies, with nominal GDP figures of \$3.86 trillion.

India, with nominal GDP of \$2.94 trillion, overtook UK and France to emerge as the world's fifth largest economy in the year 2019. In the process, the country has left behind the likes of France, Italy, Canada, Russia and Australia -- major trillion dollar economies with nominal GDP figures ranging from 1.3 trillion to 2.7 trillion US dollars.

India and China had the same GDP in 1950, and China's GDP per capita lagged countries such as Cambodia, Kenya and Sierra Leone as late as the 1960s. China witnessed a meteoric rise from the late 1970s to become the world's second largest economy, next only to the US, as the path-breaking reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping propelled the largely agrarian society to the industrial powerhouse of today. In fact, China's \$14-trillion economy surpasses India's \$2.9-trillion economy by about five times.

India had to wait for another two decades until the year 1991, for then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh to put India on the path of economic liberalization. It is a tribute to the potential of the Indian economy that within a decade of the forces unleashed by Rao-Manmohan duo, its GDP growth started expanding at the rates to the tune of 6-8 per cent annually - a far cry from the growth rates of 3 per cent seen in the pre-liberalisation era.

It is noteworthy that India sustained its growth momentum despite the global financial crisis in 2008. India was, in fact, the world's fastest growing major economy between 2014 and 2018, with the services sector contributing more than 60% to its economy. The GDP growth however slumped to 4.5 per cent in the September quarter, amid financial stress in the rural sector and joblessness across sectors.

The slowdown may just be a blip, after all. The World Bank, in the South Asia Economic Focus, said the country was expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2021 and 7.2 per cent in 2022 on the back of an accommodative monetary stance. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das sees the emergence of some green shoots - such as rise in the cost of projects sanctioned by banks and financial institutions, and higher investments in fixed assets by India Inc.

'MAKE IN INDIA' ENTERS DECISIVE PHASE, TAKES INDIAN DEFENCE PRODUCTION SECTOR AT WORLD'S CENTRE STAGE

The "Make in India" campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 09/2014 seems to be heading into its most decisive phase. We are yet to see the impact of the campaign on the 25 target sectors of the Indian economy as very little analytical studies are available on the subject. Nevertheless, the expansion of manufacturing sector in terms of investment, capacity, sales and economic value addition takes time sequentially. India has moderately priced resources and quality skillsets to build globally competitive manufacturing excellence, however, we are poor presenters and by and large bad salespeople as compared to our western and far eastern counterparts, consequently our products seldom reach international shores.

The upcoming Defence Expo 2020 at Lucknow is a great event for India's defence sector to showcase its achievements under the "Make in India" campaign. Being a biennial event, this is perhaps the third defence expo since the launch of the campaign. Pre 2014, the Indian defence industry can safely be termed as moribund. Strong focus under the "Make in India" program has elevated the defence industry to a nascent stage today. Past five years has seen India importing state of art defence systems. Side by side, we have also seen a number of indigenous defence systems under production through foreign collaboration, off-set deals, tech transfer as well as local innovation. Although all these efforts are still be termed as "experimental" there is no denying the fact that the Indian defence industry has catapulted itself to the world centre stage.

Indian Defence Industry so far was dominated by two groupings viz the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and the Defence Public Sector Units (DPSU). They are now joined by private sector enterprises hitherto involved in heavy engineering projects. OFB is a colonial-era player with 41 modern factories, 9 learning centres and a huge infrastructure spread across India. It is generally regarded as a conventional armament manufacturer and has to a certain extent dominated the successive Defence Expos with a variety of products as compared to its DPSU cousins that are involved in defence vehicles and mobile armament systems including air and sea-based defence systems. Within the private sector, the initial euphoria appears to have been slowed down – currently, L&T heavy engineering is seen to march ahead with high tech import substitution defence systems.

"Make in India" target for the Defence Sector is not just self-reliance but exports as well. Of the total defence budget outlay of US\$ 60.9 billion in 2019 India is expected to spend at least 45% on imports. On the other hand, India's defence-related exports in 2018-19 by the military-industrial



players was US\$ 1.47 billion, a jump of 122 per cent over 2017-18 export figures. Compare this with the world's top ten exporters. As per SIPRI Trend Indicator Values, in 2018 the top ten players led by USA and Russia exported US\$ 2,082.23 billion worth armaments. If India maintains its 2017-19 arms export momentum and performance, India has already breached 6th rank and is perhaps well poised to move ahead of China in 2019-20 and rub shoulders with the likes of France and Germany.

The key success factor for the spectacular performance of India's defence sector has more to do with the introduction and implementation of structural changes on the sidelines of "Make in India" campaign rather than the new investment and latest technology absorption by the sector. Dynamic changes in arms exports policies within the ambit of Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) as well as UN conventions for enabling arms exports, inviting India's private sector in defence production and permitting them to take part in defence import offset deals, export incentives, enabling Technology Transfer from DRDO to industry, increasing the FDI cap and finally management independence to OFB-DPSU units has played a Steller role in defence export surge.

Increase in global conflicts and the need for peace to promote and sustain human development is driving the global arms industry. Countries that affirm their commitment to global peace are the world's largest exporters. Every country has realised the need for a "strategic deterrent" and the need for weapons to prevent conflicts. To cater to this pragmatic world order, there is no reason why India should be left behind. India has set an arms export target of US\$ 5 billion for 2025 while the Industry output target for 2026 set by the Defence

Minister Mr Rajnath Singh is whopping US\$ 26 billion. A number on low-conflict theatres in Africa, South America and the Far East are new, prospective markets for India where conventional products of OFB could have a great demand as compared to high-cost air and sea systems manufactured by DPSUs and private sector giants. These geographies are currently being served by China with its superior marketing power, financial deal-making and State support.

On quality and tech front, India should have no worries. However, the Indian Defence Industry needs to set its Marketing initiatives right by improving its geographical reach and response time, deal-making and deal closing abilities. Exports statistics reveal that OFB-DPSU combine contributed mere 8 per cent to India's total defence exports in 2018-19. Such an average performance can be attributed to poor marketing initiatives and to a certain extent to the cap on production for export. OFB-DPSU need a robust marketing network including fee-based sales intermediaries rather than banking on government-2-government pacts and protocols. Their response time too needs to improve. A number of prospective importers with consular operations in Delhi complain of a response time stretching over two years, insignificant after sales and spares supply and disposal management. On the production and supply front, the government needs to re-consider the 10 per cent cap on production for exports after meeting local demand to enable OFB and DPSUs to meet the contracted timelines. The Indian defence Military-Industry players have to take a gamble on whether their capacities will drive exports or the exports will drive capacities under the "make in India" campaign.

LOOK OUT FOR INDIA'S SPACE MISSION

Astronaut training

Four astronauts have been selected to train for India's maiden manned space programme, Gaganyaan, and will be training in the third week of January in Russia. Meanwhile, Gaganyaan spacecraft systems will be tested throughout the year to prepare for an unmanned mission either in 2020 or 2021.

Second Indian orbital spaceport

ISRO has begun land acquisition for its second orbital launch site, which will be located in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, in Southeast India. According to K. Sivan, the site was chosen "mainly to get the advantages of the southward launch, especially for SSLV launches."

A third lunar mission

Rumours that India will launch Chandrayaan-3, its third Moon mission, have been confirmed. Work has already begun, and the next mission will consist for a lander and a rover, and while utilizing Chandrayaan-2's operational orbiter.

The first flight of the SSLV

ISRO will conduct the maiden flight of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), which will supplement the PSLV in catering to the small satellite market.

A larger payload fairing for GSLV

A new variation of India's newest and largest launch vehicle, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III (GSLV Mk-III), will be launched. It will be equipped with a 4-metre payload fairing.

An indigenous atomic clock

ISRO will finally introduce its indigenous atomic clock, which India has been working on for years. The clock will be used on the latest navigation satellite, IRNSS-1J.

Launch of the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS)

ISRO will launch 2 satellites as part of its planned data relay constellation, which K. Sivan explained is necessary for Gaganyaan.

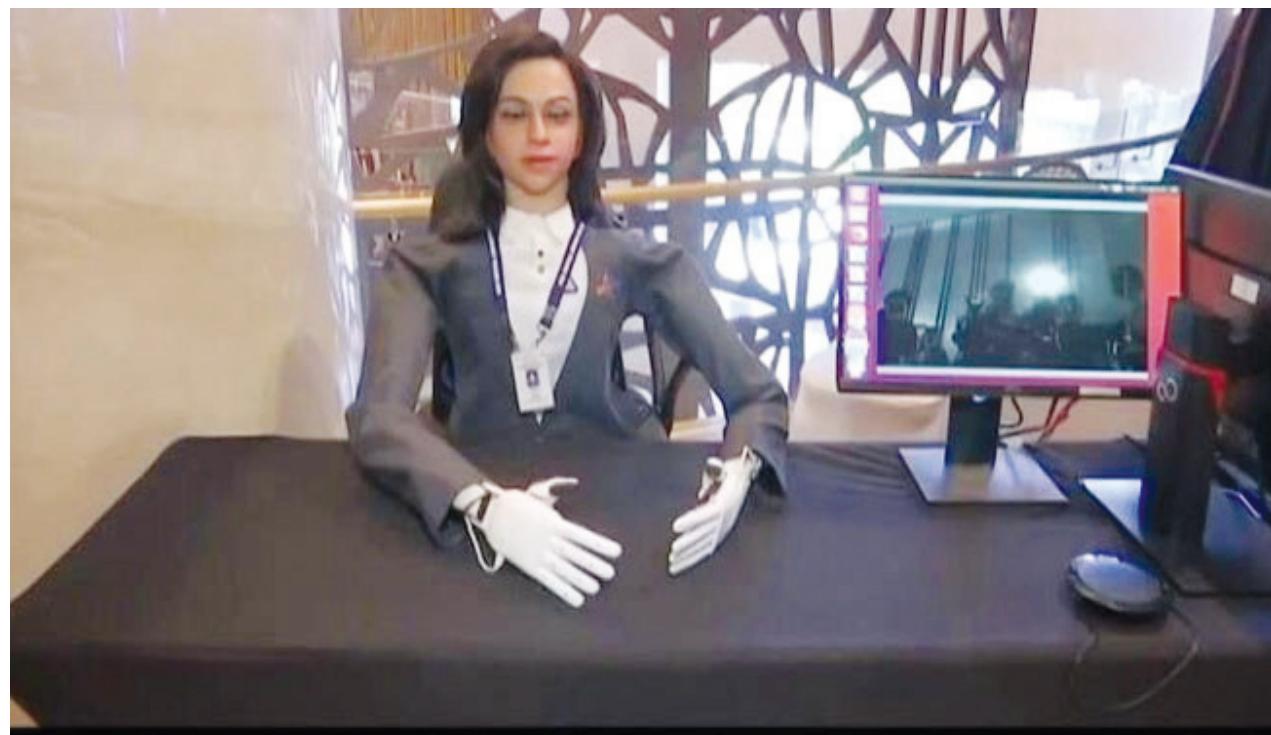
The first solar mission

India's first solar mission, Aditya-L1, will be launched in the second half of 2020. The 1,500 kg satellite will function as a solar observatory and will be inserted in a halo orbit around the L1 point.

Mobile-friendly navigation system

K. Sivan announced that India's regional navigation system, NavIC, has been approved for use on mobile devices and will be available for public use, along with GPS. In separate news, Chinese mobile manufacturer Xiaomi is reportedly already equipping its India-export devices with NavIC.

Meet Vyommitra, the talking human robot that Isro will send to space



She can talk. She can recognise other humans. She can mimic what they would do in space. She can even hold conversations and answer queries. She is Vyommitra, a spacefaring human robot developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation. Vyommitra is a 'half-humanoid' that Isro plans to send to space as part of test flights that will be undertaken ahead of the ambitious launch of India's maiden human spaceflight mission.

Vyommitra, in her own words, can "mimic" the activity of a crew of astronauts and even "recognise them and respond to their queries". Vyommitra was unveiled by Isro at an event in Bengaluru on Wednesday where she greeted reporters with "Hi, I'm Vyommitra the first prototype of half humanoid."

According to an Isro scientist, Vyommitra is a half humanoid since she does not have legs. "It's called a half humanoid because it doesn't have legs. It can only bend sideways and forward. It will carry out certain experiments and will always remain in touch with the Isro command centre," Isro scientist Sam Dayal said.

The space agency plans to send Vyommitra to space later this year when it will launch uncrewed flights to space as part of the Gaganyaan project. The Gaganyaan project, announced by PM Narendra Modi in his 2019 Independence Day address, is an ambitious plan of sending Indians to space.

An Indian -- Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma -- has been to space. But, he did so as a cosmonaut onboard a Russian spacecraft. The Gaganyaan

project, on the other hand, aims to send three Indians to space onboard an Indian spacecraft launched by an Indian rocket from within India.

Four men -- all pilots from the Indian Air Force -- have already been shortlisted for the Gaganyaan mission. They will receive training in Russia and India. Simultaneously, doctors from the Indian Air Force will be sent to France to be trained in monitoring the health of astronauts who will fly to space.

Previously, Isro unveiled prototypes of the spacesuits and the crew capsule that will be used for the Gaganyaan mission. The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III rocket, which will fly the astronauts to space, has already been developed and has proven its mettle.

Isro aims to launch the manned spaceflight mission by 2022. Before that, the space agency will launch two uncrewed missions -- one in December this year and another in June 2021. These will demonstrate test flight aimed at proving that Isro can fly humans to space and at testing the various systems that will be part of the final manned space mission.

The humanoid Vyommitra will be part of both the uncrewed spaceflights during which she will mimic crew activity. Will she also accompany the three Indian astronauts during their historic flight to space in 2022? It is not known. But, while 'speaking' to reporters on Wednesday, she did say that she could "recognise [astronauts] and respond to their queries".

UPCOMING REFORMS IN INDIAN EDUCATION SECTOR

The Indian education sector has a lot of hope, with elements of concern too, on the changes it will see in 2020. Academicians and industry leaders expect reform measures to be announced in early 2020 which will help strengthen the education system. The initiatives could range from skill development and innovative financing to encouraging research output.

Prime concerns in the sector, at an international level, include China taking a lead in research output. But, there's hope that India will show improvement in the area. The past five years have seen some leading institutions lay greater emphasis on research.

Domestic issues include shortage of top faculty and remuneration. In fact, board members of some of the leading management institutions have called for greater incentives - both financial and career growth - to faculty members.

National Education Policy

A landmark development of 2019 in the education sector was the National Education Policy. Space scientist K Kasturirangan, who led a nine-member team and drafted the 400-page policy, hopes the government will adopt and declare a national policy on education in 2020.

He also hopes that starting 2020, the country will move towards bringing in critical changes in the Indian education system. To him, the highlight of 2019 was the response the policy draft received. "I am happy the policy draft that was put into the public domain triggered a series of discussions, which only meant there was tremendous interest to know how India will go about education in future," he says.

The policy draft had received over 2 lakh responses. The committee studied them and found over 80 per cent suggestions were in tune with the policy. In some sense, it "displayed national anxiety to have a good educational policy," he said.

Review Funding Options

According to Kasturirangan, teacher training and a clear career growth path for top performers are equally critical to move towards a better education system. He hopes the Centre will form a national research foundation to imbibe a new research culture among universities.

On funding, he calls for exploring various options. "I do not see philanthropic efforts coming forward in terms of the scale at which they need to. Also, if we look at the present regulatory and accreditation systems, the policy does recommend that we should have a similar thing between public and privately-funded institutions. That may help ease the concerns that private investments may have for increasing investment in education. We should encourage it by adopting suggestions made in the policy," he adds.

Kasturirangan calls for more options to attract both philanthropic and private



investments. "There could be more public-private partnerships," he says, stressing the need for public, private, philanthropic funding and tapping alumni.

The Last Decade

The past decade saw some major touchpoints from a policy perspective. Besides an education policy, the Centre came up with the IIM Act, though its net impact is yet to be seen. Even though a lot remains desired, it is expected to put greater power to institutions and make them more accountable.

The challenge before the 20 IIMs and other leading institutions is a shortage in top faculty and little freedom, at least in the government-backed institutions, in deciding on faculty remuneration.

Another initiative that stood out in the decade was granting of the Institute of Eminence tag to some institutions. This has been seen as a positive development, as it will encourage institutions to be more competitive.

But, an area where Indian higher education has to move forward is research output. Quoting the findings of the UT Dallas database, which is a key indicator of the top-quality research papers published in management, one of the directors of a leading Indian management institution said the number of research papers published in the top 24 management journals over the last five years show Chinese universities contributing a dozen times more than what was done by Indian universities.

This, he says, is a clear pointer to the direction we need to take, though he feels India has put in place some of the right triggers in this direction. Some of the leading Indian institutions like the IIMs and some private institutions have been giving career and financial incentives to professors to publish papers in some of the marquee journals.

Over the next few years, the management schools will also need to review their curriculum and refresh it in keeping with the changing needs of the industry. New age disciplines like AI (Artificial Intelligence), ML (Machine Learning) and analytics need to be prioritised.

Education trends

Online courses will be more job-oriented

Online courses are a quicker route for churning out employable professionals. In this context, we are seeing industries collaborating with colleges as well as educational start-ups to prepare courses in tune with the current market demands, making online course students readily employable.

Moreover, data-rich online learning models go a long way in solving hiring woes by making study materials more accurate, efficient and up to date.

Closing down of engineering and technical colleges

The number of students opting for engineering and technical education colleges has been on a decline in the recent past. This has been the case because the courses these colleges offer are not regularly updated, even as these institutes face a shortage of funds and qualified teachers.

Emergence of online courses by reputed institutes

Several prestigious universities and colleges in India have started offering online learning. These include government-backed organizations like the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) and private ones like the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE). This trend will continue in 2020.

Easier enrolment and access

Online learning programs are much easier to enroll for and to access, compared to the traditional model of education. Students can participate in the course as well as carry out the study formalities like fees payment from the comfort of their homes. Also, the fees are much lower than what one has to pay for traditional education.

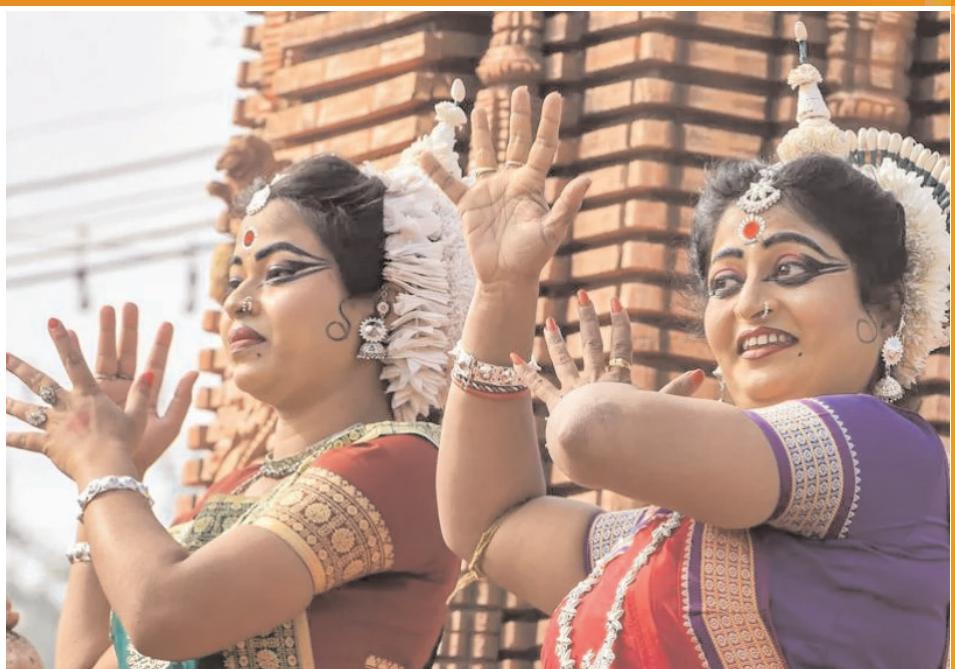
Newly introduced Income Share agreements from online ed-tech start-ups are also picking up steam.

Scope for pre-empting and predicting outcomes

There is a big focus on the analytics of online data related to students.



Indian Airforce Tableaux on display ahead of the forthcoming Republic Day function, during a press preview, in New Delhi.



Odisha tableau artists rehearse ahead of the forthcoming Republic Day function.



Punjab tableau at R-Day to propagate basic philosophy of Guru Nanak.



Tableau artists pose for photographs during a press preview of tableaux contingents participating in Republic Day parade 2020, in New Delhi.



Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) contingent takes part in the rehearsal for the Republic Day parade.



Indian paramilitary soldiers perform a stunt on a motorcycle stunt during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day parade at Raisina Hills, the government seat of power, in New Delhi.



SISTER CALLING MY NAME, Play

By Mabel Pais

"Buzz McLaughlin's "Sister Calling My Name" takes us on the difficult journey home. It's a trip often avoided as there can be regrets and recriminations at every turn, but this gripping memory play takes us through the struggles of reconciliation to the most sublime of rebirths."

-Peter Dobbins, Director

At The Sheen Center for Thought & Culture, Blackfriars Repertory Theatre and the Storm Theatre present a new production of Buzz McLaughlin's "Sister Calling My Name" directed by Peter Dobbins ("Ah, Wilderness!"; "The Rainmaker").

Performances begin on January 24 for a run through February 16 in the Black Box Theater at The Sheen Center for Thought & Culture (18 Bleecker Street at the corner of Elizabeth Street, NYC). Opening night is set for January 30 and this marks the play's New York premiere.

A young man, Michael Stouffer, disillusioned by divorce and a failed academic career, is tricked into returning to his hometown after a self-willed separation of nearly eighteen years to face an emotionally charged encounter with his past.

An enthralling tour de force, this award-winning play deals with issues of love and loss, faith and doubt, the strength of family ties, and the possibility of personal redemption.

Sister Calling My Name is about a brother's reluctant reunion with his developmentally disabled sister who has become an extraordinary artist. When he discovers his sister's guardian, a nun, is a woman he knew from his past, the three are all thrown into an emotionally charged encounter that leaves them forever changed.

The play deals with issues of love, loss, faith, doubt, family, and redemption.

"Buzz McLaughlin's 'Sister Calling My Name' takes us on the difficult journey home", said director Peter Dobbins. "It's a trip often avoided as there can be regrets and recriminations at every turn, but this gripping memory play takes us through the struggles of reconciliation to the most sublime of rebirths."

The cast of "Sister Calling My Name" features Susie Duecker ("As You Like It"; "The 12 Dates of Christmas"), John Marshall ("The Imbible"; "Apple Seed") and Gillian Todd ("The F"; "Orestes 2.0").

"Sister Calling My Name" features scenic design by Daniel Prosky, costume design by Jake Poser, lighting design and production coordination by Michael Abrams, and sound design by Ian Werhle. Kellie Taylor is the stage manager and assistant director and Fleur Alyss Dobbins is the associate artistic director of the Storm Theatre.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE AND TICKETS



John Marshall as 'Michael' and Gillian Todd as 'Lindsey'

Photo / Sheen Center

"Sister Calling My Name" plays at The Sheen Center in The Black Box Theater (18 Bleecker Street at the corner of Elizabeth Street, NYC). Performances are Thursday - Friday at 7:30pm and Saturdays at 2pm & 7:30pm. There is a special Sunday matinee added on February 17 at 2pm. Opening night is January 30.

For Tickets, visit SheenCenter.org in-person or at the box office, or by phone at 212-925-2812.

Time: 7:30 PM Event Category: Play

Venue: The Black Box Theater

Presented by: Blackfriars Repertory Theatre & The Storm Theatre

"Writing this play was very personal for me." "It was inspired by my own mentally disabled sister and I think of it as a special tribute to her."

-Buzz McLaughlin, Playwright

Buzz McLaughlin (playwright) is a playwright and screenwriter, theatre and film producer, script consultant, and teacher. His plays, which include Transcendence, Leaving

Peter Dobbins (director) is a co-founding member and Producing Artistic Director of the Storm Theatre Company since its inception. Besides many directing credits to his name, he recently directed the Blackfriars Repertory Theatre and Storm Theatre's production of "Ah, Wilderness!" at the Sheen Center. Last spring he directed "The Rainmaker" by N. Richard Nash, and the prior spring directed "Death Comes For The War Poets" by Joseph Pearce, both at The Sheen Center. Dobbins' other directing credits include: T.S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral"; Dion Boucicault's "The Shaughraun" and "Arrah~na~Pogue"; Stewart Parker's "Spokesong"; William Shakespeare's "As You Like It," "The Tempest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Twelfth Night"; Karol Wojtya (Pope John Paul II)'s "The Jeweler's Shop," "Jeremiah," and "Our God's Brother." To learn more, visit stormtheatre.com

Blackfriars Repertory Theatre, the first professional religious theatre ever tried in New York City and the oldest continuous Off-Broadway theatre in American stage history, is an apostolate of the Dominican Friars of the Province of Saint Joseph, founded in 1998. Blackfriars Rep carries on the mission of "producing plays of artistic merit that reflect the spiritual nature of man and his eternal destiny." In its twenty years of existence, Blackfriars Repertory Theatre has staged over twenty-five productions in New York City, regionally, and on tour in its commitment to "theatre dedicated to the human drama." To learn more, visit blackfriarsrep.com

The Storm Theatre is an Off-Broadway company committed to offering a mix of world premieres, established classics, and reviving forgotten theatrical treasures for today's audiences. Founded in 1997, the non-profit is celebrating its 24th season with its fourth production at the Sheen Center. The New York Times' named The Storm Theatre's 2012 season as one of the "12 most galvanizing offerings of the year." For more information, visit stormtheatre.com.

The Sheen Center for Thought & Culture (sheencenter.org) is a New York City arts center located in NoHo that presents a vibrant mix of theater, film, music, art and talk events. An initiative of the Archdiocese of New York, The Sheen Center serves all New Yorkers by presenting performances and artists that reflect the true, the good, and the beautiful. To learn more, visit sheencenter.org

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

GROOM YOUR EYEBROWS AT HOME

How many times have you missed going to the salon right before an office party, only to dread partying with undone eyebrows? But worry not, we tell you ways you can do it yourself at home.

Tweeze after you shower

While we all know that tweezing can be a real pain in the butt, there's a way to make the whole process a lot less painful. After taking a hot shower, grab your favorite pair of tweezers, and pluck your eyebrows. The warm water helps open up the follicles, which allows the hair to be pulled out much easier.

Align your brows with your face shape

When it comes to your brows, there are a few set of rules you should be aware of before you pluck away your arches: Use a brow pencil as a guide to help you find the beginning, end, and arch of your eyebrows. The beginning of your brow should start right where your nostril begins. Hold the pencil vertically against the bridge of your nose and on top of your nostril to help you find the starting point. (Essentially you want the inside edges of your brows to match the outer bridge of your nose.) To find your arch, place the pencil on the tip of your nose and angle it straight across your pupil. Ladies and gentlemen, that's where your natural arch lies should be.

Finally, to find the end of your brow, simply take the pencil, at an angle, and place it against the end of your nose and eye. If the tail end of your brow hits the place where the pencil ends, then your eyebrows are the perfect length. If your brow is too long, then tweeze some of those hairs away.



Tweeze with good lighting

If there's one thing you need to make sure to have before you tweeze your eyebrows, it's really, really good lighting. The worst thing you can do is try to pluck your eyebrows in a dimly lit bathroom, where you're pretty much asking for a beauty disaster. If you can, take advantage of natural light. Bring a handheld mirror to the most lit area in your home so you can see all those tiny hairs you need to pluck.

Tweeze in the direction of your hair growth

If you see a tiny black hole where

you just tweeze, it means you didn't pluck the whole hair follicle. To prevent this next time, tweeze in the direction of your hair growth so you can capture the whole strand with ease.

Fill in the spaces

If you're one of the lucky few who naturally wakes up with Cara Delevingne brows, then I praise you. But if not, to get the best brows possible you want to fill those puppies in—but not too much. First, find a color that complements your brows. Use this guide if you're unsure on how to find the perfect shade.

CAN WE FALL IN LOVE WITH THE SAME PERSON MORE THAN ONCE?

It's going to sound a lot like fairy tales but trust us when we say this, YES—It is possible to fall in love more than once with the same person. Here, we don't mean in gaps or with breaks in the middle—we mean throughout the course of the same relationship! Before you start feeling cynical again, here's our logic for it.

You discover tiny things

Love, essentially, is work. It makes you feel a certain way but those feelings don't just come on their own. This can happen while you're dating as well. Say your partner remembered how you wanted that exact coffee in the afternoon so they went and got it for you on their way back—it's the thought that makes you love them that much harder.

When you see how someone else loves you, it can really make you refocus on your relationship again. Small gestures,



random acts of kindness and thoughtfulness, even while 1 year-into a relationship, can really make you value your partner and fall in love again.

From personal experience

Falling in love happened by accident so understanding the gravity of that

FOOD CORNER



HONEY CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

600 gm chicken, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoon butter, 2 tablespoon virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1/2 cup honey

Method

Firstly, wash the chicken under running water and place it over a chopping board. Cut the chicken into pieces. Now, place a frying pan over medium flame and pour virgin olive oil in it. Once the oil is sufficiently hot, add the chicken pieces and fry for 4-5 minutes and keep them aside in a roasting pan.

Next, place a saucepan over medium flame and add butter and honey into it. Once the butter is melted, turn off the flame. Now add lemon juice and salt in the same pan and mix well. Now, put the roasting pan into the oven and baste the chicken with butter-honey mixture. Then, bake the chicken at 200-250 degree Celsius for 45 minutes. Baste the chicken thoroughly at separate intervals. Serve hot!

RABRI KHEER

INGREDIENTS

250 gm readymade rabri, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon raisins, 10 cashews, water as required, 1/4 cup rice, 1/2 teaspoon green cardamom, 10 almonds, 1 litre milk

Method

Put cardamoms in a grinder and grind them to make a fine powder. On the other hand, rinse the rice and soak them in water for half an hour. After half an hour, drain out the extra water and then coarsely grind the rice using a grinder. Bring it to a boil and let it simmer for a 2-3 minutes. When the milk starts simmering, add coarsely grind rice and stir well. Now stir the milk at an interval of every 1-2 minutes and keep the flame to medium. Now, place cashews and almonds over a chopping board and finely chop them. When the rice are cooked, add milk into the pan and stir continuously to mix all the ingredients well. When rice and dry fruits get tender and the kheer gets dense, turn off the flame. Now, mix sugar into the pan and add cardamom powder.

intensity is always both surreal and scary. What I'm trying to say is, I went through that feeling hopelessly and frustratingly in love and even though it reinstates that you can indeed fall in love with the same person all over again, it can be slightly frightening. You get to realize the extent of how much one person can matter to you and how much you worry for their well-being. It's almost bittersweet!

In terms of falling in love with breaks, that's also highly possible. There are so many cases of re-meeting your ex after months or years and falling in love all over again when you've seen the change for yourself. In both cases, pretty much, the answer to our pressing life question is yes, it is 100% possible to trick your already tricked brain into loving someone even harder than before (enjoy it while it lasts).

LOW-FAT MILK LINKED TO SLOWER AGEING IN ADULTS

Drinking low-fat milk is associated with less ageing in adults, according to a new study which supports existing dietary guidelines which do not recommend high-fat milk as part of a healthy diet.

The study, published in the journal *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity*, assessed 5,834 US adults and found that people who drink low-fat milk experience biological ageing slower by several years than those who drink high-fat (2 per cent and whole) milk.

"It was surprising how strong the difference was. If you're going to drink high-fat milk, you should be aware that doing so is predictive of, or related to some significant consequences," said Larry Tucker, study co-author from Brigham Young University (BYU) in the US.

The researchers analysed the link between the length of the end of chromosomes -- the coiled structure in which DNA is present in cell nucleus -- milk intake frequency and fat content consumed.

According to the scientists, these chromosome ends, called telomeres, act like a biological clock, and they're correlated with age.

Each time a cell replicates, they said, humans lose a tiny bit of these end caps. Hence older people have



shorter telomeres, the researchers added.

The more high-fat milk people drink, the shorter their telomeres are, according to the BYU study.

According to the study, for every one per cent increase in milk fat consumed, telomeres were 69 units shorter in the adults studied.

This translated into more than four years in additional biological ageing, the researchers said.

In the extremes of milk drinkers, adults who consumed whole milk had telomeres that were a striking 145 molecules shorter than non-fat milk drinkers.

"Milk is probably the most controversial food in our country. If someone asked me to put together a presentation on the value of drinking milk, I could put together a 1-hour presentation that would knock your socks off," Tucker said.



PREGNATAL SMOKING, DRINKING IN MOMS LINKED TO HIGHER SIDS RISK: STUDY

Kids of mothers who both drink and smoke beyond the first trimester of pregnancy may have a 12-fold higher risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) compared to those unexposed in the first trimester, a new study says.

SIDS is the sudden, unexplainable death of children under one year of age, explained the researchers, including those from Boston Children's Hospital in the US.

The study, published in the journal *Lancet*, assessed how SIDS risk is influenced by the timing and amount of prenatal exposure to tobacco and alcohol.

"Ours is the first large-scale prospective study to closely investigate the association between prenatal alcohol and tobacco exposure and the risk of SIDS," said study first author Amy J. Elliott from the Avera Health Center for Pediatric & Community Research in the US.

"Our findings suggest that combined exposures to alcohol and tobacco have a synergistic effect on SIDS risk, given that dual exposure was associated with substantially higher risk than either exposure alone," Elliott explained.

In the study, the researchers followed the outcomes of nearly 12,000 pregnancies among women from two residential areas in Cape Town, South Africa, and five sites in the US from 2007 until 2015.

They determined one-year outcomes for about 94 per cent of the pregnancies, and found that 66 infants died during that time, including 28 SIDS deaths, and 38 deaths from known causes.

The scientists also said the risk of SIDS was increased five-fold in infants whose mothers reported they continued smoking beyond the first trimester.

This risk was four-fold more in infants whose mothers said they continued drinking beyond the first trimester, according to the study.

These were in comparison to children who were either not exposed to tobacco or alcohol during gestation, or whose mothers quit tobacco or alcohol use by the end of the first trimester.

HEALTH TESTS FOR EVERY WOMAN

Indian women often tend to put their own needs on the backburner, preferring to tend to home and family first. However, the fast-changing lifestyle and juggling career with bringing up children sooner or later begins to take a toll on their health. Many common health problems in women can be prevented or effectively tackled by undergoing testing for the following five health tests.

Anaemia

Anaemia is the most common blood disorder. Women are especially at risk of iron-deficiency anaemia because of blood loss from their periods. The normal haemoglobin level for women is 12 gram per decilitre (g/dL). All women should get tested for anaemia at least once a year. The test will look for the size and colour of red blood cells, haematocrit, haemoglobin and ferritin levels.

Vitamin D deficiency

Researchers have linked vitamin D deficiency with increased risk of poor bone health and depression in women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). Symptoms include bone pain, muscle weakness and fatigue.

Mammograms and breast exams

All prevention tests in women start early, and so is the case for the exam to check for breast cancer. A manual exam where a doctor tests for lumps and abnormalities is



recommended starting around age 20 up to until 40 years.

A mammogram is a screening test for breast cancer and involves applying moderate compression to the breasts so that X-ray images can be captured.

Calcium deficiency

As women get older, they become more prone to osteoporosis (reduced density and quality of bone). A good healthy diet is enough to provide all the calcium that our body needs. Women should undergo a blood test once a year to check for levels of calcium, albumin and ionized or free calcium. Sustained

low calcium levels of below 8.8 mg/dL may confirm calcium deficiency disease.

Pap smears and pelvic exams

Women should start undergoing these exams every year from the age of 21, or even earlier if they are sexually active. This is important to reduce their risk of cervical cancer, which is the second leading cause of death in women due to cancer. A pelvic exam will generally include an external visual exam to check for abnormalities. A pap smear test is conducted to examine cervical cells and check for any abnormal growth in the uterus and the cervix.

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SAMSUNG IS WORKING ON QUICK SHARE, AN AIRDROP-LIKE FEATURE

If you're an Android user who has long envied Apple's AirDrop, which allows file sharing between iPhones, Samsung may have some good news for you. The Korean electronics giant is working on a similar feature called Quick Share that will allow files to be shared between Galaxy phones, according to XDA Developers.

The feature will allow users to share photos, videos and other files between supported Samsung devices, XDA Developers reported Thursday. The tech news site got its hands on the feature's APK but were unable to complete a transfer – probably because their device wasn't supported.

XDA Developers theorizes that the feature will be supported by the Galaxy S20, the forthcoming Samsung flagship handset expected to unveil on Feb. 11 at its Unpacked event in San Francisco.

But unlike AirDrop, which Apple unveiled in 2015, Quick Drop will include a cloud aspect, allowing files up to 1GB to be temporarily uploaded to the Samsung Cloud, XDA Developers reported. Files can then be streamed to Samsung SmartThings devices or downloaded to another device, according to the report.

Tinder adding a panic button for when bad dates go wrong

Meeting strangers off the internet is inherently dangerous, and Tinder reportedly wants to do something about it.

The popular dating app is beefing up its user security options, offering a panic alarm for when casual meet-ups or dates take a turn for the worst.

Tinder, which is owned by Match Group, will start testing a panic button in the U.S. on Jan. 28. The offering is brought about through Match's investment in the personal safety app Noonlight, which was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

Match will extend the feature to its other dating apps like OkCupid, Match and Hinge this year. After the feature goes live, users will be able to add an icon to their profile to let potential suitors know that they have the tool at their disposal in the hope of deterring bad actors.

And before a date starts, users can input details about the other person and the outing.

"If an alarm is triggered, Noonlight's certified dispatchers will reach out to check on the user and alert emergency responders if needed, providing them with critical, contextual information from the Tinder user's Timeline," Match said in a statement.

Earlier in January, Tinder was accused of selling users' private data like location stats to advertisers, though the dating app denied the claims.



FORGET SMART FRIDGES, SMART KITCHEN NEEDS A BRAIN

If there's one area of the smart home that enjoys a near-constant barrage of new technology, it's the kitchen. Not just because people spend so much time in their kitchens, but because there are so many different angles of attack for making it smarter.

Food recognition? Sure. Voice controls? You bet. Automated reordering or live cooking classes with world-class chefs? That too. So what could manufacturers and developers possibly do to improve the crowded smart kitchen of 2020? Well, hold onto your bread bots, because I have thoughts.

Better food recognition

The smart kitchen hinges on appliances learning to think for themselves, and that includes recognizing the food we put into them. We've seen this dish-detecting tech in the June Oven and more recently in Whirlpool's WLabs Smart Oven. When it works, it makes baking, roasting and even dehydrating much less intimidating. When it doesn't, you're left with burnt biscuits and a screeching smoke detector.

Meanwhile, the Amazon Smart Oven and Tovala Smart Oven can scan packaged foods sold in grocery stores. Sure, you might still have to stir -- and the Amazon model is unabashedly Whole Foods-focused -- but these devices use finely tuned algorithms to make use of power levels and other modes you'd likely skip over if you were doing it yourself.

Food recognition needs to get better, and then it needs to be extended into more full-size ovens and fridges. We've seen a few concepts demonstrated at trade shows, like Bosch's fridge that labels and tracks food and GE's Next Gen Kitchen Hub that watches your stovetop to tell you when your food is cooked. These are steps in the right direction, but the AI powering appliances like those could still stand to improve.

Progression like that might happen faster than you'd expect. LG recently announced a new AI chip focused on object recognition, and Amazon won a patent for a fridge that can sense spoiled food, but neither one has made it to market yet. There's a bit of the loop still left to close when it comes to recommending recipes with only the ingredients you have, reordering or making grocery lists and sending commands to other appliances. I'm confident we'll get there, but nothing available in stores today can convince me that it will do a better job of managing my kitchen than I can.

Smarter small appliances

Companies have worked hard to bring smarts like voice control to large appliances, while small appliances are beginning to fall behind. There are a few smart coffee makers out there, and you can get an Instant Pot with Wi-Fi, but by



How the Google Home Hub can help you cook a delicious meal

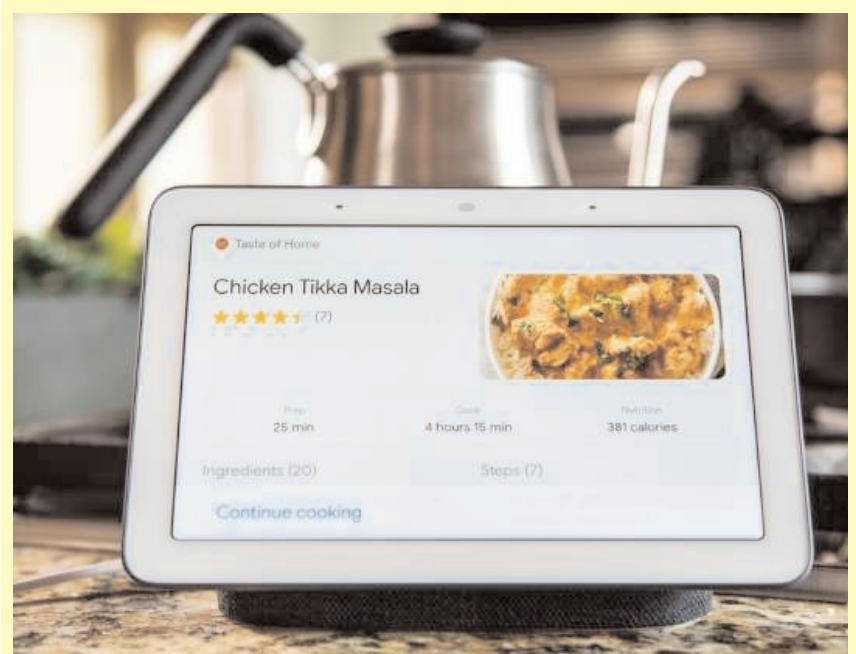
A streamlined option, perhaps with broader partnerships, could create a one-stop shop for EVERYTHING. That's complex -- apps that control an oven and apps that order groceries and apps that show recipes are different animals. The best attempts we've seen are Chefling and Drop; each of those combines recipes and shopping lists with the ability to control several brands of smart appliances.

It feels a bit like the beginning of the smart home, when some devices worked with Alexa, some with SmartThings and some with Google Assistant. In the smart home of 2015, there was a mishmash of devices that worked well individually, but didn't talk to each other. The smart kitchen feels that way now.

It all boils down to this

The smart kitchen has come a long way in just the few years it's been a thing. There are refrigerators that know their contents, microwaves that order popcorn, you name it. Soon, it will be hard to buy a new large appliance without Wi-Fi built in.

What we still need is better integration across appliances (and appliance brands) and a larger, simpler platform to manage it all. Only then will the kitchen of the future feel like a helpful concept rather than something that needs human supervision and double-checking. Until that happens, I'll keep managing grocery lists and recipes the old fashioned way -- on my smartphone.



Govt Budget math to get boost from AGR mop-up, RBI dividend, tax dispute

NEW DELHI (TIP): Even with the Centre expecting to face significant shortfall in mop-up from taxes and disinvestment in the current fiscal, it will partly make up via unexpected revenues from a tax dispute resolution scheme, Supreme Court mandated payments related to adjusted gross revenue (AGR) from telecom companies and higher-than-budgeted dividend payout from the RBI.

Reduction in expenditure by ministries in the last quarter of the current fiscal, as suggested by the Union Finance Ministry, would further help in cushioning the fiscal situation. Analysts note the revenue loss from corporate tax rate cut announced last September will not be more than Rs 70,000-80,000 crore, as against Rs 1.45 lakh crore estimated earlier by the government.

Though a breach in fiscal deficit is being anticipated, these steps combined would help contain its quantum. Rough calculations suggest the government may get Rs 2.36 lakh crore from these unexpected revenue sources, while the shortfall from taxes and disinvestment is Rs 3.10 lakh crore, resulting in a fiscal deficit of around 3.7 per cent of GDP, which could even slip further, given a lower 7.5 per cent nominal GDP growth rate projected in the government's first advance estimates. The Budget had pegged fiscal deficit at 3.3 per cent of GDP for 2019-20. In a report on economy on Wednesday, India Ratings & Research said it expects shortfall in tax and non-tax revenue to result in the fiscal deficit slipping to 3.6 per cent of GDP.

The highest collection among the unexpected sources would likely come from payments by telcos, even though they have sought a review of the payment deadlines from the SC. The payout by all telcos combined could be as high as Rs 1.43 lakh crore after the dues for spectrum usage charges (SUC) linked to AGR is taken into account.

In a reprieve to Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea among others, the Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to hear their plea seeking permission to negotiate the timeline for payment of AGR with the DoT next week. As of July last



year, Airtel had to pay nearly Rs 21,682 crore in AGR dues, while the combined entity of Vodafone Idea has to shell out as much as Rs 28,308 crore. Reliance Communications, which is currently undergoing insolvency proceedings, owed the government about Rs 16,456 crore as of July 2019. The court's judgment on AGR had impacted non-telecom public sector enterprises, such as GAIL, Power Grid, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and RailTel, which are contesting the levy.

The government will also get an additional Rs 58,000 crore, compared to Rs 90,000 crore accounted for as surplus transfer from the RBI in the Union Budget 2019-20 for spending in the current financial year. The government is also expecting Rs 35,000 crore under the Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, last week, said "about Rs 35,000 crore has been settled" for cases related to excise and service tax regime.

Citing fiscal situation, the Finance Ministry last month cut the amount various ministries and departments can spend in the last quarter to a maximum of 25 per cent of their Budget estimate for the entire financial year, as against the earlier limit of 33 per cent. The Centre is also expected to miss on its target from disinvestment collections.

'America seeing economic boom never seen before': US President

DAOS (TIP): US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said the US is in the midst of an economic boom that has never been seen before anywhere in the world.

The American dream is back and it's better than ever and there is no one better than the American middle class today, Trump said.

In a special address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit, he said since he last addressed Davos two years ago, the US has enjoyed the "great American comeback" that he had predicted.

"Today I am proud to declare that the United States is in the midst of an economic boom the like of which has never been seen before," he said.

According to him, 11 million jobs have been gained by America since his election and average unemployment rate is the lowest for the tenure of any US President in history.

He also noted that the new trade deal initiated with China is very important.

Earlier, Trump had tweeted, "Heading to Davos, Switzerland, to meet with World and Business Leaders and bring Good Policy and additional Hundreds of Billions of Dollars back to the United States of America! We are now NUMBER ONE in the Universe, by FAR!" Two years ago here in Davos, Trump had said, "I will always put America First ... But America First does not mean America alone."



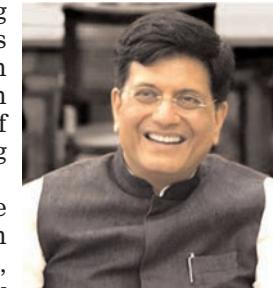
Things looking up, economy poised to take off, says Goyal

DAVOS (TIP): Asserting that the Indian economy is well-poised to take off, Union minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said there is a lot of enthusiasm for making investments in the country.

Speaking at a session at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit here, the Commerce and Industry Minister also said the government will hold discussions with Britain and European Union on free trade agreements. Britain is set to leave the European Union by end of January. "... things have once again started showing an uptrend... economy is well poised to take off from here," Goyal said.

According to him, the enthusiasm to make investments in India is infectious. At least four or five companies have said that more than 50 per cent of their total workforce would operate out of India in the coming years. Some of them are big names, he noted. On RCEP, Goyal said it was an "unbalanced trade agreement, which was really not fulfilling the guiding principles on which RCEP started about eight years ago, therefore India chose not to participate in it".

"Among the RCEP countries, India already has bilateral trade agreements with ASEAN, 10 with Japan and Korea; we are close to concluding negotiations with Australia which we have restarted now and in the next six to eight months we can close a bilateral trade partnership with Australia," he said.



OIL PRICES FALL AS DEMAND CONCERNS WEIGH

NEW YORK (TIP): Oil prices extended losses on Thursday as traders continued to worry about an economic slowdown, which could result in weaker demand for energy.

The West Texas Intermediate for March delivery settled \$1.15 lower at \$55.59 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude for March delivery dropped 1.17 dollars to close at 62.04 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange.

Despite news of supply outages, concerns about demand definitely gained the upper hand, which would exacerbate the oversupply risks, energy analysts at Commerzbank Research said in a note on Thursday.

Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, reportedly said earlier this week that he expected the market to be oversupplied by as much as 1 million barrels per day in the first half of this year.

Traders also kept a close eye on the disruptions to Libya's crude output.

On January 18, Libya's state-owned National Oil Corporation (NOC) declared a state of force majeure in oil ports, accusing the east-based army of closing the ports.

The closure of the ports causes loss of daily crude oil production of 8,00,000 barrels, or a daily equivalent of 55 million dollars, the NOC said in a statement.

TESLA CROSSES \$100 BILLION STOCK MARKET VALUATION

Tesla Inc became the first \$100 billion publicly listed US carmaker in extended trading on Tuesday, in a sign of Wall Street's confidence in an all-electric future.

The milestone comes less than a month after Tesla's stock crossed \$420, the infamous price at which Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk had tweeted he would take the electric car maker private.

Musk tweeted he had "funding secured" to take Tesla private in August 2018, when its shares were trading in the mid-\$330s, only to later give up under investor pressure and regulatory concerns.

Tesla shares were last up 1.4% at \$555 after the bell, building on a 7.2% gain during trading when brokerage New Street Research raised its price target to \$800.

Tesla's market value also puts Musk a step closer to earning the first \$346 million tranche of options in a record-breaking pay package.

The \$100 billion valuation needs to stay for both a one-month and six-month average in order to trigger the vesting of the first of 12 tranches of options granted to Musk to buy Tesla stock.

Tesla, which is already valued more than Ford Motor Co and General Motors Co combined, has seen its stock more than double in the last three months, fueled by a rare quarterly profit in October, news of production ramp-up in its China factory and better-than-expected annual car deliveries.



Mauni Amavasya which is also known as 'Mauna Amavasya' and 'Bhomavati Amavasya' is a very ancient and unique Hindu tradition observed on the 'no moon day' (Amavasya) in the Hindu month of Magha.

This Amavasya usually falls in January or February according to the Gregorian calendar. Mauni Amavasya is often referred to as 'Maghi Amavasya' as it is celebrated during the month of Magha.

On the auspicious day of Mauni Amavasya, Hindus practice silence throughout this day based on the principles listed in the ancient Hindu science of Yoga. In fact, the word 'Mauni' signifies silence. Therefore most of the Hindus observe a complete silence on this day.

They also keep a full day fast on the auspicious day of Mauni Amavasya. It is said that fasting on the day of Mauna Amavasya helps to attain virtues from the deities and the ancestors get peace. Hindus believe that all the Gods (Devas) gather on the sacred Ghats of the 'Sangam.' So, there's the special significance of having a holy bath in the Ganges. It is known as "Mauni Amavasya Snana" which is very predominant during the Kumbh Mela and Magha Mela.

Mauni Amavasya has a deep spiritual significance. The day is dedicated to Spiritual Sadhana. The Hindu Yogis and Rishis observe the day for getting peace, happiness, bliss, and liberation. They observe silence and practice deep meditation. It is also believed that Sage Manu was born on the auspicious day of Mauna Amavasya.

Although Amavasya is very popular in different parts of the country, it has attained a special significance in northern India. Mauni Amavasya is widely popular in Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

It is the most important day for having a holy dip in the Ganges during the world-famous Kumbh Mela in Prayag (Allahabad). The day is often referred to as 'Amrit Yoga' and 'Kumbh Parva.'

However, Mauni Amavasya celebrations are also very popular in the state of Andhra Pradesh where it is celebrated as "Chollangi Amavasya." Mauni Amavasya is also known as "Darsh Amavasya" in other parts of India.

So, Mauna Amavasya is a very auspicious day in the Hindu religion for attaining knowledge, peace, happiness, and liberation.

Mauni Amavasya Katha

The Hindu Puranas sing praises of the auspicious day of Mauni Amavasya. There is a very important event known as the 'Samudra Manthan' Katha which describes the significance of 'Sangam Snana' on Mauna Amavasya. Here, we briefly describe the event which led to the importance of "Sangam Snana" on Mauni Amavasya as described in the Puranas.

During the pre-historic era, all the Devas and Asuras gathered for the famous exercise known as the 'Samudra Manthan.' It was performed to get the divine 'nectar' (Amrit) which blesses the soul with immortality, and other precious jewels as well as priceless items.

When the Samudra Manthan was in progress, Lord Dhanvantari appeared holding the 'Amrit Kalash' which contained the divine nectar drinking of which one could become immortal. Immense battle arose between the Devas



and Asuras for this "Amrit Kalash." During this fight, some of this divine nectar fell in places such as Prayag, Haridwar, Nasik, and Ujjain.

Puranas say that whosoever takes a holy dip at the rivers along with these places on the day of Amavasya is blessed with immense purity ("Punya's") and gets the blessings of the Gods. The soul is purified, and life is filled with peace and happiness.

If it's Mauni Amavasya on Monday, the importance is increased manifold. Moreover, if the day is Monday during Maha Kumbh, the importance of Mauna Amavasya is raised in an infinite magnitude.

It is mentioned in the Hindu Shaastra that having a "Sangam Snana" on Mauni Amavasya during Magha month blesses the devotee with infinite purity and peace of mind and they attain liberation from the cycle of life and death.

So, one should take a dip in the holy rivers on the auspicious day of Mauni Amavasya. Hindus follow the custom of donating food, clothes, money, gold, land, and cow as per their ability. People also donate "til" on this day. They observe silence (Mauna Vrata) throughout the day and pray to Lord Vishnu as well as Lord Shiva.

Sacred mantras are chanted throughout this day. There is religious custom to worship Peepal tree by giving "Arghya" and lighting of lamps known as "deep daan." People also observe a full day fast on Mauna Amavasya.

Mauni Amavasya Significance

Mauni Amavasya glorifies the practice of silence (Maun) in the Hindu religion for attaining peace, self-control, liberation and ultimate reunion with God.

By practicing Maun, one can transition from being a piece of creation to the source of creation. Maun or absence of sound opens up a dimension that is beyond life and death. It leads us

to experience the enormous presence of the source of creation.

Amavasya teaches us the importance of practicing silence and becoming silence. Hindu Yogic traditions have given immense importance to maintaining silence from Mauni Amavasya to Maha Shivratri.

Mauni Amavasya offers us the opportunity to transcend the endless cycles of time and reunite with our true self to experience Godhood and immortality by practicing silence.

In fact, Hindu Yogis and Rishis have used silence as an integral component of spiritual development. Moreover, the word "Mauni" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Muni" which means a saint who practices silence.

So, "Maun" or silence was used to realize oneself. Many Hindu Gurus or Saints have given immense importance to the practice of silence for spiritual attainment.

The tradition of Amavasya was used to practice silence for attaining nirvana, freedom from the cycle of life and death.

Bathing in sacred rivers (such as the Ganges) on the auspicious day of Mauni

Amavasya is considered another very important practice for the Hindu followers. It is believed that the waters of the holy River Ganga turn nectar on the day of Mauni Amavasya.

So, devotees take a bath in the holy rivers on Amavasya. "Sangam Snana" holds immense importance for the devotees on Mauna Amavasya. Moreover, the whole month of Magha is considered ideal for bathing rituals in the sacred rivers.

Mauni Amavasya Date 2020

Mauni Amavasya is the day of silence when Hindus take a pledge not to utter a word throughout the day. Devotees go for a holy dip in the sacred rivers such as the Ganges. Mauni Amavasya 2020 will be celebrated on 24th January 2020 (Friday).

Amavasya Tithi Begins = 02:17 AM on 24 Jan 2020

Amavasya Tithi Ends = 03:11 AM on 25 Jan 2020

So, Mauni Amavasya is the day to practice silence and pray to God for attaining knowledge, peace, health, and happiness.

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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."





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 and on phone 011-91-8141234275 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 27 - February 2, 2020

ARIES: Ganesha says the mood now is softer. It is one of conciliation, a willingness to meet people more than halfway, as you work your magic in the world of business and high finance. A whole new mindset finds you caring and sharing, working, helping others, bonding in various ways, affecting major shake-ups in the office and / workplace.

TAURUS: Your humane and caring approach is well received and appreciated. There will be some domestic issues to deal with, including the health of elders at home; children will also be an area of concern. Ganesha is with you. There is great intensity in your life now. You are passionate, excited and excitable. Minor health problems are also likely.

GEMINI: There is a dramatic shift in your perspective as loans and funds, sex and passion, create a volatility and restlessness within you. Prayer and the right use of tantra, mantra and meditation will help. There will be exciting, even fascinating times as you are galvanised into a creative pursuit of goals. All this work may find your over-extended as you cope with increased pressures.

CANCER: You need to pace yourself; strive for streamlining and greater efficiency in your affairs. Learn to delegate so that you can take time off. Leisure is also important and you should learn the joys of simply goofing off. Ganesha wishes you well. You are doing many things at the same time. You are giving off your best at work and socially.

LEO: You will be totally absorbed in the domestic scene, the house and home, along with working at a punishing pace. There is a lot on your plate; try not to go under with this monumental burden. Learn to make time to relax, to pursue hobbies, pleasure activities, sport and exercise. The numerous demands of family / domestic life / extended family, though demanding, will also be immensely pleasurable.

VIRGO: You feel that you have got your affairs in order and now you want to enjoy the fruit of your labours. You have worked hard to achieve whatever you have and are now determined to enjoy a taste to luxury, passion, comforts, and the good life. You are on high and the good times roll by without too much effort; almost every goodie seems to fall on your lap.

LIBRA: There is urgent need for moderation in whatever you do. You may get carried away with excesses. There is a kind of careless rapture pervading your life and pursuits now. You are prepared to relax, have fun and indulge in the pleasures of the flesh. You have a certain standing in society and you are justifiably proud of it. You want to savour your success fully and enjoy every bit of life.

SCORPIO: There are expenses and many expansion plans too. You lay the groundwork for an assault at the highest level. If you are in the corporate world, this could be a good time to go global. You can become a corporate giant with a global following. Ganesha is with you. There will be many propitious new beginnings as the moon is in your sign. Everything you embark on now will lead to success.

SAGITTARIUS: You have had your moments of fun and now the material world and money matters assume enormous significance. Property, family affairs, taxes, revenues, stepping up of income are your major concerns as you busy yourself handling practicalities. Along with all this, you will also be mending fences and clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions.

CAPRICORN: There will be demands of the family on your time and resources. You realise that it doesn't help to neglect loved ones or to let your relationships suffer or falter in any way. Ganesha blesses you and encourages you to spend more time with your loved ones. It has been a long time since you met your siblings and extended family and spent quality time with them. What are you waiting for?

AQUARIUS: There could be international travel and you make several profitable contacts. Intense and intensive intellectual activities are your main pursuits. You will be busy with higher studies, crash courses, self-improvement, and enhancement of your knowledge, expertise and new skills. All this will be geared to increased earning. You are driven and determined to succeed.

PISCES: You are bit tired now and need a break to get your breath back. All the demands on you right from family, home, relationships, work have been heavy. Your patience is running thin but you will have to remain calm and maintain poise. Do not ride roughshod over others. Avoid extreme mood swings lest you damage your own image in the eyes of others.

Birthday Horoscope January 27 - February 2, 2020

27TH: Ganesha says drive, intensity, and passion seek channels of expression. Find a worthy goal into which you can invest such energy. Involving family or directing it toward a home project would fit the bill.

28TH: Some business difficulty, possibly in connection with a partner or financial complication, could make your now hard to hoe today. You could get caught up in a whirl of activity that makes you feel confused, out of control.

29TH: Take advantage of opportunities to put

family relations on better footing and to make home improvements. Support comes from those willing to share benefits. Renegotiate a loan, job benefits.

30TH: Imagination is a strong factor, but it can mislead or distort perception of the facts either in a professional setting or concerning your personal life. Be careful about shifting position to please others.

31ST: The Moon may coincide with people and events complicating your life. Power dynamics may be a part of this and concern your

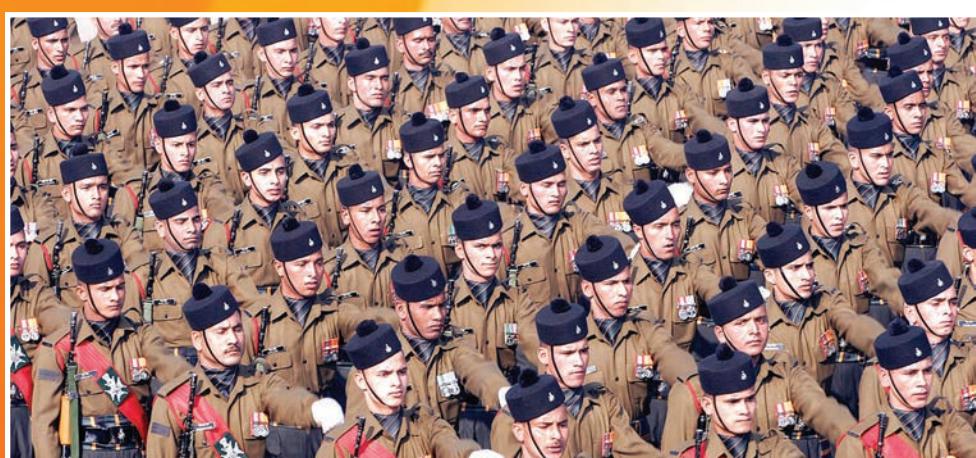
personal and social life, along with the addition of a financial angle.

1ST: Misunderstandings will be on the agenda if you don't make an effort to be clear and to spell everything out. It will help if you can drop any pre-conceived notions and really listen.

2ND: The desire to please and be of service is an admirable trait, but watch that you don't take it too far and to your detriment. Find a way to indulge a yearning to avoid the hustle and bustle of the world.

Vignettes of Republic Day of India

Through the lens of New York based photojournalist Jay Mandal-on assignment





Kiccha Sudeep to receive the Dada Saheb Phalke International Film Festival award for Dabangg 3

The Kannada superstar will be receiving the award for the Most Promising actor for the film Dabangg 3 at the upcoming Dada Saheb Phalke International Film Festival 2020.

The south megastar Kiccha Sudeep recently got a new swanky car as a gift from Bollywood's superstar Salman Khan. The Pailwaan actor Kiccha Sudeep, got a lot of recognition for his role as the villain in the Salman Khan starrer, Dabangg 3.

The actor who said during one of the interviews that a villain is who makes the hero stand out in a film. The south actor Kiccha Sudeep who also featured in films like Kotigobba 2, Chiranjeevi starrer, Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy and Veera Madakari is very careful while selecting his roles.

The actor was quizzed whether in the future he will take up more negative characters.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE RECEIVES CRYSTAL AWARD AT DAVOS

Deepika is the only Indian actress to have received such an honour at Davos summit.

While receiving the award, Deepika spoke about her own struggles battling depression and anxiety and assured scores, mental health patients, that they were 'not alone'.

"My love and hate relationship with this has taught me a lot and I want to tell everyone suffering from this that you are not alone," she said.

"One trillion dollars is the estimated impact of depression and mental illness on the world economy," she said while receiving the annual Crystal Award on the first evening of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2020.

"In the time it has taken me to accept this award, the world has lost one more person to suicide. That person may have been a father, a mother, a son or daughter, a brother or sister, a friend, a family member or a colleague. Every 40 seconds one person dies by suicide somewhere in the world," she said.

Dressed in a blue gown with her



hair pulled back, Deepika kept her look for the evening classy and understated.

"Depression is a common yet serious illness. It is important to understand that anxiety and depression is like any other illness and treatable. It was experience with this illness that encouraged

me to set up Live Love Laugh," she said mentioning the foundation she has set up for this cause.

Padukone was given the award for her leadership in raising mental health awareness -- which she did by going public a few years back with her own experience with anxiety and depression.

KANGANA: DEEPIKA MUST APOLOGISE FOR HER CHHAPAAK 'LOOK' COMMENT

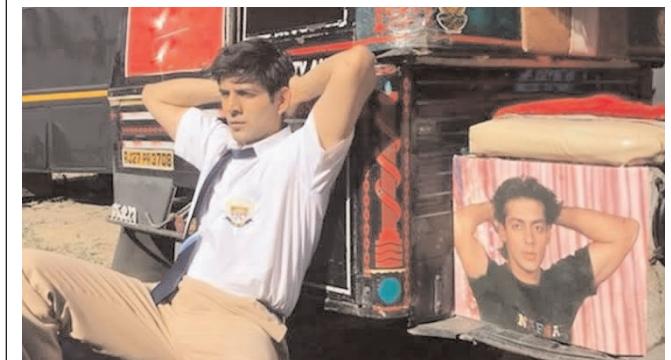
Recently, Deepika Padukone had faced backlash from social media users for a TikTok video, where she challenged an influencer to recreate her acid attack survivor "look" from her latest film Chhapaak. Kangana Ranaut, in a recent interview with India Today, said she wants Padukone to apologise for being insensitive. She said her sister Rangoli Chandel, an acid attack survivor, was hurt by the video.

"My sister was very hurt with that video. I am sure Deepika must have an explanation for that why and how, what circumstances, because sometimes marketing teams plan things in a way and we don't have time to go exactly into the depths of that," said Ranaut.

Ranaut was also asked to comment on Padukone joining protesting students at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Padukone left without saying anything, however, she was photographed meeting JNU Students' Union president Aishe Ghosh, who was injured in the violence that took place at the university on 5 January.

Ranaut said that she did not think she was the right person to comment on Padukone's decisions. She said that by making an appearance at JNU, the Chhapaak actress was only exercising her democratic right.

In the video, Padukone had asked make-up artiste Faby to recreate "three favourite looks" from her films. Faby chose the actress' looks from her 2007 debut Om Shanti Om and 2015's Piku. However, her attempt to do the same with Chhapaak, in which Padukone plays Malti was criticised on social media. Many called out the actor for trivialising the trauma of an acid attack survivor by categorising the part as a mere "look" and even questioned her intention behind taking up the part.



KARTIK AARYAN COPIES SALMAN KHAN IN LOVE AAJ KAL STILL

Actor Kartik Aaryan took to Instagram to share a still from his upcoming film, Love Aaj?Kal. The picture is from his 1990s avatar in the film, where he is called Raghu. What's different here is that he is copying Salman Khan from the latter's old hit, Maine Pyar Kiya.

Sharing it, Kartik wrote: "Maine Bhi Pyaar Kiya Meet my other half #Raghu #Kal #1990 #LoveAajkal." In the picture, Kartik sits, resting his back against a local transport, an auto perhaps. He is wearing a school uniform — beige-brown trousers, white shirt, blue tie with the school's logo on the shirt's pocket. His hands are behind his head, just the way Salman does in a poster of Maine Pyar Kiya, stuck to the body of the auto. Salman looks quite unlike his current self in the old Maine Pyar Kiya picture.

In Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal sequel, Kartik will play two characters — one set in 1990 and the other in 2020.

James Bond can be of any colour, but never a woman: Producer

Producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G Wilson, described as 'the custodians' of the James Bond franchise, have said that there is no chance for a female Bond, although changing the character's race isn't out of the question.

In an extensive interview to Variety, Broccoli said, "He can be of any colour, but he is male. I believe we should be creating new characters for women — strong female characters. I'm not particularly interested in taking a male character and having a woman play it. I think women are far more interesting than that." Previously, actor Idris Elba has often been connected to the role.

No Time to Die, the 25th Bond film, is slated for release in April. It will also be the fifth and final time actor Daniel Craig will play the iconic British spy, and the first film of the series to be released in a post-MeToo world. It will feature Lea Seydoux as the returning Doctor Madeleine Swann, and Ana de Armas as a CIA field agent and Lashana Lynch as a 00 operative. "Bond's been evolving along with all the other men in the world," Broccoli said. "Some have just gotten there more quickly than others."

No Time to Die is a film of many firsts. It is directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga, the first American to be handed the reins of the franchise, and will feature a theme song by Billie Eilish, the youngest performer ever to be given the responsibility.

BRAD PITT AND HELENA BONHAM CARTER HAVE A 'FIGHT CLUB' REUNION

Jennifer Aniston's not the only leading lady Brad Pitt reunited with at Sunday's 2020 SAG Awards! The 56-year-old actor was also photographed catching up with his Fight Club co-star Helena Bonham Carter at the annual award show.

Pitt and Carter played the reckless Tyler Durden and the rough and tumble Marla Singer, respectively, in the 1999 classic, which also stars Edward Norton.

At Sunday's SAG Awards, Carter and Pitt were spotted animatedly chatting before The Crown star gave Pitt a hug.

Carter was nominated for her role as Princess Margaret in the Netflix series and The Crown also picked up the Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series Award.

As for Pitt, he picked up a SAG Award for his role in Once Upon a Time in Hollywood.

"I gotta add this to my Tinder profile," he quipped in his speech.

But all eyes were on Pitt's backstage



antics where he was spotted chatting with his ex-wife Jennifer Aniston and even grabbing her arm. He was later

filmed backstage proudly watching as Aniston took him a trophy of her own for her work in The Morning Show.

REESE WITHERSPOON KEEPS GETTING SURPRISE GIFTS FROM BEYONCE AFTER THEIR GOLDEN GLOBES RUN-IN



Singer Beyoncé Knowles has surprised actor Reese Witherspoon with another huge gift. Witherspoon showcased her love for Beyoncé Knowles as she modelled the singer's latest collection of Ivy Park x Adidas apparel in a playful new clip.

The actor donned several different ensembles from the line as she posed and fooled around in front of a bright orange backdrop, as she gushed over the surprise delivery, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"You guys, somebody told me that a big package is arriving. I don't know what it is. Let's go see," she said in a video posted on Instagram.

While Witherspoon initially guessed the giant orange package could hold art,

some balloons or movie posters, she opened to reveal the full collection of the Beyoncé's fashion line.

The Legally Blonde star then proceeded to model a few of the pieces for fans, complete with a little dance for each one. "Does this officially make me the newest member of the #Beyhive?" she captioned the video, referring to Beyoncé's fans. "Thank you, @Beyonce for the #IvyPark swag!"

The special gift comes after Beyoncé and her rapper husband Jay-Z gifted Witherspoon a case of Jay's Armand de Brignac champagne after she shared an edited image of herself with the couple from the Golden Globes earlier this month, January 2020.



I WANTED TO PLAY WONDER WOMAN BUT I WAITED TOO LONG: JENNIFER ANISTON

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston says she wanted to play Wonder Woman at one point of time but ended up waiting for "too long".

However, the Friends alum didn't mention if she ever actively pursued the role.

"I wanted to play Wonder Woman but I waited too long," Aniston said as reported by Variety.

The actor, who picked up her first SAG award for best female actor in drama for The Morning Show, was speaking to the press backstage post her win.

She is yet to appear in any comic book-based films or TV shows and even recently criticised Marvel films.

Actor Gal Gadot mostly recently played Wonder Woman in the 2017 titular film and will reprise her role as the DC superhero in Wonder Woman 1984 this year. Other actors that have portrayed

live-action versions of Wonder Woman include Cathy Lee Crosby in the 1974 film Wonder Woman and Lynda Carter in the massively-popular TV series of the same name.

Asked what she hopes to do in career going ahead, Aniston said she is just getting started.

"I have a lot to do. I honestly feel I'm just kind of kicking into a creative stride that I've just discovered... A real love of this in a new way I didn't know that I had before."

"I almost have new eyes that I'm seeing what it is that I do as an actor..." she said. The 50-year-old actor said she wants to star in more comedies after The Morning Show which is set in the post MeToo world.

"I'm ready to have some laughter, that was some heavy stuff," Jennifer Aniston said.

Saudis ask US to remove Sudan from terrorism list, TV reports

DUBAI (TIP): Saudi Arabia has asked the United States to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism, Saudi state TV said on Wednesday, citing Minister of State for African Affairs Ahmed bin Abdul Aziz Qattan.

The US government added Sudan to its list of state sponsors of terrorism in 1993 over allegations that then-President Omar al-Bashir's Islamist government was supporting terrorist groups.

The designation makes Sudan technically ineligible for debt relief and financing from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Congress needs to

approve a removal.

Bashir was toppled by the military last year. A civilian transitional government, formed in August, agreed with the United States that it could start engaging with international institutions while still on the list.

Saudi Arabia supported the overthrow of Bashir, in what analysts believed reflected its coordinated efforts with the United Arab Emirates to curtail the regional influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, who backed his regime. Reuters



contd from page I

China locks down two cities to curb virus outbreak

leading to fear and panic for those who were trapped. Hours later, authorities in neighboring Huanggang announced that public transport and train services would be suspended at midnight, while people were told to not leave the city of 7.5 million.

All of Hangzhou's cinemas, internet cafes, and the central market will close.

A third city, 1.1 million-population Ezhou, announced the train station had been temporarily closed earlier in the day.

"We are feeling as though it is the end of the world," said one Wuhan resident on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform, voicing concerns about shortages of food and disinfectant.

"We really need everyone's help."

Another described being on the "verge of tears" when the de facto quarantine was announced, with the misery compounded by it coming on the eve of the Lunar New Year holiday.

Wuhan's train station and airport, which should have been packed with people coming for holiday family reunions, were almost empty except for workers on Thursday afternoon.

Few people were seen in the streets of the city and all were wearing masks.

Taxis in Wuhan tripled their fares, a driver said.

"It's very dangerous to be outside at this moment but we need to earn money," the driver told AFP.

More than 570 people have been infected with the virus across China—with most cases found in Wuhan, where a seafood market that illegally sold wild animals has been identified as the epicenter of the outbreak.

The coronavirus has caused alarm because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

Like SARS, it can be passed among people through the respiratory tract.

The first case of the new virus was confirmed on December 31, and it has since been detected in Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

The 17 people who died in China were aged from 48 to 89, and had pre-existing health conditions, Chinese health authorities said Thursday.

The World Health Organization on Wednesday delayed a decision on whether to declare a global health emergency—a rare instrument used only for the worst outbreaks.

The emergency committee will meet again on Thursday, after its chair, Didier Houssin, said the experts were split over declaring a public health emergency.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, "more information" was needed but he also praised China's "very, very strong measures" that will help control the epidemic and "minimize the chances of this outbreak spreading internationally".

With hundreds of millions of people travelling across China this week for the Lunar New Year holiday, the National Health Commission announced on Wednesday measures to curb the disease nationwide including sterilization and ventilation at airports and bus stations, as well as inside planes and trains.

The city's tourism and culture department cancelled all group tours until February 8, according to state media.

Wuhan has also cancelled large public events for the Lunar New Year holiday, which starts Friday. (Agencies)

India's New Citizenship Law Threatens Its Democracy, Says NJ Governor

He heavily criticized 'Oppressive Policies Toward Muslims in China, Myanmar, and India'

"The new year is supposed to be a time full of promise and hope, but for millions of Muslims in China, Myanmar, and India living under authoritarian policies, promise and hope are in short supply", he said in a statement.

"India's new citizenship law threatens its long and proud history as a secular and diverse democratic nation by establishing a religious test for migrants. As the largest democracy in the world, India could set an example for us all by abandoning this restrictive and intolerant policy" he said.

Murphy also spoke against the policies toward Muslims in China and Myanmar. "In China, millions of ethnic Uyghur Muslims have been unfairly imprisoned in re-education and forced labor camps -- an egregious violation of their human rights that potentially constitute crimes against humanity. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar have

sought to flee one of the world's most abhorrent state-sanctioned policies of repression and annihilation, creating a refugee crisis the scale of which we are only beginning to truly understand."

"As one of the most diverse states in the nation, New Jersey, with its strong and vibrant Muslim community, is particularly affected by these global crises. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' It is time for all nations, including ours, to take firm and unequivocal stances against the narrow thinking that is fueling these divisions and embrace the world as it should be -- tolerant, pluralistic, and interconnected" he further added.

More Shaheen Baghs are coming up across country: Actress Nandita Das

"They (government) are asking those who have been living here for four generations to prove that they are Indians. This is very sad. I think everyone should speak up," she said on the sidelines of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF).

The actor said the protests against the CAA and the NRC are "spontaneous" and no political parties are involved in them.

"These are led by students and common people. The youth has created a hope in the country. Every other place is becoming a Shaheen Bagh now, and I think as human beings, we should speak up against these laws," Das said.

She emphasized that with the economic slowdown, growing unemployment rate, and now with the CAA and the NRC, the country has become a topic of discussion across the world as "people are being divided on the basis of religion".

"We haven't seen this kind of unemployment in possibly 50 years. The economy is going down. International newspapers are writing about what's happening. This is the first time that we are being divided on religious lines.

"Our Constitution has given us the right to equality. You may belong to any caste, gender or religion but you are equal under the Constitution. And if you believe in that equality, you wouldn't want to see any sort of segregation," Das said.

She added it was a great thing that people from the film fraternity have also spoken strongly against the CAA and the NRC. (Source:PTI)

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Published by Prof. Indrajit Saluja

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Upbeat India take on injury-hit Kiwis as build-up to T20 World Cup continues

AUCKLAND (TIP): Preparations for the World Cup on top of their agenda, India will take on an injury-hit New Zealand in a rare five-match T20 International series starting Friday during which seam-friendly wickets would be a major challenge for the visitors.

Unlike most overseas tours, this will be a quick start for the Indian team. In a tight season, the first T20 comes only five days after their last ODI against Australia at home.

The team arrived in Auckland on Tuesday and chose to rest on Wednesday. Thursday was when they hit the nets ahead of the tour-opening game.

On the plus side, this hectic schedule helps the team management maintain consistency in team selection as they continue experimenting across the available squad in a World Cup year. The T20 showpiece is scheduled to be held in Australia in October this year.

Despite injury issues to key white-ball personnel like Shikhar Dhawan, Hardik Pandya, Deepak Chahar and Bhuvneshwar Kumar this past home season, the bench strength has come across adequate and raring to go for challenges ahead.

It begins at the top where KL Rahul has stepped up as a key part of India's white-ball plans.

He did enough against the West Indies as Shikhar Dhawan's replacement to merit a starting spot, and then formed a solid pairing when Dhawan returned while Rohit Sharma was rested. And now, India will once again start this T20 series with Rohit and Rahul pairing up at the top.

Skipper Virat Kohli dropped



hints that Rahul's newfound confidence in his dual role as batsman-keeper has given vital options to the team.

According to Kohli, Rahul will continue to keep wickets in both ODIs and T20Is, but will open in the shortest format while returning to the middle-order in the 50-over format. It could mean that Prithvi Shaw is being primed for an ODI debut and a potential pairing with Rohit when the three-match series begins on February 5.

The skipper also indicated a change in middle order plans. With Rahul keeping wickets, the fit-again Rishabh Pant could lose his spot in the playing eleven.

Manish Pandey is expected to play as the fifth specialist batsman

and Shreyas Iyer will regain his spot at number four.

Pandey, Iyer and Pant batted together in the nets on Thursday, while Sanju Samson hung around, only to pad up later on. The Kerala batsman didn't seem to be in contention for the first T20I.

Pant and Pandey could both fit into the playing eleven should India opt for five bowlers and leave out the sixth option in Shivam Dube. Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja are the other two all-round options.

The Yuzvendra Chahal-Kuldeep Yadav combination is yet to play a game together since the 2019 ODI World Cup, and it remains to be seen if things will change in this aspect.

Handling pressure will be key in T20 World Cup: Harmanpreet Kaur

MUMBAI (TIP): The Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur said at the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Australia, handling the pressure would be crucial — something her side could not do in the last two global showpieces. Harmanpreet was speaking to reporters at the pre-departure press conference ahead of the Tri-series involving England and hosts Australia, which will be followed by the T20 World Cup next month.

India made a semifinal exit in the last T20 World Cup and in the previous ODI World Cup, they had finished as the runners-up. "We were quite close in the last two World Cups, the only thing is we have to keep in mind how to handle pressure in the tournaments. The last two World Cups, we lacked in handling pressure," Harmanpreet said. "This time we want to enjoy rather than taking more pressure on ourselves,



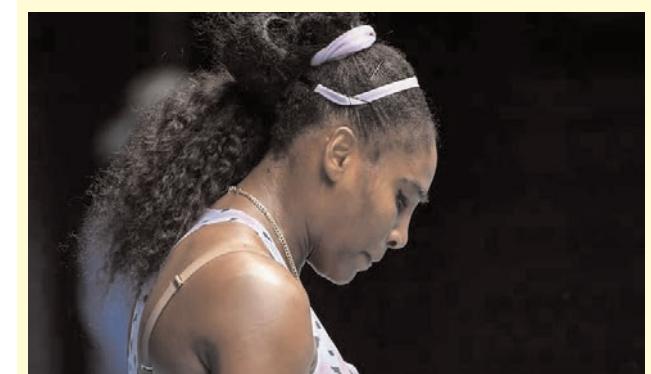
thinking that it is a big tournament. We have to avoid thinking like that and focus on giving our best," she added.

The women's T20 World Cup will be played in Australia from February 21 to March 8. India will take on Australia, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Sri Lanka in the group stage. The 30-year-old Harmanpreet, who has played 104 T20Is, said the team needs to focus on enhancing skills instead of thinking about the pressure of performing at the big stage. "The last few World Cups, we put ourselves under too much

pressure of playing in a big tournament. This time rather than thinking that we are going for a big tournament, we just want to focus on our skills, how we should play and how to make the team win," she said. "That will be very important for us and when we focus on these things, we will produce better results," she added. She counted spin bowling as one of the strengths of her team.

Christchurch to host 2021 women's World Cup final

Christchurch's Hagley Oval will host the summit clash of next year's Women's ODI World Cup. The 50-overs tournament which will run from February 6 to March 7 will be played across six cities. Auckland will host a bumper opening weekend at the Eden Park, before the focus shifts to matches in Wellington, Hamilton, Tauranga, Dunedin and Christchurch.



AUSTRALIAN OPEN: SERENA CRASHES OUT IN 3RD ROUND

MELBOURNE (TIP): Serena Williams' bid to win a 24th Grand Slam title has been falling short with losses in finals. At this Australian Open, she didn't make it nearly that far.

Serving only so-so, failing to convert all but one of her break chances and missing groundstrokes with alarming regularity, Williams stunningly exited in the third round at Melbourne Park, beaten 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5 by 27th-seeded Wang Qiang of China on Friday.

Williams was broken in the final game, fittingly ending things with a backhand into the net. That was her 27th unforced error on the backhand side, part of a total of 56 miscues. Wang made only 20.

Williams owns seven trophies from the year's first major championship and this was her earliest defeat there since also bowing out in the third round all the way back in 2006.

Here is just one measure of how unexpected this result was: The only other time these two women faced each other came at the U.S. Open last September—the only Slam quarterfinal appearance of Wang's career—and Williams needed all of 44 minutes to dominate her way to a 6-1, 6-0 victory. The total points were 50 to 15.

Saina bows out as India's campaign ends in Thailand

BANGKOK (TIP): Top Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal suffered a second consecutive opening round defeat as she went down to Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of Denmark to bring down the curtain on the country's campaign in the Thailand Masters.

The fifth-seeded Saina lost to unseeded Kjaersfeldt 13-21 21-17 15-21 in a hard-fought 47-minute contest. World No. 18 Saina had a 4-0 head-to-head record against the No. 29 Dane before today's match. With Saina's defeat, India's campaign came to an end in the BWF World Tour Super 300 event. Saina had also lost in the opening round in the Indonesia Masters last week after entering the quarterfinals in the Malaysia Masters.

In the men's singles, the trio of Kidambi Srikanth, Sameer Verma and HS Prannoy too faltered in the first round. Indian shuttlers thus continued their poor run after making early exits in Malaysia and Indonesia earlier this month.

Verma lost to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia 16-21 15-21 in a 39-minute match. The story went on similar lines for the fifth-seeded Srikanth, who went down to Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia 21-12 14-21 12-21 in a match that lasted 48 minutes. This was Srikanth's third consecutive first round exit this season.



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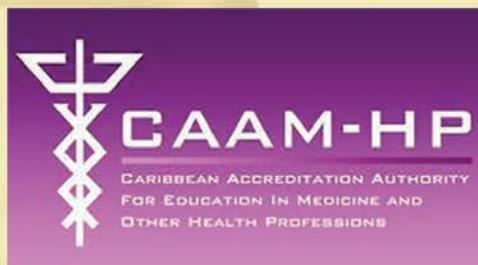


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