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1 Indian American Weekly: Since 2006

The INDIAN PANORAMA

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AAP Makes a Near Clean Sweep winning 62 of 70 Assembly Seats in Delhi Elections

- **BJP improves position from 3 in 2015 to 8 in 2020; Congress pushed into oblivion**
- **Kejriwal to be sworn in as Chief Minister of Delhi for the third consecutive term on February 16**
- **No politicians from other states to be invited for Kejriwal oath ceremony**



Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal send kisses to the jubilating party workers after the glorious victory, Feb 11

Potential for Co-operation between US and India is Limitless, Says Indian Envoy



Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu (Left) with Dr. Mukesh Aghi, President and CEO of USISPF at the USISPF reception in Washington, February 7. Photo / Courtesy Embassy of India

WASHINGTON (TIP): As Prime Minister Modi has made it clear that the US is India's preferred partner for trade and business, the potential for co-operation, between United States and India, is limitless, said India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum hosted a welcome reception for Ambassador Sandhu on February 7, 2020. Ambassador Sandhu addressed the gathering and interacted with industry representatives. Addressing the gathering the Ambassador described when he was here, as a young diplomat in 1997, he always sensed, the potential of the US-India partnership, and wondered how we could, move forward.

contd on Page 32

I.S. SALUJA

NEW DELHI (TIP): In a massive show of approval of AAP governance in the State of Delhi, Delhites returned Kejriwal government to power, giving it almost a landslide victory with 62 Assembly Seats, leaving the BJP with 8 Assembly Seats and sending the Congress to oblivion which could not win even a single seat. Worse, its candidates lost deposit on 63 seats, a humiliation which the once ruling party of Delhi may not have dreamed of.

The people of Delhi indubitably rewarded the good governance and public welfare schemes launched by the AAP government. Voters rejected the Congress completely.

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Kem Cho, Trump: Record Number of People to Welcome US President in Ahmedabad



PM Modi invited President Trump to visit India during his U.S. trip in June 2017 with hope to improve bilateral trade relations with the US (File photo)

WASHINGTON (TIP): At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald J. Trump, accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump, will pay a State Visit to India on 24-25 February 2020. This will be the President's first visit to India.

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United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres to Visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan

The Kartarpur Corridor, which links Dera Baba Sahib in Gurdaspur in India and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan, was opened on November 9, 2019

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, in Kartarpur during his visit to Pakistan from Feb 16-18. According to the information available with The Indian Panorama, the UN chief will arrive in Islamabad on Sunday, Feb 16 and will hold bilateral meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on that day and speak at an event on sustainable development and climate change.

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United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is expected to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan on February 18th

Photo / Courtesy UN



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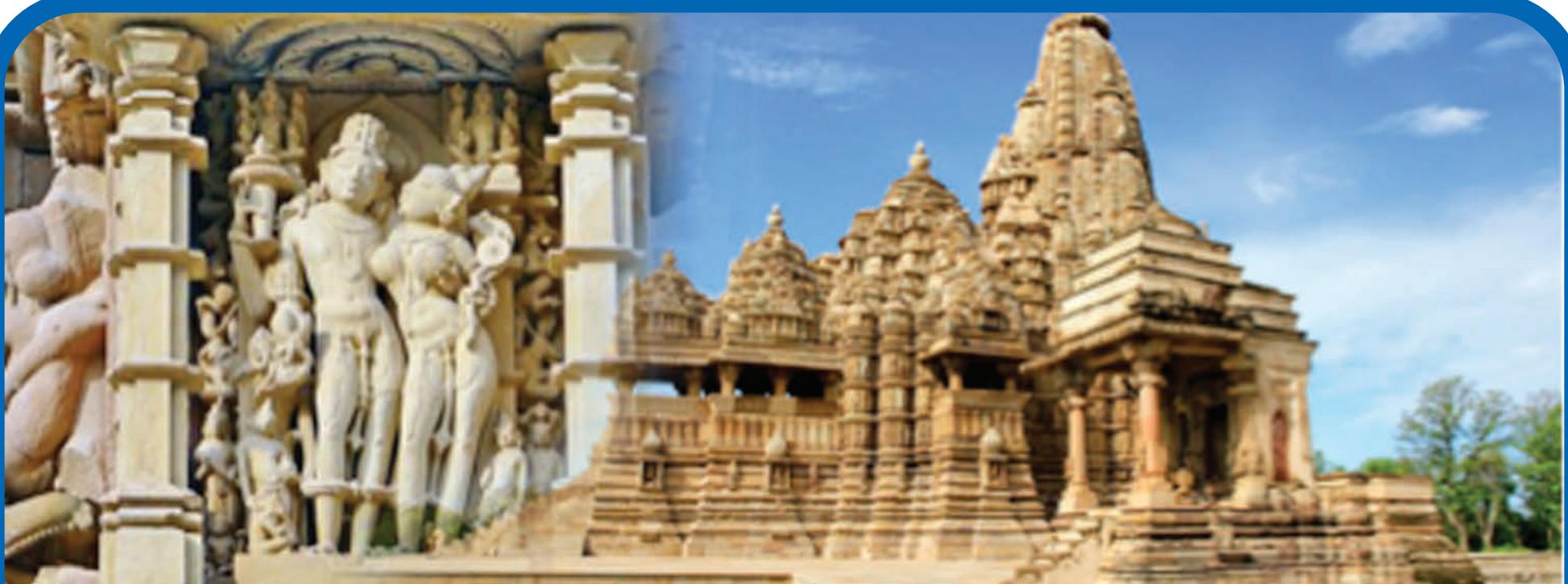
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WHEN: March 21st-24th2020

WHERE: KHAJURAHO, Madya Pradesh, India - A World Heritage Site

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ABOUT THE EVENT:

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Ancient Temples More Than 1,000 Years Old, Ayurveda, Indian Philosophy, Yoga, Kama, Workshops, Meditation, Prayer, Music, Dance and Play India has always been a spiritual teacher for the world; it is time to revisit its teachings.

The purpose of this Festival:

Happy Life Yoga Initiative

- Raise awareness about how to live life in balance

A Tribute to Khajuraho

- Celebrate and understand the importance, beauty, and history of Khajuraho

- Receive blessings and healing from temples representing Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, Kamadeva and others

Hosted by The Indian Panorama, Indian American Forum, Tirlok Malik and the HAPPY LIFE YOGA team, & more

ABOUT HAPPY LIFE YOGA:

HAPPY LIFE YOGA is an educational platform offering a unique holistic approach to health and happiness using tools from Ayurveda, Indian Philosophy, and Yoga.

www.happylifeyoga.org

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Anupam Kher Captivates with “Kuch Bhi Ho Sakta Hai”

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Anupam Kher's solo theatre performance Kuch Bhi Ho Sakta Hai has been performed many times all over the world stage. But his outstanding performance on Feb 8 at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New York City to an intimate audience and crème de la crème invitees set yet another bar entirely. Setting the tone of the evening, Anupam Kher forayed into the theatre with the customary ease of a consummate performer and mingled with the audience, cracked jokes, giving casual shout outs, just shaking hands, engaging them even before the performance had begun and a few minutes later stepped onto the stage and the unforgettable evening began.

Enacting his life story of failures and success with the passion, power and energy kept the audiences engaged and gave them an intimate glimpse into the making of Anupam Kher the star, the person, the performer. They laughed with him, empathized with every failure and gloried in his victories. The story of his birth, his family life growing up in Shimla, his yearning to be someone different to make a mark outside his limited world - made for a mesmerizing tale of how everyone can dare to dream and should. Weaving the antics of school days with his first disastrous forays into acting, while sharing with the audience the nuances of his first kiss, his first crush were mesmerizing as they were relatable. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*



The consummate theater artist Anupam Kher in solo performance in "Kuch Bhi Ho Sakta Hai" at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New York City, Feb 8



Photos / Jay Mandal-On Assignment



Post performance, Anupam Kher thanks God and the audience which included Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin and his wife Padma Akbaruddin, Consul General of India Sandeep Chakravorty and his wife Taruna Chakravorty.

Photo / Jay Mandal-On Assignment



New York State bans single-use plastic bags, effective March 1

Starting March 1, 2020, single-use plastic bags are banned, with limited exceptions, in New York State. In addition, businesses will begin collecting a five-cent fee on paper carryout bags in New York City. This fee will not apply to any customers using SNAP or WIC.

Lotus Management Group Inc, Hicksville, NY Ordered to Pay Wages to ex-Employee

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): District Court of Nassau County 1st District NSC Part has ordered the Lotus Management Group Inc located at 127 North Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801 to pay \$548.57 to one of its ex-employees for the unpaid wages and interest thereon.

The Judge Arbitrator Brendan Twomey passed the order February 5, 2020 on a petition filed by an ex-employee of Lotus Management Group Inc that her employer had not paid her wages for the work she had done for the company.

The Judge Arbitrator, "after trial, on inquest and deliberating thereon", decided to award in favor of the petitioner. The defendant Lotus Management Group Inc has been ordered to pay to the plaintiff a total of \$548.57 which includes Award amount: \$500.00; Interest: \$13.57; Costs & Disbs: \$35.00. The judgment, which is a public record, is valid for 20 years.

Brooklyn Borough to Celebrate Black History Month Feb 26



Photo / Courtesy : Borough of Brooklyn

NEW YORK (TIP): Brooklyn Borough Prez Eric Adams told TIP that Brooklyn Borough will host the annual Black History Month event on Feb 26th. The theme is "Black History's Next Chapter." The event, co-sponsored by MetroPlus, JP Morgan Chase, and NYC & Co. Foundation, will feature a keynote speech from Asha Boston, founder and prez of The Dinner Table, a non-profit that provides college and career readiness workshops and programming for middle school and high school aged women of color, as well as incoming college freshmen.

AAPi Holds Spring Governing Body Meet

Dr. Sajani Shah, a second-generation physician of Indian Origin elected Chair of BOT, AAPI for 2020-21

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): "I am excited to announce that Dr. Sajani Shah, a second generation physician of Indian Origin, and the first ever from the Young Physicians Section, has been elected as the Chair of BOT, AAPI for the year 2020-21," Dr. Suresh Reddy, President of AAPI announced here. "I am so proud that this historic milestone by AAPI has occurred during my Presidency," the young and dynamic President of AAPI declared here.

Dr. Sajani Shah was elected Chair of Board of Trustees, AAPI during the AAPI Spring Governing Body Meeting



held on Saturday, February 8th, 2020. Organized by the AAPI-QLI Chapter, the GB Meeting was conducted smoothly with informative reports & healthy discussions.

Attended by over 150 AAPI Members and leaders of AAPI from across the country, the Executive Team was led by AAPI President, Dr. Suresh Reddy and was coordinated by Dr. Ravi Kolli, in his capacity as the Secretary of AAPI. Dr. Aravind Goyal, a veteran AAPI leader served as the Speaker for the GB Meeting, ensuring a smooth flow of agenda.

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Indian Origin Rishi Sunak Named New Finance Minister of UK



Sunak, the son-in-law of Infosys Co-founder Narayana Murthy, was appointed UK's New Finance Minister on Feb 13

LONDON (TIP): Rishi Sunak, the son-in-law of Infosys Co-founder Narayana Murthy, was appointed UK's New Finance Minister on Feb 13. He was previously Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 24 July 2019 to 13 February 2020, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government from 9 January 2018 to 24 July 2019.

Rishi went to Winchester College and studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University. He was also a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University (USA) where he studied for his MBA. Rishi was elected Conservative MP for Richmond (Yorks) in May 2015 and served as a Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy from June 2017 until his ministerial appointment. Rishi spent his professional career before politics in business and finance, working internationally. He co-founded an investment firm working with companies in multiple geographies. He then used that experience to help small and entrepreneurial British companies grow.

Indian American Pleads Guilty to Medicare Kickback Scheme

SACRAMENTO, CA (TIP): Jai Vijay, 54, of Sacramento, pleaded guilty Feb 6 to conspiring with the owners of home health care agencies and a hospice agency to pay and receive illegal kickbacks in exchange for Medicare beneficiary referrals. According to court documents, Jai Vijay's wife, Anita Vijay, worked as the social services director at a skilled nursing and assisted living facility in Sacramento. In her role, Anita Vijay assisted Medicare beneficiaries in selecting home health care and hospice agencies following their discharge from the facility. Anita Vijay used her position to steer Medicare beneficiaries to home health agencies in Folsom and El Dorado Hills and a hospice agency in Folsom. In exchange for the beneficiary referrals, the agencies' owners paid Jai Vijay and Anita Vijay illegal cash kickbacks. In his plea agreement, Jai Vijay admitted that the agencies' owners paid him and his wife kickbacks in exchange for the referral of approximately 60 beneficiaries. Medicare paid the agencies approximately \$400,000 for services they purportedly provided to the beneficiaries. Because the agencies obtained the beneficiary referrals by paying kickbacks, they should not have received any reimbursement from Medicare.

Three Indian Americans Elected to National Academy of Engineering, Two International Members from India

NEW YORK (TIP): Three Indian Americans have been elected as new members of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) while two Indians named international members.

Rajeev Gautam, Jayathi Y. Murthy and Amarpreet Singh Sawhney are the three new members from the USA while Pawan K. Goenka and Chennupati Jagadish are elected as international members.

The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) has elected 87 new members and 18 international members, announced NAE President John L. Anderson. This brings the total U.S. membership to 2,309 and the number of international members to 281.

Rajeev Gautam, president and chief executive officer, performance materials and technologies, Honeywell, Morris Plains, N.J. For business and technical leadership in the oil, gas, and petrochemicals industry.

Jayathi Y. Murthy, Ronald and Valerie Sugar Dean and Distinguished Professor, Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science, University of California, Los Angeles. For the development of unstructured solution-adaptive finite volume methods for heat, mass, and momentum transport.

Amarpreet Singh Sawhney, chairman of the board, Ocular Therapeutix Inc., Bedford, Mass. For development of innovative medical devices that have impacted millions of patients.



Rajeev Gautam, Jayathi Y. Murthy and Amarpreet Singh Sawhney are the three new members from the USA while Pawan K. Goenka and Chennupati Jagadish are elected as international members

International Members are:

Pawan K. Goenka, managing director, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., Mumbai, India. For leadership and expansion of Mahindra's automotive business in India, and for contributions in automotive engine lubrication.

Chennupati Jagadish, distinguished professor, electronic materials engineering, Australian National University, Canberra. For contributions to nanotechnology for optoelectronic devices.

Election to the National Academy of Engineering is among the highest professional distinctions accorded to an engineer. Academy membership honors those who have made outstanding contributions to "engineering research, practice, or education, including, where appropriate, significant contributions to

the engineering literature" and to "the pioneering of new and developing fields of technology, making major advancements in traditional fields of engineering, or developing/implementing innovative approaches to engineering education." Election of new NAE members is the culmination of a yearlong process. The ballot is set in December and the final vote for membership occurs during January.

Individuals in the newly elected class will be formally inducted during a ceremony at the NAE's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 4. A list of the newly elected members and international members follows, with their primary affiliations at the time of election and a brief statement of their principal engineering accomplishments.

Indian American Woman to Run for US Congress from Virginia



Manga Anantatmula launched her Congressional Campaign on Saturday, Feb 8

WASHINGTON (TIP): Manga Anantatmula, an Indian origin Republican has announced her bid for US House of Representatives from the 11th Congressional District of Virginia. Born in Andhra Pradesh, she did her schooling from Chennai and graduated from the Agra University before coming to the US as an immigrant. Anantatmula helped campaign Virginia Republican candidates in 2017-2018 and has been since tirelessly helping the GOP. As a professional, Anantatmula worked for federal government agencies, such as Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Marine, DoD, and DHS as a small business owner and a consultant, rising to the ranks of defense acquisitions program management. I will be your voice, not a noise, Anantatmula says in her outreach to Indian American particularly Hindu community. In her recent tweets she has supported India's stand on Kashmir and recently enacted Citizenship Amendment Act and building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. "Never imagined that my Kickoff will also be my celebratory campaign kickoff as a PRESUMPTIVE NOMINEE!! The battle begins!!! VA11 is turning RED! GOD BLESS AMERICA! My name will be on the ballot in November!!" she wrote on social media after formally launching her Congressional Campaign on Saturday, Feb 8 from Herndon, a Virginia suburb of Washington DC.

Indian Origin Alok Sharma Named UK's Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

LONDON (TIP): Indian Origin Alok Sharma was appointed Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 13 February 2020 in UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Cabinet reshuffle and will take charge of the crucial summit COP26 as its former president was removed amid controversy just weeks ago. Sharma was previously Secretary of State for International Development from 24 July 2019 to 13 February 2020, and Minister of State for Employment at the Department of Work and Pensions from 9 January 2018 until 24 July 2019.



Alok was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 17 July 2016 to 13 June 2017.

Sharma was Minister of State for Housing and Planning, for the Department for Communities and Local Government from 13 June 2017 to 9 January 2018. Alok was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 17 July 2016 to 13 June 2017.

He has served as a member of the Commons Treasury select committee, a member of the Commons Science and Technology select committee, a Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Treasury and from 2012 to 2015 as a Conservative Party Vice Chairman. Alok was appointed in 2016 as the Prime Minister's Infrastructure Envoy to India.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)



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NYS Common Retirement Fund Announces \$800 Million In Recent Climate-Related And Sustainable Investments



Thomasdi Napoli: "New York State's pension fund will continue our leadership on the issue of climate change and take advantage of the opportunities created by the global transition to a lower carbon, sustainable economy to strengthen the Fund."

ALBANY, NY (TIP): New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, on Feb 13, announced \$800 million in recent investments through the New York State Common Retirement Fund's (Fund) Sustainable Investments and Climate Solutions program.

"Climate change is one of the greatest risks facing investors, but the worldwide effort to address it has spurred innovation and change," DiNapoli said. "New York state's pension fund will continue our leadership on the issue of climate change and take advantage of the opportunities created by the global transition to a lower carbon, sustainable economy to strengthen the Fund."

As part of his Climate Action Plan, DiNapoli has committed \$20 billion to its Sustainable Investments and Climate Solutions program. To date, the Fund has allocated \$8.5 billion of that overall commitment. The latest \$800 million comprises three separate investments.

(Read full story in www.theindianpanorama.news)

Nominations Being Accepted for Stewardship Appreciation Awards through April 30

Not-for-profit organizations, individuals, educational institutions, and municipalities with formal agreements with DEC are eligible to apply.



ALBANY, NY (TIP): The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is now accepting nominations for the inaugural 2020 Stewardship Appreciation Awards, DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos announced Feb 13.

"Partnerships are invaluable to DEC's efforts to promote outdoor recreation and provide a positive visitor experience," said Commissioner Seggos. "This new awards program will recognize the efforts of volunteers and partners in improvement, outreach, and stewardship projects on state lands, waters, and at DEC facilities."

DEC manages 4.6 million acres of public lands, including three million acres in the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, more than 5,000 miles of formal trails, campgrounds, day use areas, and hundreds of trailheads, boat launches, and fishing piers. These lands provide countless outdoor recreational experiences for the public, while also protecting valuable natural

resources. Volunteers and partner organizations are essential to the continued stewardship and promotion of these resources.

Not-for-profit organizations, individuals, educational institutions, and municipalities with formal agreements with DEC are eligible to apply.

Nominees must be in good standing with DEC and New York State Environmental Conservation Law for the past three years. Nominees must have one of the following formal agreements with DEC:

- An active Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA).
- A current Memorandum of Understanding.
- A current Use and Occupancy Agreement; or
- Proof of organized volunteer activities on State lands.
- DEC encourages those who meet the eligibility requirements and are committed to improving lands, waters, and facilities including, but not limited to, forest preserves, state forests, conservation easements, wildlife management areas, and

environmental education centers to submit a nomination.

- Examples of projects completed by volunteers and partners include:
- Rehabilitation of trails.
- Restoration of historic buildings, structures, or other interpretive structures related to the conservation of natural resources; and
- Promoting environmental education efforts for the public, for example, Leave No Trace and outdoor safety principles, natural resource stewardship efforts, and outdoor recreational programming.

Completed nominations for the 2020 awards must be submitted by Thursday, April 30. Award winners will be announced in September. Additional information about the award program, including a 2020 nomination form, can be found on DEC's website. Nomination forms can also be requested via email to adventureny@dec.ny.gov, or by writing to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Adventure NY, 625 Broadway, 14th Floor, Albany, New York 12233-1010.

To learn more about DEC's volunteers and partners, visit DEC's website.

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/press.html>

Nassau Legislature Minority Leader Kevan M. Abrahams says Nassau County has nothing to do with passing a bail reform



The Nassau County Legislature had nothing to do with passing bail reform and has no say or power to change bail reform now, says Nassau Legislature Minority Leader Kevan M. Abrahams

MINEOLA, NY (TIP): "Let's be clear: The Nassau County Legislature had nothing to do with passing bail reform and has no say or power to change bail reform now. County Executive Curran, District Attorney Singas and Democrats in the Legislature have already clearly and loudly made known our view that bail reform needs to be fixed by the New York State Legislature", said Nassau Legislature Minority Leader Kevan M. Abrahams, in response to Republican Majority's Bail Reform Hearing.

Here is the full statement of Abrahams. "Our caucus proudly stands by its unwavering, consistent support of the law enforcement professionals that serve and protect Nassau residents. However, the primary purpose for the Republicans to hold a bail reform hearing at the Nassau County Legislature was to exploit an issue that they can do nothing about - and an issue that leaders in Albany have already committed to addressing. This 'hearing'

was designed to be a hatchet job that had little to do with public safety and everything to do with politics.

People should never be punished disproportionately by the criminal justice system solely because of their inability to pay pre-trial bail. Recent reports in Newsday have highlighted a proposal by New York State Senate Democrats that would abolish cash bail while emphasizing public safety by:

- o Ending bail requirements for misdemeanors except for certain hate and sex crimes.
- o Increasing judicial authority and discretion to remand a suspect or impose monitoring requirements based on guidelines considering the suspect's criminal record, flight risk and history of violence.
- o Making any crime involving a

fatality eligible for remand.

- o Allowing the court to remand or monitor suspects in felony domestic violence cases; and
- o Monitoring the impact of bail reform by gathering and analyzing data related to recidivism, the percentage of suspects being held/released and racial demographics.

The Republican Majority in the Legislature must stop wasting Nassau taxpayers' time and money with fearmongering and politicking. Instead, they should focus their energy on passing the County Executive's Taxpayer Protection Plan - something that will save many homeowners millions of dollars on their property taxes this year.

It is time for Republicans to stop playing politics and start doing the people's business."

(Based on a press release)

Seven Indian Americans Named 2020 Sloan Research Fellows



Monika Raj, Ami Bhatt, Sanjam Garg, Aditya Parameswaran, Srabanti Chowdhury, Vedika Khemani and Ila Varma are the seven Indian Americans named 2020 Sloan Research Fellows

NEW YORK (TIP): Seven Indian origin persons were among the 126 researchers from more than 60 research institutions in the United States and Canada named as 2020 Sloan Research Fellows.

They are:

Chemistry - Monika Raj, Auburn University
Computational and Evolutionary

Molecular Biology - Ami Bhatt, Stanford University

Computer Science - Sanjam Garg and Aditya Parameswaran, both from University of California, Berkeley

Physics - Srabanti Chowdhury and Vedika Khemani, both from Stanford University

Mathematics - Ila Varma, University of Toronto

Sloan Research Fellowships are one of the most competitive and prestigious awards available to early career researchers, often seen as a marker of the quality of an institution's science faculty and proof of an institution's success in attracting the most promising junior researchers to its ranks.

These 126 early-career scholars represent the most promising scientific researchers working today. Their achievements and potential place them among the next generation of scientific leaders in the U.S. and Canada. Winners receive \$75,000, which may be spent over a two-year term on any expense supportive of their research.

AAPi Holds Spring Governing Body Meet

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During his inaugural address, Dr. Reddy gave an overview of accomplishments under his leadership of AAPI in the past 200 days. "As I look back to the past 200 days since we assumed office, leading American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), representing over 100,000 enthusiastic and cohesive group of Physicians and Fellows of Indian Origin, I am extremely happy to state that we have accomplished several and are on way to fulfill our promises and commitment to take AAPI to the next level."

"In my inaugural address, I had promised to align all the energies to make AAPI an enormous force, committing to take the more than three decades old organization to the new heights and bring all the AAPI Chapters, Regions, Members of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees to work cohesively and unitedly for the success of AAPI and the realization of its noble mission, bringing in increased dignity, decency, professionalism and eliteness into the organization, and thus elevate the already existing stand," Dr. Reddy reminded AAPI members.

Dr. Reddy highlighted the historic Global Health Care Summit held in Hyderabad, Continuing Medical Education, active involvement/participation of Young Physicians, Three highly successful voyages to Antarctica, Obesity Awareness campaign in India, Argentina and in the US, Share a Blanket program, Leadership Summit in Washington, DC, several new initiatives in India in collaboration with the government of India, MCI, local NGOs, Tata Trust and Apollo Hospital, and the continued collaboration and efforts to coordinate and unify the many AAPI Chapters as some of the highlights of the AAPI's 200 Days Under Dr. Reddy and Team.

In her remarks, Dr. Seema Arora, current Chair of AAPI's BOT said, "Congratulations to President Dr. Suresh Reddy for another



successful event of the year and completion of very productive 200 days. It has been a great journey working together with the active contribution from Board of Trustees towards achieving the mission and goals of the organization, ensuring financial stability as well as maintaining peace and harmony which is the foundation for prosperity of any institution. I look forward to an even better rest of the term setting strong foundation for years to come!"

"Early Bird Registration for the historic 38th Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) to be held from June 24th to 28th, 2020 at the famous Donald E Stephens Convention Center in Chicago has begun, offering discounted registration rates for the AAPI delegates," Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, President-Elect of AAPI, announced.

"For the AAPI members who had attended the AAPI Spring GBM, a discount of \$100 towards the Registration fee," Dr. Ravi Kolli, Secretary of AAPI announced. "Also they will have \$100 waived towards registration for the Cruise On Michigan

Lake planned for the inaugural day of the AAPI Convention."

Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, Vice President of AAPI thanked AAPI-QLI leaders Dr. Raj Bhayani, Dr. Ajay Lodha, Dr. Himanshu Pandya, Dr. Jagdish Gupta, Dr. Krishan Kumar, Dr. Sunil Mehra, Dr. Shashi Shah, and the rest of the very efficient and dedicated QLI team for organizing this awesome event.

Dr. Rajendra Bhayani, President of AAPI-QLI, said, "Thank you all for the love and friendship which you have shown to all of us at AAPI-QLI by giving us the opportunity to be the host and welcome you all on Long Island, New York." A Health Book compiled by Dr. Chander Kapasi, Chair of the AAPI Charitable Foundation was released.

The fabulous Evening Gala and Valentine's Day Party organized by AAPI-QLI was attended by over 400 AAPI members and their families. The gala was enjoyable and the food was extraordinary with exceptional hospitality of the local Chapter. Towards making AAPI financially strong, Dr. Reddy urged members to contribute towards AAPI Endowment



Dr. Sajani Shah, a second-generation physician of Indian Origin elected Chair of BOT, AAPI for 2020-21

Fund. Dr. Ravi Kolli presented a check for \$10,000 while the President of the St. Louis Chapter of AAPI, Dr. Raghuveer Kura along with Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, BOT Vice Chair donated a check for \$10,000. AAPI-QLI expressed their intent to contribute towards the AAPI Endowment Fund in the future.

Dr. Sajani Shah, the new chair of BOT, AAPI, is a surgeon from Boston, MA who specializes in minimally invasive Bariatric Surgery. She earned her executive MBA from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Currently, she is serving as the Chief of Minimally Invasive Bariatric/Surgery and is the Medical Director of Weight and Wellness, Obesity Treatment Program in New England. Dr. Shah is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Tufts University School of Medicine. She was also a President of IMANE, a subchapter of AAPI. She has been serving as a member of BOT, AAPI since 2018. For more information about AAPI and the upcoming convention, please visit www.appiusa.org (Based on a Press Release)



By Satish Deshpande

Being both the symbolic space that holds the reins of power over the nation-state and a geographical place that hosts millions of everyday lives, Delhi is politically split. Local elections in Delhi are neither simply provincial nor straightforwardly national. The Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya's famous words, "Hunooz Dilli door ast" (Delhi is distant yet), apply to the city itself. Though they co-exist in the same city, the different avatars of Delhi can be quite far from each other. The elections to the Delhi State Assembly have underlined as never before the vast gulf between the national power center and the regional State.

Study in contrasts

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contested the Delhi election as though it was an extension of the 2019 Lok Sabha campaign. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) fought the election as though it was about municipal matters such as water and electricity and nothing else. The Indian National Congress (INC) pretended that it was not pretending to fight the election. These contrasting styles of campaigning point to the larger challenges facing not just our polity but the very idea of India today. But before looking at the reasons why this is so, a quick look at the result.

AAP won 62 of 70 Assembly seats, with the BJP bagging 8, while the INC experienced an even more emphatic whitewash than in 2015. But do these results support the swift and sure conclusions that are already being drawn by the pundits? Has achieving a second landslide win truly vindicated the AAP strategy of presenting itself as a non-ideological management consultancy that refuses to engage with the burning political issues of the day?

Does a second successive defeat in its Lok Sabha stronghold - where it won all seven seats in the past two general elections - mean that the BJP's politics of hate has finally failed? And does a repeat rout in a State that it ruled for 15 years imply that the INC must now be issued a political death certificate? Though the details will become clear only later, it does look like the immediate answer to each of these questions must be a qualified no.

Even before the results were declared, it was clear that this was an election where the manner in which BJP conducted its campaign was more important - almost - than the outcome. It is hard to come up with another State election where electioneering has been so full of shrill, hate-filled aggression designed to incite violence.

In fact, the BJP tried its hardest to make this election into an anti-minority vendetta centered on the protests at Shaheen Bagh. Its formidable media resources were deployed to paint all opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, or CAA, 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) as anti-national, terrorist-

AS I SEE IT

The other Delhi is distant yet

If they want to remain relevant in the India of tomorrow, all the non-BJP parties have to remind themselves that politics has to be about more than winning the next election, however important that may be as an immediate goal. Formulas that win elections may not ensure long-term relevance.



inspired, and based on paid protesters. The public language of politics was made to plumb new depths as senior leaders repeatedly said and did things that violated every norm of basic decency. The eventual outcome of this contest seemed to pale into insignificance in the face of the new norms of political engagement that were being enforced. But the defeat of the BJP in Delhi does not necessarily mean that these tactics have backfired, or even that they have failed. It only means that they did not succeed in this place at this time. The big bonus for the BJP is that its strongest opponent did not oppose these tactics. In fact, AAP often seemed as if it was playing a different kind of dog whistle politics that was saying, in effect, "Don't worry, we have no problem with communal politics, but please don't ask us to say it openly."

Now that it has won big, this policy of non-engagement is being presented as an astute strategy. But its short-term electoral gains need to be compared to its medium-term political costs. The BJP has been so successful in redrawing the terms of political discourse that not only AAP but most other political parties have been forced to take a few steps in the same direction to polish their majoritarian credentials.

Regional versus national

The consequences of this play-it-electorally-safe strategy are visible in the impasses of a polity split between the regional and national levels. A party with local roots strong enough to sweep two Assembly elections could not even get to second place in the parliamentary elections - AAP placed third in the Lok Sabha polls, behind the INC. On the other hand, despite having lost several State elections, the BJP continues to have an iron grip on the national polity and enjoys an unchallenged monopoly over agenda-setting at this level. In the past, our psychologist pundits nodded wisely at

this emerging split in our electoral system and told us that it showed the shrewdness of the Indian voter who was pursuing different priorities at the two levels. Today, when all our institutions are being undermined and a pervasive climate of impunity for bigotry is being established, this interpretation seems not just unhelpful but dangerous in its complacency.

The irony is that the last two months have witnessed the emergence of a remarkable political effervescence that defies all the usual frameworks of definition. It cannot be called a movement for that word suggests something coordinated and planned. Nor are its objectives classifiable in the usual terms. Having crystallized around opposition to the CAA and NRC, this new energy and socially rooted resolve is visible not only in named places such as Shaheen Bagh but also in numerous un-famous locations in campuses, neighborhoods, towns and cities across India. This amazing political effervescence is raising questions about politics with a capital P, reminding us that the bedrock of citizenship is a shared sovereignty that we all inherit from the founding moment of our republic. Because it has successfully mobilized this hitherto untouched yet priceless political capital, this moment demands engagement in terms far more serious than those allowed by pragmatic self-preserving elect oralism.

Congress's options

This remarkable moment is also one which ought to encourage the INC to take more risks, since it is now a party with little left to lose. Its tale is perhaps without precedent in modern world history - a party which could effortlessly command a 25% vote share in the world's largest electorate, is now on the verge of political irrelevance. If it is able to draw energy from this moment to remake itself, it may reclaim its rightful place in our polity. If they want to remain relevant in the India of tomorrow, all the non-BJP parties have to remind themselves that politics has to be about more than winning the next election, however important that may be as an immediate goal. Formulas that win elections may not ensure long-term relevance. After all, fascists can also make trains run on time and provide regular supplies of water and power. So, as we celebrate the well-deserved victory of the AAP, we must remind ourselves that the other Delhi is still far away.

(The author teaches Sociology at Delhi University. The views expressed are personal)

GUEST COMMENT

What should worry India is the ground reality in Kashmir, not the views of other countries

The Centre's decision to take another group of envoys on a guided tour of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and the stated hope of the Ministry of External Affairs that these tours will become a regular feature, point to a belief that these visits have been productive. Clearly, the government, which has been under considerable international pressure to lift restrictions in the former State, has managed to arrange these three visits without any incident. The delegations have been taken to meet with local groups and shown a glimpse of 'normalcy' in the Kashmir Valley, with

Managing perceptions: On envoys visit to J&K

shops open, people out on the streets, and boating on the Dal Lake. After these tours, no envoy has come forward with any negative account, which indicates that at least for the moment, the government's narrative has prevailed. U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Juster's trip to J&K paved the way for President Donald Trump's upcoming visit, and the latest visit by European Ambassadors was timed just before Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar travels to Brussels to prepare for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip next month for the EU-India summit. However, the government must recognize that these gains in the immediate present are superficial in the absence of a change in

the situation in Kashmir. It would not have escaped anyone's attention that these tours are tightly controlled, and the people meeting the foreign guests in the confines of the Raj Bhavan are handpicked by the government. The chimera of 'normalcy' seems patently fragile: the visit had to be postponed by a day due to a bandh call in the Valley; and just a day after the visit, the Internet was snapped once again due to security concerns. It is also puzzling how the government, which has repeated often that J&K is an "internal affair", squares it up with this new policy of conducting tours for the international community. The truth is, managing India's image is important, but the government's

primary responsibilities still lie within its borders - responsibilities to the people of J&K, who have yet to see a return to normalcy; to those detained in and outside J&K, including sitting Member of Parliament and octogenarian Farooq Abdullah, against whom little evidence of wrongdoing has been furnished; and to the people of India as a whole, who are yet to see a credible path to the peace and prosperity that was promised when the momentous decision on Article 370 was announced last August. It is their legitimate expectations, not those of the international community, that must be a priority for the government.

(The Hindu)

Trump's march and the Sanders factor



By Sankaran Krishna

“

This presidency and the scandals of the last three years, on both domestic and foreign policy fronts, have given new meaning to the term "American exceptionalism". Where it once stood for the idea, at least among the patriotic faithful, that the United States was a beacon for democracy and human rights, a land of opportunity for all comers, and unvested in the social hierarchies of Europe, today it signifies a country that elected, and may re-elect, a bigoted, climate-change-denying carnival barker incapable of distinguishing public office from private pelf.

For approximately half the U.S. electorate, a nightmare that began with the unlikely election of Donald Trump to the presidency, is beginning to look as if it may continue into a second term. The U.S. President's current approval rating (at 49%, in one poll) is the highest it has been since the day he took office. Initial hopes that his evident venality and incompetence may lead to an early termination of his presidency have gradually given way to a shocked realization that no matter what he does, says, or tweets, there is no diminution in his support among those who voted for him in the 2016 election or in the Republican party. Indeed, as the abortive attempt to impeach him underlined, his command over the party is stronger than ever today.

Nothing stuns

The eruption of each outrageous scandal followed by Mr. Trump's brazen strategy of a scorched-earth counterattack has led the U.S. to a point where it is now impossible to conceive of any scenario that could lead his supporters to rethink their allegiance. A seemingly hyperbolic comment made by Mr. Trump way back in January 2016, when he was a complete outsider among the aspirants for the Republican nomination ("I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters") is reality today.

This presidency and the scandals of the last three years, on both domestic and foreign policy fronts, have given new meaning to the term "American exceptionalism". Where it once stood for the idea, at least among the patriotic faithful, that the United States was a beacon for democracy and human rights, a land of opportunity for all comers, and unvested in the social hierarchies of Europe, today it signifies a country that elected, and may re-elect, a bigoted, climate-change-denying carnival barker incapable of distinguishing public office from private pelf.

Sanders and the Democrats

If Mr. Trump and his supporters present a united bloc impervious to self-doubt, the opposite is true of the Democrats. A crowded field of contenders caught in a

Besides the advantages of incumbency, Mr. Trump has a huge re-election war chest, the largest in U.S. history as a matter of fact; Republicans (like right-wing parties all across the world) have a pronounced advantage over Democrats in manipulating social media in their favor and against opponents; and polls indicate that as much as 63% of the electorate approves of the way Mr. Trump is handling the economy.

seemingly endless series of primaries and caucuses with arcane rules has meant no candidate has really pulled clear of the pack. More importantly, Democrats are deeply divided in terms of a strategy to defeat Mr. Trump. One of the front runners, Bernie Sanders, is running on an explicitly socialist platform that clearly energizes racial minorities, youth, poorer sections of society, women, and liberals looking for an alternative to a two-party system bereft of ideas in the face of global warming, endless war, and unprecedented polarization of wealth.

Yet, socialism or anything vaguely associated with the term has long been anathema for many in the U.S. Mr. Sanders's ideas on socialized medical care, free college education for everyone, and a more progressive tax structure evoke incredulity. Similar incredulity, however, is never expressed about the irrationality of a trillion dollar defense budget year after year; nor is there much recognition that in other industrialized democracies, variants on "socialized" medicine vastly outperform the U.S., or that college education is highly subsidized and incomparably cheaper in such countries.

The mainstream media's conviction that the candidacy of Mr. Sanders will ensure Mr. Trump's victory - one evidently shared by many in the Democratic Party leadership - is perplexing. He is the one candidate who seems to genuinely energize those groups that were central to Obama's victories in 2008 and 2012: racial minorities, youth, and first-time voters. The self-confident pundits who prematurely dismiss Mr. Sanders prospects may do well to remember that even as late as the evening of November 9, 2016, as the first results were coming in, none of them gave Donald Trump any chance of defeating Hillary Clinton.

Carceral state

In a form of slow violence that has escaped the attention of many both domestically and abroad, the U.S., with just 5% of the world's population is now home to about 25% of the world's prison population (2015 data), the overwhelming majority of whom are black or brown minorities. A criminal justice system thoroughly vitiated by racism has interacted with a prison-industrial complex to produce a situation in which a young black man has a higher chance of ending up in prison than he does in college. In deindustrializing States across much of the U.S., one of the few growth industries is prisons staffed by poor whites guarding poorer blacks and Hispanics.

Recent scholarship and quality investigative journalism have established beyond doubt that the emergence of the carceral state in the alleged "land of the free" was a bipartisan effort. Since the early 1980s, first Republicans and then Democrats competed fiercely to be seen as the party of "law and order", of being "tough on crime", and backing the relentless pursuit of the "war on drugs" - all euphemisms for appealing to the worst instincts, fears, and racism of whites seen as key to winning elections. At least three important remaining Democratic aspirants are tainted by their role in the creation and maintenance of this carceral state: Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and Pete Buttigieg.

Mr. Biden was a high-ranking Senator and Chair of the Senate Judiciary committee during the 1980s and 1990s, and instrumental in passing legislation that produced the carceral state. The billionaire Bloomberg is former Republican Mayor of New York City and architect of the city police's notorious "stop-and-frisk



The U.S. President's tenure and its baggage have given a new meaning to the term 'American exceptionalism'

program", which racially profiled blacks and Latin Americans leading to disproportionate levels of arrests, often for trivial degrees of drug possession or petty crimes, if even that. Mr. Bloomberg has very recently, and convincingly, apologized for the disastrous results of "stop-and-frisk". Mr. Buttigieg pursued similarly "tough" (read racialized) policies during his tenure as Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, from 2012-20, and has been unrepentant, even proud, of this aspect of his record.

It is hard to see any of these three candidates energizing minorities or the young given this track record. Meanwhile conservative whites susceptible to such dog-whistle politics may well stay with Mr. Trump and his unapologetically white supremacist views: why opt for the ersatz when you already have the real thing? (Mr. Trump's faithful often cite the fact that he "says it like it is" as their reason for supporting him.)

Besides Mr. Sanders, at this moment the other seemingly strong and viable candidate in terms of appealing to the constituencies that could help the Democrats defeat Mr. Trump is Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Her impressive track record as economic manager (she was part of the committee that oversaw the post-2008 financial crisis recovery programme, and pushed for greater regulations over banking and finance, and for consumer protection) and the calm competence she radiates on matters of public policy could be an ideal complement to Mr. Sanders.

Trump's cards

Besides the advantages of incumbency, Mr. Trump has a huge re-election war chest, the largest in U.S. history as a matter of fact; Republicans (like right-wing parties all across the world) have a pronounced advantage over Democrats in manipulating social media in their favor and against opponents; and polls indicate that as much as 63% of the electorate approves of the way Mr. Trump is handling the economy.

Those are dispiriting facts. Yet, if the long and unpredictable primary season ends with Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren (or Ms. Warren and Mr. Sanders) as the Democratic ticket, they are likely to bring energy, the newest voters, and alienated minorities into the Democratic fold in a way that none of the other candidates is likely to do. All that may not be enough to unseat the current occupant - but at this point in time, it would appear to be the Democrats' best bet.

(The author teaches politics at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Honolulu, U.S.)



Have no fear, Indonesia's Spider-Man will clean up your trash

PAREPARE, INDONESIA (TIP): Indonesian cafe worker Rudi Hartono struggled to persuade residents of his small coastal community of Parepare to follow his example and pick up rubbish strewn on the streets and beaches—until he dressed up as Spider-Man.

"At first, I did the same activity without wearing this costume and it did not attract the public's attention in order for them to join and help pick up trash," said the 36-year-old Hartono, wearing his red and blue Spider-Man costume.

"After wearing this costume, it turns out the public's response was extraordinary," he added.

Many parts of Indonesia suffer from having little in the way of organised public services to deal with trash, with plastic waste in particular often ending in rivers or in the oceans.

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country, generates 3.2 million tonnes a year of waste, with nearly half ending up in the sea, a 2015 study in the journal Science showed.

Hartono usually collects waste as Spider-Man before his cafe work begins at 7 p.m. and his efforts have helped put a spotlight on the waste issue nationally. He has been interviewed by newspapers and appeared on television chat shows dressed in his Marvel Comics super hero costume to explain his motivation.

Initially, he admits, he bought the Spider-Man outfit simply to amuse his nephew, before others in his town took notice.

"We need a creative role model to foster society's active engagement in protecting the environment," said Saiful Bahri, a resident of Parepare in southwest Sulawesi.

With a population of around 142,000, Parepare produces around 2.7 tonnes of unmanaged waste per day, according to data released in 2018 by the ministry of environment and forestry. Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is estimated to be the world's second-largest producer of plastic pollutants in the oceans after China, the study added. Hartono said he hoped the government would throw more weight behind efforts to clean up trash and tighten rules on waste management including on single-use plastic bags." Reuters

SAEED GETS 11-YR JAIL FOR FINANCING TERROR

LAHORE (TIP): Mumbai attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed was sentenced to 11 years in two terror financing cases on Wednesday, four days ahead of a crucial meeting of the Financial Action Task Force in Paris where Pakistan will present its case to get itself off grey list.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 in the terror financing cases. He is lodged at the Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in high security.

Anti-terrorism court Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta sentenced Saeed and his close aide Zafar Iqbal to five and a half years each and imposed a fine of Rs 15,000 in each case. A total of 11 years sentence will run concurrently.

Saeed and Iqbal were sentenced in two cases registered against them in Lahore and Gujranwala cities on the application of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police.

"Saeed and Iqbal will have to spend five and a half years in imprisonment," a deputy prosecutor general said after the verdict.

Interestingly, the court on Tuesday accepted Saeed's plea to club all six terror financing cases pending against him in the anti-terrorism court Lahore and announce the verdict on completion of the trial.

The verdict comes four days ahead of a crucial meeting of the FATF in Paris where Pakistan will present its case to get itself off grey list.

The FATF in October last decided to keep Pakistan on its 'Grey' list for failure to curb funnelling of funds to terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and others.

If not removed off the list by April, Pakistan may move to a blacklist of countries that face severe economic sanctions, such as Iran.

The FATF is backed by the UN Security



Council passed resolutions which made its recommendations binding and in case of deficiencies, sanctions could be imposed.

Earlier, the court had reserved the verdict in the two cases against Saeed for February 8 after the completion of the trial.

"However as the court resumed hearing in four other terror financing cases against Saeed and others on Wednesday, Judge Bhutta announced the verdict in the two already completed cases handing down a total 11 years imprisonment to Saeed and Iqbal," deputy prosecutor general Abdul Rauf Wattoo said.

Saeed will undergo imprisonment at the Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail where he has been detained since July last.

The four other terror financing cases are against Saeed, Iqbal, Yahya Aziz, Abdul Rehman Makki.

The anti-terrorism court or ATC had indicted Saeed and his close aides on

December 11 in the terror financing cases.

On last Saturday, judge Bhutta deferred the verdict against Saeed in two terror financing cases till February 11.

In the two cases, the prosecution produced some 20 or so witnesses in the ATC who testified against Saeed and his close aides for their involvement in terror financing. Saeed pleaded "not guilty" in both the cases.

The Counter Terrorism Department had registered 23 FIRs against Saeed and his accomplices on the charges of terror financing in different cities of Punjab province.

The cases were registered against Saeed and others in Lahore, Gujranwala and Multan for collection of funds for terrorism financing through assets/properties made and held in the names of Trusts/Non Profit Organisations including Al-Anfaal Trust, Dawatul Irshad Trust, Muaz Bin Jabal Trust, etc.PTI

Porn movie shot at holy site outrages Myanmar

YANGON (TIP): Outrage is growing in Myanmar after the emergence of a 12-minute porn video shot in Bagan, the country's best-known tourist hotspot and UNESCO heritage site of thousands of hallowed Buddhist pagodas.

The video was posted on PornHub by users "YeeesYeeesYeees", who describe themselves as a 23-year-old Italian couple with piercings and tattoos.

According to the site, the pair boasts more than 81,000 subscribers and over 35 million video views since they joined 11 months ago.

But the couple's naked antics against one of Bagan's ancient pagodas have been less than well-received in Myanmar, with condemnation spreading online.

"Our Bagan pagodas are The Holy Land," wrote Mg Khin Gyi on Facebook with multiple angry emojis.PTI

Pakistan Army chief Gen Bajwa to stay till Nov 2022: Govt

ISLAMABAD (TIP): General Qamar Javed Bajwa will remain as the Pakistan Army chief until November 28, 2022, according to a notification by the Ministry of Defence. The notification was issued on January 28 after the country's Parliament passed a law to settle the issue of the extension of army chief's tenure. It said that the new tenure of army chief will be "for an additional tenure of three years, effective from November 29, 2019 to November 28, 2022". Bajwa was to retire on November 29 last year at the end of his three-year original term but Prime Minister Imran Khan gave the 59-year-old Army chief another extension of same length citing regional security situation through a notification on August 19. However, the Supreme Court on November 28 suspended the government order, observing that there is no law to give extension to the Army chief's tenure. PTI

India constructs Rs 3.9 cr school building in Nepal

KATHMANDU (TIP): India has built a school building in Nepal's Nuwakot district with a grant assistance of Rs 3.9 crore as part of its post-earthquake reconstruction initiatives. The new building for Aiselubhume Secondary School in Kispang was inaugurated on Monday by Nepal Communist Party chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal Prachanda. PTI

Remembering victims

THAILAND (TIP): People place flowers and write memoirs in front of Terminal 21 shopping mall after a shooting that claimed 29 lives in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. Reuters

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American Airlines announces flights to India New nonstop services to Bangalore, India begin in Oct. 2020



SEATTLE (TIP): American Airlines announced, February 13 that it will begin flying daily to Bangalore, India from Seattle. This is the first American Airlines service to India since it discontinued its Chicago-New Delhi route in 2012. Service to India will begin in October with tickets on sale later this month.

The daily nonstop service to Bangalore, India, will be operated using a Boeing 787-9 aircraft, and will be the longest service from SEA by distance. The Bangalore service is the 13th new international service to be announced or launched since 2017.

Bangalore, officially known as Bengaluru, is the heart of India's IT and technology sector, and this new nonstop flight will be Seattle's longest route in distance. It will further cement the deep ties between two of the world's major hi-tech centers. Popularly known as the Garden City for its lush greenery and pleasant climate, Bangalore is India's third-largest city, with a population of over 10 million. Despite the enormous cultural and economic ties between the United States and India, there are relatively few nonstop flights connecting the two markets.

Another US city passes resolution against India's citizenship law

After Seattle, resolution by Cambridge city council in Massachusetts asks India to repeal the Citizenship Amendment Act.

CAMBRIDGE, MA(TIP): Cambridge in Massachusetts state has become the second city in the United States after Seattle to pass a resolution against a controversial citizenship law pushed by India's Hindu nationalist government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Cambridge City Council on Tuesday, February 11, passed a unanimous resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), calling upon the Indian Parliament to "uphold" the country's secular constitution by repealing the law and stopping a proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The US city houses the world-renowned Harvard University and Massachusetts Institutes of Technology.

"It has come to the attention of the city council that on December 11, 2019, the Indian Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act, which for the first time uses religion as a criterion for Indian citizenship," the resolution said.

The CAA fast-tracks Indian nationality for non-Muslim minorities from Muslim-majority Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who came to India before 2015. Critics have said it violates India's secular constitution and



Cambridge city council resolution came days before US President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit India
Photo / Courtesy Raminder Pal Singh/EPA

have challenged it in the Supreme Court.

The CAA and NRC have triggered fears of marginalization and disenfranchisement among India's Muslim minority, who form nearly 15 percent of the country's 1.3 billion population.

The Cambridge resolution declared that "Modi government's racist and repressive policies" were inconsistent with the values of the city, "which welcomes South Asian communities of all castes and religions".

The Cambridge city council urged its congressional delegation to support legislation in the US Congress censuring India for enacting such policies.

The move came a week after Seattle, one of the most powerful city councils in the US, passed a similar resolution, urging India to repeal the CAA and stop the NRC.

The two resolutions came ahead of an upcoming visit of US President Donald Trump to India.

(SOURCE: AL JAZEERA NEWS)

IRS Advisory: Avoid the rush after Presidents Day holiday; Use IRS' online tools to get help



WASHINGTON TIP: With a surge of tax returns expected the two weeks following the Feb. 17 Presidents Day holiday, the Internal Revenue Service is offering taxpayers several tips and various time-saving resources to get them the help they need quickly and easily.

To help avoid this period of high telephone demand, the IRS encourages taxpayers and tax preparers to use online resources available at IRS.gov. And when it comes time to file, taxpayers are encouraged to file electronically and choose direct deposit for faster refunds. Filing electronically reduces tax return errors as the tax software does the calculations, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information.

Here are a few featured tips to avoid the rush.

Use IRS.gov to track refunds. The IRS issues more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days. IRS customer service representatives cannot answer refund questions until it has been 21 days or more since the taxpayer filed electronically, or six weeks since they mailed a paper return. But taxpayers can track their refund anytime by using the "Where's My Refund?" tool on IRS.gov and the IRS2Go app. Taxpayers can also call the IRS refund hotline at 800-829-1954.

Taxpayers claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit can use the "Where's My Refund?" tool to track refunds too. By law, the IRS cannot release refunds that include EITC or the ACTC before February 15. "Where's My Refund?" on IRS.gov and the IRS2Go app will be updated with projected deposit dates for most early EITC/ACTC refund filers by Feb. 22. IRS expects most EITC/ACTC related refunds to be available in taxpayer bank accounts or on debit cards by the first week of March, if

they chose direct deposit and there are no other issues with their tax return.

Use IRS.gov to find answers to tax questions. IRS offers a variety of online tools to help taxpayers answer common tax questions. For example, taxpayers can search the Interactive Tax Assistant, Tax Topics, Frequently Asked Questions, and Tax Trails to get faster answers.

Let free tax software or free volunteer assistance do the work. Most taxpayers who want to prepare their own returns can file electronically for free with IRS Free File. Alternatively taxpayers who qualify can get free tax help from trained volunteers at community sites around the country.

Turn to a trusted tax professional. To find more information about choosing a tax return preparer, including understanding the differences in credentials and qualifications, visit www.irs.gov/chooseataxpro.

Use digital payment options if additional tax is owed. Some taxpayers may receive a smaller refund or even owe an unexpected tax bill when they file their 2019 tax return particularly if they didn't do a Paycheck Checkup in 2019. Taxpayers

should use the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator to make sure they are withholding enough tax in 2020.

Make an appointment before visiting an IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers. Anyone who needs face-to-face service should make an appointment before showing up. Most TAC visits can be avoided by using online tools available on IRS.gov.

Call the employer first for that missing Form W-2. Those who have not received a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, from one or more employers should first contact the issuer to inform them of the missing form. Those who do not get a response must still file on time and may need to use Form 4852, Substitute for Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, or Form 1099R, Distributions from Pensions, Annuities, Retirement or Profit-Sharing Plans and IRA's Insurance Contracts.

Use the IRS Services Guide and the Let Us Help You page on IRS.gov to find additional ways to get help.

Use the Tax Information for Members of the Military page on IRS.gov for details on tax benefits for military members and veterans, filing options and more.

Harvard's Annual India Conference Set for Feb 15-16



Anupam Kher



Aroon Purie



Suresh Prabhu



Mahua Moitra



Varun Gandhi



Mini Mathur



Arvind Subramanian



Punita Kumar-Sinha



Vir Das



Roopa Divakar Moudgil



Ritesh Agarwal



Vasundhara Raje Scindia



Milind Deora



Kabir Khan



Kalyan Krishnamurthy

The conference attracts esteemed speakers and guests from across industrial, entertainment, media, sports, political and other spheres of India

BOSTON (TIP): Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School are hosting the 17th edition of the India Conference at Harvard University on 15-16th February 2020. India Conference is one of the largest student-led conferences focusing on India in USA. It is organized by the students of Harvard.

"At the 17th edition of India Conference at Harvard, we aim to bring

together India's thought leaders for a weekend of discussions and brainstorming sessions to unravel opportunities that lay ahead for our country" according to a statement by the organizers.

The theme of the conference is - 'Foresight 20/20'. Some of the esteemed speakers this year include Aroon Purie, Anupam Kher, Suresh Prabhu, Arvind Subramanian, Mahua Moitra, Milind

Deora, Ritesh Agarwal, Uday Shankar, Keshav Suri, Kabir Khan and many more!

The conference has a strong legacy of bringing together government officials, business leaders, academics, artists, athletes, philanthropists, and many other leaders to meaningfully discuss key issues, solutions and opportunities in the context of India's path to global leadership.

Four Senators write to Mike Pompeo on Kashmir, CAA and NRC



The letter dated February 12 is co-signed by Democrats Chris Van Hollen and Democratic Whip Dick Durbin and Republicans Todd Young and Trump ally Lindsey Graham

WASHINGTON (TIP): Days before U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to India, four Senators, who have described themselves as "longtime friends of India", have written to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asking for an assessment of the situation in Kashmir as well as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizenship (NRC).

The letter dated February 12 is co-signed by Democrats Chris Van Hollen (Maryland) and Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (Illinois) and Republicans Todd Young (Indiana) and Trump ally Lindsey Graham (South Carolina).

"We write as longtime friends of India regarding some of the troubling actions taken by the current government," the Senators write. "India

has now imposed the longest-ever internet shut down by a democracy, disrupting access to medical care, business, and education for seven million people. Hundreds of Kashmiris remain in 'preventative detention', including key political figures."

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)



Cloud over trade talks as U.S. official puts off trip

Hopes fade for deal during President Trump's visit to India.

WASHINGTON / NEW DELHI (TIP): U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer has put off his trip to India this week, at least two official sources said, amid signs that the India-U.S. trade talks have hit a rough patch just ahead of President Donald Trump's visit.

According to the sources, who are aware of the negotiations, no reason has been given for the change of plans in the USTR's visit that was expected on February 13, but that there is still a considerable chance that he would visit as a part of Mr. Trump's entourage to finalize a trade package or a "mini-trade deal" with his counterpart, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, on items that the two sides have been negotiating for more than two years now.

The two chief negotiators have been speaking on the phone quite regularly, the sources added.

"If President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi fail to bring even a modest agreement forward, it will be a missed opportunity to make progress that can benefit both countries and strengthen economic ties," said Nisha Biswal, president of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) at the U.S. Chambers of Commerce. She was speaking at an interview during a visit to India this week. However, Ms. Biswal said she remained "optimistic" that a "limited trade deal" would be finalized as part of the visit. Mr. Trump and his wife Melania are travelling to Delhi and Ahmedabad on February 24 and 25 and are expected to visit Agra as well.

Informed sources have said that talks thus far have brought some agreement on contentious issues including medical device price caps levied by India, a rationalization of tariffs levied by both sides, and greater market access for U.S. agricultural and dairy products. A full restoration of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) status appears unlikely at present, given the USTR's notice this week that aims to treat India and a number of other countries as "developed countries", coupled with President Trump's strictures against giving those defined as developed countries any GSP assistance. Instead, the U.S. might offer a partial restoration of GSP concessions to Indian exporters, but only in sectors where U.S. importers are "dependent" on Indian goods, the sources said.

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

KEJRIWAL TO BE SWEORN IN AS DELHI CM FOR THIRD TIME ON FEB 16

Cabinet to retain ministers from last Assembly

Deepak Dwivedi

NEW DELHI (TIP): After a resounding victory in the Delhi Assembly election, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal is set to take oath as the Chief Minister of Delhi on 16 February, Sunday, according to multiple reports. Like in 2015, Kejriwal will take oath for the second time at a grand public ceremony at Ramlila Maidan in the National Capital. He had invited all Delhi residents to his swearing-in when he took oath in 2015.

Kejriwal will reportedly retain his cabinet from 2015 and won't induct new ministers.

Kejriwal met Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal at the Raj Niwas on Wednesday, a day after he scripted a spectacular victory sweeping the Delhi polls. The meeting lasted for around 15 minutes.

Sources said the two discussed the oath-taking ceremony which could take place over the weekend. As per procedure, Kejriwal is also to tender his resignation to pave the way for his fresh swearing-in.

The AAP chief will also hold a meeting with the newly-elected Aam Aadmi Party MLAs. The legislators will then elect him as the leader of the legislature party, following which he will stake claim to form the government.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led party has won 62 seats. On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) marginally improved its tally of seats from three to eight. The AAP, with its vote share of 53.6 percent, fell short of its 2015 Delhi Assembly polls tally (54 percent), while the BJP bagged its second best of 38.5 percent, six percent more than last time.

Lt Governor Anil Baijal had dissolved the Delhi Assembly on Tuesday. "Lt Governor Anil Baijal on Tuesday dissolved the Sixth Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from 11 February," a Raj Niwas official had confirmed. "A new order will be issued for the formation of the Seventh Legislative Assembly after the final results come," the official added.



DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS RESULTS 2020

PARTY	LEAD	WIN
AAP	0	62
BJP+	0	8
INC+	0	0
OTH	0	0

AAP CEMENTS CAPITAL CLOUD

There is a revealing television interview of Arvind Kejriwal ahead of the Delhi elections. The anchor, towards the end of the conversation, asks him to comment on national politics — and he says that he is committed to Delhi's development. The anchor tries again — and Kejriwal repeats himself, with a smile. The crowd laughs and applauds.

In a way, the conversation sums up the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Kejriwal's strategy for the elections — keep the focus sharply local, don't get distracted, and maintain your own narrative instead of getting trapped in a narrative set by anyone else. It worked. The AAP won 62 seats, with 53.6% vote share, not far from the share it won in 2015 (and just four seats less). For context, just rewind to the Lok Sabha elections. The AAP won only 18% of the votes polled, coming third in five of the seven parliamentary constituencies. It has, therefore, seen a 35 percentage point jump within nine months. This is a remarkable political achievement by any standard.



NEW DELHI (TIP): When Arvind Kejriwal first made his mark in India's public life, he was seen as a well-intentioned, sincere civil society activist, using the Right to Information Act to empower citizens.

When Kejriwal truly became a visible public figure, as a leader of the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement, he was seen as an angry disruptor. He was channelling the fury that many felt at the infirmities and the corruption in the system; he was also providing a tangible solution by suggesting that having a

Kejriwal: From activist to undisputed leader

strong Lokpal would tackle this systemic issue.

When Kejriwal set up a political party, became chief minister, went on dharna, contested against Narendra Modi in Varanasi, and attempted to expand the party nationally, he was seen as a bit of an anarchist, whose ambitions far outstripped his party's base and experience. He hunkered down, went back to the basics, and won Delhi in 2015.

When Kejriwal decided to confront the Centre on governance issues in Delhi, oppose demonetisation, and take on the Shiromani Akali Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party coalition in Punjab, where he finished a distant second to the more established Congress, he came across as a strident Modi critic who had slipped away from the focus on governance in the city where he was elected.

To his credit, Kejriwal learned from all

these episodes — and the public perception around it — to evolve. He also, possibly, looked at what other chief ministers who had been successful, and had retained power, were doing. From 2017, his politics has been different. His leadership style has both seen elements of continuity, but also a degree of rupture. And this has paid off now, with the Delhi CM re-elected for his third term in office.

What, then, are the components of this leadership model?

The first is complete control over the party. The AAP began with Kejriwal as the face, but also as a political formation that relied largely on collective decision making, with a set of other prominent leaders such as Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav. But Indian politics is largely driven by personality-based formations where it is a single leader who drives decisions.

Be it the current BJP, where Narendra Modi or Amit Shah are in the driving seat, or the Congress, which is a party where the word of the Gandhi family is supreme, or a range of regional satraps — from Nitish Kumar to Mamata Banerjee, from Stalin to Naveen Patnaik, from the Badals to Sharad Pawar — the party is of the leader. The AAP is Kejriwal's party, and those who have a problem with that, can find other alternatives.

The second element is recognising the power of the media. Kejriwal was among the first leaders, when he was leading the Anna Hazare agitation, to sense both the power of television and social media. His was the politics of theatre, which appealed to television audiences. His party, like the BJP, was as active on all social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp.

Source:HT

Mohalla clinics win over Ayushman Bharat in Delhi

NEW DELHI (TIP): Healthcare was a key issue in the Delhi assembly elections, with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) using its mohalla clinics and upcoming hospitals as poll pitch and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) complaining about non-implementation of its flagship national health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat.

AAP chief ministerial candidate Arvind Kejriwal said on Tuesday evening, "The people of Delhi have given birth to a new kind of politics in the country; it is called the politics of work. They have said the votes would go to the person who gets schools made, who gets mohalla clinics made."

After coming to power in 2015, the AAP government had promised to set up 1,000 mohalla clinics - one for each square kilometre of the inhabited area in Delhi - to provide free consultation, medicines, and 212 tests.

The AAP government inaugurated 450 mohalla clinics till January this year, with the tussle with the Lieutenant Governor and problems in acquiring land delayed the project.

"Healthcare has to follow a pyramid structure, with primary care at the bottom. The pyramid in India is inverted, with all the focus on tertiary care, less on secondary and almost no focus on primary care," Delhi's health minister Satyendar Jain had told HT before the polls.

The clinics have been hailed as a step in the right direction towards achieving the sustainable development goal of universal health coverage by health experts, including former United Nations Secretaries-General Ban Ki-Moon and Kofi Annan.

"The AAP government's mohalla clinics have brought healthcare right inside the slums. It has strengthened primary healthcare. It is a low cost and extremely effective. It has also paid a huge political dividend for the party," said former health secretary K Sujatha Rao.

Former director of AIIMS in New Delhi, Dr MC Mishra, said that there is a need to invest in primary healthcare, no matter which party does it.

"The mohalla clinics are a good



concept, but it has to be implemented properly on ground. There have been several news reports of deficiencies. One of the key components of the Ayushman Bharat are the wellness centres as well. There is a need to focus on primary level preventive healthcare, it is the only way to save on future health problems," he said.

For tertiary care service, the AAP government started the Delhi Arogya Kosh scheme that reimburses private healthcare for providing its patients over 1,200 medical and surgical procedures and expensive radiological tests that are either not offered in Delhi government hospital or the waiting period is over one month. The treatment of accident, fire and acid attack victims is covered under Farishtey scheme.

Work is also ongoing for building or revamping 26 hospitals to add 15,154 to the existing 11,353.

The BJP, however, has been targeting the government for not implementing the central Ayushman Bharat insurance scheme.

"What is the fault of the poor Delhiites that they are not getting the benefit of free treatment of up to R 5 lakh? If a Delhi resident who is a beneficiary of the scheme who goes to Gwalior, Bhopal, Surat, Nagpur, Hyderabad, or Chennai for some work and falls ill suddenly there. Then, will these mohalla clinics go

there? But, under Ayushman Bharat scheme the person would have received free treatment in the hospitals there," said Modi in a rally in Delhi.

The government countered saying that the scheme would not benefit a majority of Delhites and does not cover OPD services, which the AAP government provides free to everyone under their healthcare schemes.

"If we implement Ayushman Bharat in Delhi, only about two per cent of the 2 crore people will get covered. What would we do with the rest of the 98 per cent? The scheme does not even cover OPD services. If a person is prescribed an MRI, CT scan or lab test in OPD, it will not get covered. This means you have to wait for admission. Why? If you have diabetes or hypertension, treat that. Why do you need to wait till you get a heart attack?" Jain had told HT.

"The scheme in Delhi is universal and also has no cap. I think it is working well. Why then would the government want to implement the central scheme and share credit with the other government? It is not possible to confine treatment only to public hospitals as the demand is huge and the private sector is necessary to ensure equitable access. The government also has to invest in its own hospitals so that they become quality markers," said Rao.

Source: HT



63 CONGRESS CANDIDATES LOSE DEPOSITS

NEW DELHI (TIP): Delhi election results, Congress candidates, Delhi Congress candidates deposits, Delhi assembly election results

Congress's performance touched a record low in the Delhi Assembly election as the party bagged less than 5% of the total votes polled and 63 of its candidates lost their deposits.

The party, which ruled Delhi for 15 years on the trot under former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, failed to open its account for the second consecutive assembly election in Delhi.

Only three of its candidates — Arvinder Singh Lovely from Gandhi Nagar, Devender Yadav from Badli and Abhishek Dutt from Kasturba Nagar — managed to save their deposits.

Security deposit of a candidate is forfeited if he/she fails to secure one-sixth of the total valid votes cast in a constituency.

Most of Congress candidates got less than 5% of the total votes polled in their respective constituencies.

Things that didn't work for BJP

LACK OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

The BJP relied heavily on national leaders to drive home its campaign. At a time when Arvind Kejriwal has firmly etched himself as the vikas purush of Delhi, the BJP was unable to find a worthy challenger. The saffron party could neither project a CM face nor dent Kejriwal's clean image.

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

The BJP focused more on Ram mandir, Article 370, triple talaq, etc. which failed to resonate with voters electing leaders on local issues such as health, education, housing and roads, to name a few. The BJP hardly campaigned on what it intends to provide for residents of Delhi if elected to power. On the other hand, the AAP sought votes on the basis of development

NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN

Shaheen Bagh dominated the BJP's campaign. With provocative slogans ringing out from BJP's meetings and rallies, its campaign was mostly perceived to be based on communal polarisation. From "goli maaro..." to biryani jibes at Shaheen Bagh protesters and opposition leaders, and calling Kejriwal a terrorist, the BJP's campaign had very little to offer on the development front. On the contrary, AAP focused on local issues and local connect, and refrained from using foul language.

Delhi Assembly to have 16 first-time MLAs, all from AAP

NEW DELHI (TIP): The new Delhi Legislative Assembly will have 16 first-time MLAs, all from the Aam Aadmi Party, including Atishi, Raghav Chadha and Dilip Pandey.

Atishi, who was fielded from Kalkaji, won the seat by defeating BJP candidate Dharambir Singh by a margin of 11,393 votes. She unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha elections last year from the East Delhi constituency against BJP's Gautam Gambhir.

Chadha, who had also registered

victory from Rajinder Nagar, defeated his BJP rival Sardar RP Singh by a margin of 20,058 votes. He too had contested from the South Delhi Lok Sabha seat but lost to BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri.

Pandey, who also unsuccessfully contested from the Northeast Delhi Lok Sabha seat in 2019, won the Timarpur seat by a margin of over 24,000 votes. In 2017, Pandey had resigned from the post of AAP's Delhi unit convener after the party's drubbing in the MCD polls.

Former Congress leader Rajkumari Dhillon, who joined the AAP ahead of the Delhi polls, won the Hari Nagar seat and defeated BJP's Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga by a margin of over 20,000 votes.

AAP's Preeti Tomar, who contested from the Tri Nagar seat, defeated BJP's Tilak Ram Gupta by a margin of over 10,700 votes. Her husband Jitender Tomar was the sitting AAP MLA from Tri Nagar. He had won the seat in 2015 with a margin of 22,311 votes.

In January this year, the Delhi High

Court had set aside the 2015 election of her husband, for allegedly giving false declaration regarding his educational qualification in his nomination papers. Following this, the party decided to field Preeti from the constituency.

AAP's Kondli candidate Kuldeep Kumar defeated his BJP rival Raj Kumar by a margin of 17,907 votes while Mukesh Kumar Ahlawat of the AAP trumped BJP's Ram Chander Chawriya from Sultanpur Majra, a reserved seat by a margin of 48,052 votes.

Publish details of tainted candidates: SC to parties

NEW DELHI (TIP): Political parties that field candidates with criminal records must from now on tell the public why they have chosen tainted candidates over those with clean records, the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday as it handed down a series of directions aimed at checking the criminalization of politics.

The court ruled that it shall be mandatory for political parties during central and state elections to put out detailed information about candidates with criminal cases pending against them, including the nature of the offences. Parties must also list the reasons for selecting such candidates and state why others without criminal antecedents were not selected.

"The reasons as to selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements, and merit of the candidate concerned, and not mere 'winnability' at the polls," it said.

The information should be published in one local vernacular newspaper, a national newspaper, and on the official social media platforms of the political party, including Facebook and Twitter.

The court noted that there has been an alarming increase in the number of candidates with criminal records entering politics.

In 2004, 24% of members of Parliament (MPs) had criminal cases pending against them. In 2009,



that went up to 30%, in 2014 to 34%, and in 2019 as many as 43% of MPs had criminal cases pending against them, it said.

The directions are likely to have a key political fallout given that the two biggest and politically crucial states, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, go to polls over the next two years.

A bench headed by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman also directed that these details are to be published within 48 hours of the selection of the candidate.

"The political party concerned shall then submit a report of compliance with these directions with the Election Commission within 72 hours of the selection of the said candidate. If a political

party fails to submit such compliance report with the Election Commission, the Election Commission shall bring such non-compliance by the political party concerned to the notice of the Supreme Court as being in contempt of this court's orders," the top court said.

The court was passing orders on a contempt petition that raised the issue of criminalization of politics claiming that directions given by the court in a 2018 order on disclosure of criminal antecedents by candidates are not being followed.

Political parties fielding candidates with criminal antecedents has been a key concern in the recent elections.



TERI ex-chief RK Pachauri dead

NEW DELHI (TIP): Environmentalist RK Pachauri, a former TERI chief under whose chairmanship the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, passed away on Thursday after prolonged cardiac ailment. He was 79.

In a statement, his family said Pachauri underwent a major heart surgery before succumbing to his deteriorating health on Thursday. He was admitted to Escorts Heart Institute on Tuesday. Pachauri passed away at his residence in the national capital with wife, daughter and son by his side. "His courageous leadership allowed climate change to be recognised the world over as the most pressing issue confronting the world and launched a new era of international deliberations and actions," said his family.



Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Shah said anyone who wants to discuss issues related to CAA with him can seek time from his office. "(We) will give time within three days," he added.

He blamed the Congress for the Partition on basis of religion.



'WE DID NOT FORGET, WE DID NOT FORGIVE': CRPF SALUTES PULWAMA MARTYRS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) posted a remembrance tweet on Friday, a year after 40 of its troopers were killed in a car bomb attack in Pulwama.

In the tweet, posted at 12am, the CRPF said that they have not forgiven or forgotten the attack.

"The songs of your valour are not lost in the harsh noise/ We were so proud that we didn't cry for long," the force tweeted in Hindi.

"WE DID NOT FORGET, WE DID NOT FORGIVE: We salute our brothers who sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation in Pulwama. Indebted, we stand with the families of our valiant martyrs," it added in English.

A suicide bomber of Pakistan-backed Jaish-e-Mohammad had rammed a vehicle carrying explosives into the CRPF convoy on February 14, 2019, on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway killing the 40 men in Pulwama district.

Tensions flared up between India and Pakistan after the convoy of 78 buses, in which around 2500 CRPF personnel were travelling from Jammu to Srinagar, came under attack.

"I feel the same fire in my heart that's raging inside you," Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said on February 17, days after the attack took place.

A day before, he had said that "all tears will be avenged" and the armed forces have been given "full freedom to decide the place, time, intensity and nature of the retaliation against the enemy".

Dehradun, Rishikesh: New names for railway stations stir controversy in Uttarakhand

NEW DELHI (TIP): In a bid to promote use of Sanskrit in Uttarakhand, the Railways ministry decided to rename the name of its stations in the state. The signboards which have names of railway stations written in Hindi, English and Urdu will now be written in Hindi, English and Sanskrit.

So, Dehradun railway station became Dehradunam and Rishikesh was renamed as Rishikesah. But this has led to controversy over getting the names right.

The move to have a Sanskrit name for railway stations in Uttarakhand started when a local BJP leader wrote to railway officials in January asking why the names of the places on railway signboards were not in Sanskrit as it was mandatory under railway manual to have names of places on such boards in the second official language, which in Uttarakhand's case is Sanskrit.

Last week, name of Dehradun railway station was written in Sanskrit as Dehradunam, along with Hindi and English, when the station re-opened for public after three months. The name for Doiwala railway station also in Dehradun has been written 'Doivalah' and a new railway station in Rishikesh as 'Yog Nagari Rishikesah'.



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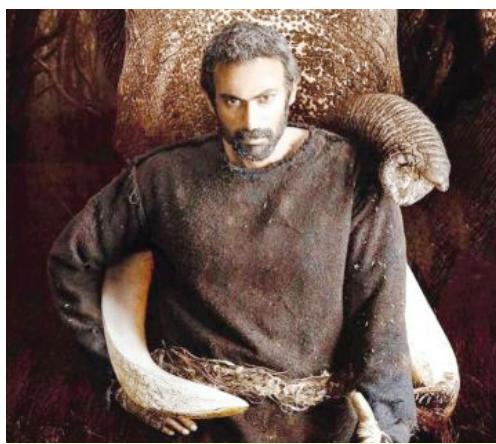
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HAATHI MERE SAATHI: RANA DAGGUBATI PLAYS ANIMAL SAVIOUR BALDEV

The teaser of Rana Daggubati starrer Haathi Mere Saathi is out. The 75-second teaser explores the stunning jungle where the film is set, and we are then introduced to Rana Daggubati's character, who seems to reside in the jungle.

From the teaser, it appears that Haathi Mere Saathi revolves around saving elephants in the jungle and Rana seems to be the saviour of the animals.

Haathi Mere Saathi borrows its title from the 1971 Rajesh Khanna film, but the plot doesn't look connected to the original film.

The movie also stars Pukit Samrat, Vishnu Vishal, Zoya Hussain, Shriya Pilgaonkar. It has been written and directed by Prabu Solomon.

Haathi Mere Saathi will release in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on April 2.

MALANG: ADITYA ROY KAPUR, DISHA PATANI'S FILM CONTINUES TO TREND WELL

Aditya Roy Kapur and Disha Patani starrer Malang is trending well in the weekdays, which is a good news for the film. The romantic thriller once again remained steady on Wednesday as it collected around Rs 3.35 crore yesterday at the box office. The film now stands with the grand total of Rs 36.50 crore and is expected to end its first week between Rs 39-40 crore. Since Love Aaj Kal will hit the screens tomorrow, Malang will face a solid screen crunch at the ticket windows.

Director Mohit Suri, who is happy with the response for the film, revealed why he chose Aditya Roy Kapur as the lead star and said, "Without sounding pompous I'd like to mention that I have never really cast an actor for his commercial viability. As long as he or she fits my role I cast him. I had cast him in 'Aashiqui 2' before which he had done character roles in a couple of films but not lead role. When I met him I felt he would be the perfect choice for Aashiqui 2. Now for Malang, I felt he is capable of doing this kind of a role where he will grow up from a hippie to a hero. Also, I come from Mahesh Bhatt's school, we make films based on who is right for the role and not



because someone is somebody's son or daughter."

Mohit Suri films are known for a soundtrack that touches the soul. His earlier directorials like "Zehar", "Kalyug", "Woh Lamhe", "Awarapan", "Aashiqui 2" and "Ek Villain" have all had blockbuster songs. The filmmaker explained the music of his latest film is different from the previous ones. "When I started off my career, I did not have big stars and a big budget to make

films. Our marketing budget used to be very less. So, our survival strategy was that we should focus on music in a way that it is able to impress people even in a single promo. In 'Aashiqui 2', I worked on the music first and then went on to select the cast," he revealed.

Talking about the soundtrack of "Malang", he added: "I wanted the music of this film to be different, not the typical brooding sad songs I normally use."

ANANYA PANDAY SHOOTS 23 HOURS NON-STOP FOR KHAALI PEELI

Without any sleep, actress Ananya Panday recently shot for her upcoming film Khaali Peeli for almost 23 hours at a stretch.

"Ananya has been juggling between shoots and other commitments. Recently, during a schedule of Khaali Peeli, she started shooting at 8 o'clock in the morning and continued to shoot till the next morning. She shot for the film for more than 23 hours at a stretch," a source said.

Directed by Parvez Shaikh, Khaali Peeli also features Ishaan Khatter.

"Ananya has a very tight schedule but even then, none of her other work commitments suffer. She's shooting for a song sequence, attending events, reading scripts and has a line-up of films in 2020, which she is shooting for. She will kick-start the shoot for some of them by the end of February itself", the source said, adding that the actress will begin shooting for her upcoming slate of films soon.

The masala entertainer is produced by Ali Abbas Zafar with Zee Studios and Himanshu Kishan Mehra.



DUS BAHANE 2.0 FROM BAAGHI 3 OUT

Exactly 15 years ago, Dus Bahane from the film Dus, starring Abhishek Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt, Sunil Shetty, Dia Mirza, Zayed Khan, and others, was the most-played song of the year. That's how popular this track from the Anubhav Sinha directorial was, and still is.

Now, 15 years later, Tiger Shroff and Shraddha Kapoor are seen in a remake of this popular party number. The makers of Baaghi 3 just released the new song, and it is climbing the charts rapidly.

Tiger took to Twitter to share the link of the full video song. He wrote, "Where's your party at? The Baaghis are all set to rock your block with the most badass song of the year! #DusBahane 2.0 is out now."

The song opens with the very familiar Dus Bahane beat that will instantly remind you of Abhishek Bachchan's swag. Does Tiger manage to match up to it? Well, he isn't trying because he is busy channelling his inner Hrithik Roshan.

Tiger is seen flaunting his rock-solid abs in several combinations of trousers and open sleeveless jackets (even vertically slit ganjis). His look will remind you of Hrithik's from Dhoom 2. Shraddha, on the other hand, is seen in embellished leotards and thigh-high boots, raising temperatures.



MARGOT ROBBIE AND CHRISTIAN BALE TO STAR IN DAVID O RUSSELL'S NEXT

Hollywood star Margot Robbie will co-star Oscar winner Christian Bale in a new film from filmmaker David O Russell.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Russell has penned the script for the untitled film, which hails from New Regency, and he might direct it if things go as per the plan.

Plot details are being kept under wraps but it is said to be based on an original idea from the director. Matthew Budman of American Hustle fame will produce.

Bale, 46, previously collaborated with Russell on 2010's The Fighter, which earned the actor his maiden Oscar for best supporting actor, and 2013's American Hustle.

He most recently starred in James Mangold's Ford vs Ferrari, where he portrayed professional racer Ken Miles opposite Matt Damon as Carroll Shelby.

Robbie, 29, was recently nominated at the Academy Awards for her role in Bombshell. She currently features in DC-Warner Bros' Birds of Prey movie.

PAMELA ANDERSON, JON PETERS END THEIR 12-DAY MARRIAGE VIA MESSAGE

Actress Pamela Anderson's short-lived marriage with producer Jon Peters was ended through a text message.

Just one week after the former "Baywatch" star announced her separation from Peters, reports came out that it was her husband for 12 days that initiated the surprise split, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Anderson and Peters reportedly spent only five days together before he sent her the break-up message. According to Us Weekly, the executive producer of "Man of Steel" began his text by saying that their "beautiful amazing love fest".

He followed it up with a confession, "This whole marriage thing ... has scared me."

"It made me realize that at 74 I need a simple quiet life and not an international love affair," Peters text reportedly read.

The text added: "Therefore, I think the best thing we can do is that I'm going to go away for a couple of days and maybe you need to go back up to Canada we did it. The world knows we did it and I think now we need to go our own separate ways."

Sharing his hope that the 52-year-old actress can forgive him, Peters noted that he still wants her to take part in his upcoming movie "Private Dancer".

He signed off his message with a statement that read, "I love you, Jon. I want to be in your life forever." Us Weekly claimed that she replied by simply stating that she forgave him.



Elizabeth Hurley spends weekend with old friends in Jaisalmer, shares pics

Actor and model Elizabeth Hurley looked stunning in a sheer dress as she spent the weekend with some old friends in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer. The 54-year-old dressed in elaborated getup took to Instagram to share the moments from the night.

"A magical weekend with old friends in Jaisalmer. It may take some time to recover Thank you to @tanyadubash and @arvinddubash for being the best hosts #lebaloriental," the actor captioned the post alongside a series of pictures.

Elizabeth was decked up in a purple shade sheer dress and accessorized it with dramatic jewellery. She completed the look with a dazzling headpiece and went for a smoky eye makeup look for the evening.

Further, the star even thanked the hosts Tanya Dubash and Arvind Dubash, for having her and being the best hosts. The event was a grand birthday celebration of Arvind Dubash, who is the husband of executive director and chief brand officer at the Godrej Group, Tanya Arvind Dubash.

Famous people from the Bollywood



fraternity including Neha Dhupia, Angad Bedi, Amrita Arora, Malaika Arora, Gauri Khan, Karan Johar, Maheep Kapoor, Natasha Poonawalla Chunky Pandey, and Rahul Khanna also attended the event.

JENNIFER ANISTON TURNS 51, FRIENDS ACTOR RECEIVES WARM WISHES

Jennifer Aniston celebrated her 51st birthday on February 11. The actor, who is known for her role as Rachel Greene in popular TV show Friends, received warm wishes from her friends, co-stars and many others.

Lisa Kudrow, who shared screen space with Aniston in Friends, took to her Instagram account and wrote, "Always beautiful and keeps getting more beautiful. Happy birthday @jenniferaniston I love you."

"Happy birthday, Jenny!!!," wrote actor Matthew Perry who made his Instagram debut earlier this month. The actor shared screen space with Jennifer Aniston in Friends.

Aniston's close friend Courtney Cox, who played Monica Geller in Friends, posted an adorable photo on Instagram with a caption that read, "No matter how hard you might try... there's only one Jennifer Aniston. Happy birthday my dear friend @jenniferaniston! I love you!"

Reese Witherspoon, who shares screen space with Jennifer Aniston in Apple TV+'s The Morning Show, said she could not ask for a better friend. In a



tweet, she mentioned, "Happy Birthday Jen! I couldn't ask for a better friend and partner to chase my dreams with. Life is way more fun with you in it!!!"

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day or The Feast Day of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually on February 14. Traditionally, people in many countries of Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran faiths, celebrate the day by sending greeting cards and gifts, dating, and attending church services.

It is also a festival of romantic love and many people give cards, letters, flowers or presents to their spouse or partner. They may also arrange a romantic meal in a restaurant or night in a hotel. Common symbols of Valentine's Day are hearts, red roses and Cupid.

It is considered the celebration of love and affection. The Day honors one or two early saints named Valentinus. Valentine's Day is recognized not only as a significant cultural, religious event but also a commercial celebration of romance and romantic love in many regions around the world.

There are numerous martyrdom stories associated with various Valentines connected to February 14, including a written account of Saint Valentine of Rome's imprisonment for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry and for ministering to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire. According to legend, Saint Valentine restored sight to the blind daughter of his judge, and he wrote her a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell before his execution.

".....I read a short story called "First Love" by the Russian writer, Ivan Turgenev. I was drawn to this material because of Turgenev's exquisite writing and his truth-telling about the human experience...that would eventually become the basis for our new play with music and songs - ABOUT LOVE." - Will Pomerantz, Playwright-Director

"Turgenev's story is so human-each character is so true to life that it lives today even though it takes place 150 years ago. It is universal and recognizable in 2020, a portrait of the essence of human relationships touching on a wide range of emotions- joy and sorrow, humor and humiliation, cruelty and empathy. Turgenev loved his characters." - Nancy Harrow, Singer-Songwriter

**'Culture Project' presents "About Love," Music and Lyrics by Jazz Artist Nancy Harrow
Script and Direction by Will Pomerantz**

Culture Project' presents "About Love," a new play with songs and music. Music and lyrics are composed by jazz artist Nancy Harrow and script and direction by Will Pomerantz. "About Love" runs February 25 through March 22 at The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture (18 Bleecker Street, corner of Elizabeth Street, NYC) in the Black Box Theater.

The cast of "About Love" features Silvia Bond ("Things Found on the Ground"), HelenCoxe ("Super Regret"), DanDomingues ("The Tempest" at 'The Public'), JeffreyKringer ("Cruel Intentions: The 90's Musical," National Tour), TomPatterson ("1984," Broadway) and JeanTafler ("My Witch: The Margaret Hamilton Stories").

"About Love" features scenic design by Brian Staton, costume design by Whitney Loher, lighting design by Allen Hahn, sound design by Connor Brent, musical direction by Misha Josephs, musical arrangements by Alphonso Horne and Owen Broder, and stage management by Abigail Strange.

"About Love" plays a limited four-week engagement, February 25 through March 22 at 'The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture' (18 Bleecker Street, corner of Elizabeth Street, NYC) in the Black Box Theater. The official opening is Wednesday, March 4 at 7:30PM.

"About Love" is a new play with songs and music, based on the exquisite short story, "First Love," by Ivan Turgenev. "About Love" is inspired by Ivan Turgenev's beautifully crafted short story, "First Love," originally published in 1860. Turgenev was one of Russia's

ABOUT LOVE, Play

By Mabel Pais



Cast & Creators of "ABOUT LOVE" - clockwise from top left - WILL POMERANTZ, JEAN TAFLER, SILVIA BOND, DAN DOMINGUES, NANCY HARROW, TOM PATTERSON, JEFFREY KRINGER, HELEN COX.

first modern writers to achieve international acclaim with his novel, "Fathers and Sons," and his play, "A Month in the Country." "About Love" is a fresh re-telling of one of his most memorable stories.

"About Love" tells the compelling story of a young man who expects to spend a quiet summer with his parents in the Russian countryside, but soon discovers those three months will be the most consequential of his life, as he learns the difference between love and passion, and the ephemeral nature of life itself.

Featuring a haunting jazz score by Nancy Harrow and a versatile cast of six playing eighteen characters, all within a bold, theatrical staging by Will Pomerantz, "About Love" promises to be a unique theatrical event.

To learn about Nancy Harrow, visit nancyharrow.com

To learn about Will Pomerantz, visit willpomerantz.com

For complete cast and creative team and to listen to song selections, visit Aboutlovetheplay.com

Ivan Turgenev

Ivan Turgenev, known for his detailed descriptions of everyday life in 19th century Russia, was a novelist, poet and playwright. His unique qualities as a writer would ensure his lasting place as the first "modern" writer of Russia, a major figure of 19th century Russian literature.

Turgenev's work is distinguished from that of his contemporaries by its sophistication, balance, lucidity and urbanity, with his greatest works celebrating the extreme preciousness and beauty of life. The elegance he brought to a love story, as well as the psychological acuity of his characters, were part of the power of this writer of great charm and wit.

Ivan Turgenev was born October 28, 1818, in Russia, and died August 22, 1883, near Paris. His major works include the short-story collection "A Sportsman's Sketches" (1852), the novel "Fathers and Sons" (1862), and the play "A Month in the Country" (1855), his works offer realistic,



*About Love" Poster.
Photos / Russ Rowland*

affectionate portrayals of his characters as they attempt to move Russia into a new age. Turgenev poured into his writings not only a deep concern for the future of his native land, but also an integrity of craft that has ensured his place in Russian literature.

Turgenev spent many years in western Europe due to his personal and artistic stand as a liberal against reactionary tsarist rule. He returned home a confirmed believer in the need for Russia to follow a course of Westernization. During his period of self-exile from Russia, Turgenev became a sort of ambassador of Russian culture in Paris, and was friendly with the writers George Sand, Gustave Flaubert, the young Emile Zola and Henry James. In 1879 he was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Oxford.

Turgenev's work is distinguished from that of his contemporaries by its sophistication, balance, lucidity and urbanity, with his greatest works celebrating the extreme preciousness and beauty of life. The elegance he brought to a love story, as well as the psychological acuity of his characters, were part of the power of this writer of great charm and wit.

Tickets and Schedule

Tickets are available online at SheenCenter.org, or in-person at The Sheen Center box office or by phone at 212-925-2812. Discount-priced Rush tickets are available at the box office 1 hour before any performance.

"About Love" plays a limited four-week engagement, February 25 through March 22, Tuesdays to Thursdays, at The Sheen Center (18 Bleecker Street, corner of Elizabeth Street, NYC) in the Black Box Theater. The official opening is Wednesday, March 4 at 7:30PM.

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

BJP had nothing positive to offer at local level



By Saba Naqvi

“Half the second rung of the BJP has passed away while the other half has been rendered powerless. This includes Union minister Nitin Gadkari, former chief ministers Shivraj Chouhan and Raman Singh, who have all been cut to a size, smaller than their potential. What are left are the Big Two and yes-men and women, none of whom can muster the courage to speak up even if they thought errors were being made (and some do). And there are new entrants who are absolutely committed to this goli maaro tone and tenor without any pretense of being part of polite politics.

There were always good reasons for the BJP to be defeated in the Delhi Assembly elections. First, the party is in power in the three municipal corporations in the Capital that have a shabby record. Indeed, one could say that they are a blot on the Swachh Bharat campaign of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Second, the BJP could offer no local leadership or face to take on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, whose approval ratings always remained high. Third, the BJP had no youth alternative to AAP whose core team is packed with young faces. Fourth, large sections of the youth were, in any case, alienated from the BJP at the spectacle of violence on two universities in Delhi, Jamia Millia and JNU, in the weeks preceding the elections (after voting day, came reports of sexual assault on girl students of Gargi College in South Delhi by goons shouting Jai Shri Ram).

In the end, the AAP moved far more deftly and creatively than the older party. It was light on its feet in evading the BJP's attempt to make this election about Hindu versus Muslim as opposed to issues of local governance. Partly because the BJP

had nothing positive to offer at the local level, it decided to make the election about its ideological national issues. In the process, in full view of the national and international media in the Capital, the BJP dropped all pretense at civility in public life and ramped up the hate speech.

The desperation to also stick to its CAA agenda in the face of spreading protests in the Capital and across the country also drove the BJP to the point where we can state that in January 2020, the BJP completely abandoned its mukhauta (mask) model that has a place in the party's history.

Mukhauta was the phrase that gained currency after a high-ranking RSS-BJP functionary described former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the mask/plausible pleasant face who gave cover to an ideological agenda. Vajpayee helmed a successful coalition in an age where numbers demanded moderation.

The BJP has a majority on its own at the national level but is losing power in states at a time when the economy is in crisis. There is now a palpable sense of economic despair in the air. In the week preceding Delhi's February 8 voting day, a diplomat from a country with large investments in India revealed that their internal political assessments show a cycle of endemic social unrest leading up to 2024; they do not see the country as a safe destination to invest in infrastructure and do not expect the Indian economy to grow at a healthy rate. They were even factoring in a simulated war with Pakistan!

This shockingly bad economic projection means that the BJP cannot use traditional means to engage the young in a future that has hope. The current BJP and its ideological family have, therefore, made the shift to invoking enemies here, there, everywhere. In doing so, the BJP gives some youth the pretext to abuse, blame others for their misfortune and feel a sense of belonging to an ideology, some even picked up guns as was witnessed in three cases of shooting that took place in Delhi. In the past, polarization was part of the strategy; in the future, it seems likely to be the main plank of the strategy along with the continued cult of the Great Leader.

The language of urban warfare and civil war was spoken in Delhi and hate speeches made by lawmakers without any real apology from the nation's pre-eminent party. This is because they do not see themselves as replacing any middle ground - as the BJP of the Vajpayee era did



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah who led the election campaign in Delhi in pensive moments

- but in creating an entirely new ground and reality in India.

Besides, there is no one left in the national BJP who can pull off the kind of deft positioning that is required when a party pushes a hard-ideological agenda and then tries to pass it off as reasonable. In the past year, the more plausible pleasant faces of the BJP passed away. Sushma Swaraj would have watched her Ps and Qs while talking about other women, be they protesters or leaders; she even maintained excellent relations with Sonia Gandhi although the two had contested an election against each other. Manohar Parrikar who managed to peacefully rule Goa with a large Christian population without any social upheaval is gone too. The most significant is the passing away of Arun Jaitley who determined the media spin given to events and was brought out as a troubleshooter when the script went haywire.

Half the second rung of the BJP has passed away while the other half has been rendered powerless. This includes Union minister Nitin Gadkari, former chief ministers Shivraj Chouhan and Raman Singh, who have all been cut to a size, smaller than their potential. What are left are the Big Two and yes-men and women, none of whom can muster the courage to speak up even if they thought errors were being made (and some do). And there are new entrants who are absolutely committed to this goli maaro tone and tenor without any pretense of being part of polite politics.

There is no turning back from the hard ideological line for the BJP. It's also important to understand why Shaheen

Bagh, the anti-CAA protest site in Delhi, that became a template for similar protests across the country, was made the main election issue by the BJP. It upset the believer for a multiplicity of reasons that lie beyond the Delhi poll. Shaheen Bagh marks the resurrection of the power of the nation's largest minority supported by the large percentage of Indians who did not vote for the BJP. The protests have also been the sites of a creative outpouring through poetry, song and art. At a deeper psychological level, this disturbs the ideological adherents of the BJP, many of whom got a 'feel good' surge from the belief of having rendered Muslims powerless, from silencing them in Kashmir, to reducing their financial and electoral clout in other parts.

The political is also the emotional, according to philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum in her wonderful work, *The Monarchy of fear*. Briefly, she argues that a sense of powerlessness, economic downturn and fear of change also lies behind the resentment of others - be they immigrants, Muslims or cultural and intellectual elite.

Like most Indians now, the storm-troopers of the Hindu Right do not have good prospects in this economy. Shouting out the hate could be a release for them. They will continue to do so even after the defeat in Delhi and the same rhetoric heard in the Capital will first be taken to Bihar - where state polls will take place later this year - and then to West Bengal in 2021 and Uttar Pradesh in 2022. That is now the strategy of India's pre-eminent party.

(The author is a senior journalist)

COMMENT

Delhi debacle: BJP's divisive agenda rejected by voters

A party that won over 300 Lok Sabha seats last year used all its might to wrest control of a 70-seat Assembly - but in vain. The BJP's second successive rout in the state elections of Delhi is a massive rejection of its divisive campaign that revolved around negativity and hatred. The plank of national security had worked wonders for the party in the 2019

parliamentary elections, which took place months after the Pulwama terror attack and the Balakot airstrike. The BJP unreasonably tried to extrapolate this template to the state polls, invoking the abrogation of Article 370 and the 'anti-national' protests at Shaheen Bagh, and even dragged Pakistan into the discourse. One of their candidates, Kapil Mishra, equated the Assembly electoral battle with an India vs Pakistan clash.

This desperation betrayed the party's disconnect with the people of Delhi despite having swept all Lok Sabha seats in the Capital last year. The ruling party at the Centre neither projected a CM face

nor came up with a concrete road map to address local issues. The leaders who delivered incendiary speeches didn't even get a rap on the knuckles from the top brass. BJP MP Parvesh Verma dubbed Arvind Kejriwal a terrorist, a throwback to the 'AK-49' label the then Gujarat CM Narendra Modi had given to his Delhi counterpart ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Such name-calling was like water off a duck's back for Delhi's voters, who preferred the basics to theatrics.

Assembly and parliamentary polls are poles apart. This electoral truism was hammered home by the voters of

Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand over the past year or so, but the BJP didn't bother to learn any lesson. The behemoth miserably failed to position itself as a viable alternative to the fledgling Aam Aadmi Party. Its attempts to provoke AAP to take an unambiguous stand on the CAA-NRC came a cropper as Kejriwal astutely stuck to the development agenda, virtually appropriating PM Modi's mantra of 'minimum government, maximum governance'. With a misplaced Plan A and no Plan B, the BJP's crushing defeat was inevitable. (Tribune, India)

Soviet spy hailed by Russia for 'saving Krakow' dies at 103

MOSCOW (TIP): Russia on Thursday announced the death at 103 of veteran Soviet spy Alexei Botyan, whom it hailed as a hero for "saving" the Polish city of Krakow from the Nazis, although Poland disputes Moscow's version of events. Russia's SVR military intelligence agency said Botyan, who lived in Moscow, had died after turning 103 on Monday. Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed condolences. AFP

Banksy artwork to be auctioned for Aus bushfire relief

SYDNEY (TIP): An original artwork by Banksy, the acclaimed anonymous British street artist, will be auctioned in Australia to raise money for bushfire relief, it was reported on Thursday. As the extensive bushfire recovery effort begins, art collectors, Sandra Powell and Andrew King from Melbourne saw the opportunity to put their lifelong passion for practical good, reports Xinhua news agency. IANS

250-yr-old family-run inn awarded UK's Pub of the Year

LONDON (TIP): The Bell Inn in the English village of Aldworth, Berkshire, which has been run by the same family for 250 years, was named the UK's Pub of the Year for a second time. The only pub in the county of Berkshire with an official Grade-II listed (buildings that are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them) interior, the Bell Inn was named the best in the country this time for its strong community focus, relaxed ambience and great beer. IANS

65 new virus cases on Japanese ship carrying several Indians

TOKYO (TIP): Passenger tests aboard the quarantined Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan confirmed at least 65 more cases of coronavirus on Monday, as some passengers took to social media to warn against depression over their confinement. The ship, carrying 3,711 passengers, has an unspecified number of Indians on board.

The death toll in the coronavirus outbreak in China has gone up to 908 with 97 new fatalities reported mostly in the worst-affected Hubei province and the confirmed cases of infection crossing 40,000.

The figure takes the tally on board to 135, showing a rapid rise in the outbreak on the ship docked in the port of Yokohama. The ship arrived at the Japanese coast early last week and was quarantined after a passenger who deboarded last month in Hong Kong was found to be the carrier of the novel virus on the ship.

(Reuters)

Death toll in China's coronavirus nears 1,500 with 5,090 new cases

BEIJING (TIP): The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has spiked to nearly 1,500 with 121 new fatalities reported mostly from the worst-affected Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection jumped to nearly 65,000, health officials said on Friday.

The hard-hit Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, has reported 116 new fatalities and reported 4,823 new confirmed cases on Thursday, the provincial health commission said on Friday.

The National Health Commission said that with 5,090 new cases the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases soared up to 64,894 as of Thursday.

The commission said it received reports of 121 deaths on Thursday with 5,090 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection from 31 provincial-level regions.

Among the deaths, 116 were in Hubei Province, two in Heilongjiang, and one in Anhui, Henan and Chongqing respectively, the commission said.

The number of new cases in Hubei Province included 3,095 clinically diagnosed cases, which have been seen as confirmed cases. The new deaths also include eight who were clinically diagnosed.

The latest report brought the total confirmed cases in Hubei province to 51,986, state-run Xinhua news agency



reported.

The World Health Organisation on Thursday said a sharp rise of 254 cases of COVID-19 (official name for coronavirus) cases in China, due to a change in counting methods, did not represent a big shift in the epidemic.

Of the 254, Hubei and its provincial capital Wuhan reported 242 deaths, the single highest in a day so far.

"This does not represent a significant change in the trajectory of the outbreak," Michael Ryan, head of WHO's health emergencies programme,

told a press conference in Geneva.

"We're not dealing, from what we understand, with a spike in cases of 14,000 on one day," he said.

"This increase that you've all seen in the last 24 hours is largely, in part, down to a change in how the cases are being reported."

Ryan also said he expected members of a WHO-led international mission to China to arrive over the weekend.

Already 15-member advance WHO team has arrived in China on Monday. PTI

PM begins to reshape post-Brexit UK Govt

LONDON (TIP): Prime Minister Boris Johnson began reshaping his government on Thursday, tightening his grip on power by sacking some senior ministers to make way for a team he hopes will deliver his vision for Britain beyond Brexit.

The reshuffle was not shaping up to be as explosive as some commentators had suggested, based on his senior adviser Dominic Cummings' well-publicised desire to see a radical reorganisation of government to fit Johnson's agenda.

Instead, Johnson's team signalled that he was keen to foster new talent, particularly among women, in the junior ranks of government while also rewarding loyal supporters who helped him win a large majority in December's election.

With most of his biggest-hitting ministers, such as those for foreign and home affairs, expected to stay in place, Johnson drew criticism for sacking Northern Ireland minister Julian Smith, who only a month ago had helped broker the restoration of a government in the British province. Smith, who had been in charge of parliamentary discipline for Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, was the first minister to be sacked. He was joined by business minister Andrea Leadsom and environment minister



Theresa Villiers.

"The Prime Minister wants this reshuffle to set the foundations for government now and in the future," sources in his Downing Street office said.

"He wants to promote a generation of talent that will be promoted further in the coming years. He will reward those MPs (members of parliament) who have worked hard to deliver on this government's priorities to level up the whole country and deliver the change people voted for last year," said the sources. — Reuters

Iran unveils ballistic missile, 'new generation' engines

TEHRAN (TIP): Iran's Revolutionary Guards unveiled Sunday a short-range ballistic missile that they said can be powered by a "new generation" of engines designed to put satellites into orbit.

The Guards' Sepahnews website said the Raad-500 missile was equipped with new Zoheir engines made of composite materials lighter than on earlier steel models.

It also unveiled Salman engines made of the same materials but with a "movable nozzle" for the delivery of satellites into space.

The Raad was "a new generation missile that has half the weight of a Fateh-110 missile but with 200 kilometres more range," it added. The Fateh-110 is a ballistic ground-to-ground missile first unveiled in 2002. Its latest generation has a range of 300 kilometres (186 miles).

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Major General Hossein Salami unveiled the missile and engines alongside IRGC aerospace chief Brigadier General Amirali Hajizadeh.

Queen's eldest grandson, wife to file for divorce

LONDON (TIP): Queen Elizabeth II's oldest grandson Peter Phillips on Tuesday announced that he and his Canadian wife Autumn have separated and will file for divorce.

Phillips, 42, the son of the Queen's daughter Princess Anne, confirmed the separation from his wife and that they will share custody of their children Savannah, nine, and Isla, seven.

"They had reached the conclusion that this was the best course of action for their two children and ongoing friendship. The decision to divorce and share custody came about after many months of discussions and although sad, is an amicable one," their joint statement read.

"Peter and Autumn have requested privacy and compassion for their children while the family continues to adapt to these changes," it said.

Phillips met Canadian management consultant Autumn Kelly, 41, at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal in 2003, while he was working for Formula One. Some reports suggest Kelly might intend to move back to Canada after the divorce.

The couple told the Queen and other royal family members about their decision to separate last year and both of their families were said to be "sad" but "fully supportive" of the decision to "co-parent", the statement added.



It would make Phillips, the Queen's first grandchild to divorce. While he is a member of the royal family, he is not a working royal and does not have a royal title because he is descended from the female line. He refused the offer of an Earldom when he married so his children do not have courtesy titles.

The couple married in 2008 in St

George's Chapel at Windsor Castle – where Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's wedding would take place 10 years later – and brought up their children in Gloucestershire.

Before the wedding, Autumn Phillips gave up her Catholic faith, a move which allowed Peter Phillips to retain his right to the throne under the rules of the UK's succession rules. — PTI

Australia admits 'national shame' of failing to help Aboriginals

SYDNEY (TIP): A pledge to close the health and wellbeing gap between Aboriginal and other Australians is failing, the government admitted Wednesday, describing the situation as a source of "national shame".

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said just two of seven key targets to improve the lives of Australia's indigenous people were on track—unchanged from last year.

More Aboriginal children were enrolled in early education and graduating from high school than ever before, he said, but attendance rates were still lagging behind other groups.

Other targets to halve the gap in child mortality, literacy, life expectancy, and unemployment rates were not being met.

Morrison called the failure to give indigenous children equal opportunities to other Australian kids "a national truth and a national shame".

The admission comes 250 years since Captain James Cook's first voyage to the vast continent, a journey that led to British colonisation and upended indigenous communities.



The life expectancy for Aboriginal Australians is about eight years lower than the national average.

Indigenous children are twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday and 25 times more likely to be incarcerated than the rest of the population, according to official statistics.

The report marks 12 years since

former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made a historic apology to Aboriginal people for centuries of injustice and launched the "Closing the Gap" initiative. "Over decades, our top-down, government-knows-best approach has not delivered the improvements we all need," Morrison said. "The results are not good enough." — AFP

Israeli jets bomb Gaza, none hurt

GAZA (TIP): Israeli war jets bombed Gaza Strip on Monday as an Egyptian security delegation arrived in the Palestinian enclave for its ceasefire with Israel, security sources said.

Israeli war jets struck several sites belonging to the al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, in southern Gaza, Xinhua quoted Palestinian security sources. No injury was reported.

Meanwhile, Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee said in a press statement that Israeli war jets targeted Hamas facilities including a "military training facility" in southern Gaza. Hamas should "bear responsibility for the terrorist acts against Israelis," Adraee added.

Israeli public radio reported that around 20 rockets had been launched from Gaza toward Israel since January 15. Israeli PM has already said the nation is ready to wage a war against terrorists. — IANS

Four survive 32 days adrift in Pacific that killed 8 others

WELLINGTON (TIP): Four people who survived a month adrift in the Pacific were recovering in the Solomon Islands Wednesday after an ordeal that claimed the lives of eight of their companions, including a baby, reports said.

The group, from Papua New Guinea's Bougainville province, said they survived by eating coconuts found floating in the sea and collected rainwater in a bowl during their 32 days adrift.

The Solomon Star News reported the group set off from Bougainville on December 22, intending to celebrate Christmas in the Carteret Islands, about 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

But survivor Dominic Stally said their small boat capsized and a number of the group drowned.

The rest managed to right the vessel but there were further fatalities as they floated in the remote waters at the mercy of powerful ocean currents.

"We could do nothing with their dead bodies, we just have to let go of them at sea," he told the newspaper.

"A couple have died and left behind their baby and I am the one who held onto the baby and later the baby died as well."

Stally said a number of fishing vessels passed nearby without noticing them until they were finally picked up on January 23 off New Caledonia after drifting some 2,000 kilometres.

The Star News said the survivors comprised two men, a woman and a girl aged about 12.

They were dropped off in Honiara last Saturday and were discharged into the care of PNG High Commissioner John Balavu after receiving treatment for dehydration. Epic tales of survival are not uncommon in the Pacific, where tiny islands are separated by vast expanses of ocean. AFP

THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO LONG-TERM COUPLE

Couples in a long-term relationship often end up resembling each other in one way or another. After all, if you're spending all of your spare time with one person, it's inevitable that you will pick up a few of their mannerisms, start wearing similar clothes or share the same interests. But did you know that there are five scientifically proven things that happen when two people stay together for a long time? Chances are, if you've been in a relationship for more than a year, you can relate to at least one of the five points below.

You start to look alike

If you're in a long-term relationship you may find that you and your partner have begun to morph into one person - whether you subconsciously wear matching outfits or share similar mannerisms. But according to science, this isn't just superficial. Convergence In The Physical Appearance Of Spouses claims that couples who have spent over 25 years in a relationship will begin to noticeably resemble one another. Why? Because constantly mimicking each others emotions results in 'vascular changes' to the face.

You start to sound alike

If you're in a long-term relationship you may have found that you and your partner have developed an intimate way of speaking that's exclusive to just you two. You'll have an abundance of inside jokes that only you find funny, plus embarrassing nicknames for each other that have become a part of your daily dialogue. Therefore it's no shock that long-term couples begin to mirror each other's speech patterns), from accent to intonation.



Your needs and desires change

It's commonly acknowledged that when two people have been in a relationship for a long time their behaviour towards each other changes, and so do their needs. What Characteristics Do Men and Women Desire In Their Short-Term And Long-Term Romantic Partners shows that both sexes desire characteristics such as intelligence, honesty and warmth in long-term relationships, as opposed to physical attractiveness and sex drive in short-term relationships.

When a couple has been together for a long time the element of obsession - which is more common during the early stages of a relationship - is lost, according to Does A Long-Term Relationship Kill Romantic Love? Without the obsession element couples can often fall out of sync sexually and intimacy is lost. Interestingly, Exploring Relationships Among Communication, Sexual Satisfaction, and Marital Satisfaction explains how sexual satisfaction can compensate for poor communication, but good

communication and poor sexual satisfaction still results in a less-satisfying relationship. So, although your priorities may pivot as you grow comfortable with a partner, sex and intimacy should not be neglected.

Your sleep cycles sync

You may have been polite about each other's sleeping habits at the beginning of your relationship, but if you've been with your partner for a while you will have no problem telling them off for snoring or kicking you in the middle of the night.

Unsurprisingly, the quality of our sleep depends largely on who we sleep next to on a regular basis. The study Sex: Sleeping Together shows that long-term couples' sleep tends to sync, and if one partner is struggling to sleep, the other's sleep suffers too. Interestingly, American Academy of Sleep Medicine says that between husbands and wives, the wife is more likely to dictate the sleeping syncrony, as when she is experiencing marital satisfaction it directly correlates to the husband having good quality sleep.

Many things cause our skin to age. Some things we cannot do anything about; others we can influence.

One thing that we cannot change is the natural aging process. It plays a key role. With time, we all get visible lines on our face. It is natural for our face to lose some of its youthful fullness. We notice our skin becoming thinner and drier. Our genes largely control when these changes occur. The medical term for this type of aging is "intrinsic aging."

We can influence another type of aging that affects our skin. Our environment and lifestyle choices can cause our skin to age prematurely. The medical term for this type of aging is "extrinsic aging." By taking some preventive actions, we can slow the effects that this type of aging has on our skin.

The sun plays a major role in prematurely aging our skin. Other things that we do also can age our skin more quickly than it naturally would. To help their patients prevent premature skin

WAYS TO REDUCE PREMATURE SKIN AGING

aging, dermatologists offer their patients the following tips.

- Protect your skin from the sun every day. Whether spending a day at the beach or running errands, sun protection is essential. You can protect your skin by seeking shade, covering up with clothing, and using sunscreen that is broad-spectrum, SPF 30 (or higher), and water-resistant. You should apply sunscreen every day to all skin that is not covered by clothing.
- Apply self-tanner rather than get a tan. Every time you get a tan, you prematurely age your skin. This holds true if you get a tan from the sun, a tanning bed, or other indoor tanning equipment. All emit harmful UV rays that accelerate how quickly your skin ages.
- If you smoke, stop. Smoking greatly speeds up how quickly skin ages. It causes wrinkles and a dull, sallow complexion.
- Avoid repetitive facial expressions. When you make a facial expression, you contract the underlying muscles. If you repeatedly contract the same muscles for many years, these lines become permanent. Wearing sunglasses can help reduce lines caused by squinting.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Findings from a few studies suggest that eating plenty of fresh fruits and



FOOD CORNER



BENGALI FISH FINGERS

A popular and easy to make Bengali style appetizer/snack. These fish fingers are well suited for any occasion, party or can also be served as an evening snack.

Ingredients

White Fish Fillets - 300 gms, skinless, boneless

Eggs - 2

Fennel Seeds - 1 tsp

Cumin Seeds - 1 tsp

Mustard Seeds - 1 tsp

Nigella Seeds - 1 tsp

Fenugreek Seeds (Methi) - 1/2 tsp

Maida - 1 1/2 tbsp

Besan Flour - 1/2 tbsp

Red Chilli Powder - 1 tsp

Garlic - 3 cloves, crushed

Ginger - 1 inch piece, grated

Oil as required

Breadcrumbs - 1 to 2 cups

Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped

Salt as per taste

Method

- Combine the cumin seeds, fennel seeds, mustard seeds, nigella seeds and methi in a mixer jar.
- Grind them together and transfer to a bowl.
- Add the maida, besan, red chilli powder, garlic, coriander leaves, ginger and enough salt.
- Mix well.
- Beat the eggs in a bowl and add to the flour.
- Gently whisk until combined.
- Chop the fish fillets into small bite-sized pieces or strips.
- Heat oil in a deep frying pan.
- Dip the fish fillets into the batter and remove.
- Allow any excess to drip off and dredge it in the breadcrumbs, coating it fully.
- Gently slide them into the hot oil and fry until cooked through or crisp and golden brown.
- Remove and drain excess oil.
- Serve with chutney or sauce of choice.

vegetables may help prevent damage that leads to premature skin aging. Findings from research studies also suggest that a diet containing lots of sugar or other refined carbohydrates can accelerate aging.

- Drink less alcohol. Alcohol is rough on the skin. It dehydrates the skin, and in time, damages the skin. This can make us look older.
- Exercise most days of the week. Findings from a few studies suggest that moderate exercise can improve circulation and boost the immune system. This, in turn, may give the skin a more-youthful appearance.
- Cleanse your skin gently. Scrubbing your skin clean can irritate your skin. Irritating your skin accelerates skin aging. Gentle washing helps to remove pollution, makeup, and other substances without irritating your skin.

LEMON WATER'S HEALTHY, BUT IT'S NOT A MIRACLE WEIGHT LOSS DRINK

Lemon water. This bright, citrusy drink is often paired with far-reaching promises, with companies and health gurus claiming it can do everything from turn back the clock on aging to aid weight loss efforts.

It's not all hype, though. There are certainly some health benefits to adding lemon juice to your water. "The best thing about lemon juice is the antioxidants it contains," says Kristin Kirkpatrick, R.D., a registered dietitian and manager of nutrition services at Cleveland Clinic's Wellness Institute. "The high vitamin C content may help boost your immunity, enhance iron absorption, and help reduce the risk of certain cancers."

But can sipping on lemon water really help you lose weight, detox your system, and fire up your metabolism? We asked registered dietitians for the facts.

So, can drinking lemon water actually help you lose weight?

Some animal studies do suggest that lemon compounds might help with weight loss, but the research is still too preliminary to know how lemon water affects humans and weight.

Because lemons contain pectin, the same satiating fiber found in apples, some people claim the juice will fill you up and in turn, help you shed pounds. But there's only a trace amount of that fiber (if any) still present in the juice by the time you squeeze it into your water.

"Fiber, in general, is key when it comes to slowing down your digestion, and helping the entire digestive process work," says Maggie Michalczyk, R.D., a registered dietitian based in Chicago. "Unfortunately, none of this fiber is in the actual lemon juice itself."

As for boosting your metabolism? Unfortunately, experts can't back this one up either. "I've never seen that association," says Kirkpatrick.



"Some foods, like cayenne pepper, temporarily speed up metabolism through the thermic effect of food, but I have not seen any studies where lemons do the same."

However, if adding lemon to your water helps you to drink more than you usually would, that may provide a benefit. "It can help, but that benefit is coming more from the actual water rather than the lemon you're squeezing into it," says Michalczyk. "Your metabolism thrives off of water to maintain its functions. Think of it as a lean, calorie-burning machine, and water is the gas in the tank."

And as much as we love to believe that lemon water serves as the perfect "detox," research doesn't stand behind this claim, either. "This is a popular theory, but again, other than the high vitamin C content, which is also found in other foods, there's little scientific evidence to support that lemon juice detoxes your system better than water," says Kirkpatrick. In fact, your body doesn't need to be "cleansed" at all, despite what diet detoxes or liquid

cleanses might tell you. "Our kidneys and liver do all the detoxifying we need," says Michalczyk.

The best way to add lemon water into your weight loss plan

You're better off including high-fiber foods like oats, beans, and legumes in your diet as part of a satisfying meal. Otherwise, lemon juice may serve best as a replacement tool for weight loss (say, drinking it in place of soda or other sugary drinks), rather than a magic bullet. "Since it's low in calories, it may help with overall calorie restriction for weight loss. But that's the only impact it would have," says Jason Ewoldt, R.D.N., L.D., a wellness dietitian at the Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program.

Just be cautious of the side effects. "Strong acids like lemon juice can erode tooth enamel if in contact on a regular basis," says Libby Parker, R.D., a registered dietitian in San Luis Obispo, Calif. "If you are drinking lemon juice, be careful not to brush your teeth right after. Just swish plain water around in your mouth."

SMART INSULIN PATCH TO HELP MONITOR GLUCOSE LEVELS

Researchers have developed a coin-sized insulin-delivery patch, an advance that may help people with diabetes monitor and manage their blood glucose levels, and deliver the necessary medical dose of insulin they need.

According to the study, published in the journal Nature Biomedical Engineering, the adhesive patch is about the size of a small coin, is simple to manufacture, and intended for once-a-day use.

The researchers, including those from the University of North Carolina (UNC) in the US, said the hormone insulin is naturally produced in the pancreas, and helps the body regulate glucose—the main energy-providing chemical from



food. In type 1 diabetes, a person's body does not naturally produce insulin, while in type 2 diabetes it does not efficiently use the insulin from pancreas, and together both types affect more than 400 million people worldwide, they said.

"Our main goal is to enhance health and improve the quality of life for people who have diabetes," said Zhen Gu, study co-author and a former professor at UNC.

"This smart patch takes away the need to constantly check one's blood sugar and then inject insulin if and when it's needed. It mimics the regulatory function of the pancreas but in a way that's easy to use," Gu said. According to the researchers, the patch monitors blood sugar, or glucose, and has doses of insulin pre-loaded in very tiny microneedles, less than one-millimetre in length that deliver medicine quickly when the blood sugar levels reach a certain threshold. When blood sugar returns to normal, they said, the patch's insulin delivery also slows down—an advantage since this may help prevent overdosing of insulin, which can lead to low glucose levels, seizures, coma, or even death.



WASH HANDS CORRECTLY TO LIMIT SPREAD OF DISEASE

As coronavirus, now known as covid-19, continues to spread, health organisations are urging people to engage in basic protective measures to curb the spread of the deadly disease.

While it may seem obvious, one of the easiest and most foolproof methods for limiting the spread of coronavirus and other diseases is by washing your hands, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

But that doesn't mean a simple rinse in the sink is sufficient, as the agencies' guidelines state that you must wash your hands for "at least 20 seconds" for the preventative action to be effective.

According to the CDC, you should wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, "especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing".

The agency also encourages people to wash their hands "before, during and after preparing food, before eating, before and after caring for someone who is sick with vomiting or diarrhoea, before and after treating a cut or wound, after changing diapers, after touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste, after handling pet food or pet treats, and after touching garbage".

To wash your hands correctly, the CDC suggests following these five steps: wet, lather, scrub, rinse, dry.

First, you should wet your hands with clean, running water, before turning off the tap and applying soap. The next step consists of lathering your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. During this step, you should lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

After lathering up, you should then scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds, or roughly the length of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice, according to the CDC.

Once you've finished scrubbing, you should rinse your hands well under clean water, before drying your hands using a clean towel or by air-drying them.

While washing your hands with soap and water is the most effective method for killing germs, if you cannot access either, the CDC suggests using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains "at least 60 per cent alcohol".

To effectively use hand sanitiser, the CDC says you should apply the product to the palm of one hand and rub your hands together. You should then rub the gel all over the surfaces of your hands until your hands are dry, a process that should take around 20 seconds.

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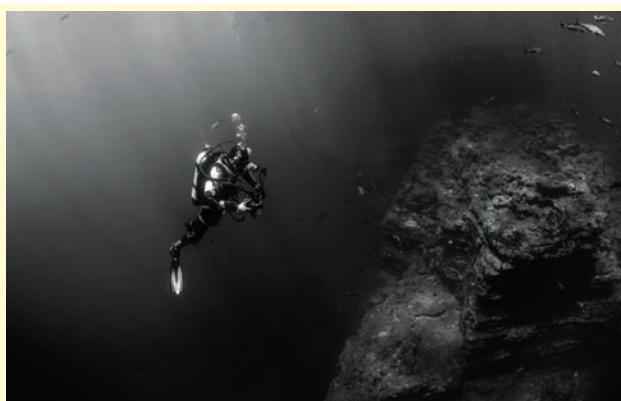
Former Chairman, Board of Trustees, AAPI National

E-Mail: sanandmd@gmail.com

GITANJLI ANAND

Former President, India Association of Long Island (IALI)

E-mail: gitanjlianand@gmail.com



SCIENTISTS DIVE INTO 'MIDNIGHT ZONE' TO STUDY DARK OCEAN

A team of scientists is preparing to dive deep into the depths of the Indian Ocean—into a “Midnight Zone” where light barely reaches but life still thrives.

Scientists from the British-led Nekton Mission plan to survey wildlife and gauge the effects of climate change in the unexplored area.

Working with the Seychelles and Maldives governments, the five-week expedition is targeting seamounts—vast underwater mountains that rise thousands of meters from the sea floor.

To explore such inhospitable depths, Nekton scientists will board one of the world's most advanced submersibles, called “Limiting Factor.”

“What we do know is that beneath 1,000 meters (3,280 feet), there's no light down there, but a lot of animals ... are bioluminescent. It's life that glows,” says Nekton mission director Oliver Steeds.

“The area that we're going to be researching, it's one of the most bio-diverse parts of the world's oceans. So what we're going to find there is unknown,” Steeds recently told The Associated Press in Barcelona, Spain, before sea trials for the submersible and its mother ship.

The AP will be covering the expedition exclusively from start to finish.

Last August, the “Limiting Factor” completed the Five Deeps Expedition, diving to the deepest point in each of the world's five oceans.

SCIENTISTS TRACK ORIGIN OF MYSTERIOUS SIGNAL COMING FROM DEEP SPACE

Detectors on Earth have been picking up strange, sometimes-repeating signals from space for a long time. After being received, these radio bursts disappear in a flash for forever, remaining one of the universe's great mysteries. However, in a recent development, a Canadian-based telescope found a source of radio bursts from space that repeat every 16 days.

According to the study, this is the first time in recorded science history that radio bursts have been picked that repeat with such regular radiofrequency. Known as fast radio bursts (FRB), these signals come from deep space. Scientists discovered the first radio burst in 2001 and have found more of these signals events ever since with the help of Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment Fast Radio Burst (CHIME/FRB) Project.

What is CHIME?

The CHIME is a huge ground-based radio telescope made of four cylinders. It is located in British Columbia, Canada and functions like fixed antennae to map the sky. The instrument is designed to map the emission from hydrogen atoms, and it uses a very wide field-of-view to capture a broad range of electromagnetic radiation frequencies. CHIME is able to hunt FRBs as it scans 1,024 points in the sky at 16,000 different frequencies—1,000 times per second.

Newly found repeating radio bursts

Scientists have found repeating signals in the past as well but the newly found burst, which has been named as FRB 180916.J0158+65, is one of its kind. An international team of scientists led by the Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics graduate student Dongzi Li observed that these radio bursts repeat every 16 days. The European Very-long-baseline-



interferometry Network (EVN) of telescopes also confirmed the Canadian findings.

What's the source of these FRB?

The FRB 180916.J0158+65 was itself first discovered in 2018 and pinpointed to a spiral galaxy approximately 500 million light-years away. It was examined over a period of 13 months and found to repeat with a highly regular rhythm—the first instance of these signals having such a fixed frequency.

Also, sorry to break it to you but these signals do not come from aliens. According to the researchers, the cause for these radio bursts could be a binary star (a system of two stars) accompanied by a third celestial body like a planet. The data doesn't explicitly confirm or deny this hypothesis, and there's a possibility that the source could be a magnetar—a compact, magnetized neutron star.

Arctic ice melt disrupting ocean current, may alter Europe's climate

Researchers have unravelled how an ocean water current, which plays a key role in keeping Western Europe warm, could be altered by an influx of unprecedented amounts of cold, fresh water from melting ice in the Arctic.

According to the scientists, including those from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the US, an seawater current called the Beaufort Gyre keeps the polar environment in balance by storing fresh water near the surface of the Arctic ocean.

Wind blows the gyre in a clockwise direction around the western Arctic Ocean, north of Canada, where it naturally collects fresh water from the melting of glaciers, and river runoff, the study, published in the journal Nature Communications, noted.

The researchers said this fresh water is important in the Arctic since it floats above the warmer, salty water, and helps protect the sea ice from melting—in turn regulating the Earth's climate.

As the fresh water is slowly released by the gyre into the Atlantic Ocean over a period of decades, it allows the Atlantic Ocean currents to carry it away in small amounts.



However, since the 1990s, the researchers said, the gyre has accumulated a large amount of fresh water—8,000 cubic kilometres—or almost twice the volume of Lake Michigan in the US.

According to the new study, the cause of this gain in freshwater concentration is the loss of sea ice in summer and autumn.

"If the Beaufort Gyre were to release the excess fresh water into the

Atlantic Ocean, it could potentially slow down its circulation. And that would have hemisphere-wide implications for the climate, especially in Western Europe," said Tom Armitage, lead author of the study from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The release of fresh water from the Arctic Ocean to the North Atlantic can change the density of surface waters, the study warned.

NASA's Mars 2020 rover leaves its 'home' to prep for launch

Last year in December, NASA's Mars 2020 rover had passed its first driving test at the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California. The rover “earned its driver's license” and now it has been transported to NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida to begin the final preparations for its launch to the Red Planet in July this year.

Two Air Force C-17 Globemaster cargo planes carried the Mars 2020 rover along with the cruise stage, descent stage, and Mars Helicopter to the space agency's Kennedy Space Center, Florida completing a 3,700-kilometer trip from the JPL, California, NASA said in a statement.

“Our rover has left the only home it has ever known,” said John McNamee, Mars 2020 project manager. “The 2020 family here at JPL is a little sad to see it go, but we're even more proud knowing that the next time our rover takes to the skies, it will be headed to Mars.” The rover, cruise stage, descent stage and other mission support equipment were transported in four police-escorted trucks to the US Air Force's March Air Reserve Base on February 11, where they were loaded aboard the two waiting C-17s to reach Kennedy. The rover's protective covering for the trip to the Red Planet—also known as aeroshell—arrived at Kennedy in December 2019.

Within hours of arriving at the Shuttle Landing Facility, the 11 pallets of spacecraft will be transported to the same spacecraft processing facility that in 2011 handled NASA's Curiosity rover.

Indian economic environment weaker than forecast, urgent reforms needed: IMF

WASHINGTON (TIP): India urgently needs more ambitious structural and financial sector reform measures and a medium-term fiscal consolidation strategy due to the rising debt levels while ensuring a more accommodative fiscal stance in the budget, the IMF has said.

Responding to a question on the budget presented by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson Gerry Rice said the economic environment in India is weaker than what the organisation had forecast earlier.

"While the budget touches on ongoing sectoral efforts, there remains an urgent need for more ambitious structural and financial sector reform measures and a medium-term fiscal consolidation strategy, anchored in tangible revenue and expenditure measures, especially given rising debt levels," Rice told reporters.

"The environment is weaker than what we had forecast earlier, that a more accommodative fiscal stance, this year, is appropriate, so that more accommodative fiscal stance in the budget, we think, is appropriate," he said.

"But, over the medium term, to be looking at a fiscal consolidation strategy," Rice said.

The IMF in January lowered India's economic growth estimate for the current fiscal to 4.8 per cent.



Inflation rises to 7.6%, Index of Industrial Production shrinks

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Indian economy was showing signs of recovery after gross domestic product (GDP) growth plummeted to a 26-quarter low of 4.5% in the three months ended September 2019. Various high-frequency indicators (data released more often than a quarter) such as the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) continue to suggest this. The Composite PMI index was 56.3 in January 2020, the highest since June 2018, indicating rise in economic activity in manufacturing and services. On Tuesday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Parliament that "green shoots" were visible. "There are seven important indicators which show that there are green shoots in the economy... economy is not in

trouble," she said while replying to a debate on the Union budget in Lok Sabha.

Two data points released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Wednesday are bound to dampen such hopes. One, retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased further from a 65-month high of 7.35% in December 2019 to 7.59% in January. This was expected.

Two, industry growth, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), slipped into contraction mode in December 2019. It declined by 0.3% in December on an annual basis.

Both these numbers are more adverse than what analysts had expected. A Reuters poll of economists estimated the CPI to quicken 7.4% in January and another Reuters poll of analysts projected IIP growth in December to rise by 1.8%.

'RBI'S ASSET RECOGNITION NORMS FOR REALTY SECTOR CREDIT NEGATIVE FOR BANKS'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ratings agency Moody's Thursday said the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) move to revise asset recognition norms for bank loans to real estate sector is credit negative for lenders as it would defer the recognition of such loans.

The RBI on February 7 allowed banks to not classify real estate loans as restructured for one year if the project is delayed for reasons beyond the control of real estate developers. "While this will alleviate near-term asset quality risk to the banks from the real estate sector, it will not address the credit issues facing real estate developers," the ratings firm said.

The real estate sector has been facing challenges as NBFCs, the key lenders to the sector, are also under stress. Further, stagnating property sales have resulted in a large stock of unsold inventory. "Tight funding conditions are straining developers' ability to complete projects, and by extension, their solvency," Moody's said.

Under the new guideline, banks can extend the principal repayment period by one year if the project is delayed because of reasons beyond the developer's control. Typically, the principal repayment on loans to property developers starts two-three years after the disbursement.

UN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY 2030

ROME, ITALY (TIP): The United Nations will miss its target of achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, a senior UN representative has said in Rome.

"We are not going to achieve the goals by the next decade. We are all lagging far behind," said Hans Hoogeveen, permanent representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

Hoogeveen was delivering the welcome address at the 43rd session of the governing council, the decision-making body of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Hoogeveen is the outgoing chair of the council.

Set in 2015 by the UN General Assembly, the self development goals (SDGs) are the "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all", intended to be achieved by 2030. The goals include zero poverty, zero hunger, good health and well being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, clean and affordable energy, sustainable cities and communities, and climate action.

IFAD, a UN financial institution that offers grants and low-interest loans to projects that help reduce poverty and increase food security, is particularly interested in fighting hunger.



ALMOST 93,000: HALF AT BSNL, 80% EMPLOYEES AT MTNL OPT FOR VRS

NEW DELHI (TIP): In the largest mass retirement of employees in the country, nearly 93,000 staffers of state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) have opted for the voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) offered by the central government.

The move, which comes as part of a government scheme to restructure the loss-laden companies, will substantially reduce the wage bills of these utilities and free up real estate that has a potential for monetisation in the future.

Significantly, of the 1,53,000 employees working for BSNL when the VRS scheme was approved in October 2019, over half — 78,569 employees in all — have opted to retire.

At MTNL, which had an employee strength of over 18,000, nearly 80 per cent — 14,400 employees — have opted for the VRS.

Most of the employees of BSNL who have opted for the VRS are learnt to be in the non-executive category and in the age group of 55-60 years, officials said.

"About 93,000 people have opted for VRS. What is significant is there is not a single court case. BSNL's wage bill will reduce by about 50 per cent, while MTNL wage expenses will come down by about 75 per cent after the process is completed. Their annual expenditure on employees, which was about Rs 1,300 crore, will come down to Rs 650 crore," a senior Department of Telecommunications (DoT) official told The Indian Express.

RAJIV BANSAL APPOINTED AIR INDIA CHIEF

NEW DELHI (TIP): Senior bureaucrat Rajiv Bansal was on Thursday appointed as the chairman and managing director (CMD) of Air India, according to a Personnel Ministry order.

Bansal, a 1988-batch IAS officer of Nagaland cadre, is at present additional secretary in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment as chairman & managing director, Air India in the rank and pay of additional secretary, the order said, without mentioning further details.

The post became vacant after incumbent Ashwani Lohani completed his tenure.



MOHINI – THE ONLY FEMALE AVATAR OF LORD VISHNU

Mohini is introduced in the Hindu legends of the narrative epic of Mahabharata. She appears as a form of Vishnu, who acquires the pot of Amrita from Asuras(demons) and gives it back to the devas (gods) helping them retain their immortality. She is the only female avatar of the lord Vishnu. Mohini is also known as enchantress because she is supernaturally beautiful and feminine by nature.

Etymology of the Name

Mohini means 'erotic magic or spell'. The name has its origin in the word 'moha' which means 'delusion personified' or to enchant, perplex or to delude. Therefore, moha is the quality of desire after which the Mohini has been named. In Sanskrit, Mohini simply means Enchantress. The name also has an implied connotation of "the essence of female beauty and allurement".

Historical Background

She was first introduced in the Mahabharata. Mohini, who was the only female Avatar of Vishnu, became an important part of the 'Samudra Manthan' in which she acquires 'Amrita' from Asuras (demons) and gives it to the Devas to make them immortal. In original texts, Mohini is referred simply as an enchanting, female form of Vishnu. But in the later versions, Mohini is described as Maya (illusion) of Vishnu.

Once the Mohini legend becomes popular, it was expanded, retold and re-written in several texts. The tales of Mohini-Vishnu gradually increased among various other religions. The similar type of Mahabharata version of the story is expanded in the Bhagwat Purana in the 10th century CE where Mohini becomes formal Avatar of Vishnu.

Relationship with Shiva

The most famous and prominent tale of her life is her union with Shiva. The connection of Shiva with Mohini became popular everywhere. According to Bhagwat Purana, after Vishnu deceives



the demons by his Maya, the female form, Shiva wanted to meet her again. Every god started praising Lord Vishnu and the beauty of Mohini. This incident overwhelmed Lord Shiva so much that he immediately visited Vishnu along with his wife Parvati.

In the Bhramanda Purana, when sage Narada tells Shiva about Vishnu's Mohini form that deluded the demons, Shiva dismisses him. Shiva, along with Parvati go to Vishnu's home and asked him to take the form of Mohini again. Vishnu started to meditate on the Goddess, and in place of Vishnu stands the gorgeous Mohini.

When Vishnu turned himself into a beautiful and seductive lady, Lord Shiva fell for her. Overcome by lust, Lord Shiva ran behind the gorgeous Mohini and grabbed her arms and embraced her but she escaped. During her violent coupling,

Shiva's seed fell on the ground and that led to the birth of another God known as Ayyappa.

Son of Shiva and Vishnu

According to various texts and Puranas, Shiva and Mohini have a union which led to the birth of their son Ayyappa. He is known by different names in different parts of the country. Ayyappa is also called as Mahashasta, Sastava, Manikandan who is believed to be an incarnation of Dharma Sasta, the offspring of Shiva and Vishnu. He is generally depicted in a yoga posture, wearing a jewel around his neck, hence named as Manikandan which literally means "with a bell around the neck".

Appearance of Mohini

According to mythologist Puttanaik, the appearance of Mohini is just a disguise to delude the demon Bhasmasura, rather than a sexual transformation. Mohini was reincarnated or transferred from

Vishnu's physical body to a beautiful 'apsara'. Westerners may interpret the Shiva-Mohini union as homosexual, but traditional Hindus do not agree with this interpretation. Similarly, Shiva's union cannot be considered as homosexual as it was done with Mohini (the avatar) not with Lord Vishnu himself. Mohini does not have an independent existence, she exists only as a temporary form and is transformed back into Vishnu after serving her purpose.

Temples of Devi Mohini

Among various temples of Mohini, there is Jagan Mohini Keshava Swami Temple of Mohini Devi in Andhra Pradesh East Godavari district of Rayali, India. There is also one of Mahasala which is located in Nevasa, Maharashtra, India. Similarly, Harikanyaka Temple is also one of the ancient Hindu temple named after Mohini which is situated near Guruvayur. Similarly, Ryali Jagan Mohini Temple is another holy temple which is dedicated to Lord Vishnu.



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

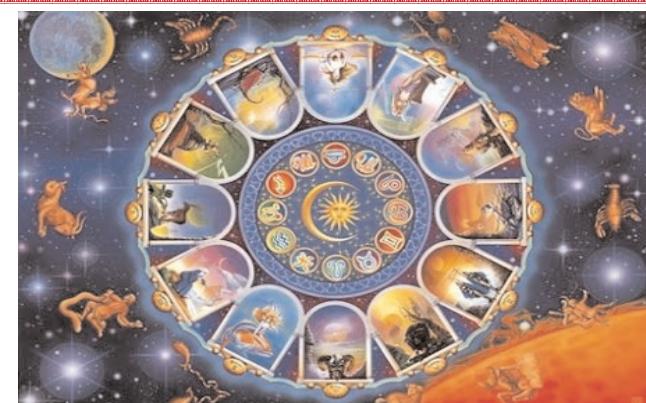
"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"

"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, launched 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 February 17 - February 23, 2020

ARIES: Ganesha says you are on the top of the world and have the confidence to handle just about anything that is thrown at you. You have taken on a lot and it all depends on how you delegate and manage time to accomplish it all. But it is better to be busy than have nothing to do. You are also restless and go hunting for even bigger projects. You will have to micromanage it all but you do it well.

TAURUS: There will be new areas of study and accomplishment. You expand, grow and reach the moon. Ganesha smiles in approval. The period is coming to an end and a lot has been accomplished. You could be tired and discouraged as your vital energies are low. You are pushing away at executing your plans but there could be unwarranted opposition to them.

GEMINI: You may feel physically distressed as if the burdens of your life are too much to handle. There may be a feeling of world-weariness and it may be a good time to go for a medical check-up as it is in your interest to conserve your energies. There are several inhibiting factors at work and you will have to plough through them, which you will with Ganesha's help. There could be marital troubles and you may have to terminate a long association.

CANCER: There will be new beginnings and many new opportunities as you climb new peaks of achievement. Life is never stagnant; every moment differs from the next. Life has a natural cycle and it is best to go with the flow. This can be marvellous period and you feel good. Your health is fine, you are optimistic and all your plans are falling into place.

LEO: This is the time to enjoy the rewards of sustained and hard labour. You are on a growth trajectory and your life is bullish. It is the time to initiate new projects, expand your activities and broaden your perspective. You realise your full potential as a human being. There is travel and new contacts as you soar ahead into the stratosphere. You look at new areas of study and try to raise your consciousness and expand your world view.

VIRGO: All new associations will influence you positively and there will be freedom and substantial growth. Ganesha is happy for you. You are joyous, energetic and exuberant and want to overdo or overreach yourself. It will be good to exercise a certain amount of restraint. You may also be in spending frenzy. Be careful with your purse strings if you are a sole proprietor as you might leave yourself vulnerable to the more difficult times that will eventually come.

LIBRA: Ganesha says make sure that all expansion is carefully planned and that you have built safeguards against future times of difficulty. You also crave more recognition and may feel cheated. But, away from all this, are glorious moments with the family and a home away from home. There may be travel, even an overseas holiday. There are many tasty dishes on your plate, assures Ganesha. Get hungry for them.

SCORPIO: You end the period on an upbeat note. This is an exuberant time, with high energies at play. You feel physically strong and fit and you manage to accomplish more than usual. Almost anything that you direct your energies to, will lead to success. The only real danger is that you overwork and push yourself over the hill. This is a good time to begin a new project, as long as you know your limits.

SAGITTARIUS: You have great intuitive and can accomplish a great deal by yourself; your pace will be scorching and others will not be able to match you. You will display a magnificent sense of timing or planning. All projects begun now will pay great dividends in the future. Ganesha watches over you. This is a period of power plus work and pleasure. You begin the period well and this is a fiery start to the period.

CAPRICORN: You will be moving fast and getting things done in a trice. You also have a spiritual bent of mind and Ganesha will protect you no matter what happens. As the period moves on, emotions will boil over. Watch out for impulsive actions and rash decisions that may have sudden, unexpected consequences and undesirable results. You may also get into disputes with colleagues over trifles.

AQUARIUS: Authority figures, who limit your freedom of movement and self-expression, are likely targets for your rebellion. But there are many beautiful moments with close family and friends in this period. As the period ends, there are inflated expectations, excessive and impractical idealism and sudden disappointments. You need to make a concerted effort to keep your feet on the ground.

PISCES: You are looking for profound answers to life's disturbing questions. Ganesha says there could be tough times. Health needs extra safeguards. This is a good time to enter new relationships, strengthen existing ties and reach out afresh. There are many expenses and travel is also on the cards. Your heartstrings are also pulled.

Birthday Horoscope February 17 - February 23, 2020

FEB 17: Ganesha says a relationship problem can set off resistance, jealousy, or frustration, but don't forget the power of understanding and a little bit of charm.

FEB 18: The love might be coming from your professional zone, which could make a closer companion feel neglected or get a little cranky about it.

FEB 19: A.M. moods may be too aggressive until a late-morning surprise turns things

around. Tonight, a friend may supply warm understanding.

FEB 20: Whatever resonated between you and another yesterday reheats to a perfect slimmer today. Catch the waves as early this A.M. as you can.

FEB 21: A private lunchtime talk can bring mutual understanding and agreement but watch for late-afternoon gloominess. Look for ways to cheer!

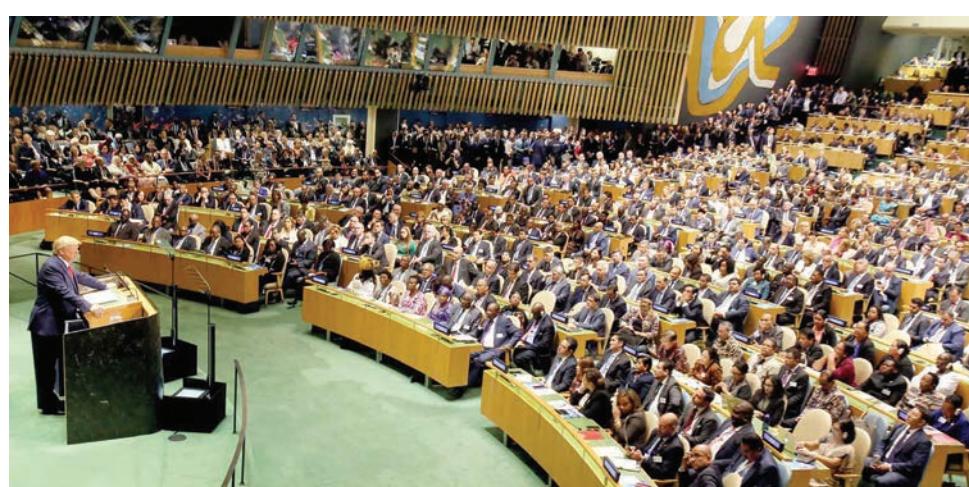
FEB 22: You have practical skills and know how things work, so your efforts bring big improvements. If you're in a competition, you've got the physical prowess to endure in a contest toward the victory line.

FEB 23: Come mid-morning you feel warmer emotions starting to fill the room. But there's the urge to take a chance, too. Don't risk too much. Results can bring lucky returns as well as a big loss.

United Nations 2019 through the Lens of Jay Mandal -on Assignment



Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi at the United Nations



US President Donald Trump at the United Nations



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at the United Nations



Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur Sahib, Pakistan. The Indian Panorama editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja (left) and his Ludhiana based lawyer friend Arminderjit Singh Arora who visited the shrine in January 2020 are seen in the foreground.

United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres to Visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan

contd from page 1

Mr Guterres will "travel to Kartarpur to visit a holy site, Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib", on Tuesday, Feb 18, before returning to New York on the 19th, deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters here, Monday, Feb 10.

The founder and the first Master of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak Dev spent the last 18 years of his life in Kartarpur Sahib.

On February 17, Mr Guterres will also speak at the International Conference on 40 Years of Hosting Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, which is being organized by the Pakistan government and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), along with High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

He will participate in a high-level

panel discussion and other events at the conference.

Mr Guterres will also meet Pakistan President Arif Alvi.

The Secretary-General will be in Lahore on February 18, where he will meet students and attend an event on Pakistan's polio vaccination campaign. He will also be visiting Kartarpur Sahib on Feb 18th.

In November last year, the UN Chief welcomed the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor between India and Pakistan, saying it paved the way for interfaith harmony and understanding.

"We welcome #Pakistan and #India opening #KartarpurCorridor today connecting two key Sikh pilgrimage sites, paving way for interfaith harmony

and understanding by facilitating visa-free cross border visits by pilgrims to holy shrines," spokesperson for the Secretary-General had tweeted.

Kartarpur Corridor links Dera Baba Sahib in Gurdaspur in India and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan. It was opened on November 9 in a historic people-to-people initiative between the two countries.

Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib is located across the Ravi river in Pakistan and is about 3 miles from Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district of Punjab.

According to the agreement between Pakistan and India, 5,000 pilgrims from India can visit the shrine daily and the number can be increased in future.

(With inputs from PTI)

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contd from page 1

AAP Makes a Near Clean Sweep winning 62 of 70 Assembly Seats in Delhi



Arvind Kejriwal and senior AAP leaders celebrating their victory, February 11.



Ecstatic AAP Supporters celebrating AAP victory

Elections

The BJP, which was claiming that it will form the government, with its leaders from Home Minister Amit Shah to Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari optimistically repeating that the BJP will get anywhere from 45 to 48 seats, enough to form the government, were shellshocked at their humiliating defeat. However, their only satisfaction was an improvement from 3 in 2015 to 8 seats in 2020.

While the Congress has probably reconciled to its fate over the loss in Delhi, BJP leaders are simply confounded over the results. There have been all kinds of explanations, the latest coming from Amit Shah who has said that certain utterances by BJP leaders did a lot of damage to party prospects.

Commenting on why the BJP lost, he said on Thursday, February 13 that he disapproved of statements like 'goli maro' and 'Indo-Pak match' by a few BJP leaders during the Delhi assembly poll campaign and said these remarks may have been one

of the possible reasons for the party's defeat.

"Such statements should not have been made. Our party has distanced itself from such remarks," he told at a Times Now program.

Shah was asked a question about a few BJP leaders raising slogans like 'goli maro' and talking about the 'Indo-Pak match' during the Delhi elections campaigning.

He admitted that the BJP may have suffered in the polls because of the statements made by some of its leaders.

"It is possible that our performance may have suffered because of this," he said.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal who will be sworn in as Chief Minister of Delhi for the third consecutive term at Ram Leela Maidan where he learnt the first lessons in politics under the benign eye of Anna Hazare, on February 16, profusely thanked the voters of Delhi for reposing their trust in "your son" and promised to create better living conditions for them and make Delhi a truly world class city.

No political leaders from other States are being invited to the oath taking ceremony. Kejriwal will take oath as chief minister for a third term in a "Delhi-specific" ceremony, AAP's Delhi unit convener Gopal Rai said.

"No chief minister or political leader from other states will be invited for the ceremony that is going to be specific to Delhi," he said.

Kejriwal would take oath with the people of Delhi who had reposed their faith in his leadership, he added.

It is learnt that all those who held cabinet positions in the last Kejriwal government will be retained.

Already, Delhi model of governance is catching the attention of leaders in other states. Recently, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said he will replicate the model in his state.

The tremendous success of AAP in Delhi has surely made political leaders look closely into the AAP governance model.

All eyes are on Delhi and Kejriwal who will be under scrutiny and pressure to meet the ever-increasing expectations of Delhites.

Kem Cho, Trump: Record Number of People to Welcome US President in Ahmedabad

During the visit, President Trump and the First Lady will attend official engagements in New Delhi and Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and interact with a wide cross-section of Indian society.

The public show, 'Kem Cho Trump' has been planned in Ahmedabad along the lines of the 'Howdy, Modi' event that saw Modi addressing the Indian diaspora in Houston last year. Reportedly Trump will address a gathering of about 125,000 people at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium in Motera.

"The President and The First Lady will travel to New Delhi and Ahmedabad, which is in Prime Minister Modi's home state of Gujarat and played such an important role in Mahatma Gandhi's life and leadership of the Indian independence movement. During a phone call over the weekend, President Trump and Prime Minister Modi agreed the trip will further strengthen the United States-India strategic partnership and highlight the strong and enduring bonds between the American and Indian people", The White House said in a statement.

Extremely delighted that

@POTUS

@realDonaldTrump

and

@FLOTUS

will visit India on 24th and 25th February. India will accord a memorable welcome to our esteemed guests. This visit is a very special one and it will go a long way in further cementing India-USA friendship.

Tweeted Modi.

Thank you

@narendramodi

for the kind invitation. Looking forward to visiting Ahmedabad & New Delhi later this month.

@POTUS

& I are excited for the trip & to celebrate the close ties between the #USA&#India., Melania Trump tweeted thanking Modi for invitation.

"The global strategic partnership between India and the U.S. is based on trust, shared values, mutual respect and understanding, and marked by warmth and friendship between the peoples of the two countries. The relationship has further evolved under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and President Trump, with significant progress in all areas including trade, defense, counterterrorism, energy, coordination on regional and global issues as well as people-to-people ties. The visit will provide an opportunity for the two leaders to review progress in bilateral ties and further strengthen our strategic partnership", the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

Potential for Co-operation between US and India is Limitless, Says Indian Envoy

"We are both vibrant democracies; open and multicultural societies, based on the rule of law. Our partnership today is as natural as, it is seamless, based on the strong people-to-people connections. We have become, global strategic partners, and our collaboration, cuts across spheres of activity, which was unimaginable two decades ago."

"The potential for co-operation, between United States and India, is limitless. The relations between our governments has found a new momentum, getting its energy, from the warm friendship, between our leaders" he said

"More than 2000 US companies have a presence in India. Over 200 Indian Companies, have invested US\$18 billion in the US, creating more than, 100,000 direct jobs. Two-way investment, between India and US reached, US \$ 60 billion in 2018. Bilateral trade is growing at 10 per cent, on a year-to-year basis, and reached, \$ 160 billion in 2019" he pointed out.

"This makes me, bullish about our relationship. The best is yet to come. When US capital, and expertise meets the Indian market, and Indian mind, we should aim, for nothing less, but the sky. I look forward to working with, USISPF and each one of you, in this endeavor of taking our relationship, to new heights", he further added.

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VICE PRESIDENT: Chitagam Saluja
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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:
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P.O. Box No. 190067, South Richmond Hill, NY 11419,
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Email: editor@theindianpanorama.com
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P.O. BOX 121695, ARLINGTON, TX 76012
Lovleen Kaur, VP & Bureau Chief
Bureau Chief Phone: 972-330-3139

E-mail tipdallas01@gmail.com; Phone: 646-247-9458
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Ever since the Beatles visited the ashram of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the late '60s, Rishikesh has been a magnet for spiritual seekers. Today it styles itself as the 'Yoga Capital of the World', with masses of ashrams and all kinds of yoga and meditation classes. The action is mostly north of the main town, where the exquisite setting on the fast-flowing Ganges River, surrounded by forested hills, is conducive to meditation and mind expansion. In the evening, an almost supernatural breeze blows down the valley, setting temple bells ringing as sadhus ('holy' men), pilgrims and tourists prepare for the nightly ganga aarti (river worship ceremony). You can learn to play the sitar or tabla; try Hasya yoga (laughter therapy), practise meditation or take a punt on crystal healing.

Rishikesh is not all spirituality and contorted limbs, it's also a popular white-water rafting centre, backpacker hangout and Himalayan-trekking gateway.

NEELKANTH TEMPLE

Neelkanth temple is one of the most sacred places of worship for Hindus. It is situated on a hill above Swargashram and located at a distance of 32 km from Rishikesh. Neelkanth temple is considered to be an apt example of complete natural hill heaven that lies adjacent to mountain ranges of Nar-Narayan. Owing to its raw beauty & religious significance, both the devotees and nature lovers visit the place round the year. The way to the temple is quite exhilarating. There are steep & narrow roads taking above the hill, which will add the extra spice of adventure amidst the beauty. There is river flowing on one side and mountain terrain is on the other side. Road is very curvy and narrow with steep slopes.

TREKKING

Trekking is all about reconnecting yourself with nature and exploring the wonders of the Himalayas. For adventure enthusiasts, it is a much sought after option to escape the daily mundane life to find themselves in the lap of nature. Walking through verdant landscape, lush greenery and waterfall, and breathing in fresh air really prove to be a refreshing experience. Located in the lap of the Shivalik Himalayas, the picturesque town of Rishikesh offers a host of scenic locales for trekkers. It gives the trekker a chance to witness the outstanding scenery of flowery green meadows, dense forests, fascinating local communities and astounding landscape of the eastern part of the Garhwal Himalayan ranges. There are all sorts of treks available near Rishikesh, which can be categorised into easy, moderate and hard treks. Small treks can be done in the adjoining villages and waterfalls while longer treks can be taken in nearby mountains. Few famous treks which can be taken near Rishikesh are Neer Garh waterfall trek, Kunjapuri trek, Neelkanth Temple Trek, and Jhilmil Gufa Trek. Longer treks which serve route from Rishikesh are Gomukh (Gaumukh) Trek, Valley of flower Trek, Tungnath-Chandrasheela Trek, Deoria Taal Trek, Hemkund sahib trek, Kuari Pass Trek and Roop Kund Trek.

DEVPRAYAG

In Sanskrit, prayag means 'confluence' and Devprayag stands for 'holy confluence'. Devprayag is the confluence of two holy rivers Alaknanda and Bhagirathi to form Ganga. According to religious scriptures, Devprayag is one of

RISHIKESH: GATEWAY TO THE GANGES



the five important holy confluences. Rivers like Bhagirathi, Alaknanda & the mythological river Saraswati (flowing underground) meet to form the River Ganga. River Bhagirathi originates from Gangotri and Alaknanda originates from Badrinath, both of which are considered sacred destinations for Hindus across the world. Devprayag is the last prayag of River Alaknanda.

Religiously, the site is very sacred and holds immense significance among the Hindu followers. It is believed that Lord Rama and the King Dushratha did penance here. There is an ancient temple of Raghunathji built above the confluence with massive rocks. It is believed that the temple was built more than ten thousand years ago. There is a small water spring called Baitalshila, which is believed to have powers to cure leprosy. Devprayag is also hugely blessed with divine natural beauty and showers tourists with its serenity. The place is accessible throughout the year and can be visited anytime.

Try avoiding Devprayag during monsoons, when the water level rises and there are chances of roads getting blocked due to landslides. Devprayag is a small town situated in Tehri Garhwal district in the state of Uttarakhand, located on the Rishikesh-Badrinath highway.

RAJAJI NATIONAL PARK

Rajaji National Park is known for its pristine scenic beauty and rich biodiversity. A paradise for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts, Rajaji National Park or Chilla Park is just 25 km away from Rishikesh. A normal safari by jeep usually takes 3 to 4 hours to complete the 36 km stretch of safari



range and costs around Rs. 1200-1500 per person. It is carried out twice in a day; at 7 am in the morning and around 2 pm in the afternoon. Rajaji National Park is home to Asian elephants, deers, birds, tigers (only few), and antelopes such as the Nilgai, langoors etc. This park is the first staging ground for the migratory birds when they cross Himalayas to enter India. The Himalayan pied kingfisher, fire tailed sunbird & great

pied hornbill can be spotted here. The safari in the park is organised throughout the year, adding its touch of special essence every season. Don't miss out on an early morning drive along the river stream which connects to Power House in Chilla. In addition there are many hotels and tourist complexes available around Rajaji National Park at Haridwar and Rishikesh, which makes it even more convenient to visit the park.

'There is no fight': Shubman Gill on competition with Prithvi Shaw for opener's slot

NEW DELHI (TIP): Young India batsman Shubman Gill insists there is no fight for the opener's slot with fellow youngster Prithvi Shaw in the upcoming two-match Test series against New Zealand starting February 21. In the absence of injured Rohit Sharma and with KL Rahul not included in the 15-member squad, there is a spot open at the top along side Mayank Agarwal.

Shubman believes whoever gets the opportunity will try to make the most of it and there is no fight between him and Shaw as it is the team management's headache to decide the playing XI.

"Obviously, our careers started at the same time but there is no fight as such," Gill told reporters ahead of the practice match against New Zealand XI. "Both of us have done well in our positions. It's up to the team management, who they will play. It's not as if there is a fight. Whoever gets the chance will try to make the most of the opportunity and not let it go waste," he added.

Earlier, out-of-favour India spinner Harbhajan Singh had opined that Gill should open the innings in place of Shaw as he was included in the team as a reserve opener.

Shubman is also going through a rich vein of form as he recently scored 83 and 204 for India A while playing in the middle order in the



first unofficial Test against New Zealand A. He then slammed a century while opening the innings in the next match.

"Shubman should get his chance since he has been part of the team (as reserve opener) for quite a while without playing any Test match," Harbhajan was quoted as saying by PTI. While Shaw is a natural opener, Gill is looking to adapt to the position. But the batsman says that it isn't very challenging and he can do the job.

"It was nothing new to me when I was asked to open the innings. When you go at No. 4, already, you are two wickets down. That's a

different scenario, a different pressure game. When you are opening the innings, you have to set the game for the whole team. That's a different thing. And when you are opening the innings, you have to set the base for the other batsmen coming in so that it will be easy for them," he said.

Gill pointed that even as a middle-order batsman, one needs to be careful about the second new ball. "...because you are playing at a certain flow and the ball isn't swinging that much. When they take the new ball, you have to be a little more cautious than you were before," he said.

Manpreet Singh creates history, becomes first Indian to win FIH Men's Player of the Year

NEW DELHI (TIP): Manpreet Singh created history on Thursday as the halfback became the first Indian hockey team player to win the FIH Men's Player of the Year awards since its inception in 1999. Manpreet won the award ahead of Belgium's Arthur van Doren and Lucas Vila of Argentina, who finished second and third respectively. The Indian hockey team skipper has enjoyed a long career in the national squad since he made his debut in 2011. With more than 260 appearances, he has been a huge asset for the team and he will lead the team in the FIH Hockey Pro League.

In 2019, as captain, Manpreet Singh led his team to victory in the FIH Olympic Qualifiers, thus securing a spot at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. Manpreet represented India at London 2012 and Rio 2016.

Talking about the 2019 season, Manpreet said: "If you look at our year, we did well in every tournament we participated in. Be it the FIH Series Finals in June or the test series in Belgium where we played the hosts as well as Spain



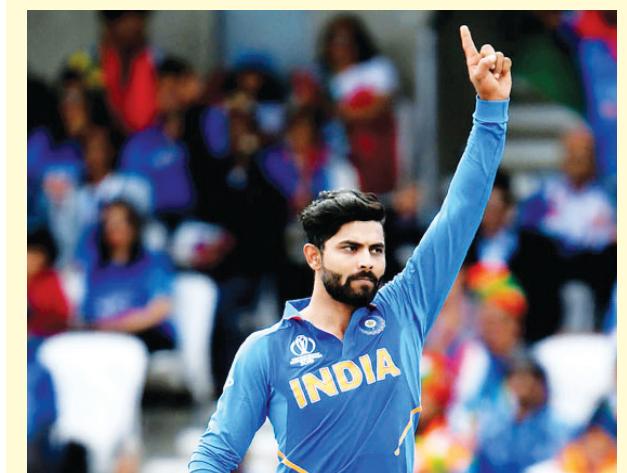
and beat them. "Our biggest goal in 2019 was to book our berth at the Olympics." The team achieved that goal in style, beating Russia in the Olympic Qualifiers over two legs – 4-2 and 7-2.

"We have plenty of youngsters in the side who will be flying as part of the team for the Olympics and it is important they are ready for it."

FIH Chief Executive Officer Thierry Weil reacted to the players who won the awards.

"On behalf of FIH, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations

from the whole hockey community to all winners of the 2019 FIH Stars Awards and also to all nominees. Thanks to their skills and performances, as well as their teammates, they invite fans all over the world to experience great emotions. We are very grateful to them. Athletes, as well as coaches, are the best ambassadors of our sport. I wish all of them every success, in particular those who are involved in the FIH Hockey Pro League and/or the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020."



BUMRAH LOSES TOP SPOT, JADEJA IS 7TH IN ICC ODI RANKINGS

DUBAI (TIP): India speedster Jasprit Bumrah lost the top spot but all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja climbed three rungs to grab the seventh position in the latest ICC ODI rankings released on Wednesday.

Bumrah, who went wicketless in India's 0-3 loss to New Zealand in the just-concluded three-match series, was placed at the second position with 719 points in the bowling chart.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who snapped six wickets in the series, jumped to 13th spot even as chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav slipped to the 16th place.

Kiwi pacer Trent Boult, despite missing the limited over series against India due to a broken hand, moved to the top of the bowling chart after Bumrah slipped.

Jadeja, who took two wickets and scored 63 runs in the series against New Zealand, moved to the seventh spot with 246 points in the all-rounders' list which saw Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi emerge as the new world number one.

In the batting chart, India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma continued to hold on to the top two positions respectively.

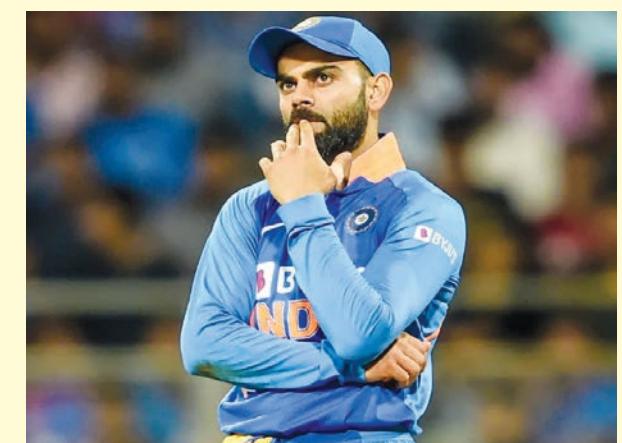
'It wasn't that bad': Kohli on first whitewash in 22 years

MT. MAUNGANUI (TIP): India captain Virat Kohli came down on his bowlers for their mediocre performance as he tried to explain the team's first ODI series whitewash in 22 years, saying that the visitors lacked composure all through.

"The games were not as bad as the scoreline suggests. It boils down to those chances that we didn't grab. I don't think it was enough to win games in international cricket," Kohli said.

"With the ball, we were not able to get breakthroughs, we were not at all good on the field. We haven't played so badly but when you don't grab those chances, you don't deserve to win," he added. "Batsmen coming back from tough situations was a positive sign for us, but the way we fielded and bowled, the composure wasn't enough to win games."

The ineffectiveness of Indian bowlers can be gauged from the fact that the team's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah finished the series without a wicket and the attack couldn't dismiss the complete rival line-up even once.



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