



## Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu Presented his Credentials to President Trump

**Affirmed his commitment to work towards strengthening strategic partnership between India and the United States**



Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu presents his credentials to US President Donald Trump at the White House, February 6. Credit/ Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Ambassador of India to the United States, Taranjit Singh Sandhu presented his credentials to the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump at the Oval office of the White House, February 6. *contd on Page 13*

## Trump Acquitted, Slams Democrats in 'VINDICATION SPEECH'



President Donald Trump displays a copy of Washington Post which carried on front page the story of his acquittal. He accused the Democrats of dishonestly and viciously impeaching him even while he did nothing wrong.

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Republican-controlled Senate has acquitted Donald Trump in his high-profile impeachment trial, giving the US President a major political victory in an election year but not before bitterly dividing the country and costing millions of dollars to the taxpayers. *contd on Page 32*



### COMMENT

Prof I.S. Saluja

Curtains came down Feb 5 on "Drama Impeachment" of President Trump- the third US President to be impeached, bringing cheer and jubilation among Republicans and sighs of desperation among Democrats.

The Democrats will not tire of accusing Senate Republicans of being blind to the failures and foibles of President Trump who they believe is a threat to America, and Republicans accusing Democrats of unethical conduct all along in harassing a performing President and finding faults with him where none existed.

Now that the Drama is over, what do Americans expect of the Republicans and the Democrats?

2020 is the election year. Obviously, another Drama to keep Americans engaged and amused will be unveiled.

Trump and his Republicans have all the good tidings for Americans- a bouncing market, a growing economy, a healthy number of steady job creation, more secure borders, with the border wall in the South, a safer and more secure America, a restrictive immigration policy to keep away hordes of immigrants from entering the country and snatching away the

jobs of "Americans" etc. Enough to satisfy Americans.

Democrats, not controlling the levers of power despite of their Congressional majority are left with finding fault with Trump's foreign policy which they term as erratic, and which they complain has been alienating the traditional partners and supporters of the US on world for a, leading to alienation of the country.

Trump's trade policies and military engagements abroad are some of the foreign policy issues which have often been criticized by Democrats. But Americans find the Trump policies have not worked against America and Americans. In respect of trade policies, America has been able to make more money as in the case of Trump's insistence on NATO partners to cough up their fair share. Americans are impressed with billions of dollars coming to the US as a result of Trump's policies.

The more Democrats have to nail down Trump? "Erratic foreign policy" card does not work with Americans who, like common people anywhere in the world, are more interested in having jobs, steady income, social and health benefits etc. to enjoy a comfortable living.

How many Americans are bothered about America's military engagements abroad? Knowing the history of America will help us a little. In its existence of 244 years, America has been engaged in wars for 224 years, with only a brief period of peace spanning 20 years. Americans are used to military engagements. They don't find it unusual or alarming.

Democrats have found this card failing.

One issue that the Democrats thought will invite the ire of Americans against Trump was his character, and Democrats did indulge in his character assassination with a vengeance and unprecedented vigor, only to find it is a non-issue with most Americans. Democrats dropped it as a hot potato but only after getting some heat on the issue.

The economic disparity between the top 10 percent and the bottom 90 percent does make many think about why it should be what it is. Income disparities are so pronounced that America's top 10 percent now average more than nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent, according to data analyzed by UC Berkeley economist Emmanuel Saez. They average over 39 times more income than the bottom 90 percent. The bottom 90 percent

surely want a more equitable distribution of wealth. They surely want the benefits of the wealthy America to percolate down to them. But, again, Democrats themselves are divided among the right wing, the center, the left and the ultra-left when it comes to the method to achieve greater fairer distribution of wealth. Here again the Democrats are at a disadvantage.

Immigration is another issue which is equally important for both the Republicans and the Democrats.

President Trump wants a restrictive Immigration policy. No illegal entry. Refugees only selectively. Fewer immigrants to protect the jobs of Americans. He surely desires strongly to get rid of the 15 million odd undocumented and illegal immigrant population, which he could and would do, once Republicans have majority in both the Congress and the Senate. With Supreme Court securely tucked in his pocket, Trump has only to wait until the Republicans gain majority in both the Congress and the Senate when he strikes it big.

What other issues are the Democrats left with? Guess? "Game over".

## The curtain is down on another drama

### On end of impeachment drama and acquittal of President Trump



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# Gov. Cuomo slams Trump and DHS for banning new 'trusted traveler' applications for NY residents as 'pure politics'

**ALBANY (TIP):** The Department of Homeland Security outlined its decision to bar New York residents from enrolling in programs that expedite border crossings on Thursday, Feb 6, as Gov. Cuomo and others blasted the move as "pure politics."

Officials with the federal agency said they will prohibit New Yorkers from signing up for four trusted traveler programs that allow low-risk travelers such as truckers to quickly cross borders in response to the state's "Green Light Law" that allows undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses.

"This is unbounded arrogance, disrespect of the rule of law, hyper political government," Cuomo said in an appearance on WAMC. "This is another form of extortion. It is pure politics. It has nothing to do with effecting

government policy or laws."

DHS said that roughly 150,000 and 200,000 New Yorkers will be unable to renew their trusted traveler applications this year. Another 50,000 to 80,000 people who were in the process of signing up for either NEXUS, Global Entry, SENTRI or FAST will not be accepted. The four programs allow for swifter reentry when driving or flying into the U.S. from abroad.

The change doesn't apply to TSA PreCheck, used for air travel from U.S. airports, nor does it impact travelers using enhanced IDs.

Acting Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli, invoking 9/11 as part of his justification, argued that the "Green Light Law" blocked federal immigration authorities from accessing driving records and vehicle-registration data

and said the state's lack of security cooperation prompted the suspension of the travel programs.

"The law that New York has introduced has made our law enforcement officers less safe on an individual basis in New York," Cuccinelli said. "It has also made New York less safe because federal law enforcement officials cannot as quickly if at all in some cases, determine if they are dealing with dangerous criminals as opposed to ordinary citizens."

The language in the state law barring federal agencies access to Department of Motor Vehicle records was inserted specifically to protect against ICE and Customs and Border Protection from using the system to track undocumented drivers who could be targeted for deportation without a



*New York State Governor Cuomo blasted DHS for banning new 'trusted traveler' applications for NY residents as 'pure politics'*

## Blasio administration: Trump travel restriction is 'childish retribution' based in racism

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration was quick to condemn President Donald Trump's travel restrictions for New York residents as "childish retribution based in racism."

The Department of Homeland Security announced Wednesday, Feb 5 night that New Yorkers will no longer be eligible to enroll in programs such as Global Entry due to the new state law letting undocumented immigrants obtain driver's licenses. The law limits the ability of DMVs to share information with some federal agencies - most notably Immigration and Customs Enforcement - and DHS is arguing that information is necessary for the programs to work.

"Considering you need a passport to qualify for one of these programs, this is clearly nothing more than showmanship and demonstrates the Trump Administration's approach to everything: childish retribution based in racism," de Blasio spokesperson Freddi Goldstein said Thursday morning.

The city reiterated its support of the state driver's license law, saying it provides greater safety for drivers by ensuring the state knows who's on the road and whether they are properly licensed and insured.

The city said it is reviewing its options in response to the Trump proposal. Trump travel Restrictions for New Yorkers: the move nothing more than political theater: NYC Mayor de Blasio

"This is a political stunt meant to single out New Yorkers for passing common-sense legislation and standing with the immigrant members of our community," said New York Civil Liberties Union executive director Donna Lieberman. "Time and time again the Trump administration has shown how far it's willing to go in its war on immigrants and to intimidate states for doing what is right."

Steve Choi, the executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, noted that 13 other states have similar laws and accused the federal government of doing President Trump's bidding as he seeks reelection.

"This is the latest height of Trump's brazen lawlessness," Choi said. "Trump's immigration force is holding all New Yorkers hostage to an unhinged re-election campaign built on demonizing immigrants at any cost. New York is one of 14 states that provide licenses to all residents, so the fact that Trump is targeting New York proves that this is about politics, pure and simple."



### What this means:

- **New Yorkers can no longer enroll in four federal "trusted traveler" programs**  
New York residents are barred from enrolling or re-enrolling in Global Entry, which allows expedited U.S. entry by air, land, and sea from all international origins; NEXUS, which allows expedited U.S. entry from Canada by air, land, and sea; SENTRI, U.S. entry from Canada and Mexico by air and land; and FAST, U.S. entry and exit by land for commercial truck drivers crossing the Mexican and Canadian borders.
- **The DHS decision does not affect enrollment in TSA PreCheck**  
DHS spared New Yorkers enrolled in the popular program allowing travelers to pass through security screenings at U.S. airports faster.
- **New Yorkers who travel with enhanced IDs are not impacted**  
The enhanced IDs that allow New Yorkers to travel to Mexico, Canada and some Caribbean countries without carrying a passport are not affected by the DHS decision. Only those hoping to enroll in the four "trusted traveler" programs.
- **Undocumented immigrants cannot apply for the "trusted traveler" programs**  
It would not be possible for an undocumented driver who obtains a license under New York's "Green Light Law" to apply for one of the programs New Yorkers are now barred from enrolling in. U.S. citizens applying for the programs must have a valid passport and be interviewed by federal officials.

## Indian American Sabrina Singh Named Bloomberg's Presidential Campaign Spokesperson



*Singh also served as a regional communications director for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Indian American Sabrina Singh, who also previously served as a spokeswoman for the Democratic National Committee (DNC), has been appointed as the national spokesperson for Democratic candidate former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's presidential campaign.

"Some personal news... I have joined @MikeBloomberg @Mike2020 as national spokesperson! I'm beyond excited to work with this incredible team to defeat Donald Trump," Singh who served as a former top aide to New Jersey Senator Cory Bookers unsuccessful White House bid, tweeted.

"We are thrilled to have Sabrina on board - she's a veteran of multiple races who will add to our talented team as we continue to grow in the run-up to Super Tuesday" The Bloomberg campaign said in a statement welcoming Singh on board.

Singh also served as a regional communications director for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016.

## Indian American Duo Admit Roles in Health Care Fraud Scheme

**Sentencing on 28th April 2020**

**NEWARK, NJ (TIP):** An Indian origin doctor with offices in Washington, Hackettstown, and Succasunna, New Jersey, and his Indian origin co-defendant Jan 28 admitted their roles in a health care conspiracy to bill Medicare and private health insurance companies for medical services fraudulently claimed to have been provided by a licensed medical doctor, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced.

Parminderjeet S. Sandhu, 66, of Long Valley, New Jersey, and Paramjit Singh, 62, of Ohio, each pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Peter G. Sheridan in Trenton federal court to informations charging them with conspiracy to commit health care fraud. "Dr. Sandhu defrauded Medicare and private insurers - and, worse, put his patients at risk - by allowing those patients to be treated by Singh, a man who had lost his medical license," U.S.

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

# Indian American Nisha Agarwal Nominated to Conflicts of Interest Board by NYC Mayor

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** NYC Mayor de Blasio on Feb 3 nominated Indian American Nisha Agarwal along with Wayne Hawley for two seats on the Conflicts of Interest Board. Those nominees are subject to advice and consent of the City Council, and if confirmed, will become effective on April 1, 2020. If appointed, Hawley will succeed Richard Briffault, and Agarwal will succeed Erika Thomas. These nominees bring extensive experience in the government and legal fields and in enforcing the highest standard of ethics for public servants. Mayor de Blasio also expects to name Jeffrey Friedlander, a current member of the Board, as Chair on April 1st.

"These two appointees are some of the best public servants New York City has to offer," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "If confirmed, I am confident they will uphold the highest standards of ethics and good governance and continue in the great service done by their predecessors, Richard Briffault and Erika Thomas."

"If confirmed, I would be honored to serve as a member of the Conflicts of Interest Board and ensure that the City will retain integrity and fairness to all City employees," said Nisha Agarwal.

Nisha Agarwal served in the role of Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor to boost civic engagement among New Yorkers and build DemocracyNYC's efforts on immigration, disability and healthcare. Agarwal served as Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, building landmark initiatives like IDNYC, the City's municipal identification card, and Cities for Action, a national advocacy coalition of local elected officials. Prior to joining the Administration, Agarwal, the daughter of immigrants, worked with the Chief



*Nisha Agarwal served in the role of Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor to boost civic engagement among New Yorkers. Also seen in the picture right is NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio who announced her nomination*

Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit to establish the Immigrant Justice Corps, a nonprofit that pairs recent law school graduates with non-profit legal services providers to offer free legal representation to immigrants. Agarwal was also the co-founder the Center for Popular Democracy and served as its Deputy Director. Agarwal is a graduate of Harvard College, Oxford University, and Harvard Law School.

## Indian American Anuradha's Song Nominated for Radio Mirchi Award

**BOSTON (TIP):** Two of the top five nominees for the best song of the year for the Radio Mirchi Music Awards, the Indian equivalent of the Grammys, in the Non-Film/Independent category are from Anuradha Palakurthi's Jaan Meri Album, Boston-based music and video production company Juju Productions announced.

Ustad Nishat Khan, a scion of one of the oldest Gharanas of Hindustani music and one of the top sitar players in the world, composed the album Jaan Meri. Lyrics were written by Bollywood's Manoj Yadav. The album was officially released in March 2019 at MIT's Kresge Auditorium in Cambridge, MA.

"We are very excited that not one but two songs from the Jaan Meri Album are among the top five nominations for a Radio Mirchi award," said Manisha Jain, CEO of Juju Productions, which produced the Jaan Meri album. "We think Anuradha is the first Indian singer from outside India and definitely the first Indian-American singer to be in the top five for this prestigious award."

The annual Radio Mirchi awards are the highest recognition of music in India, and this is the first time that two songs from one album have found a place in the top 5 - and also one of the rare



*Anuradha has been recognized as the top-rated singer of Indian origin by industry legends*

occasions of an American citizen's work featuring amongst the best.

"It is heartwarming to have two songs picked by a jury of great musicians and it is a tribute to the exceptional composition of the maestro Ustad Nishat Khan. We made this album as a labor of love," said Indian-American singer Anuradha Palakurthi. "I am particularly gratified that our usage of the old-world method of recording a live

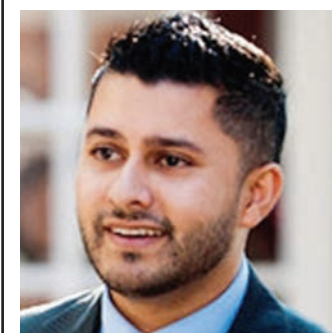
band of 70+ musicians was recognized. I thank all those musicians and the recording team of Vijay Dayal and Kamlesh Bhadkamkar."

Ms. Jain said that grand awards ceremony is scheduled for Feb. 19, 2020 in Mumbai, India.

"Be prepared to see and cheer some local faces in the audience of the grand awards ceremony planned for Feb 19 in Mumbai. This will be covered by live TV, details of which we will share soon," said Ms. Jain. "I would like to thank Radio Mirchi for recognizing the work of Independent musicians who are creating content in non-film channels - and am so delighted that our first Album has been recognized amongst the best. Onward we march."

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

## Indian American Assemblyman Raj Mukherji Elected as Head of New Jersey City Judiciary Committee



*Assemblyman Mukherji is the first Indian-Bengali state legislator in the United States*

**TRENTON, NJ (TIP):** Indian American Assemblyman Raj Mukherji has been elected as the Chairperson of the Assembly Judiciary Committee of New Jersey City by Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-Middlesex).

Mukherji represents the 33rd Legislative District (Hudson County) in the New Jersey Legislature. He is a former Deputy Mayor of Jersey City and former Sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve. In the private sector, he is a lawyer and healthcare investor and was previously an information technology CEO.

In the Assembly, he sits on the Budget Committee, responsible for crafting the state budget (approximately \$33 billion in FY 2015), as well as the Commerce and Economic Development and Labor Committees.

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



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# Curran Awards Grants to Seven Municipalities to Advance Transit-Oriented Development Projects

*New funding initiative provides more than one million dollars for downtown development projects across the County*

**LONG BEACH, NY (TIP):** Furthering her support for downtown revitalizations and the development of walkable, mixed-use communities near public transit, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran announced the winners of the County's first Transit-Oriented Development funding competition for qualified local municipalities. Allocating a total of \$1,050,000 dollars for this funding initiative, Curran established the new grant program with the Nassau County Office of Community Development in October of 2019 which received a robust response and competitive applications. Seven municipalities including the City of Long Beach, Town of North Hempstead, Village of Freeport, Town of Oyster Bay, Village of Farmingdale, Town of Hempstead and Village of Hempstead, will each be awarded \$150,000 for specific transit-oriented development projects.

The available funding is part of the



federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program received by Nassau County through an annual allocation. This initiative is intended to support overall project costs and

promote development that maximizes the amount of residential, business, and public open space within walking distance of public transportation, referred to as Transit-Oriented

Development (TOD).

"Throughout the County, several communities have already championed and embraced our model of Nassau County as a place to 'live, work, play' with revitalized, walkable downtowns near transit," said Nassau County Executive Laura Curran. "With the growth of our Main Street business districts comes the need for pedestrian safety improvements, traffic calming, parking access and more and I am proud to help ease these growing pains for several communities with these strategic investments. We must continue to capitalize on New York State's investments in the LIRR and push our towns, villages and local developers to build ideal destinations for commuters and residents that attract the next generation and boost our local economy."

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

# AAPI's 38th Annual Convention to be held in Chicago

*Over 2,500 delegates expected to attend Convention from June 24th to 28th, 2020*



**NEW YORK /CHICAGO (TIP):** "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. Suresh Reddy, President of AAPI, announced Feb 5.

"We are excited about the enthusiasm shown by the AAPI members from across the nation," said Dr. Reddy. "Over 2,500 attendees, delegates including Physicians, Academicians, Researchers and Medical students, along with guests are expected to gather at the 38th Annual AAPI

Convention in Chicago," he added.

"With the Early Bird Special Registration for the convention to end soon, we are seeing an increased interest among AAPI members to secure their seat at the convention," says Dr. Seema Arora, Chair of AAPI BOT. "Early Bird Registration fee for the delegates will be \$100 less than the regular rates. Also, one gets to pick your own choice of seats at the Galas as soon as you register for the convention."

Being organized by Chicago Chapter of AAPI, the convention offers unique opportunities for extensive academic presentations, recognition of achievement and professional networking at the alumni, cultural and social events.

A dedicated pool of Physicians, led by

Drs. Meher Medavaram, Convention Chair; Geetha Wadwani, President of IAMA, Chicago Host Chapter; Dr. Suneela Hunsoor, Convention Treasurer; Dr. Sreenivas Reddy, Convener; Niranjana Shah, Convention Co-Chair (IL) Region; Mohan Kishore Kesani (Convention Co-Chair (IN Region); Venkat Anne, Convention Co chair (WI Region); Anu Terkonda, Convention Co Chair (MO Region); and, Umang Patel: Senior Advisor; are working hard to make the convention a memorable experience for all. Acknowledging the generosity and dedication of the Convention Team members, Dr. Meher Medavaram said, "We have a fantastic group of people to meet the needs of the 2020 convention and are very



excited about the convention."

"We are eager to welcome the AAPI delegates to the Windy City" says Indian American Medical Association of Illinois (IAMA-IL) President Dr. Geeta Wadhwani.

Dr. Bharat Barai, the Chief Senior Advisor for the convention announced that top Indian and US leaders will be the keynote speakers at the convention.

In addition to offering over 12 hours of cutting edge CMEs to the physicians, the event will have several hours of product theaters/promotional opportunities, plenary sessions, CEOs Forum, and a Women's Leadership Forum. The convention will be addressed by senior world leaders, Nobel Laureates, and celebrities from the Hollywood and Bollywood world. (Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# 'Support New India' Hosts Republic Day Event in New Jersey

**SOMERSET, NJ (TIP):** After successful launch of "Support New India" in November 2019, their dedicated team and volunteers organized India's 71st Republic Day event at Vadtal Dham Swaminarayan Temple in Somerset, New Jersey on January 26, 2020, which was attended by more than 300 people. The colorful and patriotic event was witnessed by people of all ages.

The event started with American and Indian National Anthems sung by high school student Anika Patel and Umesh Patel, followed by addresses from Piyush Patel and Sridhar Chillara of Mana TV/TV 5 extended their wish for Republic Day and urged everyone to be apart of Support New India by becoming a member to strengthen our unity and your financial support or time to serve our mother land. The patriotic dance performances in colorful tri-color costumes from the very young children to youth age groups from Varsha Nayak's Navrang School of Dance and two talented duo Tarika and Tanvika were the main attractions for the entire program. The dance performances were applauded by all as the atmosphere became so patriotic with India flags on the stage and in the auditorium. Umesh Patel of Krish Entertainment and Dr. Tushar Patel mesmerized the audience with soulful patriotic songs.

Deepti Jani, President of Women Cell and entire team of dedicated women to include Dipti Vyas, Jayshri Vyas, Kalpana Parikh, Dimple Patel, Smita Gandhi extended their wish for Republic Day and Deepti Jani urged women to be part of this wonderful organization and provided information on sanitary napkins project to help women in India as part of women empowerment.

Rishi Patel of Youth Cell provided information on youth projects in India where they can be benefitted in their



education and future career. Dr. Tushar Patel provided information on health care projects to reduce gap and disparity in health care in rural and underprivileged individuals in India. Shilpa Patel, Sonal Raval and Jolly Patel provided organization information and

urged women to join the organization to support women projects in India.

Support New India also recognized individuals from the local community in New Jersey for their contributions in providing their self-less community services.

## State Of The City 2020: Mayor De Blasio Unveils Blueprint To Save Our City

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Mayor Bill de Blasio delivered his seventh State of the City Address on Thursday, Feb 6, unveiling his Administration's progressive vision to ensure New Yorkers can continue to call the city they love home. With two years left in his second term, the Mayor's blueprint to save our city will provide small businesses the support they need to survive, take meaningful steps to improve affordability, keep children at the center of his agenda, continue to drive down crime and traffic fatalities, and protect future generations from the catastrophic threat of climate change.

"New York City is the greatest city in the world, but many New Yorkers have real fears that the city they love is slipping away," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "From making Pre-K universal, to creating the safest big city in America, we have accomplished so much together, but we need to go much farther. We must make New York City easier to afford, protect the mom-and-pop businesses that make New York, New York, and hand this city back to the people who make it so great."

**Mayor de Blasio unveiled the following proposals as part of his 2020 agenda:**

### Saving Small Businesses

Small businesses are essential to the fabric of our city, and we are taking steps to provide the support they need to grow, thrive and survive. From cutting red tape and fines to providing resources for business owners to stay in their shops, we are committed to preventing the displacement of New York City's mom-and-pop shops. We aim to reach 28,000 businesses in need and will.

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

# Reading Gandhi with Residents inside Garden State Youth Correctional Facility

**PRINCETON, NJ (TIP):** Mark Edwards, a lecturer in religion in Princeton, leads a study group on Mahatma Gandhi with residents inside Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) in Crosswicks, New Jersey. Edwards will teach a spring freshman seminar using residents' writings and reflections drawn from this experience.

He will teach the spring freshman seminar "Imprisoned Minds: Religion and Philosophy from Jail," using writings from residents inside Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) in Crosswicks, New Jersey, where he recently led a study group on the ethics and actions of Mahatma



Edwards, also an adjunct professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, has held study groups inside GSYCF

Gandhi. The study group met weekly for six weeks. The program, "Discovering Gandhi in Prison," was part of the 2019 Being Human Festival, coordinated by the Humanities Council in partnership with the Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES)?.

Over the past few years, Edwards, also an adjunct professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, has held study groups inside GSYCF on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "Gulag Archipelago," Hannah Arendt's "The Origins of Totalitarianism," and the autobiographies of Malcolm X and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

(Courtesy - Princeton University)



By Manoj Joshi

The third pillar is the Indian judiciary. There was a time when the common belief was that the higher judiciary in the country made up for the infirmities of the lower one. Today, there are signs that like fish, the judiciary may be rotting from the head. The signs of this were evident in the unprecedented press conference of four Supreme Court sitting judges held two years ago, raising questions about the integrity of the institution. Since then, things have gone from bad to worse. The apex court has adopted a seemingly casual approach to the burning issues of the day, such as that of Kashmir or the anti-CAA violence and some of its judgments border on the bizarre.

AS I SEE IT

## SIGNS OF DECAY AROUND PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY

Of all the four pillars, the one that remains the least eroded till now is the armed forces, but not for the want of trying. Some military officers have not hesitated to be part of the process through which the military has been used to burnish the political credentials of the ruling party. There could be more trouble ahead.

Delivering the first Zorawar Singh Memorial Lecture at Jammu University in April 2004, the then Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant-General SK Sinha (ret'd) concluded by identifying the four pillars supporting the edifice of democracy in India - free elections, free press, independent judiciary and an apolitical army. "None of these pillars," the General said, "should be allowed to be corroded or unhinged for that will spell the doom of democracy."

Sixteen long years later, signs of decay and deterioration around the pillars are evident. The irony is that the General was principally addressing the role of the military in a democracy, but today, of the four, it is the military pillar that shows the least signs of corrosion.

There was a time till the 1980s when rigging in elections was not uncommon, especially in the badlands of the Hindi-speaking belt, West Bengal or Jammu and Kashmir. The man who cleaned up things, Chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan (1990-96) was able to do it because the authority of the dominant ruling part of the time, the Congress, had visibly declined. Massive security and multi-phase elections became the norm as did a massive crackdown on visible election expenditure.

With a new dominant party in control, the story of today can perhaps be simply summed up by the efforts of the government, returned to power with a clear majority last year, to harass Ashok Lavasa, one of the three election commissioners. His stance, sometimes at variance with those of his two other colleagues, has irked. But his real 'crime' was to refuse the clean chit to the BJP's top leaders in relation to some of their controversial election speeches. Income tax investigations were initiated within months of the new government taking power against five members of his family, including his wife. As per the norms, Lavasa is on track to be the Chief Election Commissioner when the current incumbent retires.

There is, of course, another story to be told about the electoral bonds scheme. Created to deal with black money, it has proved to be the legal channel ostensibly through which the ruling BJP has received massive funds from individuals and corporates.

The decline in the quality of journalism has been most manifest in these years. But the ruling BJP is only partly responsible for it. The blame must fall on the media itself, which, to paraphrase LK Advani's memorable description of the press during the Emergency, is crawling, when it has been



*Expectations: What the citizens are looking for from the court is a sharp attention to the protection of their rights and not homilies on their duties.*

merely asked to bend.

It is not as if there is no good journalism or scoops today. The problem is that the social media, along with a number of noisy TV channels, drown out the impact of a major revelation, sometimes simply by using fake news. Media entities close to the ruling party are known to generate fake news on an industrial scale to swamp readers and viewers. They work along their own version of Gresham's Law where shoddy news drives out the good.

The third pillar is the Indian judiciary. There was a time when the common belief was that the higher judiciary in the country made up for the infirmities of the lower one. Today, there are signs that like fish, the judiciary may be rotting from the head.

The signs of this were evident in the unprecedented press conference of four Supreme Court sitting judges held two years ago, raising questions about the integrity of the institution.

Since then, things have gone from bad to worse. The apex court has adopted a seemingly casual approach to the burning issues of the day, such as that of Kashmir or the anti-CAA violence and some of its judgments border on the bizarre.

In the case of Kashmir, a state of the Union has been bifurcated, demoted, and an Article of the Constitution relating to its autonomy removed through legal sleight of hand. Yet, the court is still in the process of hearing the petitions five months later while the new UT remains in a state of lockdown.

Speaking at a university function in Nagpur recently, Chief Justice of India SA Bobde echoed Prime Minister Modi's

call that citizenship is not just about rights, but also about 'duties towards society.' What the citizens are looking for from the court is a sharp attention to the protection of their rights, rather than homilies on their duties.

Of all the four pillars, the one that remains the least eroded till now is the armed forces, but not for the want of trying. Some military officers have not hesitated to be part of the process through which the military has been used to burnish the political credentials of the ruling party.

There could be more trouble ahead. Over the years, the country had developed a system where politicians and the military men stayed confined to their respective spheres. The politicians, with the help of bureaucrats, gave broad policy directions, approved promotions and sanctioned expenditure, while the military focused on its operational role. An important element of this compact was that promotion at the seniormost level was by seniority. All this went out with the appointment of General Bipin Rawat as the Army Chief, where two senior and highly regarded officers were superseded.

That the Indian democracy is under severe stress is now widely accepted around the world. Things do not look good as the ruling party pushes a majoritarian agenda with a view to polarize the electorate. Every country's fate eventually rests in the hands of its citizens. It remains to be seen how the good people of India deal with what is most certainly an existential challenge.

*(The author is Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi)*



# A sneeze, a global cold and testing times for China



By Rakesh Sood

*For Beijing, the coronavirus outbreak is more than a health crisis; it is a credibility challenge, domestically and globally*

**The first official acknowledgement of a new virus outbreak in Wuhan came on December 31 after an outbreak was confirmed. During the past four weeks, the number of those infected and fatal casualties have climbed rapidly. Cases have been reported from different parts of China as well as Hong Kong; cases/suspected cases have been reported from Thailand, Japan, Nepal, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, the United States, France, Austria, Germany, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. However, about 4,000 Chinese from Wuhan are reported to be still abroad. For India, the most critical is cases being reported in Nepal since India and Nepal share an open border though so far, all tests undertaken in India have been negative.**

The Year of the Rat has begun on an inauspicious note for China. A new virus belonging to the Coronavirus family (now named novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV) has claimed over 200 lives in China and the numbers infected have touched 10,000 confirmed cases, as on Friday. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it a global emergency, as the outbreak continues to spread outside China. On January 25, China's President Xi Jinping convened a meeting of the top leadership to underline the seriousness of the outbreak. Chinese authorities have been directed to take whatever steps are needed on an emergency footing to deal with "a grave public health crisis". However, for Mr. Xi, it is more than a public health crisis; it is a credibility challenge, with both domestic and global dimensions.

## At the epicenter

Ironically, the epicenter of the outbreak is the bustling town of Wuhan, China, which also hosts a number of biotech enterprises. Early on, many of the patients in Wuhan are reported to have had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to such markets, which shows that person-to-person spread is occurring.

Normally, coronaviruses is a large family of viruses that are often the source of respiratory infections, including the common cold. Most of the viruses are common among animals and only a small number infect humans. Sometimes, an animal-based coronavirus mutates and successfully finds a human host. Rapid urbanization that forces animals and humans into closer proximity (as in the "wet market" in Wuhan) creates a perfect petri dish from where such zoonotic outbreaks can originate.

The first official acknowledgement of a new virus outbreak in Wuhan came on December 31 after an outbreak was confirmed. During the past four weeks, the number of those infected and fatal casualties have climbed rapidly. Cases have been reported from different parts of China as well as Hong Kong; cases/suspected cases have been reported from Thailand, Japan, Nepal, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, the United States, France, Austria, Germany, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. However, about 4,000 Chinese from Wuhan are reported to be still abroad. For India, the most critical is cases being reported in Nepal since India and Nepal share an open border though so far, all tests undertaken in India have been negative. A tweet by



the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on January 30 said that one positive case of a novel coronavirus patient - a student studying in Wuhan University, has been reported in Kerala. The patient, who is in isolation in a hospital, is stable and being closely monitored.

## Decoding the new virus

According to the World Health Organization, during previous outbreaks due to other coronavirus, human-to-human transmission occurred through droplets, contact and fomites (objects or materials which are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, utensils, and furniture), suggesting that the transmission mode of the 2019-nCoV can be identical. More significant is the new understanding that the virus is contagious even during incubation, that is even before a patient exhibits any symptoms. This characteristic amplifies transmissibility. It also explains the travel bans across China, and the literal isolation of Wuhan, a city of 11 million and the Hubei province with a population of nearly 60 million.

For China, the timing of the outbreak could not be worse. The Chinese Lunar New Year began on January 24 and normally, it marks a week-long holiday, marked by feasting and travel by large numbers to join their families for the celebrations. Undoubtedly, this movement contributed to the rapid transmission of the disease across China and to many countries before the Chinese authorities cracked down.

Holidays across the country have been extended by three days till February 2 in an effort to stagger the returns. Starbucks and McDonalds have temporarily shut down outlets in Hubei; in Shanghai, Disneyland and in Beijing, the Forbidden City are closed; a number of temple celebrations have been called off to prevent large-scale gatherings. In Shanghai, businesses have extended the holiday period till February 10, except for supermarkets, medical suppliers and public utilities. Hong Kong has drastically cut travel between the mainland and the city.

## An earlier outbreak

Comparisons are being drawn the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2002-03 which infected around 8,000 patients and claimed nearly 800 lives. SARS is also a zoonotic case, part of the coronavirus family with clues pointing to horseshoe bats in China as the likely source. The first incidents were reported in Guangdong province in November 2002 but WHO was officially informed only after three months though mysterious flu outbreaks were being widely reported. It quickly became more than a public health issue and later, the Chinese health authorities issued a public apology. It was the first case of a coronavirus family virus developing lethal pathogenicity together with high transmission. The global economic loss was estimated at between \$30-\$100 billion.

## Reduce your risk of coronavirus infection:

Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub

Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow

Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms

Thoroughly cook meat and eggs

Avoid unprotected contact with live wild or farm animals



This time round, the Chinese government has been more open but the question being asked is whether it has been open enough? The response mechanisms, especially in the early days, evidently fell short, reflective of the 'top down' bureaucratic approach of the Chinese system. The system has kicked in now with the all-of-government approach which characterizes the China model. This is embarrassing for the "core leader" Mr. Xi, the author of 'China's rejuvenation' who replaced Deng Xiaoping's advice of "hide your capability, bide your time" with the mantra "demonstrate capability, assume responsibility and claim rightful place", implying that China's time has come. How China manages this challenge will be a test, demonstrating that the Chinese model can deliver when it comes to a crunch and that it is a responsible global player, no longer hesitant about engaging with WHO. For SARS, it took 20 months from the genome sequencing to the first human vaccine trials; for the 2019-nCoV, authorities in the U.S. are working on a deadline of 90 days.

## Lessons from Kerala

All this provides an interesting contrast with how the Kerala government dealt with the Nipah virus outbreak in May 2018. Nipah is also zoonotic and made the jump from fruit bats to humans. Though there were 17 deaths in India, effective quarantine measures by local authorities prevented the spread. It helped that health is a state subject. A local doctor took the initiative to contact the Manipal Centre for Virus Research which had worked in the northeast (where Nipah is more prevalent and a 2001 outbreak in Siliguri had claimed 49 lives) and had the diagnostic tools to identify the virus. The State health machinery responded with alacrity with many put under observation. No new case was reported after June and a month later, Kerala was declared Nipah-free and travel restrictions removed. Had the district and State authorities not taken the initiative and only reported matters to Delhi and awaited instructions while Delhi sent teams to prepare plans, the outbreak would have taken a higher toll.

Kerala managed to curtail the Nipah outbreak with few casualties. However, infectious diseases including those of the zoonotic variety are on the rise in India. In addition, regions in India suffer from seasonal outbreaks of dengue, malaria and influenza strains. The nation-wide disease surveillance programme needs to be strengthened.

There is an acute shortage of epidemiologists, microbiologists and entomologists which translates into wasteful delays in diagnostics. Given the growth potential of India's biotech sector, it is time to put in place a robust public-private partnership model that can transform the health services sector in the country, covering disease surveillance, diagnostic kit availability and accelerated vaccine development.

*(The author is a former diplomat and currently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation)*

## Saudi cold to Pak attempt at anti-India meet

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's bid to call an immediate meeting on Kashmir by Saudi-led Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) seems to have failed after Riyadh showed reluctance to the move, according to a Pakistani media report on Feb 6. In December, there were plans to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers of the OIC on Kashmir by Saudi Arabia, in an apparent move by the kingdom to please Pakistan which skipped a recent summit of Muslim nations in Malaysia seen by Riyadh as an attempt to create a new bloc to replace the 57-member grouping led by it. The report by Dawn News came ahead of the bloc's senior officials' meeting in Jeddah on February 9 to make preparations for the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). Islamabad's feeling of unease with the OIC over its failure to get the CFM's meeting appears to be growing, as Riyadh has been showing reluctance to convene the meeting on Kashmir. — PTI

## Man who shot Malala escapes

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's spokesperson Ehsanullah Ehsan, who shot Malala Yousafzai and carried out the Peshawar school terror attack, has escaped from an Army jail in Pakistan.

In an audio recording released via an online private messaging platform, Ehsanullah claimed that he has succeeded in escaping on January 11. — IANS

## Nepal PM Oli plans 2nd kidney transplant

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on February 5 said he was planning to undergo a second kidney transplant as it was a better option than undergoing regular dialysis. Oli, 67, underwent kidney transplant in India in 2007 after both his kidneys failed. He has been visiting hospitals abroad for health check-up ever since. Interacting with editors of major dailies of Nepal, Oli said that he was planning to have another kidney transplant. "After that I would be strong enough to run the government for remaining three years of my tenure," he said. PTI

## Lanka drops Tamil anthem from I-Day celebrations

COLOMBO (TIP): For the first time since 2016, there will be no Tamil national anthem at the 72nd Independence Day celebrations in Sri Lanka and it will only be rendered in Sinhalese, the government announced on Monday, amply demonstrating the administration's priority for the majority Sinhala community. The then Sri Lankan government in 2015 started including the Tamil national anthem as a means of achieving reconciliation with the Tamil minority community. PTI

# Nawaz Sharif's cardiac treatment delayed twice due to daughter's absence in London: Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's treatment has been delayed twice as his daughter Maryam was not permitted to be with him in London, according to media reports on Wednesday.

In a statement, Leader of Opposition in the Pakistan National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif said his elder brother's health was critical and the Pakistan government on humanitarian grounds should allow Maryam to be with her father.

"As Nawaz's health is (raising) concern, the margin for medical action is reducing as more time passes," Shehbaz was quoted as saying by Dawn News. Shehbaz said cardiologists had twice changed dates for the 69-year-old ex-prime minister's cardiac catheterisation.

He said Sharif's wife Kulsoom's death had negatively affected his health, Express Tribune reported.

Kulsoom died of multiple health complications in London in 2018.

Sharif left for London on November 19 in an air ambulance to seek medical treatment, a month after he was released



on bail from a seven-year prison sentence for corruption.

The PML-Nawaz supremo is undergoing treatment for multiple diseases including coronary artery disease (CAD).

The CAD is the narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries due to which the heart does not receive the blood it needs, leading to acute chest pain and, in some cases, a fatal heart attack.

Maryam, 46, was placed on a no-fly list in August 2018. Citing her father's health condition in London, Maryam filed a petition before the Lahore High Court for removal of her name from the Exit

Control List (ECL) and the return of her passport.

Maryam's name is in the ECL since she was convicted in the Avenfield corruption case in 2018.

She is also accused of money laundering. The PML-N vice-president was arrested by the country's anti-corruption bureau on August 8 last year in a case pertaining to "shady business transactions" at Chaudhry Sugar Mills, where she is a major shareholder.

A photograph of Sharif at a London restaurant with some family members went viral on social media early last month, leading to speculation on the former prime minister's "serious" health condition.

End of last month, the Punjab government asked Sharif to submit supporting reports on his application seeking extension of his stay abroad.

The Punjab provincial home department, in a letter to Sharif, said a medical board had found the reports submitted by Sharif's counsel Khawaja Haris on December 23 to be insufficient to form a conclusive opinion and sought fresh records. — PTI

## Will buy more Malaysian palm oil to compensate for India's import ban: Pak

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday thanked Mahathir Mohamad for "speaking up" on the Kashmir issue and promised to do his best to buy more Malaysian palm oil to "compensate" it after India restricted the import of the commodity from the country amid a diplomatic row.

"You have spoken for the justice for Kashmiris, for which we are thankful," Khan said during a joint press conference with his Malaysian counterpart Mahathir.

"We noticed that India threatened Malaysia for supporting the Kashmir cause by cutting their palm oil import, Pakistan will do its best to compensate for that," he was quoted as saying by the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan.

Indonesia and Malaysia are the two countries which supply palm oil. Malaysia produces 19 million tonnes of palm oil in a year, while Indonesia produces 43 million tonnes, according to trade data.

India, the world's largest importer of vegetable oils, buys nearly 15 million tonnes annually. Pakistan bought 1.08 million tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia in 2019, while India bought 4.4 million tonnes, according to the Malaysian Palm Oil Council.

The Indian government has imposed restrictions on imports of refined palm oil, a move which could discourage the inbound shipment of the commodity from Malaysia. — PTI



**We noticed that India threatened Malaysia for supporting the Kashmir cause by cutting their palm oil import. Pakistan will do its best to compensate for that. Imran Khan, Pakistan Prime Minister**

## International Criminal Court gathering evidence of Rohingya genocide

DHAKA (TIP): Investigators from the International Criminal Court have begun collecting evidence for a case involving alleged crimes against humanity by Myanmar against Rohingya Muslims, causing them to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, a court official said.

Phakiso Mochochoko, director of the Jurisdiction, Complementary and Cooperation Division of the ICC Office of the Prosecutor, said a team of investigators is visiting Rohingya refugee camps to collect evidence. He said justice will be delivered whether Myanmar cooperates or not.

Mochochoko told reporters in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka that The Hague-based court would pursue the case even though Myanmar was not a party to the Rome Statute, the treaty that established it. Myanmar has denied committing crimes against humanity or genocide.

He said the court had a mandate to proceed with the case because Bangladesh was a party to the statute and the Rohingya crossed the border into that country. He acknowledged that the investigation would be a long and difficult one without Myanmar's participation.

He said the investigators will talk to Rohingya refugees as well as witnesses in other countries.

He thanked Bangladesh for its support. More than 7,00,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh after Myanmar security forces launched a crackdown on the Muslim minority in August 2017. Bangladesh currently houses over 1 million Rohingya refugees. — AP

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# Federation of Indian Associations Chicago celebrates India's 71st Republic day & hosts the largest Health Fair event in Midwest

**"Only a life lived for others is a life lived worthwhile..." - Albert Einstein.**

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):**Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of Chicago celebrated India's 71st Republic Day & hosted one of the largest Healthcare Fair Event on Saturday, Jan 25th, 2020, at Rana Reagan Community Center at Carol Stream, IL.

FIA Chicago is a 501 (c)(3) status, non-profit umbrella organization of other Indian Associations in the Chicago land and Mid-West representing in excess of 300,000 culturally diverse but united together Asian-Indians.

Keeping its past 10 year long tradition of serving the community, following its mantra, of 'United We Stand' and 'We Serve!', FIA Chicago, successfully hosted its yearly Healthcare Fair Event on the occasion of India's Republic Day. In spite of all of us being away from our own homeland, we were blessed to be able to celebrate this very special day, when India officially got its Constitution on Jan 26, 1950, and the spirit of India with the same enthusiasm and excitement, in the country that we love and have now embraced as our home.

Over 600 people attended and availed the services provided; including 100 plus blood testing was done. One can imagine how popular this event is amongst our senior citizens, just by looking at the registration lines which started forming at 8:30am, a half hour earlier, then the scheduled start time of 9:00am. But Team FIA was ready to welcome the guests and the service providers and medical Camp personnel since 8:00am. Pratibha Jairath, Sonia Luther, Richa Chand, Vineeta Gulabani, Varsha Visal, Hema Shastri, Dr Kamal Patel, Vaishal Talati, Sunil Shah, Neil Khot, Gurmeet Singh Dhalwan, Ninad Daftari, Shital Daftari,



*Federation of Indian Associations Chicago celebrates India's 71st Republic day. FIA board, members and invited guest*

Anu Malhotra & Bharat Malhotra, Ruchi Dabral, Bharatbhai, Haribhai and several volunteers from BSC group were seen receiving and greeting the doctors and service providers and the other guests as well, and helping fill out with Patient registration forms, and finding their designated spots & booths. FIA leadership Team, led by Sunil Shah, Gurmeet Singh Dhalwan, Neil Khot were seen visiting each and every booth, and greeting and thanking them for their support.

In this event, between 9:00am to 12:00pm, for the Healthcare Fair section of the program, Medical Camp (Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Dentist, Phlebotomy Blood Draws, Alternate Medicine Homeopathy /Ayurveda, Nutritionist & Dietician, Registered Nurse Practitioners consultations, Scans/Imaging, Blood Glucose &

Cholesterol tests, Back and Shoulder Massage Treatment), Passport and Visa Counseling and Guidance Services, Tax Consultation, Social Security, Yoga/Meditation, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Medicare Benefits & Community Services were provided. Food & snacks were also provided to the attending guests. This was a FREE event with no charges or costs to the guests.

A Special Educational Lecture series presented by the specialists was also a part of the Healthcare Fair Event this year. Topics & presenters included: Cardiology - Dr Paul Nguyen, Dietician - Shweta Sheth, Deepti Singh Suri, Homeopathy - Vidya Joshi, Yoga/Meditation - Anu Malhotra.

With high spirits and keeping the 'Josh High!' as well, Republic Day Cultural Program, began promptly at 12:00pm, enthusiastically hosted by the Masters of

Ceremony Richa Chand & Varsha Visal. There were presentations of US National anthem (by Malavika Gopal) and Indian National anthem (by Pushpaben Parikh), followed by a beautifully choreographed patriotic Welcome Dance, "Ae Watan" (choreography by Sridevi Ram Pandalai, and performers were: Sarirha Srijith, Nisha Roy, Prathiba Varun, Swetha JayaPrakash, Sandra Suresh).

A beautiful Lamp Lighting ceremony was performed by the dignitaries present at the event, Sunil Shah, Founder President of FIA Chicago, Chief Guest, Consul General Sudhakar Dalela, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Onkar Singh Sangha, Founder & Past President, Gurmeet Singh Dhalwan, President 2020, Smt. Prem Kaur, Mother to Incoming President 2020,

*contd on Page 32*

## *Leila Janah, CEO and entrepreneur who wanted to end global poverty, dies at 37*



*Leila Janah was the founder and CEO of artificial intelligence data company Samasource. Photo / courtesy Samasource*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA (TIP):** Leila Janah, a social entrepreneur who poured her energy into creating job opportunities for the world's poorest communities, has died at 37, Samasource, the artificial intelligence company founded by Janah said.

Samasource confirmed that she passed away on January 24 due to complications from epithelioid sarcoma, a rare soft-tissue cancer.

Janah was born in upstate New York and raised in a suburb of Los Angeles by her Indian parents. In 2008, she founded Samasource in Kenya with the mission to improve the lives of those living below the poverty line.

The company employs more than 2,900 people in Kenya, Uganda and India, creating data for companies around the

world that need to test numerous artificial intelligence products, including self-driving cars and smart hardware.

The company has helped more than 50,000 people lift themselves out of poverty and has become one of the largest employers in East Africa, according to Samasource's website.

"Leila spearheaded a global impact sourcing movement and was a champion for environmental sustainability and ending global poverty," the company said.

Besides Samasource, Janah was the founder and CEO of LXMI, a fair-trade, organic skin care company, and Samaschool, a non-profit organization that trains people in digital skills.

Before founding Samasource, Janah

was a visiting scholar with Stanford University's Program on Global Justice and Australian National University's Center for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics.

"We will miss Leila's infectious laugh, her tenacious spirit, and her ability to inspire all she encountered to be a force for good in the world," the statement said.

Following Janah's death, Wendy Gonzalez, the company's chief operating officer, was named interim CEO of Samasource. The longtime business partner and friend of Janah spent the past five years working "to craft Samasource's vision and strategy."

Janah is survived by her husband, Tassilo, and her stepdaughter, the company said.

# Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu Presented his Credentials to President Trump



Ambassador Sandhu being welcomed by Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of India in New York, on his arrival at JFK Airport, en route to Washington. Photo /Jay Mandal-on assignment



Ambassador Sandhu in his office after assuming charge on February 3. Photo / Courtesy Embassy of India

## CONT FROM PAGE 1

President Trump warmly welcomed Ambassador Sandhu back to Washington DC and wished him every success in his responsibilities as India's Ambassador to the United States. The President fondly recalled his friendship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and their several interactions.

Ambassador Sandhu conveyed warm greetings from the President and the Prime Minister of India to President Trump and the First Lady. Ambassador Sandhu also added that the vision and guidance provided by Prime Minister Modi and President Trump in the last three years have moved India and the United States towards greater strategic convergence. Ambassador Sandhu affirmed his commitment to work towards strengthening strategic partnership between India and the United States, which is anchored in mutual trust and friendship, democratic values and people-to-people

ties.

Earlier, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's Ambassador, designate to Washington was welcomed by Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, India's Consul General to New York at John F. Kennedy Airport on February 3 when Ambassador Sandhu arrived in New York, en route to Washington. Earlier, Taranjit Singh Sandhu assumed charge as India's new Ambassador to the United States on February 3, 2020. Upon his arrival, he was given a warm welcome by the Deputy Ambassador, Amit Kumar, and other senior officials at the Indian Embassy. He succeeds Harsh Vardhan Shringla who became India's new foreign secretary on Jan 29. Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu is one of the most experienced Indian diplomats on US affairs, having served in the Indian Mission in Washington DC twice earlier. He was Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in Washington DC from July 2013 to

January 2017. Earlier, he was First Secretary (Political) at the Embassy of India, Washington, DC responsible for liaison with the United States Congress from 1997 to 2000. He has also been at the Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York from July 2005 to February 2009.

Prior to his current assignment in Washington DC, Ambassador Sandhu was High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka from January 2017 to January 2020. He had also served at the High Commission of India, Colombo earlier as the Head of the Political Wing from December 2000 to September 2004. Ambassador Sandhu was Consul General of India in Frankfurt from September 2011 to July 2013. He has worked in the Ministry of External Affairs in various capacities: as Joint Secretary (United Nations) from March 2009 to August 2011; and later as Joint Secretary (Administration) heading the Human Resource Division. He was Officer on

Special Duty (Press Relations), Ministry of External Affairs from December 1995 to March 1997, and was responsible for liaison with foreign media in India.

In a distinguished career spanning over thirty years in the Indian Foreign Service since 1988, Ambassador Sandhu started his diplomatic career from former Soviet Union (Russia) where he worked as Third Secretary (Political) / Second Secretary (Commercial) in the Indian Mission from 1990 to 1992. Following the breakup of Soviet Union, he was sent to open a new Embassy in Ukraine. He served as Head of Political and Administration Wings in Indian Embassy in Kiev from 1992 to 1994.

Born on 23 January 1963 in a family of educationists, Ambassador Sandhu studied at The Lawrence School, Sanawar and graduated with History Honors from St. Stephens' College, Delhi. He pursued a Master's Degree in International Relations at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## Seattle City Council Passes Resolution against India's CAA and NRC

SEATTLE, WA (TIP): Indian American Councilmember Kshama Sawant (District 3, Central Seattle), South Asian community members, and activists celebrated the passage of a historic Seattle City Council resolution denouncing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) enacted by the government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India.

Seattle City Council is believed to be the first legislative body in the United States to take a stance on the CAA and NRC, which have resulted in mass protests and strike actions throughout India since the CAA passed in December 2019.

Sawant's resolution explains that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "right-wing government published an updated NRC, requiring nearly two million people in the northeastern state of Assam to prove with documentary evidence their Indian citizenship or face detention at mass prisons and detention camps that the Indian government has begun to build and fill."

The resolution further explains that together, the NRC and CAA threaten to strip hundreds of millions of



The resolution was introduced by Indian American City Council member Kshama Sawant,

Muslim people, poor people, and marginalized communities of their Indian Citizenship and all democratic rights, and placing large numbers in detention camps and prisons, as already seen in the state of Assam.

"The National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act by the BJP and Modi regime bear frightening similarities to the early Nuremberg laws of

the Third Reich in 1930's Germany," said Councilmember Sawant.

"Progressives in America fighting against Trump's bigoted, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant agenda need to be linked with the global fightback against the far right," continued Sawant. "This resolution is in solidarity with the courageous youth protests in India, and with the 250 million workers and farmers who walked out on January 8 in the largest-ever one-day general strike in global history, to protest not only the dangerous anti-Muslim and anti-Dalit policies of the far-right BJP government, but also the economic devastation wrought by intensified corruption, rampant privatization and neoliberal policies, and unprecedented inequality." "We welcome the Seattle City Council's resolution denouncing the divisive and draconian CAA and NRC. These acts are unconstitutional and designed to disenfranchise several million Muslim, Dalits and other minorities in order to create a fascist state," said Javed Sikander, spokesperson for the Seattle chapter of the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC).

contd on Page 32

# Delhi election campaigning ends, parties make final push to seek votes

Deepak Dwivedi

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Marked by the BJP aggressively raising the anti-CAA protests in Shaheen Bagh as a poll issue, the AAP hardselling development and the Congress conspicuous by its near absence, the bitter, often divisive and vitriolic campaign for the Delhi elections ended on Thursday (Feb 6).

In their final electioneering push, the three key parties made last ditch efforts to seek votes and slugged it out over issues ranging from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, appeasement politics and unemployment.

The campaign that lasted for over three weeks ended at 6 pm on Thursday, just 38 hours before the start of voting for the high-stakes Delhi assembly election.

There are 672 candidates in fray for 70 Assembly seats. Over 1.47 crore total voters in various categories include males (81,05,236), females (66,80,277), service voters (11,608), third gender voters (869), and senior citizens (aged 80 and above) voters (2,04,830), according to Delhi CEO Office.

On the last day of the campaign, Home Minister Amit Shah took out three roadshow at Seelampur in northeast Delhi, and Hari Nagar and Madipur in west Delhi.

"During the elections (campaigning), got a chance to communicate with Delhi people. Delhi is suffering from anarchy and needs development. It is clear from the support for the BJP in Delhi that the party is going to form the government by winning more than 45 seats on February 11," Shah asserted.

BJP president J P Nadda also took out two roadshows in Nangloi Jat and Mangolpuri in northwest Delhi while Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia did a 'padayatra' (walk) in his Patparganj constituency in east Delhi.

Speeches and tweets with communal undertones, and poll claims that violated the Model Code of Conduct kept the poll authorities on their toes all through the campaign. The BJP, which started the campaign with a focus on the development work done by the Centre for the national capital, took a sharp turn and made Shaheen Bagh, the epicentre of anti-CAA protest in southeast Delhi, its main poll plank.

The saffron party's campaign saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi address two rallies while Shah addressed many more. Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also in full throttle over the Shaheen Bagh protest and attacked the Congress and the AAP.

The BJP till Wednesday had organised 5,239 campaigning events, said Praveen Shankar Kapoor, co-convenor of the Delhi BJP's media team for election said. This includes two rallies by Modi.

Shah covered 60 constituencies that comprised 'nukkad sabhas', road shows, workers meet, while Nadda criss-crossed across all 70 constituencies, Kapoor added.

Apart from its MPs and MLAs, the BJP also roped in chief ministers of party-ruled states -- Vijay Rupani (Gujarat), Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), N Biren Singh (Manipur), M L Khattar (Haryana),



Jairam Thakur (Himachal Pradesh) -- to canvass for its candidates.

The campaign got bitter when Union Minister Anurag Thakur, in a rally, egged the crowd to say 'shoot the traitors', and the party's West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma made a controversial statement on Shaheen Bagh.

Both Thakur and Verma were banned from campaigning for 72 and 96 hours respectively and also dropped from the party's star campaigner's list.

On Wednesday, Verma was again barred from campaigning while Adityanath was issued a show-cause notice on Thursday for his alleged 'biryani for terrorist' remarks.

BJP leader and its Model Town candidate Kapil Mishra was also banned from campaigning for 24 hours for his controversial tweets. On the other hand, AAP focused its campaign on development work done by its government.

In an interview to PTI, Kejriwal assured that the Delhi government's 'free schemes' will continue if AAP is voted back to power and also introduce more schemes if needed.

The entire AAP campaign, which started before the polls were announced, was piloted by Kejriwal. He addressed nearly 200 events that included road shows, public meetings and town halls. The AAP held silent marches against the BJP in all 70 constituencies for three days to protest against Verma's "terrorist" remarks.

The party also launched a door-to-door campaign, asking voters to support Kejriwal if they believed he is a "son of Delhi" and vote for the BJP if they feel he is a "terrorist". The Congress' campaign did not match the vigour of its opponents.

However, as polling day drew closer, the party jumped into action with former prime minister Manmohan Singh addressing a rally in Rajouri Garden on Tuesday while Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressed public meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Congress also fielded its chief ministers -- Amarinder Singh (Punjab), Bhupesh Baghel (Chhattisgarh) for canvassing.

As the campaign ended, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala claimed his party may spring a surprise in Delhi like it did in the elections in neighbouring Haryana last year.

BSP supremo Mayawati also campaigned on Monday for her party which has fielded 68 candidates in the Assembly polls. This time, both the Congress and the BJP have given seats to their allies. Canvassing votes for his party candidates in Sangam Vihar and Burari seats, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar targeted Kejriwal over his claims of development.

Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) has also fielded candidate from Seemapuri, and its leader Chirag Paswan campaigned for him as well as other NDA candidates.

While Rashtriya Janta Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav campaigned for its UPA ally as well for his party candidate from Palam, the Trinamool Congress is backing the AAP.

# Modi taunts Oppn, calls Rahul 'tubelight'; quotes Nehru to attack Cong on CAA, Kashmir

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday replied to the Motion of Thanks in the Lok Sabha. Acknowledging the criticism offered by MPs like Shashi Tharoor and Danish Ali, the prime minister said that he understands that the norm was to tread the traditional path. However, he added that the people voted for a change at the helm because not only did they want a new government but also a new ethos. "It is the time for those people, who love to tread the untrodden path," Modi said.

Continuing the allegory, Modi said that if the BJP government had continued on the same path as Congress, neither Section 370 would have gone away, nor would the government be able to outlaw the practice of triple talaq and ensure justice for Muslim women.

"Had we continued with the same thinking as Opposition, Ram Janmabhoomi would continue to be a disputed issue; had we continued on the Congress path, we would still be waiting for next generation fighter plane and the appointment of a Chief of Defence Scheme," Modi claimed, adding that the government was trying to think and work outside the box.

Replying to a debate on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, the prime minister said the people of the country have seen his government's work between 2014 and 2019 and gave a bigger mandate in 2019.

Modi further asserted that his government has worked with an increased momentum, because the country was tired of waiting for things to change. "People were wondering why is the government in a rush to change things around, but because we were working at a



high speed, people have given more power to us in these elections, to carry on with the same momentum," the prime minister added.

The prime minister also referred to the discussion over the Bru agreement and the Bodo Peace Accord signed by the Centre recently. Modi said, "People are reminding us that what happened in North East is nothing new. When did I ever say that it is a novel idea. It did happen before, only the intent was missing. Half-hearted attempts were made, which is why the efforts were never result driven. Now it is for the first time that the Bodo accord categorically mentions that all demands related to the Bodo issue, have been finally resolved." "Whatever was done earlier was for meeting political ends and hence it remained confined to papers," Modi added.

"For the North East, Delhi was

always a distant force, but in the past five years we have worked in a way that now Delhi is standing at the doorstep of North East," Modi said.

He also reserved some barbs for Rahul. Referring to his '6 mahine me Modi ko dande mareng' comment, the prime minister said, "I am thankful for the warning issued in advance — because it is a tough job, it takes time. But now, I will also increase the number of Surya Namaskars in my daily workout to strengthen my back to bear the burden of further such insults. In any case, I have been abused so much for the last two decades that their negativity hardly matters."

Rahul, at this point, rose to intervene, but the prime minister sent another retort his way and said, "I was speaking for the last 30-40 minutes but it took this long for the current to reach there. Many tube lights are like this."

## RIGHT TO INTERNET NOT FUNDAMENTAL: PRASAD

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Misconception about the right to Internet being a fundamental right needs to be cleared, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, emphasising that the country's security was equally important.

Communications, Information Technology Minister Prasad during the Question Hour said communication of ideas and views through Internet were part of fundamental right to speech and expressions.

"The Supreme Court has clearly stated that no lawyer argued that right to Internet is a fundamental right. This kind of misconception needs to be corrected. What the SC has stated is that for communication of your ideas and views the use of Internet will also to be held a part of your fundamental right of speech and expression," Prasad said in reply to a query. Prasad said no one could deny abuse of Internet for spreading violence and terrorism, and Pakistan had been doing it in Kashmir and ISIS prospered because of Internet.

## Omar, Mehbooba booked under PSA on last day of detention



**SRINAGAR (TIP):** Former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were on Thursday night booked under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), barely hours before their six-month-long "preventive detention" was to come to an end.

Earlier in the day, the PSA was also slapped on two political stalwarts from NC and its arch-rival PDP.

A magistrate accompanied by a police officer arrived at Hari Nivas where 49-year-old Omar has been detained since August 5, the day the Centre abrogated the special status of the erstwhile state and also announced its bifurcation into two union territories -- Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

He was handed over a warrant issued under the PSA, a law which was enacted by his grandfather Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah in 1978 initially to check timber smuggling.

The PSA, which came handy for police force to book separatists and militant sympathisers, has two sections -- 'public order' and 'threat to security of the state'. The former allows detention without trial for six months and the latter for two years.

Omar, who has been junior foreign minister and commerce minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led Cabinet in 2000, was served with a three-page dossier in which he was alleged to have made statements in the past which were "subversive" in nature.

Omar, who was the chief minister of the state from 2009 to 2014, rose to fame in 2008 with his famous five minute speech at Parliament when he, despite being in opposition, supported the Indo-US nuclear deal.

"I am a Muslim and I am an Indian," he said. "And I see no distinction between the two. I don't know why should I fear the nuclear deal. It is a deal between two countries which, I hope, will become two equals in the future," Omar had said and warned that the enemy of Indian Muslims was not America or deals like these.

Omar's father, Farooq Abdullah, was booked under the PSA in September last year which was reviewed again in December for a period of three months.

Similarly, the magistrate and a police officer visited Mehbooba Mufti at the government accommodation, which had been converted into a subsidiary jail, and was handed over the dossier in which her statements from 2010 were cited as reasons for keeping her in detention.

Mufti's PDP was an ally of the BJP from 2014 and the two had formed a government in the erstwhile state till 2018 when the BJP suddenly withdrew its support and governor's rule was imposed.

# PM talking of Nehru, Pak, but silent on main issue of unemployment: Rahul

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not talking about the main issue of unemployment and alleged that he was distracting people by talking about other things from Jawaharlal Nehru to Pakistan.

Hitting back at Modi after the prime minister replied to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in Lok Sabha, Gandhi said the biggest issue before the country is of unemployment and economy, on which the PM did not speak.

"All youngsters of this country want that after studies—school, college, university—they get



employment. We asked the prime minister repeatedly that you have given a one and a half hour speech and if for 2 minutes you can tell the youth about employment and what your government has done about it," he said.

"You would have seen, youngsters

saw, that the PM could not give a reply," the former Congress president said while speaking to reporters outside Parliament.

Earlier, the government used to talk about economy, Make in India, USD 5 trillion, but the prime minister now does not talk about the biggest issue facing the country and is distracting the people by talking about other things, ranging from the Congress and Nehru to Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Both the prime minister and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman have failed to reply on issues like providing employment to youth and putting the economy on the right track, Gandhi.

# NJSO 2020 - STAR WARS: Two Film Concerts

By Mabel Pais

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"Star Wars: The Force Awakens": Apr 17-19

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) presents "Star Wars: Return of the Jedi" February 7-9 and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," April 17-19, each in concert.

Since the release of the first "Star Wars" movie more than 40 years ago, the "Star Wars" saga has had a seismic impact on both cinema and culture, inspiring audiences around the world with its mythic storytelling, captivating characters, groundbreaking special effects and iconic musical scores composed by Williams.

The NJSO ([njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org)) performs "Star Wars: Return of the Jedi" in Concert on February 7 at 8 pm at the Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank ([thebasie.org](http://thebasie.org)), February 8 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm at NJPAC in Newark and February 9 at 3 pm at State Theatre New Jersey ([stnj.org](http://stnj.org)) in New Brunswick.

In the spectacular climactic sixth episode of the "Star Wars" saga, Darth Vader readies the second Death Star to unleash the final blow to the Rebel Alliance. Luke Skywalker joins R2-D2, C-3PO and Princess Leia to free Han Solo from Jabba the Hutt and launch a desperate attack upon the entire Imperial Fleet.

The Orchestra performs "Star Wars: The Force Awakens in Concert" on April 17 at 8 pm at the Count Basie Center for the Arts, April 18 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm at NJPAC and April 19 at 3 pm at State Theatre New Jersey.

Thirty years after the defeat of the Empire, Luke Skywalker has vanished, and a new threat has risen: The First Order, led by the mysterious Supreme Leader Snoke and his enforcer, Kylo Ren. General Leia Organa's military force, the Resistance and unlikely heroes brought together by fate are the galaxy's only hope. Constantine Kitsopoulos conducts.

## Tickets

A special double-feature deal is available for tickets to both films. Tickets for all dates and locations are available from the NJSO online at [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or in



NJSO/movie screen composite shot Photo / © 2018 & TM LUCASFILM LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © DISNEY

person at NJSO Patron Services or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

Tickets for the February 9 and April 19 performances are available from State Theatre New Jersey online at [STNJ.org](http://STNJ.org), or in person at State Theatre New Jersey Guest Services or by phone at 732.246.SHOW (7469).

For more information, visit [njsymphony.org/starwars](http://njsymphony.org/starwars).

State Theatre New Jersey co-presents the February 9 and April 19 performances.

## John Williams

In a career spanning over five decades, John Williams has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and for the concert stage, and he remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices. Williams has received five Academy Awards, 51 Oscar nominations, seven British Academy Awards, 24 Grammys, four Golden Globes and five Emmys. In 2016, he received the 44th Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute.

He has composed the music for more than 100 films, including all eight "Star Wars" films, the first three "Harry Potter" films, "Superman," and many more. His 45-year artistic partnership with director Steven Spielberg has resulted in many of Hollywood's most acclaimed and successful films, including "Schindler's List," "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," "Jaws," "Jurassic Park," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind, and more.

Williams composed themes for four Olympic Games. He served as music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra for 14 seasons and remains their laureate

conductor.

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Disney Concerts is the concert production and licensing division of Disney Music Group, the music arm of The Walt Disney Company. Disney Concerts produces concerts and tours and licenses Disney music and visual content to symphony orchestras and presenters on a worldwide basis.

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Music Director Xian Zhang-a "dynamic podium presence" "The New York Times" has praised for her "technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"-continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO.

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## NJPAC thrilling entertainment: Japan's drum tao 2020

By Mabel Pais

"The highly acclaimed debut of DRUM TAO in Broadway will represent not only Japanese entertainment but Japan itself" - **Newsweek**

"Extraordinarily talented percussion artists, and they're seductive, alluring performers." - **Chicago Tribune**

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Performers in Drum Tao 2020.

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

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DRUM TAO has been expanding worldwide and played in 26 countries, 500 cities with over 8 million spectators.

With this worldwide achievement and over 200

shows/year in Japan, TAO received "The 6th Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner's Awards" from Japan Tourism Agency and "Outstanding Cultural Contribution" from Oita prefecture. TAO has been rewriting the whole story of traditional Japanese Drum and stays the greatest of all Japanese Drum Performers in Japan.

Tickets to see DRUM TAO can be purchased at [NJPAC.org](http://NJPAC.org) or by visiting the NJPAC Box Office or calling 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

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



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## SALMAN KHAN ANNOUNCES SOORAJ PANCHOLI'S NEXT

**S**uperstar Salman Khan on Tuesday unveiled the first look of the biopic on Hawa Singh, known as the father of Indian boxing, featuring actor Sooraj Pancholi.

Based on the true story of the iconic heavyweight boxer, the film will be directed by Prakash Nambiar. It will be produced by Sam S Fernandes and Kamlesh Singh Kushwaha.

"Hawa se baatein karega singh (This Singh will fly)," Salman captioned the first look on Twitter.

The poster shows a beefed up Sooraj, guzzling a glass of lassi in a boxing ring.

"Hawa Singh" traced the boxer's journey from a village boy to a legendary figure in the world of boxing.

A recipient of the Arjuna Award and the Dronacharya Award, Singh dominated Indian and Asian Boxing in his weight class for a decade.

# DEEPIKA, KARTIK IN IMTIAZ ALI'S NEXT FILM?

**E**ver since Deepika Padukone and Kartik Aaryan surprised viewers with their 'Dheeme Dheeme' challenge, the two's pairing in a film has been hot news. It now appears that Imtiaz Ali might be ready to collaborate with the two in a project, or so he might have hinted.

While talking to Mumbai Mirror, Imtiaz Ali happened to mention that he has heard rumours about him directing Kartik and Deepika. Reacting on the same, he stated that 'something will happen'. "There's nothing I've spoken to her about, but hopefully something will happen," he told the daily.

Apart from the 'Dheeme Dheeme' video, Kartik and Deepika have another connection too. Kartik Aaryan has been paired opposite Sara Ali Khan for Imtiaz Ali's movie 'Love Aaj Kal'. Interestingly it is the same movie that featured Deepika Padukone and Saif Ali Khan in the lead roles originally.

Sara and Kartik (SarTik)'s 'Love Aaj Kal' promotions are on in full swing. They had recently visited Ahmedabad for the same. Their movie, which has also got the fresh pairing of Sara and Kartik on the big screen, is slated for release on Valentines' Day i.e. February 14, 2020.



## ANANYA PANDAY DANCED TO SARA ALI KHAN'S AANKH MAREY AT FRIEND'S WEDDING

**A**nanya Panday danced the night away at the sangeet ceremony of her close friends Isha Biyani and Rahil Shah. In a video shared online by a fan club, she can be seen busting out her best moves to the chartbuster Aankh Marey from Rohit Shetty's Simmba, which was picturised on Sara Ali Khan.

The clip has Ananya looking stunning in a Tarun Tahiliani thread work lehenga as she nails the steps of Aankh Marey. Compliments poured in from fans in the comments section. "Pehle Akhiyon se Goli mare aur abhi Dobra Ladki Ankh mare," one Instagram user wrote. Another commented, "Omg steps".

Sara and Ananya have been pitted against each other, professionally as well as personally. Both have been linked to Kartik Aaryan and there were rumours of a simmering tension between them.

In an interview with Hindustan Times, Ananya refuted all speculation of a rivalry. "I wouldn't say there is a rivalry, but it's always good to have that competitive spirit," she said, adding that it is "extremely normal" when she and Sara meet.

"Sara was in school with me... We all are friends and working in the industry together. Everyone is doing



so well in their respective spaces and there is work for everyone. I think it's good to have that competitive spirit in general," she added.

Currently, Ananya is shooting for Maqbool Khan's Khaali Peeli, in which she will be paired opposite Ishaan Khatter. Apart from this, she also has Shakun Batra's next in her

kitty. She will share screen space with Deepika Padukone and Siddhant Chaturvedi in the film.

Sara, meanwhile, is gearing up for the release of Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal. The film also features Kartik Aaryan, Randeep Hooda and Arushi Sharma and is scheduled to hit the theatres on February 14.



## TAAPSEE PANNU ON HER THAPPAD CHARACTER: SHE MADE ME GROW UP

**T**aapsee pannu will be back to the big screen with Anubhav Sinha's Thappad. The film shows Taapsee in the role of a wife who is determined to leave her husband and teach him a lesson after he slaps her at a party.

Playing this character took a toll on Taapsee and she mentioned it in her recent tweet. She wrote, "Amrita ... As an actor some characters set you free and some suffocate you. This was the latter for me... her righteousness, her maturity to handle every situation, determination deep inside and an infectious calmness on the outside.... she made me grow up... #Thappad 28th feb!"

Taapsee's character in Anurag Kashyap's film Manmarziyaan was inspired from legendary author-poet Amrita Pritam. Manmarziyaan, which also Abhishek Bachchan and Vicky Kaushal, was a major hit. Taapsee in particular was lauded for her performance in the film.



## HOLLYWOOD LEGEND KIRK DOUGLAS PASSES AWAY AT 103

**K**irk Douglas, the intense, muscular actor with the dimpled chin who starred in *Spartacus*, *Lust for Life* and dozens of other films, helped fatally weaken the blacklist against suspected Communists and reigned for decades as a Hollywood maverick and patriarch, died on Wednesday, his family said. He was 103.

"To the world, he was a legend, an actor from the golden age of movies who lived well into his golden years, a humanitarian whose commitment to justice and the causes he believed in set a standard for all of us to aspire to," his son Michael Douglas said in a statement on his Instagram account.

Kirk Douglas' death was first reported by *People* magazine.

His granite-like strength and underlying vulnerability made the son of illiterate Russian immigrants one of the top stars of the 20th century. He appeared in more than 80 films, in roles ranging from Doc Holliday in *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* to Vincent van Gogh in *Lust for Life*.

He worked with some of Hollywood's greatest directors, from Vincente Minnelli and Billy Wilder to Stanley Kubrick and Elia Kazan.

# MARGOT ROBBIE WANTS MORE MEN TO WATCH FEMALE-DRIVEN FILMS

**A**ctor-producer Margot Robbie hopes more men turn up to watch female-driven films, like her latest *Birds of Prey*, as she believes they will be able to relate with such stories. Robbie is returning as Harley Quinn in *Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)*, on which she also serves as producer.

Directed by Cathy Yan, the DC film has been penned by *Bumblebee* scribe Christina Hodson. *Birds of Prey* also features Mary Elizabeth Winstead as Huntress, Jurnee Smollett-Bell as Black Canary, Ella Jay Basco as Cassandra Cain and Rosie Perez as Renee Montoya.

Robbie said she watches films regardless of the protagonist's gender. "I hope that guys watch films with female leads as much as they watch ones with male leads. 'Cause I watch films despite the gender of the protagonist and find a way to relate just on human behaviour. I feel if more men watch female-driven content they'd find a way to relate as well," the 29-year-old actor told *Sky News* at the premiere of the movie.

The new film is a spin-off of *Suicide Squad* that introduced Robbie as Harley Quinn. Robbie said despite being a champion of women's rights, she ultimately wanted the best person for the directing job.



Actors Jurnee Smollett-Bell, Rosie Perez, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Margot Robbie and Ella Jay Basco pose for a selfie photo upon arrival at the world premiere of *Birds of Prey*.

"It was a big priority for me to always seek opportunities for women because they categorically and historically get fewer opportunities. However, at the end of the day, the best person for the job should get the job and if the best person that came in was a guy we would have had a guy directing this film, but Cathy was the best person for this job," she added.

This award season has been a let down when it comes to a lack of female nominees in the directing categories at this year's BAFTAs and Oscars and the actor hopes next year is better. "I hope that's not the case next year. I loved a lot of movies this year, I loved movies that were directed by phenomenal female directors as well, but yeah, what can you do?" Robbie said.

## Selena Gomez launches beauty makeup line

**F**ollowing in the footsteps of stars like Rihanna, Kesha and Lady Gaga, Selena Gomez is launching her very own makeup line this summer!

The 27-year-old singer revealed the exciting news via Instagram on Tuesday, announcing that the brand is called Rare Beauty. The news comes less than a month after Gomez released her third album, also titled *Rare*.

"Guys, I've been working on this special project for two years and can officially say Rare Beauty is launching in @sephora stores in North America this summer!" she captioned a behind-the-scenes video from the planning process. "Follow @rarebeauty and become part of our beautiful community. Here's a tiny sneak. There's more to share AND I can't wait."

In the video, Gomez says that "being rare is about being comfortable in yourself."

"I've stopped trying to be perfect," she explains. "I just want to be me."

"I think Rare Beauty can be more than a beauty brand," she adds. "I want us all to stop comparing ourselves to each other and just start embracing our own uniqueness. You're not defined by a photo, a like, or a comment. Rare Beauty isn't about how other people see you; it's



about how you see yourself."

The brand added to Gomez's message on Tuesday via their official Instagram account, writing, "Our mission is to shape conversations around beauty, self-acceptance, and mental health. We want to help people get more access to support and services, and help people feel more authentically connected to one another and less alone in the world."

## MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ: WOULD LOVE TO PLAY CATWOMAN



**F**ast and Furious star Michelle Rodriguez says if given a chance, she would love to play DC superhero Catwoman.

The actor, 41, said Catwoman was her favourite from the comic book franchise as she is both "bad and good".

"I would love to be a superhero. I think DC has my favourite superhero, which is Catwoman. I like her because

she's bad and good and I'm in the middle when it comes to being good.

"I'm pretty bad and good so I would go the DC route 'cause there aren't a lot of really great female superheroes in general and so I need a little edge or I can't play and so Catwoman I think is my favourite," Rodriguez told MTV International.

The actor will next reprise her role of Letty Ortiz in *Fast and Furious 9*.

# VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day means different things to different people. For some, the day is celebrated with heart-shaped DIY Valentine's Day cards, thoughtful gifts of flowers or jewelry, and romantic Valentine's Day dinner plans. For others, it's simply marked by time spent with a loved one and reading romantic Valentine's Day quotes, or posting a Valentine's Day caption on a cute couples Instagram photo. And to many more, it's just another day on the calendar—one that means very little, if anything at all.

But no matter your personal relationship with the day, odds are, you've found yourself wondering about its origins from time to time. How did February 14 first come to be considered the day of love, anyway? What's the origin of Valentine's Day—and why have its romantic themes persisted to this day?

Oh, and while we're at it, where does the word "Valentine" come from?

As it turns out, nobody really knows the true history behind this storied holiday, nor do any of the theories completely check out. Even historians find themselves arguing over the exact traditions from which the present-day holiday takes inspiration.

But here, we're sharing as much as we know about the topic, including the murky origin of Valentine's Day and its interesting history. Surprisingly, its backstory—though not confirmed—is actually quite dark and even a bit bloody. Strange traditions, pagan rituals, and grisly executions abound. If you're not faint of heart though, you'll enjoy learning about everything we've compiled here. Who knows? It might even inform your Valentine's Day wishes!

## WHERE DOES THE WORD VALENTINE COME FROM?

The day is named, of course, for St. Valentine—we all know that by now. But why? Who is this mysterious Valentine?

According to The New York Times, it's possible that the heart-filled holiday is based on a combination of two men. There were, after all, two Valentines executed on February 14 (albeit in different years) by Emperor Claudius II, reports NPR. It's believed that the Catholic Church may have established St. Valentine's Day in order to honor these men, who they believed to be martyrs. What's more, it's possible that



one of these men, Saint Valentine of Terni, had been secretly officiating weddings for Roman soldiers against the emperor's wishes, making him, in some eyes, a proponent of love.

But others believe that St. Valentine's Day was actually designated by Pope Gelasius I in order to replace the ancient Roman festival Lupercalia.

The debauchorous feast fell around the same time and involved a pagan ritual of naked men whipping women with the blood-soaked hides of sacrificial animals (yes, really), which they believed promoted fertility. Following this flagellation was an equally strange tradition, in which men selected women's names at random to decide who would remain together the

rest of the festival, or, if the match was successful, for life.

However, a University of Kansas English professor, the late Jack B. Oruch, had a different theory, notes the Times: Through research, he determined that the poet Geoffrey Chaucer linked love with St. Valentine for the first time in his 14th-century works "The Parlement of Foules" and "The Complaint of Mars." Therefore, Oruch claimed that Chaucer invented Valentine's Day as we know it today. (At the time of Chaucer's writing, February 14 also happened to be considered the first day of spring in Britain, since it was the beginning of birds' mating season—perfectly appropriate for a celebration of affection.)

# VALENTINE'S WEEK

## WHY DO WE CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY?

Whether or not Chaucer can be fully credited, it is true that he and fellow writer Shakespeare popularized the amorous associations surrounding the day. Soon, people began penning and exchanging love letters to celebrate Valentine's Day, and by the early 1910s, an American company that would one day become Hallmark began distributing its more official "Valentine's Day cards." Flowers, candy, jewelry, and more followed, and the rest, of course, is history.

## WHAT PART DOES CUPID PLAY ON VALENTINE'S DAY?

It's not all about St. Valentine! Cupid—that winged baby boy often seen on Valentine's Day cards and paraphernalia—is another symbol of this love-filled holiday, and it's easy to understand why. In Roman mythology, Cupid was the son of Venus, goddess of love and beauty. He was known for shooting arrows at both gods and humans, causing them to fall instantly in love with one another. While it's unclear exactly when Cupid was brought into the Valentine's Day story, it's certainly clear why.

## Valentine's Week List 2020

The Loveliest week of the year, the Valentine's week or Love Week! The week starts from 7th of February and ends on 14th of February. The love week starts with the Rose Day followed by Propose Day, Chocolate Day, Teddy Day, Promise Day, Hug Day, Kiss Day and finishes with the Happy Valentines Day.

### Rose Day

To begin with, the first day of the week in Rose day, a day when lovers greet each other with a red rose. So basically, it's a preparation for the propose, which is right next day. So, set the scene by sending that red rose. 7th February is marked for the day.

### Propose Day

It is marked as the day of the propose, as people are free to propose with a rose or ring, and the proposed person may deny it, but is not to have any hard feelings on it, thus making it a fearless propose day. Go ahead and open your heart on this day, and propose to him/her.



8th February is marked for the day.

### Chocolate Day

Chocolates are for love, and how can chocolates not find a special place in the week of love! Send chocolates to your loved ones to uplift their mood, and to spread the love. 9th February is marked for the day.

### Teddy Day

Teddies are the cutest and most famous soft toys, loved by every girl. Gift a soft teddy to your girl, which will always remind her of you. 10th February is marked for the day.

### Promise Day

11th February is Promise Day. It is a day to make promises together, frequently marked by gift giving with it. Make realistic promises that you can keep with a pure heart, and God will be

with you to see through.

### Hug Day

Go on! The day says it all! Give your bear-est hugs to your dearest ones. Shower your hugs, in a way, so that they are remembered for some time. And remember, the more hugs you give, the better. 12th February is marked for the day.

### Kiss Day:

13th February is kiss day, a golden day to kiss and makeup. Remember to kiss her forehead too, for it signifies care and responsibility.

### Valentine's Day

And finally, it all culminates to Valentine's day on the 14th, when you can get creative in every way to show that you care, you are responsible, and you love.

## Chinese doctor who first warned about coronavirus outbreak dies

**BEIJING (TIP):** Chinese doctor Li Wenliang, one of the eight whistleblowers who warned other medics of the coronavirus outbreak but were reprimanded by the police, died of the epidemic on Feb 6, official media reported.

Li, a 34-year-old doctor who tried to warn other medics of the epidemic, died of coronavirus on Thursday in Wuhan, the state-run Global Times reported.

He was the first to report about the virus way back in December last year when it first emerged in Wuhan, the provincial capital of China's central Hubei province.

He dropped a bombshell in his medical school alumni group on the popular Chinese messaging app WeChat that seven patients from a local seafood market had been diagnosed with a SARS-like illness and quarantined in his hospital.

Li explained that, according to a test he had seen, the illness was a coronavirus—a large family of viruses that includes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) which led to 800 death in China and the world in 2003.

Li told his friends to warn their loved ones privately. But within hours screenshots of his messages had gone viral — without his name being blurred.

"When I saw them circulating online, I realised that it was out of my control and I would probably be punished," Li was quoted as saying CNN recently.

Soon after he posted the message, Li was accused of rumour-mongering by the Wuhan police.

He was one of several medics targeted by the police for trying to blow the whistle on the deadly virus in the early weeks of the outbreak.

Overall 564 people have died in China due to the virus and 28,018 confirmed cases have been reported from 31 provincial-level regions, the National Health Commission reported on Thursday. — PTI

## UK ex-PM's guard leaves gun on plane, faces probe

**LONDON (TIP):** London's Metropolitan Police are investigating after former PM David Cameron's bodyguard reportedly left his gun in an airplane bathroom. The Daily Mail newspaper reported that the weapon found on a trans-Atlantic flight was handed to flight attendants. The Sun reported that passports belonging to Cameron and the officer were also found. Police said the officer involved had since been removed from operational duties. AP

# China's novel coronavirus toll soars to 636; total confirmed cases over 31,000

**BEIJING (TIP):** The death toll in China's novel coronavirus epidemic has risen to 636 with 73 new mortalities reported, mostly from the worst-affected Hubei province, while the total number of confirmed cases has crossed 31,000, Chinese health officials said on February 7.

Hubei province and its provincial capital Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus outbreak, reported 69 deaths on Thursday while Jilin, Henan, Guangdong and Hainan provinces reported one each, China's National Health Commission said.

As many as 73 people died on Thursday, while another 3,143 new cases of infection were reported, taking the total number of confirmed cases of infection to 31,161 from 31 provincial-level regions, the commission said.

A total of 1,540 patients infected with the virus have been discharged from hospital after recovery by the end of Thursday, it said, highlighting that a large number of people are getting cured.

The Chinese officials said 19 foreign nationals living in the country had been confirmed of contracting the novel coronavirus as of Thursday, but did not disclose their nationalities.

The deceased on Thursday also included Chinese doctor Li Wenliang, one of the eight whistle-blowers who warned other medics of the coronavirus outbreak but were reprimanded by the police. Li, the 34-year-old doctor, died due to coronavirus on Thursday in Wuhan.

He was the first to report about the virus back in December last year when it emerged in Wuhan. He dropped a bombshell in his medical school alumni group on the popular Chinese messaging app WeChat that seven patients from a



local seafood market had been diagnosed with a SARS-like illness and quarantined in his hospital. Soon after he posted the message, Li was accused of rumour-mongering by the Wuhan police.

He was one of the several medics targeted by the police for trying to blow the whistle on the deadly virus in the early weeks of the outbreak.

Meanwhile, China on Thursday opened a new 1,500-bed makeshift hospital especially built for virus patients, days after a 1,000-bed hospital started functioning with prefabricated wards and isolation rooms in Wuhan.

Chinese officials argue that the death toll and confirmed cases are rising in Hubei province because of lack of enough hospitals and beds.

Officials also started setting up tent hospitals and mobile clinics to treat the growing number of patients.

China also lodged diplomatic protests

to countries over cancellation of flights to China due to virus fears.

"As some countries have taken such excessive steps as suspending flights, ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) has also issued bulletins and encouraged all countries to follow WHO recommendations," a spokesperson said.

"We deplore and oppose those countries who went against WHO's professional recommendations and ICAO's bulletins and have lodged stern representations with them," she said.

Several international airlines, including Air India and IndiGo, have cancelled flights to China over fears of the virus spreading across the world, a move which Beijing described as being against WHO guidelines.

Many countries, including India and the US, have also announced travel bans. PTI

## Unbelievable! Baboon 'grooms' lion cub in South African safari

**KRUGER NATIONAL PARK (TIP):** A video of a baboon nurturing a lion cub up on top of a tree in South Africa's Kruger National Park is being widely shared on social media.

The video shared by YouTube page Kruger Sightings was shot by Kurt Schultz of Kurt Safari, reported the Daily Mail.

In the video, the adult baboon can be seen sitting on a marula tree and as the sun shines through the leaves, it turns around to reveal that it is holding a lion cub which is crying out feebly and clearly in distress. The video is captioned: "Watch the incredible and never-before-seen moment a male baboon stole a lion cub and starts grooming it, while it is alive and healthy."

The video shows the baboon likely adopting the big cat cub. Twitter is skeptical about the outcome though.

While some are happy at this cross species bond, others are of the opinion that the lion cub may not survive for long on the branches.

Ill-informed Tweeple even suggest that the baboon cannot make the lion cub learn hunting techniques, so the cub would likely die of hunger. Baboons are carnivores and are known to hunt around.

Some even fear that baboon might itself kill and eat the cub. A user wrote: "I'd be curious to see how that ends. At some point the lion cub will need milk and somehow I doubt the baboon will be able to accommodate." Another wrote: "This is how our ancestors adopted their first cat millions of years ago." A post read: "Baboons have been known to kidnap feral dog puppies and raise them to adults and basically keep them as pets who knows what will happen here..." AP

## Finland to offer new fathers as much paid leave as mothers

**HELSINKI (TIP):** Finland's woman-led centre-left government plans to nearly double the length of paternity leave to give new fathers the same amount of paid time off work as new mothers, it announced on Wednesday.

Paid paternity leave will be extended to nearly seven months, in line with maternity leave. Around half can be given to the other parent.

Pregnant women are also entitled to a month of pregnancy leave before the expected date of birth.

Minister of Health and Social Affairs Aino-Kaisa Pekonen said the aim of the "radical reform" was both to improve gender equality and to boost a declining birth rate.

"This enables better equality between parents and diversity among families," she said. She noted that other countries such as Sweden and Iceland had seen increases in their birth rates after offering more leave for fathers.

Finland's governing coalition is made up of five parties, all led by women, of whom four are under 35 years old.

Increasing gender equality has been one of the government's aims since it took office in December. - Reuters

# Palestinian killed in West Bank; Israeli troops hurt in Jerusalem ramming

**JERUSALEM (TIP):** A car ran down a group of Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem early on February 6 in a suspected Palestinian attack and, in a separate incident, Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian during clashes in the occupied West Bank, authorities said.

Long-simmering Palestinian unrest has been stoked anew by anger at U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan, which was embraced by Israel and rejected by the Palestinians when it was announced last week.

The Jerusalem car-ramming took place on David Remez Street, which is close to the Arab neighbourhoods of eastern parts of the city that Palestinians want for a state. A theatre and late-night restaurants and bars are also located along the street.

A military spokeswoman said 12 soldiers were injured. They were sightseeing after coming to the city to be sworn in upon completing basic training.

The Magen David Adom ambulance service said a total of 14 people were injured, including one admitted to hospital with severe injuries and another with moderate injuries.

"The incident is being investigated as a terror attack," a police spokesman said. The driver was still at large.

"It is just a matter of time - and not much time - until we get our hands on the attacker. Terrorism will not defeat us, we will win," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. In the West Bank city of Jenin, a 19-year-old man was shot dead by troops while throwing rocks at them, Palestinians said.

An Israeli military spokesman said troops came to Jenin to demolish the home of a Palestinian who was involved



in the 2018 killing of a Jewish settler. Troops opened fire at Palestinians who shot and threw bombs at them in Jenin, the spokesman said.

Palestinian medics said a Palestinian police officer was also seriously wounded by Israeli gunfire in the incident. The military did not immediately comment on that account.

On Wednesday, Israeli troops shot dead a 17-year-old Palestinian elsewhere in the West Bank, saying he had thrown a fire-bomb at them during a violent protest against Trump's peace plan. He was the first fatality since Trump's plan was unveiled.

There have also been several days of violence across the border with the Gaza Strip. Palestinians have launched mortar shells, rockets and balloon-borne explosives into Israel, causing panic but no serious casualties. Israel has carried

out nightly air strikes against sites belonging to Gaza's ruling Hamas Islamists. Hamas praised the West Bank clashes and Jerusalem attack.

"The spreading resistance and clashes by our people in the West Bank and their resistance in the heart of occupied Jerusalem is an active response against the destructive Trump deal," said Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem.

The Palestinians, who have long shunned the Trump administration, accusing it of bias towards Israel, say the peace plan falls far short of their demands for territorial and other rights. Washington deems many of those demands unrealistic.

Israel supports the Trump plan, which would give it much of what it has sought for decades, including sovereignty over nearly all the occupied land on which it has built settlements. Reuters

## Scotland minister quits over messages to teenager

**LONDON (TIP):** Scotland's finance minister resigned on Feb 6 hours before he was due to deliver his annual budget, after he reportedly sent hundreds of messages to a 16-year-old boy on social media. Derek Mackay said, "I am truly sorry." Mackay is not accused of breaking the law, but Scottish Labour Party leader Richard Leonard said his behaviour had been "nothing short of predatory." AP

## Sir Philip Barton to take charge as UK envoy to India

**LONDON (TIP):** : The UK government on Feb 6 announced career diplomat Sir Philip Barton as the new British High Commissioner to India, to succeed outgoing envoy Sir Dominic Asquith. The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) said Barton will take charge at the British High Commission in New Delhi in the coming weeks of Spring. Barton is currently the Director General of Consular and Security at the FCO. PTI

## Australian PM Scott Morrison announces Cabinet reshuffle

**SYDNEY (TIP):** Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Feb 6 announced a Cabinet reshuffle following the resignations of two senior ministers.

Morrison said Keith Pitt—a well-known supporter of nuclear power and the country's coal industry—will become Australia's minister for mining and resources.

David Littleproud, Australia's minister for drought, will combine that role with the responsibility of overseeing the country's A\$60 billion (\$40 billion) agricultural sector.

The appointments come after Bridget McKenzie was forced to resign from her post as the minister of agriculture on Sunday after an independent audit found money from a A\$100 million sports development fund was used to target votes ahead of last year's federal election.

Matt Canavan resigned earlier this week as minister for mining and resources amid a fracture in the National Party—the junior partner in Morrison's coalition government. Reuters

## 3 die, 179 injured as plane skids off at Istanbul airport in Turkey

**ISTANBUL (TIP):** Three people have died and 179 were injured when a plane skidded off the runway at an Istanbul airport, caught fire and split into three after landing in rough weather. Live images broadcast on Turkish television showed several people climbing through a large crack in the severed aircraft and escaping onto one of the wings at the rear.

AFP

## Brexit, homelessness dominate in Irish election

**DUBLIN (TIP):** Ireland goes to the polls on Saturday, with Prime Minister Leo Varadkar touting his successful handling of Brexit, but facing pressure over housing and healthcare.

A late surge in support for the republican Sinn Fein party, once the voice of the IRA paramilitary group, also threatens to shake up the political landscape.

Varadkar's Fine Gael party has led a minority government with the main opposition party, Fianna Fail, since the 2016 election.

Just a few months after that, Britain voted to leave the European Union—and Brexit has dominated Irish politics since.

Britain's exit on January 31, under the terms of a last-minute EU divorce deal, eased immediate fears of a damaging split between London and the bloc, which includes Ireland.

It set up a transition period during which trade ties continue, and maintained Ireland's open border with Northern Ireland, which suffered



decades of violence over British control.

Varadkar won plaudits for his role in securing the agreement, but has warned of more uncertainty to come, as Britain seeks a longer-lasting trade deal with the EU by December.

And he has presented himself as the man to deliver on the next stage.

"A failure to secure a trade deal would be a major threat and an existential threat to our economy in 2021," he said

last month.

Both centre-right parties, Fianna Fail agreed to prop up Fine Gael during the uncertainty of Britain's prolonged EU departure, but the former argues that it should now take the lead.

"The idea that Ireland cannot change its government because of Brexit is cynical and desperate in equal measure," said Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin.

Fianna Fail says the government's efforts to shockproof the economy from Brexit need to "rapidly increase" in preparation for the risk that trade talks with Britain fail.

But there is little real differentiation between the parties, driving voter apathy.

"The approach to phase two of the Brexit talks—trade talks—is not going to be substantially different regardless of who wins this election," said Jonathan Evershed, from University College Cork.

"I think basically people know that and there was very limited political capital in it for the Irish government," he told AFP. AFP

# HERE'S HOW TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR SKIN

As the days get longer and the temperatures begin to shin up, off go the jumpers and boots and on come the skin-exposing garbs and flip-flops.

During spring, your heart might be enjoying the season's magic, but your skin is crying out with the winter blues - dry, scaly, rough, spots on heels, knees and elbows as well as stressed-out, overheated, undernourished skin on your face and body.

With a forecast of brighter days ahead, it's time to spring clean your skin-care routines.

Dr. Anup Dhir, Senior Consultant, Cosmetic Surgeon, Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi, says, "The harsh winter can have a detrimental effect on the skin, so spring is the time to rejuvenate it. The most important skin care regime for spring is exfoliation and hydration to get rid of the dead, flaky winter skin to reveal the healthy glow."

He adds, "You can buy a good, gentle exfoliator or use a homemade one, like with combining sugar and coconut oil or oatmeal and honey."

In scientific terms, there exists the phenomenon called the Hayflick limit, which is the number of times a normal cell population will divide before it stops. For human skin, that number is around 50, suggesting that each skin cell is only allowed to rejuvenate itself 50 times before it becomes useless.

Exfoliation takes away the dead skin cells from the top layer of the skin, to stimulate new cell growth, below the surface of the skin. The consensus is that a gentle and mild exfoliant, once a week, is enough for most skin types.

Dr. Dhir further says, "Remember to use a good moisturiser to make the skin supple and soft."

Seasonal changes can cause our skin to undergo considerable modifications - higher the



temperature, oilier is the skin. And so, it's important to use a lighter moisturizer during spring. Sunflower oil and vitamin E work as emollients that trap moisture inside skin cells, keeping the skin hydrated. But if you prefer not to switch to a new moisturizer, you can try mixing some rosewater into your winter one.

Dr. Dhir next suggests using a "high factor sunscreen cream." If you like dolling up, you can use the sunblock beneath your makeup.

Sunscreen is a must-have year-round, but as for the spring and summer, it becomes crucial, when more of your skin is exposed for longer periods of time. It helps you stay vigilant. Non-chemical sunscreens with ingredients like titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide are a better choice as these do not react with skin the way harsher chemicals do.

Also, a research, conducted in Australia and published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, demonstrated that regular sunscreen use can prevent the most deadly form of skin cancer, melanoma.

According to Dr. Dhir, when warm weather arrives one should "eat fresh fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water."

Conventional wisdom tells us that drinking more water will have a positive impact on skin, providing a younger-looking, radiant complexion. However, definitive research on any positive effects water consumption has on the skin is scarce.

When it comes to skin, the phrase "you are what you eat" cannot be truer. Foods like bell peppers, mushroom, shellfish, strawberries, sunflower seeds and others can give you a spring glow.

A diet rich in antioxidants like carotenenes, vitamins A and E, algae and EFAs is extremely beneficial for springtime skin as it will kick-start sluggish skin conditions and reveal a brighter, rejuvenated complexion.

Spring is a great time to let your skin go au natural and lighten up on the makeup. Warmer days mean sweating, which can leave a mess on your face if you wear a lot of makeup and can lead to clogged pores and acne.

## FOOD CORNER



### CHICKEN TANDOORI WRAP

#### Ingredients

- Chicken Fillets - 4, chopped, boneless, skinless
- Onion - 1/4 cup, sliced
- Tomatoes - 2, sliced/chopped
- Green Chilli - 1, chopped
- Garlic - 2 cloves, chopped
- Ginger - 1 tblsp, peeled, chopped
- Plain Yogurt - 125 gms
- Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped
- Curry Powder - 1/2 tsp
- Plain Rotis as required (leftovers or fresh)
- Salt as per taste

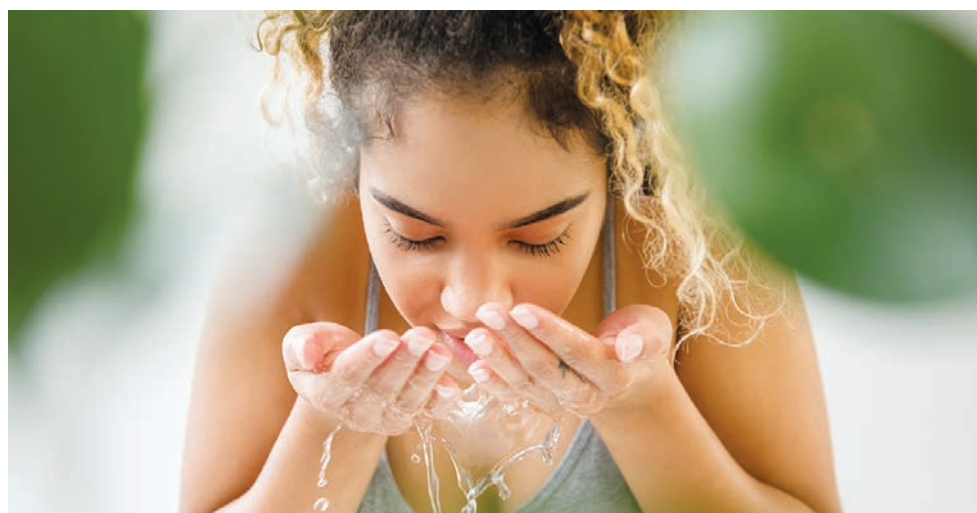
#### Method

- Coarsely grind the garlic, ginger and green chillies.
- Combine this with the yogurt and small handful of coriander leaves.
- Grind again until well mixed.
- Sprinkle some salt and mix well.
- Add the curry powder and mix well. Reserve some of this mixture.
- Add the chopped chicken pieces and mix well until evenly coated.
- Keep aside for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Heat a nonstick pan over medium flame.
- Cook the chicken until slightly browned and cooked through, turning from time to time.
- Alternatively you can place it in a baking tray lined with foil and bake for 15 to 20 minutes in a preheated oven at 170C.
- To the reserved yogurt mixture add the onions, tomatoes and some coriander leaves.
- Mix well.
- Warm the chapatis and place them on a flat surface.
- Divide the chicken and the salad between the chapatis.
- Roll them up tightly and serve at once.
- Cut them in halves if desired.

## MAKE RICE WATER AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR SKINCARE REGIMEN

Rice is widely consumed across the globe, especially Asia, and is a staple in many cuisines. It is the agricultural commodity with the third-highest worldwide production, after sugarcane and maize. But did you know that rice is not only delicious to eat, it also has additional benefits that leave the skin feeling beautiful. In fact, rice water has myriad properties that make it a wonderful addition to our skincare regimens. Loaded with vitamins, minerals and amino acids, it makes the skin look healthy.

Regular use of rice water helps minimise the appearance of pores, and promotes cell growth. In addition, it makes your skin soft and helps balance its pH levels. Which is why, there are many beauty products that contain rice as the main ingredient. It is also one of the prominent ingredients found in Korean skincare brands.



So in case you plan to include the cereal grain in your beauty regime, here are some benefits you need to know about:

- Rice water can be used as a natural sunscreen which protects one's skin from harmful UV rays. Similarly, it can work as a natural cream that

treats sunburns.

- It is very good for sensitive skin. It naturally soothes skin inflammation, rashes and helps in treating acne and pimples.
- It also calms the redness of an acne breakout as it acts as an astringent on the skin by tightening the pores.
- It is advisable to refrigerate rice water before applying it on the face using a cotton pad. Leave it for 10 minutes at least and rinse it with water.
- It helps to get rid of dark age spots, and to minimize free radical damages from the environment.
- Rice water is rich in minerals, antioxidants, Vitamin B and Vitamin E. It also smoothes the skin texture, addresses hyperpigmentation, tightens skin, reduces pore sizes and leaves a soft porcelain-like finish for the face.



# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM A VIRUS

**H**aving a cold is a miserable experience—no doubt about that. Snuffing, sneezing, coughing, and feeling exhausted—we've all been there. Colds, however, are not just unpleasant—they present a very real public health problem. Here's how to stop a virus before it starts, with everything you need to know about them, too.

## What Causes a Cold?

A cold is an infection of your upper airways, caused by a virus. Around 50% are caused by the human rhinovirus (HRV). HRV belongs to the Picornaviridae family. It is an RNA virus whose genetic makeup has been extensively studied. The remaining colds are caused by other viruses such as the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), parainfluenza and the corona virus.

## Is There a Cure for a Cold Yet?

Nope. These viruses were first identified in the 1950s, but despite 60 years of research, sadly there is still no cure! In that time we sent a bunch of people to the moon, and designed an Instant Pot and figured out a way to have it delivered to our home in a day.

The coating of the viral cell wall—the capsid—contains several specific capsid proteins. These have a high propensity for genetic mutation—which is why new infections are common, and producing a vaccine has so far not been possible.

## How Do Viruses Work

Once the HRV virus lands on the cell surface, such as the skin lining the inside of your nose, it attaches to the host cell, gains entry, and reproduces inside the cell to produce more viral particles. The host cell then ruptures to allow the new viral particles to escape and these are then ready to attack further host cells.

## How Do I Catch a Cold?

Catching a cold has nothing to do with feeling cold!

You catch the virus by either breathing it in, by skin to skin contact or by touching an object harboring viral particles on its surface.

The virus can live outside the body for several days in the correct environmental conditions and up to two hours on a skin surface. It usually enters the body through the nasal passages—not through the mouth.

## How Likely Am I to Catch a Cold?

Viral transmission takes place very easily. In one experiment, 18 subjects—artificially infected with HRV—



played card games for 12 hours with their non-infected opponents. By the end of the study period, 56% of the 18 opponents were now infected.

In another study, subjects were artificially infected with HRV. The virus was then detected on 40% of their hands and 6% of articles found in the home.

Mind that playing cards for 12 hours straight may cause worse problems than catching HRV. We recommend spending that time cooking stew in an Instant Pot.

## What Are Symptoms of a Common Cold

The incubation period for the HRV virus is just under 2 days. Symptoms are at their worst days 1-3, often last 7-10 days, and can last 3 weeks.

The most common symptoms are a sore throat, runny nose, runny eyes and feeling lethargic and unwell. Children often have a fever, but this is not so common in adults. Children aged under 2 have 4-6 colds per year, whereas adults have on average only one per year.

## If It's Not a Cold, What Could It Be?

Doctors may find it difficult to be sure of the diagnosis, as several other conditions can present with similar symptoms.

Allergic rhinitis (hay fever) causes a runny nose with sneezing, but a sore throat is unusual. If the throat is very sore, this raises the possibility of streptococcal pharyngitis (bacterial). Facial pain and nasal discharge occur when the sinuses have become infected. Similarly, infection of the eardrum produces severe ear pain, which may follow on from a cold—with an episode of otitis media.

## How to Tell If You Have a Cold or the Flu?

One common difficulty is how to distinguish a common cold from an attack of influenza—"flu" caused by

the influenza virus. Generally, people suffering from flu feel weaker and look sicker. They usually have other symptoms such as headache, joint and muscle aches and pains, fever with chills and sweats.

An attack of flu can be very serious for the elderly or for people who have a lowered immune system. It's important with a serious systemic illness not to miss a potentially life-threatening condition such as meningitis or septicaemia.

## How Does My Body Fight the Virus?

The body has a complex immune system. Cells called macrophages are circulating all the time in your bloodstream. These recognize foreign particles and destroy them. However, if the virus is multiplying rapidly, the numbers rapidly overwhelm the macrophages. Other white blood cells called B-lymphocytes and T-lymphocytes are summoned.

B-lymphocytes attach to the virus and produce antibodies which kill the virus. T-lymphocytes kill virus-infected cells. Small numbers of B and T lymphocytes persist which remember the virus and are quick to attack the virus next time if you are re-infected.

## Why Does My Temperature Rise, And I Feel Pain?

The symptoms of the disease process reflect what is happening inside the body. The presence of the virus leads to an increase in body temperature. The virus cannot survive unless conditions are favorable, and so the rise in temperature is part of the body's response to defeat it.

The immune system works by signaling different cells and cell processes using chemical messengers—called cytokines. The defence process is called inflammation. The symptoms of inflammation are warmth, redness, swelling and pain.



## PLANT-BASED DIET MAY HELP LOWER HEART DISEASE RISK

**D**iets with reduced sulphur amino acids—which occur in protein-rich foods, such as meats, dairy, nuts and soy—are associated with a decreased risk for cardiovascular disease, according to a study.

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. A subcategory, called sulfur amino acids, including methionine and cysteine, play various roles in metabolism and health.

"For decades, it has been understood that diets restricting sulphur amino acids were beneficial for longevity in animals," said John Richie, a professor at Pennsylvania State University in the US.

"This study provides the first epidemiologic evidence that excessive dietary intake of sulphur amino acids may be related to chronic disease outcomes in humans," Richie said.

The study, published in the journal *Lancet EClinical Medicine*, examined the diets and blood biomarkers of more than 11,000 participants from a national study in the US.

It found that participants who ate foods containing fewer sulphur amino acids tended to have a decreased risk for cardiometabolic disease based on their bloodwork.

The researchers compiled a composite cardiometabolic disease risk score based on the levels of certain biomarkers in participants' blood after a 10-16 hour fast including cholesterol, triglycerides, glucose and insulin.

"These biomarkers are indicative of an individual's risk for disease, just as high cholesterol levels are a risk factor for cardiovascular disease," Richie said.

"Many of these levels can be impacted by a person's longer-term dietary habits leading up to the test," he said.

The researchers found that higher sulphur amino acid intake was associated with a higher composite cardiometabolic risk score after accounting for potential confounders like age, sex and history of diabetes and hypertension.

They also found that high sulphur amino acid intake was associated with every type of food except grains, vegetables and fruit.

"Meats and other high-protein foods are generally higher in sulphur amino acid content," said Zhen Dong, lead author of the study.

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## APPLE'S 'CARKEY' LETS YOU UNLOCK AND START YOUR CAR WITH YOUR IPHONE

Apple wants you to use your iPhone to unlock your car. While the feature is not yet out, but it could be released sooner than expected.

As discovered by 9to5Mac, references to a new 'CarKey' feature have been found in iOS 13.4 beta. The feature seems to allow users to replace your car keys with an iPhone. But how does this feature work in the first place?

Well, you need to hold your iPhone or Apple Watch near an NFC-enabled car to use your iPhone as a car key. It appears that the digital key will be stored in the Wallet app. Most importantly, you might be able to share your CarKey with some other member of your family. Cool isn't it?

Evidently, CarKey won't require authentication with your FaceID, similar to how Express Transaction cards work. This means that you will be able to unlock or lock your car for up to 5 hours even if they have run out of battery.

Unlocking or locking your car with a smartphone isn't a new concept. Last year, Huawei had launched a digital car key app that allows owners to control their cars using an Android phone and share a virtual car key with up to four users. At the moment, the Hyundai Digital Car key only supports new Sonata sedans.

# THIS SOLAR PANEL COULD GENERATE ELECTRICITY EVEN AT NIGHT

With Climate Change knocking at our door, countries around the world are trying to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel and embrace renewable energy. Some parts of the world have taken the solar panel technology quite seriously but as beneficial as these panels are, solar power plants cannot generate electricity at night.

But what if these solar panels could operate around the clock? According to a study published in the ACS Photonics, it is possible to design solar panels that can produce energy during the night.

### How do the anti-solar cells work?

A regular solar cell generates power when it absorbs photons of light from the sun to generate a voltage across the device for the current to flow. However, in these specially designed photovoltaic cells, light is instead emitted to generate current and voltage, which go in the opposite direction but still produce energy.

The drawback of these "anti-solar cells" or thermoradiative cells, at the moment, is that the electricity produced is way lower than the power generated by the conventional solar cells.

According to the authors of the paper — Jeremy Munday, professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at University of California, Davis and graduate student Tristan Deppe — photovoltaic cell could generate up to 50 watts of power per square meter under ideal conditions at night, which is about a quarter of what a conventional solar panel can generate in daytime.

Munday says that an object that is hot compared to its surroundings will radiate heat as infrared light. Since space is cold, if you have a warm object and point it at the sky, it will radiate heat toward it. He says that people have been using this phenomenon for nighttime



cooling for hundreds of years and researchers have been exploring the use of thermoradiative cell that generates power by radiating heat to its surroundings.

Munday says that the thermoradiative cell pointed at the night sky would emit infrared light because it is warmer than outer space. According to the study, the device would work during the day as well, if steps were taken to either block direct sunlight or point it away from the sun.

This would allow this new type of solar cell to operate around the clock and provide an intriguing option to balance the power grid over the day-night cycle.

## Twitter to label altered media, remove if it may cause harm

Twitter will begin to label and in some cases remove doctored or manipulated photos, audio and videos that are designed to mislead people.

The company said Tuesday that the new rules prohibit sharing synthetic or manipulated material that's likely to cause harm. Material that is manipulated but isn't necessarily harmful may get a warning label.

Under the new guidelines, the slowed-down video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in which she appeared to slur her words could get the label if someone tweets it out after the rules go into effect March 5. If it was proven that it also causes harm, Twitter could also remove it.

But deciding what might cause harm could be difficult to define, and some material will likely fall into a gray area.

"This will be a challenge and we will make errors along the way — we appreciate the patience," Twitter said in a blog post. "However, we're committed to doing this right." Twitter said it considers threats to the safety of a person or a group serious harm, along with risk of mass violence or widespread civil unrest. But harm could also mean threats to people's privacy or ability to freely express themselves, Twitter said. This could include stalking, voter suppression and intimidation epithets and "material that aims to silence someone."

Google, Facebook, Twitter and other technology services are under intense pressure to prevent interference in the 2020 U.S. elections after they were manipulated in four years ago by Russia-connected actors. On Monday, Google's YouTube clarified its policy around political manipulation, reiterating that it bans election-related "deepfake" videos. Facebook has also been ramping up its election security efforts. As with many of Twitter's policies, including those



against hate speech or abuse, for instance, success will be measured in how well the company enforces it. Critics say even with rules in place, enforcement can be uneven and slow.

This is likely to be especially true for misinformation, which can spread quickly on social media even with safeguards in place. Facebook, for instance, has been using third-party fact-checkers to debunk false stories on its site for three years. While the efforts are paying off, the battle against misinformation is far from over.

Twitter said it was committed to seeking input from its users on such rules. Twitter said it posted a survey in six languages and received 6,500 responses from around the world. According to the company, the majority of respondents said misleading tweets should be labeled, though not everyone agreed on whether they should be removed or left up.

## Get a Paranoid for your smart speaker

Smart speakers are a great convenience. But as of late, a good chunk of smart speaker users have been worried about who is listening in to what they have to say. Adding to the worry is the fact that most users don't enable the physical mute button, letting Amazon Echos and Google Homes listen to whatever they are saying nearby, even before the wake word is uttered.

This is the problem Paranoid hopes to tackle. Yes, as the name suggests, this is a product for those who are paranoid about their privacy. So Paranoid — available in three configurations — will try and block a smart speaker's ability to hear conversations it is not supposed to. There is the Paranoid Home Button, a USB-powered button-pusher that physically turns on and off a smart speaker's mute button when it hears the Paranoid wake word. The Paranoid Home Wave, meanwhile, generates noise near the speaker so that it can't hear anything else. When the wake word is uttered these noises stop and the speaker can hear you — this is ideal for models without a physical mute button. And for the really paranoid users is the Paranoid Home Max option where you send the device to the company for an internal configuration.

Thomas Stachura, Inventor of Paranoid & CEO of Pleasant Solutions, the company behind the product, says they are "solving a tension between technology and privacy". Paranoid is aimed at all smart speaker brands, "but initially we are supporting several models of Amazon Echo and Google Home".

# Coronavirus fears wipe \$393 billion off China's stock

**BEIJING (TIP):** Investors erased \$393 billion from China's benchmark stock index, sold the yuan and dumped commodities as fears about the spreading coronavirus and its economic impact drove selling on the first day of trade in China since the Lunar New Year.

A nearly 8% plunge on the Shanghai composite index was its biggest daily fall in more than four years. The Chinese yuan blew past the 7-per-dollar mark and Shanghai-traded commodities from palm oil to copper hit their maximum down limits.

The wipeout came even as the central bank made its biggest cash injection to the financial system since 2004 and despite apparent regulatory moves to curb selling.

The total number of deaths in China from the coronavirus rose to 361 by Sunday, compared with 17 on January 23, when Chinese markets last traded.

"You wanted to know what a real decoupling from China might look like, or what a 'What if everyone just stayed at home and didn't buy anything?' economic thought-experiment looks like? Well here you are, folks," Rabobank strategist Michael Every said in an afternoon note.

The yuan began onshore trade at its weakest this year and was down 1.2% by the afternoon, sliding past the symbolic 7-per-dollar level to close at 7.0257.

Shanghai-traded oil, iron ore, copper and soft commodities contracts all posted sharp drops, catching up with sliding global prices.

The new virus has created alarm because it is spreading quickly,



much about it is unknown, and authorities' drastic response is likely to drag on economic growth. "This will last for some time," said Iris Pang, Greater China economist at ING.

"It's uncertain whether factory workers, or how many of them, will return," she said. "We haven't yet seen corporate earnings since the (spread of the) coronavirus. Restaurants and retailers may have very little sales."

More than 2,500 stocks fell by the daily limit of 10%. The Shanghai Composite closed down 7.7% at 2,746.6, its lowest since August and a modest recovery from early trade, when it was down nearly 9%. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said the stocks plunge had irrational or even panic elements, triggered by herd behaviour, in a newspaper commentary published after markets closed.

The sell-off cast a pall over Asia, though losses were contained because a slide had been expected. Amid the sell-down, the PBOC had

injected \$173.81 billion into money markets through reverse bond repurchase agreements, the largest such move since 2004, according to DBS analysts. It also cut the interest rate on those short-term funding facilities by 10 basis points.

China's securities regulator moved to limit short selling and urged mutual fund managers not to sell shares unless they are facing investor redemptions, persons aware of the matter said.

## China to cut tariffs on \$75 billion in US imports: Official

China will cut punitive tariffs on USD 75 billion in US imports by half starting February 14, the government said on Thursday, a month after Beijing and Washington signed a truce in their trade war.

The reduction will apply to tariffs of five per cent and 10 per cent that were imposed on more than 1,600 items in September, according to the State Council Tariff Commission.



## ABU DHABI'S ETIHAD SELLS 38 PLANES FOR \$1 BILLION

**DUBAI (TIP):** Abu Dhabi's long-troubled Etihad Airways said it would sell 38 aircraft to an investment firm and a leasing company in a deal valued at USD 1 billion, the latest cost-cutting measure by the United Arab Emirates' national carrier.

Etihad said it would sell 38 aircraft — 22 Airbus A330s and 16 Boeing 777-300ERs — in the deal with investment firm KKR and leasing firm Altavair AirFinance. KKR said the Boeing 777-300ERs will "be leased back to Etihad upon purchase in early 2020," while the Airbus A330s will go to international clients.

Etihad described the move as being in line with "the third year of its transformation program." "The deal offers us flexibility while ensuring we stand by our sustainability targets and maintain a fleet of the most fuel-efficient, technologically advanced aircraft," the airline said in a statement.

Etihad's website lists itself as having a fleet of 102 aircraft. It no longer lists its A330s among its fleet, having said it would begin phasing those aircraft out.

The 16 Boeing 777s it will sell and lease back represent 15 per cent of its current fleet.

Since 2016, Etihad has lost a total of USD 4.75 billion as its strategy of aggressively buying stakes in airlines from Europe to Australia to compete against Emirates and fellow rival Qatar Airways exposed the company to major losses.

Etihad lost USD 1.28 billion in 2018. It has yet to release results for 2019.

## Air India has dues of Rs 822 cr towards VVIP charter flights

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Cash-strapped Air India, which is being disinvested by the government, has outstanding dues of over Rs 822 crore towards VVIP charter flights, according to latest data provided by the national carrier to an RTI response.

In its RTI response provided on Wednesday to Commodore Lokesh Batra (retd), who sought to know the latest data on outstanding bills of Air India, the carrier said as on November 30, 2019, Rs 822 crore were pending towards VVIP charter flights.

It also said an additional Rs 9.67 crore towards evacuation operations and Rs 12.65 crore towards ferrying foreign dignitaries were also pending.

Under VVIP charter flights, Air India provides its aircraft to ferry— the President, the Vice-President and the Prime Minister— for which the bills are paid by the ministries. If outstanding bills of VVIP charter flights were not enough, the carrier had also accrued bills of Rs 526.14 crore towards tickets taken on credit by government officials as on March 31, 2019, according to the reply.

Out of Rs 526.14 crore, Rs 236.16 crore were pending for over three years, Air India said in its response.

The airlines also said provisioned Rs 281.82 crore as an accounting charge in its account books for "probable non-recovery".



# RBI goes for no rate cut, but loans to become cheaper

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Shrugging off its inability to trim the repo — due to high inflation — Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday announced several measures to push growth and lower interest rates in the system. It said it would lend Rs 1 lakh crore of one-year and three-year money to banks at the repo rate 5.15% so they would have durable funds at a softer rate.

The central bank also gave them a six-month CRR-break on new home, auto and MSME loans, again bringing down their cost of funds. "We believe the RBI has managed to deliver implicit easing without actually cutting the policy rate," Sonal Varma, economist at Nomura, wrote, pointing the primary macro challenge has been transmission via the credit channel.

Not surprisingly, short-term bonds rallied with the yields falling by about 15 basis points. A general softening of yields, across the curve, is expected as is a spillover to the short-term corporate bond markets. The outcome-linked intervention in the form of a CRR break, for incremental loans, rather than an outright cut in the reserve ratio, was welcomed.

In a push for growth, the RBI sought to lower loan rate for MSMEs by asking banks to peg interest rates to this segment to an external benchmark much like it is for other loans. In addition, it sought to free up capital for lenders by extending the forbearance on asset-classification on their MSME portfolios till December



2020. Also, banks need not downgrade the classification of commercial real estate assets, where the project has been delayed for reasons beyond the promoter's control, for another year.

Stocks soared as investors believe fresh loans in the auto, housing and MSME segments would get a fillip as banks pass on the gains from the lower cost of funds to borrowers.

PK Gupta, MD, State Bank of India (SBI), said it was possible his bank could lend around Rs 40,000-50,000 crore to these segments. Other bankers noted that yields on loans to MSMEs were relatively high and could be lowered now thanks to the twin benefits from restructuring and the CRR-exemption. However, given the shortage of creditworthy customers banks might not rush to lend.

# MAGHA PURNIMA

**M**agha Purnima is an important day for Hindus that falls on the 'purnima' (full moon day) in the month of 'Magha' in the traditional Hindu calendar. This date roughly corresponds to the months of January-February in the Gregorian calendar. Magha Purnima is also popularly known as 'Maghi Purnima' or 'Maha Maghi' and is the last and most important day of the Magha Maas. In the Hindu legends Purnima is known to be an important day for performing religious and spiritual rituals, and of these the Magha Purnima is one of the most auspicious.

On this day Hindu devotees in thousands perform the ritualistic bath at the Triveni Sangam in Prayag. During this time the famous 'Kumbha Mela' and 'Magha Mela' is also held in which devotees flock from each and every corner of the country. Even in southern states of India like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, it is celebrated with utmost enthusiasm and gaiety. In Tamil Nadu on this day the spectacular 'float' festival is held wherein beautifully decorated idols of Meenakshi and Lord Sundeshwara are mounted on floats. Magha Purnima also holds special significance for followers of Buddhism as it is believed that Gautama Buddha pronounced his impending death on the same day.

Magha Purnima 2020 is on February 09 Sunday

## Rituals during Magha Purnima

On the day of Magha Purnima, devotees must get up early and take a holy dip in any water body, before sunrise. For those who cannot take a dip in the river, can take bath at home by mixing Gangajal in water.

After the ritualistic bath, devotees begin to make preparations for the puja. On this day, they worship Lord Vishnu and Hanuman Ji. Also along with the 'Ishta Devatas', the day of Magha Purnima is also dedicated to worshipping Goddess Parvati and Lord Brihaspati' (as Brihaspati is the God of Magha Nakshatram).

Devotees perform the Satyanarayana Puja with full devotion and also recite the Satyanarayana Katha. The idol of the lord is worshipped with banana leaves, sandalwood paste, til, supari, moli and fruits. In the most of Lord Vishnu's temples across India, special arrangements for this puja are made. Hence people also visit the temples in the evening.

Fasting on the day of Magha Purnima is also considered to be rewarding. The observer of this vrat, fasts during the day and eats only after offering 'ardhya' to the moon in the evening. Only Single meal is allowed in a day.

Making donations in the form of clothes, food, cereals, ghee, jaggery and fruits is highly beneficial. Donations can be any form and should be made to Brahmins and those in need. In the Hindu scriptures, it is believed to be very auspicious to donate 'til' (sesame seeds) in the entire month of Magha.

In some regions ancestor rituals are also held on Magha Purnima. Devotees offer tarpan for the peace of the deceased souls.

## Significance of Magha Purnima

The importance of Magha Purnima is mentioned in Brahma Vaivarta Purana. According to the Hindu mythology, on this sacred day, Lord Vishnu resides in the River Ganga and therefore it is strongly believed that by mere touching the holy water of River Ganga, devotees



can attain salvation. Taking a holistic bath in the sacred rivers like Ganga, Saraswati and Yamuna on Magha Purnima is very beneficial. By piously observing the Magha Purnima vrat devotees can gain freedom from their sins and also acquire purity and peace of mind. Doing charity on Magha Purnima gives same benefits as observing Maha Yagyas.

Besides, religious significance, the day of Magha Purnima is also holds importance in the science of astrology. It is held that on this day Sun enters into the Capricorn Sign and Moon moves in the Cancer constellation. Hence it is believed that taking a holy dip on Magha Purnima can put an end to all the problems correlated with Sun and Moon. The month of Magha is also beneficial from scientific point of view. It is believed that this month helps the human body to adjust with the changing seasons. Therefore taking a bath on Magha Purnima will provide strength and power to the body.

## Legend

According to Brahmavaivart Purana, Lord Vishnu resides in the Ganga River during the month of Magh, and hence merely looking at this holy water can cure all sins and all diseases. Another legend states that Kshir Sagar becomes an abode of Lord Vishnu during the Magh month. It is also believed that Sage Vishwamitra took the holy bath during Kumbh Mela in 2382 BCE on the day of Magh Purnima. Astrologically, Magh Purnima is regarded as an auspicious day because the Sun is in the Capricorn sign and the Moon in the Cancer Sign. Hence, taking the ritualistic bath can cure all problems related to the Sun and the Moon. According to the Matsya Purana donating the Brahma-Vaivarta Purana on this day is very auspicious.



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

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

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



### Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at [info@bejandaruwala.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwala.com) and on phone **011-91-8141234275** [www.bejandaruwala.com](http://www.bejandaruwala.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 10 - February 16, 2020

**ARIES:** Ganesha says you may feel like travelling to broaden your understanding of the world around you. You want to know about new ideas and different ways of living. You want to check out all that life has to offer away from home and work and the usual mundane demands of life. You begin to appreciate life in all its colours. Ganesha is happy.

**TAURUS:** There are many influences at play now. You want to do too many things and there is a danger of misjudgement. You are putting all your energies in different directions. You are caught between caution and optimism. You are not sure how much to push, whether you should expand or retrench. You could have overextended yourself in the past and bitter memories thankfully put the brakes on you.

**GEMINI:** You are pulled between the desire for greater freedom and opportunity and the need to hold on to the safe and predictable. You are tempted to break away from everything and start all over again from scratch without the weight of the past holding you back. All this restlessness can result in many chops and churns and you will make many significant changes in your life.

**CANCER:** You will opt for casual relationships and friendships as you are busy finding your way and do not have the time to invest in deeper liaisons. Ganesha encourages you on this quest for personal understanding. The positive aspects to this period are also considerable and this is the right time to grow, to expand. There will be new business plans and new responsibilities.

**LEO:** This is an interesting period and can represent the culmination of a long drive for success or power. There will be opposition and many challenges and roadblocks. But you manage to surmount it all. You grow in many ways and could get a promotion and acquire prestige and power. You can impact a lot of people and it all depends on several factors and what you do with your position.

**VIRGO:** You could be driven ruthlessly to get ahead. Do not cut corners or get unethical though the temptations may be very strong. There could be unfortunate consequences with the law or with higher authorities as you will be found out. Control your drives and go slow. There is no harm in it, assures Ganesha.

**LIBRA:** This will be a significant period. Do not get obsessive and keep away fanatical thought processes. Try to work in a team and hear out even the most disparate thought processes. Shun all self-righteousness and do not try to force your views upon others. Look for compromises and midway meeting points. Your ideas may be great but your style of functioning can come in for improvement.

**SCORPIO:** You should be open to negotiation. Ganesha believes that this is not a time when you should resort to coercion of any kind. With a little bit of humility coupled with intelligence, you can enlarge your personal goals to encompass the groups. You love being the top dog, the team leader, and the lion in the ring. But in the real world, every disparate entity must be taken along with you for success to be achieved.

**SAGITTARIUS:** An intense and passionate phase when you are filled with genuine warmth and the desire to give and express love. You may have many liaisons and enjoy them all as you will be walking the tightrope and playing with fire to share your passions equally among all. You are like Valentino with an insatiable appetite. You are charismatic and will attract many to your web.

**CAPRICORN:** There could be a significant relationship too in the midst of it all, but even if nothing emerges from it, but even if nothing emerges from it, you will definitely gain from the wisdom and maturity it offers. The feelings now are compulsive and overwhelming. There could also be domestic issues to handle as a result of your shenanigans. There could be problems at home; don't say you weren't warned! Ganesha wishes you well.

**AQUARIUS:** There are maudlin and soft moments. You meet with family and friends and spend time in helping others. You could get very emotional too as you bask in the love, warmth, admiration and care of loved ones. This influence stimulates your love of beauty. You make every effort of surround yourself with beauty. You make beautiful purchases and want to be in pleasant surroundings and surrounded by art objects and beautiful people.

**PISCES:** You could get extravagant in this period and spend on objects that you may not need later. This is a passing phase. The intensity of the moment and its moods seduce you as for now. Seize the moment and go with the flow as tomorrow is always another day, another time, another chance. You are doing well your plans are on the fast track to success. Ganesha's blessings are with you.

### Birthday Horoscope February 10 - February 16, 2020

**FEB 10:** Ganesha says there's stability in the atmosphere today, a good time on the job, maybe involving money or a sense of being trusted and given increased responsibility; with medical personnel, too.

**FEB 11:** Your first deep conversation with a mate or other companion, or simply others' sharp, penetrating intellect, makes its appearance today. Watch tonight, however, for rough emotional complications.

**FEB 12:** The Moon highlights recent events in

your work-health zone, perhaps with the same nervous edginess and could cause breaking away. Look for a new, balanced health regimen.

**FEB 13:** The emotional barometer gets measured in your partnership arena, which can bring its fair share of warm attention. If there are discordant interferences, fly low and smooth instead.

**FEB 14:** Little gestures of attention from someone you're very fond of can bring shared

pleasures today, perhaps in excess and in your own locale. Mid-night may be the only bump in the road.

**FEB 15:** Your instincts are on cue, and you and a companion may be understanding each other without words, and a few surprises. Don't squabble tonight.

**FEB 16:** You'll resonate to the earthy, practical, success-generating trends, finding influential contacts and resourceful accords sealing the deal.

# WIPA WINS MLK YOUTH AWARD

BY MABEL PAIS

**"Intelligence plus character is the true goal of education" - Dr. Martin Luther King**

**"Being recognized with this special award on the actual MLK day is extremely touching." - Peter H. Gistelinck, Executive Director, WIPA**

On MLK day, January 20, 2020, The Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts' (WIPA) Paterson Music Project (PMP) announced that it is this year's recipient of the Paterson Youth Council (PYC) Dr. Martin Luther King Youth Recognition Award for its exemplary work with over 250 students in grades 2-9 throughout the city of Paterson.

The annual award recognizes the outstanding achievements of individuals and one youth-serving organization making a difference in the lives of Paterson's youth. The Paterson Music Project, as well as four students, one adult, and one elected official, was honored for its impact in Paterson at an awards ceremony held on Monday, January 20 at 10:00am at The Brownstone House, 351 West Broadway in Paterson.

PMP Director Elizabeth Moulthrop said, "It is an honor to be recognized by the Paterson Youth Council. There are so many incredible organizations in Paterson with people behind them making a positive impact on the city of Paterson on a daily basis. At PMP, we are grateful to work alongside such an inspiring group of change makers and passionate community advocates. I count myself lucky to get to work with some of the best kids



Left to right: Peter H. Gistelinck, Dana Nix, Shanna Lin, Terrence Thornhill, Elizabeth Moulthrop, and Helen H. Cha-Pyo  
Photo / Courtesy WIPA

and families in New Jersey and make music with them every day."

The PYC, a citywide youth-led and youth-driven civic organization, has been representing the interests of young people in the city of Paterson since 2006. The Youth Council sponsors special events throughout the year, including the Dr. Martin Luther King Youth Recognition Award Breakfast, and is facilitated by the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC).

WIPA Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo said, "This special recognition comes to us as a huge encouragement. Dr. King said, 'Intelligence plus

character is the true goal of education,' and at the Paterson Music Project (PMP), we continue to strive to be a place where our young students can grow both in mind and in character through the transformative power of music. I would like to applaud our talented and dedicated staff and teaching artists for their tireless efforts in providing excellent instruction to our students."

"Being recognized with this special award on the actual MLK day is extremely touching," said Peter H. Gistelinck, Executive Director at WIPA. "Expanding the Paterson Music Project per our strategic plan will remain our first priority."

The PMP empowers children to achieve their full potential through the joyful pursuit of musical excellence. Inspired by the global El Sistema movement, PMP uses music education as a vehicle for social change in its home city of Paterson.

PMP provides tuition-free musical training to students throughout Paterson after school.

PMP is a program of the WIPA. Wharton is New Jersey's largest non-profit performing arts education organization serving over 1,500 students of all ages and abilities through a range of classes and ensembles including the 15 ensembles of the New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) which serve 500 students in grades 3-12. Beginning with early childhood music classes for toddlers, the Performing Arts School (PAS) offers 500 private lessons and group classes each week, ensuring there is something for everyone of all ages and abilities.

For more information on WIPA, NJYS, PMP, PYC, and PAS, visit [www.WhartonArts.org](http://www.WhartonArts.org)

By Mabel Pais

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) on January 30 announced that two of its ensembles, the NJYS Jazz Orchestra and Charles Mingus Combo, are among twelve finalist ensembles in the 12th Annual Charles Mingus Festival & High School Competition, February 14-17 at The New School of Jazz and Jazz Standard in New York City.

Organized and presented by Dr. Keller Coker, The New School of Jazz, Sue Mingus, and Let My Children Hear Music/The Charles Mingus Institute, the event showcases dozens of talented high school students from across the United States. This year's finalists, in categories for both big band and combos, will travel to New York City from California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Washington to explore aspects of Mingus's music. On Saturday, February 15, students will participate in instrumental clinics, workshops, lectures, films, and jam sessions at The New School of Jazz's Arnhold Hall at 55 West 13th Street. All events are open to the public. On Sunday, February 16, the public may attend the Mingus Competition: a full day of concert performances in Tishman Auditorium at 63 Fifth Avenue. Outstanding soloists from the

## NJYS Jazz Orchestra Finalist in Charles Mingus Fest & Competition



NJYS Jazz Orchestra

Photo / Courtesy WIPA

Competition will be invited to sit in with the Mingus Big Band, which will perform all weekend at Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th Street (between Park and Lexington).

"I believe teaching jazz is teaching the history of 20th

century American music and culture with all of its complex sociological issues. Its indisputable influence on American popular music and culture of the 20th century is foundational," said Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Music Director of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. "Here at the New Jersey Youth Symphony, we believe in the importance of jazz education and are committed to offering our young musicians exceptional opportunities to learn, experience, and perform jazz at an extremely high level. NJYS wouldn't be complete without a jazz program," said Peter H. Gistelinck, Executive Director of the WIPA.

"This is quite an accomplishment and an honor for our program, especially for the second year of the NJYS Jazz Orchestra," said NJYS Director of Jazz Julius Tolentino. "This festival consistently has the top jazz bands in the country, and I'm excited for our students to be recognized at the national level."

For more information about the New Jersey Youth Symphony jazz program, visit [www.NJYS.org](http://www.NJYS.org).



Dr. Min Kwon

Photo / Courtesy WIPA

## Wipa Presents Min Kwon's Piano Master Class

BY MABEL PAIS

**"Master classes offer so many benefits for performers and audience members alike."**

**"(Dr. Min Kwon's) in-depth musical knowledge combined with positive energy will bring many 'a-ha' moments to everyone in attendance."**

**- Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director-Principal Conductor, NJYS**

**Dr. Min Kwon, Professor of Piano Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University Gives Piano Master Class at Berkeley Heights, Friday, February 21**

The Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA) will present a piano master class with Dr. Min Kwon on Friday, February 21 from 4:00 to 6:00pm at the Performing Arts School (PAS) located at 60 Locust Avenue in Berkeley Heights. The event is free and open to the public.

The piano master class will feature seven outstanding young students selected from Wharton's Performing Arts School (WPAS) and New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS). Charlotte Bandekow, age 13, of Chatham; James Schadt, age 15, of Califon; Michael Pack, age 14, of Basking Ridge; Isabel Zarbin, age 14, of Chatham; Benson Liu, age 17, of Morristown; Joie Kuan, age 13, of Somerset; and Sarah Ouyang, age 16, of Basking Ridge, will

perform works by Schumann, Chopin, Schubert, Debussy, Schedrin, and Joplin.

"Master classes offer so many benefits for performers and audience members alike," said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo. "We are so fortunate to welcome Dr. Min Kwon to the Performing Arts School this month. Her in-depth musical knowledge combined with positive energy will bring many 'a-ha' moments to everyone in attendance. I highly encourage all pianists in our region to come and see a master teacher at work!"

To learn more about Dr. Min Kwon and WIPA, visit [WhartonArts.org](http://WhartonArts.org)

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

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## Eight Indians Sentenced for Enrolling Students in Fake Farmington University

**MICHIGAN (TIP):** Eight individuals of Indian origin from around the country who were charged with conspiracy to commit visa fraud and harboring aliens for profit, have been sentenced, announced United States Attorney Matthew Schneider.

They were given prison term for recruiting students to the fake Farmington University, which was set up by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement to crackdown on immigration fraud.

### Those sentenced included-

- Barath Kakireddy, 30, of Lake Mary, FL, sentenced to 18 months.
- Suresh Kandala, 32, of Culpeper, VA, sentenced to 18 months.
- Phanideep Karnati, 36, of Louisville, KY, sentenced to 6 months.
- Prem Rampeesa, 27, of Charlotte, NC, sentenced to 12 months and one day.
- Santosh Sama, 29, of Fremont, CA, sentenced to 24 months.
- Avinash Thakkallapally, 29, of Harrisburg, PA, sentenced to 15 months
- Aswanth Nune, 27, of Atlanta, GA, sentenced to 12 months and one day.
- Naveen Prathipati, 27, of Dallas, TX, sentenced to 12 months and one day

According to court records, from approximately February 2017 through January 2019, the defendants, a group of foreign citizens, conspired with each other and others to fraudulently facilitate hundreds of foreign nationals in illegally remaining and working in the United States by actively recruiting them to enroll into a metro Detroit private university that, unbeknownst to the conspirators, was operated by HSI special agents as part of an undercover operation. As part of the scheme, the defendants/recruiters assisted foreign citizen "students" in fraudulently obtaining immigration documents from the school and facilitated the creation of false student records, including transcripts, for the purpose of deceiving immigration authorities. The illegal documents obtained as a result of the conspirators' actions were based on false claims, false statements, and fraud since the purported foreign students had no intention of attending school, nor attended a single class, and were not bona fide students.

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

CONT FROM PAGE 1

## Trump Acquitted, Slams...

President Trump said February 6, he and the Republicans had been put through a "terrible ordeal" by some very dishonest and corrupt people during the impeachment. Addressing the religious believers at the 68th Annual National Prayer Breakfast, Trump referred to the impeachment and said that every possible attempt was made to hurt the nation.

The Senate voted on Wednesday 52-48 to acquit Trump of abuse of power and 53-47 to absolve him of obstruction of Congress, the two charges he faced. The vote along party lines foiled the Democratic Party's determined bid to overthrow Trump from the White House ahead of the November 3 presidential election.

The Democratic-led House of Representatives approved the articles of impeachment on December 18 after charging Trump with pressuring Ukraine to smear former US Vice President Joe Biden, a potential Democratic rival in the 2020 presidential election, using nearly USD 400 million in military aid as leverage. Though Trump, 73, has been acquitted, he will become the first impeached president to seek re-election.

A two-thirds majority vote was needed to remove Trump, which was always going to be a long shot in a 100-member Senate controlled by his Republican Party with 53 seats. "For now, the impeachment of Mr Trump appears to have evenly divided the nation," The New York Times reported.

Republican Senator Mitt Romney, a bitter critic of Trump and the party's presidential nominee in 2012, voted against the president on the first charge, but followed the party line on the second article of impeachment. Rest of the members voted on party lines. "The President is pleased to put this latest chapter of shameful behavior by the Democrats in the past, and looks forward to continuing his work on behalf of the American people in 2020 and beyond," a much-relieved White House said soon after Trump's acquittal.

White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham slammed the Opposition Democrats. "Today, the sham impeachment attempt concocted by Democrats ended in the full vindication and exoneration of President Donald J Trump. As we have said all along, he is not guilty," she said.

CONTD FROM PAGE 12

## Federation of Indian...

Pinky & Dinesh Thakkar, Guest of Honor, Ninad Daftari, President 2019, Dhitu Bhagwakar, Rita Singh, Sunny Kular, Neil Khot, Founding Members &

Past Presidents, Amarjeet Singh, Founder & President Wheaton Gurudwara belonging to Sikh Religious Society, Chicago, IL, Haribhai Patel, President BSC group, Dr Kamal Patel, Executive VP, Amit Jhingran, CEO State Bank of India, Nimish Jani, Schaumburg Township, Krishna Bansal, Commissioner at Naperville Planning. And Advisory Board Members, Syed Hussaini, Asha Oroskar, Brij Sharma, Aishwarya Sharma, Pradeep Shukla, Keerthi Reevori.

At the conclusion of the lamp lighting ceremony, the Founder President of FIA Chicago, Sunil Shah was requested to share a few words. Sunil Shah in his speech, gave a warm welcome to all the guests and dignitaries present at the event and recalled a brief history of the FIA Chicago's journey in the past 10 years. He requested Onkar Singh Sangha, Founder Past President, Ninad Daftari, President 2019, Neil Khot, President 2017, to join him on the stage, in welcoming, Gurmeet Singh Dhalwan, Incoming President 2020. New FIA President 2020 Dhalwan, spoke eloquently at his first formal Event of the year, and expressed that he was honored and privilege to receive an important responsibility of leading an elite group dedicated to community service, in his new role, serving as the president of FIA Chicago.

Welcome Speeches by the FIA leadership was followed by the Introduction of FIA Board, and all FIA members were requested to join on the stage and a group picture was taken.

As is the tradition for a Republic Day Cultural event, there were many inspiring speeches delivered throughout the program, including a few notable ones by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and Consul General Sudhakar Dalela, both a keynote speaker at the Republic Day Event. Hanover Park Mayor, Rodney Craig & Trustee Herb Porter also spoke about the Indo-American community and their contributions.

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and Consul General Sudhakar Dalela helped in the inauguration of the FIA Souvenir Book and distribution of the Wheelchairs and Walkers to the needy. One Wheel Chair was received by Bharatiya Senior Citizens Group and the second one was received by Wheaton Gurudwara, IL.

There were important announcements made for the upcoming FIA Events, Indian Heritage Night celebrations, along with Windy City Bulls basketball game on February 23, 2020 at Sears Center Arena and Holi event on March 21, 2020 at DuPage Fairgrounds.

For the Awards & Recognitions during the cultural program, Consul General Shri Sudhakar Dalela was felicitated and presented with a recognition plaque for

Consul General Chicago's continued support and whole-hearted participation in FIA's numerous community service endeavors.

Guest of Honor, Pinky Thakkar & Dinesh Thakkar was also invited and recognized for their wonderful support and were presented with a recognition plaque as well. All the Sponsors and Service Providers and Supporters who helped out for this special event, were also called upon one by one, and were presented with the recognition plaques, as a token of FIA's appreciation towards their generous support and help with the cause. Certificates were also given to all the cultural program performers, and the volunteers who helped out with this event. (Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

CONTD FROM PAGE 13

## Seattle City Council...

"Seattle is leading the moral consensus in the global outcry against the CAA. When genocidal campaigns begin, one important intervention is international condemnation, and the Seattle community feels a deep sense of solidarity with their electeds, as the time to stand against the Indian government's Islamophobic policies is now," said Thenmozhi Soundarajan, Executive Director of Equality Labs. "These genocidal projects happen in the shadows and this resolution highlights the significance of Seattle City Council standing up for South Asian minorities, Muslims, and caste oppressed communities."

"As South Asians in Seattle, SABAH confirms that the CAA is not an internal issue to India, and that Seattle must take a stand against it," said Veena Roy of SABAH. "There are thousands here in Seattle who are intimately connected to the minority experience in India, some have needed to migrate here after similar violence in the past, and many who have family in India who directly experience the violence that the Indian government clamors to keep hidden. We know that Kshama Sawant's resolution is much more than a symbolic gesture. It has created ripples in the Greater Seattle Area, even in India. As a community of Seattle, a sanctuary city that fights for equality and safety for the undocumented, we applaud the passing of this resolution."

"Within living memory, policies closely parallel to [the NRC and CAA] were among the first steps taken by the Nazi government of Germany in the 1930s and are now recognizable as initial steps to the Holocaust," stated a February 3 resolution by the Board of Directors of Kadima Reconstructionist Jewish Community. "Policies such as these were central elements in centuries of systematic oppression of Jews, especially in Europe."

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A quintessentially residential area, Pelling radiates a charm that takes one back to a time long gone by. Pelling is quite an eminent hill station of Sikkim. Famous for its magnificence and beauty, Pelling is natural splendour indeed. A trip to Sikkim is incomplete without a tour to Pelling. A true description of Pelling is incomplete without the mention of tranquil monasteries, lush biospheres, garrulous waterfalls and shimmering lakes. There are numerous scenic places that one can visit in Pelling like Khecheopalri Lake, monasteries and Singshore Bridge.

Pelling offers an astounding view of Mt. Kanchenjunga and even organizes adventure activities like trekking, skiing, etc. During winters, the hill station gradually disappears in a blanket of snow. Pelling has had a fascinating history. Pelling was the first capital of Sikkim. Located at an altitude of 6800 ft, Pelling offers stunning views of mountains like Kaktang, Kumbhakarna and Dom. Pelling is home to many tribes and communities like Bhutias, Lepchas, Tamangs, Limboos and Marwaris amongst others.

### Places To Visit

#### Sangachoeling Monastery

The 16th century Sangachoeling Monastery is one of the oldest and perhaps one of the most important in Sikkim. Accessible on foot only, the monastery is a 45-minute walk from Pelling.

A picturesque and peaceful setting, it is lined with prayer flags that flutter in the cool breeze and create a soothing sound. Remember to take permission before clicking pictures within the premises.

#### Khecheopalri Lake

Another must-see in Pelling is the Khecheopalri Lake. Considered a sacred site, it is revered by both Hindus and Buddhists.

Hidden by a rich forest cover, it offers a pristine setting that is perfect for a stroll along the periphery for admiring its beauty. It is also considered a 'wishing lake' and it is believed that no leaf remains on its surface at any point in time.

Realistically, this is the case also because of the sizeable duck population at the lake which usually plucks away any leaves that might fall on the surface of the lake. No water activities are permitted at the lake due to its sacred nature.

#### Rivers and Waterfalls

The Kanchenjunga Falls and the Sangay Waterfalls are two good attractions you can visit on relatively freer days. An added advantage is the unspoilt surroundings of these waterfalls. The beautiful Rimbi River is 12 kilometres away from Pelling close to Darap Village, which falls on the way to Yuksom. It also has a small hydro-electric power plant on it. While you are here, we also recommend visiting Sewaro Rock Garden to observe beautiful rock formations through which the beautiful Rimbi flows.

#### Rabdentse Ruins

Rabdentse is the 16th former capital of Sikkim and now lies in ruins. It was destroyed after the Nepalese invasion in the 18th century. Located close to the Pemayangtse Monastery, the ruins offer superb views of the Kanchenjunga Range.

#### Pemayangtse Monastery

The monastery is a 118-kilometre long

# PELLING: A QUIET HILL STATION OF SIKKIM



excursion from Gangtok but worth all the travelling time. Inside, take note of the murals depicting stories of Lamaism and Dungzin Rimpoche's seven-tier wooden masterpiece - a smaller remake of Santopalri, the celestial palace of Rinpoche. It took Dungzin five years to carve out this masterpiece.

#### Singshore Bridge

The Singshore Bridge, with a span of 198 metres and a depth of 220 metres, is the second highest suspension bridge in Asia and one of the highest in Sikkim. What's more, the bridge will soon have a permanent bungee jumping station built on it - another gift from Sikkim to adventure lovers.

### How to Reach

#### Pelling by Air

The nearest Airport from Pelling is Bagdogra Airport, Siliguri, roughly four hour drive from Pelling. Scheduled flights are available from cities such as New Delhi, Guwahati, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. There is an availability of the flights from International destinations such as Paro and Bangkok.

#### Pelling by rail

The nearest Railway Station from Pelling is Jalpaiguri Railway Station, located at a distance of 170 Kms from Pelling. It is well connected to major cities like Chennai, New Delhi, Howrah, Alipur and Darjeeling through Guwahati Express, Ndl's Bgp Express, Mas Njp Express, Dbrt Rajdhani and Porvotr S Krnti.

#### Pelling by road

It is 10 Kms from Geyzing, 55 Kms from Damthang, 84 Kms from Kalimpong, 110 Kms from Gangtok, 127 Kms from Siliguri, 145 Kms from Pankhabari, 152 Kms from Nagrakata, 168 Kms from Jalpaiguri and 380 Kms from Bhagalpur. Pelling is well connected with the above cities via Sikkim State Road Transport Corporation (SSRTC) and some private travel services.



# Sloppy fielding, 24 wides: Mistakes that cost India first ODI against New Zealand

Ross Taylor's 21st ODI hundred took the game away from India as New Zealand registered their first win across formats in 2 months, beating India by 4 wickets in the first ODI at Hamilton on Wednesday. Taylor's century overshadowed Shreyas Iyer's maiden ODI hundred. Apart from Taylor, stand-in captain Tom Latham, who was leading the side in Kane Williamson's absence, played a crucial role with his 69-run knock off just 48 balls. Henry Nicholls too played his part with 78 off 82 balls to give New Zealand a solid start when they were chasing 348 for victory. India captain Virat Kohli mentioned at the post-match presentation that New Zealand were the better side on all three departments.

While there is no real point to disagree with Kohli but India were not on the top of their game. They have been leaving a few loopholes even in the T20Is which were not highlighted due to New Zealand's lack of finishing skills. But on Wednesday they cost India dearly.

## Sloppy fielding, Kuldeep dropping Taylor

"We were decent in the field, we dropped one chance. We need to improve though," Virat Kohli termed India's fielding in the first ODI as 'decent'. That was not enough as



India paid a heavy price for their sloppy fielding. Ross Taylor was only on 10 when he miscued an attempted slog-sweep which ballooned up in the air towards Kuldeep Yadav at fine-leg. While it was not the easiest of chances but the left-arm wrist spinner should have done better after reaching the ball. The drop proved to be costly as Taylor smashed an unbeaten 103 to take New Zealand home.

## 24 wides

India gave away 29 extras on Wednesday and bowled 4.1 overs extra with 24 of them being wides. This was also the first instance since 2008 when India bowled more than 20 wides in an ODI.

## Shardul Thakur's selection

Shardul Thakur may have bowled that brilliant last over in the 4th T20I to stretch the match into the Super Over, which India won, but his overall returns in the white-ball cricket don't make him an automatic choice in India's XI, especially when there is someone like Navdeep Saini waiting in the wings. Thakur looked the least impressive of India seamers and leaked 80 runs in his 10 overs.

He did not have answers when Taylor and Latham picked his knuckleballs and went after him. Moreover, he has picked up only 9 wickets in his 9 ODIs at an average of 51.33.



## BABAR AZAM SET TO BE NAMED AS PAKISTAN ODI CAPTAIN

**KARACHI (TIP):** Top Pakistan batsman Babar Azam is set to be named captain of the national ODI squad after having already replaced wicketkeeper batsman Sarfaraz Ahmed as skipper in the T20 format. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in October had dropped Sarfaraz from the Test and T20 squads in a surprise decision while naming Azhar Ali as captain in the longer format and Babar for the shorter version.

But the PCB didn't name a captain for the ODI format as Pakistan's next 50-over assignment will be a lone match against Bangladesh on April 3 here.

Critics, however, pointed out that any decision to replace Sarfaraz as captain in ODI format is not going to be easy as the wicketkeeper-batsman led Pakistan to six straight wins last year starting with the World Cup league stage matches.

"Sarfaraz has also performed well as a batsman and keeper in 50-overs format having played with a batting average of around 32 and kept well last year," a critic said.

Sarfaraz's biggest achievement as ODI captain was to lead Pakistan to the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy title that too after defeating arch-rivals India in the final.

## Barcelona, Real Madrid fail to make Copa del Rey semis first time in decade

The Copa del Rey's new single-elimination format claimed its biggest victims on Thursday, with Real Madrid and Barcelona both being eliminated in the quarterfinals.

Madrid lost 4-3 to Real Sociedad at home before Barcelona conceded a late goal to lose 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao on the most surprising night of a competition filled with upsets.

Defending champion Valencia also lost on Tuesday and Villarreal was eliminated on Wednesday. Sevilla and Atletico Madrid had already been ousted in previous rounds.

Only the semifinals are being played over two legs this season, giving smaller clubs greater chances of knocking out bigger teams.

The surprising last four will also include Granada and second-division club Mirandes. It's the first time in a decade that neither Madrid nor Barcelona made it to the last four in the Copa. At least one of the Spanish powerhouses had reached the final every year since the 2009-10 season, when Sevilla won the title. Barcelona made the final the last six years in a row. "This is the new Copa," Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets said. "We are playing one match, away from home, and in one play you are eliminated."

Real Sociedad ended Madrid's 21-game unbeaten run with its win at the Santiago Bernabeu to reach the semifinals for the first time in six years.

Athletic got past Barcelona thanks to Inaki Williams' winner three minutes into second-half stoppage time, adding to the club's struggles since it fired coach Ernesto Valverde and replaced him with Quique Setien.

## ICC U19 World Cup: Bangladesh enter maiden final, to face India on Sunday



**POTCHEFSTROOM (TIP):** Bangladesh stormed into their maiden ICC U-19 World Cup final with a comprehensive six-wicket win over New Zealand here on Thursday, setting up the title clash with record four-time champions India. Mahmudul Hason Joy rose to the occasion with a 100 off 127 balls, helping Bangladesh overcome the 212-run target in 44.1 overs.

After losing the openers cheaply in the chase, Joy paired up with Towhid Hridoy (40) first before teaming up with Shahadat Hussain (40 not out) to share a 101-run stand for the fourth wicket and fashion a resounding win.

New Zealand had recovered to make 211 for eight from 74 for four, courtesy an unbeaten 75 off 83 balls from Beckham Wheeler-Greenall.

Shoriful Islam was the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh, taking three wickets for 45 runs in 10 overs. The final between defending champions India and Bangladesh will be played here on Sunday. Like



India, Bangladesh too are unbeaten in the tournament. Bangladesh captain Akbar Ali said his team will have to play its best cricket to upstage India.

"We will play it as a normal game. We can't take the pressure of thinking that this is our first final. India is a very good side, and we have to play our 'A' game. We have to do the best in all three departments. Bangladeshi cricket fans are crazy, and I hope we will continue to get the same support that we've been getting," said Ali at the post-match presentation.

One can expect a close finish considering India scraped through by five runs in a low-scoring Asia Cup final against Bangladesh in September.

India were able to defend a paltry 105 by bowling out Bangladesh for 101 in the final held in Colombo.

India, led by Priyam Garg, had hammered Pakistan by 10 wickets to enter their third successive U-19 World Cup final on Tuesday with the in-form Yashasvi Jaiswal slamming an unbeaten century.

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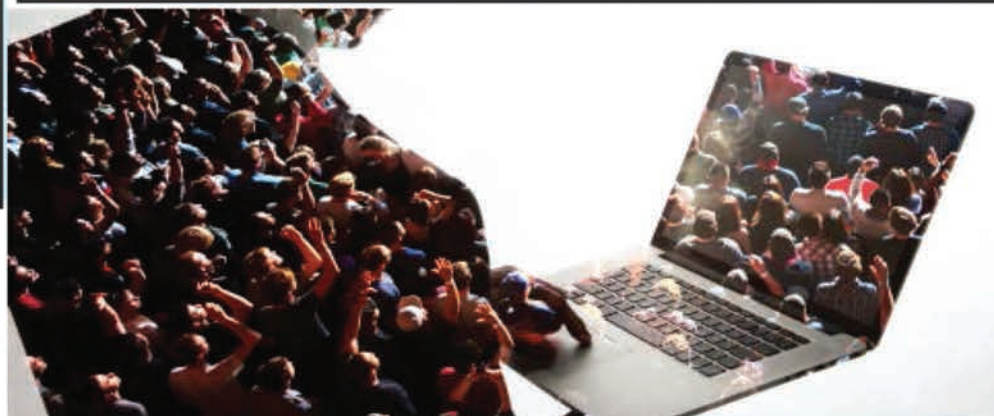
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