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# 1 Indian American Weekly : Since 2006

VOL 15 ISSUE 06 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • FEB 05 - 11, 2021 • ENQUIRIES: 646-247-9458 • info@theindianpanorama.com

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President Biden signs executive orders reversing Trump's hardline immigration policies  
Legal Indian immigrants welcome the move



US President Joe Biden signs executive orders on immigration reform in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington.

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Joe Biden has signed three executive orders that he said would lead to a "fair, orderly and humane" legal immigration system and also undo his predecessor Donald Trump's hardline policies that ripped children from the arms of their families.

The review of the existing policies and the subsequent recommendations coming from 60 to 180 days from various federal agencies are likely to benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian professionals in realizing their dream of citizenship of the United States. "I'm not making a new law, I'm eliminating bad policy," Biden said on Tuesday at the White House, flanked by Vice President Kamala Harris and newly confirmed Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, of the

contd on page 2

# Opposition puts government in the dock over farmers agitation

Tells Centre to stop monologue, start dialogue; Says show aggression on border, not protest sites  
Today we are very touchy about remarks coming from outside on the farmers' agitation. But who said this 'Abki baar Trump sarkar'. And now we are talking about interference?"- TMC MP Derek O'Brien

I.S. SALUJA

NEW DELHI (TIP): Hitting out at the government over its "failure" on various fronts, including the ongoing farmers' agitation, Opposition members in Rajya Sabha today asked the ruling NDA leadership to stop "monologue" and instead "initiate dialogue with the protesters".

Why isn't PM talking to farmers, why fences?

When the PM says he's only a phone call away, who is coming between him and farmers... Why have fences been built, toilets removed, Net blocked? - Deepender Hooda, Congress

contd on page 2

BKU leader Rakesh Tikait addresses farmers at the Ghazipur-Delhi border on Thursday, Feb 4. - Photo / Courtesy PTI >>



## INSIDE

382 passports of NRIs revoked since 2015

Page 15

PM Modi's brother stages dharna at Lucknow airport

Page 15

## Indian American groups express solidarity with protesting farmers

NEW YORK (TIP): As Indian farmers continue to their agitation against three farming legislation enacted by the country's parliament last year, more than a dozen Indian American groups have come together to extend their solidarity with the protesters.

At a virtual press conference held on Sunday, January 31, the groups asked the Indian government to repeal the laws and draft fresh legislation in consultation with farmers' leadership.

The law in question are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.

The Indian government says the farm laws are intended to increase farmer's



More than a dozen Indian American groups have come together to extend their solidarity with the protesters. At a virtual press conference held on Sunday, January 31, the groups asked the Indian government to repeal the laws and draft fresh legislation in consultation with farmers' leadership.

incomes and expand agricultural market. However, the protesting farmers say the laws were passed without

contd on page 2



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contd from page 1

**Opposition puts government in the dock...**

Opening the second day of discussion on a motion thanking the President for his address to the joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget session, RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha said the government had "lost the patience to hear and any criticism was painted as anti-national".

"With folded hands, I request you to please understand the pain of farmers. In harsh winter you stopped water supply and toilet facilities, dug trenches, put barbed wires and installed spikes," the RJD MP said. "Such aggressive approach wasn't even heard of towards the neighboring nations who came inside (the Indian territory)," he added.

On a tweet by pop star Rihanna on the farmers' protest, Jha said the democracy would not be weakened by a tweet, but by the approach of the government.

In a veiled reference to cold storage chain and godowns built by private corporates, Jha said, "Your backbone is the farmer.... 303 (seats won by the BJP in last General Election) did not come from cold storage or godowns, but from these very people." Hitting out at the government, TMC MP Derek O'Brien said, "Today we are very touchy about remarks coming from outside on the farmers' agitation. But who said this 'Abki baar Trump sarkar'. And now we are talking about interference?"

As he rose to participate in the discussion earlier, the TMC MP said, "Such are times... we should be thankful for small freedoms. Freedoms like being allowed to speak without the microphones being muted, or the television feeds censored, or MPs not being escorted out by marshals." (With inputs from agencies)

**President Biden signs executive orders...**

stream of executive orders he has signed as President.

"This is about how America's safer, stronger, more prosperous when we have a fair, orderly, and humane legal immigration system," Biden told reporters.

He said his executive orders are aimed to strengthen the immigration system, building on the executive actions he took on day one to protect the Dreamers, and the Muslim ban, and to better manage of the country's borders.

"The federal government should develop welcoming strategies that promote integration, inclusion and citizenship, and it should embrace the full participation of the newest Americans in our democracy," he said in one of the three executive orders.

"Today we are going to work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration that literally, not figuratively, ripped children from the arms of their families, their mothers and fathers at the border and with no plan, none whatsoever to reunify the children who are still in custody and their parents," he said.

The first executive order was on creating a task force, chaired by the Secretary of Homeland Security, to reunify families, which will work across governments to find parents and children separated by the prior administration.

In an attempt to deter illegal immigration, Trump's administration separated undocumented adults from children as they crossed the US-Mexico border. Under this, over 5,500 families were separated and the parents of more than 600 children still have not been located, according to US media reports. The second executive order develops a strategy to address the root causes of migration across the borders and creates a humane asylum system, including directing the Department of Homeland Security to take steps to end the Migrant Protection Protocols programme, which had led to a humanitarian crisis in northern Mexico.

"The third executive order promotes immigrant integration and inclusion and ensures that our legal immigration system operates fairly and efficiently by instructing agencies to review the public charge rule and related policies," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters.

The third order requires agencies to do a "top-to-bottom review of recent regulations, policies and guidance that have set up barriers to our legal immigration system," Psaki said.

The first one to go would be Trump's "public charge" rule, which prevented immigrants from getting permanent resident, or Green Card, status if they had or were likely to require public benefits such as housing subsidies.

Biden said over four million foreign-born individuals live in the US and millions more Americans have immigrants in their families or ancestry. "New Americans and their children fuel

our economy, working in every industry, including healthcare, construction, caregiving, manufacturing, service, and agriculture," he said. They are essential workers helping to keep the economy afloat and providing important services to Americans during a global pandemic.

They have helped the US lead the world in science, technology and innovation. And they are on the frontlines of research to develop COVID-19 vaccines and treatments for those afflicted with the deadly disease, Biden asserted.

The executive order is in addition to the slew of similar orders signed by Biden on the first day of his administration and the citizenship bill that he has sent to Congress.

The bill among other things proposes to eliminate the per-country quota in Green Card allocation, a move that will benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian immigrants. The Biden administration has also decided not to pursue the move of the previous Trump administration to rescind the policy of giving work authorization to spouses of H-1B visa holders.

The move has been welcomed by legal Indian immigrants.

The global tech trade association, ITI, welcomed the Biden-Harris Administration's actions to reunite families that had been forcibly separated at the US border and to ensure a fair and efficient legal immigration system in the country.

In keeping with his administration's efforts, the ITI also urged Biden to formally rescind the Trump Administration's presidential proclamation that currently prohibits certain high-skilled immigrants from obtaining visas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. "Keeping families together and enacting modern, fair and efficient immigration policies will strengthen communities, drive innovation and spur US economic growth. To further bolster the US economic recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that President Biden rescind the current suspension of high-skilled immigration. "Our industry is committed to working with policymakers in the administration and in US Congress to advance a modern, competitive immigration system," it said. (Source: PTI)

**Indian American groups express solidarity...**

following the due parliamentary process and they pose existential threat to the farming community.

The Global Indian Progressive Alliance, a New Jersey-based grassroots organization that was part of Sunday's event, said it was "disturbed to see the ramming through of laws without any consensus building" and the "government has repeatedly ignored the calls by farmers for greater support."

The groups that attended the press conference included Global Indian Progressive Alliance; Hindus for Human Rights; Boston South Asian Coalition; Indians Supporting Academic Freedom (InSAF); Ambedkar King Study Circle, USA; Young India, Inc; and Friends of India-Texas.

The keynote speaker at the event was Dr. Amritjit Singh, Professor Emeritus of English and African American Studies at Ohio University.

Each group issued separate statements at the press conference. "We condemn the Indian state's actions to discredit the farmers' protest movement as being misinformed and misled towards other vested political agendas, ranging from Maoism to Khalistan, in particular on the occasion of India's Republic Day when the farmers took out a peaceful tractor parade with due police permission," InSAF said in a statement. "The farmers have rejected any links to the group that reached the Red Fort and planted a religious flag there even as police in the vicinity were seen to be quietly watching."

Hindus for Human Rights said, "The farmers have been protesting peacefully for more than two months now, following the principles of ahimsa (non-violence). We pay our respects to the souls of our farmers who have been martyred in the protests. More than 150 farmers have died so far. They shall not be forgotten, and their sacrifice inspires us to stand even stronger in the fight against injustice. Right to protest is a fundamental right and our farmers in India have set an example that will inspire generations to come."

Young India said in its statement: "This legislative action coupled with the government's reaction to the concerns raised by the farmers is reminiscent of colonial times. The violence that has been unleashed by goons of the BJP with full support of the various police agencies, as captured by many journalists on video, shows the nefarious anti-farmer stance of the government. The constant effort of the government to turn a farmers' issue into a Sikh v/s Hindu issue, or a national security issue with the Khalistan angle is deeply condemnable."

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# Padma Awards: 7 awarded Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan, 102 Padma Shri

*Narinder Singh Kapany (US) awarded Padma Vibhushan (posthumously); 2 more from US-Srikant Datar and Rattan Lal- awarded Padma Shri*

**NEW DELHI/ NEW YORK(TIP):** Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. 'Padma

Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field. The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year. These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/April every year. This year

the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma Awards including 1 duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one) as per list below. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri Awards. 29 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 16 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender awardee.



Narinder Singh Kapany, 'Father of Fibre Optics', was awarded Padma Vibhushan posthumously for Science & Engineering



Clockwise from top: Singer KS Chithra, Ram Vilas Paswan, Shinzo Abe are among Padma awardees

## HERE IS A COMPLETE LIST OF PADMA AWARDEES 2021

### PADMA VIBHUSHAN (7)

- Shri Shinzo Abe - Public Affairs - Japan
- Shri S P Balasubramaniam (Posthumous) - Art - Tamil Nadu
- Dr. Belle Monappa Hegde - Medicine - Karnataka
- Shri Narinder Singh Kapany (Posthumous) - Science and Engineering - United States of America
- Maulana Wahiduddin Khan - Others - Spiritualism - Delhi
- Shri B. B. Lal Others - Archaeology - Delhi
- Shri Sudarshan Sahoo - Art - Odisha

### PADMA BHUSHAN (10)

- Ms. Krishnan Nair Shantakumari Chithra - Art - Kerala
- Shri Tarun Gogoi (Posthumous) - Public Affairs - Assam
- Shri Chandrashekhara Kambara - Literature and Education - Karnataka
- Ms. Sumitra Mahajan - Public Affairs - Madhya Pradesh
- Shri Nripendra Misra - Civil Service - Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Ram Vilas Paswan (Posthumous) - Public Affairs Bihar
- Shri Keshubhai Patel (Posthumous) Public Affairs Gujarat
- Shri Kalbe Sadiq (Posthumous) Others-Spiritualism Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Rajnikant Devidas Shroff Trade and Industry Maharashtra
- Shri Tarlochan Singh Public Affairs Haryana

### PADMA SHRI (102)

- Shri Gulfam Ahmed Art Uttar Pradesh
- Ms. P. Anitha Sports Tamil Nadu
- Shri Rama Swamy Annavarapu Art Andhra Pradesh
- Shri Subbu Arumugam Art Tamil Nadu
- Shri Prakasarao Asavadi Literature and Education Andhra Pradesh
- Ms. Bhuri Bai Art Madhya Pradesh
- Shri Radhe Shyam Barle Art Chhattisgarh
- Shri Dharma Narayan Barma Literature and Education West Bengal
- Ms. Lakhimi Baruah Social Work Assam
- Shri Biren Kumar Basak Art West Bengal
- Ms. Rajni Bector Trade and Industry Punjab
- Shri Peter Brook Art United Kingdom
- Ms. Sangkhumi Bualchhuak Social Work Mizoram
- Shri Gopiram Bargayn Burabhakat Art Assam
- Bijoya Chakravarty Public Affairs Assam
- Shri Sujit Chattopadhyay Literature and Education West Bengal
- Shri Jagdish Chaudhary (Posthumous) Social Work Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Tsultrim Chonjor Social Work Ladakh

- Ms. Mouma Das Sports West Bengal
- Shri Srikant Datar Literature and Education United States of America
- Shri Narayan Debnath Art West Bengal
- Chutni Devi Social Work Jharkhand
- Ms. Dulari Devi Art Bihar
- Ms. Radhe Devi Art Manipur
- Ms. Shanti Devi Social Work Odisha
- Shri Wayan Dibia Art Indonesia
- Shri Dadudan Gadhavi Literature & Education Gujarat
- Shri Parshuram Atmaram Gangavane Art Maharashtra
- Shri Jai Bhagwan Goyal Literature and Education Haryana
- Shri Jagadish Chandra Halder Literature and Education West Bengal
- Shri Mangal Singh Hazowary Literature and Education Assam
- Ms. Anshu Jamsenpa Sports Arunachal Pradesh
- Ms. Purnamasi Jani Art Odisha
- Matha B. Manjamma Jogati Art Karnataka
- Shri Damodaran Kaithapram Art Kerala
- Shri Namdeo C Kamble Literature and Education Maharashtra
- Shri Maheshbhai & Shri Nareshbhai Kanodia (Duo) \* (Posthumous) Art Gujarat
- Shri Rajat Kumar Kar Literature and Education Odisha
- Shri Rangasami Lakshminarayana Kashyap Literature and Education Karnataka
- Ms. Prakash Kaur Social Work Punjab
- Shri Nicholas Kazanas Literature and Education Greece
- Shri K Kesavasamy Art Puducherry
- Shri Ghulam Rasool Khan Art Jammu and Kashmir
- Shri Lakha Khan Art Rajasthan
- Ms. Sanjida Khatun Art Bangladesh
- Shri Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar Art Goa
- Ms. Niru Kumar Social Work Delhi
- Ms. Lajwanti Art Punjab
- Shri Rattan Lal Science and Engineering United States of America
- Shri Ali Manikfan Others-Grassroots Innovation Lakshadweep
- Shri Ramachandra Manjhi Art Bihar
- Shri Dulal Manki Art Assam
- Shri Nanadro B Marak Others- Agriculture Meghalaya
- Shri Rewben Mashangva Art Manipur
- Shri Chandrakant Mehta Literature and Education Gujarat
- Dr. Rattan Lal Mittal Medicine Punjab
- Shri Madhavan Nambiar Sports Kerala
- Shri Shyam Sundar Paliwal Social Work Rajasthan
- Dr. Chandrakant Sambhaji Pandav Medicine Delhi
- Dr. J N Pande (Posthumous) Medicine Delhi
- Shri Solomon Pappiah Literature and Education-

### Journalism Tamil Nadu

- Ms. Pappammal Others- Agriculture Tamil Nadu
- Dr. Krishna Mohan Pathi Medicine Odisha
- Ms. Jaswantiben Jamnadas Popat Trade and Industry Maharashtra
- Shri Girish Prabhune Social Work Maharashtra
- Shri Nanda Prusty Literature and Education Odisha
- Shri K Ramachandra Pulavar Art Kerala
- Shri Balan Putheri Literature and Education Kerala
- Ms. Birubala Rabha Social Work Assam
- Shri Kanaka Raju Art Telangana
- Ms. Bombay Jayashri Ramnath Art Tamil Nadu
- Shri Satyaram Reang Art Tripura
- Dr. Dhananjay Diwaker Sagdeo Medicine Kerala
- Shri Ashok Kumar Sahu Medicine Uttar Pradesh
- Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Singh Sanjay Medicine Uttarakhand
- Ms. Sindhutai Sapkal Social Work Maharashtra
- Shri Chaman Lal Sapru (Posthumous) Literature and Education Jammu and Kashmir
- Shri Roman Sarmah Literature and Education- Journalism Assam
- Shri Imran Shah Literature and Education Assam
- Shri Prem Chand Sharma Others- Agriculture Uttarakhand
- Shri Arjun Singh Shekhawat Literature and Education Rajasthan
- Shri Ram Yatna Shukla Literature and Education Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Jitender Singh Shunty Social Work Delhi
- Shri Kartar Paras Ram Singh Art Himachal Pradesh
- Shri Kartar Singh Art Punjab
- Dr. Dilip Kumar Singh Medicine Bihar
- Shri Chandra Shekhar Singh Others-Agriculture Uttar Pradesh
- Ms. Sudha Hari Narayan Singh Sports Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Virender Singh Sports Haryana
- Ms. Mridula Sinha (Posthumous) Literature and Education Bihar
- Shri K C Sivasankar (Posthumous) Art Tamil Nadu
- Guru Maa Kamali Soren Social Work West Bengal
- Shri Marachi Subburaman Social Work Tamil Nadu
- Shri P Subramanian (Posthumous) Trade and Industry Tamil Nadu
- Ms. Nidumolu Sumathi Art Andhra Pradesh
- Shri Kapil Tiwari Literature and Education Madhya Pradesh
- Father Vallés (Posthumous) Literature and Education Spain
- Dr. Thiruvengadam Veeraraghavan (Posthumous) Medicine Tamil Nadu
- Shri Sridhar Vembu Trade and Industry Tamil Nadu
- Shri K Y Venkatesh Sports Karnataka
- Ms. Usha Yadav Literature and Education Uttar Pradesh
- Col Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Public Affairs Bangladesh

**First Indian- Origin Sikh Female Cop Honored by Scotland Yard**



"As Britain's and the Met's first Asian female officer, Karpal paved the way for so many others who have gone into policing since 1971."

**LONDON (TIP):** Scotland Yard has celebrated the 50th anniversary of Karpal Kaur Sandhu joining its ranks as the first South Asian and Sikh female police officer, paving the way for others to follow in her footsteps. Police Constable (PC) Sandhu served the Metropolitan Police in London between 1971 and 1973 and has been dubbed as a "true pioneer" for police forces across the UK.

"PC Karpal Kaur Sandhu was a true pioneer and ahead of her time. I have no doubt that her decision to join the Met Police in 1971 was a brave one and she would have faced considerable challenges along the way," said Assistant Commissioner Helen Ball on Monday.

"As Britain's and the Met's first Asian female officer, Karpal paved the way for so many others who have gone into policing since 1971. Fifty years to the day (Monday) after PC Sandhu joined the Met, I am pleased that we are able to remember her life, her career and the legacy she has left policing," she said.

The National Sikh Police Association UK joined forces with the Met Police Sikh Association for a special virtual event in memory of PC Sandhu on Monday.

"Today, together with representatives from the Met's Sikh Association, Met police officers and staff and the wider Sikh community, we remember Karpal's special contribution to policing, as the UK's first female Asian and Sikh police officer," said Ravjeet Gupta, Chair of the Metropolitan Police Sikh Association.

"Karpal was an invaluable ambassador for the Met who helped break down barriers with London's communities and will always be remembered for being a trailblazer of her time," said Mr Gupta.

PC Sandhu was born to a Sikh family in Zanzibar, East Africa, in 1943 and came to the UK in 1962, where she got a job as a nurse at Chase Farm Hospital.

**Indian-origin Punjabi taxi driver's son makes it to Australia T20I team**

**MELBOURNE (TIP):** Teenaged leg-spinner Tanveer Sangha, son of an Indian-origin taxi driver in Australia, has been named in Australia's T20 squad for the upcoming five-match series in New Zealand.

Sangha, who represented Australia at the under-19 World Cup just 12 months ago, is son of Sydney-based Joga, who had migrated from Rahimpur Kala Sanghian, a village near Jalandhar in Punjab, in 1997.

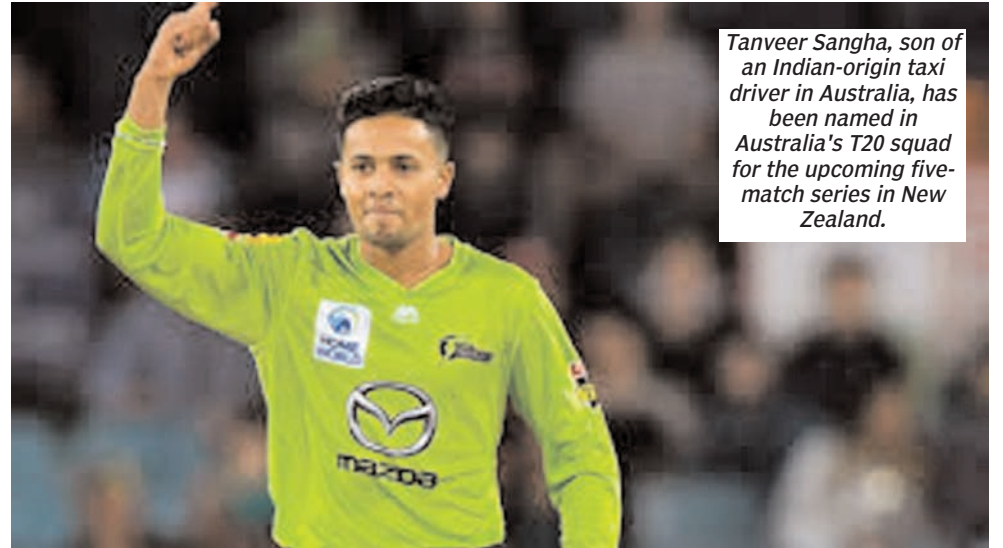
Sangha, 19, has been in great form in the Big Bash League 10 regular season.

Playing for Sydney Thunder, he scalped 21 wickets at an impressive average of 16.66.

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting had also called for Sangha's inclusion in the national side.

"He's a young bloke who looks like he's pretty confident and in control of what he's doing, and he bowls proper good balls so he might be someone they'd look to get into the system," Ponting told cricket.com.au

"It's a hard one for young leg-spinners,



Tanveer Sangha, son of an Indian-origin taxi driver in Australia, has been named in Australia's T20 squad for the upcoming five-match series in New Zealand.

because they come along quickly and everyone's excited by how good they might be, quite often they're introduced early and they can have a few setbacks after that. But they might have to think about that," he said.

Sangha was Australia's leading wicket taker in the under-19 World Cup last year.

He scalped 15 wickets in the six matches in the tournament held in South Africa.

Before Tanveer, Gurinder Sandhu was the other Indian-origin player to have played for Australia national team.

The five-match series between Australia and New Zealand will start from February 22.

**Four-year-old Indian- Origin British Sikh girl joins Mensa club of high IQ kids**

**LONDON (TIP):** A four-year-old Indian -Origin British Sikh girl has become one of the youngest in the UK to be accepted into the elite Mensa membership club of children with a high intelligence quotient (IQ).

Dayaal Kaur, who lives with her family in Birmingham, displayed exceptional learning abilities from very early on and had mastered the entire English alphabet by the time she was just 14 months old.

She expressed an enthusiasm to appear for the Mensa test, conducted online from home due to the coronavirus lockdown, and achieved an IQ score of 145, which puts her in the top one per cent of the UK's population in the "very gifted or highly advanced" category.

We are delighted to welcome Dayaal to Mensa, where she joins a community of about 2,000 junior and teen members," said John Stevenage, British Mensa's chief executive.

"Her family can make use of the supportive parents' network that has developed, and we hope that as she grows up, Dayaal makes many lifelong friends and experiences some of the many learning and network opportunities that Mensa offers," he said.

The journey to this recognition has not been an easy one for the family as they struggled to convince local experts that Dayaal needed access to the gifted intelligence programme within the education system.



Dayaal Kaur, 4, has become one of the youngest in the UK to be accepted into the elite Mensa membership club of children with a high intelligence quotient (IQ).

Her father, Sarbjit Singh, himself a teacher as a Health, Well-being and Pastoral Lead, persisted to prove that his daughter indeed was gifted.

"Now there is official documentation that proves that she is way beyond her level. As parents, it is natural for us to consider our child is special, but in this case there is actual proof that she is one in a million," said Singh.

"There is a big debate to be had about how we cultivate our youth and provide the right kind of support and education so that we don't lose future inventors and high achievers," he said.

Dayaal, whose dream for now is to become an astronaut and also to have a stable full of horses, took the test just before her fourth birthday in October last year.

Her parents explained what the online process would involve, and she readily agreed in her usual spirit of "coming alive" in any kind of learning scenario.

In her assessment, expert Lyn Kendall recommended that Dayaal's "ability and maturity" meant that it would be worth considering accelerating her beyond her peer group in a classroom setting.

"I am so glad we persisted because otherwise Dayaal would have been lost in the system and got frustrated when she didn't feel like she was being challenged enough to learn new things constantly," said her proud father, who was born and raised in Birmingham and whose family traces its roots back to Hoshiarpur in Punjab.

"Dayaal is equally enthusiastic when we are reading about Sikh history and has a fascination for icons such as Banda Singh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh so we try and do our best to make that learning fun. She hasn't yet been to India, but we hope to go as a family someday post-lockdown," he said.

Meanwhile, Dayaal has been celebrating her big achievement with her father, one-year-old sister Kalyaan and solicitor mother Rajvinder Kaur as she has worked out that she is a "genius now".

As with most families, the Covid-19 lockdown has been tough because she has had to curb her sociable side but can't wait to return to the nursery and play with her friends again.

# Indian American Community must remain politically engaged: Frank Islam

**NEW YORK (TIP):** In the wake of Indian American community's extraordinary success in the November election, prominent civic leader Frank Islam would like it to redouble its efforts to maintain and increase its participation in the political process.

The community's participation in the November election was "historically high" due "the presence of one of our own, Kamala Harris, as a Vice Presidential candidate," he noted in a keynote speech at an event to celebrate India's January 26 Republic Day.

"Today, in addition to Harris, a record number of Indian Americans are serving in the Biden administration," said Islam, entrepreneur, philanthropist and civic leader, at the virtual meeting organized by Indian Overseas Congress, Washington DC Chapter on Wednesday, Jan 27.

"On Day one of the Biden administration, nearly 20 Indian Americans began serving in various capacities", he said predicting "that number will continue to increase."

Talking about the emerging role that "Indian Americans are playing in the United States, in India and in the world", Islam, Azamgarh, India-born alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University, said, "In my half a century as an American, I have never experienced a moment like this."

"Our presence as Indian Americans goes beyond the executive branch," he said noting there are four Indian Americans in the US House of Representatives and more than a dozen in various statehouses across the country.

"There is only one reason for that," said Islam. "It is our increased participation in the political process and our empowering civic engagement."

"Now, having fought for and received a seat at the table, we should not rest on our laurels," he said. "We must redouble our efforts to maintain and increase our participation in the political process, starting with local politics."

"It is critical for us to be politically engaged not only as Indian Americans but also as responsible citizens of this nation," said Islam.

He expressed his firm belief that "engaging in



"Today, in addition to Harris, a record number of Indian Americans are serving in the Biden administration," said Islam, entrepreneur, philanthropist and civic leader, at the virtual meeting organized by Indian Overseas Congress, Washington DC Chapter on Wednesday, Jan 27.

political activities focused not just on winning elections but also on creating a common cause and a unified people are pivotal to the future of this democracy."

"All of us should be involved in those type of activities in order to ensure that we continue to build a more perfect union and develop this country in a way that benefits the many as opposed to the few," said Islam.

"Political engagement is one form of civic engagement that we should invest ourselves in to make our society and this nation a better place," he said.

"Political engagement is especially important because it can provide the lever for progress in other forms of engagement," Islam added.

Citing former presidents John F. Kennedy and Dwight Eisenhower, one Democrat and the other a Republican, he said, "While political engagement can be partisan in nature, to be responsible it must not be completely so."

"It must be bipartisan and subservient to civic engagement. Doing what is best for the country and its citizens must be more important than blind loyalty or allegiance to a political party," Islam said.

"This is why I urge each of you to stay politically and civically engaged. And I ask you to take your participation and activism to the next level."

Paying tribute to the Constitution of India, Islam

described it as "an extraordinary document that captured the spirit of India and delineated the path forward for the nation."

Noting the similarities between the US and Indian Constitutions, he said, "The beauty of the document is that, although it is considered a living document, as it can be amended or modified easily, many of the basic principles enshrined in it have been accepted as inalienable human rights."

"But our recent history has proven that laws and principles are only as good as the institutions and people that guard and implement them," Islam said.

"Nowhere has this been more apparent than in our own country, the United States," he said noting that the US "just emerged from such a dark and sad chapter in our history" after "witnessing a transfer of power that was far from peaceful."

"The good news is that even though the country remains deeply divided politically, our democracy remains intact," Islam said.

"It is intact because our institutions are strong. And, because many leaders, both Republicans and Democrats "stood united to protect and defend that constitution," he said.

Islam also fondly recalled his visit to India in 2015, as part of the US delegation accompanying President Barack Obama, the first and only US President to attend a Republic Day event as the guest of honor.

"As an Indian American, watching the ceremonial parade on Rajpath was a proud and humbling moment for me," he said.

Sam Pitroda, the global chairman of Indian Overseas Congress, emphasized the need to strengthen the secular forces in India.

Mohinder Singh Gilzian, the president of IOC USA and George Abraham, Vice Chairman, IOC, USA also addressed the gathering.

The program included several patriotic songs. Johnson Myalil, the president of the Washington DC Chapter, welcomed the gathering.

Secretary Vipin Raj proposed the vote of thanks. Mohamed Thahir, program chair of the DC Chapter, served as the Master of Ceremony.

## Indian American NYC Health Commissioner tests COVID positive



Dave Chokshi, Health Commissioner of New York City has tested positive for COVID-19.

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Dave Chokshi, the Indian American Health Commissioner of New York City, said that he has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and warned that the disease "continues to circulate in our communities, and all of us are potentially exposed to the virus".

In a statement issued on Wednesday, February 3, Chokshi, who assumed office on August 4, 2020, said: "In New York City and across the country, Covid continues to circulate in our communities, and all of us are potentially exposed to the virus. A testament to this fact is that I recently got tested and received a positive diagnosis for Covid-19."

The Health Commissioner said that he has mild, but manageable symptoms, adding that the city's Test and Trace Corps has been notified of his diagnosis and will alert anyone who was potentially exposed, Xinhua news agency reported.

"This is a reminder, if we ever needed one, that Covid is still with us and we all must continue to wear masks, wash our hands, socially distance and stay home if feeling ill," he added.

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

## Indian Americans Protest after another Mahatma Gandhi Statue is Vandalized

**DAVIS, CA (TIP):** Indian Americans on Sunday, January 31, held protest against the vandalism of a Mahatma Gandhi statue in California's Davis and demanded reinstallation of the statue.

In a statement by Deputy Chief Paul Doroshov of the Davis Police Department, the statue, broken off at the ankles and the top half of its head broken off, was found by a park worker around 9 am (local time) on Wednesday.

Stepping up in support of the Indian community at the vigil was the Mayor of Davis Gloria Partida who deeply regretted the incident. The mayor informed the protesters that they have initiated an investigation. "Vandalism will never be condoned. Mahatma Gandhi is our inspiration and we will not allow this. Not on our watch," the mayor added.

"Pro-Khalistan radical groups from neighboring towns outside of Davis tried to intimidate the



Indian Americans on Sunday, January 31, held protest against the vandalism of a Mahatma Gandhi statue in California's Davis and demanded reinstallation of the statue.

attendees in an attempt to stop the event and tried to assault a lady speaker at the event," Bhaskar Vempati, President of the Indian Association of Sacramento, one of the cohosts of the event told media.

"Police had to be called in to control the aggressive protestors. A police report has been filed on the incident of assault on the lady speaker," Vempati further added.

The Consulate General of India in San Francisco has separately taken up the matter with the City

of Davis and local law enforcement authorities.

Speaking to Media, Dr TV Nagendra Prasad, Consul General of India, San Francisco said, "The City Council has condemned the incident and issued a statement. I did take it up separately and the city council and police authorities assured me to bring the culprits to justice. They also allowed and provided security to the vigil by the community today."

## OPED

# India aims to be 'a leader in thought and action on climate'



BY HARSH V. SHRINGLA

Five years after the Paris Agreement, India is among the few developing countries that are not only meeting their "green" targets but are aspiring to more ambitious climate goals.

At the recent Climate Ambition Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated the Indian approach. He said that we must set our sights "even higher", even as we do not lose sight of the past. He added that India would not only achieve its Paris Agreement targets but would exceed them. At the U.N. Climate Action Summit in 2019, Modi said that an ounce of practice is worth more than a ton of preaching. We are taking practical steps across all areas, including energy, industry, transport, agriculture and protection of green spaces, in our whole-of-society journey to become a leader in climate action and climate ambition.

India recognizes that climate change cannot be fought in silos. It requires an integrated, comprehensive and holistic

approach. It requires innovation and adoption of new and sustainable technologies. Conscious of these imperatives, India has mainstreamed climate in its national developmental and industrial strategies.

Energy is at the center of all climate strategies. We believe India has become a clean energy powerhouse and is a leader in energy transition from carbon dioxide-producing sources to renewables and non-fossil-fuel sources.

We intend to keep harnessing India's renewable energy potential. Our renewable energy capacity is the fourth largest in the world and the capacity expansion being undertaken is also one of the largest in the world. The bulk of this will come from the cleanest energy source, the sun.

We are seeing progress already. We initially committed to 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022. We have gone further and expect to cross 220 GW in the next two years. We have an even more ambitious target of 450 GW by 2030.

We are working to ensure that 40% of electric power in India is from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. This clean energy push goes hand-in-hand with a parallel effort to reduce the emissions intensity of our economy by

33-35% (from 2005 levels) by 2030.

The Ujala scheme - a national drive to use LED lamps - is reducing CO2 emissions by 38.5 million tons every year. The Ujjwala scheme, under which over 80 million households have been provided access to clean cooking gas, is one of the largest clean energy initiatives in the world. Climate action and sustainability is being brought into government schemes across multiple sectors. Our Smart Cities Mission is working with 100 cities to help them become more sustainable and adaptable to the challenges of climate change. The National Clean Air Programme aims to reduce air pollution (PM2.5 and PM10) by 20-30% in the next four years.

The Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India, has a strong sustainability focus.

More trees are being planted and degraded land is being reclaimed to create a carbon "sink" that can absorb 2.5-3 billion tons of CO2. We are also working rapidly to create a green transport network, to offset a sector known for its polluting

emissions, particularly in our big cities.

India is building next-generation infrastructure such as mass transit systems, green highways and waterways. A national electric mobility plan is creating an e-mobility ecosystem with the aim to have over 30% of all vehicles on India's roads to be electric.

These initiatives are for our own good as India is among the countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. We recognize there is still a long way to go but these efforts are already paying dividends. India's emission intensity has reduced by 21% over the period 2005-2014. Over the next decade, we are expecting even greater reductions.

India intends to be a responsible global citizen in the climate space. We are not only going beyond our Paris Agreement commitments. We are adopting innovative instruments to further international cooperation in climate action.

We have created international organizations like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure that are working on creating global low-carbon pathways. More than 80 countries have joined the International Solar Alliance, making it one of the fastest-growing international bodies. This combination of national action and responsible international citizenship makes India unique amongst developing countries and is placing it on the path to realize its ambitions to be a leader in thought and action on climate.

(Harsh Vardhan Shringla is Foreign Secretary of India. Views expressed are personal)

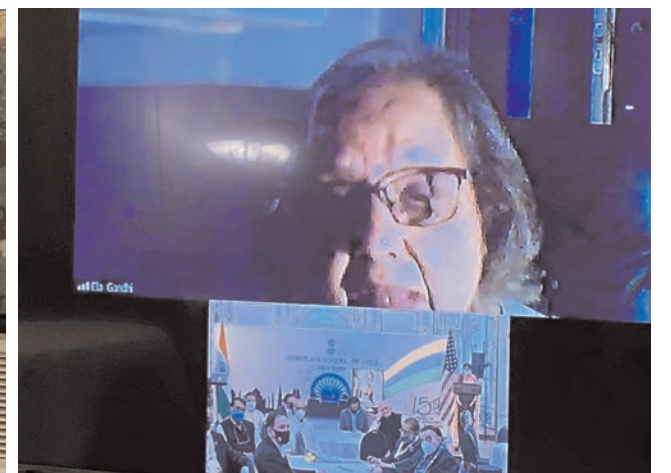
## Gandhi Society organizes a prayer meet on the 73rd martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi



Dilip Chauhan (Director of South East/ Asian Affairs for Brooklyn) presenting a citation to Indian Consul General Randhir Jaiswal and Bhadra Butala on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President - Eric Adams. Also seen in the picture are Upendra Chivukula and Rajendar Dichpally



Eric Adams - Brooklyn Borough President addressing the prayer meet virtually



Ela Gandhi (Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and Former Member of Parliament from South Africa) addressing the prayer meet.

**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Gandhian Society (USA) along with Indian Consulate in New York held a prayer meeting to observe the 73rd martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi at the Indian Consulate in New York on January 30th, 2021. The event was attended (virtually) by members from the family of Mahatma Gandhi - Arun Gandhi (Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi), Ela Gandhi (Grand Daughter of Mahatma Gandhi and former member of Parliament from South Africa), and Tushar Gandhi (Great Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi). The

event was supported and attended by Indian Consul General Randhir Jaiswal, Deputy Consul General Shatrughna Sinha, US Law makers - Cory Booker, Eric Adams (Brooklyn Borough President), Upendra Chivukula and many other community leaders who paid tributes and homage to the great legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. UN representatives Perks Ligoya (Malawi) and Rodrigo Carazo (Costa Rica) also addressed the event virtually and paid homage to the Greatest Human Being that walked the earth - Mahatma Gandhi. Indian

American community leaders like H R Shah, Mukund Thakar, Deepak Shah, Rajeev Pandya, and many others also paid homage to the Father of Nation in India - Mahatma Gandhi. The highlight of the event was the participation of our youth volunteers who talked about what the Mahatma and his teachings meant to them and how it has inspired them. The other highlight of the event was the melodious bhajans rendered by renowned classical singer Varsha Joshi. The event concluded by a simple lunch.

Gandhian Society (USA) was founded

by Mr. Bhadra Butala who plans to spread the message of Mahatma Gandhi in the USA with his team of volunteers and supporters. Team members of Gandhian Society Rajendar Dichpally, Mahesh Wani, Dr. Deepak Naran, Gunjan Desai, Hasmukh Patel and Shiva Kumar plan to work diligently to take the message of the Mahatma to the masses in the USA via partnering with educational institutions and likeminded organizations. We also plan to setup an emporium that will offer literature, Gandhian memorabilia, Khadi and



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AS I SEE IT

# A long list of opponents

**Sedition charge is being brought against anyone critical of the government**



BY JULIO RIBEIRO

I marvel at the insatiable appetite of the Modi-Shah government and its satraps in the BJP-ruled states to take on every opponent who dares to oppose its policies and actions. It reminds me of the Great Khali and his tribesmen in the world of freestyle wrestlers, all brawny men. They challenge anyone who cares to oppose them to step into the arena and fight!

It does not appear that Shashi Tharoor or Rajdeep Sardesai or Mrinal Pande had deliberately or otherwise thrown their hat in the ring. Yet, they became the objects of ire because in their hurry to be the first to break the news, they individually tweeted that a protesting farmer on a tractor had died by a bullet injury in the melee that took place in Delhi on Republic Day. They had watched on TV a tractor breaking the police cordon. It was travelling at what could be considered reckless speed. If the police present there to stop the tractors at a predetermined line was forced to take a split-second decision, I would not fault them if they had fired and thereby prevented others from resorting to similar tactics. Both the police and farmers were keen to show restraint, and a genuine misunderstanding on the part of some journalists and a political opponent could, and should, have been overlooked.

However, our brand of the Great Khalis took advantage, more than umbrage, of the tweeters' mistaken notion that the farmer had died in police firing, and filed FIRs against Shashi Tharoor and the journalists, accusing them of causing dissension between communities and sedition, of all things! The recourse to accusing opponents of the government of sedition has become a standard practice with the police in particular, despite the



Modi government's force: Farmers, activists, journalists and stand-up comics are all in the firing line now - Photo / Courtesy Tribune

Supreme Court's clear view that sedition is not to be cited unless the clear intention of fomenting violence and civic unrest against the lawfully installed State is apparent.

Incidentally, this government has developed the fine art of turning legal process into punishment, knowing fully well that the case will not stand the test of legal scrutiny. The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (not yet applied to this case) makes it almost difficult for the judiciary to release the accused on bail. So, if the trials linger, as they always do, the arrested persons are kept in judicial custody interminably. Some of the Bhima Koregaon detainees have spent more than three years in prison without trial, which in a democracy is unacceptable.

Stan Swamy, a 83-year-old Jesuit priest, whose mission in life was to stand up for the rights of Jharkand's Adivasis, has spent close to four months in jail, with no hope of the trial beginning in the near future. When his request for bail was heard by the designated judge, the Public Prosecutor declared that Fr. Swamy was 'accomplishing the agenda of the CPI Maoists!' The NIA in its charge sheet in the Elgar Parishad case had described the 30-year-old People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), a human rights body, as a frontal organization of the banned CPI (Marxist)! These accusations do not have the ring of

truth. BJP ministers, the late Arun Jaitley, and Ravi Shankar Prasad, were associated with the PUCL, which was born out of the Emergency of 1975, and was founded by no other than Jai Prakash Narayan! The PUCL is a well-known rights organization and many citizens respect the intentions of its members and appreciate the work it has accomplished in the sphere of human rights.

The SC should study the UAPA and its use by the government to convert its process into actual punishment. Should people accused of unlawful activities be kept in jail for years together without trial in a civilized society? As a Jesuit priest, conditioned to obey his superiors, I cannot envisage this old man helping the Maoists in any manner. He would be contravening Church diktats and could even be defrocked if this were true.

But reverting to the original reason for this article and that is this government's anxiety to rid itself of all critics of its policies, I have a gut feeling that the list of such opponents of the regime is lengthening so fast that the government will have to expand its security arms exponentially to keep pace. It was the cattle traders and beef eaters to begin with, then the left-wing students at the JNU and Jamia Millia, the anti-CAA/NRC protesters, the farmers opposing laws that were supposed to ameliorate their quality

"But just as I am troubled by the sedition charges against Rajdeep, I am also troubled by the continuous assaults by this government on all and sundry who do not concur with its policies and actions. Is it that Mr Modi and Mr Shah do not want any opposition at all in this land of argumentative Indians? Or are they keen to follow the Chinese path where no contrarian voices are heard?"

of life, stand-up comics and cartoonists poking gentle fun at these policies or their implementation, the Muslim boys in love with Hindu girls, and now the journalists who in their hurry to 'break the news' repeated what they were told by the dead man's relatives.

I know Rajdeep Sardesai personally. His father was the one and only Test cricket player born in my ancestral state of Goa. He was my friend. His mother was the daughter of a senior member of my own service, the police. PM Pant retired as the police chief of Modiji's own state of Gujarat. His grandmother's brother, Gen GG Bewoor, was the Army Chief and his great-grandfather, Sir Gurunath Bewoor, ICS, was my father's immediate boss as the Post-Master General of Bombay Presidency. My association with his family goes back 85 years when I was a boy of six.

But just as I am troubled by the sedition charges against Rajdeep, I am also troubled by the continuous assaults by this government on all and sundry who do not concur with its policies and actions. Is it that Mr Modi and Mr Shah do not want any opposition at all in this land of argumentative Indians? Or are they keen to follow the Chinese path where no contrarian voices are heard? All along I had imagined that their goal was a 'Hindu rashtra' which, like Pakistan, would ensure that only the majority religion would determine the course of events and politics. But now I am confused. Farmers, journalists and stand-up comics are also in the firing line. Just like they would have been in China!

(The author is a former Director General of Police, Punjab)

## GUEST COMMENT

### Pious and sanctimonious: On government's response to criticism

The government must not see all criticism as part of a conspiracy against India

India's unusual response to comments on the ongoing farmers' protests by some international celebrities comes across as highly sanctimonious. "The temptation of sensationalist social media hashtags and comments, especially when resorted to by celebrities and others, is neither accurate nor responsible," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. It advised these celebrities to ascertain facts and properly understand the issues at hand "before rushing to comment on such

matters". The response is somewhat supercilious in the immediate context of what singer and performer Rihanna had said in a single tweet. She had asked why the issue was not being talked about more, while drawing attention to a news report on the extraordinary measures taken by the government to put down the farmers' protests, including the laying of trenches and barricades and banning the Internet. Other international personages who had ventured to talk about the issue included some lawmakers from the U.S. and the U.K. too, but even that did not warrant a formal response from the government. If the MEA statement's claim that "some vested interest groups" were mobilizing international support smacked of paranoia, the fact that a few isolated comments could send the Indian government into a tizzy, and lead to a

lengthy riposte, reflects a siege mentality arising from deep insecurity. Whether it is organized dissent within the country, or informal criticism from elsewhere, it sees everything as a conspiracy against itself, a design on the country's unity and the stuff of propaganda.

The registration of a police case after Greta Thunberg, the teenaged Swedish climate change activist, shared a protesters' 'toolkit' on Twitter, has added another twist to this unedifying demonstration of touchiness. Many Indian celebrities, from the fields of cinema and sports, joined issue with Rihanna to state their case against what they saw as external interference. Many of them professed their desire to keep the country together and voiced their disapproval of 'propaganda'. The larger issue, of course, is something the

government itself has drawn attention to. What is the limit to the claim that a problem is a country's internal matter and something those outside its borders are not entitled to comment upon? Given India's recent comment voicing concern over the military takeover in Myanmar or the attack on Capitol Hill in the U.S., and its oft-expressed views on developments in neighboring countries, it requires no iteration that some issues that have a bearing on human rights, survival of democracy and international relations do tend to invite comment. It is not as if only the farmers' protests have got traction overseas. The best way for the government to avoid international criticism is not to allow more people to see it as authoritarian, disrespectful of rights, and given to attempts to undermine institutions of democracy. (The Hindu)



# Weighing in on the Biden presidency



BY M.K.  
NARAYANAN

**"India's pious hope is that the Biden Administration will prove even more favorable to it than the preceding Republican Administration. This may, however, turn out to be like the proverbial curate's egg - good in parts. Mr. Biden as Vice-President was well known to some of us, as having played a critical role as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in pushing through the iconic U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, and also as a firm proponent of the India-U.S. strategic partnership."**

Dispelling very real concerns that existed about disruption of the Inauguration ceremony, Joseph R. Biden Jr was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on January 20. Memories of the unprecedented events a fortnight earlier, when unruly mobs ran amuck in the Capitol building, seemed to haunt not only those present at the ceremony but also the world at large; Washington had been turned into a fortress for the event. Ultimately, democracy triumphed.

## Celebration of democracy

In his Inaugural Address, President Biden struck the right note, delivering a message of unity and hope, while not ignoring the enormous challenges the nation faced. His declaration that the nation was celebrating the triumph of a cause - the cause of democracy was most timely. Among Mr. Biden's strengths are that he detests bigotry, and abhors identity politics. He tends to be idealistic and is deeply committed to democratic values. He is a multilateralist, unlike his predecessor, Donald Trump.

As the ultimate Beltway insider, he knows better than most, that opposition to many of his ideas and views exist just beyond the horizon. Also, that in seeking to restore the prestige of America's democracy and revive its economy, he would face many obstacles. He has, however, chosen to gamble on the throw of the dice by issuing a spate of Executive Orders, almost immediately intended to give expression to his initiatives, and also by announcing a series of initial measures which are, as likely as not, to provoke a great deal of opposition. Among

## While it could be a curate's egg for New Delhi, for the world, a return to Obama-era policies may prove inadequate

these are his proposed \$1.9 trillion relief plan to stem the novel coronavirus pandemic, his proposed expansive unemployment benefits package, and raising of the minimum wage, etc.

### Policy reset and China

The new President would very soon come to realize that the global environment today is very different from the one that he knew as Vice-President. A return to erstwhile Obama-era policies may, hence, prove inadequate. The world has moved on and several policies will need a reset. The changed scenario, notwithstanding, under President Biden, one can expect the U.S. to rescind the 'militarization' of foreign policy reverting to erstwhile traditional diplomacy. Opportunities for a fresh look at many contentious foreign policy issues could well open up as a result, incorporating elements of both competition and cooperation.

The acid test of this would be on how to deal with China. Rising China is not merely the single most serious challenge the U.S. faces at present, but it poses a diplomatic, economic and technological threat to U.S. pre-eminence. Persisting with old-time remedies such as devising an inclusive security architecture in Asia to check an expanding China threat in East Asia could prove counterproductive. Few countries in Asia are willing to line up against neighboring China. This would, thereafter, beg the question as to whether the U.S. should persist with confrontation or attempt conciliation. If the latter, it would require the U.S. to soften its present antagonistic posture towards China. This could well have global implications.

Next, would be on how best to deal with Russia. The depth of antagonism between the two countries, the U.S. and Russia, remains unchanged, aggravated further by the growing strategic congruence between Russia and China. Initial reactions seem to point to U.S. relations with Russia continuing to remain cold, but as Russia flexes its muscles in Eurasia, the U.S. will need to come up with new policy directives, rather than surrender the initiative to the former.

### Ties with Europe, West Asia

President Biden faces an uphill task when it comes to repairing America's ties with Europe. The days when Europe and the U.S. were tied literally to the same policy cart are over, and Europe is no longer likely to give in to U.S. diktats. Germany is possibly emerging as Europe's new center of gravity, dictating Europe's relations with countries such as China and Russia. Germany, while being highly critical of Russia's human rights record, including the most recent incident of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, is not hesitating to go ahead with Nord Stream 2, the Russia-led gas pipeline project, despite the U.S.'s objections. The EU-China

Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, again despite the U.S.'s objections, is another indication of Europe's new independent thinking. European leaders seem more inclined to heed Chinese President Xi Jinping's warning to global leaders - at the virtual World Economic Forum at Davos, in late January - against 'starting a new Cold War', than listen to the U.S.'s Biden.

Problems abound for the new U.S. Administration in West Asia as well. With the civil wars in Syria and Yemen not having ended, the U.S.'s efforts to find a political settlement here will prove difficult. How to deal with a Saudi Arabia that is on a Biden 'watch-list', adds to the complexity of dealing with West Asia. The 'Abraham Accords', forged during the dying days of the Trump Administration, have further complicated the situation for the incoming Biden government. Dwarfing this would be finding ways and means to deal with the Iran problem, including Iran's capacity and potential for nuclear mischief. Return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or the Iran nuclear deal framework, may not be a realistic option in the wake of the 'Abraham Accords', which have imparted a new dynamic and given a sharper edge to the existing Israel-Iran divide.

### The outlook for India

India's pious hope is that the Biden Administration will prove even more favorable to it than the preceding Republican Administration. This may, however, turn out to be like the proverbial curate's egg - good in parts. Mr. Biden as Vice-President was well known to some of us, as having played a critical role as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in pushing through the iconic U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, and also as a firm proponent of the India-U.S. strategic partnership. Hence, under a Biden Administration, defense and security cooperation between India and the U.S. are likely to be further stepped up. Regional security cooperation is also likely to be further enhanced, at least till such time as U.S.-China relations improve.

However, a Biden Administration will be far less supportive of India on several issues. India must brace itself to heed concerns being expressed about issues such as Kashmir, the so-called travails of the Muslim minority in India, treatment of non-governmental organizations and the like. This may take place behind closed doors, so as not to embarrass the Indian government, but Biden's commitment to human rights is, by far, much stronger than that of many recent U.S. Presidents. He can be expected to satisfy his traditional constituency even at the risk of upsetting partners such as India.

What may, however, be far more disconcerting for India, if one were to analyze the statements and views of U.S. Secretary of State Antony John Blinken and U.S. National Security Advisor Jake

**"His declaration that the nation was celebrating the triumph of a cause - the cause of democracy was most timely. Among Mr. Biden's strengths are that he detests bigotry, and abhors identity politics. He tends to be idealistic, and is deeply committed to democratic values. He is a multilateralist, unlike his predecessor, Donald Trump."**



*The 46th President of the United States of America, Joe Biden knows well that in seeking to restore the prestige of America's democracy and revive its economy, he would face many obstacles.*

Sullivan is that while the emphasis on a free and open Indo-Pacific region will continue, countries such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are likely to have a far more critical role to play than India in achieving security in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. could also be less forthcoming in its open support to India and in its ongoing confrontation with China in Eastern Ladakh.

### The Afghan plan

Unsatisfactory again from an Indian standpoint are the implications of Mr. Biden's Afghanistan policy. From positions taken by Mr. Sullivan, it would appear that while some rethinking from the positions taken by the Trump Administration is possible, there is little room for India in the latest plans on the table. Mr. Biden is an ardent advocate of ending the war in Afghanistan - dating back to his years as Vice-President - and he is likely to implement this with vigor, not excluding a deal with the Taliban, the possible exit of elected President Ashraf Ghani, and giving Pakistan an even bigger role in acting as the mid-wife of any new arrangement. Not only would this mean that India's efforts of the past two decades to restore democracy in Afghanistan would come unstuck, but Pakistan would also gain a degree of legitimacy that had been denied to it by the Trump Administration, encouraging it to act with still greater impunity in carrying out terror strikes on India.

From a restricted standpoint, if India were to balance the positive with the negative and compare the incoming Biden Administration with the previous Trump Administration, the balance sheet could be marginally negative.

*(The author is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)*

## Pak launches surface-to-surface ballistic missile

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** The Pakistan Army said it had conducted a successful training launch of a surface-to-surface ballistic missile, capable of delivering nuclear and conventional warheads to a range of 290 km. The launch of Ghaznavi missile was the culminating point of Army Strategic Forces Command, the Army's media wing said. IANS

## Health workers start anti-coup protests in virus-hit Myanmar

**JAKARTA (TIP):** Medical workers across Myanmar began a civil disobedience protest against Monday's coup, wearing red ribbons and declaring they won't work for the new military government.

The army takeover that ousted the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi over allegations of fraud in November's elections could not have come at a worse time for a country battling a steady rise in COVID-19 cases with a dangerously inadequate health system.

"We want to show the world that we are totally against military dictatorship and we want our elected government and leader back," said Dr Zun Ei Phyu, who lives in Yangon, the biggest city and commercial capital, and added: "We want to show them we will follow only our elected government. Not the military."

Health workers in government hospitals and facilities issued a statement on Wednesday opposing the coup. Photos were shared on social media showing workers with red ribbons pinned to their clothes or holding printed photos of red ribbons. Others used a three-finger salute that has become a symbol of pro-democracy protests in neighbouring Thailand, where a former general has led the government since a 2014 coup.

Some medical staff went on strike while others who continued work in government-run clinics, made public their opposition to the new military rulers.

Some of those on strike have begun to volunteer at charity health clinics, many of which were shut down as a precaution against a surge in COVID-19 cases.

The clinics that had remained reopen were extending their working hours so people could still receive care during the protest, Zun Ei Phyu said.

"We give free treatment and medicine to anyone who is in need," she said, adding the clinics often operated with donations from charities and local communities.

Myanmar's early response to the pandemic mirrored that of many countries: borders were nearly completely closed, lengthy quarantines were imposed on travellers and daily life slowed with stay-at-home orders.

AP

# Nepal protest throws life out of gear; 200 arrested

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** At least six people, including two former ministers, were injured when police lobbed tear gas shells and resorted to baton charges to break up a protest rally during a nationwide general strike that paralysed normal life in Nepal on Thursday. Over 200 leaders and cadres of the Prachanda-led NCP faction were arrested for involvement in vandalism, arson, and other prohibited activities in different parts of the country, My Republica newspaper reported, citing police.

Nepal Communist Party (NCP) splinter faction led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda called for the protests to oppose the appointment of office bearers and members of various constitutional bodies by PM KP Sharma Oli-led caretaker government.

"Protesters tried to vandalise cars and a police van, forcing police to resort to mild force in which six people including two police personnel were injured," Dhanusa district administrator Bandhu Prasad Bastola said.

Two former ministers, Ram Chadra Jha and Matrika Yadav, who are also senior leaders of the rival faction of the ruling party, were among the injured in Dhanusa.



Police said at least 157 people were detained across the country to curb the violence.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari appointed as many as 32 office bearers to 11 constitutional bodies on Wednesday morning. The Prachanda-led faction has alleged that they were appointed

unconstitutionally. The caretaker government has no right to make new appointments or reshuffle the cabinet, he said. Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after Oli, known for his pro-China leanings, in a surprise move dissolved Parliament, amidst a tussle for power with Prachanda. — Agencies

## Myanmar junta blocks Facebook as opposition grows to coup

**MYANMAR (TIP):** Myanmar's junta blocked Facebook in the name of ensuring stability on Thursday and activists said at least three people were arrested at a street protest against the coup that ousted elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Nobel Peace laureate Suu Kyi faces charges for illegally importing communications equipment after the army takeover on Monday — that has drawn Western condemnation and calls on the junta to respect her party's landslide victory in November elections.

Opposition to the junta has emerged very strongly on Facebook, which is the country's main internet platform and underpins communications for business and government. Facebook's WhatsApp messaging was also blocked.

Facebook was still available sporadically, and demonstrators in the second city of Mandalay used it to livestream the first such street protest since the coup in a country with a bloody history of crackdowns on demonstrations.

"People's protest against military coup," read one of the banners.

The group of around 20 people chanted: "Our arrested leaders, release now, release now."

Three people were arrested after the protest, three separate student groups said. Reuters was unable to contact police for comment.



The social network has also been used to share images of a campaign of disobedience by staff at government hospitals across the country, with doctors stopping work or wearing ribbons in the red colour of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

Pictures shared on Wednesday showed workers at the agriculture ministry joining the campaign too.

**"UNFAIR COUP"** : Other signs of anger have also emerged. For two nights, people in Yangon and other cities have banged on pots and pans and honked car

horns, with images circulating widely on Facebook.

"Lights are shining in the dark," said Min Ko Naing, a veteran of past campaigns against military rule, in a call to action. "We need to show how many people are against this unfair coup," he added. The Ministry of Communications and Information said Facebook, used by half of Myanmar's more than 53 million people, would be blocked until February 7 because users were "spreading fake news and misinformation and causing misunderstanding". Reuters



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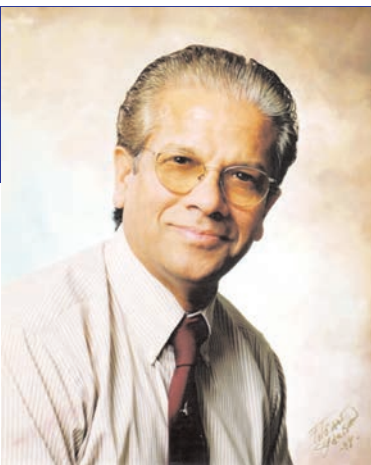
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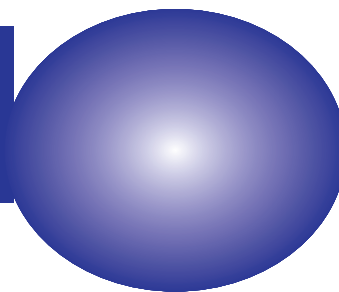


## CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE

Dr. VK Raju and Dr. Leela Raju of the Eye Foundation of America will be glad to answer any eye related concerns of the readers of The Indian Panorama during this difficult period of Coronavirus onslaught



DR. VK RAJU IS A  
CLINICAL  
PROFESSOR OF  
OPHTHALMOLOGY  
AT WEST VIRGINIA  
UNIVERSITY



DR. LEELA RAJU IS  
AN ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR OF  
OPHTHALMOLOGY  
AT NYU LANGONE  
MEDICAL CENTER



They can be reached at  
[eyefoundationofamerica.org@gmail.com](mailto:eyefoundationofamerica.org@gmail.com)

# Indian American Neera Tanden's confirmation hearing to lead OMB scheduled for Feb 9

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The confirmation hearing of Indian-American political consultant Neera Tanden, who has been nominated by President Joe Biden as his budget director, would be held next week on February 9, a Senate panel announced on Tuesday.

Tanden, 50, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman of color and first Indian-American to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which serves the President of the United States in overseeing the implementation of his vision across the executive branch.

Specifically, the OMB's mission is to assist the President in meeting his

policy, budget, management and regulatory objectives and to fulfill the agency's statutory responsibilities.

Her nomination hearing by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, experts said, is likely to be one of the most contentious confirmation battles of the Biden administration.

Republican senators allege that she deleted more than 1,000 tweets, including criticism of Republicans.

Soon after Biden announced her nomination, influential Senator John Cornyn, who is also co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, described Tanden as the worst nominee of Biden so far and said: "I think in light of her

combative and insulting comments about many members of the Senate, mainly on our side of the aisle, that it creates certainly a problematic path to confirmation."

Announcing her nomination, Biden described Tanden as "a brilliant policy mind with critical practical experience across government."

"She was raised by a single mom on food stamps, an immigrant from India who struggled, worked hard and did everything she could for her daughter to live out her American dream. And Neera did just that. She understands the struggles that millions of Americans are facing," Biden had said.

Tanden was a close ally of Hillary



*The confirmation hearing for Neera Tanden, who has been nominated by President Joe Biden as his budget director, would be held next week on February 9.*

Clinton, the former secretary of state and the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, and helped pass the Affordable Care Act under President Barack Obama.

## Gandhi Memorial Observes Gandhi Punyatithi



**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** Mahatma Gandhi's 73rd death anniversary was observed with singing of Gandhi's favorite hymns, release of a book, swearing in of New Gandhi Memorial Board, powerful tributes by community leaders and floral tributes to the Mahatma Gandhi Statue in the National Heritage Park on McCormick Boulevard in Skokie, Illinois.

The homage ceremonies opened with garlanding of Gandhi's Statue followed by singing of the American national Anthem followed by the Indian national Anthem sung by Mrs Bharti Desai, renowned Gujarati singer. Suresh Bodiwala, Chairman of Gandhi Memorial Foundation, Chicago welcomed the guests and announced the new officers of the Board of Directors: Chandrakant Modi MD, Founder, Suresh Bodiwala, Chairman, Dr. Mrs. Santosh Kumar, President, Dr. Sriram Sonty & Dr. Vijay G Prabhakar Vice Presidents and Mrs. Bharti Desai, Treasurer. Chairman Suresh Bodiwala applauded the Founder of the Gandhi Memorial, Chandrakant Modi MD who personally donated over \$150,000 dollars in 2005 to facilitate this Gandhi Statue in Skokie. Chairman Suresh Bodiwala hoped that the new Board will expand the organization's activities to be more global in outlook and involve all other communities in cherishing Gandhi's vision.

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

# US Coronavirus deaths surpass 450K; daily toll continues to be high

**50,000 new fatalities in the last two weeks alone**

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Coronavirus deaths in the United States surpassed 450,000 on Thursday, February 4, and daily deaths remain stubbornly high at more than 3,000 a day, despite falling infections and the arrival of multiple vaccines, says an AP report.

Infectious disease specialists expect deaths to start dropping soon, after new cases hit a peak right around the beginning of the year. New COVID-19 deaths could ebb as early as next week, said the new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But there's also the risk that improving trends in infections and hospitalizations could be offset by people relaxing and coming together - including this Sunday, to watch football, she added.

"I'm worried about Super Bowl Sunday, quite honestly," Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Thursday in an interview with The Associated Press.

Walensky said one reason cases and hospitalizations are not rising as dramatically as they were weeks ago is because the effect of holiday gatherings has faded.

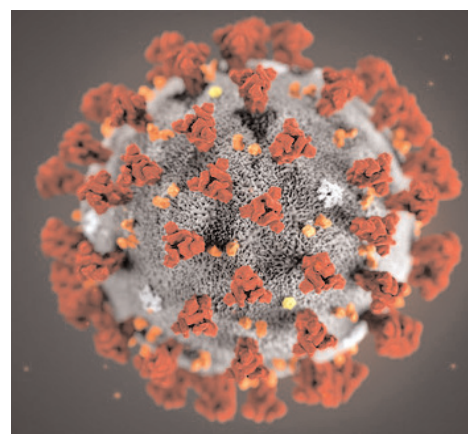
The effect on deaths is delayed. The daily toll amounts to 50,000 new fatalities in the last two weeks alone.

"We're still in quite a bad place," she said.

The nation reported 3,912 COVID-19 deaths on Wednesday, down from the pandemic peak of 4,466 deaths on Jan. 12.

The biggest driver to the U.S. death toll over the past month has been California, which has averaged more than 500 deaths per day in recent weeks.

California's experience has mirrored many of the inequalities that have been exposed since the pandemic began nearly a year ago, with people of color being hit especially hard.



For example, Latinos make up 46% of California's overall death toll, despite being 39% of the state's population. The situation has worsened in recent months. In November, the daily number of Latino deaths was 3.5 per 100,000 residents, but that rate shot up to 40 deaths per 100,000 last week.

Alabama is another hot spot. The seven-day rolling average of deaths there has risen over the past two weeks, from 74 to 147 deaths per day. Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee also saw surges in deaths.

The hardest hit demographic groups continue to be the oldest and frailest, said Dr. Thomas Holland of Duke University.

When coronavirus first swept through the country, it was concentrated in nursing homes, prisons and other congregate care settings. It later spread more broadly.

"But deaths have still been concentrated among older patients and patients with other health problems, Holland said. "Even as the pandemic has spread more broadly in the population, the demographics of who dies from COVID has not really changed."

In Florida, for instance, 83 percent of deaths attributed to the virus have been in people 65 and older.

Public health experts are watching

Florida closely this week, because the Super Bowl will be played in Tampa. City leaders and the NFL are trying to ensure social distancing by capping attendance at a third of the stadium's capacity - 22,000 people. Still, there will be parties, events at bars and clubs, and other activities that draw people together.

While most people who become infected will recover, others face a much longer road. It can take a week or two to get sick enough to end up in the hospital. Then, those who are severely ill may end up in an ICU for many weeks, and some will die.

"The patients who don't do well are often in for these long and very stormy courses, and the patients who die, that's typically weeks into their hospital stay," Holland said.

Treatments have evolved for COVID over time, but there have not been any "game-changing miracle treatments" on par with the development of the vaccine, Holland said.

"We've had things on the margin that are helpful," Holland said.

Among those, the use of steroids for patients who require oxygen, different ventilator strategies and preventing and managing blood clots. There's also the use of monoclonal antibodies for outpatients early in their illness who do not need to be on oxygen, but who might be at higher risk of complications.

In addition, changes in testing have helped.

"Clearly, if people know they're infected, they're going to be more likely to do the things they need to do, like staying at home and quarantining or isolating," he said.

Looking forward, the big concern is how the virus is changing, shifting into new strains that are potentially more infectious and better able to evade antibody products or to make vaccines less effective.

# Indian American Lawmaker Re-Elected Chairman of Subcommittee on Asia Pacific

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Congressman Dr. Ami Bera has been re-elected as chairman of a key congressional subcommittee that plays a major role in the policies relating to Asia, Pacific, Central Asia, and non-proliferation.

Ami Bera, 55, who is the longest-serving Indian-American in the House of Representatives, has been elected again to serve as chairman of the influential House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia and Non-proliferation for the 117th Congress.

"I am honored to be elected to serve again as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Non-proliferation. Asia continues to be the most consequential region for American foreign policy, as our economy and national security are intrinsically linked to this region," Ami Bera said in a



*Dr. Ami Bera has been re-elected as chairman of a key congressional subcommittee that plays a major role in the policies relating to Asia, Pacific, Central Asia, and non-proliferation*

statement.

There are many pressing challenges that Congress must work to address, from an authoritarian China and a provocative North Korea, to the receding of democracy and human rights across the region, he said, listing out the priorities as the head of this key

congressional subcommittee.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues on the subcommittee and the Biden administration to tackle these problems, restore American global leadership, and rebuild our alliances in Asia and the Pacific," Ami Bera said.

Other Democratic members who will serve on the subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and non-proliferation for the 117th Congress include Brad Sherman, Dina Titus, Andy Levin, Chrissy Houlahan, Andy Kim, Gerry Connolly, Ted Lieu, Abigail Spanberger, and Kathy Manning.

Ami Bera will also serve on the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights for the 117th Congress. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea and previously chaired the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans.

## Indian American Congressman Condemns Vandalization Of Gandhi Statue



*The 6-ft tall, 650-pound (294 kg) bronze statue of Gandhi in the Central Park of the City of Davis in Northern California was vandalized, broken and ripped from the base by unknown criminals.*

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna on Monday, Feb 1, strongly condemned the vandalism of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the US state of California, calling it a shameful act.

The 6-ft tall, 650-pound (294 kg) bronze statue of Gandhi in the Central Park of the City of Davis in Northern California was vandalized, broken and ripped from the base by unknown criminals early this week. "Nonviolent, respectful protest was the essence of Gandhi's life mission. To see the desecration of this magnificent statue only underscores the need for more people to study Gandhi's teachings, not unilaterally erase him from the public discourse," Khanna said.

"This was a shameful act. At a moment in our history when disagreement needs to be managed with tolerance and patience, I urge everyone involved to take the time to listen and talk instead of resorting to acts of public vandalism," he said. As the Democratic Vice Chair of the India Caucus, Khanna said he will continue to work with his colleagues to build bridges across these divisions.

"I encourage everyone to join me in working through disagreement with dialogue and discussion, rather than resorting to violence that tears at the fabric of our society," he said.

Meanwhile, two groups gathered at the park in Davis on Sunday where the statue was vandalized, local media reported. While one group demanded that the statue be restored, the other opposed such a move.

The City of Davis has launched an investigation into the incident.

"The City of Davis condemns the vandalism that destroyed the statue of Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi in Central Park. We do not support any actions that include the destruction of property," the city said in a statement on Sunday.

"We understand that our community reflects a diversity of views and values, but we expect that everyone will extend respect to each other and to shared spaces," it said.

But we reiterate our belief that the solution to solving such differences is never in violent acts but through compromise and dialogue. It is our sincere desire that our community move forward with peaceful and positive discourse and reconciliation," the city said in its statement.

# Indian-Origin Raj Panjabi is Global Coordinator for Biden's Malaria Initiative

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Joe Biden has appointed Indian-origin Raj Panjabi to lead his Malaria Initiative, which is mainly in African and Asian countries.

"After being sworn in this morning, I'm honored to share that I've been appointed by" Joe Biden as the president's Malaria Coordinator to lead the US president's Malaria Initiative, Raj Panjabi said on twitter. "I'm grateful for this chance to serve," he added.

Born in Liberia, Raj Panjabi and his family fled the county during its civil war and arrived in the United States as refugees in the 1990s.

My family and I arrived in America 30 years ago after fleeing civil war in Liberia. A community of Americans rallied around my family to help us build back our lives. It's an honor to serve the country that helped build back my own life as part of the Biden-Harris Administration.

"In the face of unprecedented crises, I am humbled by the challenges our country and our world faces to build back better. But as I have learned in America: we are not defined by the conditions we face; we are defined by how we respond," Raj Panjabi said in a series of tweets.

As a doctor and public health professional who has cared for patients alongside the staff of the President's Malaria Initiative and its partners USAID and Center for Disease Control, Raj Panjabi said: "I've been inspired by how they've responded to fight malaria, one of the oldest and deadliest



*US President Joe Biden has appointed Indian-origin Raj Panjabi to lead his Malaria Initiative, which is mainly in African and Asian countries.*

pandemics, and saved lives around the world."

He said this mission is personal for him. "My grandparents and parents were infected with malaria while living in India. As a child in Liberia, I fell sick with malaria, and as a doctor serving in Africa, I have seen this disease take too many lives," he said.

"I've seen how" the Malaria Initiative and its partners have responded with resolve in the countries where it operates.

"I've seen the relief on the faces of parents whose children survived malaria because they were treated with medicines and by health workers backed by its support," he said.

Raj Panjabi fled Liberia during the country's civil war at age nine, becoming a refugee in the US. He

returned to Liberia as a medical student and in 2007, co-founded Last Mile Health. He has served as an assistant professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School, an associate physician at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and the CEO and co-founder of Last Mile Health, according to his profile on LinkedIn.

Raj Panjabi and the Last Mile Health team played a key role in the 2013-16 West Africa Ebola epidemic, helping train over a thousand frontline and community health workers and support the government of Liberia to lead its national Ebola Operations Centre. Raj Panjabi delivered testimony on the Ebola epidemic at the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee.

In response to COVID-19, he led Last Mile Health to support governments in Africa to train frontline health workers. He served as the advisor to former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in her role as the co-chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response at the World Health Organization (WHO). Raj Panjabi has cared for patients with COVID and urgent care needs.

He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, trained in internal medicine and primary care at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and received a master's degree in public health in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins. He has served as a faculty member at the Harvard Kennedy School.



## What gets cheaper and what's costlier

**U**nion Budget for 2021-22: While a large number of commonly used items, including refrigerators, ACs, and mobile phones, are set to become more expensive due to hike in customs duty on imported parts, gold and silver will become cheaper as a result of rationalisation in customs duty on imports of these precious metals.

### Costlier

- Compressors for refrigerators and air conditioners
- LED lamps, parts and spares such as printed circuit board
- Raw silk and cotton
- Solar invertors and lanterns
- Automobile parts such as safety and toughened glasses
- Windscreen wipers
- Signalling equipment
- Mobile phone parts like PCBA
- Camera module
- Connectors
- Back cover, side keys, mobile phone charger components
- Inputs or raw materials of Lithium-ion battery
- Ink cartridges and ink spray nozzle
- Finished leather products
- Nylon fibre and yarn
- Plastic builder wares
- Cut and polished synthetic stones, including cut and polished cubic zirconia

### Cheaper

- Gold and gold dore
- Silver and silver dore
- Other precious metals like platinum and palladium
- Medical devices imported by international organisation and diplomatic missions

# Infra, healthcare get big boost in Union Budget 2021

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament on February 1. In significant changes to the taxation process, Sitharaman announced the scrapping of income tax for senior citizens under certain conditions, new rules for removal of double taxation for NRIs, and a reduction in the time period of tax assessments among other measures. Startups will get an extension in their tax holiday for an additional year.

Sitharaman also announced that the advance tax liability on dividend income shall arise after declaration of payment of dividend. In her speech, Sitharaman announced that India's fiscal deficit is set to jump to 9.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 2020-21 as per Revised Estimates. This is sharply higher than 3.5 per cent of GDP that was projected in the Budget Estimates. A slump in government revenues amid the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a sharp rise in deficit and market borrowing. In health care spending, Sitharaman announced a total spend of around Rs 2 lakh crore on healthcare with Rs 35,000 crore on Covid-19 vaccine development and inoculation.

Two of the biggest winners in budget were healthcare and infrastructure as both got one of the biggest allocations in percentage terms. The allocation for the defence sector was also comparatively higher in the wake of the India-China conflict. A host of announcements were also made on the government's disinvestment strategy for the upcoming fiscal year starting April 1, 2021. It is also worth mentioning that no major tax changes were announced in the budget.

The funds allocated for infrastructure development and healthcare were the biggest highlights of Budget 2021. The decision is in line with the biggest hurdles India currently faces the Covid-19 pandemic and growth.

For healthcare, a new centrally-sponsored scheme, PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, will be launched with an outlay of about Rs 64,180 crores over 6 years.

Infrastructure was the next-biggest focus point of the Union Budget 2021-22. Stressing on the need to focus on local manufacturing for India's USD 5 trillion economy dream, Sitharaman said that the government had already announced a production-linked incentive scheme



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget 2021 on Monday, February 1, 2021, comes in the backdrop of a debilitating pandemic that has wreaked havoc on the economy.

(PLI) for 13 sectors.

"For this, the government has committed nearly Rs 1.97 lakh crore, over 5 years starting FY 2021-22. This initiative will help bring scale and size in key sectors, create and nurture global champions and provide jobs to our youth," said Sitharaman.

The Budget 2021 also focused on the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), which was announced last year. Since it will require a major increase in funding both from the government and the financial sector, the finance minister has proposed to take three concrete steps to boost the NIP. Firstly, through institutional structures; secondly, by a big thrust on monetizing assets, and thirdly by enhancing the share of capital expenditure in central and state budgets.

### Defence gets 7% boost

The allocation for defence was also higher by over 7 per cent in Union Budget 2021-22 as India has been locked in a prolonged conflict with China in eastern Ladakh. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated Rs 3.62 lakh crore, excluding pensions, for defence expenditure -- up by 7.4 per cent from last year. The total outlay for the Defence Ministry in Budget 2021 is pegged at Rs 4,78,195.62 crore, with pension liabilities down by Rs 18,000 crore from the present fiscal.

The outlay for weapons and

modernisation has been increased from Rs 1,13,734 lakh crore last year to Rs 1,35,060 crore for 2021-22 -- a rise of 18 per cent. The increased budget for modernisation will help the armed forces equip themselves with new weapon systems and spares.

### No major changes in income tax

This is one area which did not make it to the government's priority spending list. In the Union Budget 2021, measures were proposed to ease tax compliance besides providing some relief to small taxpayers, homebuyers and senior citizens. Click here to know the key income tax changes in the budget.

### Divestment in focus

Nirmala Sitharaman's budget speech made it clear that the government is committed to boosting divestments in the fiscal year starting April 1, 2021. She has announced Rs 1.75 lakh crore as the disinvestment target for FY2021-22. Sitharaman said two PSBs and one general insurance company would be divested.

She said strategic sale of IDBI Bank, BPCL, Shipping Corp, Container Corporation, Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd, Pawan Hans, Air India among others, would be completed in 2021-22 fiscal year beginning April 1. Also, amendments to the existing Act to facilitate LIC IPO would be brought in 2021-22, she said.

**T**he budget proposed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the next fiscal year has succeeded in providing a long-term growth roadmap, but it has been disappointing for India's huge middle-class population.

### No income tax relief

For starters, the budget did not offer any income tax relief to small taxpayers, which could have been one way to boost demand.

Given the tight revenue situation, taxpayers were expecting at least some incremental benefits. But only compliance issues were dealt with in the budget besides giving tax relief to those above 75 years of age. However, the pandemic has severely affected the working population of the country, especially people in their 20s to those in their late 50s. There were hardly

## Why India's middle class is not impressed

any tax measures announced to help India's working-class population, who were affected badly due to the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the government's effort to give the gig economy a boost by boosting infrastructure, falling income levels among the country's salaried-class citizens could become a concern over a longer period.

Even though the revenue position of the government was tight going into the budget, it must be noted that citizens have also been waiting for a tax exemption relief since 2014.

### Taxing Savings

Another decision that has not gone down

well with some Indians, particularly, high net worth individuals (HNIs), is the removal of tax exemption on the interest income from provident fund contribution above Rs 2.5 lakh per year. In the budget, the finance minister said that interest earned on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) of Rs 2.5 lakh at the current income tax rates. Revenue secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey told The Economic Times that the decision to tax PF interest is based on the principle of equity.

### Duty hikes

Among other reasons that have upset the middle-class population is the rise in

customs duty on some products. Reports have already started indicating that prices of some consumer durable items and smartphones will rise.

Customs duty on some auto parts has also been raised to 15 per cent. Citizens feel that this will lead to a further hike in vehicles prices. There is also a general sense of disappointment regarding the high taxes on petrol and diesel. The government did slash basic excise duty and special additional excise duty on both fuels, but it has introduced a 2.5 per cent cess for agricultural infrastructure development. The end result is that the price remains the same.

382 passports  
of NRIs revoked  
since 2015



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The government on Thursday, February 4, told Parliament that 382 passports had been revoked or impounded since 2015 in cases pertaining to desertion of Indian women by NRI grooms and 216 women had so far sought legal and financial assistance from the government in such cases. Answering a question by Congress MP Partap Singh Bajwa, the External Affairs Ministry said the Indian Community Welfare Fund was set up in all-Indian Missions and Posts abroad to assist Indian nationals in times of distress overseas. (Source: TNS)

PM Modi's  
brother stages  
dharna at  
Lucknow  
airport



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi stages a dharna at the Lucknow airport on Feb 4, alleging that police did not let his supporters reach there.

**LUCKNOW (TIP):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi staged a dharna at the Lucknow airport on Wednesday, February 3, alleging that police did not let his supporters reach there.

According to Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport's Additional General Manager (Operations) Bhupendra Singh, Prahlad Modi arrived at Lucknow by an Indigo flight around 4 pm. He sat on a dharna on the airport premises as he was unhappy over police stopping his supporters from reaching there, Singh said, adding that Prahlad Modi left after an hour and a half. (Source: PTI)

## MONETARY POLICY

# RBI keeps repo rate unchanged at 4%, maintains accommodative stance

**MUMBAI (TIP):** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept its repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent while maintaining an 'accommodative stance' as long as necessary at least through the current financial year to the next year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on Friday, Feb 5.

The RBI governor announced that the decision was taken unanimously and added that the reverse repo rate too was kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

The central bank had slashed the repo rate by 115 basis points since late March 2020 to support growth. This is the fourth time in a row that the MPC decided to keep the policy rate unchanged.

The RBI had last revised its policy rate on May 22 in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rates to a historic low.

The central bank also sees FY22 GDP growth at 10.5 per cent. The RBI governor said that the inflation has eased below the level of 6 per cent. The outlook on growth has also improved significantly. He also said that the MPC judged that need for the hour is to continue supporting the growth. He added that the signs of recovery have strengthened further and list of normalising sectors is expanding.

This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das meets every two months to analyze the state of the Indian economy and inflation and address the monetary issues in the country. This month, it began the 3-day bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3.

Das said that the CPI projection is revised to 5.2 per cent for Q4 FY21 and CPI inflation is pegged at 5-5.2 per cent in H1 FY22.

The RBI Governor said "capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector

improved to 63.3 per cent in Q2 vs 47.3 per cent in Q1. FDI and FPI investments have surged in recent months, reposing faith in the Indian economy."

Speaking on non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), Das said that the funds from banks though the TLTRO scheme will now available to NBFCs. He also said that the CRR will be restored in two phases to 3.5 per cent from March 27 and 4 per cent from May 22, 2021.

The RBI governor also said that the CRR normalisation will open up space for a variety of market operations.

## Tejas done, focus on three other fighter jets: Two for IAF, one Navy

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** With the largest-ever deal for domestic defence manufacture signed on Wednesday, Feb 3, – for 73 LCA Tejas Mk-1A and 10 LCA Mk-1 versions – it was the culmination of a project that kicked off in 1983. However, officials of the agency that designed and developed the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) say now that the core technology is ready, it will act as a catalyst for several other projects that are lined up.

Three new fighter jets will be flying by 2026, of which two will be for the Air Force and one for the Navy, Girish S Deodhare, chief of Aeronautical Development Agency of the Defence Ministry, which has designed the LCA, told The Indian Express.

He said the first to roll out by the end of 2023 will be a new LCA, the Mk-2 version. It consolidates the technologies which have matured in Mk-1 "into a bigger more capable platform", said Deodhare.

He said the 123 Mk-1 and Mk1A aircraft procured by the Air Force are replacement for the MiG-21 class so their "design parameters were such that it was a light, small aircraft, very maneuverable and mainly for air defence, that is guarding our boundaries, so it has a certain capability of carrying weapons and fuel". The Tejas, he said, can carry 3.5 tonnes of external payload.

The LCA Mk-2 though, Deodhare said, is a replacement for the Mirage 2000 class of aircraft, "which is much bigger, and it has got a bigger engine also" and can carry 6.5 tonnes of payload. "It's a much more capable aircraft, but what is important is that the technology is already developed in LCA. That is why this is something targeted very fast," he said.

The roll-out is planned for 2022 and first flight by 2023 and production of the Mk-2 version by 2026, he said.

This will be followed by the AMCA (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft), which is fifth generation while the LCA is 4.5 generation, he said. "The design activity was started in 2010, and a lot of new developments had to be done," he said.

It is a stealth aircraft so it is designed for stealth and unlike



the LCA, which is designed for maneuverability, the AMCA has a unique shape to achieve low radar cross-section and has got internal carriage of weapons, he said. "When you remove the external weapons, this aircraft has enough fuel and weapons inside to do a very capable operational role in the stealth mode," Deodhare said. It will have a range from over 1,000 km up to 3,000 km in different modes, he said. "We will be reaching the forefront of technology."

Deodhare said the AMCA's design is complete and the Air Force has "frozen their requirements". "We are starting into the manufacturing phase," he said. The prototype will be ready by 2024, and the first flight, immediately after that.

While AMCA Mk-1 will have an imported engine, same as LCA Mk-2, the AMCA Mk-2 will have an indigenous engine. The LCA Mk-2 engine can be replaced with an indigenous one at a later stage. "Two squadrons of the AMCA Mk-1 will have an imported engine. Subsequently in Mk-2, which Air Force wants in bigger numbers, will come with a more powerful indigenous engine," he said. The aircraft will be made in a way so that the new indigenous engine will fit in with very minimal changes, he said.

# What's the problem if foreign celebrities support farmer stir; don't know Rihanna, Greta: Tikait

**GHAZIABAD (TIP):** For all the global uproar the farmers' movement against the new agri laws has caused, the man at its centre seems oblivious of the celebrity support he has been getting.

Rakesh Tikait, the 51-year-old Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader from the hinterlands of Muzaffarnagar in western Uttar Pradesh, welcomed the support from international artistes and activists, including Rihanna and Greta Thunberg, but acknowledged that he did not know them.

Talking to the media at Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border on Thursday, Tikait, who is credited with reviving the agitation that appeared to be flagging after the January 26 violence in Delhi, sought to know who these people were.

"Who are these foreign artistes?" Tikait said showing unawareness when asked about the foreigners supporting the farmers' movement.

When informed about American pop-singer Rihanna, adult star Mia Khalifa and Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg, the Sisauli-born Tikait responded: "They may have supported us, but I don't know them."

"If some foreigner is supporting the movement, then what is the problem. They are not giving us or taking anything away from us," he said.

Commenting on the futile attempt by 15 members of Parliament to reach Ghazipur and meet protesters on Thursday, the BKU national spokesperson said the MPs should have sat on the ground on the other side of the barricades where they were stopped by Delhi Police.

"A barricading has been set up here. They had to come, but they should have sat down there itself. They would have been on the other side and we on this side (of the barricade)," he said.

Tikait said he did not have any talk with the 15 MPs who had tried to come to Ghazipur to meet the protesters. They were also not allowed to speak to the protesters, he added.

The 15 MPs from 10 Opposition parties, including the SAD, the DMK, the NCP and the Trinamool Congress, wanted to meet the protesters at Ghazipur. Members of the National Conference, the RSP and the IUML were also part of the delegation.

MP and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal, who coordinated the visit, said the leaders were not allowed to cross the barricades and reach the protest site, where thousands of farmers are camping since November with a demand that the government repeal the new agri-marketing laws enacted last September.

The farmers' protest at Ghazipur, Tikri and Singhu at Delhi borders has now attained global spotlight with prominent international celebrities and rights activists talking about the stir.

In its pushback, the government said the facts on the issue must be



The BKU leader welcomes the support from international artistes and activists, including Rihanna and Greta Thunberg, but acknowledges that he does not know them.

## Delhi Police file FIR on farmers' protest 'toolkit' tweeted by Greta Thunberg

The Delhi Police has lodged an FIR in connection with a 'toolkit' containing information on how to back the farmers protests. The 'toolkit' has been doing the rounds on social media and the document was tweeted out by, among others, Swedish teen climate change activist Greta Thunberg. She deleted that tweet and later reposted an updated version of the toolkit.

Praveer Ranjan, Special Commissioner of Police (CP), Delhi Police, on Thursday, Feb 4, evening said, "We haven't named anybody in the FIR, it's only against the creators of toolkit which is a matter of investigation & Delhi Police will be investigating that case."

"Preliminary enquiry has revealed that the toolkit in question appears to have been created by a pro-Khalistani Organisation 'Poetic Justice Foundation'," the police officer said.

The FIR has been lodged under the Indian Penal Code's Sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity), and 120B (criminal conspiracy).

Earlier, this week Greta Thunberg took to Twitter to lend support to farmers in India who are protesting against the three new farm laws. The farmers having been sitting at the Delhi border in protest for several days now.

In her tweet on Tuesday night, Greta Thunberg wrote "We stand in solidarity



Swedish teen climate change activist Greta Thunberg.

with the #FarmersProtest in India" and shared a CNN article on the ongoing farmers' protest in India and how internet has been suspended around the Delhi borders. Her tweet followed that of Rihanna who brought global attention to the issue.

In a follow-up tweet, Greta Thunberg wrote, "Here's an updated toolkit by people on the ground in India if you want to help. (They removed their previous document as it was outdated.) #StandWithFarmers #FarmersProtest" and shared a document on details about the agitation.

ascertained before rushing to comment on it, and asserted that the "temptation" of sensationalist social media hashtags and views is "neither accurate nor responsible".

## Will not enter Delhi, say farmers as police prepare for Feb 6 chakka jam

Farm unions agitating against three agriculture laws announced on Thursday that no protester will enter Delhi during a three-hour nationwide highway blockade on February 6 in a bid to avoid a repeat of the clashes and violence witnesses on Republic Day.

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana drummed up support for the chakka jam, scheduled between 12pm and 3pm on Saturday, held village-level meetings and deputed special security volunteers to avert any clashes with security forces.

In Delhi, Union home minister Amit Shah met national security adviser Ajit Doval and Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava inside the Parliament complex to review the security situation. The Centre had already conveyed to Delhi Police that additional central paramilitary forces are on standby if required. Currently over 60 companies (6,000 personnel) of central paramilitary forces are assisting Delhi Police at the borders.

Farm leaders said cultivators camping at Singhu, Tikri, and Ghazipur borders, and those who will join them by Friday, will carry out the chakka jam at their respective venues.

(Source: PTI/HT)



# 43 FIRs in R-Day violence, 13 being probed: Delhi Police to HC

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Delhi Police on Thursday, Feb 4, informed the Delhi high court that 43 FIRs have been registered in the Republic Day violence, out of which 13 have been transferred to the special cell.

A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh was told by the police, represented by Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, that provisions of UAPA have also been invoked in some cases involving banned organization "Sikhs for Justice" and investigations is on.

The submissions were made while hearing a plea seeking a probe into the violence during farmers' tractor rally on Republic Day and the alleged lapse in security, which resulted in a religious flag being hoisted at the Red Fort.

The court declined to hear the plea and asked the petitioners, three Uttar Pradesh residents, to withdraw the petition or face costs. It said that a crime can happen in a fraction of seconds but the investigation takes time, while adding that it was to analyse the mindset of such petitions.

"So you started typing the petition right after the incident on January 26 noon? Do you know how much time is given for investigation under the Criminal Procedure Code? You are a lawyer. How much time is given for an investigation?"

"You expect the investigations to be completed within two days of the incident? Does the government have a magic wand which it will wave and everything will be done? Should we dismiss it with cost or will you withdraw," the bench asked advocate Vivek Narayan Sharma, appearing for the petitioner.

## Man arrested for R-Day



## violence gets bail

A Delhi court has granted bail to a man arrested for allegedly being part of unlawful assembly and conducting riots in the Uttam Nagar area during the tractor rally on Republic Day. The court stated that "no fruitful purpose would be served by curtailing the liberty of the accused".

Additional sessions judge Dheeraj Mor, while granting bail to one Sandeep Kumar, said that the Investigating officer's report is "conspicuously silent" about his previous criminal involvement.

"Therefore, there is no reason to doubt the submissions on behalf of the accused that he has clear antecedents. He is no more required for the investigation of

this case. In the aforesaid circumstances, no fruitful purpose will be served by further curtailing the liberty of the accused," the judge said in his order of February 3.

The judge also noted that co-accused Gurvinder Singh, with the similar allegations as that of the accused, was released by the police after giving a notice.

Kumar, through his counsel, advocate Kapil Chaudhary, had contended his client was falsely implicated in this case and he was just a bystander at the spot of occurrence. He said that Kumar was neither part of the unlawful assembly nor he was involved in the riots.

The counsel said that Kumar owns a shop of iron rods at Kakrola, Dwarka

Mor, New Delhi and he was not part of any agitation.

However, opposing the bail application, additional public prosecutor Satvinder Kaur, told the court that the accused was part of unlawful assembly that committed riots and caused injuries to nine police personnel. She said that the members of the unlawful assembly also damaged the public property including the cluster buses.

The police had earlier released a list of over 120 arrestees after allegations that several protestors were illegally detained without even informing their families.

Advocate Harpreet Singh Hora said that their legal team has been providing legal aid since the first day of the arrests of several farmers and this type of orders give them hope.

"Additionally, the bail reinforces our faith that the people who have been wrongly implicated in these cases shall get justice. What we are doing is upholding the law and we will strive to fight cases of these farmers till this reaches a logical conclusion," he said.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, are protesting at various border points of Delhi for over two months now against the three farm laws.

The tractor parade on January 26 that was to highlight the demands of farmer unions to repeal three new agri laws dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the national capital as thousands of protesters broke through barriers, fought with the police, overturned vehicles and hoisted a religious flag from the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort.

(Source: HT)

## Punjab reaches out to Centre and farmers, proposes longer pause

**CHANDIGARH (TIP):** Wary of the protracted farmers' agitation in the capital and the Republic Day incident at Red Fort, the Punjab government has stepped up efforts to reach out to the Centre to work towards an early resolution, sources told The Indian Express.

Some top state officials have been camping in Delhi and are in constant touch with both the protesting farmers and the Centre.

There were concerns in the state government that after the Nishan Sahib was hoisted at Red Fort, the agitation would fizzle out and farmers would return empty-handed.

"Everybody here knows that if farmers come back without getting anything after these weeks and months of protests, anger will mount in the state. That would be a perfect breeding ground for resentment and we cannot afford that," said a top state government functionary.

That's why, sources said, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh invoked Operation Blue Star at the all-party meeting this week and warned that Pakistan could "exploit" the situation to foment trouble.

"Thanks to Rakesh Tikait, the agitation has got a new lease of life. If another Red Fort-like incident happens, it will be difficult for the leaders to sustain the agitation. Wisdom lies in taking it to a logical conclusion and save Punjab from any after-effects," said a source who is aware of discussions between the state and the Centre.



He said the state is trying to impress upon the Centre to repeal the laws but the Centre is "willing to do anything other than repeal." So one option the state has proposed is to put the laws on hold for three years instead of the earlier offer of 18 months.

"The farmers leaders had not agreed then. But now we are working on both the farmers as well as the Centre to make sure that the agitation is called off soon. If we can get the laws on hold until 2024 — which means the next elections — we can then work on the farmers to back down. After the Republic Day incident, we all have learnt our lessons. We will have to agree on something," said the source.

(Source: The Indian Express)

## R-Day Violence: Rs 1 lakh reward announced for leads on actor Deep Sidhu

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Delhi Police, that is probing the violence that unfolded inside the Red Fort complex on Republic Day amid the farmers' protest, announced monetary rewards for those who can provide information on Punjabi actor-activist Deep Sidhu and others named as accused.



While the police announced a Rs 1 lakh reward for leads that could lead to the arrest on Sidhu and three others, a reward of ? 50,000 was announced for any information that could lead the police to arrest four others, Jagbir Singh, Buta Singh, Sukhdev Singh and Iqbal Singh, for their alleged involvement in last Tuesday's violence.

A tractor rally by farmers protesting the centre's three agricultural laws went rogue as protesters broke off the agreed route and schedule, forced their way inside the Red Fort complex, climbed the ramparts and placed a Sikh religious flag.

Police, who repeatedly appealed for calm and urged protesting farmers to stand down and return to the agreed routes, resorted to firing tear gas and lathi-charges to regain control.

The crime branch of Delhi Police, meanwhile, released photographs showing the faces of 12 people whom they're searching for as part of the January 26 violence investigation.



## 'Food critic' Sunny Leone getting distracted by pastry

Sunny Leone, who co-hosts MTV Splitsvilla with Rannvijay Singhaa, shared a behind-the-scenes video from the show's sets on Instagram. For a day, Sunny Leone doubled up as a food critic, reviewing the spread served for the cast and crew on Splitsvilla sets. Sunny Leone, known for her signature sense of humour, will crack you up with her ROFL comments. She particularly seemed obsessed with the dessert option - pineapple pastry. Sunny began the video with a sad face because: "The pastries are also gone," she said. Switching on her food critic avatar, Sunny said: "Let's start from the beginning. I don't eat meat but... This, people like a lot. It's fish and it's almost gone."

Meanwhile, Sunny spotted a plateful of pastries being taken to fill the empty dessert counter and she couldn't be more excited. Upon learning those are pineapple pastry, she literally hijacked the tray and exclaimed: "Thank you so much!" The moment Sunny realised she got a bit distracted, she gained composure and returned to her food review and said: "They don't actually need to make steamed rice anymore because nobody is eating it. It's just gonna go to waste. They like the daal."

# Parineeti is a murder suspect in mystery thriller

Parineeti Chopra has teased us with glimpses of *The Girl On The Train* in the past several times and yet the film's trailer will keep you glued to the screen all along. *The Girl On The Train* trailer begins by introducing Parineeti Chopra - the protagonist named Mira Kapoor - as a stalker of sorts, who is obsessed with the blissfully happy life of Mobi Mehta, played by Aditi Rao Hydari. "She's everything I lost," said Mira Chopra, who is an alcoholic divorcee. Mira's character is a little more complicated than just that. She also suffers from amnesia, which refers to loss of memories, after she met with a car accident in the past.

The trailer shows Mira's obsession with Mobi Mehta takes her to her Greenwich residence, following by a chase sequence in the jungle in the middle of the night. Next we know, Mobi Mehta has been found murdered in the woods and her death is being investigated. Kirti Kulhari, who is the investigating officer on the case, spots Mira's ID card in the jungle and tracks her down but Mira has no memory of that night.

Embroided in the murder mystery, Mira tries to fill up the black spaces in her past and put together the unfortunate happenings on the night of the



murder. In her attempt to recreate the dreadful night, Mira asks for "a phone, cash and a gun" and then

begins her journey into the past. Is Mira guilty of murder? Even she doesn't know.

## Kapil Sharma and Ginni Chatrath blessed with baby boy

Comedian-actor Kapil Sharma has welcomed his second child, a baby boy, with wife Ginni Chatrath. He shared the happy news with his fans on social media on Monday, Feb 1. He said that the mother and the baby are both fine and thanked everyone for blessings and prayers.

"We are blessed with a Baby boy this early morning, by the grace of God Baby n Mother both r fine, thank you so much for all the love, blessings n prayers Folded hands love you all Red heartginni n kapil (sic)," Kapil wrote on social media.

Fans congratulated him on welcoming a baby into their family.

Only recently, The Kapil Sharma Show host had confirmed that his hugely popular TV show will be taking a "small break" so that he can be with his wife to welcome their second child. The comedy show features an ensemble of artistes, including Bharti Singh, Sumona Chakravarti, Krushna Abhishek and Kiku Sharda.

Kapil and Ginni became parents to baby girl Anayra in Decemebr 2019. They had tied the knot in 2018.

On the work front, Kapil is attached with streaming giant Netflix for a project. It is unclear at the moment whether its a comedy special, TV series or a movie. It will premiere on the streamer in 2021 across 190 countries. Kapil will also star in SonyLIV project Dadi Ki Shaadi.



## Loop Lapeta first look: Taapsee Pannu promises 'a crazy ride'

After wrapping up *Rashmi Rocket*, Taapsee Pannu has moved on to her next film titled *Loop Lapeta*. On Tuesday, the actor shared her first look from the film.

Introducing her character Savi, Taapsee wrote on Instagram, "Life mein kabhi kabhaar aisa time aata hai jab humein khud se yeh sawaal karna padta hai 'How did I end up here?' main bhi yahi soch rahi thi. (Sometimes in life, we end up questioning, 'How did I end up here?' I was also thinking the same.) No, not the shit pot, but the shit life! Hi, this is Savi and welcome on board a crazy ride #LoopLapeta."

*Loop Lapeta* also stars Tahir Raj Bhasin in the lead role.

Tahir also shared the first look of Taapsee with a caption that read, "When shit gets real. Here's @taapsee as the crazy and the uber cool Savi in this year's craziest ride, #LoopLapeta."

*Loop Lapeta* is the Hindi remake of German film *Run Lola Run*. It is directed by Aakash Bhatia and produced by Sony Pictures Films India and Ellipsis Entertainment.

Apart from *Loop Lapeta*, Taapsee has started preparing for *Shabash Mithu*, a biopic on Mithali Raj. The actor also has Haseen Dilruba in her kitty.





## Angelina Jolie's *Those Who Wish Me Dead* sets release date

Angelina Jolie-starrer *Those Who Wish Me Dead* will debut in US theatres on May 14 this year, Warner Bros has announced.

According to Deadline, the Taylor Sheridan-directed Westerner will premiere on streamer HBO Max the same day as per the release strategy of Warner Media for the year 2021.

Based on Michael Koryta's 2014 novel of the same name, the film is described as a female-driven Western set amidst a wildfire raging in the Montana wilderness. When a teenager witnesses a murder, he finds himself being pursued by twin assassins in the Montana wilderness. Though there is a survival expert tasked with protecting him, the forest fire threatens to destroy them all.

The cast also includes Nicholas Hoult, Jon Bernthal, Tyler Perry, Aidan Gillen, Medina Senghore, Finn Little and Jake Weber. Sheridan is known for writing the screenplays of Oscar-nominated *Hell or High Water* and Denis Villeneuve's *Sicario*. He made his directorial debut with critically-acclaimed thriller *Wind River* in 2017.

# Mank leads Golden Globe nominations with 6 nods

After a year where the pandemic nearly emptied movie theaters, Netflix dominated nominations to the 78th Golden Globe Awards on Wednesday, Feb 3, with David Fincher's *Mank* leading film nominees with six nods and *The Crown* topping all television series.

The Globes, delayed about two months due to the coronavirus, tried to muster some of the awards' usual buzz on Wednesday in a largely virtual awards season bereft the kind of red-carpet glamour the Globes annual feast on. And perhaps to account for the otherwise lack of it, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association heaped nominations on two lavish period pieces of high royalty — both the Hollywood variety (*Mank* dramatizes the making of *Citizen Kane*) and the British kind.

*Mank*, about *Citizen Kane* co-writer Herman Mankiewicz, landed nominations for best film, drama; best actor for Gary Oldman; best director for Fincher; best supporting actress for Amanda Seyfried; best score; and best screenplay for Jack Fincher, the director's father who penned the script before dying in 2003.

Netflix, which topped all studios at the Globes last year, too, led with a commanding 42 nominations, with 22 coming in film categories and 20 in television. No other studio was close.

*The Crown* also landed six nominations including best series, drama, and acting nods for Olivia Colman and Josh O'Connor. The final season of *Schitt's Creek* trailed with five nominations, while Netflix's *Ozark* (four



nods) and *The Queen's Gambit* (two nods) also added to the streamer's totals.

Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of the Chicago 7* — which is also a Netflix release — came in second with five nominations, including nods for best film, drama; best director and best screenplay for Sorkin; supporting actor for Sacha Baron Cohen; and best song.

The other nominees for best film in the drama category were Chloe Zhao's *Nomadland*, Emerald Fennell's *Promising Young Woman* and Florian Zeller's *The Father*.

Netflix doesn't report box office figures and both *Nomadland* and *The Father* are yet to open beyond a qualifying run in theaters. So the category's total box office — a historic low of about \$265,000 — is due to "Promising Young Woman."

A year after fielding no female nominees for best director — or best feature film nomination for any movie

directed by a woman — the HFPA nominated more female filmmakers than it had before.

Regina King (*One Night in Miami*), Zhao and Fennell were nominated for best director, alongside Sorkin and Fincher.

The nominees for best musical or comedy film are: *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*; *Hamilton*; *Music*; *Palm Springs*; *The Prom*.

The nominees for best television series, drama, are: *The Crown*; *Lovecraft Country*; *The Mandalorian*; *Ozark*; *Ratched*.

The nominees for best television series, musical or comedy, are: *Schitt's Creek*; *Ted Lasso*; *The Great*; *The Flight Attendant*; *Emily in Paris*.

The nominees for best motion picture, foreign language, are: *Another Round*; *La Llorona*; *The Life Ahead*; *Minari*; *Two of Us*.

## Kylie Jenner and Travis Scott 'still madly in love'

The former couple - who share three-year-old daughter Stormi together - have been split up for two years but "there is a lot of love there" still between the two of them.

A source shared to E! News: "Kylie and Travis are still madly in love. You can tell every time they are together that there is a lot of love there. Both of their faces light up when they are together and both seem very happy. They are amazing co-parents and have a great routine."

The exes aren't ruling out the possibility of getting back together but won't put any pressure on their romance for the time being and are just concentrating on co-parenting their daughter.

The insider added: "Kylie and Travis spend a lot of time together with Stormi as a family and aren't ruling out getting back together. They aren't putting pressure on the relationship right now."

And it has also been claimed Travis and Kylie have been stronger than ever following their brief split.

Another source shared: "Kylie and Travis truly enjoy one another and are in love, but it can often be hard navigating their lives at such a young age. The couple needed to take a step back to reevaluate many things, but in doing so, they are better now than ever."

Travis has close bond with Stormi and pledged to always love Kylie even if they weren't together.

Speaking about his relationship with the reality



star, he said: "Stormi is one of the best human beings I know. She's like my best friend. She makes life a little bit easier. She just inspires me and she surprises me every day with how she's thinking. It's so crazy. I love her mommy and I always will. The hard part about relationships is just trying to be in one without a million outside voices interfering."

## Evan Rachel Wood accuses Marilyn Manson of abuse

*Westworld* star Evan Rachel Wood has claimed that heavy metal and rock singer Marilyn Manson was the person she has referred in the past when she has talked about being in an abusive relationship.

The 33-year-old actor made the allegations in an Instagram post. Evan Rachel Wood and Marilyn Manson went public with their relationship in 2007 when she was 19 and he was 38. The duo got engaged in 2010, but broke up later that year.

"The name of my abuser is Brian Warner, also known to the world as Marilyn Manson. He started grooming me when I was a teenager and horrifically abused me for years. I was brainwashed and manipulated into submission. I am done living in fear of retaliation, slander, or blackmail," she wrote.



# OSCAR CONTENDERS

BY MABEL PAIS

## ASIAN AMERICAN CONTENDERS

**Karishma Dev Dube's 'BITTU'**  
**Shalini Kantayya's 'CODED BIAS'**  
**Geeta Gandbhir's 'CALL CENTER BLUES'**

Among OSCAR Contenders



A scene from 'Bittu.' - Photo / LondonFlairPR



A scene from 'Coded Bias.' - Photo / DOC NYC 2020



A scene from 'Call Center Blues.' - Photo / DOC NYC 2020

### A-DOC: ASIAN AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY NETWORK AND OYEATMF

TEAM UP TO CELEBRATE A HISTORIC YEAR FOR ASIAN AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY AWARDS CONTENDERS OF TALKBACKS, INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS FEATURING NON-FICTION DIRECTORS/PRODUCERS

### 17 FEATURES AND 5 SHORT FILMS

QUALIFIED FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AND SHORT AWARDS

The awards season is in full swing and this year, Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) documentary filmmakers represent a record number of 17 features and 5 short films that are now recognized as documentary awards contenders.

This weekend, 'A-DOC': 'Asian

American Documentary Network' - which works to increase the visibility and support of Asian Americans in the documentary field and the virtual cinema screening platform 'Open Your Eyes & Think MF' (OYEATMF) are teaming up to highlight some of this year's AAPI documentary awards contenders with interviews and fireside chats online through their respective YouTube channels.

From Saturday January 30 and continuing through Monday, February 1, their respective online channels featured virtual discussions/talkbacks with this year's impressive group of AAPI filmmakers including Hao Wu, Ramona S. Diaz, Bao Nguyen, Richard Lui, Yung Chang, Ursula Liang, S. Leo Chiang, Diane Quon, Jiayan "Jenny" Shi, Carol Nguyen, Jeff Orlovski, Yi Chen, Elizabeth Lo, Annie Katsura Rollins, Joanna Vasquez Arong and more.

Log in to their YouTube channels for these conversations and celebrate the ASIAN AMERICAN DOC FILMMAKERS CONTENDERS 2021 at [youtube.com/channel/UCO5696sLJohYRwT7uPK\\_Cag](https://youtube.com/channel/UCO5696sLJohYRwT7uPK_Cag)

Watch videos about A-Doc and OYEATMF

A-DOC [bit.ly/adoc-youtube](https://bit.ly/adoc-youtube)

OYEATMF [bit.ly/39u0iua](https://bit.ly/39u0iua)

### ABOUT: A-DOC: ASIAN AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY NETWORK

A-Doc is a national network that works to increase the visibility and support of Asian Americans in the documentary field. Asian American documentary filmmakers who have come together as one, multi-generational force to advocate for our vital presence in the field. A-DOC is committed to sharing ideas and resources, providing mutual support and mentorship, and advocating for equity and diversity in the production and distribution of non-fiction storytelling.

### ABOUT: OPEN YOUR EYES AND THINK MF - OYEATMF

Established in 2020 by film publicists David Magdael and Vince Johnson, OPEN YOUR EYES AND THINK MF supports films and filmmakers that may not fit within the current distribution and exhibition system. The goal is to provide access to films that are challenging and changing the landscape of truth telling and story creation. These include BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other content creators who are on the margins. OYEATMF provides exhibition opportunities, resources, and the creation of meaningful discussions for and by filmmakers who are challenging us to think.

### 2021 FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES DIRECTED AND/OR PRODUCED BY AAPI FILMMAKERS

76 DAYS

A THOUSAND CUTS

A WOMAN'S WORK: THE NFL'S

CHEERLEADER PROBLEM  
ASWANG  
BE WATER  
BELLY OF THE BEAST  
CODED BIAS  
THE DONUT KING  
DOWN A DARK STAIRWELL  
FINDING YINGYING  
FIRST VOTE  
KID FROM CONEY ISLAND  
OUR TIME MACHINE  
SKY BLOSSOM  
THE SOCIAL DILEMMA  
STRAY  
THIS IS NOT A MOVIE

### 2021 SHORT DOCUMENTARIES

DIRECTED AND/OR PRODUCED BY AAPI FILMMAKERS  
CALL CENTER BLUES  
NO CRYING AT THE DINNER TABLE  
PANDEMIC19  
SING ME A LULLABY  
TO CALM THE PIG INSIDE

### Watch the A-DOC video: [youtu.be/MpAhg6yRvIE](https://youtu.be/MpAhg6yRvIE)

#### Best Documentary Short:

BITTU  
HUNGER WARD  
TO CALM THE PIG INSIDE  
ASHES TO ASHES  
NO CRYING AT THE DINNER TABLE  
EDDY'S WORLD  
PANDEMIC19  
CHURCH AND THE FOURTH ESTATE  
THE WAY HOME  
MAKING THE CASE

#### Best Documentary Feature:

A THOUSAND CUTS  
BEDLAM  
FEELS GOOD MAN  
FINDING YINGYING  
HUMAN NATURE  
THE MOLE AGENT  
MR. SOUL!  
MUCHO AMOR  
NASRIN  
REWIND  
OLIVER SACKS: HIS OWN LIFE  
OUR TIME MACHINE  
SKY BLOSSOM  
SOFTIE  
THROUGH THE NIGHT

### OTHER DOCUMENTARY SHORTS CONTENDERS

#### (Non-Asian films/filmmakers):

ALIVE: Dir. Jimmy Olsson  
ANNA: Dir. Dekel Berenson  
MOLOKA'I BOUND: Dir. Alike Maikau  
CHUBBY: Dir. Madeleine Sims-Fewer  
NO MORE WINGS: Dir. Abraham Adeyemi  
EVERYBODY FLIES: Dir. Captain Tristan Loraine  
WHITE GOLD: Dir. Luke Bradford  
TURNED: Dir. Anders Walter  
DA YIE: Dir. Anthony Nti  
ALINA: Dir. Rami Kodeih  
PROXY: Dir. Sophia Banks  
WHITE EYE: Dir. Tomer Shushan  
MATRIOCHKAS: Dir. Berangere

McNeese  
3 FEET: Dir. Giselle Geney  
AFTER CLASS: Dir. Charles Xiuzhi Dong  
BIRTH RIGHT: Dir. Inbar Horesh  
REBEL: Dir. Pier-Phillippe Chevigny  
A WHITE HORSE: Dir. Shaun O'Connor

#### Short List: FEATURES via DOC NYC

76 DAYS  
Dir: Hao Wu, Weixi Chen, Anonymous  
BOYS STATE  
Dir/Prod: Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine  
COLLECTIVE  
Dir/Prod: Alexander Nanau  
CRIP CAMP  
Dir/Prod: Nicole Newnham, Jim LeBrecht  
DICK JOHNSON IS DEAD  
Dir/Prod: Kirsten Johnson  
THE FIGHT  
Dir/Prod: Elyse Steinberg, Josh Kriegman, Eli Despres  
GUNDA  
Dir: Victor Kossakovsky  
I AM GRETA  
Dir: Nathan Grossman  
MLK/FBI  
Dir: Sam Pollard  
ON THE RECORD  
Dir/Prod: Kirby Dick, Amy Ziering  
THE SOCIAL DILEMMA  
Dir: Jeff Orlovski  
A THOUSAND CUTS  
Dir/Prod: Ramona S. Diaz  
TIME  
Dir/Prod: Garrett Bradley  
THE TRUFFLE HUNTERS  
Dir/Prod: Michael Dweck, Gregory Kershaw  
WELCOME TO CHECHNYA  
Dir/Prod: David France

#### Short List: SHORTS presented via DOC NYC

Abortion Helpline, This Is Lisa  
Dir/Prod: Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater, Mike Attie  
Ashes to Ashes  
Dir: Taylor Rees  
Call Center Blues  
Dir: Geeta Gandbhir  
Do Not Split  
Dir/Prod: Anders Hammer  
Flower Punk  
Dir/Prod: Alison Klayman  
Hunger Ward  
Dir/Prod: Skye Fitzgerald  
A Life Too Short  
Dir: Safyah Usmani  
A Love Song for Latasha  
Dir/Prod: Sophia Nahli Allison  
No Crying at the Dinner Table  
Dir/Prod: Carol Nguyen  
Now Is the Time  
Dir: Christopher Auchter  
Sing Me a Lullaby  
Dir/Prod: Tiffany Hsiung  
Then Comes the Evening  
Dir/Prod: Maja Novakovi?

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

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

BY MABEL PAIS

## WHARTON CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY

**"Jazz Education is an important part of our mission here at Wharton Arts and we are committed to offering our students high-level opportunities to learn and perform jazz throughout the year. The free Jazz Listening Series is a way for us to extend an invitation to the wider community to learn about jazz history and celebrate the legacies of early Black jazz artists, recognizing jazz as the foundation of popular music such as rock n' roll, R&B, soul, and more." - Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director-Principal Conductor**



Dave Schumacher with Black Jazz musicians - Photo / WIPA

The Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA) celebrates Black History Month with a virtual Jazz History and Masters Listening Hour Series every Saturday from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. EST during the month of February. Learn about the origins and development of jazz genres, including historical icons and their influence on particular jazz styles and trends, as well as an exploration of jazz's social implications in a broader historical context. Led by award-winning saxophonist Dave Schumacher, the Jazz History and Masters Listening Hour Series is free and open to the public. To register to attend, visit [WhartonArts.org](http://WhartonArts.org)

"I hope many people will join our esteemed jazz faculty, Dave Schumacher, on Saturday mornings in February," continued Cha-Pyo, "and listen to this 'triumphant music' as best described by Martin Luther King, Jr.: 'Jazz speaks for life. The Blues tell the story of life's difficulties, and if you think for a moment, you will realize that they take the hardest realities of life and put them into music, only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music.'"

### Jazz History & Masters Listening Hour Series

All classes take place at 9:00 a.m. EST via Zoom. Classes are FREE.

#### Saturday, February 6: Jazz History and Listening Survey I

Part I of a survey of the history of Jazz music through listening, briefly touching on each of the eras from Early Jazz in the late 19th century through the Bebop Era ending in the '50s.

Saturday, February 13: Jazz History and Listening Survey II

Part II of a survey of the history of Jazz music through listening, briefly touching on each of the eras of Jazz from the mid-50s Hard Bop/Cool eras through the present.

#### Saturday, February 20: Jazz Masters Series - Louis Armstrong

An examination through listening and commentary of Jazz Master Louis Armstrong,

considered by many the greatest soloist and one of the most influential Jazz artists of all time.

#### Saturday, February 27: Jazz Masters Series - Mary Lou Williams

An examination through listening and commentary of Jazz Master Mary Lou Williams. Williams was a great pianist, arranger and informal educator who influenced many younger Jazz musicians including Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, and Tadd Dameron at informal sessions at her apartment. Mary Lou Williams came to prominence in the 1930s when very few women in Jazz received their due.

#### About Dave Schumacher

Chicago native Dave Schumacher has been a key player in the New York jazz scene for more than three decades, touring throughout the United States and internationally with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, the Art Blakely Big Band, T.S. Monk on Monk Ensemble, Nicholas Payton's Louis Armstrong Tribute Big Band, and as an original member of the Harry Connick, Jr. Orchestra. To learn more, visit [jazzbarisac.com](http://jazzbarisac.com)

#### About WIPA

The Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts' (WIPA) mission is to provide the highest quality performing arts education to a wide range of students in a supportive and inclusive environment, where striving for personal excellence inspires and connects those they teach to the communities they serve.

Wharton is New Jersey's largest independent non-profit community performing arts education center serving over 1,200 students through a range of classes and ensembles including the 15 ensembles of the New Jersey Youth Symphony, which serve 500 students in grades 3 - 12 by audition.

WIPA is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 10 counties. All of Wharton's extraordinary faculty members and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and



Black Civil Rights protestors - Photo / JCC NYC.

trained to enable their students to achieve their personal best. To learn more, visit [WhartonArts.org](http://WhartonArts.org)

### Events of Note Jews and Blacks in the Civil Rights Era and Now - Fact and Fiction

Why were there Jews on both sides, and the sidelines, of the civil rights movement? What was the role of Judaism in the activism of young people in the 1960s? What are the implications for the streets of America today? Explore these questions and others on the reality of the relationship between the Jewish and Black communities in this session led by Billy Planer, director and founder of Etgar 36

Tue, Feb 9 pm, 7-8:15 pm, Free. To register, visit [mmjccm.org/programs/jews-and-blacks-civil-rights-era-and-now-fact-and-fiction#utm\\_source=CSR&utm\\_medium=JIAMulti1-28-21&utm\\_campaign=jbcivilrights](http://mmjccm.org/programs/jews-and-blacks-civil-rights-era-and-now-fact-and-fiction#utm_source=CSR&utm_medium=JIAMulti1-28-21&utm_campaign=jbcivilrights)

### Justice in Action: Desegregating NYC's Public Schools

New York City public schools are among the most segregated in the nation, more than 65 years after Brown vs Board of Education. Students, educators, and activists have been organizing for the past five years to demand change. Join JCC Social Justice Activist in Residence Ruth Messinger and NYC Council Member Brad Lander for a virtual conversation on NYC's history of school segregation and what it would take to build a better and fairer school system.

Thu, Feb 18, 7:30-8:30 pm, Free. For tickets, visit

[mmjccm.org/programs/justice-action-desegregating-nycs-public-schools#utm\\_source=CSR&utm\\_medium=JIAMulti1-28-21&utm\\_campaign=desegregating](http://mmjccm.org/programs/justice-action-desegregating-nycs-public-schools#utm_source=CSR&utm_medium=JIAMulti1-28-21&utm_campaign=desegregating)

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

## UK aircraft carrier in Indo-Pacific soon

**LONDON (TIP):** The UK Government has announced its plans to deploy a new Carrier Strike Group led by aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth later this year as part of its “renewed focus” on the Indo-Pacific region, following talks with Japan.

“The Indo-Pacific tilt of Britain demonstrates our shared priorities and common strategic interests from issues ranging from maritime security to climate change and free trade,” said Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. — PTI

## Japan scientists study source of high heat on asteroid

**TOKYO (TIP):** Japanese space experts said they are examining soil samples brought back from a distant asteroid in an attempt to find the source of heat that altered the celestial body, in their search for clues to the origin of the solar system and life on Earth. A preliminary examination of 5.4-gram soil, which the Hayabusa2 spacecraft brought in December, has already been done. Agencies

## Philippine ice plant ammonia leak leaves 2 dead, 90 sickened

**MANILA (TIP):** An ammonia leak from an ice plant in the Philippine capital region left two dead and more than 90 others injured or sickened while hundreds of residents fled to safety, an official said Thursday.

Navotas City Mayor Toby Tiangco said an employee of TP Marcelo Ice Plant died after exposure to ammonia fumes Wednesday and the body of a second employee, the plant's electrician, was found in the building Thursday. More than 90 residents and employees were taken to hospitals after being exposed to the leaking ammonia, which is used as a refrigerant but could be toxic to people in large amounts, officials said. More than 20 remained in a hospital, complaining of breathing difficulties, eye and skin irritation and other illnesses.

Hundreds of residents near the ice plant fled to safety after smelling the pungent fumes Wednesday but started to return when the leak eased hours later, officials said.

Tiangco said investigators were trying to determine if ammonia leaked from a pipe or was set off after a half-filled tank exploded. He apologized to the victims, saying the company, which is partly owned by his mother, would shoulder all medical and burial expenses. The plant has been ordered closed and won't reopen until it puts in place additional safeguards. Safety checks in other ice plants and cold storage warehouses in Navotas, one of Asia's largest fish ports, will be taken to avoid a repeat of the accident, officials said. AP

# ‘Not like every time’: Beirut blast victims want the truth

**BEIRUT (TIP):** Months after a massive explosion ripped through Beirut's port and disfigured the Lebanese capital, family members of some of the 211 people killed in the blast demanded an international probe.

It was a swift vote of no confidence in the authorities' ability to investigate one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history and one of the nation's most traumatic experiences.

The skepticism was justified. Lebanon, a country wrought by political violence and assassinations, has a history of unfinished prosecutions and buried secrets.

Six months after the August 4 blast, the domestic investigation has been brought to a virtual halt by the same political and confessional rivalries that thwarted past attempts to uncover the truth in major crimes. What started as an investigation into how nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive fertilizer component, were stored in Beirut port for years with politicians' and security agencies' knowledge has taken a turn, wading into a web of murky international business interests in the explosives trade and global shipping.

Government officials rebuffed an international probe and appointed former military court judge Fadi Sawwan to investigate. He has largely focused on government incompetence amid public anger at a corrupt political class blamed for Lebanon's slide into poverty and upheaval.

In a rare move, Sawwan charged two former ministers and the current prime minister with negligence, triggering pushback.

The prime minister refused to appear for questioning, calling it “diabolic” to



single him out for charges.

The ministers challenged the judge and asked Lebanon's highest court to replace him in a move that brought the probe to a halt since December 17. The interior minister said he won't ask security forces to implement arrest warrants targeting political figures.

In early January, the Court of Cassation ruled that Sawwan can resume his investigation while it reviews calls to replace him, keeping the possibility hanging over the probe.

Yet Sawwan hasn't resumed work, raising concerns among victims' families that he may have caved to pressure.

Dozens of family members gathered outside his house Monday, urging him to restart the probe.

“We want to know if they are not letting him,” Kayan Tleis, whose 40-year-old brother was killed in the blast, said in reference to politicians. “This should

not be like every time.”

Lebanon's sectarian-based political factions have had a lock on power in the country for decades and have divvied up posts across the state among themselves. Though rivals, they have a common interest in preventing accountability.

Structural problems undermine the judiciary. The government and the president name judges, allowing political factions to install loyalists as rewards. Prosecutors stall, preventing cases from reaching courts.

The government also holds enormous sway over the five-member Judicial Council, a special court where it refers security and political crimes. Decisions by the government-appointed judges can't be appealed.

Human Rights Watch said Sawwan's appointment process was opaque and the investigation itself, so far secret, has been tainted with political interference. — AP

## Erdogan says will not let university protests swell

**ISTANBUL (TIP):** President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday his government would not allow month-long demonstrations at a Turkish university to grow into anti-government protests similar to those in 2013, calling the protesters “terrorists”.

Defying a government ban on demonstrations, students and teachers at Istanbul's Bogazici University have protested Erdogan's appointment of Melih Bulu, an academic and former political candidate, as rector.

They say the process was undemocratic and want him to resign, causing a nationwide debate over the government's reach and separate protests elsewhere. More than 250 people were detained in Istanbul this week and 69 others in Ankara.

The unrest marks some of the largest demonstrations since 2013 when hundreds of thousands of people marched against government plans to build replica Ottoman barracks in Istanbul's Gezi Park.

“This country will not be run by terrorists. We will do whatever is needed to prevent this,” Erdogan told members of his ruling AK Party. He said young protestors lack Turkey's “national and spiritual values” and are members of terrorist groups.

“Are you students or terrorists trying to raid the rector's room?” Erdogan said. “This country will not again live a Gezi event in Taksim, will not allow it. We have not stood with terrorists and we will not.”



Bulu said earlier he would not step down despite growing calls. “I am never thinking about resigning,” Turkish media quoted him as telling reporters.

The main opposition party leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, has called for Bulu's resignation. Ankara Mayor Mansur Yavas urged Bulu in an open letter to “sacrifice” his position instead of “academic peace, youth and our future”.

Bulu, who once applied to the AK Party to run for parliament, told broadcaster HaberTurk the “crisis will be totally finished within six months.” — Reuters

# Canada puts Proud Boys on terror list, cites active security threat

**OTTAWA (TIP):** Canada named the far-right Proud Boys a terrorist entity on Wednesday, saying it posed an active security threat and played a “pivotal role” in last month’s attack on the US Capitol that left five people dead.

Although the Proud Boys have never mounted an attack in Canada, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair said domestic intelligence forces had become increasingly worried about the group.

“There has been a serious and concerning escalation of violence — not just rhetoric but activity and planning — and that is why we have responded as we have today,” he told a news conference. He did not give details.

The group’s assets can now be frozen by banks and financial institutions, and it is a crime for Canadians to knowingly deal with assets of a listed entity. Anyone belonging to the group can be blocked from entering Canada.

Canada’s Public Safety Minister Bill Blair announces that the Proud Boys and other groups have been listed as terrorist entities, in a still image from a remote video call in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on February 2, 2021. Office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness/Handout via REUTERS.

The group’s founder, Gavin McInnes, is Canadian who lives in the United States.

The US authorities have charged several members of the Proud Boys in connection with the January 6 attack in Washington.

Ottawa added 12 other groups to its list of terrorist entities — three neo-Nazi groups, eight organisations described as affiliates to al-Qaeda and Daesh (Islamic State), as well as Hizbul Mujahideen, a Kashmiri group.

Blair said Canadian intelligence agencies had been working for months, and in some cases, years to gather evidence needed to list the groups.



“Canada will not tolerate ideological, religious or politically motivated acts of violence,” said Blair.

Founded in 2016, the Proud Boys began as an organisation protesting political correctness and perceived constraints on masculinity in the United States and Canada, and grew into a group that embraced street fighting.

Former US president Donald Trump, asked last September whether he would denounce white supremacists and militia groups, called on the Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by”.

The listing will likely have “a bit of a polarising response” on Proud Boys members, said Jessica Davis, a former senior intelligence analyst with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service spy agency.

“For some individuals this may have a dampening effect...However, there are probably some hard-core members who will be further radicalised by this,” said Davis, president of Insight Threat

Intelligence.

It was tough to say how many Proud Boys members there were in Canada, said Evan Baggord, executive director of the Anti-Hate Network of Canada.

“Before the announcement there were about eight chapters,” he said by phone, adding: “I would expect they’re pretty much done for here ... under that name, they’re done.”

The group itself does not hold major financial assets, as far as Baggord knows.

The move underscored constitutional concerns about a Canadian government’s ability to designate a group as a terrorist entity, said Leah West, a national security professor at Ottawa’s Carleton University and former lawyer with the Canadian Justice Department.

Designations are impossible to challenge beforehand and difficult to address afterward, especially given lawyers may be reluctant to provide counsel to members of a terrorist group, she said by phone. Reuters

## Microsoft backs Australian plan to make Google pay for news

**CANBERRA (TIP):** Microsoft said on Wednesday it supports Australia’s plans to make the biggest digital platforms pay for news and would help small businesses transfer their advertising to Bing if Google quits the country.

Microsoft has been positioning itself to increase market share for its search engine Bing after a Google executive told a Senate hearing last month that it would likely make its search engine unavailable in Australia if the government goes ahead with a draft law that would make tech giants pay for news content.

Microsoft President Brad Smith said in a statement that he and Microsoft Chief Executive Satya Nadella had told Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Communications Minister Paul Fletcher in an online meeting last week that “Microsoft fully supports” the so-called News Media Bargaining Code.

Morrison this week confirmed he had spoken to Nadella about Bing replacing Google in Australia.

“I can tell you, Microsoft’s pretty confident” that Australians would not be worse off, Morrison said on Monday.

Smith said he had assured the government leaders that small businesses who wished to transfer their advertising from Google to Bing could do so simply and without transfer costs.

“We believe that the current legislative proposal represents a fundamental step towards a more level playing field and a fairer digital ecosystem for consumers, business and society,” Smith said. The Australia Institute’s Center for Responsible Technology, an independent think tank, welcomed Microsoft’s stance and called on Google to withdraw its threat to close its search services within Australia.

“This is a significant development and should send a message to both Google and Facebook that their network dominance in Australia is only as strong as their respect for Australians,” the center’s Director Peter Lewis said in a statement. AP

## Over 80 people arrested in China for smuggling fake COVID-19 vaccines

**BEIJING (TIP):** China has arrested over 80 people for smuggling and supplying counterfeit COVID-19 vaccines, amid reports that some of the jabs have already made their way to Africa, the official media has reported.

Apart from the arrests, 3,000 doses of the fake vaccines were confiscated from the accused in a special drive that China has carried out to curb vaccine-related crimes, the Global Times reported on Tuesday.

The raids were carried out in a joint action by police in Beijing and East China’s Jiangsu and Shandong provinces, among other regions. The criminal activity was scattered across multiple cities, the report said.

The suspects were profiting from the

illegal manufacture and sale of the vaccines since September last year, the report added.

The accused made the counterfeit vaccines by injecting saline into pre-filled syringes, the newspaper said, adding that the “doses” were being sold for high prices.

The smugglers are believed to have smuggled the fake vaccines into Africa, although it is not known how they managed to leave the country, the report said.

Asked about the reports of fake vaccines in circulation, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing on Tuesday that China will take effective measures to fight against the counterfeit vaccines and

their smuggling. He said cooperation with other countries would be needed to prevent such criminal activities.

The captured suspects might have planned to send vaccines abroad, the report said. The police have multiple times checked with vaccine manufacturers to confirm the vaccines illegally sold in markets were the fake ones produced by the suspects.

In early January, Japanese media had reported that smuggled Chinese vaccines were in circulation in the country. However, the reports were slammed by the Chinese Embassy to Japan as “unverified and misleading”.

China is presently conducting clinical trials of 16 COVID-19 vaccines, seven of which have entered phase three trials

and one has conditionally hit the market, according to Wu Yuanbin, an official with the Ministry of Science and Technology.

The deadly coronavirus emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019 and then spread across the world and became a pandemic.

According to Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 tracker, over 2,240,000 people have died and more than 103,500,000 people have been hit by the coronavirus. China is vaccinating people at home with two vaccines and sending the same doses abroad. The Chinese government has given conditional approval to the Sinopharm vaccine, even as the results of the third trial is yet to be released. PTI



*India's Covid recovery rate goes up to 97.08%*

India's Covid tally of cases rose to 1,07,77,284 with 11,039 new infections being reported in a day, while the recoveries surged to 1,04,62,631, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The death toll increased to 1,54,596 with 110 daily new fatalities.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,04,62,631 pushing the national Covid recovery rate of 97.08 per cent, while the Covid case fatality rate stands at 1.43 per cent.

The total Covid active cases remained below 2 lakh.

There are 1,60,057 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 1.49 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

*UK records another 20,634 Covid cases, 915 deaths*

Another 20,634 people in Britain have tested positive for Covid-19, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 3,892,459, according to official figures released on Thursday, Feb 4.

The country also reported another 915 coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 110,250. These figures only include the deaths of people who died within 28 days of their first positive test, Xinhua reported.

A seven-year-old with known underlying health conditions is among the latest reported deaths of people who have tested positive for coronavirus in England, the Evening Standard newspaper reported.

"While the risk from the virus to children is low, people with underlying conditions are known to be at higher risk of serious disease," according to the London-based newspaper.

Patients were aged between seven and 102 years old and all except 30 -- aged 40 to 99 -- had known underlying health conditions.

**Global Covid cases top 104.8mn: Johns Hopkins**

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The total number of global coronavirus cases has topped 104.8 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 2.28 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Friday, Feb 5, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 104,832,983 and 2,281,608, respectively.

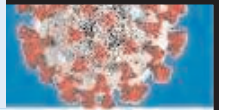
The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 26,673,780 and 455,657, respectively, according to the CSSE.

India comes in second place in terms of cases at 10,790,183.

The other countries with more than a million confirmed coronavirus cases are Brazil (9,396,293), the UK (3,903,706), Russia (3,874,830), France (3,310,496), Spain (2,913,425), Italy (2,597,446), Turkey (2,508,988), Germany (2,265,536), Colombia (2,135,412), Argentina (1,961,635), Mexico (1,886,245), Poland (1,533,511), South Africa (1,466,767), Iran (1,445,326), Ukraine (1,275,334), Peru (1,158,337), Indonesia (1,123,105), Czech Republic (1,013,352) and the Netherlands (1,007,268), the CSSE figures showed.

Brazil currently accounts for the second highest number of Covid-19 fatalities at 228,795, followed by Mexico (161,240) on the third place and India (154,703) on the fourth.

**TRACKING THE VIRUS**



**GLOBAL**

Cases **104,832,983** | Deaths **2,281,608**

**INDIA**

Cases **10,790,183** | Deaths **1,54,823**



Meanwhile, the nations with a death toll above 20,000 are the UK (110,462), Italy (90,241), France (77,743), Russia (74,005), Spain (60,802), Germany (60,067), Iran (58,256), Colombia (55,131),

Argentina (48,700), South Africa (45,605), Peru (41,538), Poland (38,344), Indonesia (31,001), Turkey (26,467), Ukraine (24,429), Belgium (21,216) and Canada (20,486).

**World faces around 4,000 COVID-19 variants as researchers explore mixed vaccine shots**

**LONDON (TIP):** The world faces around 4,000 variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, prompting a race to improve vaccines, Britain said on Thursday, Feb 4, as researchers began to explore mixing doses of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca shots.

Thousands of variants have been documented as the virus mutates, including the so-called British, South African and Brazilian variants which appear to spread more swiftly than others.

British Vaccine Deployment Minister Nadhim Zahawi said it was very unlikely that the current vaccines would not work against the new variants.

"Its very unlikely that the current vaccine won't be effective on the variants whether in Kent or other variants especially when it comes to severe illness and hospitalisation," Zahawi told Sky News.

"All manufacturers, Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Oxford-AstraZeneca and others, are looking at how they can improve their vaccine to make sure that we are ready for any variant — there are about 4,000 variants around the world of COVID now," Zahawi added.

While thousands of variants have arisen as the virus mutates on replication, only a very small minority are likely to be important and to change the virus in an appreciable way,



according to the British Medical Journal.

The so called British variant, known as VUI-202012/01, has mutations including a change in the spike protein that viruses use to bind to the human ACE2 receptor — meaning that it is probably easier to catch.

"We have the largest genome sequencing industry — we have about 50 per cent of the world's genome sequencing industry — and we are keeping a library of all the variants so that we are ready to respond — whether in the autumn or beyond — to any challenge that the virus may present and produce the next vaccine," Zahawi said.

**VACCINE RACE**

The novel coronavirus — known as SARS-CoV-2 — has killed 2.268 million people worldwide since it emerged in China in late 2019, according to Johns Hopkins University of Medicine.

Israel is currently far ahead of the rest of the world on vaccinations per head of population, followed by the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Bahrain, the United States and then Spain, Italy and Germany. Britain on Thursday launched a trial to assess the immune responses generated if doses of the vaccines from Pfizer and AstraZeneca are combined in a two-shot schedule.



# Jaipur Literature Festival Goes Virtual from February 19



BY DR YASH GOYAL

The world-famous Jaipur Literature Festival (JLf) this year not only rescheduled its date but is also going with a stellar online programme, spread over 10 days, for its 14th edition between 19th and 28th February 2021.

The 'greatest literary show on Earth' returns in a virtual avatar, featuring a spectacular line-up of speakers from across the world, consisting of writers, poets, playwrights, thinkers, politicians, journalists, cultural icons and recipients of major literary awards including the Man Booker, the Pulitzer, JCB Prize for Literature, Commonwealth, European Union Prize, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, PEN Award for Poetry in Translation etc.

Facing the strict Corona-19 guidelines, author and Festival Co-Director Namita Gokhale said, "It's been a joyous challenge to work on the programming for Jaipur Literature Festival 2021. We look at our transformative times and try to understand the future through the lens of the present and the past. Our hybrid digital outreach has opened up a new universe of possibilities. I'm excited at having Italian astrophysicist and writer Carlo Rovelli in conversation with Professor Priyamvada Natarajan, on Nagarjuna, Sunyata, and Stardust. Winner of the 2020 Booker prize, Douglas Stuart, speaks of his award-winning debut novel. We rediscover Emperor Ashoka's ancient edicts through music with T.M. Krishna."

Some highlights from the programme include Glasgow-born author Douglas Stuart whose 2020 Booker Prize-winning debut novel Shuggie Bain evokes the essence of addiction, parenthood, courage and love.

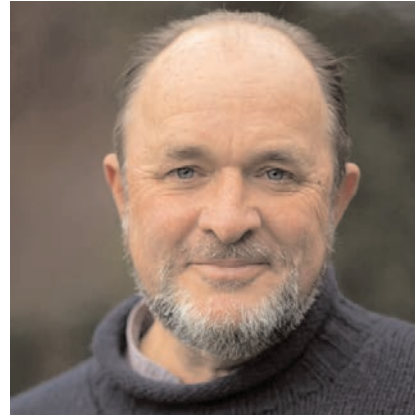
Celebrated American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, historian, social critic, and political activist Noam Chomsky's latest book, Requiem for the American Dream: The 10 Principles of Concentration of Wealth & Power, sharply questions the utopian idea of neoliberalism and the consequences of markets dictating all aspects of society.

**Covering the ongoing pandemic, doctors and co-authors Randeep Guleria, Chandrakant Lahariya and Gagandeep Kang will discuss their exciting new project in conversation with award-winning journalist Maya Mirchandani.**

During the Festival, award-winning Irish writer Colm Tóibín will take us through the rhythm and roots of his writing process and celebrated career.

Marina Wheeler, a Queen's Counsel in England, opens the portals of memory as the daughter of a woman traumatized by the Partition of 1947 that divided British India into Pakistan and India.

Acclaimed author and historian Vincent Brown's groundbreaking geopolitical thriller Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War takes on the Atlantic slave trade with a subversive and powerful reconstruction of the history of insurgency, rebellion, victory and defeat.



Festival Co-Directors Namita Gokhale and William Dalrymple, as also for Jaipur Literature Festival 2021, as also Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, producer feel confident of the success of the event.

**JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

**The Jaipur Literature Festival 2021**  
will be held on 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February  
and 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> February.

**Register Now!**

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**TEAMWORK**  
CELEBRATING THE ARTS

Journalist and writer George Packer's Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century is an enduring account of the force behind the Dayton Accords which famously ended the Balkan wars.

Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, producer of the Jaipur Literature Festival, said, "A year after the world was felled by the pandemic, we have persevered and shown that human endurance can and will prevail, fueled by knowledge and information, empathy and the right to justice. The Jaipur Literature Festival is representative of these ideals and will continue to be

a platform to celebrate the joy of knowledge."

**For more information about the festival, please email to [jlf@teamworkarts.com](mailto:jlf@teamworkarts.com) [www.jaipurliteraturefestival.org](http://www.jaipurliteraturefestival.org)**

*(Dr Yash Goyal is Foreign Correspondent for The Indian Panorama, based in Jaipur, India. He has been a correspondent with the Tribune. He can be reached at [tribune.yg@gmail.com](mailto:tribune.yg@gmail.com))*

# Signs that you are in a toxic relationship

Most of us have been involved in a toxic relationship at some point in our lives, whether it was in the personal or business sphere—and whether we knew it at the time or not. Of course, no relationship is perfect, but there are certain people with whom a healthy relationship is unattainable and you just have to get out.

While good relationships provide a feeling of security, happiness, respect, and freedom, toxic relationships spread through you like poison from the hands of people who only care about themselves, and it can turn you into someone you may not even recognize.

Whether it's in the workplace, among friends, or in a romantic partner, if you're feeling drained of your energy and joy, it's time to re-evaluate those relationships. Check out this gallery to see some red flags.

## It's all take and no give

To sustain a good relationship, you need both. If you're constantly giving without receiving, you'll soon be running on empty.

## Always judging and criticizing you

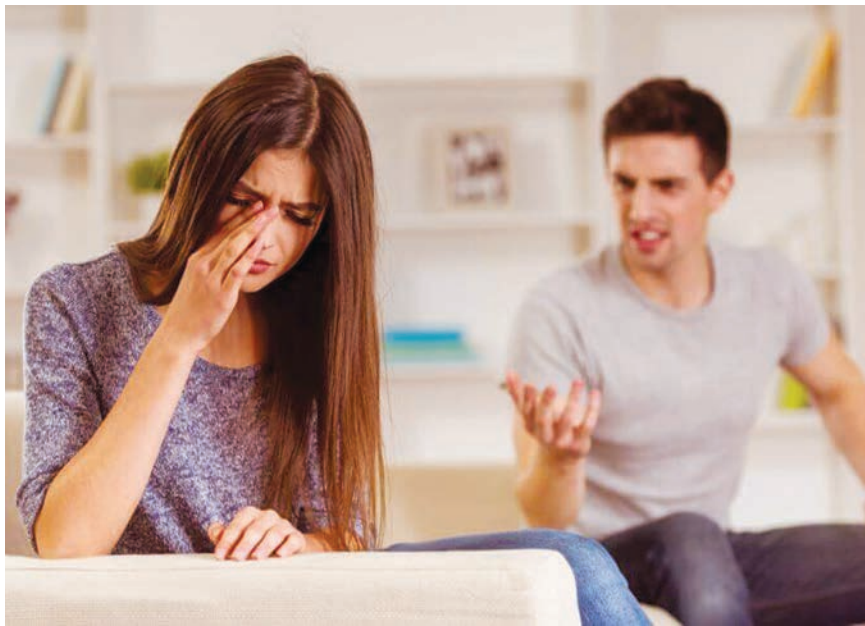
It's okay to have opinions, but when it's constant criticism that is not intended to be helpful, it's a toxic attempt to belittle you.

## Endless narcissism

If the person only cares to frame everything around themselves, from daily conversations to the entire relationship, you will never be considered an equal partner in the way you should be.

## Lack of trust

No relationship can progress



without trust. If you don't trust them, why stick around? You'll both be endlessly putting out illusory fires.

## Feeling drained

Good relationships should lift you up and add something to your life. If you're not being your happy and productive self, and you're always mentally, emotionally, and even physically exhausted, take a step back.

## Betraying yourself

Acting against your own opinions and morals, and instead changing them to match someone else's, is a sign of a damaging relationship.

## Lack of support

What reason is there to engage in a relationship if you can never rely on one another?

## Bad-mouthing others

If someone talks poorly about others to you, they're likely trying

to get you on their side, and it shows what kind of person they are—you never know if they're talking about you like that.

## Feeling like you can't do anything right

When this happens, it's not so much about what you do, but rather it's about how you feel. When nothing you do is right, it's likely the relationship is wrong.

## Hostility

Feeling constantly angry or unsafe can take a real toll on every part of your life and is a sure sign of an unhealthy relationship.

## It brings out the worst in you

Harmful relationships have a way of bringing out nasty traits, sometimes just as a means of coping. Good relationships should challenge you to be better.



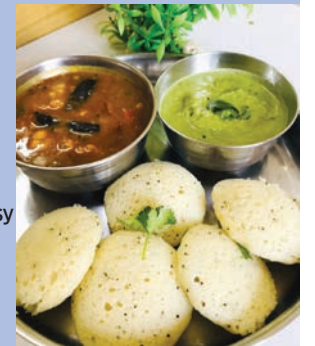
By Tript Arora

## CONNOISSEUR'S CHOICE



## Sambhar Idli

Sambhar Idli is or vada sambar is one of my family's favorite Sunday brunch. The hot steaming sambar with rava idli and coconut coriander chutney makes everyone's taste buds tingle. Today we are making sambhar through a really quick recipe. As you already know, I prefer to keep my recipes easy to follow and in such a way that the dish does not take much time to prepare. My version of Sambhar can be made quickly in the morning to carry it in tiffin as well as for breakfast. With it we are making rava idlis which also don't require much effort. Also, we are using those veggies which cook fast. Sambhar can be made with masoor dal, moong dal or Tur Dal. But I prefer to make it with Tur Dal. We first steam tur dal and then mash it properly to get a smooth consistency. Then add vegetables having less cooking time (like carrot and beans) to it. Later on it is tempered with curry leaves, hing, mustard and whole red chillies. We are also making a quick chutney to go with idli sambhar, consisting of Dessicated coconut, coriander leaves and peanuts. This is healthy and nutritious too. So you can cook up this whole meal of three elements in about 45 minutes. Please find the recipe below with step by step pictures.



## We need

For Sambar: 1 Cup Tur Dal, ½ Cup Cauliflower, ½ Cup Beans, ½ Cup Shallots / or onions, ½ Cup Diced Tomatoes, 1 Tbsp Ginger, 1 Green Chilli, 1" Piece of Jaggery (optional), 50 gm of Tamarind soaked in water/ 2 spoons of ready-made tamarind paste, 2 Tbsp Sambhar Masala Powder, 1 Tsp of Turmeric Powder, 1 Tsp Kashmiri Mirch Powder, 1Tsp Oil, 1 Tsp Salt or to taste.

For Tempering: 4 Tbsp Oil, 1 Tbsp Mustard Seeds, 1 Tbsp washed Urad Dal (without skin), 1 Tsp Fenugreek Seeds, 4 Whole Red Chillies, A pinch of Asafoetida (Hing), 7 to 8 Curry Leaves.

For Idlis: 1 Cup Semolina (Sooji), 1 Cup Curd, 1 Sachet Eno fruit Salt, 1 Tsp. Salt

## Here We Go

Wash Tur Dal till the water runs clear. Soak it for 10 min. Soak Tamarind in a cup of water and keep aside. Next, in a bowl, mix Sooji, Curd and salt. Set aside for 15 min. Take a pressure cook and add washed tur dal to it along with 3 cups of water, turmeric powder salt and a spoon of oil. Pressure Cook for 5 whistles. Let it cool on its own. do not force the steam out. Meantime dice all the vegetables in the shape and size of your choice.

When the pressure in the cooker is released, open the pressure cooker and mash the Dal till it is smooth in texture. Take out in a bowl and keep aside. Mash the already soaked tamarind. Stain the water and discard the seeds.

In the same pressure cooker add all the diced vegetables, onions, ginger, tomato, turmeric powder, Sambar Powder and salt. Add the tamarind water. Also add Jaggery. Pressure cook these vegetables upto one whistle. Let the pressure release on its own. After that add the mashed tur dal to it. Mix everything well. If the Sambhar appears too thick add water to adjust the consistency. When you add water, after that don't forget to boil the Sambhar again so that the water is incorporated to it and it becomes one homogenous whole.

Meantime the sooji and curd batter is ready as sooji is soft and has soaked water. If the batter is too thick add a little water, but not more than ¼ th Cup. Mix well. Add Eno salt to the Idli batter and add a little water to it for fermentation. Grease the idli mould. Put a small amount of batter in each mould. Fill water in the Idli maker and put the idli mould in it. Keep the flame on low. It will take around 15 minutes for the idli to cook. To check if the idli has cooked, insert a toothpick in the idli and if it comes out clean, switch off the gas and let the idlis remain in stand for a few minutes. Only after giving it standing time, demould the idlis one by one and keep them in hot case so they stay warm.

Time to temper the Sambhar. Heat a pan and add 4 Tbsp oil to it. When the oil is hot, add mustard seeds (Rai), whole red chillies, urad dal and Hing to it. When the whole red chillies turn dark in colour add Curry leaves and Kashmiri Red Chilli powder to it. Be careful not to burn the chillies otherwise the taste and colour of the Sambhar will be spoiled. Put this tempering in the sambhar and let it boil for a few minutes for all the flavours to mix in the Sambhar. Serve Hot.

You Can reach me at: [www.triptasfoodtunnel.com](http://www.triptasfoodtunnel.com)  
Email: [triptasfoodtunnel@gmail.com](mailto:triptasfoodtunnel@gmail.com).  
Instagram: [@triptasfoodtunnel](https://www.instagram.com/triptasfoodtunnel)

## Beauty tips every woman must know

If You Don't Want To See Your Older Self at an Early Age.

### Lotion Up

Daily moisturizing is the best defense against dry skin. Invest in a heavy moisturizer to keep in your bag, car, and office.

### Love The Greens

For a radiant and blemish-free complexion, add a side salad to your lunch or dinner.

### Honey

We recommend honey for taking care of dry, cracked lips. It helps to heal wounds and hydrate parched skin, plus the anti-viral properties make it a good cold sore remedy, too.

### Skin revival

Apply a retinol based cream at night to repair damaged tissue while you



slumber.

### A Little Omega

A Mediterranean diet full of fish, fruit, vegetables, olive oil, and tea provides the skin with the good omega fatty acids, in order to maintain a healthy glow and reverse sun damage.

### Skin irritants

We know you don't apply hair products to your face, but the residue can end up there anyway. Next time you apply hairspray, cover your face with a clean towel to protect your skin.

### Get Your Zzzzz's

Not getting enough Zzzz's can cause stress, which leads to breakouts and a dull complexion. Bottom line: Don't deprive your body and skin of sleep.

### Care For Fine Eyes

Squinting in the sun can contribute to those crow's feet, so always sport sunglasses with UV protection.

### Skin Pampering

Whether it's a facial, massage, or even a pedicure, be sure to pamper yourself. Try our medifacials. Its divine and you'll love it.

### Endorphin rush

Endorphins are happy hormones. Need yet another reason to work out? Exercise gives your face a healthy glow by increasing blood flow. Without regular exercise you may see an increase in age spots, so grab your running shoes or hit the gym.

# Side-effects of eating microwaved meals

Whether you're returning home late after a long day at the office or find yourself with precious little in the way of fresh ingredients in the fridge, grabbing a microwaveable meal often seems preferable to ordering another unhealthy—and expensive—takeout meal. However, while many microwave meals may bill themselves as healthy or diet-friendly, experts say they often do more harm than good. According to a 2015 study published in The British Journal of Nutrition, there were startlingly deleterious health effects recorded among adult study subjects who consumed prepared foods, including microwaved meals, on a daily basis.

## You may be at greater risk for cancers

The ingredient list on the back of that microwave meal may not tell the whole story when it comes to what you're actually consuming.

"Using electromagnetic radiation, the microwave causes food and the containers in which the foods are cooked to super-heat," says Spencer Kroll, MD, PhD, an internal medicine specialist with Kroll Medical Group. "This super-heating can cause breakdown of the chemical components of the containers surrounding your food and these dangerous chemicals can potentially leach into your food."

## Your blood pressure may rise

Just because that microwave meal is low in calories doesn't mean it's good for you. In fact, the copious amounts of salt used to make many



microwave dishes palatable could contribute to serious health problems down the line.

"Microwave ready meals are high in sodium and other preservatives," says Kroll. "High sodium foods accelerate blood pressure problems and can lead to heart disease."

## You might retain water.

It's not just your cardiovascular health that's at risk when you consume sodium-laden microwave meals. As registered dietitian nutritionist Shena Jaramillo, MS, RD, explains, microwaved meals "are high in sodium which can lead to water retention."

Over time, this may lead to other healthy habits, like drinking enough water, falling by the wayside.

## You could put yourself at risk for food poisoning.

Though microwaving has been touted as a means of killing everything from viruses to bacteria, it may not actually mean you're in the clear when it comes to food poisoning. In fact, it's one of the microwaved meal side effects that could leave you sidelined in the short term.

## You might see your waistline expand.

If you're eating microwaved meals in an attempt to whittle your waistline, don't hold your breath.

According to the British Journal of Nutrition study, greater consumption of prepared foods, including microwaved meals, "was found to be independently associated with abdominal obesity."



## Asthma can be prevented by consuming omega-3 fatty acids

Researchers during a recent study have found that by higher dietary consumption of long chain omega-3 fatty acids during childhood, the risk of developing subsequent asthma reduces in children carrying a common gene variant.

The study, led by the Queen Mary University of London, is in collaboration with the University of Bristol and the University of Southampton, UK, and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden.

In the UK, 1.1 million children (1 in 11) are currently receiving treatment for asthma and most adult asthma begins in childhood. The NHS spends around £1 billion a year treating and caring for people with asthma.

Senior author, Professor Seif Shaheen from the Queen Mary University of London, said: "Asthma is the most common chronic condition in childhood and we currently don't know how to prevent it. It is possible that a poor diet may increase the risk of developing asthma, but until now most studies have taken 'snap-shots', measuring diet and asthma over a short period of time. Instead, we measured diet and then followed up children over many years to see who developed asthma and who didn't."

"Whilst we cannot say for certain that eating more fish will prevent asthma in children, based on our findings, it would nevertheless be sensible for children in the UK to consume more fish, as few currently achieve recommended intake."

Fish is of particular interest because it is a rich source of the long chain omega-3 fatty acids, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which have anti-inflammatory properties.

The study, published in the European Respiratory Journal, used data from a large UK birth cohort, children of the 90s, which recruited mothers who were pregnant in the early 1990s and has been following up their offspring ever since. They analysed the association between intake of EPA and DHA from fish at 7 years of age (estimated by food frequency questionnaires) and incidence of new cases of doctor-diagnosed asthma at 11-14 years of age.

## This alternative surgery may prevent total knee replacement

An underused type of knee surgery in younger patients shows considerable success in reducing the need for total knee replacement, a new study suggests.

The surgery, named high tibial osteotomy, is a knee surgery aimed at younger patients in the earlier stages of knee osteoarthritis, according to the study published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal).

"One of its goals is to prevent or delay the need for knee replacement," said co-author Trevor Birmingham from the Western University in Canada.

"In some ways, it's like performing a front-end alignment on your car to stop asymmetric wear on your tires and increase their longevity," Birmingham added.

Knee osteoarthritis is a common cause of pain and disability and puts tremendous burden on health care systems. Total knee replacement is frequently



performed on older patients with end-stage disease and limited mobility.

Of the patients in this study getting high tibial osteotomy (643

knees in 556 patients), 95 per cent did not need a total knee replacement within 5 years, and 79 per cent did not get a total knee replacement within 10 years.

Even in patients traditionally not considered ideal candidates for high tibial osteotomy (e.g., women and patients with later-stage disease), about 70 per cent did not get a knee replacement within 10 years.

The procedure is particularly suitable for people who are younger, have less severe joint damage and who may be more physically active.

"Those patients especially contribute to the burden of knee osteoarthritis," the researchers said.

"There is a treatment gap between exhausting non-operative treatments and appropriateness for joint replacement, resulting in many years of pain, lost productivity and associated costs," they added.

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## Soon unlock your iPhone via Apple Watch even with a mask on

Soon you will be able to unlock your iPhone with Face ID even when with a Covid-19 mask on, but only if you are wearing an Apple Watch.

In the next iOS 14 update, Apple Watch will give you haptic feedback to let you know your iPhone has been unlocked, reports Pocket-lint.

The new iPhone iOS version 14.5, now available as developer Beta, has the functionality to unlock your iPhone via Apple Watch as you travel around wearing a mask.

"This is similar behaviour to using the Apple Watch to unlock your Mac which has been available for some time," the report said on Monday.

You need to keep Apple Watch in close proximity to your iPhone to use this feature.

This Apple Watch shortcut is only available for unlocking your iPhone and other functions will still require other authentication if your face is covered.

You'll be asked to put in your passcode every few hours even when unlock with Apple Watch is enabled.

## Samsung could soon launch phones with rollable and slidable screens

South Korean tech giant Samsung is no rookie when it comes to unconventional phone designs. The brand has come out with two Galaxy Fold phones so far, along with a Galaxy Z Flip that folds in half but operates with a single main display. Now, Samsung may be working on phones with screens that can roll and slide as its next project.

Samsung's sister company, Samsung Display has confirmed that Samsung will be working on new smartphones with rollable and slidable screens, as mentioned in a report by SamMobile.

Samsung Display is the company behind the screen technologies used in the brand's foldable phones including both the Galaxy Fold phones and the Galaxy Z Flip.

The new rollable and slidable Galaxy phones could be launched in late 2021 or more likely in 2022. Samsung will look forward to being the first brand to launch a phone with the new tech, just like it did with the original Galaxy Fold smartphone back in 2019.

It is unlikely that Samsung will discontinue the Galaxy Z Fold series or the Galaxy Z Flip series once it shifts R&D to newer designs. The upcoming rollable-screen phone and slidable phone could likely be separate smartphones in the series.

# Mars' Gale crater was similar to Iceland over 3 bn yrs ago: Study

More than three billion years ago, Mars Gale crater had seasons and terrain that were close to that of Iceland's. A study by Rice University scientists using the data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Curiosity rover suggests that the crater which was home to an ancient lake had similar geologic formations that underwent weathering in different climates when compared to places on Earth.

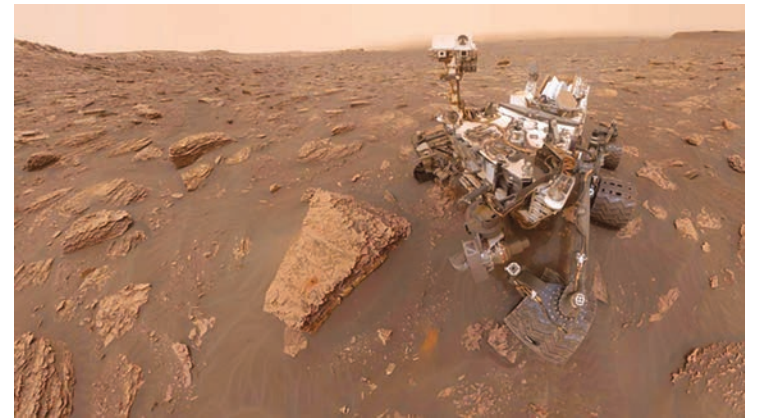
As per the study published in JGR Planets, the data collected by the rover since 2012 provided the details about the chemical and physical state of the rocks that were formed in the lake. However, these details are not enough to reveal the climate conditions or whether the sediment was a result of upstream or not. In order to draw the conclusion, researchers resorted to a comparison of the data with places on our planet.

So far, it has been established that the Gale crater was home to a lake but there is an argument whether the conditions were warm and wet or cold and dry which would make glaciers and snow more common and similar to Iceland.

"Sedimentary rocks in Gale Crater instead detail a climate that likely falls in between these two scenarios," said Thorpe, a Mars sample return scientist at NASA Johnson Space Center contractor Jacobs Space Exploration Group. "The ancient climate was likely frigid but also appears to have supported liquid water in lakes for extended periods of time."

The findings that shocked researchers was the little weathering of rocks on the Red planet despite being there for more than three billion years.

"On Earth, the sedimentary rock record does a fantastic job of maturing over time with the help of chemical weathering.



In a NASA photo, a self-portrait taken by NASA's Curiosity rover at the Gale Crater, at the center of which stands Mount Sharp, a 3.4-mile-high mound, June 15, 2018. Mars, it appears, is belching a large amount of a gas that could be a sign of microbes living on the planet today.

However, on Mars we see very young minerals in the mudstones that are older than any sedimentary rocks on Earth, suggesting weathering was limited," Thorpe explained in the release.

The comparison was not just limited to Iceland but places like Idaho, Antarctica and even Hawaii to study the effects of weathering, climate and other factors. But, after an analysis of chemical and physical weathering of a sample using the standard chemical index of alteration, the conditions of Iceland and Idaho were found to be the closes for comparison.

## Tesla's new Model S will automatically shift by 'guessing'



Electric car maker Tesla's redesigned Model S and Model X will have automatic shifting between the park, reverse, neutral and drive (or PRND) by "guessing".

There will be an option to change drive modes on the touchscreen, but CEO Elon Musk made the case for automatic shifting on Twitter late Wednesday night.

"No more stalks. Car guesses drive direction based on what obstacles it sees, context & nav map. You can override on touchscreen," Musk tweeted.

"After you drive without using a PRND stalk/stick for a few days, it gets very annoying to go back & use a shifter!" he added. An internal Tesla document obtained by Electrek expands, slightly, on what Musk means by "guesses"—the vehicle uses its Autopilot sensors to intelligently and automatically determine intended drive modes and select them, according to a report in The Verge.

The general idea behind the decision fits into the larger Silicon Valley ethos that Tesla subscribes to, though, of "eliminating friction." The consequences of trying to automate PRND won't be clear until people start taking deliveries of these new cars, which is supposed to happen in a matter of weeks, the report added.

The Tesla Model S was updated with a totally new interior on Wednesday, and the most radical change is the new yoke-style steering "wheel".

## iPhone 13 plans optical in-display fingerprint sensor

Apple is reportedly planning to launch iPhone 13 line-up next year and now a new report has claimed that the upcoming series may come with an optical in-display fingerprint sensor as the secondary biometric option alongside Face ID.

According to The Wall Street Journal, Apple may incorporate some of the features of the Samsung Galaxy S21 in its next-generation iPhones.

As per the reports, a former employee said the company was working with optical sensors for in-screen fingerprint reading, which "can be more reliable" than an ultrasonic solution.

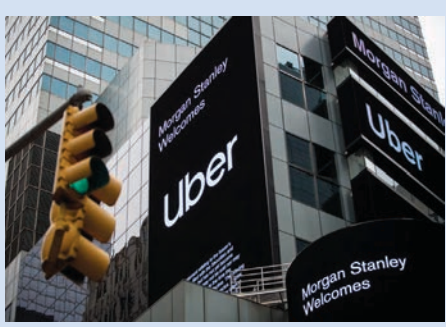
Previously, Apple analyst Ming-Chi Kuo had also revealed that Apple is working on the optical in-display fingerprint and might introduce it with the iPhone 13 series.

The iPhone 13 lineup may mirror the iPhone 12 family of phones, with a 5.4-inch iPhone 13 Mini, 6.1-inch iPhone 13, 6.1-inch iPhone 13 Pro and 6.7-inch iPhone 13 Pro Max.

In addition, the Ultra-Wide cameras on the two high-end models will be significantly upgraded to f/1.8, 6P (six-element lens) with autofocus.

All the current iPhone 12 models are equipped with f/2.4, 5P (five-element lens) Ultra-Wide cameras with fixed focus.





## Uber to buy alcohol delivery startup Drizly for \$1.1 billion

Uber Technologies Inc. agreed to acquire Drizly Inc., which makes an on-demand alcohol delivery app, for \$1.1 billion, beating out at least two rival companies that held talks with the startup.

The deal is Uber's biggest since July when it bought Postmates, a food delivery app. The Drizly purchase primarily consists of Uber stock, with less than 10% in cash, the companies said in a statement Tuesday. The acquisition excludes Drizly's cannabis delivery arm, an Uber spokesman said. Uber shares climbed about 7%.

Before cinching the deal, Drizly held sale talks with DoorDash Inc., the largest food delivery app in the U.S., and GoPuff, the SoftBank-backed delivery company that recently acquired BevMo!, said people familiar with the discussions. Neither reached an agreement, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions were private. The companies either declined to comment or didn't respond to requests for comment about the discussions.

Drizly has had a breakout year as consumers stuck at home ordered in alcohol instead of venturing to the store. The Boston-based company operates in more than 1,400 U.S. cities connecting customers with local stores to order beer, wine and liquor.

# Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder, will step down as CEO this year

Jeff Bezos, who founded Amazon as an online bookstore and built it into a shopping and entertainment behemoth, will step down later this year as CEO, a role he's had for nearly 30 years, to become executive chairman, the company announced on Tuesday, Feb 2.

Bezos, 57, will be replaced in the summer by Andy Jassy, who runs Amazon's cloud-computing business.

In a blog post to employees, Bezos said he planned to focus on new products and early initiatives being developed at Amazon. He said he would have more time for side projects, including his space exploration company Blue Origin, his philanthropic initiatives and overseeing The Washington Post, which he owns.

Bezos, who is the company's biggest shareholder, will still have broad influence over Amazon.

"Jeff is really not going anywhere," Amazon's Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky said in a call with reporters. "It's more of a restructuring of who's doing what."

Launched in 1995, Amazon was a pioneer of fast, free shipping that won over millions of shoppers who used the site to buy diapers, TVs and just about anything else. Under Bezos, Amazon also launched the first e-reader that gained mass acceptance, and its Echo listening device made voice assistants a common sight in living rooms.

As a child, Bezos was intrigued by computers and interested in building things, such as alarms he rigged in his parents' home. He got a degree in electrical engineering and computer science at Princeton University, and then worked at several Wall Street companies.

He quit his job at D.E. Shaw to start an online retail business — though at first he wasn't sure what to sell. Bezos quickly determined that an online bookstore would resonate with consumers. He and his now ex-wife, MacKenzie Scott, whom he met at D.E. Shaw and married in 1993, set out on a road trip to Seattle — a city chosen for its abundance of tech talent and proximity to a large book distributor in Roseburg, Oregon.

While Scott drove, Bezos wrote up the business plan for what would become Amazon.com. Bezos convinced his parents and some friends to invest in the idea, and Amazon began operating out of the Bezos' Seattle garage on July 16, 1995.

Amazon has gone far beyond selling paperbacks. It now produces movies, makes sofas, owns a grocery chain and even has plans to send satellites into space to beam internet service to earth. The company is one of the most valuable in the world, worth nearly \$1.7 trillion.



During the pandemic, Amazon was one of the few retailers to benefit as shoppers stayed clear of malls and shopped from their phones. On the same day Amazon announced Bezos would step down, the company reported making a record profit in the last three months of 2020, and its quarterly revenue shot past \$100 billion for the first time.

Bezos' riches have also swelled: His stake in Amazon is currently worth about \$180 billion. For years he stayed behind the scenes, running the company. More recently, he sometimes stepped into the spotlight, showing up at movie premieres and Hollywood parties.

In 2019, he announced he was divorcing Scott in a tweet, just before the National Enquirer published a cover story saying Bezos had an affair with a former TV host. Scott received a stake in Amazon after the divorce worth nearly \$40 billion at the time. She has pledged to give away half her fortune to charities.

As Amazon has grown, so has scrutiny. Amazon and other tech giants have enjoyed light-touch regulation and star status in Washington for decades, but calls for greater regulation are growing. A report by the House Judiciary Committee in October called for possibly breaking up Amazon and others, making it harder for them to acquire companies and imposing new rules to safeguard competition.

Source: AP

## Equity benchmarks spike to new highs ahead of RBI policy decision

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty advanced their record-setting spree in early trade on Friday, Feb 5, ahead of the RBI monetary policy outcome.

The 30-share BSE Sensex briefly touched the 51,000-level, and was trading at 50,830.76, gaining 216.47 points or 0.43 per cent in opening trade.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty was quoted at 14,968.95, moving higher by 73.30 points or 0.49 per cent.

SBI, Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank, HDFC, ONGC and Axis Bank were top gainers in the Sensex pack.

Of the Sensex constituents, 22 shares were trading in the green.

On Thursday, the Sensex had ended 358.54 points or 0.71 per cent higher at its new closing record of 50,614.29; and the Nifty had settled with 105.70 points or 0.71 per cent gains at its closing peak of 14,895.65. Both indices had touched their all-time highs as well during the session.

"The market will be keenly watching



the monetary policy due today, particularly the nuances of the policy and indications coming from the central bank. The policy rates are likely to remain unchanged but there can be indications on liquidity management, going forward," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

## IMF to roll out new method to judge debt sustainability

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The International Monetary Fund said on Wednesday, Feb 3, it is launching a new method of assessing debt sustainability for countries with access to financial markets to more accurately predict risks of financial crises and improve transparency.

The update of the debt assessment methodology, the first since 2013 in the wake of a European sovereign debt crisis, is expected to be operational by the fourth quarter of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022, IMF officials said.

Assessing a country's debt sustainability has always been "more art than science," and the new system aims to inject a bit more science into the process, Jeromin Zettelmeyer, deputy director of the IMF Strategy, Policy and Review Department, told a Web briefing.

He said the IMF has revised its modeling of debt-related factors to provide "a more accurate framework



that allows us to warn about or predict crises and unsustainable and sustainable debts."

The assessments are important because they help determine how much a country can borrow and still meet the IMF's stringent requirements that its debt does not fall into an unsustainable situation. For example, the IMF has been reluctant to grant a bailout program to Lebanon until the country's existing debts are put on a sustainable path, among other factors.

## Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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Chirag Bejan Daruwalla with his father late Bejan Daruwalla

The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope from the World's most trusted Vedic Astrologer Nastur Bejan Daruwalla.

## Weekly Horoscope Feb 8 - Feb 14, 2021

**ARIES :** Ganesha says this week is going to be quiet exciting for you as a result it is going to be an extremely positive week. Your sign has very great plans for you this week. You will have to take important decisions and they will turn out in your favor, hence accordingly you will achieve great success. You are going to increase your sources of income and that will allow you to get an even better standard of living. Because of your great leadership qualities, your team will give you a very rewarding response. Your issues with your finances are going to get under control. You will not be able to give proper time to your family but they will understand you and will support you for that. By the end of week happiness will be with you. It will help you to be calm and to be patient. And you will generate good income from your past investments. As you will earn more it seems like you will be able to change your lifestyle. You will also donate some amount to charity.

**TAURUS:** This is an ideal week for you to reflect on yourself. You have been through lot of challenges and become the strongest person you have ever been. Allow yourself time and space to relax and rest. A mini vacation will do you well this week, as you have been ignoring your health by staying busy. Your business and finances will work out on its own this week, without you having to pay much time and attention. Although you need to do something to show your appreciation and gratitude towards your friends and family by giving them your time. They have been trustworthy and have got your back throughout all the difficulties that you have faced. You will receive a lot of love from your spouse this entire week. Plan fun and cute dates for yourself and your partner to get to know each other even more. Making other people happy will lift up your mood this week; hence try to do as much of it as you can. Your health has been not

doing so well for quite a while now but this week will be different, you'll notice that you are starting to feel more energized and positive.

**GEMINI :** Although not every aspect of your life will work out as you would have liked it to be, you'll come through struggles stronger and smarter. You're likely to feel slightly nervous and excited about how things will work out financially for you this week, as you have already made investments based on estimation of an income that's yet to come. Mid-week you'll realize that you have been blessed in all aspects of life, you will enjoy your personal as well as work life. You're likely to take an unconventional break this week to spend some much-needed time with your loved one. Take this time to discuss your future and related topics that your partner has been dodging lately. During your time off be physically active. Go on long walks and soak in the sun as much as you can.

**CANCER :** You are going to create a positive atmosphere for your friends and loved ones, or rather everywhere you go, as you will carry an aura of positivity throughout this week. This week will help you in many ways. You will be able to work hard. You will be able to connect more people around you to build new connections. Your positive attitude will boost you for a new start-up of business. You will receive many blessings from the people you don't know receiving them will get closer to achieve your goals. Singles can get ready to get a partner as loneliness is going to hell from your life. People with serious relationships are blessed by god and they will be able to create stronger bond with the one they love. Good times have started for you so just enjoy your life.

**LEO :** This week is bringing you a lot of better things. As you foresee the upcoming seven days, the losses incurred in last few weeks will be revived. You will earn trust of everyone in your life. The monotonous nature of your job will

make you feel dull but this feeling is temporary. The last three days of the week will be a little bit challenging but this adventure of hardship will bring you growth. Income is going to increase and your family will support you in whatever you do. Your love life is expecting some challenges as there will be some misunderstandings between your partner and you. Married life will be alright as you will take this week to reconnect with your partner. Your health will do just as good as you're feeling this week. The consequences of the immense amount of happiness that you're feeling this week will show. Work on taking deep breaths every few seconds and just taking in today's massive positive energies.

**VIRGO :** Your charismatic energy will impress a new prospect this week, which bring in huge profits for your business. You will be able to make some huge investments in this week. You're likely to rush the process and skip the analyzing and strategizing part, which can ruin all the profit you have made from the new prospect. You need to listen to your financial advisor and take your time. Managing such a huge amount of money can make you or break you. Your love life will be quite rewarding throughout the week, your partner will act very caring and loving, and immediately get into action as soon as you mention your future together or taking the next step in your relationship. Let them know that they can express their feelings and fears without the anticipation of an overreaction from you. Getting them to express their true feelings will be quite difficult, but it is important you to know at what stage your relationship stands to have a clear picture and make decisions that you need to make. Your health will not bother you at all this week. Although it will benefit you if you work out or at-least go for a walk to clear your head every day this week.

CONTD ON PAGE 53

# Weekly Horoscope

## Feb 8 - Feb 14, 2021

CONTD FROM PAGE 52

**LIBRA** : You are blessed with the moon this week which will give you inner strength and confidence. Self-respect will stop you from taking some negative decision, specifically in regards to your relationships. Your social prestige is likely to increase based on the decisions you have taken in the past few days. You will make new plans to start some new project; your patience will help you throughout this week be it your relationships or your work. Singles will be blessed by the Venus. If you're single you might find your soul mate this week if they focus on socializing and meeting new people every day. Your health will do great this week. You'll constantly feel great despite the poor eating you have been doing since the past week. You are feeling amazing this week but you need to keep your exercise routine going on hence focus on enjoying and staying consistent with your routine.

**SCORPIO** : This is a tough week for you. You will feel dissatisfaction and unhappiness in every moment, you will feel detached from your responsibilities, which will affect your productivity; your grip on your projects will become slow, which might create some loss in the business or at work. You might be a victim of conspiracy at work which only worsens your situation. You need to be careful in terms of hidden enemies and opponents. You are advised to be careful in the way you speak; otherwise, you might face losses in near future. You should avoid making investments in risky assets. Practicing meditation and yoga will help you to come out from this messy situation. You are advised to avoid lending money to anyone, as luck is in your sign's favor for this week, but taking risks like this won't be lucrative.

**SAGITTARIUS** : You will gain a lot of profit in your business this week which will set a positive tone for the entire week. You won't need to do things that you hate in terms of work anymore. You will have the time, space and affordability to follow your passion. Financial abundance is in your cards this week, which will keep you satisfied and happy throughout the week. You need to be more analytical about making investments now as managing the funds that you receive this week and in the future as it will make a significant difference in your life. This is the perfect week for you to make investments as your luck will favor you into making the correct and logical decisions. Seek advices from the elders that you trust as well as your partner. Do not delay in taking the decisions as your luck is in your favor this week. Make sure to take important decisions in this week itself.

**CAPRICORN** : This is the week you realize who you can truly trust. You will go through a minor rough patch in business which will leave you in immediate need for the money. The people who you thought were your friends will make excuses and try to leave you to your own devices when they find out about your loss, it will still take you some time to fully realize who really cares and looks out for you and who is with you for selfish reasons, focus on only yourself this week so that you can create a positive outcome at the end. This week is a crucial learning lesson for you. Do not worry about the finances as you will be able to work things out yourself! Infect you will realize how independent you are and to what limits you can work and produce great results. Your health will remain well throughout the week except for minor fatigue and tiredness throughout the week.

**AQUARIUS** : This week is all about new and positive beginnings for you. Career-wise, your journey will give the expected results. You just have to make sure that you are determined to tread ahead with discipline. You will be provided with ample opportunities to prove yourself at work as well, which, in turn, may also lead to your promotion in this week itself. Material security is on your way this week. Your business will be great and smooth throughout the week. Your business will grow a lot this week and you will acquire new clients. Be it a big or a small prospect, you will observe that your business has grown the most this week. Your health is doing great this week but you should remain extra cautious and careful about your eating habits these days starting this week. Preventive health check-up would prove to be very assuring for you.

**PISCES** : You will be busy at work; your focus will be good and you will have good patience. You will be able to utilize your strength to implement your plans in the business or work, in terms of growth in the work and business. You will get help from your network to make it possible. Expect some changes in your place, position or responsibilities at work, in terms of promotions. Your seniors will appreciate your work. Your family will support you to get success at work, which will maintain domestic harmony. Your opponents and hidden enemies will be under control now. Singles and love birds - you will take important decisions in terms of marriage with the help of your relatives or friends. You will experience minor body aches throughout the week. Excess of work will keep you busy, but in spite of this, you will have to take time for yourself and try to improve your health. You haven't been taking care of your health and it will make you realize that this week.

## Birthday Horoscope

### February 8 - February 14, 2021

**FEB 8:** Ganesha says today is going to be fabulous for you. Use the tremendous energy you have today to focus entirely on yourself. Your leadership skills will help you move past any hurdles without much effort. Your health is doing very well and you will go through a positive shift when it comes to your mental and physical health which is a blessing you receive today from all of your loved ones.

**FEB 9** :Your charming personality will have a lot of people falling head over heels for you today; you will have to pick and choose who you want to spend time with as a lot of people will demand your presence today. Your business is very likely to flourish like never before today

hence you will enjoy today a lot. Make sure you take time to relax.

**FEB 10:** Your friends, family, partner and colleagues will all treat you extra special today. You will have a day full of doing things you love and spending time with your favorite person, getting to know each other better. Let your intuitions guide you when it comes to your love life today. Focus on building relationships that feel right and aren't harmful or toxic towards you.

**FEB 11:** Positive energies will work on bettering your health and you will feel the positive changes today. Your health will be stagnant; it will not bother you at all throughout the day. You will have a lot of support and help from your loved one today

and your finances will improve in abundance today as well. Today is a very positive and productive day for you.

**FEB 12:** You will come across a lot of people today whose company you will thoroughly enjoy. Your Relationships will continue to require less work and efforts from you. You will have tremendous courage and energy to achieve important business goal. Your sweetness will make your partner fall head over heels in love with you.

**FEB 13:** You will be very innovative in your work and business today which will prove to be very lucrative for you. Marked improvements in all spheres of life is in your cards today. You will have the

most positive day. You will remain quite happy today; you might feel energetic and maintain your physical fitness. Your immunity and will power both will be very good today. Drink lots of water, iced or herbal teas, or healthy fruit juices.

**FEB 14:** You will be showered with a lot of love and appreciation from your partner today. You feel appreciated for your efforts. Your love life is taking a highly positive turn today and you will be thrilled about it. Your love life is taking a highly positive turn today and you will be thrilled about it. Practice jogging, yoga, meditation, or cycling. Physical activity will do you a lot of good and will help you stay healthy and happy today.

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# Shattila Ekadashi

Shattila Ekadashi, also famous as Tilda or Sattila Ekadashi, takes place on the 11th day during the Paush Month in the Krishna Paksha. According to the Gregorian calendar, this festival occurs either in the month of February or January. This year, it will be observed on February 7.

## The Significance of Shattila Ekadashi

The importance of Shattila Ekadashi is to make the people understand about the divine blessings and benefits associated with making donations and offering food to the needy and poor. Hence, the most significant part of this observance is to feed the poor and perform the puja of Lord Vishnu as by performing this the devotees get blessed and are bestowed with abundant wealth and happiness.

One of the most vital and significant aspects of the day is to take maximum use of sesame seeds (Til) in diverse ways:

- The seeds can be used for bathing by mixing them in the water used for the bathing purpose.
- Til can be used for preparing a paste which can be applied on the body before taking a bath.
- The devotees must offer Til to the sacred fire
- They can also donate the sesame seeds to the needy and poor
- People can also consume savories made up of til on the day of Shattila Ekadashi

## Puja Vidhi of Shattila Ekadashi Vrat

- The devotees who observe a fast of Shattila Ekadashi must wake up early morning and should take a bath.
- They should clean the place of worship, decorate and adorn the altar and then install the statue, idol or the picture of deities Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna.
- Devotees must offer prayers and worship the deities by performing pujas and reciting the hymns of Lord Krishna and reading Vishnu Sahasranama.
- Prasad (sacred food), tulsi water, fruits, coconut, incense sticks, and flowers should be offered to the deities, and continuously chant the mantras and sing devotional songs.
- The same puja must be repeated on the next morning i.e. on Dwadashi and devotees can conclude their Shattila Ekadashi vrat after consuming the sacred food.

## Fasting Rules of Shattila Ekadashi

- The fast of Shattila Ekadashi initiates at Ekadashi dawn and concludes on Dwadashi morning.
- The fast can only be concluded on the day of Dwadashi during Parana after performing puja rituals of Lord Vishnu.
- During the fast, devotees refrain themselves from consuming food and grains but few people consume sesame seeds on this particular day.
- In the milder form of the fast, devotees can also observe the fast by consuming fruits and milk in the day.

## Vrat Story of Shattila Ekadashi

As per the legend and Hindu scriptures, there was a lady who had immense wealth. She used to donate a lot



to poor people and usually perform huge charities to the needy. She used to distribute valuable products, clothes and a lot of money to them but never donate food to the poor. It is believed that among all the donations and charities, the most significant and divine one is the donation of food as it offers great merits to the one who perform donations. By seeing this, Lord Krishna decided to make the lady aware of this fact. He appeared in form of a beggar in front of that lady and asked for food. As expected, she denied giving food in donation and drove him away.

The beggar kept on asking for food again and again. As a result, the lady insulted Lord Krishna who was in the form of a beggar and in anger put a clay ball in the begging bowl instead of giving food. Seeing this, he thanked the lady and left the place. When the lady returned back to her home, she was surprised by observing that all the food which was there in the house converted into clay. Even whatever she purchased too also turned into clay only. Her health started deteriorating due to hunger. She prayed to the deity to save her from all this. Listening to the request of the lady, Lord Krishna appeared in her dreams and reminded her of the day when she drove away that beggar and the way she insulted him by throwing the clay ball instead of food in his bowl. Lord Krishna made her understand that by doing such deed she invited her misfortune and this is why all such circumstances are taking

place. He advised her to donate food to the poor and needy on the day of Shattila Ekadashi and also observe a strict fast of Shattila Ekadashi with complete devotion. The lady observed a fast as well as donated a lot of food to the needy and poor and as a result, she gained back all her wealth, good health and happiness in life.

## Benefits of Shattila Ekadashi Vrat

By observing the fast of Shattila Ekadashi with complete devotion, the devotees get bestowed with an abundance of wealth, good health and

prosperity in all their births.

By donating money, clothes, and food to the needy on the day of Shattila Ekadashi, the devotees get a lot of merits and they never run short of food or face loss of wealth and prosperity in their homes.

## Ekadashi Fasting Days

Apart from Shattila Ekadashi, there are 23 Ekadashi Vrat in a year that fall on Krishna and Shukla Paksha of Hindu Calendar. All these Ekadashi tithi are very significant in Hindu traditions and are popular with various Ekadashi names. Here is the list of Ekadashi Vrat observed throughout the year.

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**"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."**

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# Kausani: A picturesque hill station

**W**indow to the snow-crested Trishul, Nanda Devi, Nandakot and Panchchuli peaks, there are very few places in the Himalayas whose beauty can be compared to that of Kausani – a picturesque hill station famous for its scenic splendor and its spectacular 300 km-wide panoramic view of the Himalayas.

With a total area of 5.2 sq. km, situated at a height of 1890 m above sea level, located 51 km north of Almora, Kausani is the birthplace of famous Hindi poet Sumitra Nandan Pant, who wrote some of his memorable poems in praise of this paradise on earth. In 1929, Mahatma Gandhi stayed here for 14 days at the Anasakti Ashram while scripting his book titled 'Anasakti Yoga' and was greatly impressed by its environs.

Far from the maddening crowd, Kausani is a calm and idyllic resort. One just has to walk down the hills amidst dense forests or trek around to reach the highest points of the hills, Pinnath (5 kms), Burapinnath (5.5 kms) and Bhatkot (12 kms). Enjoy a relaxing day and get wonderstruck by the starry nights.

## Anasakti Ashram

Refresh the memories of 1929, when Mahatma Gandhi, spent here 14 days while writing his book on 'Anasakti Yoga'. His spinning wheel (Charkha) and other memorabilia are kept here. There is also a study with a small library where one can find books on Gandhian philosophy. The Ashram can accommodate up to 300 people and every evening prayer is conducted in the main hall. One can enjoy mesmerizing sunset and sunrise from the Ashram premises.

## Kumaon Shawl Emporium

A fabulous collection of high quality woollen shawls, exquisitely designed by the local weavers, can be purchased from here.

## Pant Museum

Named after the famous Hindi poet, Sumitra Nandan Pant, who was born in Kausani, the Museum has the articles of



his daily use, drafts of his poems, letters, his awards etc. This Museum is at a short distance from the Kausani bus terminal.

## BEYOND KAUSANI

### Bajjnath

Most important historical place in Uttarakhand, situated at a height of 1126 meters above sea level on the banks of River Gomti. It is 19 kms from Kausani towards Bageshwar. Main attractions are the 12th century old temples of Shiva, Ganesh, Parvati, Chandika, Kuber, Surya and Brahma with beautiful carvings and sculptures.

### Lakhudiyar

Known for its caves and rock paintings.

### Bageshwar

40 kms away from Kausani, on the confluence of rivers Saryu and Gomti lies the holy township of Bageshwar, an important centre of worship of Lord Shiva. According to Hindu scriptures, the sage Markandeya lived here and spent many years worshipping Lord Shiva.

This is also the place from where one can start his journey towards Pindari, Sunderdunga and Kafni glaciers.

### Chaukori

87 kms from Kausani, a picturesque tourist spot amidst mighty Himalayan peaks.

### How to reach

### By Flight

The nearest airport is Pant Nagar, (178 kms). One can hire a taxi from Pant Nagar to reach Kausani

### By Train

The nearest railway station is Kathgodam (141 kms), from there one starts the climb to Kausani via Almora. An equally beautiful route is via Ranikhet (163 kms).

### By Road

Kausani is linked to several other hill stations by road. Some of the major road distances are: Almora-51 kms, Rainkhet-60 kms, Pithoragarh-107 kms, Gwaldam-39 kms and Nainital-117 km. From Delhi it is 431 kms away.



# Indian American artist Sujata Tibrewala's painting 'Bloody Immigrant' depicts Deb Haaland



*The position of blacks in America is bad but at least they are in popular consciousness. However, the Native Americans and their issues are not even part of the dialogue.*

**SAN JOSE, CA (TIP):** Back in 1637, there was a massacre in which Pilgrims killed Native Americans and stole their land. And so goes the story of Thanksgiving, where the Native

Americans taught the Pilgrims how to live in the winter, ploughing the land and growing food, and Pilgrims then thanking their host. A plague perishing all Native Americans is a whitewashed story - a story where they insist that there are no rightful owners of the land that was usurped, so they don't have to pay back for sins or atone to anyone.

In reality, the Pilgrims stole the Native American land, raped and killed them as a manner of "giving thanks". This killing symbolically continues today by the mainstream America pretending that they don't exist. For example, Donald Trump said that Sen. Elizabeth Warren was not Native American since her blood is mixed with white blood. This is an age-old technique colonialism has used to make their victims disappear.

When I think about their story, I really feel pity for them because they don't get to tell their side of the story and have to continue living with their oppressors. Although in India, British did equally bad, at least they left and then we rewrote our history, teaching children about our freedom fighters and soldiers. Whereas in America, the opposite happened: the Native Americans are portrayed as

savages, uncivilized tribes who don't even exist today.

It must be noted that I am not calling them Indians, because they were never Indians. I am an Indian from South Asia, not a Native American. It is like Columbus came here, discovered Native Americans thinking they were Indians, and instead of correcting their mistake, now insist on continuing to call them Indians hundreds of years later.

These were some of the thoughts that were running in my mind when I painted this work. So, this painting is a tribute to 5 million Native Americans who live in the United States today. A majority of them are living on reservation land as forced by the famous "trail of tears" displacement, perpetrated by state where thousands died in transit or after reaching their destinations due to diseases. This happened between 1830 and 1850, because the US government wanted to acquire the land east of Mississippi. And this continues to this day. Native American land is where most polluting industries are likely to be located and they are in danger of being acquired to lay pipelines for fossil fuel industry or being dug for mining.

There is a savior complex within the

white population and yet within their own backyards, the indigenous people are always struggling to keep their land. Deb Halaand, one of the first two Native Americans to enter U.S. Congress and first from New Mexico, has a history of fighting for tribal sovereignty and advocating for natural resources. She was nominated by Joe Biden for interior secretary to serve in the new administration.

Hence it is just fitting that she gets to do the honors in my painting to be squashing out Trump, an immigrant-hating president who has no place in American democracy. The imagery used is based on actual footage of George Floyd's killing while he was crying for help "I can't breathe," which has become an anthem for the Black Lives Matter movement. I used this image to comment that though the position of blacks in America is bad, at least they are in popular consciousness, however the Native Americans and their issues are not even part of the dialogue.

*(Sujata Tibrewala is an eco-feminist, artist and engineer, based in San Jose, California. She has exhibited her works at various prestigious venues in the United States and India. More of her work can be seen on [www.Pratibimba.info](http://www.Pratibimba.info).)*

## Indian American Baiju Bhatt is the latest billionaire



*Baiju Bhatt, the cofounder of Robinhood holds 10.5 percent stake in the no-fee stock trading app.*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Baiju Bhatt, the Indian American cofounder of the trading unicorn Robinhood, has become the latest Indian American billionaire thanks to the stunning growth of the financial services company in the past year.

Robinhood, a no-fee stock trading app, has upended Wall Street by allowing "little guys" with limited resources to invest in stocks. Last week, the company was in the news after it restricted the trading of certain stocks, most notably GameStop, AMC, and BlackBerry, following the efforts of many Reddit users to drive up the stock's price.

The move was met by severe backlash on social media, as internet users, celebrities and politicians alike came together to criticize Robinhood, which was founded by Bhatt and fellow Stanford alum Vladimir Tenev in 2013, for seemingly trying to protect hedge funds.

However, the controversy caused windfall for Robinhood. The company infused \$3.4 billion in the last week of January alone. And on January 29, the app was downloaded a record one million times.

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

## Indian American Bhavya Lal Appointed Acting Chief of Staff of NASA



*Bhavya Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology*

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Indian American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US space agency on Monday.

Ms. Lal served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency and oversaw the agency's transition under the administration of President Joe Biden.

In a statement, NASA said Ms. Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.

There, she led analysis of space technology, strategy, and policy for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Space Council, as well as federal space-oriented organizations, including NASA, the Department of Defense, and the intelligence community.

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

## Indian American gets Top Job in US Homeland Security Department



*Dr. Pritesh Gandhi has been appointed as Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Homeland Security.*

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US President Joe Biden has appointed Indian American doctor Dr. Pritesh Gandhi as Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Homeland Security.

In this role, Mr. Gandhi serves as principal adviser to the Department of Homeland Security secretary, assistant secretary for the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator, a media release said.

He will lead on issues related to natural disasters, border health, pandemic response, acts of terrorism and other human-caused disasters.

Mr. Gandhi was a Democratic Congressional Candidate last year in the 10th Congressional District of Texas. He lost in the primaries.

A public health trained and board-certified internal medicine specialist, Mr. Gandhi most recently served as the Associate Chief Medical Officer and Director of Adult Medicine at People's Community Clinic, an Austin-based federally qualified health center, which provides care to over 20,000 uninsured and medically underserved Central Texans. *(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))*

## Indian American Ashwani K. Jain to run for Maryland governor



*Ashwani K. Jain plans to seek the Democratic nomination for Maryland governor next year with an expressly generational appeal for votes.*

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Ashwani K. Jain, a young Indian American who held multiple roles during the Obama administration, plans to seek the Democratic nomination for Maryland governor next year with an expressly generational appeal for votes.

The 31-year-old son of Indian immigrants who grew up in Maryland, acknowledged in a campaign video that his youth and inexperience may turn off some voters, marylandmatters.org reported. "I understand that some will say that this overly ambitious, eager millennial with a baby face and no elected experience is not qualified or ready for this position," Jain said. But, he argued, "elective experience is not the only kind of experience that matters." "In a state that's becoming younger and more diverse than ever before, voices like mine are growing in Maryland and deserve to be heard, because decisions made about us should not be made without us," Jain asserted.

In his announcement speech, Jain noted that he would be the first millennial governor in the US and the first governor of color in Maryland.

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



## Rafa struggling with back problem

World No. 2 Rafa Nadal said doubts remain over his fitness ahead of next week's Australian Open.

Nadal pulled out of Spain's ATP Cup tie against Australia on Tuesday with a lower-back problem and, despite some improvement, said he was still far away from the level required to play at the year's first Grand Slam. "It's not that I'm in a really bad way, but I'm also not alright in the sense that I can't play either," Nadal told a Spanish television channel. "I've improved a little but I'm not in a position where I can go and play a game at full intensity."

Nadal's name was also absent from Spain's ATP Cup tie on Friday against Greece at Melbourne Park's John Cain Arena. The 34-year-old practised for an hour today evening at the Rod Laver Arena and his fitness was improving "little by little, step by step", sources close to Nadal told Reuters.

## Germany bars Liverpool from coming for Champions League game

Germany will not allow Liverpool into the country to play a Champions League game at Leipzig on Feb. 16 because of border restrictions imposed over new variants of the coronavirus.

The German Interior Ministry confirmed Thursday that an application by Leipzig for special permission for Liverpool to enter the country was refused by federal police, the dpa news agency reported.

That means the game, the first leg of the round of 16, can't be played as scheduled on Feb. 16 in Leipzig. The German club could ask UEFA to move the game to a neutral venue. Switching the order of the legs so that Liverpool plays at home first could also be an option, but would likely require Leipzig's players and staff to go into quarantine on their return to Germany from Britain. UEFA is open to delaying games affected by travel bans. On Tuesday it set April 2 as the latest possible date to finish last-16 games in time for the quarterfinals.

# 'Kohli is still the main man': Hussain on Rahane impact ahead of Chennai Test

Ahead of the start of the Test series between India and England, there has been a lot of talk on how Ajinkya Rahane's leadership in Australia could actually put Virat Kohli under pressure, as he was away when Rahane inspired the team to a comeback 2-1 win.

Rahane himself has said that he would be happy to take the backseat now that Kohli is back in charge of the team and Kohli in his pre-match press conference elaborated on the relationship of trust he shares with Rahane and also lauded his deputy for leading the side with responsibility in Australia.

Former England captain and cricket commentator Nasser Hussain wrote on the emergence of Rahane as a possible candidate as India's Test captain in future in his column in Daily Mail.

Hussain though mentioned that Kohli remains the man in charge for India and a good start to the series against England for the hosts will enhance Kohli's stature again.

"Virat Kohli is still the main man, make no mistake. He is still that god-like figure in India, let alone Indian cricket, and he will be very much in charge for Friday's first Test against England.

"All the 2-1 win over Australia did was give India another option as captain if things do not go according to plan, because Ajinkya Rahane did exceptionally well taking charge of the last three Tests while Kohli was on paternity leave.

"That was one of the greatest wins in India's history and Rahane, with his calm captaincy style, would have taken a lot of credit. So that might add a bit of pressure to the returning Kohli," Hussain wrote in his column.

The former England captain though gave credit to Kohli for his role in creating a winning mentality in the Indian team, which he said was evident even when Kohli was away on paternity leave while the team battled in Australia.

"A lot of Kohli's passion was there in



his absence in Australia. India would not be bullied. They would not be beaten by that first Test humiliation and they would not stand down when one of their players, Mohammed Siraj, was racially abused in Sydney.

"Just because Kohli wasn't captain at the time, it doesn't mean the culture he has created was missing. He more than anyone is responsible for the modern India attitude on the field to match their power off it. They have a swagger," Hussain wrote.

He opined that the emergence of Rahane as a candidate for captaincy gives England a chance to create some flutter in the Indian camp by starting well in the Test series as that will put Kohli under pressure.

"What I would say is something that was unthinkable just a couple of months ago — Kohli one day being replaced as captain is a possibility now. And if the first Test in Chennai doesn't go well for India — and that's a massive 'if' — the whole country will be asking whether Rahane should have stayed in charge.

"That's why England must start well. If India bully them in this first Test and go

1-0 up, everything will be forgotten and Kohli will be the king again.

"But if Joe Root can put some doubt in India minds, then this series could suddenly become very interesting," Kohli said.

### Axar Patel ruled out

India all-rounder Axar Patel has been ruled out of the first Test against England with a knee injury, the (BCCI) said on Friday ahead of the toss. As per the BCCI release, the left-arm spinner complained of pain in his left knee during a training session on Thursday.

"Axar Patel has been ruled out of the first Paytm Test against England. The all-rounder complained of pain in his left knee during Team India's optional training session on Thursday. He is being monitored by the BCCI Medical Team and while his detailed reports are awaited, he will not be available for selection for the opening match," the BCCI said in a statement.

In place of the 27-year-old cricketer, the Indian cricket board added spinners Shahbaz Nadeem and Rahul Chahar to the Indian Test squad.

## Australian Open to go ahead despite COVID-19 case: Organisers

**MELBOURNE (TIP):** The Australian Open will begin as scheduled on Monday, Feb 8, even though a worker at one of the Melbourne hotels used to quarantine players and their entourages tested positive for COVID-19, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Thursday, Feb 4.

The day's warm-up matches at Melbourne Park were called off after the case was announced late on Wednesday, and those who underwent quarantine at the Grand Hyatt hotel were instructed to get tested and isolate until they had a result.

"We're absolutely confident



the Australian Open will go ahead," Tiley told reporters. "We are starting on Monday."

He said the 507 people affected, 160 of them players, would have their tests

completed by late Thursday afternoon.

If the results were negative, the players would be free to participate in the six warm-up events at the Grand Slam

venue to allow them to get match practice after 14 days in quarantine.

"This does give us three days for the lead-in events to be completed," he said, adding that the draw for the Grand Slam tournament had been postponed from Thursday to Friday.

Earlier, Victoria state health officials said the testing of the tennis cohort was precautionary.

"We think the risk to other guests in the hotel - tennis players and their accompanying staff - is relatively low," Allen Cheng told reporters.

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