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HOLI SPECIAL EDITION will be published on March 26, for which articles may please be submitted by March 23. Advertising space may please be booked by March 22. Please send articles and advertising requests to salujaindra@gmail.com

VAISAKHI SPECIAL EDITION will be published on April 9. Advertisements may please be booked by April 2, and articles for publication may please be submitted by March 30 to salujaindra@gmail.com

UK PM Boris to visit India in April-end Will shift focus to Indo-Pacific in post-Brexit review



UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India at the end of April

NEW DELHI (TIP): UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India at the end of April, his first major international tour after London's exit from the EU.

The announcement from London came after the minister for South Asia Tariq Ahmad wrapped up his visits where which included interactions with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

CONTD ON PAGE 42

Atlanta shootings leave 8 dead at Asian businesses

Six of the victims at the three businesses were Asian women Asian American community shocked and fear-stricken Nationwide condemnation of the attack on Asian-Americans



I.S. SALUJA

ATLANTA (TIP): Eight people were killed in shootings at three businesses in the Atlanta area on Tuesday, March 16. Six of the eight victims were Asian women, authorities said.

The attacks began at around 5 pm Tuesday, March 16afternoon. Atlanta police officers first responded to a crime scene at Young's Asian Massage, where four people were killed, in Cherokee County, just north of Atlanta. The victims were Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, and Daoyou

CONTD ON PAGE 44

Police at the scene of crime

House passes bill to give Dreamers and other undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship

Roughly 2.5 million undocumented immigrants to benefit

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Democratic-led House voted on Thursday, March 18, to create a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants, reopening a politically fraught debate over the

nation's broken immigration system just as President Biden confronts a growing surge of migrants at the border, says a New York Times report filed by Nicholas Fandos. In a near party-line vote of 228 to 197, with just nine Republicans joining Democrats, the House moved to set up a

CONTD ON PAGE 42



A rally in Los Angeles in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. File photo / Los Angeles Times



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Facebook sees computing's future on your wrist

The science behind Facebook's new vision for the human-computer interface - electromyography, or EMG - can read nerve signals in muscles anywhere in the body. But Facebook researchers said the wrist is the ideal spot to apply it.

NEW YORK (TIP): Facebook researchers are rapidly learning how to replace mouse clicks and screen taps with finger twitches. contd on page 42



Photo of prototype Facebook wristband that reads nerve impulses, on a person's arm with the finger pointing Photo / Facebook

Advertisement for Ideal Home Care featuring a caregiver assisting an elderly woman. Text includes 'NOW HIRING! Home Health Aides, Registered Nurses & Experienced Caregivers' and contact information: 300 Motor Pkwy, Suite 125 Hauppauge, NY 11788, www.IDEALHCS.com

Advertisement for Ideal School of Allied Health Care featuring a smiling healthcare worker. Text includes 'Health Care Providers Are in High Demand Get Professional Training Today!' and contact information: 300 Motor Pkwy, Suite 125 Hauppauge, NY 11788, www.ISAHC.com

Indian - Origin Small Business Owner Attends Round Table with Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON (TIP): An Indian - origin businesswoman, who imports goods and supports widowed women in India, has participated in a round table with Kamala Harris and asked the US Vice President to back a global plastic policy.

Lalitha Chittoor, the owner of Eco All Trading LLC, a small micro business involved in wholesale trading of sustainable products such as stainless steel, bamboo, birch wood attended the round table with Harris in Denver, Colorado on Tuesday along with her daughter.

Ms Harris brought up the administration's climate change efforts and said a policy staffer would follow up with her. Ms. Chittoor's business founded in 2019, is women-owned and imports goods from India and supports widowed women in India.

She told the round table that the small businesses were really part of the



During the round table, Lalitha Chittoor asked Ms. Harris to back a global plastic policy

heartbeat of every community.

"Our small business leaders are not only business leaders, you are civic leaders, community leaders, role

models," she said.

"It is our small businesses that hire from the community, that uplift the community, that have regular customers

who come in and you can recognize if they're having a bad day and you already know what they want to they don't even have to put in an order," she said.

Ms Harris said those in need of assistance have been opening up their car trunks to pick up food boxes but leave handwritten notes and sometimes a tip thanking the volunteers.

"These families who have nothing because they've lost so much, tipping the volunteers for their generosity and recognizing the dignity of their work," she said

Born in Chennai and a naturalized citizen of the US, Ms Chittoor started her business at the behest of her daughter. Her primary customers are restaurants, federal government, state government, school cafeterias, prison cafeterias, hospital cafeterias.

During the round table, Ms Chittoor asked Ms. Harris to back a global plastic policy.

Two Indian-origin South African women won International accolades for their exemplary leadership

JOHANNESBURG (TIP): Two young Indian-origin women from South Africa's Pretoria city, a 21-year-old beauty products entrepreneur and a 30-year-old architect, have won international accolades for their exemplary leadership this week.

Beauty products entrepreneur, Rabia Ghoor, received the Forbes Woman Africa 'Young Achievers' Award for 2021, while architect Sumayya Vally, was included in the 2021 Times100 list that acknowledges leaders who are shaping the future.

Ghoor's award was announced during a virtual Forbes summit to celebrate African women leaders who are committed to economic and social transformation on the continent. Ghoor started 'Swiitch Beauty', her make-up and skincare online beauty store at just 14, dropping out of school two years later to concentrate full-time on the business, which was inspired after she spotted a gap for the African market.

"American, European or Asian brands that are unavailable here in South Africa were constantly innovating and evolving, especially in the digital space, while South African brands lagged behind or just straight up didn't exist.

"I began researching product sourcing, formulation, e-commerce, packaging, manufacturing, design with the end goal in mind being to create a beauty brand that firstly, didn't break the bank and secondly - made things that people would actually use in real life - things that did what they said they were going to do," Ghoor said.

"After being announced as the winner, I received tones of emails for



collaborations. That is exposure for my brand and myself. I think winning opened networking opportunities," she added.

Vally became the youngest ever architect to make in the Times100 list for her role in the design of the pavilion for London's Serpentine Galleries. She joins such internationally celebrated architects as Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid.

Vally established the company Counterspace five years ago in partnership with a group of friends while still lecturing at the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. She said the company was formed with the aim of developing a design language that acknowledges and celebrates the African continent.

"It is an absolute privilege to be on a list with so many artists, innovators and leaders who I look up to. It has deepened the sense of responsibility to our histories, our hybrid identities and our futures that I strive to embody in my work, and the sense of responsibility that I have to my communities," Vally told the website *Laudium Today* in her hometown.

Indian-origin man charged for cyber-stalking

WASHINGTON (TIP): A 31-year-old Indian-origin computer security consultant has been charged in the US for allegedly engaging in cyber-stalking campaign against a woman and threatening multiple people, including a deputy prosecutor and a police officer investigating him.

Sumit Garg from Seattle was indicted on Wednesday, March 17 by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to engage in cyber-stalking, three counts of cyber-stalking in violation of criminal order, and two counts of cyber-stalking, Acting US Attorney Tessa M Gorman announced.

Garg was transferred to federal custody last week and was ordered detained at the Federal Detention Centre at SeaTac on March 15, 2021, the US Department of Justice said in a statement.

He will be arraigned on the indictment on March 25.

According to a detailed criminal complaint and the indictment in the case, Garg has been involved in an extensive campaign of threats and sexually explicit messaging and posts about a woman who used to share an apartment with his spouse.

Using her personal information, Garg threatened and tormented the former roommate in violation of court order.

He allegedly also used his computer



skills to threaten multiple people in the former roommate's life, including her uncle who represented her in obtaining a civil protection order; her current boyfriend; the Seattle Police Detective who investigated the threats; and even the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney who filed charges against Garg for his illegal stalking conduct.

He used his computer skills to try to hide who was sending the threats or making the posts.

The case is being investigated by the United States Secret Service with assistance from the Seattle Police Department.

Conspiracy to engage in cyber-stalking is punishable by up to five years in prison. Cyber-stalking in violation of criminal order is punishable by a mandatory minimum of one year and a maximum of five years in prison. Cyber-stalking is punishable by up to five years in prison.

Indian-origin crypto investor buys \$69.3 million artwork

SINGAPORE/ NEW DELHI (TIP): Singapore-based Indian Cryptocurrency investor Metakovan has bought an artwork by digital artist Beeple for \$69.3 million.

Various media reports cited that Metakova is a pseudonym of the investor, which means King of Meta in the Tamil language. His real identity is not known, but the investor is the co-founder of the NFT collection called Metapurse.

The investor successfully acquired the piece, titled-Everydays: The First 5,000 Days-for \$69,346,250 (Rs 504 crore approximately), according to the auction house Christie's.

According to reports, the price jumped from the \$20 million range to over \$50 million in the last minutes of the auction.

The work in question is a mosaic of 5,000 artworks made over the last 13 years by Mike Winkelmann, who goes by the artist name Beeple.

It's by far the largest known sale of an NFT, a special type of token



The artwork a Singapore-based Indian Cryptocurrency investor has bought for \$69.3 million

that lives on the Ethereum blockchain and proves digital ownership of its associated media.

According to the New York Times, the most expensive painting ever sold was a Leonardo da Vinci that went for \$450.3 million in 2017.

The Art Newspaper reported that

Twobadour, the steward of Metapurse whose real identity is also unknown, said he understands that valuation might sound like a "fantastical number, but we do believe that down the line this has the potential to become the most valuable piece of art ever".

Indian American Republican 'JD' Diganvker running for highway commissioner in Illinois Township

CHICAGO (TIP): Indian American Republican Jitendra "JD" Diganvker is no stranger to politics and public service. A small business owner, he ran against Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-IL, from Illinois' 8th congressional district in 2016.

Now Diganvker, known as "JD," is taking another stab at electoral politics. This time he is running for the post of Highway Commissioner in the Maine Township, a suburb of Chicago.

The long time Illinois resident, who is running on a Republican slate, told the American Bazaar that the commissioner's job would provide him with the right platform to address local issues. Diganvker said his candidacy is important as the Maine Township is home to many minority communities "who are entirely unrepresented."

Born in India, Diganvker immigrated to the United States in 1999. A US citizen since 2003, he made Des Plaines and Maine Township his home. In 2003, he launched a small business, along with his wife. It employed five people and grew by 230 percent over the next seven years.

Diganvker is not the only Indian American Republican on ballot in the April 6 local elections. Smitesh Shah is running for the Maine Township clerk. The presence of two Indian Americans on GOP slate is a first, according to old-timers.

Early voting for the local elections begins on March 22.

Diganvker told the American Bazaar



JD is running for the post of Highway Commissioner in the Maine Township, a suburb of Chicago

that, through his candidacy, he wants to send a message to all Indian Americans to concentrate on local offices. "More voices at a local level, bring in real issues to the center stage," he said.

Speaking about the increasing Indian American presence in US politics, he said, "Americans are more welcoming to all candidates who come forward to represent them on a local level and they have high regard for Indian Americans."

Diganvker said if he goes on to win, it will increase representation for the community. "This will also be our chance to represent our community in local government," he said "The Maine Township Highway Commissioner

focuses primarily on maintaining roads and bridges in the unincorporated areas of township. Unincorporated Maine Township is also home to many minority communities who are entirely unrepresented on the Maine Township Board. As a resident of unincorporated Maine Township and a member of its ethnic community, I think I will be able to do just representation."

Diganvker said he wants to keep roadways open and safe while also acting as a strong steward of hard-earned taxpayer funds.

"I plan to lower the tax over the next four years to reduce the excess accumulated by my predecessors through over-taxation," he said. "I also plan to regularly meet with residents of various neighborhoods in the township to brainstorm about how to improve our government and make it more efficient and inclusive."

Diganvker spoke about his priorities if he gets elected. "My first issue would be to make sure all our citizens receive their Covid-19 vaccine as soon as possible," he said. Secondly, we had a particularly bad winter this year so I will be on road to review our roads and bridges and do the needful."

Lastly, he added, "With COVID-19 taking a toll on all aspects of life, every family is affected and has somehow lost a loved one. At this time, healing and safety is of paramount importance to me." (Source: American Bazar)

Indian American high school Basketball phenom commits to Stanford

PARAMJIT S AUJLA

SACRAMENTO (TIP): Indian American high school basketball phenom Ryan Agarwal has committed to Stanford University.

Agarwal made the announcement Tuesday, March 16 afternoon via a commitment video posted on his social media.

"It's truly a blessing to have experienced this recruitment process, a process that I will never forget" Agarwal said in the video. "However, it can only be one."

"And I have decided to go with my dream school, Stanford University," said Indian American high school basketball phenom Ryan Agarwal

Agarwal thanked his coaches, family, and friends in the five-minute video.

The four-star signee also received offers from Harvard, Princeton, Oklahoma State, and Rice University, among others.

In a recent interview with the American Bazaar, prior to his commitment, Agarwal said there were three things he was looking at most when considering a school to play for:

"A relationship with the head coach is huge," said Agarwal. That's who he will be playing for; putting him in games, and teaching him the most, Agarwal noted; a role he seems to trust with Stanford Head Coach Jerod Haase.

Play style was also an important factor according to Agarwal.

"Me being a shooter and a guy who spreads the floor more, and tries to get out in transition and shoot, I wouldn't want to play on a team that just [has the ball] stay in the guard's hands or goes to the bigs and they score inside all the time. I'd rather be on a team that spreads the floor, moves the ball well and shoots the ball a lot."

One of the best long-range snipers in his class, Agarwal should look to have plenty of opportunities to light the ball fly playing alongside five-star point forward and McDonald's All-American Harrison Ingram and four-star guard Isa Silva next season.

At the end of the day, it's also about development Agarwal told The American Bazaar. While playing Division I basketball was a goal of his, the 6'6 wing has his sights set on the NBA in the future.

"I know I'm not an NBA athlete right now, so college at the end of the day is gonna have to take me to that point where I want to be and so the development and how they train, not just team wise, but personally is gonna be huge."



"And I have decided to go with my dream school, Stanford University", said Indian American high school basketball phenom Ryan Agarwal

BAPS Charities organized a COVID-19 vaccination drive in Melville



Hon. Steve Stern Assemblyman (District: 10), Suffolk county executive Hon. Steve Bellone, Medical Staff from Stony Brook University Hospital with Ginit Patel a Volunteer of BAPS Charities at Covid-19 Vaccination Drive 03/05/2021



MELVILLE, NY (TIP): As the country takes steps towards distributing COVID vaccines to the population, many communities throughout the United States are either uninformed or misinformed about the process and effectiveness of being vaccinated.

BAPS Charities organized a COVID-19 vaccination drive in Melville, New York on March 5, 2021, in collaboration with the State of New York COVID-19 Task Force and Stony Brook University Hospital benefitting 240 participants.

While the hospital staff handled the registration of individuals, administration of the vaccination and post-vaccination care, BAPS Charities played an essential role in ensuring that the vaccine's beneficiaries had a safe and smooth experience. In particular, the volunteers assisted in providing safe flow and translation services. On average, the onsite



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition presented by Thomas Suozzi, Member of Congress for hosting a pop-up site for Covid-19 Vaccination. 3/5/2021

process lasted less than 30 minutes.

Before the vaccination, BAPS Charities provided

education by a grassroots telephone campaign and through local media on the vaccination's necessity and safety.

Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive, said, "BAPS Charities is doing is an important aspect of the process of vaccination. Through such vaccination sites, we are reaching parts of the community that may not be getting access."

Members of US Representative Thomas Suozzi's office presented a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition on behalf of the Congressman to BAPS Charities for hosting the vaccination drive. New York State Assemblyman Steven H. Stern (10th Dist.) and Chad A. Lupinacci, Town Supervisor for Huntington Township, visited the vaccination drive and expressed their appreciation and gratitude on behalf of their constituents.

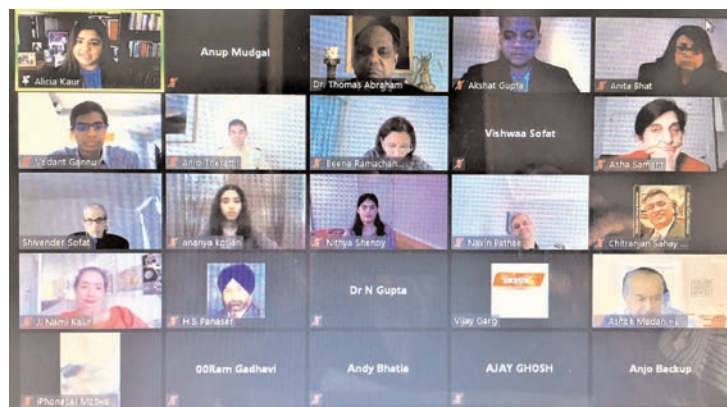


Shanti Bhavan to launch High School Chapter program in the US

NEW YORK (TIP): The Shanti Bhavan Children's Program has decided to launch a High School Chapter program in the US in view of the recent considerable interest from students wishing to bring about social change by furthering their involvement with Shanti Bhavan. By establishing student chapters on campuses across the United States, young people can create change in their own communities while helping Shanti Bhavan's students create change in theirs. Through these chapters, students will build leadership and service skills by spearheading discussions, organizing fundraisers, and spreading awareness of Shanti Bhavan's mission.

If you know of a great student interested in getting involved, email us at subha@shantibhavanchildren.org

GOPIO Organizes 1st Ever Webinar Session "India's Outreach to the Diaspora - Youth Perspective"



Part of the participants at the GOPIO Youth Session



Ambassador Anup Mudgal and GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham with selected youth presenters.
Top row: from L. to R. Amb. Anup Mudgal, Dr. Abraham, Akshat Gupta;
Middle row: from L. to R. Anjo Therattil, Abhi Parikh, Ananya Kotiyar;
Bottom row, from L. to R. Vedant Gannu, Nithya Shenoy and Alicia Kaur

STAMFORD, CT (TIP): As the youth-led initiatives and their success stories around the world have shown, collective action from young people is already changing things for the



Top: Amb. Anup Mudgal and Dr. Thomas Abraham; Bottom Dr. Beena Ramchandran

better. Young people are the HOPE for the future as they are creative and full of energy. Identifying youth leaders and supporting them in their efforts to be the leaders who could be a critical link between the government of India and the immigrant youth who are spread around the world.

With the objective of providing a youth forum that will provide a platform for the Diaspora youth to help amplifying youth actions that will help create change in approach and programs by the Government of India, GOPIO International organized a virtual session on "India's Outreach to Diaspora-Youth Perspective" on Sunday, March 7th, 2021. Attended by youth and senior leaders of the Diaspora from around the world, the event provided the participants a rare view into the youth and their perspectives on how the Diaspora youth power can be utilized creatively for the benefit of India and the world.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Forum organized the Tenth Outstanding Women's Achievements Awards Gala

Dr. Nirmal Kaur Khurana, Dr. Angelish Kumar, Laura Curran, Jennifer Rajkumar, Roopa Patel awarded

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): IAF organized the tenth edition of Outstanding Women's Achievements Awards Gala virtually on March 6.

Supervisor of Town of Oyster Bay Joseph Saladino, New York State Assemblywoman Jennifer Raj Kumar, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Bobby Kumar Kalotee, Founding Member of IAF, and community leaders joined in the ZOOM call.

IAF (Indian American Forum) led by Indu Jaiswal, known for her strong commitment and dedication to the community cause, was the organizing force behind the gala.

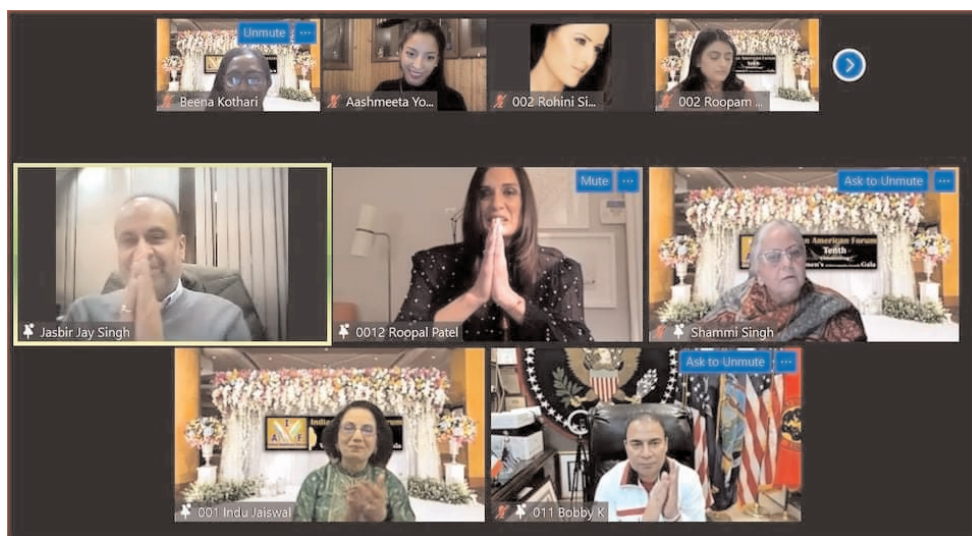
Well known community leader Shammi Singh was the Chairperson of the Gala. Welcoming the guests to the event, she congratulated the honorees and praised their efforts in achieving the high level of success.

National anthem of America and India were sung by Gurbani Kaur Sethi and Roopam Maini, respectively. Aashmeeta Yogiraj Sandhu mastered ceremonies.

Ganesh Vandana sung by Vandana Jauhar, Dance performances by students of Nartan Rang Dance Academy and Students from Satya Narayan School, Vocal performances by Pallavi, Jyoti Gupta and Kul Bhushan Sharma enthralled the audience.

Chambir Kaur Sethi, Roopam Maini, Inesha Singh, Rohini Singh and Dr Meena Jaiswal coordinated a brief Q&A session with the honorees discussing and emphasizing their accomplishments.

Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino congratulated the honorees and acknowledged the efforts of IAF Team. Five distinguished women who had excelled in their profession and community services were presented with Outstanding Women's achievements Awards



training at NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S LANGON MEDICAL CENTER. Dr Kumar has handled women's need with cutting edge technology very successfully for over a decade enhancing the quality of care for busy New York City women who want to stay fit and make most of their lives. Dr. Kumar serves on the Executive Boards of Springboard Enterprises, USA and Human Care Charitable Trust a medical facility in New Delhi, India

LAURA CURRAN A very successful NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE serving the sixth richest county of America, abutting New York City, with Gold Coast of America, she opened the gates of opportunity to many on Long Island and handled the Pandemic specter very ably to control it and is bringing the thriving economy back to Long Island.

JENNIFER RAJKUMAR A dynamic political leader and first Indian American Lady to get elected as ASSEMBLY WOMAN OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY in the thirty-eight district to lead the well-known State of New York with a thriving population of over twenty million. We wish her good luck

MS ROOPAL PATEL A glamorous leader in the fashion world of New York City where she leads as SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT in the prestigious SAKS FIFTH AVENUE, bringing a touch of beauty and elegance to the lives of eight million New York City dwellers and beyond.

Also, Citations of Appreciations were presented to Dr Sanjana Jon and Ms Brahashitha Gupta for their community services.

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran was all praise for the efforts of Indian American Forum and Indian American Community. She congratulated the honorees and stressed the importance of role women are playing in this world.

Citations on behalf of Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, New York State Senator Kevin Thomas were presented to the Honorees

Dr NIRMAL KUMAR KHURANA, MD.MBA. F.A.A. P A very well well-known pediatrician of Long Island, who not only treated children over half a century to maintain their robust health but also trained an army of doctors on Long Island Hospitals.: Mercy, South Nassau, Hempstead General Etc. A very successful entrepreneur too who along with her husband Dr ISH KUMAR, a neurosurgeon, attained successes in many enterprises in America and founded a large Hospital in India facility with first class medical

technologies which is also affiliated with a medical college in New Delhi, India, to meet the health care challenges of burgeoning population and train an army of medical doctors, to meet future needs. Both are known for their philanthropic work over several decades that served various causes of humanity.

DR ANGELISH KUMAR MD, NCMP, AOA A young dynamic diplomat of the American Board of Urology, who is affiliated with Mount Sinai Hospital. She is also the founder of Women's Orology, New York, New York. She got



AS I SEE IT

Boris, beware the Ides of March!

BY PRABHU DAYAL

It is indeed a cause of some concern that some mischievous, anti-India elements in the UK have an unambiguous agenda of pushing their country's relationship with India on a downward spiral. These include Khalistan supporters and Kashmiri activists who have the backing of Pakistan's ISI. A series of unfortunate developments engineered by such elements have been threatening to derail the bilateral relationship.

On the Ides of March (15th March), India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made a strong statement in the Indian Parliament which set the tone for the ensuing period of Indo-UK relations. Jaishankar's statement came after a question about racism in the UK by an MP Ashwini Vaishnaw who alleged that Rashmi Samant, a student from Karnataka and the former president-elect of the Oxford University Student Union, was "cyberbullied to the point that she had to resign (from the post)." Jaishankar said in his reply: "As the land of Mahatma Gandhi, we can never ever turn our eyes away from racism wherever it is. Particularly so when it is in a country where we have such a large diaspora."

Through this statement, the Indian government sent out a message that if the British parliament can debate India's internal affairs, so can the Indian parliament debate the internal affairs of Britain. Thus, the clear message sent by New Delhi to London is that the trend being witnessed in Britain to interfere in India's internal affairs must be brought to an end or else it will adversely affect the growth of bilateral ties.

It is indeed a cause of some concern that some mischievous, anti-India elements in the UK have an unambiguous



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had a taste of Jaishankar plain speak on March 15 when Indian External Affairs Minister said: "As the land of Mahatma Gandhi, we can never ever turn our eyes away from racism wherever it is. Particularly so when it is in a country where we have such a large diaspora."

agenda of pushing their country's relationship with India on a downward spiral. These include Khalistan supporters and Kashmiri activists who have the backing of Pakistan's ISI. A series of unfortunate developments engineered by such elements have been threatening to derail the bilateral relationship.

A quick review of recent events is needed to put matters in the correct perspective. Tension has slowly built up between some British political groups and the Indian Government in regard to the farmers protests in India. When British PM Boris Johnson was slated to come to India in January this year as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day celebrations, more than a hundred members of the British Parliament had signed a letter asking him to raise the concerns of India's protesting farmers in his discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as also the "brute force" employed against them. However, Johnson had to cancel his visit due to the surge in the Coronavirus cases in the UK.

Later, as a follow up of a petition which was started by a UK Sikh activist Gurch Singh and signed by more than 1 lakh persons, the House of Commons had assigned 90 minutes for a debate on March 8, 2021 on matters relating to the farmers' protests in India. During this debate, several MPs from the Liberal Democrats, Labour Party and the Scottish National Party expressed concern about the safety of the farmers protesting against the agricultural laws on Delhi's borders and the targeting of journalists covering the agitation. They



made adverse comments against India over press freedom, freedom of speech and domestic values.

The Indian High Commission in London issued a strong statement against these British Parliamentarians over their comments. The High Commission said that it would "normally refrain from commenting on an internal discussion involving a small group of Parliamentarians in a limited quorum. However, when aspersions are cast against India by anyone, there's a need to set the record straight."

To further underline India's displeasure, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla summoned the British High Commissioner and conveyed strong opposition to the unwarranted and tendentious discussion on India's agricultural reforms in the British Parliament. The Foreign Secretary made it clear that this represented a gross interference in the politics of another democratic country. He advised that the British MPs should refrain from practicing vote bank politics by misrepresenting events, especially in relation to another fellow democracy.

Thus Jaishankar's 'Ides of March' statement in Parliament was a firm signal that the demarche made recently by the Foreign Secretary with the UK high commissioner last week was more than just a passing phenomenon. However, Jaishankar went on to say during the very same statement that "as a friend of the UK, we also have concerns about its reputational impact," adding "What I do want to say is that we have strong ties with the UK (and) we will take

- India's External Affairs Ministers S Jaishankar made a strong statement in the Parliament that set the tone for the ensuing period of Indo-UK relations
- Jaishankar's statement came after a question about racism in the UK by an MP Ashwini Vaishnaw
- Vaishnaw alleged that an Indian student and former president-elect of the Oxford University Student Union was "cyberbullied"

up such matters with great candor when required." The use of the expressions 'a friend of the UK' and 'strong ties with the UK' indicates that having made known his displeasure, he perhaps signaled the Indian Government's willingness to put the relationship back on track.

Notably, within a few hours of making his statement in Parliament yesterday, Minister Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla held talks covering bilateral ties and global cooperation with Lord Tariq Ahmad, the visiting UK Minister of State for South Asia. The talks assume a great deal of significance in view of the fact that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India at the end of next month in what will be his first major international trip after Britain's exit from the European Union and will be part of his efforts to boost the UK's opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region.

It is a truism that in diplomacy, overcoming the main threats to national interests must always override other concerns. India's national interests are threatened by serious challenges such as the ongoing stand-off with China, the unending tension with Pakistan and the Covid-19 pandemic with its resultant slowing-down of the economy. No doubt, at this critical juncture, India can ill-afford a deterioration in its relationship with the UK, but the latter must also realize that the reverse is equally true. Hopefully, the combination of tough posturing and deft diplomacy by India will perhaps be able to put things back on track.

*(The author is a retired Indian diplomat)
(Courtesy OPOYI)*

LETTER TO EDITOR

COVID-19 AND 2021

Dear Editor,

A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across the world. Throughout human history there have been a number of pandemics of disease, such as smallpox and tuberculosis, and the most fatal pandemic in recorded history was the black death, also known as the plague. The plague killed over 75 million people in the 14th century.

History has the nasty habit of repeating itself. Our longevity in the present century is mainly due to the successes of public health. The most scientific and technological advances have added only 6 to 8 years to our life. Such is the paramount importance of public health, that even in the era of exponential scientific and bioengineering advancements, the impact of basic health protections from the 1900s cannot be underestimated. Let us recollect

Charles Edward Winslow's quote from 1842, "The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical and mental health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene... will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health." Obviously, we missed many of these fundamentals during our present epidemic.

Concern for future pandemics includes antibiotic resistant microorganisms called "super bugs" and may contribute to the reemergence of diseases that were thought to be under control. A tuberculosis pandemic???

One of my very religious Indian patients asked me recently, "Dr. Raju, so many people died so sadly, is it their karma?" I said instantaneously "Some others failed their Dharma, and these people suffered their karma".

Dr. V.K. Raju
Morgantown, WV
vkraju@comcast.net

How America's Big Ag swallowed the family farms



BY CHRIS MCGREAL

"This is an eye opener for the majority of India's middle class who are being fed the narrative that 'Big Ag' is the panacea for Indian farmers difficult situation, and especially for small farmers. I distinctly remember late Arun Jaitley had argued against Congress initiative bring in corporate investment to farming by quoting American farmers' plight! Why are we still so adamant to bring in the new farm laws?"



Dave Makkar

Did monopoly power reduce food prices?

In the past 40 years, average food prices in America have shot up by more than 200%, while the earnings of the bottom 90% have increased by less than 25%.

Joe Maxwell, who leads a campaign group called Family Farm Action, told us about entrenched rural poverty, child hunger, and food-insecure homes. Not what you'd expect to hear about the most powerful nation. Today, rural America feels abandoned, its dignity stripped away. As we drove home, one thing had become clear to us: far from being a panacea, the opening up of US agriculture, the elimination of MSP-like parity schemes, and the rise of contract farming has been a lose-lose proposition for everybody other than Big Ag.

India had better learn from American experience.

Dave Makkar

"Over time, it has extracted wealth and power from communities. We can see how that has impacted rural main streets. You can see the boarded-up storefronts. You can see the lack of economic opportunity."



An abandoned farmhouse with graffiti on the front. Across the state, farmhouses where generations grew up lie abandoned. - Photo / Courtesy Scott Morgan/The Observer

When the vast expanse of rural Iowa was carved up for settlers in the 19th century, it was often divided into 160-acre lots. Four farms made a square mile, with a crisscross of dead-straight roads marking the boundaries like a sprawling chess board.

Within each square, generations of families tended pigs and cattle, grew oats and raised children, with the sons most likely to take over the farm. That is how Barb Kalbach saw the future when she left her family's land to marry and begin farming with her new husband, Jim, 47 years ago.

"When we very first were married, we had cattle and calves," she says. "We raised hogs from farrow to finish, and we had corn, beans, hay and oats. So did everyone around us."

Corporate agriculture evolved to take control of the entire production line from "farm to fork", from the genetics of breeding to wholesalers in the US or far east. As factory farms spread, their demands dictated the workings of slaughterhouses. Smaller abattoirs, which offered choice and competitive prices to family farmers, disappeared, to be replaced by huge operations that were further away and imposed lower prices on small-scale breeders such as the Kalbachs.

Half a century later, Kalbach surveys the destruction within the section of chessboard she shared with other farms near Dexter in southwestern Iowa. Barb and Jim are the last family still working the land, after their neighbors were picked off by waves of collapsing commodity prices and the rise of factory farming. With that came a vast transfer in wealth as farm profits funneled into corporations or the diminishing number of families that own an increasing share of the land. Rural communities have been hollowed out.

And while the Kalbachs have hung on to their farm, they long ago abandoned livestock and mixed arable farming for the only thing they can make money at any more - growing corn and soya beans to sell to corporate buyers as feed for animals crammed by the thousands into the huge semi-automated sheds that now dominate farming, and the landscape, in large parts of Iowa.

Kalbach comes from five generations of farmers and suspects she may be the last. As she drives the roads around her farmhouse, she ticks off the disappearances.

"That's the Shoemiths' place," she said. "Two years ago, it had cattle, pigs and pasture."

Now the land is rented out and is all given over to corn. A little further along, the Watts family's farmhouse stands empty, its roof falling in. There are a few relics of the old farm at the place that used to be owned by the Williamses - an abandoned hen house and a bit of machinery - but the land is all corn and soya beans. The Denning house, on Walnut Avenue, was bulldozed after the land was sold and rolled into a bigger operation.

It's a story replicated across America's Midwest, with the rapid expansion of farming methods at the heart of the row over US attempts to erode Britain's food standards and lever open access to the UK market as part of a post-Brexit trade deal. Last weekend, the US ambassador to Britain, Woody Johnson, appealed to the UK to embrace US farming, arguing that those who warned against practices such as washing chicken in chlorine had been "deployed" to cast it "in the worst possible light".

His message was greeted with anger by campaigners. Nick Dearden of Global Justice Now warned: "It is really an animal welfare issue here. If UK farmers want to compete against American imports, they will have to lower their standards or go out of business." His words would come as no surprise to Rosemary Partridge, who farms in Sac County, western Iowa. She grew up on an Iowa family farm and then moved with her husband in the late 1970s to raise pigs and grow crops.

"In the past 20 years, where I am, independent hog farming just silently disappeared as the corporates came in," says Partridge. "I live on a hilltop. I can see seven farm families, people my kids went to school with. They're all gone now. My county has 11 small towns, and it's almost like I could look back in slow motion and just see the businesses change and disappear. We've become poorer. Our communities are basically shattered and in more than just an economic way - in a social way too."

This collapse has in good part been driven by the rise of concentrated animal feeding operations, or Cafos. In these industrial farming units, pigs, cows and chickens are crammed by the thousand into rows of barns. Many units are semi-automated, with feeding run by computer and the animals watched by video, with periodic visits by workers who drive between several operations.

"That's how I end up with 40,000 hogs around me," says Partridge. Cafos account for only a small proportion of America's 2 million farms, but they dominate animal production and have an outsize influence on crop growing, particularly in the Midwest. By one calculation, the US has around 250,000 factory farms of one kind or another. They have their roots in the 1930s, with the mechanization of pig slaughterhouses. By the 1950s, chickens were routinely packed

CONTD ON PAGE 10

CONTD FROM PAGE 9

How America's Big Ag swallowed the family farms

into huge sheds, in appalling conditions.

In the early 1970s, US agriculture secretary Earl Butz pushed the idea of large-scale farming with the mantra "get big or get out". He wanted to see farmers embrace what he regarded as a more efficient strategy of growing commodity crops, such as corn and soya beans. Some farmers invested heavily in buying land and new machinery to increase production - taking on large amounts of debt to do so.

A decade later, the farm crisis hit as overproduction, the US grain embargo against the Soviet Union and high interest rates dramatically drove up costs and debt for family farms. Land prices collapsed and foreclosures escalated.

"Every blow to independent farming made it more of an opportunity for large corporations to come in," said Partridge.

In 1990, small and medium-sized farms accounted for nearly half of all agricultural production in the US. Now it is less than a quarter.

As the medium-sized family farms retreated, the businesses they helped support disappeared. Local seed and equipment suppliers shut up shop because corporations went straight to wholesalers or manufacturers. Demand for local vets collapsed. As those businesses packed up and left, communities shrank. Shops, restaurants and doctors' surgeries closed. People found they had to drive for an hour or more for medical treatment. Towns and counties began to share ambulances.

Corporate agriculture evolved to take control of the entire production line from "farm to fork", from the genetics of breeding to wholesalers in the US or far east. As factory farms spread, their demands dictated the workings of slaughterhouses. Smaller abattoirs, which offered choice and competitive prices to family farmers, disappeared, to be replaced by huge operations that were further away and imposed lower prices on small-scale breeders such as the Kalbachs.

"By the time you paid to transport them the extra distance, and they were paying you less than they paid the corporations because you weren't bringing the big numbers, there was really no money in it," says Kalbach.

The buying power of the Cafos also helps drive farmers' decisions on which crops to grow. With no livestock, the Kalbachs were forced into growing corn and soya beans to sell to factory farms as animal feed or to corporations for ethanol.

Iowa is not alone. Missouri, to the south, had 23,000 independent pig farmers in 1985. Today it has just over 2,000. The number of independent cattle farms has fallen by 40% over the same period.

Tim Gibbons of Missouri Rural Crisis Center, a support group for family farmers set up during the 1980s farm crisis, says the cycle of economic shocks has blended with government policies to create a "monopolization of the livestock industry, where a few multinational corporations control a vast majority of the livestock".

Gibbons explains: "They are vertically integrated, from animal genetics to grocery store. What they charge isn't based upon what it costs to produce, and it's not based on supply and demand, because they know what they need to make a profit. What they have done, through government support and taxpayer support, is to intentionally overproduce so that the price stays low, sometimes below the cost of production. That kicks their competition out of the market. Then they become the only player in town.

"Over time, it has extracted wealth and power from communities. We can see how that has impacted rural main streets. You can see the boarded-up storefronts. You can see the lack of economic opportunity."

Gibbons says that corporations game the system by obtaining low-interest, federally guaranteed loans to build Cafos that then overproduce. But they know the government will buy up the surplus to stabilize prices.

"The system has been set up for the benefit of the factory farm corporations and their shareholders at the expense of family farmers, the real people, our environment, our food system," he adds.



Semi automated pig barns now dominate large parts of rural Iowa -

Photo / Courtesy Scott Morgan/The Observer

"The thing that is really pervasive about it is that they control the rules of the game because they control the democratic process. It's a blueprint. We're paying for our own demise.

"It would be a different argument if it was just based upon inevitability or based on competition. But it's not based upon competition: it's based upon squelching competition."

There are about 70 million pigs in the US at any time, most of them destined for the dinner plate. But one in 10 are

breeding sows, and the majority of those are in Cafos. The biggest pig farmer in the country is Virginia-based Smithfield Foods, which has nearly a million sows in the US (and more in Mexico and eastern Europe). Iowa Select Farms has one of the fastest-growing Cafo operations in the country, with 800 farms spread through half of the counties in Iowa.

Yet few of the economic benefits spill down to the communities around them. Workers are often poorly paid; many are bussed in. That they often include immigrants has sharpened the criticism from men like Nick Schutt, who used to work at Iowa Select, driving pigs in livestock trucks and handling sows. He says he earned \$23,000 a year for 12-hour days and no overtime.

"These companies claim they're creating all these jobs, but who's coming? Not people with families who create communities."

Schutt lives in Williams, a small town in central Iowa, which is surrounded by Cafos and currently fighting to keep a big new one out, saying factory farms pollute the environment and depress property values. When the wind blows in the wrong direction, the stench from huge lakes of pig manure wafts across the town.

The high school Nick Schutt attended has closed. His daughter was in the last class to graduate. As Williams declined, the only doctor shut his clinic and left town. Schutt's mother used to own a restaurant: that closed along with the town's three grocery stores.

In Blairsburg, seven miles away, pretty

In 2017, its former owner, Jack DeCoster, went to prison, along with his son Peter, over a 2010 salmonella outbreak that made tens of thousands sick, left some with permanent injuries and prompted the recall of more than half a billion eggs shipped from Iowa factory farms. Quality Egg pleaded guilty to selling eggs with false expiry dates and to bribing an agriculture department inspector to approve the sale.

DeCoster had a long history of paying fines worth millions of dollars for animal cruelty, falsifying records, swindling contractors and polluting - without much impact on the way he did business. He was found to have made immigrant workers, many of them in the US illegally, live and work in squalid and unsafe conditions. The company paid \$1.5m to settle allegations that supervisors at Iowa plants raped female workers.

DeCoster is an extreme case, but around Iowa he's seen as emblematic of how the industry uses its money and influence to impose its will, including changing planning and environmental regulations.

Much of this is the result of agricultural corporations pouring millions into lobbying state governments. But Gibbons says Washington also bears some responsibility. He accuses President Barack Obama's administration of failing to deliver on promised reforms that would have benefited smaller farmers. It is this, he says, that damaged Obama's standing among farmers and drove up their support for Donald Trump.

Barb Kalbach is not optimistic about the future. Her son will not be taking over the farm. She hopes the land will stay in the family for at least another generation, but expects it to be rented out and subsumed into some larger operation.

But Kalbach fears something bigger than the loss of her own farm. Farmers are ageing and their children either have little interest in working the land or cannot afford the sophisticated equipment needed to compete with corporations.

"Investors buy the land, and they have tractors and combines that you can run by computer," she said. "They'll hire somebody to sit in a little office somewhere and run that stuff off the computer and farm the land that way. Now what you've done is you have lost the innate knowledge of how to grow food and raise animals. You've lost a whole generation of it, probably two. Now we are going to rely on a few corporations to decide who is going to eat and who isn't. We're one generation away from that picture right now." In Williams, Schutt says he's seeing a community of owners becoming workers: "It's going to be like Russia with serfs. If you want to work on a farm, you'll have to work for them. We'll give you a job, but you're going to be working on our terms. We control everything. Small farms can't survive."

Kalbach agrees. "I think they're done," she said.

(The article authored by Chris McGreal was first published in *The Guardian* on March 9, 2019. It has been republished with the addition of a comment of Dave Makkar)

Why I Dare to Dream Big

BY MEISHA PORTER

This week, I began leading the nation's largest public school system. A school system that serves more than 1 million students-including, many years ago, me!

I am both excited and honored to take on this role. Not only because I am a New Yorker born and bred, but because education is in my blood. Both my mom and auntie were teachers and between them have 40 years of changing young people's lives. I became a New York City public school educator because of them, and the amazing teachers I had as a student myself-like Ms. Pearlman, my first grade teacher at P.S. 215, and Mrs. Hulak, Mr. Garrison, and Mr. McCarthy, and my great instructors at Queens Vocational and Technical High School where I studied plumbing.

Over the course of 20 incredible years, I worked as an English teacher, an assistant principal, and then principal. More recently, I served our school communities as a superintendent and Bronx executive superintendent.

But I have to admit, never did I imagine that a youth activist from the Highbridge section of the Bronx would rise to become the first Black woman to serve as Schools Chancellor. This is a milestone, not just for me, but for every child who feels "different" but dares to dream big.

I don't come into this role wearing rose-colored glasses. I know how challenging the last year has been for all of us. I know just how much our



Meisha Porter, New York City Schools Chancellor

students, families, teachers, school staff, and principals, have sacrificed and suffered. But I also see signs of renewal as more vaccines become available and more sectors of our great city reopen.

I have that same sense of optimism about our schools. As I prepare to welcome our high school students back next week, I want to share my top three priorities for this school year and beyond:

First and foremost, I want to give every student the option to go back into school buildings five days a week starting this fall. I want New Yorkers to know that our buildings are safe and

that our schools are ready. We've put all the recommended safety and health measures in place, and our schools are one of the safest places in the city to be. I hope to see everyone back full-time come September.

Second, I want to make sure that what we teach reflects students' lived experiences, including any trauma related to this past year. We are coming back from the hardest year of our lives.

We want all our students to see themselves in their curriculum, their classrooms, and their schools. We will have social-emotional supports in place as well, not only for our students but also for our staff. We are aware that many people will be returning to schools where they've lost somebody. They may walk past an office that was once occupied by someone else. They may think about a paraprofessional who supported them or a kitchen worker who gave them an extra lunch every day. So, we will have a dual-pronged approach, addressing both academics and social-emotional learning.

Third, I want to take the lessons we learned during the pandemic into the next school year. As an example, the pandemic forced us to harness technology to create a 21st-century learning experience and we've delivered nearly half a million devices into students' hands. At the same time, it showed us that human interaction is critical; nothing replaces the experience between a kid and a teacher in a classroom. So, I want to bring these two worlds together, using technology to

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address students' individual needs-both for those learning full-time in classrooms and those who may wish to continue learning remotely.

To our families, I want to assure you that this will be a collaborative effort, with many opportunities for us to meet and talk. I promise to include your voices and expertise as we finish out this school year and plan for the next.

To our students, as your Chancellor I will continue to dream big on your behalf, and I invite you to dream and achieve alongside me. Lean into your education, dream beyond your wildest imagination-and know that there are no limits, only endless possibilities.

Indian Americans divided, polarization increasing: Survey

The survey - "How Do Indian Americans View India?" - was conducted in collaboration between the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Johns Hopkins-SAIS and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Indian diaspora in the United States is deeply divided over the direction India is headed, according to a first-of-its-kind survey of Indian Americans that was released early this month.

It also shows that religious polarization is increasing among Indian Americans, one of the authors of the survey told *indica News*.

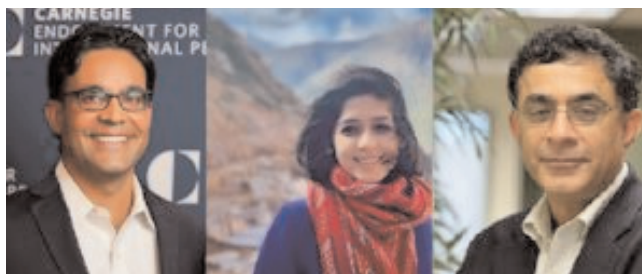
The survey - "How Do Indian Americans View India?" - was conducted in collaboration between the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Johns Hopkins-SAIS and the University of Pennsylvania.

It is authored by University of Pennsylvania professor Sumitra Badrinathan, Devesh Kapur of Johns Hopkins-SAIS, and Milan Vaishnav, director and senior fellow, South Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Vaishnav told *indica News* that they fielded a nationwide survey in September 2020 in partnership with YouGov. That survey had three modules: one on US politics, one on Indian domestic affairs, and one on Indian-American social identity and social relations.

"Our plan is to release one report on each," Vaishnav said. "We hope to publish our third and final report of this series in May 2021."

Asked what prompted the survey, Vaishnav said: "There have been surveys of Americans about India



(L to R) Milan Vaishnav, Sumitra Badrinathan and Devesh Kapur, the survey report authors

and surveys of Indians about America but there have not been, to our knowledge, surveys of Indian Americans about India.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made outreach to the diaspora a critical element of his foreign policy, but we know very little about how Indian Americans view their ancestral homeland. So that really was the inspiration," he added.

The survey had questions on how Indians in America regard India, how do they remain connected to developments there, what are their attitudes toward Indian politics and changes underway in their ancestral homeland, and what role, if any, do they envision for the US in engaging with India.

Vaishnav said they interviewed 1,200 Indian Americans across the country, ages 18 and older, and wanted to make sure that the sample contained both US citizens and non-citizens given that the latter constitute a significant share of the overall diaspora population.

The survey shows that 44 percent of US-born Indian Americans believe the country is on the wrong track, compared to 36 percent of foreign-born Indian Americans. Roughly 25 percent of respondents expressed no opinion.

However, many Indian Americans hold 'relatively more conservative' views on Indian policies - such as those affecting protection of religious minorities, immigration, and affirmative action.

As an example, 90 percent of respondents supported treating members of all faiths equally. Of these, 60 percent expressed opposition to the 'Muslim travel ban' imposed by Donald Trump but only 49 percent opposed the Indian government's controversial citizenship law.

Similarly, 69 percent supported the idea of more liberal immigration policies in the US and 55 percent supported less stringent policies. However, only 45 percent indicated they were opposed to the controversial all-India National Register of Citizens exercise proposed by the Indian government.

The report shows 18 percent believed government corruption to be India's most pressing challenge, followed by 15 percent who listed the economy as their area of concern. Another 10 percent of respondents cited religious majoritarianism as the country's most important challenge.

Indian Americans are also divided about US action to strengthen India's military as a check against China, which only 7 percent of respondents saw as the top challenge facing the Narendra Modi government today.

CONTD ON PAGE 42

The Indian Panorama is grateful to Dr. V.K. Raju and the Eye Foundation of America

BY I.S. SALUJA

The Indian Panorama is grateful to Dr. V.K. Raju, President of the Eye Foundation of America and the board of directors of the Eye Foundation of America for their collaboration in publishing the special edition to pay tribute to Martyrs of India on the Martyrs Day.

We take this opportunity to briefly introduce the eminent eye surgeon and a great philanthropist.

VK Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS
Ellis Island Award Nominee 2019
Ophthalmologist, Regional Eye Associates
President and Founder, Eye Foundation of America
President and Founder, Goutami Eye Institute
Clinical Professor, West Virginia University
Director, International Ocular Surface Society
Adjunct Professor, GSL Medical School

Dr. VK Raju received his medical degree from Andhra University, India and Residency and Fellowship in UK. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American college of Surgeons.

V.K.Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS is a clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University, WV, USA and practicing ophthalmologist at Regional Eye in Morgantown, WV, USA. In 1977, work began on what is now known as the Eye Foundation of America. With Dr. Raju's guidance, the Eye Foundation of America's work has grown. To date, the Eye Foundation of America has performed over 3 million vision screenings in rural areas of over 30 countries. Through the Eye Foundation of America, over 350,000 sight-saving surgeries have been performed at no cost. Over 700 medical professionals, including many residents and ophthalmologists, have been trained to identify and treat eye diseases.

Dr. Raju remains highly involved as the Founder and President of the Eye Foundation of America to this day, returning to India every few months to participate in educational programs, vision screening camps, and surgeries.

His insatiable drive to improve the lives of others has also resulted in the recent culmination of another lifelong goal. The construction of another eye hospital is underway with wings devoted to specialties including

ocular oncology, pediatric ophthalmology, and the retinopathy of prematurity, a disease effecting premature babies.

Dr. VK Raju has received awards from American Academy of Ophthalmology four times for his teaching, research and international service. A partial list of awards include Doctor Nathan Davis International award of Excellence in Medicine by American Medical Association Foundation, Lifetime Achievement Award from WV State Medical Association, the President's Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama, Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman award for Achievement in Medicine, House of Lords, London. He also received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Achievement Award from West Virginia University. He was also inducted into Medical Missions Hall of Fame by University of Toledo and Medscape placed him among the best doctors in America.

For over 40 years, Dr. Raju has dedicated himself to eliminating avoidable blindness in children and adults through outreach programs, surgeries, and educational efforts. V. K. Raju has published over 100 scientific articles, 17 book chapters, and 2 books. Still, he will tell you, "My work is only beginning."

Only this morning, Dr. Raju shared with me two quotes. Now these quotes are a pointer to his mind.

"Of all the senses vision is the most precious.
(SARVENDRIYANAM NAYANAM PRADHANAM- in Sanskrit.

80% of our learning is through vision.
Join us in giving a gift of vision "

Another now.

"There is nothing new under the sun.

In this world, nothing is more important than children's nutrition and education. If we give them nutrition and education, they will take care of themselves.

Since 1977, Eye foundation of America is striving to do just that.

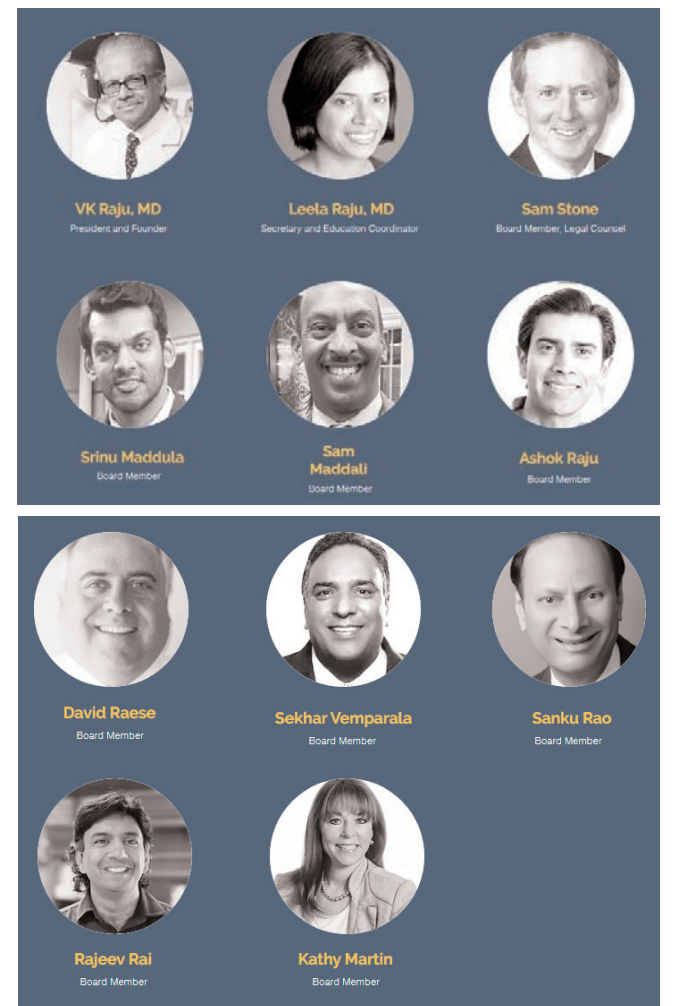
"Be part of that effort".

He often speaks about the colossal work which needs to be done to prevent childhood blindness. He is passionate about his vision of a world without childhood blindness.

Luckily for him, he says, he has been blessed with a

wonderful team who are always there to share his vision and work for its realization.

Let me introduce the readers of The Indian panorama to this great team.



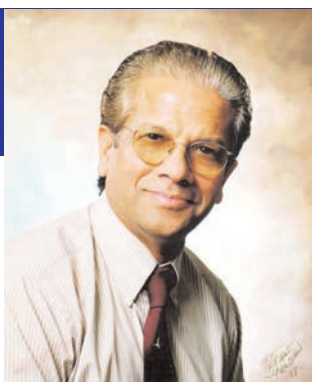
We have no doubt that the vision of Dr. Raju to have a world without childhood blindness will be realized. If human effort could have a world without polio, why can't the world be free from childhood blindness?

We wish you, Dr. Raju and your dedicated team all success.

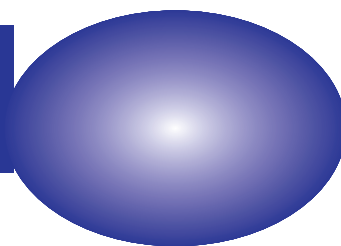


CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE

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

India's Consul General at Chicago launches the first Gandhi King legacy roundtable summit

NAPERVILLE, IL (TIP): The First Gandhi King Legacy Roundtable Summit was organized by the U.S. Congressional Multi Advisory Task Force (MEATF) of Congressman Danny K Davis in cooperation with Metropolitan Asian Family Services (MAFS) on Friday February 26 from 12 noon to 4pm.

Ms. Vasavi Chakka, Commissioner, Naperville Sister Cities Commission moderating the Summit stated that this Summit is being held to Commemorate the Black History Month and Mahatma Gandhi's 73rd Death Anniversary with the theme being, "Challenges of the Behavioral Health Crisis during the COVID pandemic."

Dr. Mrs Santosh Kumar, Founder Executive Director of Metropolitan Asian Family Services welcoming the Roundtable Summit stakeholders said that this is the first time a Gandhi King Roundtable Summit is being held in Illinois State and stressed that the Summit is addressing the important issue of Behavioral Health and how to improve



General of India at Chicago inaugurating the Summit said the greatest testament of the Gandhi King Legacy is the current strong ties between India, the largest democracy and USA, the Oldest democracy, at the highest levels and recalled the role of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership during the COVID pandemic. The supply of Indian made vaccines to several countries recently is yet another glowing

message and philosophy continue to inspire us all, that life of Mahatma Gandhi was very closely followed in the US, referred to the historic visit of Dr. King to India in 1959 and efforts to spread the legacy of these two leaders. He referred to the Gandhi-King Scholarly Initiative Act passed by the US Congress in 2020 that was initiated by late Congressman John Lewis, another iconic figure in the civil rights movement. He

contribution of the Indian American community in helping local communities in several ways during the Covid-19 period."

U. S. Congressman Danny K. Davis's Multi Ethnic Advisory Task Force saluted India's Consul General Amit Kumar for his vision in conceiving this Gandhi King Legacy Summit as a tribute to two great legends. The month of February is officially observed as BLACK HISTORY MONTH throughout United States and Gandhi's 73rd Death Anniversary (Punyatihi /Shaheed Diwas) was on January 30. U.S. Congressman's Multi Ethnic Advisory Task Force presented Consul General Amit Kumar with an Official plaque for his initiative in conceiving this historic epoch making event. A brief video of Martin Luther King Jr speaking on Mahatma Gandhi was screened followed by Dr. Sriram Sonty, eminent Ophthalmologist, the Vice President of The Gandhi Memorial, Chicago eloquently describing the GANDH-KING Connection and its



and increase the Behavioral Health Resources in our communities which is the most effective way to continue the legacy of the legends Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Vijay Prabhakar, Founder Chairman of Congressman Danny K Davis's Multi Ethnic Advisory Task Force in his opening remarks credited India's Consul General at Chicago Amit Kumar for conceiving this historic Summit to honor Gandhi King's Legacy. Dr. Vijay Prabhakar, a public health expert said that America will face the gravest challenge from the behavioral health crisis in 2030 and hence all concerned citizens, elected officials, behavioral healthcare providers and other stakeholders should form a broad framework to work towards seriously addressing the challenges of behavioral health care. www.asianmediavideo.com/user/AsianMediaVideo/videos?view=1&flow=grid

Ambassador Amit Kumar, Consul



General of India at Chicago thanked Representative Danny K Davis, for his strong support to India-US ties, and recalled his initiative to establish the Multi-Ethnic Advisory Task Force a decade ago to empower different ethnic communities in his district. He also acknowledged the exemplary

relevance to the present day.

Consul General of India Amit Kumar along with Consul General of Japan Kenichi Okada at Chicago jointly presented the Gandhi King Legacy Award of Excellence 2021 to Dr. Steve Munsey, Founder, Family Christian Center, Munster, Indiana for his extraordinary leadership to the underserved communities of Northwest Indiana and the City of Chicago during COVID pandemic from June 2020 to present. Dr. Steve Munsey, Author, Pastor, Creative Director, and Producer giving the Dr. Gandhi King Legacy Oration 2021 extolled all the leaders to emulate the virtues of these two great legends by their actions in their day to day lives and implement life transforming programs with purposeful goals. Dr. Munsey spoke about the need to make Behavioral Health Care affordable and accessible to all especially the vulnerable sections of the community now.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi coming back to face law, says Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that fugitive businessmen Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi are "coming back" to India to face the law.

The government is pursuing extradition of Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi from the UK while Mehul Choksi is believed to be in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi all of them are coming back to face the law of this land...One after other everybody is coming back to this country to face the law of this country," Ms Sitharaman said while responding to a discussion on Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in Rajya Sabha.

Vijay Mallya, an accused in bank loan default case of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines, is in the UK since March 2016. He is on bail on an extradition warrant executed three years ago by Scotland Yard on April 18, 2017.

Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, are accused in a scam involving fake guarantees in the name of state-run PNB to secure overseas loans. Both fled India in 2018, before the CBI began probe. Last month, Nirav Modi, the diamond merchant wanted on charges of fraud and money laundering in the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, had lost his legal battle against extradition as a UK judge ruled that he does have a case to answer before the Indian courts.

Stone From Sita Temple in Sri Lanka for Ram Temple in Ayodhya

A stone from Sita Eliya, the place in Sri Lanka where Goddess Sita is believed to have been held as a captive, will be used in the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The stone is expected to be brought to India by Sri Lankan High Commissioner-designate to India Milinda Moragoda.

Sita Eliya has a temple dedicated to Goddess Sita and is said to mark the place where she was held captive by the demon king Ravana and where she regularly prayed to Lord Rama for her rescue.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya in August last year.

Ambani security scare: Two cars allegedly used by suspended Mumbai cop Vaze seized

MUMBAI (TIP): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday, March 18, seized two more luxury cars allegedly used by suspended Mumbai police officer Sachin Vaze, sources said.

A Toyota Land Cruiser Prado was found parked outside Vaze's residence in Saket area of adjoining Thane, an agency official said. A Mercedes car was also seized but it was not clear from where it was picked up.

The total number of vehicles seized has gone up to five, including another Mercedes, a Scorpio and an Innova.

The vehicles were brought to the NIA office at Cumballa Hill on Pedder Road here.

The NIA on Thursday called two policemen, including an aide of Vaze and a senior police inspector, for questioning, sources said.

The NIA arrested Vaze on Saturday night in connection with the security scare outside the south Mumbai residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani.

Under fire over handling of the bomb scare outside Ambani's house, Maharashtra Government on Wednesday shifted Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh to the Home Guard.

Senior IPS officer Hemant Nagrale has replaced Singh as Mumbai police commissioner.

The NIA on Tuesday seized a black Mercedes from the Crawford market area in Mumbai and recovered from it the original number plate of the explosive-laden SUV that was placed outside billionaire Mukesh Ambani's residence 'Antilia' on February 25.

A 27-year-old travel operator said on Wednesday he sold the Mercedes-Benz car in February to a website that deals in



Two cars taken to National Investigation Agency (NIA) office in connection with Sachin vaze case in Mumbai on Thursday, March 18.

used vehicles. He said he did not know Vaze. Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said Singh was transferred after some of his colleagues committed "serious and unforgivable mistakes".

In his first public comments after Singh's transfer, Deshmukh said he was shifted to ensure that the probe into police officer Sachin Vaze episode is conducted "properly and without hindrance".

Deshmukh said the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and the NIA are conducting the probe into the episode "professionally".

He said that action will be taken against whoever is found guilty in the respective probes by the NIA and ATS.

"This is not an administrative transfer (of Singh).

Some things have come to light through the probes conducted by the NIA

and the ATS," Deshmukh said.

"Some of the colleagues of the (former) Mumbai police chief (Singh) committed some serious mistakes. Those are unforgivable mistakes. Hence, he was transferred. Further action will be taken based on the probe report," he added.

Asked about the BJP and the MNS's allegation that political bosses of the officials are not being acted against, Deshmukh said, "The NIA and ATS are conducting the probe professionally. They will definitely find out whoever is guilty." Vaze was arrested by the NIA on March 13 in the probe into recovery of explosives from the SUV. He was later suspended.

Vaze, an "encounter specialist", has also been facing heat in the murder case of Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hiran, who was in possession of that SUV. Hiran was found dead in a creek in Thane district on March 5.

Foreign tourist arrivals will not revive before 2023: Report

NEW DELHI (TIP): Foreign tourist arrivals in India will not touch pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels before 2023, the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) has said, citing the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) March survey that found 80% of visitors do not want to travel due to quarantine rules.

CAPA's preliminary forecast indicates that foreign arrivals will grow to just over 18 million by 2030. It said India is highly dependent on long-haul flights for foreign tourist arrivals. CAPA said such flights are expected to recover more slowly than short-and medium-haul travel. It has estimated 72.0% of people will travel by air for visiting friends and relatives as soon as the pandemic has been contained.

CAPA said Covid-19 has peaked in the UK, US, Canada, China, Malaysia, Australia, which are key sources of foreign tourists to India. It added Covid-19 vaccination rollouts are in initial stages worldwide, except the UK (34.3%) and the US (19.7%). Widespread vaccinations are expected by late 2021 in other countries from where a bulk of tourists come to India, it said.

The IATA survey found 56% of potential travellers will postpone their air travel until the economy stabilises, 66% of them feel that quarantine is not necessary for vaccinated passengers and 81% were ready to travel by air if vaccinated. The survey also found 84% of potential tourists will not travel if there is a chance of quarantine.

"The aviation and tourism industries should ensure the highest levels of strategic determination, commitment and coordination to expedite the recovery of India's inbound



tourism," CAPA said in its report. "Although some travel may resume from winter 2021/22, meaningful recovery is unlikely until winter 2022-23 and pre-Covid volumes will probably not be achieved until winter 2023-24." It added India is a long-haul destination from most of its source markets and a large proportion of travellers are from vulnerable older age groups. "[This] will impact the speed of recovery. Protocols related to health and hygiene, and the quality of civil infrastructure will become the new normal and the industry needs to prepare for this reality." Aviation safety consultant Mohan Ranganathan said foreign tourist arrivals will not revive before 2025. "Tourist's traffic will not commence even after the vaccinations are completed until restrictions imposed by the government are lifted," he said.

Source: HT

BJP announces 157 candidates for West Bengal assembly polls, turncoats rewarded

KOLKATA (TIP): The BJP on Thursday, March 18, announced its list of 157 candidates for the last four phases of assembly election in West Bengal, rewarding around 22 turncoats and fielding party heavyweights Mukul Roy and Rahul Sinha.

The candidate list also features 17 Muslim faces, including women.

The party is facing protests and resignations as many of its aspiring old-timers did not find their names in the list of candidates.

Roy's son Subrangshu, a sitting TMC MLA, state BJP Mahila Morcha president Agnimitra Paul, Bengali film personalities Rudranil Ghosh, Srabanti Chattopadhyay and Parno Mitra were among those given tickets by the saffron party.

Roy, BJP national vice-president and former union minister, is back in the electoral fray after a gap of two decades.

He will contest from the Krishnanagar Uttar seat, which is dominated by the Matua community. He had unsuccessfully contested election on a TMC ticket in 2001.

The BJP, which has emerged as the main opposition in the state, has also fielded sports personalities and a scientist for the high stakes battle in the state.

Despite protests over recruits getting more importance than old-timers in the candidates' list, the party gave nominations to 22 turncoats, including several former TMC MLAs like Arindam Bhattacharya who has been fielded in Jagatdal and Jitendra Tiwari in Pandaveswar.

However, in some cases, the saffron party has not



given nominations to turncoats from their home seats to avoid dissent.

The list also has 19 women candidates, which is more than its previous two lists.

The party continued with its strategy of fielding personalities from different walks of life and sitting MPs.

It named folk artiste Ashim Sarkar from Haringhata assembly seat and scientist Gobhardhan Das from Purbasthali Uttar.

It has fielded its former state unit chief Rahul Sinha, who is yet to taste success in any of the elections he has contested so far, from Habra against the state Food Supplies Minister Jyotipriyo Mullick.

The BJP has nominated party MP Jagannath Sarkar for the Santipur seat.

The party has so far announced names of five sitting MPs, including Union minister Babul Supriyo, as its candidates for the state election.

Nitin Gadkari: Will remove all toll booths within a year, take collections via GPS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The government will remove toll booths across the country within a year and carry out collections through GPS imaging on vehicles instead, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said Thursday, March 18.

"I want to assure the House that within one year all physical toll booths in the country will be removed. It means that toll collection will happen via GPS. The money will be collected based on GPS imaging (on vehicles)," Gadkari said in the Lok Sabha. His announcement came in response to a question raised by BSP's Danish Ali, who complained about toll booths in Ganamukteshwar in Hapur district. Ali said that instead of the norm of toll booths at 60-km intervals on national highways, his constituency has two booths within 40 km.

Gadkari said: "I know in some places there are too many toll booths. Its wrong and unfair. We have decided to get rid of them."

"There used to be lot of theft in this. Our income from toll tax used to be Rs 24,000 crore per year, but during Covid time, it was Rs 10,000 crore lower. But we have implemented FASTag," he said.

The FASTag system, which facilitates electronic payment of fee at toll plazas, was introduced in 2016.

Gadkari said 93 per cent of existing vehicles pay toll using FASTag, but the remaining section had still not adopted it despite having to pay double toll. "It looks like they don't want to leave a record. Now, I have called a police inquiry."

Priyanka takes dig at BJP leaders over 'ripped jeans' remark

NEW DELHI (TIP): Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat had stirred a controversy on Tuesday when he said that due to a lack of values, young people, including women, follow strange fashion trends these days by wearing jeans ripped at the knees.

Congress leader Alka Lamba also attacked the BJP over the remarks, alleging that many leaders have made similar comments against women in the past, and the country is angry as the latest remarks have come from a Chief Minister.

"The Congress strongly condemns this kind of thinking towards women. We demand that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should ask the Uttarakhand Chief Minister to apologise immediately," she said.

Lamba also warned that if Rawat didn't apologise, the BJP will have to replace him as the women of the country will launch an agitation and expose the BJP leaders and their mindset.

"The Congress feels that the women of the country have complete freedom to eat, wear or speak whatever they want according to the Constitution. They will not tolerate any such remarks," she said.

On Tuesday, Rawat had said, "Showing bare knees by wearing ripped jeans just to look like rich kids is the value given now which is just a race towards westernisation when the western world today are following us. Ripped jeans pave the way for societal breakdown and is a bad example for children."

He had also said that youngsters go to the market to buy ripped jeans, and if they do not find one, they cut their jeans using scissors.

India looks forward to upping ties with US in five areas: Envoy

NEW DELHI (TIP): India looks forward to closely working with the new US administration and other stakeholders around five immediate baskets of cooperation, India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu told The Tribune in an interview.

Speaking after the February 18 Quad summit, Sandhu outlined cooperation in healthcare and pharma as the first item on the wish list. This also includes ensuring affordable medicines and vaccines.

Like Covid cooperation, the second area — digital space; information and communication sectors — was also discussed in the Quad under the rubric of emerging technologies. The third is the energy sector, including LNG, renewable and solar, that will help in the fight against climate change. Equally important are advanced partnerships in education and knowledge partnership; and cooperation in strategic and defence areas, including in the Indo-Pacific.

"We look forward to building on the momentum to strengthen our existing partnerships across diverse sectors," he said.

He said industries in both countries were working together to chart out reliable supply chains in next-generation defence technology and to undertake joint R&D, manufacturing, innovation and experimenting in new domains. Both sides can offer a lot to each other in critical and emerging technologies such as AI, big data analytics, robotics, quantum computing, block chain and Internet of things.

"In recent years, we have cemented traditional areas of cooperation, while simultaneously exploring new horizons. Today, there is no area of human activity that the partnership does not touch — from nanotechnology to space and Indo-Pacific to Covid vaccine manufacturing and delivery," he observed. "The visit of US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin to India will enable the two sides to review ongoing cooperation and provide new momentum to our defence ties," he said.

India remained committed to the bilateral trade target of



Taranjit Singh Sandhu

\$500 billion and hopes to re-engage with the US on trade and tariff issues. "In coming days, once senior officials of the Biden administration take their positions, intensive discussions can be expected on trade issues," he added.

Sandhu was hopeful that the brakes on immigration and easier work visas would also be revisited by the new administration. "We remain engaged on issues related to movement of Indian professionals, who bring in value to the US economy," he said.

There is a strong sense of commitment and determination among the political leadership of both India and the US to take the bilateral strategic partnership to the next level. The Ambassador, however, did not take questions on the farmers' agitation and allegations in New Delhi about the increased activity of US-based Khalistanis. *Source: The Tribune*

The character of a nation is known by its martyrs

India's freedom movement against the British was witness to an overwhelming participation of people throughout the country. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, Assam to Gujarat, thousands of men and women fought together against atrocities of the British Raj. While many selflessly gave their lives to protect the dignity of their motherland, others got injured and embraced imprisonment. Let us know about a few brave freedom fighters from various parts of colonial India who gave their lives to achieve freedom for their beloved motherland:

Mangal Pandey



Mangal Pandey, (born July 19, 1827, Akbarpur, India—died April 8, 1857, Barrackpore), Indian soldier whose attack on British officers on March 29, 1857, was the first major incident of what came to be known as the Indian, or Sepoy, Mutiny (in India the uprising is often called the First War of Independence or other similar names).

Pandey was born in a town near Faizabad in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh state in northern India, although some give his birth place as a small village near Lalitpur (in present-day southwestern Uttar Pradesh). He was from a high-caste Brahman landowning family that professed strong Hindu beliefs. Pandey joined the army of the British East India Company in 1849, some accounts suggesting that he was recruited by a brigade that marched past him. He was made a soldier (sepoy) in the 6th Company of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, which included a large number of Brahmans. Pandey was ambitious and viewed his profession as a sepoy as a stepping-stone to future success.

Pandey's career ambitions, however, came into conflict with his religious beliefs. While he was posted at the garrison in Barrackpore in the mid-1850s, a new Enfield rifle was introduced into India that required a soldier to bite off the ends of greased cartridges in order to load the weapon. A rumour spread that the lubricant used was either cow or pig lard, which was repugnant to Hindus or Muslims, respectively. The belief arose among the sepoys that the British had deliberately used the lard on the cartridges.

There have been various accounts of the events of March 29, 1857. However, the general agreement is that Pandey attempted to incite his fellow sepoys to rise up against their British officers, attacked two of those officers, attempted

A nation is known by its people. The strength of a nation is known by its heroes. The character of a nation is known by its martyrs. With the Martyrs Day (March 23), commemorating the martyrdom of the three patriots- Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev-four days away, the editorial board of *The Indian Panorama* decided to recall their sacrifices, as also of many others who sacrificed their lives to bring freedom to India.

The brief description of the martyrs is meant to remind Indians that the freedom they enjoy today is the result of their sacrifices, and whatever tributes they may pay the patriots on this day, are not enough to repay them for their nobility.

Let us know some of the martyrs of India.

to shoot himself after having been restrained, and eventually was overpowered and arrested. Some contemporary reports suggested that he was under the influence of drugs—possibly cannabis or opium—and was not fully aware of his actions. Pandey was soon tried and sentenced to death. His execution (by hanging) was set for April 18, but British authorities, fearing the outbreak of a large-scale revolt if they waited until then, moved the date up to April 8. Resistance to the use of Enfield cartridges later that month in Meerut led to the outbreak of a revolt there in May and the start of the larger insurrection.

In India, Pandey has been remembered as a freedom fighter against British rule. A commemorative postage stamp with his image on it was issued by the Indian government in 1984. In addition, a movie and stage play that depicted his life both appeared in 2005.

Rani Lakshmi Bai

Lakshmi Bai, also spelled Laxmi Bai,



(born c. November 19, 1835, Kashi, India—died June 17, 1858, Kotah-ki-Serai, near Gwalior), rani (queen) of Jhansi and a leader of the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58.

Brought up in the household of the peshwa (ruler) Baji Rao II, Lakshmi Bai had an unusual upbringing for a Brahman girl. Growing up with the boys in the peshwa's court, she was trained in martial arts and became proficient in sword fighting and riding. She married the maharaja of Jhansi, Gangadhar Rao, but was widowed without bearing a surviving heir to the throne. Following established Hindu tradition, just before his death the maharaja adopted a boy as his heir. Lord Dalhousie, the British governor-general of India, refused to recognize the adopted heir and annexed Jhansi in accordance with the doctrine of lapse. An agent of the East India Company was posted in the small

kingdom to look after administrative matters.

The 22-year-old queen refused to cede Jhansi to the British. Shortly after the beginning of the mutiny in 1857, which broke out in Meerut, Lakshmi Bai was proclaimed the regent of Jhansi, and she ruled on behalf of the minor heir. Joining the uprising against the British, she rapidly organized her troops and assumed charge of the rebels in the Bundelkhand region. Mutineers in the neighbouring areas headed toward Jhansi to offer her support.

Under Gen. Hugh Rose, the East India Company's forces had begun their counteroffensive in Bundelkhand by January 1858. Advancing from Mhow, Rose captured Saugor (now Sagar) in February and then turned toward Jhansi in March. The company's forces surrounded the fort of Jhansi, and a fierce battle raged. Offering stiff resistance to the invading forces, Lakshmi Bai did not surrender even after her troops were overwhelmed and the rescuing army of Tantia Tope, another rebel leader, was defeated at the Battle of Betwa. Lakshmi Bai managed to escape from the fort with a small force of palace guards and headed eastward, where other rebels joined her.

Tantia Tope and Lakshmi Bai then mounted a successful assault on the city-fortress of Gwalior. The treasury and the arsenal were seized, and Nana Sahib, a prominent leader, was proclaimed as the peshwa (ruler). After taking Gwalior, Lakshmi Bai marched east to Morar to confront a British counterattack led by Rose. Dressed as a man, she fought a fierce battle and was killed in combat.

Subhas Chandra Bose



Subhas Chandra Bose, byname Netaji (Hindi: "Respected Leader"), (born c. January 23, 1897, Cuttack, Orissa [now

Odisha], India—died August 18, 1945, Taipei, Taiwan?), Indian revolutionary prominent in the independence movement against British rule of India. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II. He was a contemporary of Mohandas K. Gandhi, at times an ally and at other times an adversary. Bose was known in particular for his militant approach to independence and for his push for socialist policies.

The son of a wealthy and prominent Bengali lawyer, Bose studied at Presidency College, Calcutta (Kolkata), from which he was expelled in 1916 for nationalist activities, and the Scottish Churches College (graduating in 1919). He then was sent by his parents to the University of Cambridge in England to prepare for the Indian Civil Service. In 1920 he passed the civil service examination, but in April 1921, after hearing of the nationalist turmoils in India, he resigned his candidacy and hurried back to India. Throughout his career, especially in its early stages, he was supported financially and emotionally by an elder brother, Sarat Chandra Bose (1889–1950), a wealthy Calcutta lawyer and Indian National Congress (also known as the Congress Party) politician.

Bose joined the noncooperation movement started by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who had made the Indian National Congress a powerful nonviolent organization. Bose was advised by Gandhi to work under Chitta Ranjan Das, a politician in Bengal. There Bose became a youth educator, journalist, and commandant of the Bengal Congress volunteers. His activities led to his imprisonment in December 1921. In 1924 he was appointed chief executive officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, with Das as mayor. Bose was soon after deported to Burma (Myanmar) because he was suspected of connections with secret revolutionary movements. Released in 1927, he returned to find Bengal Congress affairs in disarray after the death of Das, and Bose was elected president of the Bengal Congress. Shortly thereafter he and Jawaharlal Nehru became the two general secretaries of the Indian National Congress. Together they represented the more militant, left-wing faction of the party against the more compromising,

Continued on Page 17

From page 16

right-wing Gandhian faction. Vocal support for Gandhi increased within the Indian National Congress, meanwhile, and, in light of this, Gandhi resumed a more commanding role in the party. When the civil disobedience movement was started in 1930, Bose was already in detention for his associations with an underground revolutionary group, the Bengal Volunteers. Nevertheless, he was elected mayor of Calcutta while in prison. Released and then rearrested several times for his suspected role in violent acts, Bose was finally allowed to proceed to Europe after he contracted tuberculosis and was released for ill health. In enforced exile and still ill, he wrote *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1934* and pleaded India's cause with European leaders. He returned from Europe in 1936, was again taken into custody, and was released after a year.

Meanwhile, Bose became increasingly critical of Gandhi's more conservative economics as well as his less confrontational approach toward independence. In 1938 he was elected president of the Indian National Congress and formed a national planning committee, which formulated a policy of broad industrialization. However, this did not harmonize with Gandhian economic thought, which clung to the notion of cottage industries and benefiting from the use of the country's own resources. Bose's vindication came in 1939, when he defeated a Gandhian rival for reelection. Nonetheless, the "rebel president" felt bound to resign because of the lack of Gandhi's support. He founded the Forward Bloc, hoping to rally radical elements, but was again incarcerated in July 1940. His refusal to remain in prison at this critical period of India's history was expressed in a determination to fast to death, which frightened the British government into releasing him. On January 26, 1941, though closely watched, he escaped from his Calcutta residence in disguise and, traveling via Kabul and Moscow, eventually reached Germany in April.

In Nazi Germany Bose came under the tutelage of a newly created Special Bureau for India, guided by Adam von Trott zu Solz. He and other Indians who had gathered in Berlin made regular broadcasts from the German-sponsored Azad Hind Radio beginning in January 1942, speaking in English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, and Pashto.

A little more than a year after the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia, Bose left Germany, traveling by German and Japanese submarines and by plane, and arrived in May 1943 in Tokyo. On July 4 he assumed leadership of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia and proceeded, with Japanese aid and influence, to form a trained army of about 40,000 troops in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia. On October 21, 1943, Bose proclaimed the establishment of a provisional independent Indian government, and his so-called Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj), alongside Japanese troops, advanced to Rangoon (Yangon) and thence overland into India, reaching Indian soil on March 18, 1944, and moving into Kohima and the plains of Imphal. In a stubborn battle, the mixed Indian and Japanese forces, lacking Japanese air support, were defeated and forced to retreat; the Indian National Army nevertheless for some time succeeded in maintaining its identity as a liberation army, based in Burma and then Indochina. With the defeat of Japan, however, Bose's fortunes

ended.

A few days after Japan's announced surrender in August 1945, Bose, fleeing Southeast Asia, reportedly died in a Japanese hospital in Taiwan as a result of burn injuries from a plane crash.

Lala Lajpat Rai



Lala Lajpat Rai, (born 1865, Dhudike, India—died November 17, 1928, Lahore [now in Pakistan]), Indian writer and politician, outspoken in his advocacy of a militant anti-British nationalism in the Indian National Congress (Congress Party) and as a leader of the Hindu supremacy movement.

After studying law at the Government College in Lahore, Lajpat Rai practiced at Hissar and Lahore, where he helped to establish the nationalistic Dayananda Anglo-Vedic School and became a follower of Dayananda Sarasvati, the founder of the conservative Hindu society Arya Samaj ("Society of Aryans"). After joining the Congress Party and taking part in political agitation in the Punjab, Lajpat Rai was deported to Mandalay, Burma (now Myanmar), without trial, in May 1907. In November, however, he was allowed to return when the viceroy, Lord Minto, decided that there was insufficient evidence to hold him for subversion. Lajpat Rai's supporters attempted to secure his election to the presidency of the party session at Surat in December 1907, but elements favouring cooperation with the British refused to accept him, and the party split over the issues.

During World War I, Lajpat Rai lived in the United States, where he founded the Indian Home Rule League of America (1917) in New York City. He returned to India in early 1920, and later that year he led a special session of the Congress Party that launched Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi's noncooperation movement. Imprisoned from 1921 to 1923, he was elected to the legislative assembly on his release. In 1928 he introduced the legislative assembly resolution for the boycott of the British Simon Commission on constitutional reform. Shortly thereafter he died, after being attacked by police during a demonstration in Lahore.

Bhagat Singh



Bhagat Singh, (born September 27, 1907, Lyallpur, western Punjab, India [now in Pakistan]—died March 23, 1931, Lahore [now in Pakistan]), revolutionary

hero of the Indian independence movement.

Bhagat Singh attended Dayanand Anglo Vedic High School, which was operated by Arya Samaj (a reform sect of modern Hinduism), and then National College, both located in Lahore. He began to protest British rule in India while still a youth and soon fought for national independence. He also worked as a writer and editor in Amritsar for Punjabi- and Urdu-language newspapers espousing Marxist theories. He is credited with popularizing the catchphrase "Inquilab zindabad" ("Long live the revolution").

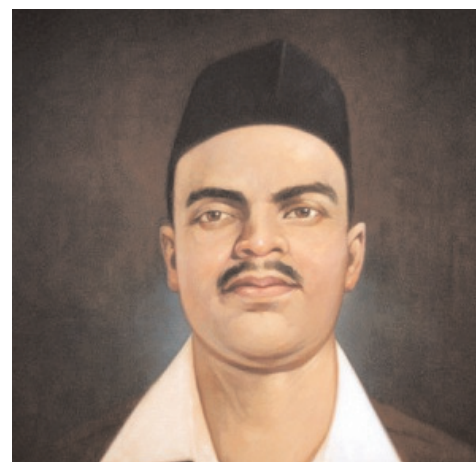
In 1928 Bhagat Singh plotted with others to kill the police chief responsible for the death of Indian writer and politician Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the founders of National College, during a silent march opposing the Simon Commission. Instead, in a case of mistaken identity, junior officer J.P. Saunders was killed, and Bhagat Singh had to flee Lahore to escape the death penalty. In 1929 he and an associate lobbed a bomb at the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi to protest the implementation of the Defence of India Act and then surrendered. He was hanged at the age of 23 for the murder of Saunders.

Sukhdev



Sukhdev Thapar was a senior member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. He participated in several actions alongside Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, and was hanged by the British authorities on 23 March 1931 at the age of 23. Sukhdev participated in numerous revolutionary activities such as a prison hunger strike in 1929. He is best known for his assaults in the Lahore Conspiracy Case (1929-30). He is best remembered for his involvement in the assassination of Deputy Superintendent of Police, J. P. Saunders, on 17 December 1928, by Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, undertaken in response to the violent death of the veteran leader Lala Lajpat Rai.

Rajguru



Shivaram Hari Rajguru was an Indian revolutionary from Maharashtra, known mainly for his involvement in the

assassination of a British Raj police officer. He also fought for the independence of India and On 23 March 1931 he was hanged by the British government along with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev Thapar.



Chandra Shekhar Azad

Chandra Shekhar Azad a close associate of Bhagath Singh in the freedom struggle was born in the year 1906. He is the most challenging and fearless Independence Fighters against the British Rulers. He was a part of the Hindustan Republican Association. After a fierce battle with British Soldiers and killing so many enemies he shot himself with a pistol.

Ram Prasad Bismil



Ram Prasad Bismil was a young revolutionary Independence Fighters from India who martyred for his country like Bhagat Singh. He was born in the year 1857 and was a respectable member of the Hindustan Republican Association along with Sukhdev. British government sentenced him to death for involving in the notorious Kakori train robbery.

Bipin Chandra Pal



Bipin Chandra Pal an unforgettable revolutionary was born in the year 1858. Pal was a substantial part of the Indian National Congress and he is the one who encouraged the abandonment of foreign goods. He formed an association with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Lal-Pal-Bal trio. All of them together executed many revolutionary activities for the country.

From Page 17

Chittaranjan Das



Das the founder of the Swaraj Party and a Lawyer by Profession was born in the year 1870. He was popular as Deshbandhu and took an active part in the Indian National Movement. Being a Law Practitioner he successfully defended Aurobindo Ghosh who was charged in a crime by the British. Chittaranjan used to Mentor Subash Chandra Bose.

Abdul Hafiz Barakatullah



Abdul Hafiz Mohamed Barakatullah fought in a unique style for the nation's freedom. He was born in the year 1854 and is also the co-founder of Ghadar Operated overseas from San Francisco. He took Pen as a weapon and published blazing articles in England's leading daily to arose the fire of Independence.

Ashfaqulla Khan



Ashfaqulla Khan the founder of young revolutionary fire sacrificed his life for Mother India like many other leaders in the list. Similar to Bismil and Chandrashekhar he became a prominent member of the Hindustan Republic Association. He carried out the popular train robbery Kakori Khan with the help of his associates. That's the reason British Executed him.

Khudiram Bose



Born on December 3, 1889 in Habibpur of Midnapore district of the then Bengal Presidency, Khudiram Bose lost both his parents, Trailokyanath Bose and Lakshmi Priya Devi, when he was just six. Never too fond of studies, he would rather spend his time helping people affected by flood and other calamities. A student of Midnapore Collegiate School, he gave up studies to dedicate his life to revolutionary activities. After dropping out, he became a member of the Revolutionary Party.

In 1905, when Bengal was divided, 'Banga-Bhanga' saw the strongest protests in Midnapore where Khudiram Bose actively participated in burning British products. The British attitude towards peasants, revolutionaries, farmers and other Indians further fuelled his anger.

As a member of the Revolutionary Party, he started distributing pamphlets with Vande Matram written on them. At one of the places where Bose was distributing pamphlets, he apparently slapped a police officer, breaking his nose when he was just 14 years old.

At the age of 16, he had learnt how to make bombs and went about planting bombs near police stations and targeted government officials.

In 1908, he and Prafulla Chaki were assigned to assassinate Muzaffarpur district magistrate Kingsford. Kingsford, before being transferred to Muzaffarpur, was a magistrate in Bengal and his method of torturous punishments against revolutionaries had angered the youngsters of Bengal. It was decided that the two appointed men, Bose and Chaki, would hurl bombs at him in the court but after 10 days of monitoring Kingsford's movements, they realised that hurling bombs in courtroom would injure a large number of innocent civilians. The plan was thereafter changed to assassinate him outside a club which he attended.

On April 30, 1908, Khudiram Bose instructed Chaki to run away and threw the bomb himself on the carriage, in which Kingsford was supposed to be travelling. However, as he had on previous occasions, Kingsford escaped death as the carriage was, instead, carrying the wife and daughter of a barrister named Pringle Kennedy. Bose was arrested from a railway station in Samastipur district, where he had reached walking barefoot for 25 kilometres (16 miles) after bombing the carriage. Later, the station where he was captured was renamed to Khudiram Bose Pusa railway station.

Unlike other parts of India, where revolutionaries could rarely afford a lawyer, educated Bengali lawyers' teams used to represent the revolutionaries of Bengal for free. Khudiram's statement was recorded in English, instead of the language used by Bose, and lawyer Narendra Kumar Basu used this, along with Bose's tender age, to defend him. Bose was too young to know the art of making a bomb, he had argued.

However, the judge received a letter, where it was written that there would be revolutions not only in Bengal but also in Bihar if Bose was not sentenced, or sentenced lightly.

On 13 July 1908, Bose was finally sentenced to death. On being asked by the shocked English judge, as Bose was still smiling after hearing the judgment, whether he understood the

judgment, the young freedom fighter said with a smile on his face, "Yes, I do and my lawyer said that I was too young to make bombs. If you allow me some time before I'm taken away from here, I can teach you the skills of making bombs too."

He was, finally, executed at 4:30 in the morning of August 11, 1908.

Jatindra Nath Das



He was born in Calcutta and when he was in B.A he was arrested for revolutionary activities. Later, he was contacted by other revolutionaries and he agreed to prepare the bomb. He was arrested when police discovered the Saharanpur bomb factory of H.S.R.A and were put in Lahore Jail with Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutta. He started hunger strike along with Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries and died on the 63rd day of his hunger strike.

Bhagwati Charan Vohra



He was born in Lahore and he joined H.S.R.A when he met other freedom fighters of India at National College in Lahore. He was a great orator and a campaigner and he prepared the HSRA manifesto that was used to educate people about HSRA and its activity. He rented out a small room in Lahore and used it as his bomb preparation laboratory. The bomb prepared by him was used to blast the train of Viceroy Lord Irwin. He died in Lahore on 28th May 1930 while testing a bomb. It is said that bomb was necessary for the rescue of Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries. His last words were: "Had this death been late by two days I would have attained more success before dying. Now that desire of mine remained unfulfilled."

Madan Lal Dhingra



Madan Lal was one of the first Indian revolutionaries of the 20th

century. He was studying in England when he carried out the Assassination of William Hutt Curzon Wylie. While studying in England he joined Abhinav Bharat Mandal and became an active member of India House an organization started by Indian in England. On 1st July 1909, during the gathering of the Indian National Association, Dhingra fired five shots at Curzon Wylie and then he didn't try to escape and surrendered. After a trial of 25 days, he was sentenced to death and subsequently hanged on 17th August 1909.

Pratap Singh Baharat

Pratap Singh Baharat was an Indian revolutionary who hailed from Udaipur district of the Indian State of Rajasthan. He was born in the family of freedom fighters and with his uncle, he carried out bombing at viceroy procession (Lord Hardinge) on 3rd December 1912. Later he was caught and trailed under Banaras Conspiracy Case. He was sentenced to 5 years rigorous imprisonment. Inside the jail, he was tortured to reveal the name of his fellow revolutionaries and he refused. He died in Bareilly Central Jail on 7th May 1918.

Bhai Balmukund

Bhai Balmukund was born in Jhelum district, now in Pakistan. He was one of the founding members of the Ghadar Party. He was involved in throwing a bomb at Viceroy Procession in Delhi and killing Europeans by a bomb at Lawrence Garden in Lahore. He was arrested in Jodhpur and after a trial in court, he was sentenced to death. He was hanged in Ambala Central Jail on 11th May 1915.

Rajendra Lahiri

Rajendra was born in Pabna District, now in Bangladesh and while studying in college he joined H.R.A to overthrow British from India by aggressive means. He participated in Dakshineswar Bombing and afterward escaped from the site. He remained underground in Benaras as a student and after joining H.R.A executed famous Kakori Train Conspiracy. After a long trial he was found guilty in both the cases and he was hanged in Gonda district Jail on 17th December 1927.

Udham Singh



Udham Singh was born in Sangrur district of Punjab and he is commonly referred to as Shaheed-i-Azam Sardar Udham Singh. His father and mother died at an early age of 8 and he studied in an orphanage. He was inspired by Bhagat Singh and joined the Gadar Party. He helped Indian Revolutionaries by providing Arms and ammunition for which he was later arrested. He is famous for Assassinating Michael O'Dwyer in England who approved Reginald Dyer's Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He concealed his revolver in a book and entered the hall. When the meeting was over he shot O'Dwyer twice killing him immediately. After assassinating O'Dwyer he didn't try to escape and was arrested.

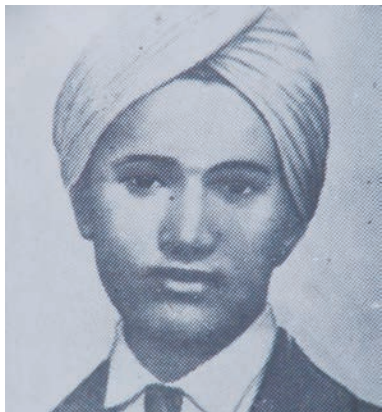
Lesser known heroes who sacrificed their lives for country's freedom

Bhagat Singh, Azad, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Ram Prasad Bismil, Gandhi, and Bose are few names that are synonymous with our struggle for freedom from the British. We owe our freedom to them.

But apart from these hallowed names, there were thousands of others who too sacrificed their lives on the path of freedom. But unlike these big names, history didn't do justice with them.

Many of them have been forsaken by history and most of us don't even know about them. This is an attempt to give those souls a tribute because their contribution to our freedom is by no means lesser than those who got their due.

Kartar Singh Sarabha

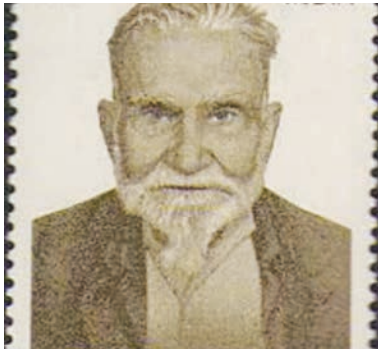


We all love Bhagat Singh, but only a handful know Kartar Singh Sarabha who Bhagat Singh himself considered his guru. Kartar Singh Sarabha was the main architect of the Ghadar revolution which aimed to incite a mutiny in British Indian Army during the thick of World War-I. Sarabha sought to take advantage of the war to uproot the British from India. Born in Ludhiana, Punjab in 1896, Sarabha went to the US for studies and established Ghadar Party in 1913.

In 1913, the party came out with a paper called 'Ghadar' which came out in languages like Pushto, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, and Gujarati. Sarabha aimed to start a mutiny within British Indian Army and over 20 thousand Ghadar activists travelled to India from different countries of the world put plans in the motion. But the betrayal of an insider resulted in the arrested Sarabha and a few more. After the trial, the 19-year-old, Kartar Singh Sarabha was hanged on November 16, 1915, in Lahore central jail, the same jail where Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged.

Raja Mahendra Pratap

A royalty of Hathras, Aligarh, Raja Mahendra Pratap was one of the first Marxist revolutionaries in the country. In fact, Pratap was the president



of first President of the Provisional Government of India formed in Afghanistan. In 1906, despite against the wishes of the family, he went to Calcutta to attend the Congress session and met several leaders of the Swadeshi movement.

But soon he realised that Congress won't be able to help his cause of freedom. Therefore, he moved out of India in 1915 and via Switzerland, entered Germany. With help of Indian members of the Berlin Committee, he met Kaiser Wilhelm-II, the German emperor who promised him assistance to invade India via Afghan border. Pratap who had family relations with Jat Sikh states of Jind, Nabha and Patiala wanted to invade India through Afghanistan and later to use these states to crush the British in India.

But with Germany's defeat in WW-I, his dream of invading India didn't materialise. Pratap also tried to connect with Russians after Germans forsake him and his peers. He met Lenin as well. In 1932, Pratap was also nominated Nobel Prize in 1932. N.A. Nilsson, his nominator, said about him- "Pratap gave up his property for educational purposes, and he established a technical college at Brindaban. In 1913 he took part in Gandhi's campaign in South Africa. He travelled around the world to create awareness about the situation in Afghanistan and India. In 1925 he went on a mission to Tibet and met the Dalai Lama. He was primarily on an unofficial economic mission on behalf of Afghanistan, but he also wanted to expose the British brutalities in India. He called himself the servant of the powerless and weak." Today majority of land acquired by Aligarh Muslim University is donated by Pratap and his family.

Alluri Sitarama Raju



Born in a prosperous Kshatriya family in Andhra Pradesh in 1887, Raju left everything for the freedom struggle. In 1922-24, he led a failed yet important 'Rampa Rebellion' with the help of tribals. Raju was referred, "Manyam Veerudu" (Hero of the Jungles) by the local people. He took up the cause of the tribal people in the Agency areas, who were being harassed by British officials under the Forest Act, and led an armed rebellion against the British forces. Raju was trapped and killed by the British in the jungle in 1924.

Tirot Singh



Tirot Singh was one of the chiefs of Khasi people in the early 18th century who fought against the British who tried to take control over the Khasi hills. Though the year of his birth is unknown, Tirot Singh fought the British in 1835 when British tried to acquire Khasi hills to extend their possession on Lower Assam areas.

Actually, the British wanted to construct a road through this area to connect Guwahati with Sylhet to save weeks of travel and malarious country. But Singh and his tribe objected the British occupation of the area and thus British tried to crushed their opposition which resulted in a bloody war between Khasi tribes and the British in which Singh sacrificed his life defending his tribe and land.

Pingali Venkayya



Venkayya was the man who designed the Indian national flag. Before independence, many flags were designed and used by different groups and in this process, Venkayya designed one version of flag for Indian National Congress which later became Indian flag after minor alterations post-Independence.

According to The Hindu, "Pingali Venkayya was an authority in geology,

agriculture and also an educationist who set up an educational institution in Machilipatnam. He, however, died in poverty in 1963 and was largely forgotten by the society and by his own party, the Congress." A postage stamp was issued to commemorate him in 2009 and in 2011 it was proposed that he be posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna. The outcome of that proposal is, however, not known.

Tanguturi Prakasam



Not many people know about this Andhra Kesari (Lion of Andhra). Prakasam was first the chief minister of Madras presidency and then chief minister in Andhra state. He started as a lawyer but gave up practice in 1921 to participate in the freedom movement. He rose to fame in 1928 during the protest against Simon Commission in Madras. The police had issued orders of shooting people in some areas. But Prakasam didn't fear the orders and faced police by tearing open his shirt and daring police to shoot at him. This lone act of defiance won him the title of Andhra Kesari.

Veerapandiya Kattabomman



Almost 60 years before the rebellion of 1857, Kattabomman rebelled against the British and refused to pay taxes to them. As a chieftain of Palyekar community in the 18th century, Kattabomman waged a war against the British to protect his lands. He too died in the war against the British.

The Trio of Badal, Dinesh and Benoy

Bengal had given many freedom fighters and these three were also from there. They are known for their attack on the Dalhousie Square in Kolkata. Much like Bhagat Singh and his



friends killed Saunders, the trio killed Col NS Simpson Inspector General of Prisons who was known for his atrocities on the prisoners. The trio of Badal Gupta, Dinesh Gupta and Benoy Basu decided not only to kill him, but also to strike fear in the hearts of the British by attacking the secretariat building- the Writers' Building in Dalhousie Square, Kolkata. On 8 December 1930, trio dressed as Europeans went to Writers' building and killed Simpson. None of the three revolutionaries wanted to be nabbed; therefore Badal consumed poison whereas Benoy and Dinesh shot themselves. Badal was taken to hospital where he died on 13 December.

Surya Sen



Surya Sen popularly known as master Da because he was school teacher was a Bengali Indian independence activist. Sen is known for 1930s Chittagong armoury raid. Sen drew his inspiration from nationalist ideals during his college days on 1916 in Behrampore. In 1918, he was selected as the president of INC's Chittagong branch. Later after college, Sen started recruiting young men to fight the British. In the late 1920s, Sen decided to free Chittagong from the British and thus formed a group of revolutionaries who carried out the infamous Chittagong armoury raid. On 18 April, Sen led a group which looted the armoury of the police. Their plan was to seize the arms and destroy the communication system of the city, thereby isolating Chittagong from rest of the British India. The group managed to loot the armoury, but failed to get the ammunition. The group hoisted the Indian National Flag on the premises of the armoury before escaping. But the British captured most of the revolutionaries but Sen in Jalalabad hills. Many died there while fighting the British.

Sen managed to escape and remained absconding for three years before being captured in 1933. Before he was hanged by the British, he was tortured beyond the limit.

Source: Indiatimes

Ghadar Movement: The rebels who wrote history

On November 16, 1915, seven patriots were hanged after the culmination of the first Lahore Conspiracy Case. These hangings, however, did not deter the Ghadarites from waging a war against the British.

These included Bakshish Singh, Jagat Singh, Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, Surain Singh s/o Boor Singh, Surain Singh s/o Ishar Singh, Harnam Singh and Kartar Singh Sarabha. These trials were to have an enduring impact on the psyche of Punjab and reverberations on India's history. These hangings by the colonial government were one of the many in order to curb the war declared by the Ghadarites on the colonial government in India in February of 1915.

Events that led to Ghadar

A week after Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, a clarion call had appeared in Ghadar, a weekly revolutionary newspaper published from San Francisco, summoning its overseas Indian readers to return to their homeland and fight. It said the opportunity to free their country from slavery had arrived.

This was so because Britain was quite vulnerable due to depletion of troops and resources. Also, its arch-enemy Germany was offering support to various revolutionary movements which had the potential of undermining the strength of the Empire. These included the Indian and Irish national revolutionists and the pro-Ottoman pan-Islamists. This was how the Ghadar Movement was launched among the Punjabi migrant workers in North America in 1913. It was characterised by a predominant Punjabi male participation and was a ringing explosion in the ears of the imperial government of the time.

The Ghadar Party was established by the Punjabi Sikhs of the USA and Canada in June 1913 also known as the Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast. The word 'Ghadar' means "mutiny" or "rebellion" or "revolt". On November 1, 1913, the Ghadar Party issued their first newspaper from University of California in Berkeley. This party was originally built around the weekly paper Ghadar. For the first time, a true picture of the British rule was shown in the journal, simultaneously enunciating a vision for the future of India. In fact, the founders envisioned that the Ghadar would do the work of preparing the Indians for revolt until the actual war.

Today, it is important to remember the martyrs and the specific conditions that led the erstwhile loyal 'Sikhs' to turn against their imperial benefactors. At the heart of the movement was the Punjabi farmer-soldier-turned-labourer abroad, driven out by the accretion of economic problems at home.

In the decade before the seeds of this large-scale unrest were sown by the imperial government in Punjab, the agrarian legislation, the colonisation Bill, issues of water rates and enhancement of land revenue had largely contributed to Punjabi men being forced to migrate in search of economic opportunities. At the same time the Indian National Association, the Indian National Congress, the Swadeshi Movement and the activities of Zamindara League (Unionist Party) had contributed to the political awakening of the Punjabis.

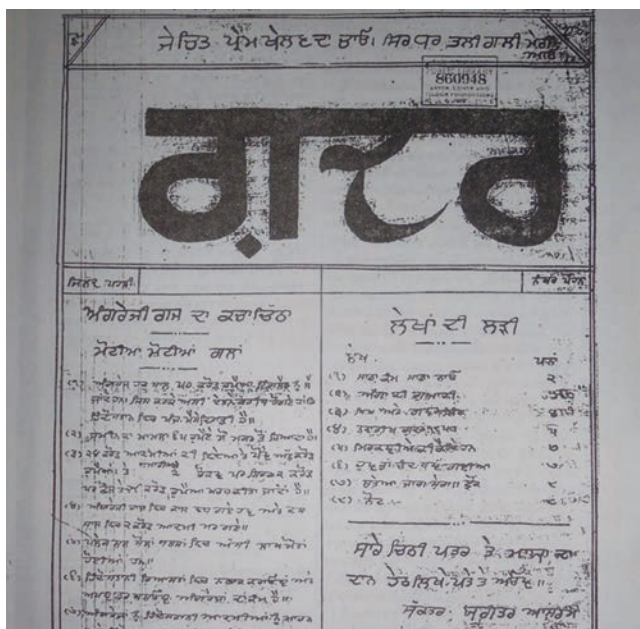
The Sikh connection

It is a curious question of history as to how the Sikh community in Punjab which was given the distinction of being a 'martial race' by the British, turned around to demand complete independence and plan a violent stratagem against their benefactors. The spectacular display of material prosperity, the spring of freedom in the steps of white people and the opportunities of economic mobility in the USA and Canada led the pioneer migrants to understand their own depravity induced by slavery to an imperial power. The white Canadians and Americans believed that they belonged to a superior and civilised race whereas Indians and other Asians were considered uncivilised.

During the first decade of the 20th century, 5,000 Indians reached Canada. Out of these more than 90 per cent were Sikhs. The harsh racial differentiation, violent attacks by white labourers and hoodlums led to a feeling of humiliation and shame among these Indian migrants. They believed they were subjected to this treatment because they were citizens of a slave nation. The British at



(Clockwise from top left) Harnam Singh Sialkoti, Jagat Singh Sursingh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Suren Singh Gilwali (senior), Bakshish Singh Gilwali, Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, Surain Singh Gilwali.



One of the early issues of the Ghadar, a weekly revolutionary newspaper published by Ghadarites from San Francisco.

that time did not want Indians associating or interacting with white people. This led to measures being taken by the Canadian government, then a colony of Britain, discouraging immigration from India. The freedom offered by these countries to the migrants propelled the transition to a demand for a more just social order.

These socio-political conditions led to the birth of the Ghadar Party, a party that gave expression to the evolved understanding of the repercussions of colonial rule in India. Although strict interpretation of its character is difficult without being unfair to its secular participants, numerically the Ghadar was largely a Sikh movement. The Komagata Maru incident was the final spark that ignited an already inflamed Sikh pride. The aftermath of this incident was a burst of revolutionary activity in the migrant Sikhs to redeem themselves from both the shame of allegiance to the British government in 1857 and their own cursed status as a slave nation.

Literary legacy

The Ghadar was no ordinary movement neither in its scope of influence nor its tactics. Maia Ramnath has observed in her book, Haj to Utopia that the Ghadar's printed material served as connective tissue or switching

circuit, capable of linking various elements among the Indian radicals abroad. It also linked Indian radicals to other networks, and also connected pre to post-war revolutionary movements inside the country. This movement in its overall assessment has been termed as a "heroic failure" by Ghadar historian Harish K Puri. Although it largely failed to impact the colonial government in ways its members had originally anticipated, its cultural reach extends to this day.

The literature of Ghadarites was strikingly separate from any talk of fatalism. Instead it spoke to the higher ideal in men while looking at the ultimate fate in its eye. It remains a shiny reminder of the refusal of a population which formed the spine of the military prowess of the colonisers to yield to exploitation, a doomed attempt of unthinkable courage and splendid patriotism. It is a story of our forefathers which merits remembrance and retelling.

The Ghadar Movement was the first Indian movement with truly global linkages that effectively kick-started the movement of immigrants for equal rights and consolidated the integration of migrants into their new nations. It needs to be remembered that the participants being largely Sikh, the ideas of egalitarianism, sacrifice, service and martyrdom formed the bedrock of the political thinking of this and the later resistance movements in the region.

A struggle like Ghadar which failed in its overall objective and did not gain the large-scale support of the citizenry has a tendency to be relegated into historical insignificance. However, this is the exact reason why it must be remembered that not every battle is about victory.

Parallels can be drawn with the widespread desire of today's Punjabi youth for migration abroad. The fact that it speaks volumes about the socio-economic conditions here is not lost to anyone. The demand for fair migratory opportunities is a prominent legacy of the Ghadar.

The rejection of sectarianism, calling out for social justice and demand for a just society, are vestiges of its cultural impact. In line with Kartar Singh Sarabha's daring conviction 'the blood of martyrs never goes waste', the failure of the Ghadar Movement proved to be a landmark in the struggle for freedom. It inspired the likes of Bhagat Singh who considered Kartar Singh Sarabha his role model towards a revolutionary change. It will be right to conclude that the dreams of these primal modern revolutionaries must be remembered on the day of their martyrdom to serve as a light post for the future we aspire to as a society and a country and to forever be grateful.

The saga of Komagata Maru

On May 20, 2016, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau rendered an apology in Parliament, saying 'More than a century ago, a great injustice took place.'

This was one of the rare occasions when a sitting public official apologised publicly for a controversial historic event. What he was apologising for was the SS Komagata Maru incident of 1914, when a ship laden with Indian immigrants was refused entry at the Canadian ports.

It was a time when Canada's immigration policies were an actively racialised endeavour. The objective of the Canadian government was to attract more British and American immigrants, as well as immigrants from the 'preferred countries' of central and northern Europe. This strict hierarchy continued till the Second World War, with a more inclusive policy only being adopted in the 1960s.

Suffice it to say, Indians and other 'Asians' were on the bottom deck, actively kept out due to Western paranoia about them coming and taking up local jobs and introducing their 'ways of life.'

As per the Canadian government's 1908 Continuous Passage Act, all potential immigrants had to make a continuous journey to Canada, with no stops. A later amendment stated that no immigrant of 'Asiatic' origin would be permitted unless they were in possession of \$200, a significant sum even today.

Canada at the time was actually seeing a period of increased migration from Europe, with its more direct routes. A journey from law. This was, therefore, just another case of 'smart discrimination,' part of a concerted Asian-exclusion policy by the Canadian Government, to keep the 'unwanted' out.

Matters came to a head with the Komagata Maru incident.

The story begins in 1913. Gurdit Singh was a well-to-do Sikh contractor from Amritsar, who had also lived variously in south-east Asia. During a visit to Hong Kong in 1913, he came across a large contingent of Sikhs who were looking to immigrate to the United States or Canada.

The ship set sail from Hong Kong on April 4, 1914, with 165 passengers, and more joining in Shanghai and Yokohama. It left Yokohama on May 3 with 376 passengers and sailed into Burrard Inlet, near Vancouver, on May 23.

The Canadian authorities, however, citing the policy, refused permission to dock and the passengers were detained on board. A two-month stalemate followed, with negotiations, political manoeuvring and talks taking place. Conditions aboard were abysmal for the passengers, with a shortage of food and water.

'Shore' committees were formed to help the passengers with provisions, both food and legal, by Indians in Vancouver. Protest meetings were also held in the city. But on July 23, the ship was forced to turn back, with only 20 people satisfying the authorities to stay back and the rest having their dreams shattered.

The ship's departure, however, was just the beginning of the saga though—the passengers faced the iron fist of the

The Komagata Maru incident involved the Japanese steamship Komagata Maru, on which a group of people from British India attempted to immigrate to Canada in April 1914, but most were denied entry and forced to return to Calcutta, where at least 19 people were killed in a clash with British soldiers.

IN 2017, the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, accorded the status of martyrs upon those killed in Komagata Maru tragedy.



Indian immigrants aboard Komagata Maru in 1914.

British authorities, to much more violent ends, on the return voyage.

It was the time when the revolutionary Ghadar movement was sweeping across the Indian diaspora in the USA and Canada. The leaders planned to return to India and foment a revolution. Clarion calls were sounded across Indian student societies across the Pacific Coast, including California and Oregon, urging Indians to 'go home'.

The British were not in the dark about what was brewing. They were ill-prepared for it, and the passengers of the Komagata Maru had to bear the brunt of the response. They even passed an ordinance restricting the liberties of any Indian returning to the country after September 5, 1914, and the ship's passengers were one of the first to be charged. The SS Komagata Maru arrived at the Budge Budge dock in Calcutta on September 27, only to be welcomed by British gunboats at the entry into the port. The passengers were charged as political agitators who had acted illegally. A riot ensued, as the police stepped in to capture Gurdit Singh and other leaders. In the ruckus, 19 passengers were shot and killed, the rest were incarcerated or kept under house arrest until WWI ended. Gurdit Singh escaped, but eventually gave himself up



Komagata Maru Memorial at Budge Budge in Kolkata.

and served a ve-year term.

Komagata Maru was an incident that not only shaped Indian immigration but galvanised Indian nationalism, particularly with the Ghadar movement. The confrontation became a rallying point in a diasporic movement for social justice and a springboard for an international, anti-colonial sentiment.

In 1952, the Indian government erected a monument to the martyrs of Komagata Maru at Budge Budge. September 29 is marked as memorial day when Sikhs visit Budge Budge to pay homage.

While remembered as a dark phase in Canadian history, the story still remains largely forgotten in India.

Source: Live History India

Pak PM Imran Khan receives anti-COVID vaccination; urges nation to implement norms against deadly virus

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday received the first shot of vaccination against COVID-19 and urged the citizens of his country to ensure the full implementation of norms to prevent the surge in cases of coronavirus.

Khan, 67, was vaccinated as part of the nationwide anti-coronavirus vaccination campaign which is underway in its first phase. "Prime Minister Imran Khan was vaccinated today. On the occasion, he appealed to the nation to ensure full implementation of SOPs in view of the third wave of the pandemic," according to a tweet by his office.

The COVID-19 vaccine is being provided to people 60 years of age and above and to front-line health workers.

Pakistan on Thursday also imposed smart lockdowns in areas worst hit by the coronavirus as the country recorded a sharp increase in the positive cases.

All markets, shopping malls, offices, and restaurants will remain closed in the areas of smart lockdown. However, grocery stores, hospitals, pharmacies, bakeries, meat and milk shops will be allowed to remain open.

Punjab province Health Minister Yasmin Rashid said that smart lockdowns are imposed in Gujrat,



Sialkot, and Hafizabad, which will remain in effect till March 30 in Gujrat, March 24 in Sialkot and March 26 in Hafizabad. "We have to save more people from the danger of being infected. The coronavirus is spreading rapidly because of not taking precautions," Rashid said.

Minister for Planning Asad Umar, who is also head of National Command and Control Centre that deals with the

pandemic, warned that stricter restrictions on activities might be enforced if the compliance of standard operating procedures (SOPs) did not improve.

"Sharp spike in covid positivity. Hospital daily admissions & people in critical care rising fast. If sop compliance does not improve, we will be forced to place stronger restrictions on

activities. Please be very very careful," he tweeted.

He also urged the people to remain careful as the new (UK) "strain spreads faster and is more deadly" as compared to the Wuhan variant of the COVID-19 virus.

The fresh measures were taken as Pakistan recorded the highest 3,495 new coronavirus cases in a single-day after three months as the national tally of infections reached 615,810 on Thursday, according to the official data.

It is the highest number of new cases in a day since December 6 last year when 3,795 cases were recorded, according to the ministry of National Health Services reported.

The ministry data shows that 61 people died in the last 24 hours, taking the COVID-19 death toll to 13,717. Another 2,062 patients were in critical conditions.

Meanwhile, 1,634 patients recovered from the deadly disease during the day, taking the total number of recoveries to 577,501. The sharp rise in the coronavirus cases came as the second batch of 500,000 Sinopharm vaccines sent by China reached Pakistan on Wednesday. Pakistan officials last week said that the country was hit by the third wave of the pandemic. PTI

Indonesian girls traumatised by push to wear hijab: HRW report

JAKARTA (TIP): Ifa Hanifah Misbach was 19 when her father died - and her family told her he would not go to heaven because she refused to wear the hijab, a Muslim head covering.

Misbach now works as a psychologist in Bandung, West Java, where she has counselled dozens of Indonesian girls who have been ostracised, bullied and threatened with expulsion from school because they too declined to wear the veil.

"The impact of religious pressures, especially to wear the jilbab, when you're young, makes it feel like you have no breathing room," Misbach said, using the word for hijab more commonly used in Indonesia, in a report by Human Rights Watch.

"I wanted to run away."

The 45-year-old's experience is one of many shared by women and girls in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, including cases of girls being expelled from school.

Indonesia's ideology enshrines religious diversity and the country has significant Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and other minorities, but religious conservatism and growing intolerance of beliefs other than Islam has been rising over the past two decades. Reuters

Helicopter crash kills 9 Afghan troops in central province

KABUL (TIP): A helicopter crash overnight has taken the lives of at least nine Afghan military personnel in a central province, the defence ministry said Thursday.

In a statement, it said that four crew members of the MI-17 helicopter along with five security personnel were killed in the crash, in the Behsud district of Maidan Wradak province. It gave no further detail except to say that investigations were ongoing.

Separately on Thursday, a bombing killed four state employees commuting in a minibus in the capital Kabul, police said.

Ferdaws Faramarz, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said a woman was among the dead and nine other people were wounded in the attack in the city's north.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the Kabul attack, but government employees have been targeted before. On Monday, another bombing on a minibus carrying state workers in Kabul killed three women and a 3-year-old child, and wounded 13 others, according to security officials.

Afghanistan is experiencing a

nationwide spike in bombings, targeted killings and other violence as peace negotiations in Qatar between Taliban insurgents and the Afghan government stall.

The Islamic State group's local affiliate has claimed responsibility for some of the violence, but many attacks go unclaimed, with the Afghan government putting the blame on the Taliban. The insurgents have denied responsibility for most of the attacks.

The attack in Kabul comes on the same day Russia hosts the first of three international conferences aimed at jump-starting the peace process, ahead of a May 1 deadline for the final withdrawal of US and NATO troops from the country.

The Moscow conference is seen as a critical first step toward peace. Key players are attending, including US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, Afghan national security adviser Hamdullah Mohib and Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who will lead a 10-member delegation. Representatives of Pakistan, Iran, India and China are also participating. AP

Myanmar faces growing isolation as military tightens grip

MYANMAR (TIP): Myanmar faced growing isolation on Thursday with increasingly limited internet services and its last private newspaper ceasing publication as the military built its case against ousted elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi was overthrown and detained in a February 1 military coup, triggering mass protests across the country that security forces have struggled to suppress with increasingly violent methods.

The total documented number of people killed in the unrest stood at 217 but the actual toll was probably much higher, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners activist group said.

Western countries have condemned the coup and called for an end to the violence and for the release of Suu Kyi and others. Asian neighbours have offered to help find a solution, but the military has a long record of shunning outside pressure. Large parts of an economy already reeling from the novel coronavirus have been paralysed by the protests and a parallel civil disobedience campaign of strikes against military rule, while many foreign investors are reassessing plans. (Reuters)

Empowered Women Empower Women: CII Hosts Women Leaders in the US-India Corridor to Reflect on International Women's Day 2021

NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP): To commemorate International Women's Day, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) brought together leaders within the US - India partnership to discuss innovative and empowering solutions to daily challenges women face in the workplace. Countries around the world have rallied for international gender parity with International Women's Day celebrations for over 100 years, highlighting the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. CII's own first female president, Ms Shobana Kamineni, Executive Vice-Chairperson of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, moderated Monday's panel that reflected the vast diversity of women's experiences from government to the corporate boardroom and even outer space.

CII's "Women Leaders in the US - India Corridor" panel featured remarks from Ms Diane Farrell, Acting Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade, US Department of Commerce; Dr Swati Mohan, Lead, Guidance and Operations - Mars 2020 Perseverance Mission, JPL, NASA; Ms Bhavani Parameswar, Executive Director and President, Indivate Inc (ITC Group); and Dr Sofia Mumtaz, past Chair, CII - India Business Forum USA and President, Lupin Ltd, who graciously joined together to share their experiences and insights, as well as a few words of advice for women navigating the post-COVID workforce.

Acting Undersecretary Farrell, reflecting on her years of service within the US Government, attributed much of her success to remaining flexible in her career path, staying open to opportunities, and taking risks. She

stressed perseverance and working through emotions to free oneself to try new things and solutions to professional struggles.

Dr Mohan spoke to studying, working, and building a family within a STEM field known for its gender disparity, and how she strives for the elusive "work/life balance." She called for diversity and particularly increasing the representation of women and minorities in every career field and at every level, as all the panelists concurred that women proliferate throughout educational institutions and entry-level positions, but are still largely missing from upper-level, management roles.

From the corporate sector, Ms. Parameswar noted her organization's dedication to mentoring and supporting women throughout their careers, and remarked that in addition to gender constructs, she faced cultural barriers as well when she began working in the US from India. Besides learning about American football to build relationships with her predominately male US colleagues, Ms Parameswar also worked within her company to eliminate the "motherhood penalty" and prevent women who chose to have children from suffering lost wages, equity, and leadership opportunities.

Dr Mumtaz was also quick to point out that gender discrimination is both a US and India issue, citing that for women to succeed in the workplace, they must overcome society's expectations as well as their male peers' prejudices, as being called pejorative names like "aggressive" to family pressures to quit after marriage



The participants

are prolific in both countries. Empowerment, she declared, begins in the home, and young girls have to be taught to see themselves as equal to persist in a world that tells them otherwise.

While all the panelists agreed that things are not as they should be, the general consensus of CII's 2021 Women's Day Panel is that the world is certainly improving in terms of women's access and empowerment within the US - India Corridor. Dr Mohan cited that she was selected to work at NASA by a woman leader whose supervisor was also a woman, and reiterated the imperativeness of supporting and mentoring women particularly within male-dominated career fields. She also noted that her daughters have access to a plethora of resources like STEM camps, classes, etc. that did not exist when she was younger. Dr Mumtaz concurred, praising the positive impact of increasing levels of female education, as well as companies like Lupin that directly focus on encouraging women in the workforce. Ms Parameswar stressed the advantages for companies and countries' overall GDP to increase and retain women workers, noting specifically that continued success depends upon examining policies and how they either effect or enable women to excel in their fields. To conclude, Acting Undersecretary Farrell engendered another cause for hope by suggesting to the panel that the new Biden - Harris Administration in the US is expected to focus more on gender equity for women all around the world.

The Fascinating Stories of Achievements of Women



By Anu Jain
Realtor

What women have achieved and what they are capable of achieving is a fascinating topic to write about, I suppose it's a topic every woman has thought about at one point in her life, at least those of us old enough to know that roles have changed over time.

In 21st century, women enjoy more freedom and power than ever before, entering in the job market and the political arena in greater number than ever. Women's education and income continue to rise in the 21st century due to the steadily growing percentage of women in college in the past few years.

Women are taking care of their responsibility with pride in all fields precisely; we have many examples around us including our Vice President Kamla Harris is strong example of women achievements Indra Nooyi a business executive and the past Chairperson and CEO

of PepsiCo, the second largest food and beverage business in the world. Indra Gandhi who was the Prime Minister of India and Janet Louise Yellen is an American economist. She is serving as the United States secretary of the treasury and she

was the Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and there are many woman entrepreneurs who are successfully leading and handling businesses.

A decade ago, they were given roll in the movies mostly for singing dancing or supporting male actors, nowadays their rolls are so diversified including roles as a police officer or detective etc. which were initially played only by male actors.

And I am convinced that women's value will not be in trying to imitate men or in becoming more like men. Our value will be in honoring our womanhood and femininity and offering to the world the wisdom that we hold.

Many women who don't have enough confidence think that by not obtaining a degree or having work experience it means that they are not contributing

anything to the world.

It is very clear to me that what the world needs most urgently is not another business executive, not another PhD holder or not another lawyer. These things may be important but alone they won't bring us a world of peace in the next century.

What the world needs very simply are individuals with commitments and genuineness at heart. The world is starving for this heart! And as a woman of commitment, we must have the confidence that we can, and we will make a difference despite of what our background is.

Let us remember that with our special qualities as women also comes a unique responsibility.

Only a woman can bear a child. Only a woman can be a mother. In addition to bearing, nurturing and raising our own children, we share a united responsibility to maintain, uplift and improve each of our hometown cities and nation.

Personally, I feel more confident and have a great feeling of flowing with the time and adjusting with whatever comes in my way and I am enjoying the new and improved womanhood on a day-to-day basis..... Naree tum Shakti ho...

UN's largest gathering on women's rights calls on enhancing women's leadership in public life in the run up to the 2021 Generation Equality Forum

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women called for increasing women's participation and leadership in decision-making to solve global challenges.

NEW YORK (TIP): The 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65), the UN's largest gathering on gender equality and women's rights, opened March 15, as an almost entirely virtual session, with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19



UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said: "This pandemic has been the most directly discriminatory crisis the world has ever seen. It has treated most harshly those most deprived, and affected women's lives across the world."

pandemic in the foreground, and preparing the ground for the forthcoming Generation Equality Forum, which will kick off in Mexico City from 29-31 March.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



AR Rahman to score Heropanti 2

Mozart of Madras and Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman and celebrated lyricist Mehboob have joined the team of Tiger Shroff's upcoming sequel in the Heropanti franchise, Heropanti 2.

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh confirmed the news as he took to Twitter to share the announcement. "AR RAHMAN - MEHBOOB JOIN #HEROPANTI2 TEAM... #ARRahman [music] and #Mehboob [lyrics] come on board for #Heropanti2... Stars #TigerShroff... Directed by #AhmedKhan... Produced by #SajidNadiadwala... 3 Dec 2021 release," the post caption read.

Later in the day, Tiger Shroff also shared the news on his social media and called it an "absolute honor and privilege to work with the legendary maestro."

Tiger had marked his Bollywood debut with the actioner Heropanti in 2014, which was directed by Sabbir Khan.

Tiger had broke the news about sequel of Heropanti 2 with a post on his social media handle that read, "My first love is back action, thrill, like never before! Lets celebrate this one together on the 3rd of December in cinemas."

Kiara confirms she is dating Sidharth Malhotra



There is a rumour in B-town that actors Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani are dating. Although the two have not confirmed their relationship, there are speculations that the actors who will be seen together in the upcoming film Shershaah are together off-screen as well. Now, Kiara Advani has spilled some beans on her dating life and seemingly hinted that the two are indeed together. During an interview

with Filmfare, the actress was asked about what's brewing between her and Sidharth. But Kiara refused to divulge details. Instead, she opened up about a date she went on earlier this year.

Speaking to Filmfare, Kiara said, "Last time I went on a date was... It was sometime this year. And it's been only two months for this year, so you do the math." The Kabir Singh star also opened up about how she would react if she found her boyfriend cheating. The

actor said, "Then I will block him and never look back. No forgetting. I don't go back. That's a complete no-no in a relationship."

Meanwhile, Sidharth Malhotra-led Shershaah, the biopic of Kargil war hero Vikram Batra, is set to release theatrically on July 2. The film, also starring Kiara Advani, has been helmed by Tamil director Vishnu Varadhan, known for films like Arinthum Ariyalum, Pattiyal and Billa.

Sanya Malhotra plays an unusual young widow in Pagglait

The film is focused on Sandhya, played by Sanya, who is a young widow who appears not be coping with the loss of her husband as expected by her family and the events in her life that unfold after the passing of her husband after five short months of her wedding.

Sandhya's whole family is concerned about her well-being who is holed up in her room after the death of her husband.

The widow, however, is a constant surprise who is never shown shedding a tear while others wail around her, eats gol gappas and prefers Pepsi over chai, and is more concerned with the number of comments on the Facebook post about her husband's death.

A large sum of insurance money left behind by Sandhya's husband however does change things. With everyone rushing to determine Sandhya's fate and if she should remarry using the money or not marry and keep the money in the family and much more, Sandhya decides she wants to take charge of her own life.

Despite being a comedy, the trailer does invoke thoughts about what is the right way of expressing grief, or even if there is one?

The story of self discovery of a woman definitely comes from a unique point of reference and one to watch out for. Sanya looks promising in the role surrounded by a variety of seasoned actors like Ashutosh Rana, Raghubir Yadav, Sheeba Chaddha, Sayani Gupta and others.



Govinda says Bollywood 'conspired' against him

Bollywood actor Govinda, in a new interview, has said that certain sections in Bollywood have 'conspired' against him which has led to him being deliberately sidelined, resulting in financial losses for him.

Govinda told The Times of India, "In the last 14-15 years, I have invested money and lost around Rs 16 crores. I was treated badly by some people from the fraternity too. My films didn't get theatres and they wanted to demolish my career, which didn't happen. Now, I am ready to kick-start 2021 in a big way."

The actor also refused to speak badly about the recent 'Coolie No 1' remake starring Varun Dhawan and Sara Ali Khan which made its debut on Amazon Prime Video last year.

Asked if the film shouldn't have been made, Govinda said, "You will never see me speaking against others. While others often like to talk about me, I never talk about their work or judge it because I respect everybody's hard work and money invested."





Kelly Brook launching her own beer

Kelly Brook is launching her own brand of beer. The 41-year-old model has filed a trademark for a new brand of beers and non-alcoholic drinks under her birth name, Kelly Ann Parsons, The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column reports.

Meanwhile, Kelly previously revealed she created a gin bar and a coffee shop inside her home.

She shared: "I've really enjoyed making my home space versatile for my working day and it's really helped to keep me feeling energised and happy."

"You don't need a lot of room, but creating different designated areas for activities, whether it's making a coffee or having a stretch, is a nice way to make use of all your space. I've created different areas in my home dedicated to things I like to do, like a reading corner, a yoga space, a little coffee shop and a gin bar. When I feel organised in my living space it's a total game changer and I've loved presenting my radio show overlooking my garden."

Elliot Page 1st trans man to star on Time magazine cover

Oscar-nominated actor Elliot Page will become the first transgender man to star on the front cover of Time when the magazine's latest edition goes on sale on Friday.

Page, 34, who was nominated for various awards for Oscar-winning 2007 independent film Juno and plays a leading role in the current Netflix hit The Umbrella Academy, announced he was trans in December.

The actor wrote on Instagram at the time that he could not "begin to express how remarkable it feels to finally love who I am enough to pursue my authentic self". Page follows in the footsteps of actor Laverne Cox, who became the first trans woman to appear on the cover of Time, a mark of mainstream media approval, in 2014 under the headline The Transgender Tipping Point.

In his first interview since coming out as a transgender whose preferred pronouns are he and they, Hollywood actor Elliot Page (formerly known as Ellen Page), has opened up about coming to terms with who he actually is, with regard to as an artiste and as a person. He is on the cover of Time magazine in his first interview since disclosing in December that he is transgender.

"Sorry, I'm going to be emotional, but that's cool, right?" Page asked his interviewer.

"What I was anticipating was a lot of support and love and a massive amount of hatred and transphobia. That's essentially what happened," Page said as he spoke about the time when he finally revealed his transgender identity via a lengthy Instagram post.



Rachael Leigh Cook finalises divorce from Daniel Gillies

The 40-year-old actress ended her 15-year marriage to the 'Vampire Diaries' alum - with whom she has Charlotte, seven, and Theodore, five - in June 2019 before officially filing for divorce in July last year, and according to legal documents obtained by TMZ on Wednesday (17.03.21), the former couple have now been declared legally single.

Documents state Rachael has been allowed to keep her own jewellery and designer clothing as part of the divorce settlement, as well as her 2020 Audi Q5 and access to any reward points on her credit cards including frequent flyer miles.

Rachael is also keeping a property in Redondo Beach, California, whilst the Studio City home she owned with Daniel is being sold and profits will be split equally between the pair.

The former couple will share expenses for their two cats and two dogs, and are also sharing joint legal and physical custody of their two children.

Daniel, 45, will get to keep his own jewellery and clothing, as well as a 2019 BMW X6.

Meanwhile, Rachael previously opened up on her new romance with a man named Kevin, who works as a swim coach.



Katherine Heigl undergoes neck surgery for 'excruciating' herniated disc in her neck

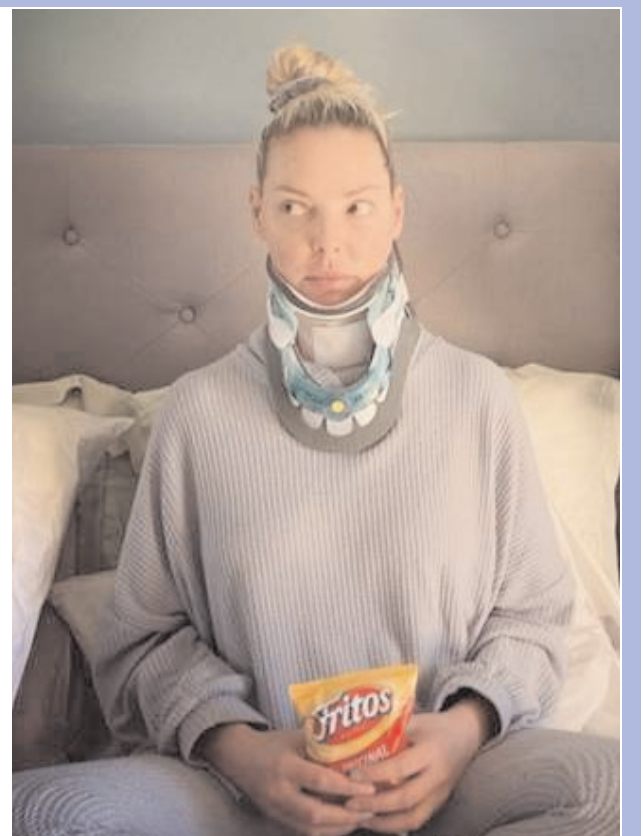
Katherine Heigl has undergone neck surgery after having a herniated disc in her neck.

The 'Firefly Lane' star took to Instagram on Wednesday (17.03.21) to reveal she's now "bionic" after having two titanium discs placed in her neck to help heal her injuries after suffering the "excruciating pain" of a herniated disc, which occurs when a soft cushion of tissue between the bones in the spine pushes out.

Posting pictures of herself in a neck brace, Katherine wrote: "Well...I am now bionic!! Two titanium disk now inhabit my neck and I can probably stand on my head for like hours. I'm not gonna try it just yet but give me a few months and I'll blow your mind!! I am so deeply deeply grateful to the incredible Dr's and care team that saved me from the most excruciating pain I have ever experienced and blessed me with a new pain free lease on life! (sic)"

Katherine went on to thank the doctors who helped nurse her back to health, as well as joking she has been "blessed with the luck of the Irish" on St. Patrick's Day, which also fell on Wednesday.

She continued: "I really feel like they deserve a big giant shoutout of gratitude and appreciation so I'm gonna give it to them! @thebackdoctorapp thank you for treating me like a human being and giving me so much of your time and attention to help me truly understand what to expect and what all my options were."



Athena Film Fest Honors Women's History Month

BY MABEL PAIS

Women's History Month 2021 is celebrated by 'The Athena Film Festival' during the entire month of March 2021

Catch up on several of the films, panels and conversations available until the end of March at athenafilmfestival.com/2021

As an organization dedicated to showcasing the best films about women leaders, the festival team felt compelled to curate a program that receives, reacts and responds to this past year. With all of its programming, the members hope to examine the challenges all around us, celebrate those who have taken up the task to solve them and use this moment as an opportunity to rebuild and envision the kind of world we want to live in.

The areas of focus in the Fest are:

A LOOK AT HEALTH

Physical health, mental health, community health, public health, socioeconomic health - we've thought about it constantly for the past 12 months. In a year where every email starts with "hope you are well," we are asking ourselves "what does it mean to be well?" Why are there so many different ways of talking about health? What does holistic wellness look like? Who has access to health? Do people have autonomy over their health? We'll dive into these questions with films about health, with a focus on the ongoing fights for reproductive rights, justice, and disparities in maternal healthcare.

COME AS YOU ARE

Women, femmes, and trans and non-binary folks are constantly being told how they should look, how they should act and how they should live. For years feminist and queer movements have been breaking down those expectations while also reclaiming things that were once seen as restrictive and stereotypical but now they're powerful but are these things reclaimed or are we just perpetuating old stereotypes OR is it now such a stereotype that the mere act of embodying it makes it subversive? It is so confusing! In this section we throw all of that out the window and celebrate just being who you are, whatever that means to you. Whether that's wearing makeup or not, wearing your natural hair or not, shaving or not. It's all good here as long as it's what you want! Come as you are.

DISCOVERY

Fall in love with new voices. Celebrate the inspiring new works of first time and student filmmakers as they discover and unlock their creativity, and support a filmmaker on the brink of success with our second annual Breakthrough Award. It has been a difficult year for filmmakers with theater closures and production halts - among those hit hardest are emerging filmmakers. But as you'll see here, emerging filmmakers are resilient and the future of the industry is bright.

IMAGINING A NEW FUTURE

When so much has changed so fast, when in the span of just a few weeks, people started talking about the "new normal," how does that change our ideas of what is possible? While so much of this rapid change has been difficult and even traumatizing, it has shown us



Farah Goes Bang



Frozen



AFF Awards - Photos / athenafilmfestival.com

things that things don't have to be the way they were. How do we use this newfound possibility to build a better world? How do we take this new perspective and turn it on institutions or systems that up until now we just accepted as the way things had to be? The future is wide open. What will it look like?

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

This rallying cry, which began in the disability rights movements in South Africa in 1993, has since been applied to multiple movements and causes. In the film community, it has been picked up as a way to discuss authorship. Too often we see new voices represented on screen but not behind the scenes. In this program, we dive into representation. Who is at the center of the story? Who is telling the story? These films examine, celebrate, and dissect representation and visibility as it appears in everyday life and in wider communities. In these times of great change, we must keep this rallying cry ringing in our heads. We must keep asking, who is this change serving and who is leading?

MAKING IT HAPPEN: WOMEN IN STEM

In a world where we're fighting a global pandemic,

staring down the eye of climate change, and on the brink of groundbreaking AI technology, we need the best and brightest leading the way. Too often women are left out, underrepresented or intentionally sidelined in the STEM fields. We're excited to once again partner with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to tell the stories of fierce and fearless women working in STEM. We'll see the discoveries they make and the challenges they face as they uncover the truth about our world and break down social barriers.

RESILIENCE THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

What keeps us going? How do we move into the future when we have no idea what it will look like? Humans, women, leaders are resilient. What does resilience look like? How do we move through the fog of uncertainty and come out on the other side? Through films and conversations we'll investigate and showcase the exhaustion and devastation, and the powerful manifestations of perseverance and hope that keeps people going.

TEAR IT DOWN: DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare that which already plagued our country, including police brutality, structural racism, and economic inequality. We'll take a look at people organizing and taking action to tear down systems of oppression. You'll see stories of activists organizing to fight white supremacy in the many forms it takes, whether that is hair discrimination, mass incarceration, or continued disrespect for indigenous communities and their sacred land.

Panels and Conversations

All panels and conversations are free of charge and open to the general public, but registration is required. Information on how to access the panel will be sent to all registrants in advance of the event.

Use this link to register for panels and conversations of your choice airtable.com/shrmnASUe1HOXH64b

All of the panels and conversations listed below will be pre-recorded and made available on the dates indicated in the list.

The following available conversations include:

This is a featured conversation of the Nothing About Us Without Us program area.

March 20: Producing During and After COVID

The conversation will also include where they see the industry going.

March 20: Writing Roundtable

This is an invitation-only event.

March 23: Deconstructing Whiteness

This is a featured conversation of our Tear it Down: Dismantling White Supremacy program area.

March 23: The Push for Decarceration

This conversation will be in conjunction with The Third Strike.

This is a featured conversation of our Tear it Down: Dismantling White Supremacy program area.

March 25: Creating Utopias: Science Fiction as a Model for Future Planning

This is a featured conversation of our Imagining a New Future program area.

March 25: Black Feminist Future: Reconceiving Freedom for Collective Power and Justice

This is a featured conversation of our Imagining a New Future program area.

To learn more or purchase tickets, visit athenafilmfestival.com/2021

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

NJSO Meets BOLLYWOOD

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players

PERFORM

FREE Bollywood Virtual Concert

March 26, 2021 at 7 PM on ZOOM

Audiences Enjoy Signature Bollywood Music and Insight into Hindi-language Film Industry

Interactive program features a Q&A with NJSO musicians

March 26 at 7 pm on Zoom

Audiences register for FREE event at njsymphony.org/bollywood



(Top) Archana Athalye; (Bottom) James Musto - Photo / Courtesy NJSO

Bollywood, the Hindi-language film industry of India, inspires a free virtual concert featuring the NJSO Chamber Players on March 26 at 7 pm.

"Best of Bollywood" explores historical influences on the growth of Bollywood and offers insights into signature music and lyrics of the genre. Famed works include themes from the Oscar-winning movie "Slumdog Millionaire."

These interactive virtual events-co-hosted by Archana Athalye and James Musto-will include a Q&A with NJSO musicians. The programs feature NJSO violinists Wendy Chen and James Tsao, violist David Blinn, cellist Sarah Seiver and percussionist James Musto.

This is a free Zoom event. Registration is required; audiences can register at njsymphony.org/bollywood

"We are proud to continue our longstanding support of the NJSO for the Diversity & Inclusion Community Initiative. The NJSO's programs are designed to enrich the lives of communities and are well aligned with our goals to support those programs that reach new and diverse audiences with a lasting impact on communities throughout New Jersey," says PSEG Director of Corporate Social Responsibility and President of the PSEG Foundation Calvin Ledford.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO)

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by 'The Wall Street Journal,' the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang-a "dynamic podium presence" 'The New York Times' has praised for her

"The NJSO is incredibly grateful for the commitment and support provided by the PSEG Foundation. Their generosity helps us fulfill our mission in bringing engaging programs to the diverse communities of New Jersey," says NJSO President & CEO Gabriel van Aalst.

"technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"-continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People and the NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez. NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners program.

The Orchestra's online hub for free NJSO Virtual 20-21 content is njsymphony.org/virtual.

Connect with NJSO:

Website: njsymphony.org

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @NJSymphony

YouTube: @NewJerseySymphony

Email: information@njsymphony.org

NJYS HOSTS PLAYATHON

BY MABEL PAIS

NJYS VIRTUAL PLAYATHON

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 3 - 4:30 P.M. EST

"Although we cannot be together in person, the New Jersey Youth Symphony is super excited to present a virtual orchestra of over 300 musicians performing two of our Playathon favorites, 'Can-Can' and 'Superman'. We will also feature newly created virtual performances by our Clarinet Ensemble and Charles Mingus Jazz Combo, as well as video messages from graduating seniors. It will be a true celebration of our beloved NJYS community and beyond!" -Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) hosts a virtual Playathon on Sunday, March 21 from 3:00-4:30 p.m. EST on WhartonArts.tv.

The event will feature virtual ensemble performances, raffles, trivia contests, and interviews with NJYS conductors, as well as a live auction to win the conductor's baton and the chance to conduct the New Jersey Youth Symphony performing John Williams' 'Superman'. WNYC's Weekend Edition and 'The Christie Tracker Podcast' Host David Furst will preside as the event's emcee.



Collage of NJYS Musicians - Photo /CourtesyWIPA/NJYS

The annual fundraiser raises a nearly 6-figure amount for the organization to support performing arts education, including scholarships and tuition assistance for New Jersey's largest youth orchestra program. This year, NJYS students are participating in a practice challenge to help raise funds for the event and have logged 279,500 minutes to date. To support music education at the New Jersey Youth Symphony and the 2021 Playathon, continue to give by texting MUSIC to 74121 or donating online at WhartonArtsDonate.org

NJYS

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), founded in

1979, is a tiered orchestral program offering ensemble education for students in grades 3-12 across New Jersey. NJYS has grown from one orchestra of 65 students to over 500 students in 15 different orchestras and ensembles, including the internationally recognized Youth Symphony. NJYS ensembles have performed in venues including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Carnegie Hall, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. NJYS has received numerous prestigious awards for its adventurous programming from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and has had six European tours, including participation in the Summa Cum Laude International Youth Festival and Competition (Vienna), winning First Prizes in July 2014 and 2017.

WIPA

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) is a program of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA). Wharton is New Jersey's largest non-profit performing arts education organization serving over 1,500 students of all ages and abilities through a range of classes and ensembles. In addition to the New Jersey Youth Symphony, programs include the Paterson Music Project, an El Sistema-inspired program that uses music as a vehicle for social change by empowering and inspiring children through the community experience of ensemble learning and playing in its hometown of Paterson. Beginning with early childhood music classes for toddlers, the Performing Arts School offers 500 private lessons and group classes each week, ensuring there is something for everyone of all ages and abilities.

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

IRS Pushes Tax Deadline Back by One Month

Filers will have until May 17, the agency said Wednesday, March 17

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Internal Revenue Service will give Americans extra time to file their taxes as a result of the pandemic.

Instead of the usual April 15 deadline, filers will instead have until May 17, the agency said Wednesday, an extension that will ease the burden on filers dealing with the economic upheaval caused by the coronavirus, which has put millions out of work or caused their hours to be cut.

"This continues to be a tough time for many people, and the IRS wants to continue to do everything possible to help taxpayers navigate the unusual circumstances related to the pandemic," said Chuck Rettig, the IRS commissioner.

The one-month delay is not as much

extra time as the IRS offered last year, when the filing deadline was pushed to July 15. But it should make it easier for taxpayers to get a handle on their finances - as well as tax changes that took effect just this month with the signing of the American Rescue Plan.

The new law made the first \$10,200 of unemployment benefits received in 2020 tax-free for people with incomes of less than \$150,000, a significant change for many whose jobs were affected by the pandemic. The IRS said last week that it would provide a worksheet for paper filers and coordinate with tax-software companies. The agency also asked those who were eligible for the tax break but had already filed their 2020 returns not to file an amended return until it had issued

additional guidance.

But Mr. Rettig said taxpayers should not unnecessarily delay filing, especially if they will be receiving money back.

"Filing electronically with direct deposit is the quickest way to get refunds," he said. (Taxpayers who file electronically can generally expect to receive any refund within 21 days.)

The IRS emphasized that the extra time is only for federal returns, not state returns, so taxpayers should check with their state tax agencies about any deadline changes. It also does not apply to estimated tax payments that are due on April 15, which are still due on that day.

Filing quickly also can benefit people whose 2020 income makes them newly eligible for a stimulus payment, or



"This continues to be a tough time for many people, and the IRS wants to continue to do everything possible to help taxpayers navigate the unusual circumstances related to the pandemic," said Chuck Rettig, the IRS commissioner.

eligible for a larger one. (The latest stimulus bill includes a provision for the Treasury Department to make supplemental payments by September; if you don't get one by then, you should be able to claim what you're owed when you file your 2021 taxes.)

(Source: NY Times)

The IRS is behind in processing nearly 7 million tax returns, slowing refunds as it implements new stimulus

- IRS commissioner says he hopes to clear tax refund backlog by summer
- Lawmakers told him Americans need the refunds as a lifeline during the pandemic.

WASHINGTON (TIP): Nearly 7 million tax filers are in limbo and facing substantial delays in getting refunds so far this tax filing season, as the Internal Revenue Service struggles to keep up with the demands of issuing stimulus checks and implementing myriad tax code changes from coronavirus relief packages, including the one President Biden signed this week.

There are 6.7 million returns that have not yet been processed, more than three times the number in the same period last year, when fewer than 2 million returns faced delayed processing, IRS data shows.

The delays are largely a result of a year's worth of extraordinary stimulus measures that have created more complicated tax returns for millions of Americans. The IRS was already straining to adjust after the December stimulus package. The newest package, the American Rescue Plan, adds even more tasks for the agency, including sending out another round of one-time payments, making changes to tax rules to help unemployed workers and paying out a new child tax benefit.

Many Americans who did not receive the correct stimulus payments in January or last year are filing for additional money now. And some low-income filers are newly eligible for more tax credits than usual. The IRS is having to manually review a lot of these returns, a slow process that is delaying refunds for millions of low-income families, after the agency has faced a decade's worth of budget cuts and staffing losses.

More than 100 people still waiting for the IRS to process their returns shared their stories with The Washington Post. Most filed electronically on Feb. 12, when the IRS opened tax filing season. They were eager to get their refunds and to update their information with the IRS ahead of the \$1,400 stimulus payments going out. But a month later, many of these early filers are still waiting for their returns to be processed - and their refunds to be deposited.

"I'm supposed to get a \$5,600 refund. I absolutely need



that money, and the IRS just won't give me any answers," said Frances Johnson, a single mother in Burlington, Wash., who filed on Feb. 12 and needs the money to repair her car. "When I call, they say I will have to wait until the end of April."

The main two issues to emerge so far this tax filing season are a large number of returns being sent for manual review and the malfunctioning of the popular "Where's My Refund?" tool for weeks. The tool was fixed last weekend, the IRS confirmed, but the processing delays persist.

National Taxpayer Advocate Erin Collins has been urging the IRS to let people know why returns are delayed. She is also concerned that the processing delays could get even worse if millions of people who already filed their taxes have to file amended returns to benefit from the changes Congress just enacted.

For example, unemployed workers could see tax breaks, because Congress agreed to make the first \$10,200 of unemployment benefits received from the government in 2020 nontaxable.

The backlog is severe for any tax return requiring a manual review by an experienced IRS staffer. Amended returns typically require a manual review, and many of the 6.7 million returns that have yet to be processed are also sitting in line for a manual review, according to Collins.

The IRS said that 36 million refunds have gone out so far and that the agency is moving as fast as it can to get stimulus payments out in the coming days, all while

processing more returns.

"While the IRS issues most tax refunds within 21 days of the filing season start, it's possible some refunds may take longer," said IRS spokesman Robert Marvin. "Many factors can affect the timing of your refund after we receive your return. Some tax returns take longer to process than others. For example, returns with an error, incomplete information or those affected by theft or fraud may take longer to process."

Marvin said the IRS would send taxpayers letters if more information is needed to process a return.

Jacob White is one of the frustrated Americans desperate for a refund to arrive, so that he can pay March rent. He and his girlfriend both filed their tax returns on the same day: Feb. 12. Her refund arrived two weeks later. He has not seen his, and the IRS reports that it is still "processing."

An IRS call center agent told White on Wednesday that "over 7 million returns were sent to the Error Resolution System to buy time."

"It's just the wrong time for all of this. People need the money," White said. "My rent and my car payment are due next week, and the electric."

The Error Resolution System is the group involved in the manual review of returns. Most years, it deals mainly with returns that are flagged as potentially fraudulent, but this year millions of returns claiming stimulus money or involving the earned-income tax credit or the child tax credit have also gone to the error department. Most of these filers are low-income families who lost a job or who had a new baby in 2020, and should have received stimulus checks based on those events but did not.

"We had a 2020 baby, and we also had our income drop in 2020, so we claimed that we had missed out on some stimulus," said Caitlyn Primiano, who lives in Syracuse, N.Y., with her husband and five children. "The IRS is telling everyone like me that their returns are in the 'review and errors' department and to expect 10 weeks."

The other problem is that Congress said low-income tax filers could use either 2019 or 2020 income to qualify for the highest possible tax credits for children. IRS systems have struggled to handle two different years of income qualification.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Senators ask Blinken to raise farmers issue, say Indians will determine path ahead on new laws

WASHINGTON (TIP): Observing that it is for the people and the Government of India to determine the path forward on its recently enacted farm laws, two top Democratic senators have urged Secretary of State Antony Blinken to raise the issue of treatment of peaceful farmer protesters and journalists.

In a letter to Blinken, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Thursday urged the Biden administration to further engage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government over its treatment of farmers in India who have been peacefully demonstrating against the passage of new farm laws.

"India is a long-term strategic partner with deep ties to the United States, thanks to our many shared values and our large and valued Indian American community. In light of these shared values and strong connections, we write with serious concern regarding the response of the Indian government to the farmer protests," Menendez and Schumer wrote in their joint letter to Blinken.

In their letter, released to the press, the two senators urged Blinken to raise the importance of freedom of speech and the right to peaceful protest in conversations with his Indian counterparts and to ensure that State Department officials at all levels do so as well.

After becoming the Secretary of State, Blinken has spoken with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar multiple times. The



readouts of the phone calls do not indicate that Blinken raised this issue, under pressure from his party men, with Jaishankar. The Biden administration has insisted that the two countries share democratic values.

Schumer and Menendez said the months-long demonstrations have been met with orders from the central government and local authorities to shut off internet access in protest areas, cut off water and electricity supplies for the tens of thousands living in protest camps, and impede the work of journalists reporting on the protests.

"India's people and government will determine the path forward on these laws, and peaceful dialogue and respect for the viewpoints of all peaceful actors should drive that

decision. As the US pursues a more perfect union here at home, including efforts to bolster the rule of law and our democracy, those efforts reinforce the importance of addressing challenges to democracies abroad as well," the Senators wrote.

The letter by Schumer and Menendez comes a day after the latter wrote a similar letter to Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, who is visiting India this week.

There has been no response from either Austin or Blinken if they plan to raise these issues with their Indian counterparts, especially when the Biden administration is going out of its way in its outreach with the Modi government given the serious challenge it is facing from China.

Source: PTI

Tikri farmers shun jab, to be sensitised

JHAJJAR (TIP): Despite the best efforts of the district health authorities, farmers camping at the Tikri-Bahadurgarh border have so far been reluctant to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

For the second consecutive day today, no farmer turned up for vaccination at a booth set up at the protest site. The dismal response has forced the health authorities to plan holding an awareness campaign at Tikri. "We have been contacting farmers for vaccination, but they refuse to take jab. They often claim that the Covid-19 pandemic is nothing but a conspiracy of the Centre to divert the public attention," said an official.

Parminder Singh of Moga claimed no farmer had been infected for three months at the stir site hence there was no need for vaccination.

"The issue will be discussed in the next meeting of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha to take a final call in this regard," said Purushottam Singh Gill, a senior BKU leader.

Civil Surgeon Dr Sanjay Dahiya said efforts were being made to convince the protesters.

Dr Vinay Deswal, Senior Medical Officer, said health officials had been directed to meet the farmers to motivate them. No one had been vaccinated, he added.

Source: The Tribune



Farmers construct permanent shelter as the summer season approaches, during their ongoing agitation against Centres three agri-laws, at Tikri border in New Delhi. Photo source: PTI

Farmers' protest to continue through harvest season

NEW DELHI (TIP): The farmers protesting at Delhi's borders plan to keep the movement alive during the upcoming harvest season with the help of supporters from other walks of life in an example of building solidarities across professions.

With the harvest season upon them, farmers from Punjab and Haryana are under pressure to return to their fields. But Darshan Pal of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) said that various unions and groups had already committed to sending people in batches to occupy the protest sites during this period.

This is just one instance of the broader coalition sought to be built, against not just the three contentious farm laws but also the labour codes and bank privatisation.

It is with this end in view that progressive mass organisations, including trade unions and student associations, participated in a meeting organised by the SKM at the Singhu border on Wednesday to ensure the success of the Bharat Bandh called by farmers on March 26.

The farmers' unions, particularly from Punjab, are up in arms also over a new order from the Food Corporation of India asking peasants to furnish land records for direct transfer of the minimum support price to their bank accounts for the rabi marketing season. The SKM has asked farmers not to provide the documents to the government in a show of non-cooperation.

Insider advises Modi to bring in law on MSP

Satyapal Malik, the Meghalaya governor handpicked by the Narendra Modi dispensation, has pitched for a law on the minimum support price and warned the Centre of consequences if the government tries to suppress the farmers' protest and send them back empty-handed.

Malik's voice holds significance as he belongs to the ruling stable and hails from western Uttar Pradesh, the epicentre of the farm protests along with Punjab and Haryana.

"When I saw what was happening in the matter of farmers, I couldn't stop myself. I spoke and I told both the Prime Minister and home minister that 'One, don't send them back empty-handed because the sardars remember it for 300 years. Second,



Satyapal Malik

don't use force against them'," Malik told a felicitation at a school in Baghpat, western Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday. Malik had studied in the village school.

Malik, who joined the BJP in 2004 after stints in the socialist camp and the Congress, was picked as governor of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2018, a move indicative of his proximity to Modi and Shah.

It was during his stint as governor that the Centre decided to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Later, he was transferred to Goa and then to Meghalaya.

Malik, who had spoken in favour of the protesting farmers earlier too, said he was "ready to go to any extent" for the farmers since he belonged to a farmer family and knew well the problems they faced.

Malik warned the Centre against committing the mistake of ignoring the farmers and echoed their demand for a law on the minimum support price, underscoring that "Kisan bahut bure haal me hai desh me".

"Make a law on the MSP and the farmers will be ready for other amendments the government wants," he said, urging the Centre not to allow the protest to drag on.



Tanzania's Prez Magufuli dies

NAKURU (KENYA) (TIP): President John Magufuli of Tanzania, a prominent Covid-19 skeptic in Africa whose populist rule often cast his East African country in a harsh international spotlight, has died.

He was 61. Magufuli's death was announced on Wednesday by Vice-President Samia Suluhu, who said the president died of heart failure. "Our beloved president passed on at 6 pm this evening," said Suluhu on national television. "All flags will be flown at half-mast for 14 days. It is sad news. The president has had this illness for the past 10 years." The vice president said that Magufuli died at a hospital in Dar es Salaam, the Indian Ocean port that is Tanzania's largest city. Although the Vice-President said the cause of Magufuli's death was heart failure, opposition politicians had earlier alleged that he had Covid. — AP

China busts \$770 million refined oil smuggling ring in massive swoop

BEIJING (TIP): China foiled criminals seeking to smuggle nearly 1 million tonnes of refined oil worth 5 billion yuan (\$770 million), with officials seizing 11 ships and detaining 171 suspects in a sprawling swoop on Tuesday, customs authorities said.

The operation, which saw customs officers from the port city of Ningbo join forces with local law enforcement and maritime police, spanned eight Chinese regions, including the coastal provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Shandong and Fujian, the General Administration of Customs said in a statement.

A total of 14 gangs were busted on Tuesday, the agency added. It was not immediately clear if the gangs were trying to smuggle the oil into or out of the country. China is Asia's biggest refiner and consumer of oil products such as gasoline and diesel.

Customs authorities described the swoop as "one of the most extensive operations" to combat refined oil smuggling along China's southeast coast in recent years, in terms of area.

Such smuggling disrupts the retail fuel market, brings serious safety hazards and causes pollution, it said, adding that smuggled refined oil was of inferior quality and had a sulphur content that greatly exceeded stipulated limits. The customs agency said it had launched a coordinated nationwide campaign against refined oil smuggling in August last year, focusing on hotspots like the Pearl River and Yangtze River Deltas and had recorded 170 cases involving products worth 5.4 billion yuan by the end of February. Reuters

South Africa has world's most dangerous roads: Study

JOHANNESBURG (TIP): South Africa has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in while India came in at a fourth place, according to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi.

Among the list of 56 countries in the study, Thailand came in the second position and the US took up the third spot.

The safest roads in the world can be found in Norway, with its Scandinavian neighbour Sweden having the third safest roads while Japan took second place, according to the study.

"We analysed each country on five factors, giving each one a normalised score out of ten for each factor, before taking an average final score across all five factors," Zutobi said.

These factors included estimates on the number of road traffic deaths per 100,000 population; the percentage of car occupants who use a seat-belt when travelling in the front of a vehicle; and



the proportion of road traffic deaths that have been attributed to alcohol consumption over the national legal limit.

These estimates were based on the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory data repository.

The maximum speed limit on motorway and blood alcohol content restrictions in the various countries were also taken into account.

But Zutobi's findings have been challenged by the Justice Project SA (JPSA), an NGO that aims to improve road traffic laws and their enforcement

in South Africa.

JPSA Chairperson Howard Dembovsky, while agreeing that South Africans tended to be poor drivers, said that Zutobi had used outdated figures in its study.

Dembovsky also queried why South Africa was the only African country on its list.

"So to accuse us of being the worst in the world is a little bit unfair. If you are going to talk about the worst countries in the world, then you need to adopt a balanced approach," Dembovsky said as he commented on poor driving in his country in an interview with radio station Cape Talk.

"(South African drivers) do have a shocking road safety record. As much as I would not place much reliance on that so-called study, there is still plenty of evidence to show that South Africans are dangerous drivers and inconsiderate drivers and have very little regard for the safety of others on our roads," he said. PTI

Actor Johnny Depp seeks appeal in UK wife beater libel case

LONDON (TIP): Hollywood star Johnny Depp will seek permission on Thursday to appeal against his defeat in a London libel case last year over a tabloid article that labelled him a wife beater.

High Court Judge Andrew Nicol ruled last November that Depp had violently assaulted his ex-wife Amber Heard during their tempestuous five-year relationship, at times putting her in fear for her life.

That decision came after three weeks of hearings where the court heard sensational claim and counter-claim from Depp, 57, and Heard, 34, about violent outbursts that each accused the other of committing.

Depp, star of films including 'Pirates of the Caribbean' and 'Edward Scissorhands', had gone to the London court to sue The Sun newspaper and one of its journalists over an article that stated he had been violent towards Heard.

"I have found that the great majority of alleged assaults of Ms Heard by Mr Depp have been proved to the civil standard," said Nicol in his November ruling.

In the aftermath, Depp's lawyers said the ruling was so flawed it would be ridiculous for him not to appeal.

They said it was "troubling" the judge had relied on Heard's testimony while



rejecting the evidence of police officers, her former assistant and other witnesses

which they said had undermined her evidence.

On Thursday, Depp's legal team will apply for permission to appeal, and to rely on further evidence. The hearing, expected to last for about two hours, will be livestreamed on the Court of Appeal's YouTube channel.

Following Nicol's verdict, seen as being highly damaging to his career, Depp was asked to leave the 'Fantastic Beasts' franchise, the movie spin-offs from the 'Harry Potter' books and films.

During the libel trial last summer, Heard said Depp would turn into a jealous alter ego, "the monster", after bingeing on drugs and alcohol and had often threatened to kill her.

Heard detailed 14 occasions of extreme violence when she said the actor choked, punched, slapped, head-butted, throttled and kicked her, with Nicol accepting 12 of these accounts were true, including an assault after her 30th birthday party and another incident which left her with black eyes.

The couple met while making 'The Rum Diary' in 2011 and married four years later, but divorced in 2016.

Depp had told the court he was never violent towards his ex-wife, saying her claims were a hoax and portraying her as a gold-digger. But Nicol rejected his version of events.

Depp has also filed a \$50 million defamation lawsuit against Heard in a Virginia court over an opinion piece she wrote in The Washington Post.

— Reuters

Burglars, thieves, robbers to be fitted with GPS tags in UK

LONDON (TIP): Burglars, thieves and robbers released from prison will be made to wear GPS tags to track their movements in a world-first scheme to crack down on neighbourhood criminals, the UK government announced on March 18.

Under the new rules, such offenders who have served a prison sentence of a year or more will be automatically fitted with a tag on release, allowing their whereabouts to be monitored by GPS satellites 24 hours a day for up to 12 months.

With more than half of those convicted of theft and burglary reoffending within a year and almost 80 per cent of cases resulting in no suspect being identified, the Ministry of Justice said the new scheme will be a vital extra source of intelligence to help police catch these persistent offenders.

"Being burgled or robbed is devastating and I understand how frustrating it is when the perpetrators can't be caught, both for the public and the police," said Kit Malthouse, UK Minister for Crime and Policing.

"Tagging these prolific offenders so we know where they are 24 hours a day should be powerful persuasion to change



their ways and will help police find and charge them if they don't. It's another tool helping probation staff to cut crime and keep the public safe," he said.

Police will be able to work with the Prison and Probation Service staff to investigate whether those on the tags have been in the vicinity of recent burglaries, thefts and robberies.

It is hoped that this would provide the crucial evidence needed to catch the perpetrators.

The intention is the tags will also act as a deterrent, protecting people from further burglaries and thefts and forcing "career criminals" to choose a more honest way of making a living.

The Ministry of Justice said it is hoped this novel approach will reduce the estimated 4.8 billion pounds burden

such crimes place on the taxpayer every year.

"Tagging prolific offenders provides a strong deterrent and means officers will be able to quickly arrest and gather evidence against anyone suspected of being involved in a robbery, burglary or other theft," Deputy Chief Constable Jon Stratford, National Police Chief's Council Electronic Monitoring Lead.

"This scheme will play a part in our overall work to prevent crime and keep our communities safe," he said.

The scheme will initially launch in six England police force areas of Avon and Somerset, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside and West Midlands on April 12 and it is estimated 250 offenders will be tagged in the first six months. It will then be extended to a further 13 areas in September.

Police officers will be able to submit any burglaries, thefts or robberies they are investigating to a dedicated unit overseen by the Prison and Probation Service.

Trained staff will then be able to check the location history of those on tags against the details of the crime, allowing police to either rule out or investigate suspects further. PTI

In landmark ruling, Japan court says not allowing same-sex marriage is 'unconstitutional'

TOKYO (TIP): A Japanese court ruled on March 18 that not allowing same-sex couples to marry is "unconstitutional," setting a precedent in the only G7 nation not to fully recognise same-sex partnership.

The ruling by a district court, the first in Japan on the legality of same-sex marriages, is a major symbolic victory in a country where the constitution still defines marriage as being based on "the mutual consent of both sexes".

While a new law will be needed before same-sex marriages can actually take place -- which could take some time in socially conservative Japan -- LGBT activists celebrated the ruling and said it had the potential to change their lives.

"I'm really happy. Until the ruling was announced, we didn't know this was what we'd get and I'm just overjoyed," said 44-year old Gon Matsunaka, director of activist group Marriage for All Japan and representative at Pride House Tokyo.

"Its value is absolutely measureless."

While Japanese law is relatively liberal by Asian standards, social attitudes have kept the LGBT community largely invisible in the world's third largest economy. Under the current rules, same-sex couples are not allowed to marry, can't inherit their partner's assets -- such as the house they may have shared -- and also have no parental rights over their partners' children. Though partnership certificates issued by individual municipalities help same-sex couples to rent a place together and have hospital visitation rights, they still don't give them the same full legal rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples.

The Sapporo District Court threw out the demand for damages by the six plaintiffs -- two couples of men and one of women -- who had asked that the Japanese government pay 1 million yen (\$9,168.42) each in acknowledgment of the pain they suffered by not being able to legally marry. But the "unconstitutional" ruling was the victory the plaintiffs, their lawyers and activists had been hoping for as a key step forward and one that sets an important precedent.

Similar cases are currently being heard in four other courts around Japan and this ruling may indirectly influence the outcome of those by changing public opinion, Matsunaka added. While homosexual sex has been legal in Japan since 1880, social stigma means many have yet to come out even to their families. Some in the business world say Japanese rules not allowing same-sex marriage hurts the country's competitive advantage, by making it difficult for companies, especially foreign companies, to attract and keep highly-skilled labour in an increasingly international economy. Reuters

EU sets out virus pass plan to allow free travel by summer

BRUSSELS (TIP): With summer looming and tourism-reliant countries anxiously waiting for the return of a steady influx of tourism income amid the coronavirus pandemic, the European Union's executive body presented a proposal March 18 that would allow European citizens and residents -- vaccinated or not -- to travel freely across the 27-nation region by the summer.

The plan, which will be discussed next week during a summit of EU leaders, foresees the creation of vaccine certificates aimed at facilitating travel from one member state to the other.

The topic has been discussed for weeks and proved to be divisive. The travel industry and southern European countries dependent on tourism like Greece and Spain have been pushing for the quick introduction of the measure, which could help avoid quarantines and testing requirements.

But several member states, including France, argued that it would be premature and discriminatory to introduce such passes since a large majority of EU citizens haven't had access to vaccines so far.

According to data compiled by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, less than 5 per cent of European citizens have been fully vaccinated amid delays in deliveries and



production of vaccines. The European Commission, however, remains confident it can achieve its goal that 70 per cent of the EU adult population is vaccinated by the end of the summer.

To secure the adhesion of all member states, the commission proposed that its so-called Digital Green Certificates, which should be free of charge, would be delivered to EU residents who can prove they have been vaccinated, but also to those who tested negative for the virus or have proof they recovered from it.

"Being vaccinated will not be a precondition to travel," the commission said. "All EU citizens have a fundamental right to free movement in the EU and this applies regardless of whether they are vaccinated or not. The Digital Green Certificate will make it easier to exercise that right, also through testing and

recovery certificates."

The commission proposed that all vaccines rubberstamped by the European Medicines Agency should be automatically recognized, but also offered governments the possibility to include vaccines like Russia's Sputnik or China's Sinovac, which haven't received EU market authorisation.

The European Commission guaranteed that "a very high level of data protection will be ensured" and said the certificates will be issued in digital format to be shown either on smartphones or paper.

EU officials also hope that vaccine certificates will convince the member states which have introduced travel restrictions aimed at slowing down the pace of new infections to lift their measures.

The EU's executive arm has previously warned six countries that their travel-limiting measures, which in Belgium go as far as a ban on nonessential trips, could undermine the core EU principle of free travel and damage the single market.

The commission said the certificates should be suspended once the World Health Organization declares the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If agreed by the EU leaders, the proposal will need to be approved by EU lawmakers to enter into force. AP

WHO warns against premature easing of curbs

Hans Kluge, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Director for Europe, has warned countries against premature easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

Kluge's warning on Thursday, March 18, came as the region has been witnessing a rise in Covid-19 transmission rates, while its death toll was inching towards the 1 million mark, Xinhua news agency.

Addressing a virtual press conference here, Kluge noted that "while 27 countries are currently in a partial or full nationwide lockdown, 21 are gradually easing restrictive measures".

"Some are doing so based on the assumption that increasing vaccination uptake in countries would immediately lead to an improved epidemiological situation," he said.

"Such assumptions are too early to make."

Kluge stressed that with vaccination coverage in the region ranging from less than 1 per cent to 44 per cent, it is "far too early to demonstrate the effect of vaccines on overall Covid-19 hospitalisation and deaths".

Despite "giant scientific leaps and the introduction of effective tools that give us power over the virus", the WHO official acknowledged that in parts of the region, such as central Europe, the Balkans and the Baltic states, "case incidence, hospitalizations and deaths are now among the highest in the world".

US threatens new sanctions over Nord Stream 2 pipeline

The US government has threatened new sanctions against companies involved in the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, urging them to pull out of the German-Russian project.

The US State Department "reiterates its warning that any entity involved in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline risks US sanctions and should immediately abandon work on the pipeline", said Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a statement on Thursday.

He added that the Department is tracking efforts to complete the pipeline and "evaluating information regarding entities that appear to be involved" in the project.

Nord Stream 2 is a "bad deal for Germany, for Ukraine, and for our Central and Eastern European allies and partners", Blinken said.

"As multiple US administrations have made clear, this pipeline is a Russian geopolitical project intended to divide Europe."

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 121.7 mn

In its latest update on Friday, March 19, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 121,714,255 and 2,689,898, respectively.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 29,664,869 and 539,659, respectively, according to the CSSE.

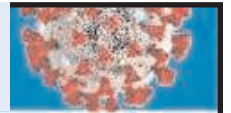
Brazil follows in the second place with 11,780,820 cases and 287,499 fatalities.

The other countries with more than a million confirmed coronavirus cases are India (11,474,605), Russia (4,378,656), the UK (4,294,327), France (4,241,963), Italy (3,306,711), Spain (3,212,332), Turkey (2,950,603), Germany (2,628,629), Colombia (2,319,293), Argentina (2,226,753), Mexico (2,175,462), Poland (1,984,248), Iran (1,778,645), Ukraine (1,553,659), South Africa (1,533,961), Indonesia (1,443,853), Czech Republic (1,439,019), Peru (1,435,598) and the Netherlands (1,196,045), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Mexico comes in the third place with 195,908 fatalities.

Nations with a death toll of over 50,000 are India (159,216), the UK (126,163), Italy (103,855), Russia (92,266), France (91,833), Germany (74,271), Spain (72,910), Colombia (61,636), Iran (61,581), Argentina (54,386) and South Africa (51,724).

TRACKING THE VIRUS



GLOBAL

Cases **121,714,255** | Deaths **2,689,898**

INDIA

Cases **11,514,331** | Deaths **1,59,370**



India sees sharpest five-day rise in COVID-19 cases in 10 months

NEW DELHI (TIP): In the past five days, India has witnessed its sharpest rise in COVID-19 cases in at least the last 10 months. On Thursday, March 18, the daily cases almost touched 40,000 with 39,670 new infections in the past 24 hours. This was the highest single-day spike in November last year.

In the last five days, the average of daily cases has been growing by more than five per cent. Previously, the daily growth of over five per cent was seen from May 19 to May 22, according to a report in the Times of India.

Maharashtra on Thursday recorded 25,833 new coronavirus cases, the highest one-day spike since last March when the first coronavirus infection was detected. The earlier record was 24,886 cases, reported on September 11 last year.

Additionally, 15 other states and union territories have also reported their highest single-day caseloads since September 2020. Punjab reported 2,387 fresh cases—highest since September 19. Chandigarh also reported its highest tally of cases at 211 since September 25.

Daily cases were up in other states as well, including Gujarat (1,276), Tamil Nadu (989), Madhya Pradesh (917), Haryana (633), Delhi (607), Uttar Pradesh (321), Rajasthan (32), West Bengal (323), Himachal Pradesh (171), Jammu and Kashmir (140), Jharkhand (97), and



Puducherry (81).

COVID-19-related deaths have also seen a surge but not at the same pace as the spurt in cases. India reported more than 150 fatalities for three straight days.

Separately, the total number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in

the country has crossed 3.89 crore, according to the Union Health Ministry. So far, 76,19,786 healthcare and 78,11,126 frontline workers got the first dose, while 46,92,962 healthcare and 21,50,198 frontline workers have received the second dose.

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Skincare tips before, after and during workouts

We all know that workouts are great for the body and mind, but did you know that they are equally good for the skin, too? Regular workouts leave your skin feeling fresh and glowing. However, not many realise that certain skincare mistakes may be responsible for not letting the skin breathe, which is why you might be missing out on a post-workout glow.

Pre-workout session

- **Cleanse:** You're more likely to experience a breakout if you start your workout with dirty skin. Remove your makeup with an oil-based cleanser and then with a gentle cleanser.
- **Moisturise and apply sunscreen:** Apply your moisturiser and lip balm, as your lips can feel dry and chapped after a workout along with a sunscreen with at least SPF 30.

During workout session

- **Do not touch your face:** All the germs and bacteria from the workout equipment can cause acne and even bacterial infection. So consciously keep your hands off your face while working out.



- **Wipe off the sweat:** Don't wipe or rub your face against your clothes as it can lead to rashes and itchiness. Instead, use a soft towel and pat on the skin to get the sweat off.
- **Hydrate:** Keep drinking water during your workout. If you do not drink enough water, you may experience symptoms like dehydration, dry mouth, lack of sweating etc.

Post-workout session

- **Always clean your face after a workout:** Use a gentle

cleanser that works for your skin type. Keeping a sweat-free face can prevent the pores from clogging.

- **Don't ignore the body:** Post-workout toxins usually get soaked into clothes. Ideally, one should take a quick shower and change into clean clothes.
- **Moisturise:** Skin can feel flushed and red following a workout due to heat from exercise. Apply a gentle moisturiser following your cleanse to help soothe the skin with a sunscreen.

Source: Indian Express

Long-distance relationship? Follow these mantras to stay close to your partner

It is normal for couples to feel a little distant and detached when in a long-distance relationship. These feelings also bring a few doubts as to whether they are with 'the one', and if their significant other is 'worth waiting for', or is 'feeling the same way'.

While the concept of long-distance is not new, technology has made it easier for people to connect and stay in touch with their partner, even if they are in another continent and time zone. But despite that, if you are struggling right now to sustain your relationship and looking for ways to keep it stable and fun, counselling psychologist at Fortis Hospital Mulund, HIRAK PATEL, shares a few coping mechanisms. Read on.

- **Mutual acceptance:** Acceptance that in this phase, the person is not going to be around you physically. Accept the reason behind getting into this phase, the variable reasons could be due to a job switch, financial needs, family circumstances or any other. Acceptance would make the couple sail through the phase smoothly and keep the lamp of hope burning.
- **Communication is key:** Communication becomes a key aspect when people are in a long-distance relationship. Truthful communication and giving enough space is important. One needs to understand there is some leeway that needs to be given. Communicate because you feel like it and do not force yourself into it. Sharing things about each other's day can help in maintaining a crucial connection even from afar.
- **Stay balanced:** Make sure your dependence and independence are well-balanced. Ensure your partner knows how much you need them, but don't cling, as that can make your partner feel trapped.
- **Use technology:** Video call, writing an email, surprising through letters, online gifting are good ways to maintain excitement in the relationship, and stay connected.



- **Encourage listening:** Show immediate appreciation when they listen to you properly and show interest when they are talking. You need to stay connected by sharing.
- **Do activities together:** There is a need to explore and experience things together, but in a long-distance relationship, it becomes difficult. Doing activities like watching a movie at the same time, virtually-cooking together, or exploring one's day virtually can help. Also, plan a holiday together as well.
- **Maintain trust:** Trust is the foundation of all strong relationships. Even if there is a physical distance, attachment and emotional connection can be sustained effectively. Trusting the partner becomes an important aspect for a relationship to sustain and thrive in distance.

Source: Indian Express



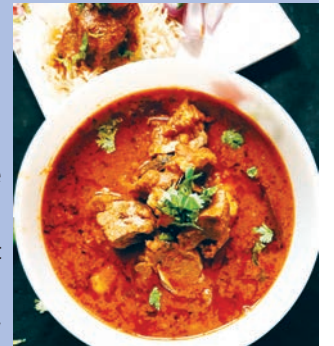
By Tript Arora

CONNOISSEUR'S CHOICE



Mutton curry

Mutton Curry is lamb cooked with flavourful spices in onion and tomato gravy. Though it is cooked in many delectable versions, Punjabi Mutton Curry is simple and tasty. The whole spices are sauteed in pure ghee or mustard oil and then cooked with onions, ginger garlic and tomato gravy. I prefer to cook it in mustard oil which gives a sharp flavour to this dish. I also prefer to cook my mutton Curry with bones. Since it adds flavour and juice to the Curry. The best meat is of the front leg of the lamb which is tender and juicy. The most asked question is why the mutton remains chewy. If we don't pressure cook it for the required time, it doesn't cook well and becomes chewy. It should be slow cooked for best results. Serve it with jeera rice on a Sunday brunch and delight yourself with this simple and flavourful recipe.



We need

500 gm Mutton with bones, 2 Tbsp fresh Curd, 3 Medium Onions, 2 Medium Tomatoes, 8 Cloves of Garlic, 2" Ginger piece, 2 Green Chillies, 2 Tbsp Kasuri Methi, 1 Tbsp Turmeric, 1 Tbsp Red Chilli Powder, 1 Tbsp Coriander Powder, 1 Tsp Garam Masala, 1 Tsp Kashmiri Red Chilli powder, 2 Bay leaves, 4 Cloves, 2 Green Cardamoms, 1" Cinnamon stick, 1 Black Cardamom, 1 Tbsp Cumin Powder, 1 Tbsp salt or to taste, 5 Tbsp Mustard Oil.

Here we go

- Wash Mutton thoroughly under running water and then put it in a sieve to drain water completely.
- Add fresh curd to the mutton along with ½ Tbsp salt and red chilli powder. Mix well and set aside.
- Grind onion to a fine paste. Also grind ginger, garlic and green chillies separately. Make puree of tomatoes also and set aside.
- In a pressure cooker add mustard oil and heat it till it smokes. Let it cool. When cooled, put it again on flame and add cumin seeds, black & green cardamom, cloves, bay leaves and cinnamon sticks. Saute till cumin seeds splutter.
- Add onion paste to these whole spices and saute till onions turn light brown in colour. Add ginger garlic paste to the onions and saute again till it leaves oil.
- Add tomato puree and ½ tsp salt, turmeric powder, coriander powder, kashmiri Red chilli powder and garam masala powder. Saute till it leaves oil. Add kasuri methi and mix.
- Add marinated mutton to this onion & tomato masala. Saute till it leaves oil and gets aromatic. Mutton juices are also sealed. It will take 5 to 7 minutes. Keep the flame on low during the process.
- Add around 600 ml of water to the mutton and close the lid of the pressure cooker. Keep the flame on high.
- After 1 whistle, turn the flame on low and continue cooking for 15 minutes. Oh, it smells so good. After 15 minutes turn off the flame and let the pressure release on its own. When the pressure is released, open the pressure cooker and serve your mutton Curry with jeera rice or chapati. Enjoy your Sunday Lunch.

Preparation Time : 15 minutes.

Cooking Time : 45 minutes.

Tips: Grind the onions to a fine paste for smooth gravy. Add a little water if required for grinding.

First wash mutton and marinate with curd, red pepper and salt and then start with the gravy preparation as the mutton will get marinated side by side till you prepare the gravy. It will save time.

Always keep the flame on low after the first whistle as the slow cooked mutton is tender and delicious.

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The real reasons behind the declining rate of women fertility

The biological ticking starts when a woman reaches 25, pushing the women to get married and have a child. But this decline is a silver lining in a woman's life because it shows that now she has full control over her choices and pregnancy decisions than ever. We believe that the decline in fertility is a reflection of women empowerment as women are openly opting for various fertility treatments. Besides empowerment, economic stress is also a major reason for falling fertility rates in a developing nation like India.

Dual incomes are needed

In order to have a comfortable and stress-free life, the expenses of a home today cost more than three times as compared to the times of our mother's era.

Now, both the members of the house need to be working. Couples these days don't have the bandwidth to afford more than one children. Sometimes, in order to support their partner's women also keep delaying their pregnancy till they have strong financial support for child's care. Even the daycare expense of a child is quite high and according to a survey the average cost of infant care is approximately Rs 50,000 – Rs 90,000 per year. To afford housing, food and other miscellaneous expenses, now the female partners also need to have a strong financial back-up before starting a family.

Age isn't the only factor



Sometimes women do have many reproductive issues that cause problems in conceiving sooner or later. For an instance, if a woman is going through PCOD (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome) then the chances of having infertility is higher. A couple is described as infertile if they are not being able to conceive after trying for a year. One of the hallmark symptoms of PCOD is irregular or absent ovulation, which makes it difficult for a person to conceive. Even an untreated pelvic inflammatory disease and endometriosis make it difficult to get pregnant. All these kinds of reproductive disorders cause hindrance in pregnancy irrespective of age. Besides radiation treatment, adherence to modern urbanization practices like smoking and alcohol consumption are the rising causes of infertility.

If you know about your problem in conceiving, you should plan ahead.

Opting for fertility treatment is the best way ahead if you want to conceive. But treatment also demands a change in your lifestyle procedures including quitting smoking, cutting down on alcohol if you're a heavy drinker. If a couple is under 35, a fertility expert first suggests trying out a natural way and somehow if the pregnancy doesn't happen other procedures such as egg or embryo freezing, intrauterine insemination, and fertility treatment are suggested to them depending upon their situation. Since now you understand there could be tons of reasons ranging from financial, emotional to relationship-related, that led you not to have a baby in your 20s and early 30s, you must be feeling like you have a little more freedom to have babies in your own time.



Avoid these foods if you have high BP

If you have hypertension, you already know how important it is to steer clear of foods that are harmful to your cardiovascular health. In the following article, we present 20 of the most illicit dishes for heart-conscious eaters.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive. If you have any questions about your diet or health, don't hesitate to speak to your doctor, pharmacist, or nutritionist.

Deli meat

Deli meat may be a practical lunch ingredient, but its high salt content (two slices of regular ham contain 730 mg of sodium) is bad news for your blood pressure.

Did you know that sodium intake is directly related to high blood pressure? According to the World Health Organization (WHO), too much sodium in your diet can lead to elevated blood pressure and increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

The best way to decrease your blood pressure is to eat less salty foods.

Pickles

Pickles are a tasty addition to any cheese platter, burger, or roast chicken dinner. However, these salty treats are off the menu if you have hypertension. As vegetables pickle, they absorb large quantities of salt from their brine. For a healthier alternative, try fresh cucumbers or other raw veggies.

Canned soups

Many people love the convenience of ready-to-eat soups. But if you're watching your blood pressure, leave those cans on the shelf! They contain a significant amount of sodium, which elevates blood pressure. For example, just half a cup of canned chicken noodle soup contains 890 mg of sodium.

Opt for low-sodium versions or, better yet, make your own soup at home. Just remember to leave the salt shaker in the pantry!

Store-bought pasta sauces

You might be surprised to learn that supermarket pasta sauces are genuine salt bombs. Half of the sauce brands tested by Consumer Reports had 400 mg of sodium or more per half-cup.

If you have hypertension, choose low-sodium sauces or whip up your own salt-free version.

Coronavirus infection linked with skin rashes among adults

Skin rashes may be associated with a positive COVID-19 test result among adults, according to a study that could help identify cases missed when relying only on the core symptoms.

Previous studies conducted in hospitals reported that COVID-19 patients showed unusual skin rashes, researchers said.

The latest study, published in the British Journal of Dermatology, analysed information provided by 336,847 individuals who used an app designed to register COVID-19 symptoms.

The researcher also used data from an independent online survey of 11,544 respondents to investigate skin specific symptoms and collect their photographs.

In collaboration with the British Association of Dermatologists, they compiled a catalogue of images of the most common skin manifestations of COVID-19 from 400 individuals.

The researchers found that skin rashes were more common in adults with a positive COVID-19 test result than in those who tested negative.

Among the respondents of the online survey, 17 per cent of SARS-CoV-2-positive cases reported skin rashes as the first presentation, and 21 per cent as the only COVID-19 clinical sign.



"Cutaneous manifestations of COVID-19 are sometimes the first or even the only sign of SARS-CoV-2 infection," said senior study author Mario Falchi, from King's College London in the UK.

"Recognition of such early signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may enable identification of cases missed when relying only on the core symptoms, allowing preventive measures to be put in place to minimise further spreading of the infection," Falchi said.

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Facebook eyes newsletter biz with new publishing platform

After launching Facebook News, the social network now aims to monetise the newsletter business and will soon start testing partnerships with independent writers for its new publishing platform.

According to a report in Axios, the newsletter publishing platform is free-to-use, and will be integrated with Facebook Pages.

The Pages integration will allow writers, journalists and content professionals to publish content outside of text, like live videos and "Stories" status updates.

The platform will also include tools for journalists to build actual websites.

"Facebook plans to build tools within the platform that allow writers to monetise their websites and newsletters with subscriptions, and possibly other forms of revenue down the line," the report mentioned on Tuesday, March 16.

Hackers hit 32 Indian firms via Microsoft email servers

At least 32 Indian organisations have been attacked by hackers who exploited vulnerabilities in unpatched Microsoft business email servers, a new report warned on Monday, adding that the finance and banking institutions have been hit the most in the country.

The finance and banking institutions (28 per cent) in India are followed by government/military organisations (16 per cent), manufacturing (12.5 per cent), insurance/legal (9.5 per cent) and others (34 per cent), according to Check Point Research.

Overall, the hacking attempts on organisations using the services of those unpatched on-premises servers have multiplied by more than six times (or tripled) in the past 72 hours.

The country most attacked was the US (21 per cent of all exploit attempts), followed by The Netherlands (12 per cent) and Turkey (12 per cent), along with India.

The most targeted industry sector has been government/military (27 per cent of all exploit attempts), followed by manufacturing (22 per cent), and then software vendors (9 per cent), the researchers noted.

"A full race has started among hackers and security professionals. Global experts are using massive preventative efforts to combat hackers who are working day-in and day-out to produce an exploit that can successfully leverage the remote code execution vulnerabilities in Microsoft Exchange," said the researchers from the cybersecurity firm.

Mars may be hiding most of its 'missing' water underground: NASA-funded study

Vast amounts of ancient water may have been trapped beneath the surface of Mars, according to a NASA-funded study which challenges the current theory that the Red Planet's water escaped into space.

Evidence found on the surface of Mars suggests that abundant water flowed across Mars billions of years ago, forming pools, lakes, and deep oceans, and where did all that water go has been a matter of investigation.

The new study, published in the journal Science, shows that a significant portion of Mars's water—between 30 and 99 percent—is trapped within minerals in the planet's crust.

The researchers from California Institute of Technology and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) found that around four billion years ago, Mars was home to enough water to have covered the whole planet in an ocean about 100 to 1,500 metres deep.

However, a billion years later the planet was as dry as it is today.

Previously, scientists seeking to explain what happened to the flowing water on Mars had suggested that it escaped into space due to Mars's low gravity.

Though some water did indeed leave Mars this way, it now appears that such an escape cannot account for most of the water loss, the researchers said.

"Atmospheric escape doesn't fully explain the data that we have for how much water actually once existed on Mars," said Caltech PhD candidate Eva Scheller, lead author of a paper on the research.

The team studied the quantity of water on Mars over time in all its forms—vapour, liquid and ice—and the chemical composition of the planet's current atmosphere and crust.

They did so through the analysis of meteorites as well as using data provided by Mars rovers and orbiters, looking in particular at the ratio of deuterium to hydrogen.

Water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen: H₂O. Not all



hydrogen atoms are created equal, however. There are two stable isotopes of hydrogen—deuterium to hydrogen.

The lighter-weight hydrogen has an easier time escaping the planet's gravity into space than its heavier counterpart, according to the researchers.

Because of this, the escape of a planet's water via the upper atmosphere would leave a telltale signature on the ratio of deuterium to hydrogen in the planet's atmosphere, and there would be an outsized portion of deuterium left behind, they said.

Instagram's new feature will protect kids, teens from creepy adults

Facebook-owned photo-sharing platform Instagram has announced new safety measures for teenagers, in a progression of endeavours to guard youngsters on its application.

As per Mashable, Facebook recognises that asking clients for their birthday won't prevent them from lying about their age, so the organisation said it is dealing with new man-made consciousness and AI advancements to attempt to comprehend the genuine age of its clients. This will likewise keep on working when clients are joined, helping the stage tailor the experience for more youthful clients.

Instagram is making genuine strides in shielding youngsters from conceivably risky grown-ups on the stage. One new element is that the grown-ups won't send direct messages to clients younger than 18 who don't follow them.

Mashable revealed, if the two clients are associated, Instagram will in any case caution the youngster about dubious conduct on the grown-up's part.



2nd-Gen Google Nest Hub to sense your sleep patterns

Google has introduced a new feature called Sleep Sensing on the second-gen Nest Hub which is an opt-in feature to help you understand and improve your sleep.

Available as a free preview until next year Sleep Sensing uses Motion Sense (powered by Soli low-energy radar technology) to analyse how the person closest to the display is sleeping, based on their movement and breathing - all without a camera or wearable.

Sleep Sensing can also detect sleep disturbances like coughing and snoring or the light and temperature changes in the room with Nest Hub's built-in microphones and ambient light and temperature sensors, Google said in a statement on Tuesday.

"We'll also be looking for ways to work with Fitbit's sleep-tracking features in the future," said Ashton Udall, Product Manager, Google Nest.

Sleep Sensing can also connect to your Google Fit app on Android and iOS devices, so you can see your sleep summary alongside your other health and wellness information.

Rajya Sabha clears Bill to raise FDI in insurance sector to 74%

Rajya Sabha on Thursday, March 18, passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to raise the FDI in insurance sector to 74 per cent from the current 49 per cent, despite opposition push to refer the Bill to a standing committee.

"The FDI policy is brought in only to supplement domestic capital. This will only supplement what is available in the country because what is now available is not sufficient," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told the House.

Responding to the opposition's criticism against the amendment, Sitharaman said the law has "enough safeguards" built in.

"Under the new structure, the majority of directors on the board and key management persons would have to be resident Indians, which will make them accountable under the Indian law. At least half of directors are to be independent directors which also ensures accountability," she said.

On the criticism that the move might dilute reservation in state insurance players, the minister said the Narendra Modi government is committed to the protection of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes.

"All the places connected with Dr BR Ambedkar have been protected by the Modi government. This shows that the government is committed to the SC community and that the reservation policy will not be changed," she said.

During the discussion earlier, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said the Bill will put people in trouble.

Oil slump deepens as Europe faces pandemic lockdowns

Oil prices fell on Friday, extending losses for a sixth day as a new wave of COVID-19 infections wash across Europe, spurring new lockdowns and dampening hopes for a recovery in demand for fuels anytime soon.

Prices plunged the most on Thursday since last summer, leaving oil down nearly 10 percent this week with the reality that the pandemic is abiding, even if infections have plummeted in the US, the worst-hit country and biggest crude consumer.

US crude fell below \$60 again and was trading at \$59.97 a barrel by 0115 GMT. Brent crude was off by 1 cent at \$63.27.

Several large European countries have reimposed lockdowns as new infections increase again, while vaccination programs slow because of concerns about side effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was being widely distributed in Europe.

"Demand concerns linked to a bumpy vaccine roll-out in Europe and other parts of the world" are hitting prices, said Vivek Dhar, director, mining and energy commodities research, at Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Rising infections in Brazil were also weighing on the market, he said.

Germany, France and other countries have since announced the resumption of inoculations after regulators



US crude fell below \$60 again and was trading at \$59.97 a barrel by 0115 GMT. Brent crude was off by 1 cent at \$63.27.

declared the AstraZeneca vaccine safe, but the programme halt has made it harder to overcome resistance to vaccines among some of the population.

Rising COVID-19 cases, particularly in Brazil, also weighed on the demand outlook, and a stronger US dollar pressured oil prices.

Supplies of oil are plentiful as well, with Saudi Arabia's crude exports increasing in

January for a seventh straight month to the highest since April 2020, according to the Joint Organisations Data Initiative website on Thursday.

Shipments from the world's biggest oil exporter increased to 6.582 million barrels per day in January from 6.495 million the previous month.

In the US, crude inventories increased for a fifth week last week, according to official figures released on Wednesday.

Tesla to miss out on UK subsidy as government lowers price cap

Tesla Inc. customers in the UK will have to pay more for Model 3s after the country lowered a cap determining which electric vehicles qualify for subsidies.

UK transport authorities on Thursday cut a purchasing bonus for electric cars, vans and trucks to 2,500 pounds (\$3,491) from 3,000 pounds, and lowered the price of models qualifying to less than 35,000 pounds. While the previous ceiling of less than 50,000 pounds meant most Model 3 variants got the aid, none will qualify under the new rule.

The UK government has been under pressure to plug a hole in the country's finances left by the pandemic. It argues that buyers of higher-priced EVs can afford to make the switch from combustion-engine cars even without the aid, and that the number of battery-powered models costing less than 35,000 pounds has increased almost 50% since 2019.

The auto industry balked at the decision, saying the cut to subsidies is the wrong move as registrations continue to plunge amid shuttered showrooms and economic damage caused by the virus. The European industry's trade group this week reported the worst February for new-car registrations since 2013, with the UK auto market shrinking 36%.

Adani Green ties up \$1.3 billion from a dozen banks

NEW DELHI (TIP): A dozen global banks are to bankroll Adani Green Energy Ltd's under-construction renewable power projects with a \$1.35 billion revolving credit line, the company said on Friday, March 19.

The finance facility would initially fund a 1.69 GW (gigawatt) hybrid portfolio of solar and wind power projects through four SPVs (special purpose vehicles) in Rajasthan.

The company claimed this as the first 'certified green hybrid' project loan in India. The liquidity will boost the company's efforts to raise its capacity to 25 GW from a little over 3 GW at present over the next four years.

But the company still faces the challenge of finding buyers for an 8 GW manufacturing-linked renewable project it won last year with tariffs higher than current market trends. The project is to be set up in four phases of 2 GW each.

The dozen lenders include Standard Chartered Plc, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp and Barclays.



Delhi HC restrains Future Group from going ahead with RIL deal

New Delhi (TIP): The Delhi High Court on Thursday, March 18, upheld the Singapore's Emergency Arbitrator's (EA) order restraining Future Retail Ltd (FRL) from going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail to sell its business, which was objected to by US-based e-commerce giant Amazon.

Justice JR Midha directed Kishore Biyani-led FRL not to take further action on the deal and held that the group wilfully violated Singapore Arbitrator's order.

The high court directed the Future Group and its directors to deposit Rs 20 lakh cost in Prime Minister's Relief Fund for providing Covid vaccines to senior citizens of Below Poverty Line (BPL) category.

The court directed the presence of Biyani and others before it on April 28 as also attachment of their properties.

The high court asked them to show cause as to why they be not detained for three months under civil prison for



violating emergency arbitrator's order.

The high court's order came on Amazon's plea seeking direction to order enforcement of the award by Singapore's EA on October 25, 2020, restraining FRL from going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail.

Amazon, in its interim plea, has sought to restrain FRL from taking any steps to complete the transaction with entities that are a part of the Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani (MDA) Group.

Shree Ganeshaya Namah



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Chirag Bejan Daruwalla with his father late Bejan Daruwalla

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**WEEKLY HOROSCOPE
22nd to 28th March 2021**

ARIES : New prospects, as well as new opportunities, are aligned for you. Planetary positions this week seem very favorable for you. There will be an improvement in your work-pattern through meetings with experienced people. Seize the opportunity and learn as much as you can this week. Be very patient with those co-workers who try to make you angry. You should not lose your temper this week as you need to focus on work, do not get carried away by their actions and words.

TAURUS : If you're single, an exciting new potential prospect could have your feelings activated. If you're currently involved, recent events may have created such a powerful connection between you and your partner that at this point you may think it'll never end. Consider what led up to this feeling and find ways to continually re-create it. Starting to work out this week will be a good idea for you. It will improve your energy levels even more.

GEMINI : You will achieve fame this week and you will be remembered for some time to come. You will need to focus on eating healthier and exercising more often now. Things will be much better for you on the health aspect if you can stay calm and keep your mind tension-free. If you try to accommodate some health care routines like exercise or yoga you feel a lot less tired and fatigued. Your health will be a lot better this week.

CANCER : You will impress a lot of business prospects as well as love interests this week, and your self-worth and self-image will skyrocket this week. You might feel overwhelmed and end up over thinking a lot this week. Allow you're self-time and space to process this week's events. Some solace will do you good this week, as you have been ignoring your feelings and staying busy. You will face a lot of obstacles this week that will take most of your time and energy and you will end up feeling tired yet satisfied with the direction you are going in your professional life this week.

LEO : Your heightened energies will help you move past any hurdles without much effort. You will feel as if you're being the most productive and efficient in your

work this week. Focus entirely on yourself and your health this week as you need to pay attention to your health. Although you will be busy working and hustling, you have the time this week to work as well as take care of your health. You'll find yourself excessively sweating and anxious this week; it is only because the stress of this week is getting to your body. Even though you'll have absolutely no appetite this week, be regular about having your meals regardless.

VIRGO : Your love life will be quite complicated this week. You wouldn't be involved in a direct rift with anyone but you will find yourself in between two family members that are fighting. You will be forced to take a side against your wish, as a third person, you can clearly see where each one of them went wrong, but you won't be able to create peace between the two of them. You will learn your partner's trigger points and how to navigate through fights to get to a resolution. You will realize this week that your relationship will only get better from this point. Which is a great outcome for you this week.

LIBRA : A new prospect is very likely to arise this week, you will feel a sense of satisfaction in terms of your finances. This week is an amazing week for your business as everything will seem to work out super smoothly and you might even be done with work in the first half of your week itself. Believe in offering quality service and products rather than just pushing quantity. Be diplomatic and do not get into fights with anyone. Know how to get work done by other people.

SCORPIO : You will be very busy with work and family events this week. Try to spend as much time as you can do what you love. That would be a good decision you make this week. If you are starting a new innovation in your existing business, you can expect help to come by in the form of sponsors from your business partner's efforts. Severe acidity will bother you a lot this week. Since it is so unpredictable you won't understand what you're doing wrong that is causing it. Make sure that you not only have a proper diet but that you eat at the right time as well.

SAGITTARIUS : This week you will try new things and take risks, all of which will turn out to be in your benefit. This week is full of professional growth, career satisfaction, business development for you. Your relationships will be similarly amazing this week. Take full advantage of the luck you have this week for your personal as well as your professional growth and don't forget to enjoy it thoroughly.

CAPRICORN : Profit remains satisfactory in your business throughout the week. The beginning of new business will be profitable. The investment will be fruitful. New opportunities will pour in for expansion. You are in the pink of your health this week. Your mood, energy levels, and strength are all really high this week. You do not need to worry about your health this week at all. Yoga and meditation will help in your physical and mental well-being this week.

AQUARIUS : Financially you are doing amazing and you will be completely satisfied with your income this week. Which will keep your partner 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 will make a significant difference in your life. Take proper diet and exercise mildly with appropriate and timely sleep. Be aware and not ignoring of any minor ailment this week.

PISCES : The positive highlight for you this week is you will gain a lot of clarity and insight into your love life. You will see your partner and their behavior the way it is and not with your love glasses on like you have been for a while now. This will make it very easy for you to make decisions and will be fruitful for you. Your health will be better this week than it has ever been in a long time. If you have been trying to achieve a fitness goal, you have ample amount of time to get to where you want. This week is a great week for you. Live in the moment and try not to rush things.

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE
22nd to 28th March 2021**

MARCH 22: You will be very engrossed in your art today. Try to spend as much time as you can doing what you love. Enrolling in dance or art classes will consistently keep you happy. That would be a good decision you make today. Your love life is progressing rapidly. Taking the next step will be a good idea today as you feel secured and confident in your partner.

MARCH 23: You will experience a great amount of adventures today. Today is a fun filled day for you. As you spend your time in new adventures and exploring nature throughout the day. You might suffer minor injuries from your adventure today. You will need to seek medical help today do not be overconfident and try to help yourself.

MARCH 24: You will have immense support from your partner today. They will understand your struggles and won't be in your way today. Even though they lack any skill or expertise in your business they will help you by managing things at work and at home. After a long tiring day, you will be welcomed to a nice warm dinner of all of your favorite things.

MARCH 25: You will get a lot of time to relax and rejuvenate. Use this time to improve your health and learn new skills that you have been wanting to since a long time. Your business requires you to be an all rounder and focus on it as much as possible. Possibility of a new opportunity is present today but. You will need to work very hard as well as make sacrifices in terms of finances to make this deal.

MARCH 26: New prospects in terms of sponsorship will help you move forward in your

business. Your health seems to be regressing today. You will feel a discomfort in your body most likely your stomach, it is a sign that you need to stop eating poorly and irregularly.

MARCH 27: Your love life is the most positive thing about today. A lot of love and appreciation from your partner will set a very positive tone for today for you. You will experience a positive shift in everyone's behavior towards you today be it your partner, family or friends, which will make you feel the most special person in the world today.

MARCH 28: You are financially doing a lot better today. You will meet a new prospect that will challenge you and your team to the core. Your employees will be highly supportive today. You will enjoy the teamwork. Today luck is by your side in terms of work and finances hence to reap the full benefits of your good luck get a lot of work done today.

Goddess Kali – The feminine form of time

When people think of Hindu goddesses most people think of elegance, love, and the counterpart of their consorts. But goddess Kali is different in every way. Kali is the feminine form of time (energy of time) and one of the ten Mahavidyas. With her tongue sticking out she symbolizes wrath, power, and sparks fear in the eyes of great lords. With her outstretched tongue, she drinks the blood of Raktabija.

Goddess Kali is the destroyer of the evil forces of the universe, the most powerful form of Goddess Shakti, or Adi Shakti (the first energy, creator of the universe). Kali is often shown as standing on the god Shiva, her consort. She wears a necklace made of heads of the demons and she is dark a color which means she is beyond all qualities of nature. On her hands, she has a sickle, sword, axe, and whip along with a flower signifying creation. Maa Kali is the chief of Mahavidyas, a group of ten Tantric goddesses, divine Intelligence.

Origin of Goddess Kali

Goddess Kali was originated from the anger of Goddess Durga to slay the asura named Raktabija (blood-seed). Raktabija was so fierce because he could spawn from every drop of his blood that touches the ground. Goddess Kali is seen carrying the head of the demon and a plate to hold the blood from touching the ground. When goddess Durga became so enraged her wrath emerged as a goddess from her forehead in the form of "Kali". She was so fierce that she tore down and ate all those who came across. It seemed impossible to calm her down. Seeing all their efforts fail gods went to Lord Shiva to ask him to calm her down.

Shiva laid down on her path which is often how she is portrayed. Kali was so consumed with her bloodlust she did not realize she was standing on her own husband. When she realized what she has done her modesty and shame calmed her down and the world was saved.

Maa Kali's Appearance

Kali is derived from the Sanskrit word "Kala" which means, Time. It also means "she who is black" – feminine noun of the Sanskrit adjective Kala. She is a dark-colored woman, a counterpart of Goddess Gauri who is fair, both being forms of Shakti. Infamously Kali is shown as a slayer of demons where she stands with one foot on Shiva and holds a severed head. She wears a skirt of severed human arms and a necklace of decapitated heads. Her hands show the form of both creation and destruction. The earring Kali wears are small embryos. Kali likes followers who have childlike qualities in them.

Forms of Kali

Goddess Kali is said to have 8, 12, or 21 different forms based. Some of her well-known forms are Bhadra Kali, Maha Kali, Dakshina Kali, and Chandika. Different forms of Kali are worshipped in different parts of South Asia. Dakshin Kali is the most popular form of Kali in Bengal.

Mother Kali

Even looking at her requires courage, she really has got a terrifying appearance. Then why is she called Maa Kali by all her worshippers and followers? Kali symbolizes the superiority of females in nature. She is that mother who could go to any lengths to protect her children. She is a mother who suffers pain to evoke her children. She is the symbol of Shakti, feminine power, and creativity. The devotees who fall at her feet in devotion or surrender in front of her can achieve moksha by touching her feet.

Kali in Tantra Vidhya

Kali dominates tantric iconography, texts, and rituals. In those Vidhya's Kali is considered the highest of all deities. Kali is time herself. As stated across many



Vidhya's, at the end of time the world will be consumed by Kali, then the world will be dark and unbound like her. She is the destroyer of the universe as her counterpart Mahakaal (Lord Shiva). Thus, worship of Kali is done to have victory over the greatest power of the universe, time itself. Kali is worshipped in cremation grounds in the darkest of the night. The goal of tantric gurus to become reconciled with death and learn the acceptance of death the way it is.

Kali Puja

Kali is especially worshipped in the Kalaratri, the seventh day of Navratri which starts from the new moon day of Ashwin for 9 days. The practice involves animal sacrifices in many temples. A tantric priest instructs on how an animal or bird should be sacrificed. Kali is the most misunderstood goddess in Hindu Religion. She is often feared and only considered the goddess of witches and tantric. In a patriarchal society, Kali is the true and oldest representation of female supremacy over nature. Kali teaches us to see life, not as something indifferent to life but as a part of life. She defies the definition of an ideal goddess and is beyond the understanding of mankind and the rules of nature. Created to destroy, she still has a core of love and motherhood.

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

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

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

Indian American Frontline Healthcare Workers Protest Outside US Capitol over Green Cards Backlog

WASHINGTON (TIP): A group of Indian-American frontline healthcare workers languishing in the Green Card backlog held a demonstration in front of the US Capitol urging lawmakers and the Biden administration to end the per capita country-specific quota.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the country.

Indian IT professionals, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas, are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of the coveted Green Card or permanent legal residency.

We are frontline COVID warriors, and we are here to tell how we have been shortchanged into a life of perpetual indentured servitude. Each of us has a story. We are here from all over the country asking for justice. Justice that has precluded us for decades now, Dr Raj Karnatak, an infectious disease and critical care physician and Dr Pranav Singh, a pulmonary and critical care physician, said.

Most of us are from India. We trained in the US and took oath as physicians to serve the sick and needy. Most of us are serving the rural and underserved areas. We are in a Green Card backlog due to archaic country caps that allow no country to get more than seven percent of employment-based green cards, said the two Indian American doctors' organizers of the peaceful protest said in a joint statement.

According to them, due to decades of backlog, many high-skilled immigrants are not able to change jobs due to fear of losing the spot in the Green Card line and are indentured to one employer.

Can only work in the specialty occupation the visa is allotted for decades. Many healthcare workers could not serve in COVID-19 hot spots as the visas are tied to the



Indian American frontline healthcare workers protest in Washington over delay in grant of green cards because of per capita country-specific quota

job and employer, they said.

The small group of protestors said that President Joe Biden can direct United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to end the Green Card backlog for the frontline healthcare workers by utilizing the unused green cards in the past years.

There was an HR 1044 fairness bill that was passed in the House of Representatives by 365 votes in 2019 and its senate equivalent S386 passed the Senate in 2020.

Now it is back to House as a modified version. Representative Zoe Lofgren, initial co-sponsor of the bill HR 1044 has not shown any interest in bringing the bill to vote as a bipartisan solution to end the suffering of skilled professionals including frontline healthcare workers, they alleged.

Dr Karnatak and Dr Singh said that India is a land of more than a billion people, but the number of green cards India gets is the same as a country as small as Iceland.

Indian high-skilled workers are brought into the US on an H-1B visa. There is no country cap on the H-1B visa and due to its sheer population; Indians make 50 per cent of the H-1B workforce.

The H-1B visa, the most sought after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The discrepancy in the number of H-1B hired from India and a small number of green cards allotted to India creates an inhumane Green Card backlog.

Green Card backlog is adversely affecting the professional and personal lives of high-skilled immigrants from India including the frontline healthcare workers, they said.

Frontline healthcare workers need immediate relief, they are suffering for a very long time. As frontline healthcare workers who are risking their lives in this pandemic, the least we deserve is a certainty. A certainty that if we die or get disabled, our children and spouses won't be kicked out of the country, said the joint statement on behalf of the protestors.

Last month, President Biden revoked a policy issued by his predecessor during the pandemic that blocked many Green Card applicants from entering the US.

Reopening the country to people seeking green cards, or legal permanent residence, Biden in his proclamation said that the policy of former president Donald Trump does not advance the interests of the country.

To the contrary, it harms the United States, including by preventing certain family members of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents from joining their families here, he said.

The US is currently facing a backlog of nearly 473,000 qualified family-based Green Card requests.

As a result of Trump's ban on issuing green cards, as many as 120,000 family-based preference visas were lost. But this came as a big boon for issuing employment-based green cards, mainly those on H-1B visas.

Indian American Lovely Varughese's epic struggle for justice "Who Killed My Son?" is streaming on Discovery+

ILLINOIS (TIP): In 2014 Pravin Varughese, an Indian American student at Southern Illinois University, went to a house party in Carbondale, Illinois. He was never seen alive again.

It took five days to discover his body, but the push to find out how Pravin's life truly ended lasted years. Rumors abounded that the 19-year-old's death was his own doing, and accusations of drugs, alcohol and foul play inundated the case.

But Pravin's mother, Lovely Varughese, knew her son, and she felt certain there was more to the story than the authorities let on, says a press release from discovery+ channel.

Fighting what she believed to be prejudice, deception, and a flawed legal system at every turn, Lovely refused to give up on the memory of Pravin, adds the channel which has documented her epic struggle for justice.

The Varughese family went through great lengths to prove that their only son was not the cause of his own death, and that the truth is worth fighting for, it says.

This two-hour special is executive produced and narrated

by acclaimed television journalist Soledad O'Brien as she reports on the nuances behind this case and follows a family as they searched for justice. "Who Killed My Son?" streams exclusively on discovery+ beginning March 23.

"The mystery behind this young man's death is just too much for any mother to bear. When the criminal justice system failed to get answers, she began an epic fight for justice, marshaling a community of supporters to hold officials accountable. What they discovered was nothing less than shocking," says executive producer Soledad O'Brien.

"We are proud to bring this incredibly moving story of perseverance to Discovery+," says Lisa Holme, Group SVP Content and Commercial Strategy for discovery+.

"Lovely Varguhese's advocacy for her son took years of working against racism and prejudice, and hopefully by sharing her story, other families will not have to endure the same fight."

This Discovery+ original follows the challenges the Varughese family faced as they fought for an investigation into their son's disappearance.

From pushing local authorities for a transparent



Lovely Varughese with son Pravin Varughese

investigation, to consistently facing what she believed is systemic racism because of the color of their skin, this Indian American family exhausted all avenues to find out what really happened to their son.

Now Lovely Varughese comes forward to share her story, joined by her family's advocate and interviews with law enforcement, friends and those connected to the case.

Through poignant, emotional and jarring interviews, this special probes for answers to the question: was Pravin murdered, or was it an accident as law enforcement initially believed? And should someone be put behind bars for his untimely death?

Who Killed My Son? is produced for Discovery+ by Texas Crew Productions and SOB Productions.

Executive Producers for Texas Crew are David Karabinas and Brad Bernstein, and Executive Producers for SOB are Soledad O'Brien and Jo Honig. For discovery+, Dianna Sperrazza is Executive Producer.



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Flyer Design: CSB

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contd from page 1

UK PM Boris to visit India in April-end

During his meeting with Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy, Ahmad is learnt to have raised the detention of Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland VVIP helicopter deal, whose prolonged incarceration has been flagged by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions. The visit is understood to have cleared the decks for an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) to be inked during Johnson's visit. The ETP could serve as a precursor to a free trade agreement (FTA).

The PM was to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day parade but had to put off his visit due to Covid surge in the UK. Since then London has wrapped up the integrated review of defense, security, development and foreign policy. A key takeaway is the accent on the Indo-Pacific region, which includes the UK applying for partner status of the ASEAN economic union. (Source: TNS)

House passes bill to give Dreamers and other undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship

permanent legal pathway for roughly 2.5 million undocumented immigrants, including those brought to the United States as children - known as Dreamers - and those granted Temporary Protected Status for humanitarian reasons.

They were expected to approve a second measure later, with more bipartisan backing, that would grant legal status to close to a million farmworkers and their families while updating a key agricultural visa program.

The votes were significant milestones for the Dreamers and other activists who have waged a decade-long campaign, often at great personal risk, to bring the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States without permanent legal status out of the shadows. Dreamers, those who have T.P.S. and agricultural workers have in many cases lived in the United States for long periods, and measures to normalize their status have broad public support.

In moving swiftly to consider both bills, House leaders wagered that singling out relatively narrow but publicly popular immigration fixes could shake up a deadlocked policy debate after years of failed attempts at more comprehensive immigration legislation, and deliver for a key constituency.

"This House has another chance to pass H.R. 6 and once and for all end the fear and uncertainty that have

plagued the life of America's Dreamers, who have become an integral part of the fabric of American society," Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, Democrat of California and an author of the Dreamer bill, said during a hard-fought debate inside the Capitol. "It is an issue about who we are as Americans."

But after colliding with a wave of hardened Republican opposition in the House, the bills face steep odds in the evenly divided Senate. While some Republicans there have pledged support for Dreamers in the past, their party is increasingly uniting behind a hardline strategy to block any new immigration law as it seeks to use the worsening situation at the border as a political cudgel against Mr. Biden and Democrats.

"There is no pathway for anything right now," Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina and a key player in past bipartisan immigration pushes, said this week.

That means the immigration measures will join a growing pile of liberal agenda items, as well as broadly supported measures on pressing national challenges, that have passed the House but are destined to languish or die because of Republican opposition in the Senate. They include a landmark expansion of voting rights, new gun control measures, the most significant pro-labor legislation in decades and the Equality Act for L.G.B.T.Q. people.

Democrats in favor of eliminating or altering the filibuster believe the accumulating pressure could help break the dam in the months ahead, allowing them to change Senate rules to do away with the 60-vote requirement and let legislation pass with a simple majority. (Agencies)

Facebook sees computing's future on your wrist

They're doing it by putting a band on your wrist that reads nerve impulses sent by your brain to your hand.

The big picture: Tech insiders widely expect the next generation of computing after the smartphone will be built around some combination of glasses, headphones and other worn devices. The challenge is figuring out how users navigate information and make choices in such a world.

What's new: By picking up brain signals, Facebook's futuristic wristband can interpret small finger-motions as, for instance, typing on an invisible keyboard or clicking on a button that isn't there.

This "intelligent click" will be paired with images you'll likely see via augmented-reality glasses - so that the menu items you're selecting, for instance, might appear to be hanging in the air around you.

The whole system is stage-managed by predictive AI programs that work to understand where you are and what you might need. When you step into the kitchen, for instance, you might see a recipe.

The goal is to give users "exactly the right interaction at the right time," says Tanya Jonker - one of a crew of Facebook Reality Labs researchers who demoed the new technology for reporters this week.

The science behind Facebook's new vision for the human-computer interface - electromyography, or EMG - can read nerve signals in muscles anywhere in the body. But Facebook researchers said the wrist is the ideal spot to apply it.

The brain devotes lots of neurons to fine control of hand motion, providing plenty of information for the devices to read.

Also, people are already used to wearing stuff on their wrists.

"Brain-computer interfaces" is a field Facebook has been talking about and investing in for years now, but the company is emphasizing that we won't get our hands on this technology for some time.

Sean Keller, Facebook Reality Labs director of research, said Facebook was unveiling details of this work early because it knows there are pitfalls and hopes to steer around them with input from outside the company. "We want to open up an important discussion with the public about how to build this technology responsibly," he said.

Likely trouble spots:

The more "context" your device knows, the more data it has on you, and Facebook has a long record of playing fast and loose with user information.

Researchers say they know they've entered a potential minefield. "Building a new platform allows us to build security, privacy and safety in from the very start," said Facebook CTO Mike Schroepfer.

Facebook is all about connecting people. But the examples the researchers discussed, where lone users are cooking a recipe or choosing music to play, are far simpler than interactions between people using these tools, where the potential for privacy problems multiply.

Facebook makes money by selling ads, and the "all around you" interface it's building could easily become overloaded with commercial come-ons.

Of note: The Facebook team nodded to the scope of their ambition by showing a still from Douglas Engelbart's celebrated 1968 "mother of all demos."

That event introduced the mouse and many other foundations of the graphical computer interfaces we use today.

Facebook wants to invent the pieces for what comes after that.



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contd from page 11

Indian Americans divided, polarization increasing: Survey

Only 53 percent of foreign-born respondents and 38 percent of US-born respondents supported that move, with the rest either in disagreement or expressing no opinion.

The division over support for the US strengthening India's military also plays out politically - 69 percent of Indian Americans who identify as Republican support this, as compared to only 41 percent of Democrats; they are also more likely to say they do not want the US to provoke China.

Despite their misgivings about where India was headed, 49 percent of the respondents gave a thumbs-up to Modi's performance as prime minister. The survey said that 32 percent disapproved of him, while the rest said they had no opinion.

Asked what surprised him in the outcome of the

survey, Vaishnav said: "A few things surprised us. First, 30 percent of Indian Americans favor the BJP while just 12 percent support the Congress party."

He also said that 40 percent do not espouse a partisan identity when it comes to Indian politics.

"We were especially struck by how low the Congress party number was. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party rate very poorly compared to Modi, the BJP, and even the RSS. Second, we were also surprised at the mixed views on India's trajectory," Vaishnav said.

"Respondents were nearly evenly split as to whether India is currently on the right track or headed down the wrong track. This is not the picture one gets from most media narratives."

He also said: "I think we are seeing really striking evidence of polarization within the community, especially on religious grounds."

"On a number of issues, Hindus and non-Hindus hold pretty diverging views on politics, especially back in India," Vaishnav said.

"The polarization we view in India is clearly seeping into the diaspora as well. This means a more fragmented, heterogeneous community going forward."

(Courtesy Indica / Ritu Jha)

This summer, head to secluded beaches

As Summer begins to kick beautiful Spring out of the calendar, it is time to head to the water. To gambol, to picnic, to tan, and to slough off everyday malice. But wait, between Summer and water lie the essential SOPs -social distancing and away from the maddening crowd. Here's a look at a few secluded beaches in India where the water is turquoise, the sand silken, and the people few.

Ottinene Beach (Karnataka)

No one will tell you how this pretty beach came to be called Ottinene but whoever has been to Ottinene will surely sing paeans to its spectacular sunset and jagged rocky cliffs. It is here that the Byndoor river enters the Arabian sea and any swimmer with a not-so-faint heart attempts to swim through. You can walk down the hill from Kshitija Nesara Dhama straight to the Ottinene beach. But if you have a duff pair of lungs, take note that the climb back can be uphill. Not just literally, but physically, too.

Where: Ottinene beach is 440 km from Bengaluru and 125 km from Mangaluru (nearest airport). The nearest railway station is Byndoor (4 km).

Mandvi Beach (Gujarat)

Gujarat Tourism describes Mandvi Beach as a golden-brown sprawl of sand along the southern tip of the Kutch district. Lying along with the namesake town of Mandvi which was founded in 1580 by the Rao of Kutch, Khengarji, the beach still carries the remnants of its historical past as a thriving port. The not-so-crowded beach is at its glorious best during evenings with the sun dipping in the sea and the hawkers peddling snacks and sweets.

Where: Lies 59 km from Bhuj airport; Bhuj is well connected by railway. The distance between Mandvi Beach and Rann of Kutch is 322 km.

Bakkhali (West Bengal)

One of the deltaic islands sprawled across southern Bengal, it is an 8-km long beach stretching from Bakkhali to Frazerganj. Do not get surprised at the sight of a grey beach - here, the land slopes into the Bay of Bengal. The beach is sturdy enough for cycling and light 4-wheelers but be careful of the deceptive soft spots. A mangrove adds to the allure of Bakkhali. Spare a few hours for Henry's Island which was named after a Mr. Henry who surveyed the land in the 19th century. Step into Frazerganj that bears testimony to the grit and enterprise of Andrew Frazer who tried building a resort in the early 1900s. He failed because the waves kept washing away the constructed areas. The resort was never built but Frazerganj has not forgotten Andrew Frazer.

Where: Bakkhali is 130 km from the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in northern Kolkata. The nearest rail station is at Namkhana. The road trip from Kolkata



to Bakkhali is about 4 hours.

Jalandhar Beach (Diu)

Jalandhar Beach has nothing to do with the city of Jalandhar in Punjab. But

the bustling city and the pretty beach both take their name from a mythological demon that was killed by Lord Vishnu's Sudahrshan Chakra. Jalandhar, the demon, has a shrine on a

hillock next to the beach. The water is calm, the palm trees countless and several opportunities for aquatic sports. The beach is prettiest in the evening when the area is illuminated.

Where: 1 km from the city of Diu which has an airport.

Butterfly Beach (Goa)

This summer, stay away from Miramar, Baga, Calangute, Anjuna and other popular beaches of Goa. Too many crowd these common beaches. Pack your picnic hamper, carry a hat, slather sunscreen and head to Butterfly Beach, a secluded beach in South Goa. If you find a few honeymooners, ignore them (Butterfly Beach is also known as Honeymoon Beach). Trek in the wooded forest, watch butterflies flit by and when there is low tide, watch out for sea urchins, goldfish and sea cucumbers.

Where: Butterfly Beach is 61 km from Dabolim Airport. The road trip from Panjim to Palolem beach takes about 90 minutes. Take a ferry from Palolem or Agonda beaches to reach Butterfly Beach.

Neil Island (Andamans)

Neil Island might not be as popular as Havelock Island but the tiny island is equally pretty. When there, do the 3-point tour which takes you through 3 beaches: Bharatpur, Sitapur and Laxmanpur. Laden with coral and exquisite marine life, Neil Island is loved by scuba divers and aquatic adventurers. There are 3 dive centres on the island. On a good day, you can spot a Dugong (Sea cow), the state animal of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Remember, Neil Island can be an Internet black hole. No data. No signals.

Where: 37 kilometres south of Port Blair. The only way to reach Neil Island is through a ferry. Both government and private ferries are available. Most tourists opt for private ferries because government ferries are mostly reserved for islanders and there is no facility of online booking.

Gopalpur-on-Sea (Odisha)

Gopalpur can turn other beaches envious. Once upon a time it was a bustling port for the seafarers of ancient Kalinga. During World war II, it served as a busy military port. But beyond war and trade, Gopalpur has a hospitality history. It was in Gopalpur that Odisha's first hotel (Palm Beach Resort) was built in 1914 by an Italian named Signor Maglion. Not many head to Gopalpur but those who do swear by the spectacular sunrise and sunset. The sea is very rough, do not attempt swimming.

Where: Distance from Bhubaneswar, the nearest airport, is 174 km. The nearest railway station is Berhampur. Berhampur is well connected by bus service from across the state. Hire a local transport to Gopalpur after alighting at Berhampur.

Source: Money Control

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contd from page 1

Atlanta shootings leave 8 dead at Asian businesses

Feng, according to police. A fifth person, Elcias R. Hernandez-Ortiz, sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

About 45 minutes later, four more people were killed at two other businesses - Aromatherapy Spa and Gold Spa - just across the street from each other. While the names of the victims have not yet been released, all four of them were of Korean descent, South Korea's Foreign Ministry officials said in a statement, though their nationalities have yet to be verified.

In Cherokee County, authorities arrested the suspect, 21-year-old Robert Aaron Long, on the side of Interstate 75, roughly 150 miles south of Georgia Tuesday night after a police chase. Long, who officers believe was heading to Florida to commit similar crimes prior to the arrest, has been charged with eight counts of murder and homicide and one count of aggravated assault. Officials are still investigating possible motives for the shootings.

Federal agents are joining local authorities to investigate the shootings, and many officials remain wary about pointing to any motives. "A motive is still not clear, but a crime against any community is a crime against us all," Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said in a statement Wednesday. "I have remained in close contact with the White House and APD as they work with federal, state and local partners to investigate the suspect who is responsible for this senseless violence in our city."

President Joe Biden on Wednesday, March 17, said that he is "very concerned" about the Atlanta shootings, adding that he's been speaking out about the "very troubling" anti-Asian violence in recent months.

"I'm making no connection at this moment to the motivation of the killer," Biden said. "I'm waiting for an answer as the investigation proceeds from the FBI and from the Justice Department. I'll have more to say when the investigation is completed."

Motives remain unclear, but advocacy groups point to a rise in anti-Asian hate

While Atlanta officials say it is still early to know what motivated the shootings, Tuesday's attacks sparked outrage and sorrow among advocacy groups across the country, particularly Asians, as they continue to face a growing number of pandemic-related anti-Asian hate incidents.

At a press conference Wednesday morning, Cherokee County sheriff's Capt. Jay Baker said the suspect indicated in police interviews that he targeted the locations because he was angry at the "porn industry," and saw the businesses as something "he wanted to eliminate." Officials also said the suspect claimed that he had a "sexual addiction" and that the shooting "was not racially motivated."

The Atlanta police chief said it was too "early in this investigation to determine [the shooting] a hate crime, even though we made an arrest."

But many advocates say it is impossible to divorce race from misogynist crimes that disproportionately impacted Asians. "Many of the victims are Asian. These murders occurred at a time when anti-Asian violence has been spiking," Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA) tweeted in response to the attacks. "All officials should do their part to condemn violence and not inflame further discrimination."

On Wednesday, Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) called out former President Donald Trump for spurring anti-Asian sentiment and violence with his racist named for the virus. "President Trump clearly stoked the flames of xenophobia against AAPIs with his rhetoric," she said at a news conference. "The CDC and the World Health Organization said we should all use the official term covid-19 in order to make sure this disease is not associated with a particular geographical location or ethnicity due to the stigma it causes. And President Trump refused to acknowledge that and instead used the terms 'China virus,' 'Wuhan Virus' and 'Kung flu.'"

On Tuesday, Stop AAPI Hate, an organization that has been tracking anti-Asian violence reports, also released its latest report that nearly 3,800 incidents had been reported since March 2020. The report also shows that a disproportionate number of anti-Asian attacks were directed at women, who reported hate incidents twice as often as men.

Since the shootings took place at spas, Atlanta police said

they have dispatched officers to similar businesses. Baker said homicides are rare for the area, adding that the county "had one homicide" in 2020. The incidents also stoked responses from places like New York City, which deployed counterterrorism officers to Asian communities for caution. (With input from Agencies)

Today We Are All Asian



BY WALLACE FORD

Yesterday (March 16), another member of the Tribe of Armed and Angry White Men decided that it

would be a good thing to kill as many Asians as he could find in massage spas in and around Atlanta. He managed to kill eight people, six of whom were Asian. The other two just happened to discover that their Sell By date was yesterday.

In other words, the other two were just collateral damage in the continued hate war being waged by the Tribe of Armed and Angry White Men. And in that war, anyone and everyone stands the risk of being collateral damage. In that sense, we are all Asian. Just as we are all Black. We are all Latino. We are all Muslims. We are all Indigenous people. We are all LGBTQI members. We are all Jews.

Because in hating and targeting all of the above, the Tribe of Armed and Angry White Men doesn't care who gets in the way. And they certainly don't care who dies. Yesterday it was six Asian women who committed the capital crime of Being Asian and Working. About a year ago it was Armaud Arberry who committed the capital crime of Jogging While Black in an Atlanta suburb. In August 2019 it was 23 Latinos in El Paso who committed the capital crime of Being Latino in A Public Place. And in 2017 it was Heather Heyer who committed the capital crime of Demonstrating for Justice with Black People in Charlottesville. And in 2018 it was 11 Jews worshiping in a synagogue who committed the capital crime of Being Jews.

Of course, the behavior which cost these men and women their lives are only capital crimes in the twisted universe of white supremacist domestic terrorists. These men (and women) have been letting us know who they are for years and the response of the public and law enforcement has been tepid at best. All of the referenced atrocities are considered isolated events and not part of the obvious pattern of white extremist violence which is committed to maintaining white minority rule in this nation, no matter the human or institutional cost.

We saw the savage combination of white supremacy and white privilege on January 6, 2020 when a mob that would have warmed the heart of the Ku Klux Klan in days gone past, stormed the capital - ostensibly to keep 45 as president - but...there were Confederate flags and Nazi paraphernalia present - clear signs that white supremacy was coursing through the veins of these so-called "good people".

History shows quite clearly how this country responds when it perceives a domestic threat. Look at what happened to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Paul Robeson among thousands of others accused of being part of some Russian conspiracy to overthrow the government.

Look at what happened to the Black Panther Party when its members asserted the constitutional right of Black people to exercise their Second Amendment rights (the irony is apparent). And look what happened to Martin Luther King, Jr. when the Federal Bureau of Investigation considered him to be "the greatest domestic threat" in the country.

A Black man preaching nonviolence in the quest for justice is a domestic threat. A tribe of white supremacist domestic terrorists are considered to be either misunderstood or misguided, but certainly not a national threat.

Attorney General Merrick Garland has stated that he considers domestic terrorism to be a national threat. But he needs to be more specific - it is white supremacist domestic terrorism that is a true national threat. And unless and until this nation confronts this danger from within, every American citizen is in danger of being in the cross hairs of this renegade tribe.

And that is why today we are all Asian.

Kohli returns to top 5 in ICC T20I rankings

Following his stellar performance in the ongoing series against England, India skipper Virat Kohli on Wednesday broke back into the top of the ICC T20 batsmen rankings.

Kohli, a formerly top-ranked batsman in the format and currently number one in ODIs, gained one slot and a massive 47 rating points after unbeaten knocks of 73 and 77 in the second and third matches against England, to be placed fifth.

KL Rahul remains the top-ranked Indian batsman at the fourth spot despite three failures in the series so far.

Shreyas Iyer is up 32 places to the 31st spot while Rishabh Pant gained 30 spots to be ranked 80th.

Among bowlers, all-rounder Washington Sundar is up two places to 11th while seamers Shardul Thakur (up 14 places to 27th) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (up seven places to 45th) have also gained.

Jos Buttler has re-entered the top 20. His match-winning 83 not out in the third match has helped him advance five places to 19th position, just two shy of his career-best 17th position attained in October 2018.

There were also some other fine performances in the series, between the top two sides, which England leads 2-1. Jonny Bairstow, who chipped in with 40 runs and was associated in an unbroken 77-run stand with Buttler in the eight-wicket win on Tuesday, has moved up two slots to 14th position in the list led by his compatriot Dawid Malan.

Ritika, cousin of wrestlers Geeta and Babita Phogat, 'commits suicide' after losing final

HISAR (TIP): A budding wrestler, Ritika Balanda, cousin of famed wrestlers Geeta and Babita Phogat, allegedly committed suicide at their residence on Monday, March 15, night.

The village sources said that Ritika, 17, was reportedly under depression as she had lost a wrestling tournament's final held in Rajasthan recently by a narrow margin.

She had participated in a state-level competition at Bharatpur between March 12 and 14.

She had been staying at the residence of Geeta and Babita to get training under the mentorship of her uncle Mahavir Phogat. She had gone to sleep in her room on Monday night and was found hanging from a ceiling fan on Tuesday morning, the sources added. Dronacharya awardee Mahavir Phogat has trained his daughters Geeta, Babita and niece Vinesh at his wrestling academy at their native place in Balali village of Charkhi Dadri district.

Suryakumar shines with bat as India level series

AHMEDABAD: (TIP): India won the fourth T20 International against England by eight runs to level the five-match series at 2-2.

Ishan Kishan the other night, and Suryakumar Yadav on Thursday, March 18. India's T20 specialists don't waste any time to find their feet in international cricket and keep sending reminders why they should be playing more regularly.

Dropped for the third T20I without getting to face a ball in his debut game, Suryakumar top-scored with 57 in his maiden outing with the bat, an innings that showed what he could offer to the side. His knock was one of the highlights in India's win over England in the fourth T20I at the Narendra Modi Stadium, which ensured an exciting finish in the fifth and final match on Saturday with the series locked 2-2.

Suryakumar got the opportunity on Thursday only because Ishan had a groin injury. Taking his spot at No 3, the 30-year-old pulled the first ball he faced off Jofra Archer for six over fine-leg. It wasn't an instinctive shot. Having experienced such countless situations in the IPL, Suryakumar fully expected the length that Archer would deliver. And as the pacer obliged, the Mumbaier merely responded.

A batsman who should have broken into the side at least a year ago, Suryakumar is at the peak of his prowess in a format, in which he has been so dominant. Unlike the rest of the options, India have to fill in the middle-order slot, Suryakumar's range of shots are unparalleled. For a batsman, who has mostly batted at No 4 and 5 during the middle overs, he has an IPL strike-rate of 134.57. It is his ability to manufacture boundary balls in the middle-overs while maintaining the momentum given by the openers and lay a foundation for the finishers that make him a precious talent in T20s. His other prized asset is his ability to steady the ship when the team struggles without affecting the scoring rate.

With just six months to go for the T20 World Cup, India have finally given him an opportunity to claim a spot. In a team where competition is tough, there is little space for Suryakumar to take time to find his feet. Sanju Samson, who was unable to make most of the opportunities he got in Australia, finds himself

discarded for this series. And maybe all those times he spent waiting for the call has only made Suryakumar hungrier than ever. He looked unstoppable until a debatable umpiring



Suryakumar Yadav smashed 6 fours and 3 sixes in his 31-ball 57 against England in Ahmedabad on Thursday, March 18. Photo source: Reuters

decision sent him back. Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant ensured Suryakumar's innings didn't go waste as they took India to 185-8, their highest total this series.

And defending the total, England came hard at India. Jason Roy, Ben Stokes and Jonny Bairstow got starts and looked threatening, but somehow the hosts' attack found ways to get wickets when they needed the most as England wilted under pressure to keep the series alive.

Paul Pogba returns from injury to help Man Utd beat AC Milan in Europa League

Paul Pogba returned from injury to score the winner as Manchester United beat AC Milan 1-0 on Thursday to reach the Europa League quarterfinals, while Mislav Orsic netted a hat trick as Dinamo Zagreb stunned Tottenham 3-0 to eliminate the London team.

Pogba was brought on at halftime and had an immediate impact as he scored two minutes later to help United secure a 2-1 aggregate victory.

"Paul looked like he'd been out for six weeks. He's been working really hard but playing football is a different matter and you can see that he needs more time," United coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said. "He couldn't play for more than 45 minutes and he'll get better and better which is fantastic for us for the rest of the season ... He's going to give us a big boost."

Arsenal, Roma, Ajax and Villarreal all went through as well.

In Milan, former Manchester United forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic also made his comeback from injury as a substitute but saw his best effort saved as his powerful header was clawed away by goalkeeper Dean Henderson.

"There's so much disappointment, we played two matches well, today we just



Manchester United's Paul Pogba, left, is congratulated by teammates after scoring his team's first goal during the Europa League round of 16 second leg match between AC Milan and Manchester United at the San Siro Stadium, in Milan, Italy, Thursday, March 18, 2021.

missed a goal," Ibrahimovic said. "We made an error at the back but that's football and if you don't take your chances it's more difficult to go through.

"But now I'll be back to help the team. ... We didn't deserve to go out tonight, but you also learn from negative moments to grow and we'll move forward."

Ibrahimovic played for United from

2016-18, helping it win the Europa League in 2017. That was the English side's last trophy.

After conceding a late equalizer in a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford, United started positively at San Siro but Milan slowly got into the match and had the best chance with the last kick of the first half as Rade Krunic volleyed wide of the left post.

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Vision of Dr. V.K. Raju, the Eye Foundation of America and Goutami Eye Institute

- * **3.5 million + served**
- * **350 thousand + surgeries**
- * **30 thousand + on children**



Message from Peter J. McDonnell, M.D. Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University, USA on the occasion of laying the foundation stone on December 10, 2020



"On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MO, I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautiful facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion. Best wishes, Peter"



POST SURGERY



PRE SURGERY

Triplets Prasanth, Susanth and Nisanth, who were treated by Goutami Eye Institute three years ago and gifted vision for life, as ROP babies under GEMROP (Goutami Eye tele Medicine Retinopathy Of Prematurity).

- Treating disease and vision problems**
- Performing free cataract surgeries**
- Screening infants and children**
- Distributing glasses and visual aids**
- Conducting Research**
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The work by the Eye Foundation of America team started in 1977 and has spread from India to 21 different countries. Additionally, EFA Focuses on teaching and training of health professionals who receive the Foundation's support at every level.
<https://youtube/B23VvUaloN4> <https://youtube/KiCzqLQe2VE>

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children". - Nelson Mandela

To know more about the work of Eye Foundation of America or to donate, visit www.eyefoundationofamerica.org

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,
सर्वे सन्तु नरिमायाः । Sarve Santu Niramayah
May all be prosperous and happy!
May all be healthy!

The Eye Foundation of America
695, West View Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505
Phone: 304-599-0705
www.eyefoundationofamerica.org