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**OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BIDEN**  
**Attorney Ravi Batra**

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**India's worries grow as Coronavirus cases mount to cross 200,000 on a single day**

- India registered 2,16,642 new COVID-19 cases as of 11.15 p.m. IST on April 15. As many as 1,153 deaths were also recorded on the day.
- Country adds more than 1,100 deaths; Maharashtra leads with 61,695 cases, followed by U.P.
- Country has so far reported a total of 1,42,87,740 cases and 1,74,306 deaths.



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Maharashtra reported 61,695 infections (accounting for nearly 31% of new cases) on April 15, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 22,339 cases and Delhi with 16,699 cases. Maharashtra also recorded the most casualties (349) on April 15. Delhi followed with 112 deaths, while Uttar Pradesh registered 104 casualties.

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**U.S. imposes new sanctions on Russia**

**Expels 10 Russian diplomats, restricts trading and blacklists 32 individuals over 'election meddling, cyberattack'**

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** A reminder of the cold war period, the United States announced sanctions against Russia on Thursday, April 15, and the expulsion of 10 diplomats in retaliation for what Washington says is the Kremlin's U.S. election interference, a massive cyberattack and other hostile activity.

President Joe Biden ordered a widening of restrictions on U.S. banks trading in Russian government debt,

**CONTD ON PAGE 7**



*In a tough and decisive action, President Biden signed an executive order to impose new sanctions on Russia - File photo*

**President Joe Biden greets Indian Americans and Sikhs on Vaisakhi**

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** US President Joe Biden led his country in greeting Indian Americans, South Asians and Southeast Asians on the eve of their New Year.

"(First Lady) Jill (Biden) and I send our warmest wishes to the South Asian and Southeast Asian communities who are celebrating Vaisakhi, Navratri, Songkran and the incoming New Year this week. Happy Bengali, Cambodian, Lao, Myanmar, Nepali, Sinhalese, Tamil, Thai, and Vishu New Year!" Biden said in a tweet on Tuesday, April 13.

Biden and the US first lady were joined by several lawmakers in greeting Indian-Americans and Sikhs on the occasion of Baisakhi.

"Wishing a happy and healthy Vaisakhi to the Sikh community celebrating across the country!" Indian American Congressman Ami Bera said.

Another Indian-American lawmaker, Ro Khanna, tweeted, "Wishing the Sikh community in America and around the world a happy Vaisakhi!"

"Wishing a happy Vaisakhi to all those celebrating in New Jersey and around



*President Joe Biden and the First Lady Jill Biden greeted Indian-Americans and Sikhs on the occasion of Vaisakhi and other festivals - File photo*

the world!" said Congressman Frank Pallone. Pallone and Congressman John Garamendi have introduced a resolution honoring the Sikh community's celebration of Baisakhi.

**CONTD ON PAGE 7**

**DIASPORA WELCOMES MODI GOVERNMENT'S SIMPLIFICATION OF OCI CARDS RE-ISSUE PROCESS**

**Wants parity in privileges and benefits with Indian citizens in India**

*I.S. Saluja*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** A notification posted by Press Information Bureau on April 15, 2021 at 7.02 PM (IST) speaks of a government of India decision which is expected to significantly ease the process for re-issue of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards.

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**-: OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE USA :-**

**Hon. President of the United States**

**Dear President,**

Request your support for India's democracy - One call does it. Briefly, India has been our reliable ally in containing Chinese influence worldwide, and we base that on the stability and strength of Indian democratic institutions. However, these institutions are crumbling, and we seek your help in sustaining our ally, India.

One of the significant sources of potential political instability is Farmer's protests against the laws passed by the Government of India. These laws help big corporations control the agriculture sector of the economy, stripping the small farmers from their livelihood.

Nearly 60% of the Indian population works in the Agriculture sector, contributing 18% to the national GDP; now, all of this is peril.

Over 200,000 farmers from across India have been protesting for the last six months, living through the cold and brittle winters of New Delhi.

Nearly 350 Farmers have lost their lives during these ongoing peaceful protests.

Farmers are arrested on bogus charges. The Government machinery is making their lives difficult.

The farmers are determined to protest and have the harmful Farm Laws repealed.

They have the support of a large chunk of Indian abroad who understand how harmful the Farm Laws enacted by the Modi government are for the farmers and the farm sector.

Further to that, the right-wing groups have given three choices to 230 million Christians and Muslims- convert to Hinduism, disappear, or live as second-class citizens.

The Journalists, politicians, and social activists have been detained, interrogated charged with treason for voicing their support for the farmers.

The age-old wisdom goes like this, "one call does it." We hope you can call Prime Minister Modi and ask him to restore the freedoms to the people and repeal the laws that will hurt India's small farmers and food security.

The political stability of India is critical to our influence in Asia.

**Mike Ghose**  
mikeghouse@gmail.com

**-: LETTER TO THE EDITOR :-**

**Dear Prof. Saluja, Greetings.**

The Vaisakhi special edition, dedicated to the agitating Indian farmers, seeking revocation of the three laws, made interesting reading, indeed. Your remarkable editorial has presented a very balanced account of the entire scenario.

Really commendable are the initiatives of Senators Charles Schumer and Robert Menendez writing to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Congressman Andrew Garbarino's letter to Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

Similarly, several world leaders, celebrities and the public of many nations have condemned the highhandedness of the Union government of India.

The People's Power of Peaceful Protest has been reinforced through an unprecedented agitation of such immense magnitude. A momentous chapter in the history of protests, worldwide, is in the making, whereby democratic norms are being re-emphasized by the farming community in India.

"No farmer, no food" is the slogan which emanated from Punjab, India, and soon it started resonating well, deeply and absolutely, with the populace of the entire world.

During the agitation, the farmers, including women, children and the old, were subjected to excruciating tortures like baton-charge, water-cannons and tear-gas shells. And during the camping on several locations, on the Delhi borders, they were further bullied when basic amenities like water, electricity and internet connections were severed, in a blatant violation of human rights.

Accomplishment of the aspirations of the already marginalized farmers is being further crushed by the excruciating pain inflicted upon them. However, their resilience and indomitable fortitude, facing all adversity, shall serve as an inspiration for many to emulate.

Protests, by Indians, are being organized worldwide and outside the New York based headquarters of the United Nations Organization, to register a vociferous opposition to the draconian laws, enacted by the autocratic Indian regime, which is also resorting to atrocious measures and machinations to discredit the agitation.

Over two hundred people have succumbed to the extremities of weather. One religious leader and preacher committed suicide, leaving a note that he was sacrificing his life for the cause of the fundamental right to speech and expression, when democratic norms are thrown to the wind, by an autocratic regime. One young farmer was shot dead, while he was driving his tractor.

Most certainly, they can be awarded the rank of "farming soldiers on the interstate borders of Delhi". The farmers are in a warzone of sorts, battling it out, "with weapons of words and demands", of course, protesting against their

own elected government, demanding their very legitimate fundamental rights, that have been guaranteed in the Indian Constitution but which are not being implemented and given to the distressed farmers. All of the happenings are really an unfortunate and unwarranted situation, especially considering the fact that India has a parliamentary form of government and the following golden words are enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution: "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic".

This is an unusually dark phase in the history of the Indian polity, post 1947 independent India, when the programs, policies, procedures and decisions of the government are being denounced by the people. The earlier such black period was the Emergency Era in 1975 to 1977.

On the 26th of January 2021, all eyes were glued towards the grand spectacle, to be staged on 'The Rajpath' (implying the Pathway to the Seat of Power) in Delhi, where the prowess of the Indian Defense Forces, during the Parade is showcased, in a gesture denoting National Glory & Esteem, while celebrating freedom and also saluting the Warrior-Defenders of the Indian populace and Indian territorial sovereignty.

A small group of protestors forced their way, into the historic Red Fort complex, hoisted the 'Nishaan Sahib', the Religious-Insignia of the Sikhs, that is visible atop every Gurdwara, around the world. The 'Nishaan-Sahib' was deliberately labeled as the 'Flag of Khalistan' (an alleged separatist militant movement) even though the entire world is aware of the 'Nishaan-Sahib' being the Insignia of the 551-year-old religion, which is the 5th largest, in terms of numbers, and whose adherents reside globally. This saffron-colored insignia is very joyously hoisted by the Sikh Regiment of the Indian Army, wherever it is posted. This flag was hoisted on the ramparts of the very same Red Fort, in a historic commemoration in 2014, to mark the conquest of Delhi by Sikh Generals Bhagel Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who vanquished the Mughals.

They hoisted the 'Nishaan-Sahib', at the very spot where the Prime Minister of India unfurls the Tricolor National Flag, every year, on the 15th of August, India's Independence Day and it is folded and stored, after the ceremony. One Tricolor is always fluttering on another pole. Although this flag was untouched, yet the protestors were charged with desecration of the National Flag.

Hence, the charges of sedition are, absolutely, ill-founded and hold no water.

**Amarjit Singh Anand**  
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# Bollywood Superstar and Fitness Icon Shilpa Shetty Kundra Is The New Face of U.S. Based South Asian food brand, Laxmi!

**Company unveils its latest campaign and vision for the North America market.**

Laxmi, the oldest and most well-loved South Asian brand in North America is best known for delivering uncompromising quality and authentic ethnic foods that stand for purity and everyday value for South Asian consumers.

Shilpa and Laxmi share a similar passion for perfection both having carved their own niche making them a dream team. Their association is one that forges a path of excellence and will leave a legacy to remember. Shilpa Shetty Kundra will be the face for all brand communications for Laxmi with special focus on promoting popular products such as basmati rice, wheat flour, spices and lentils.

Commenting on this exciting new alliance, House of Spices company executives, Neil Soni (CEO) and Amrapali Soni (COO) said, "Shilpa with Laxmi was an easy decision. Her evolution into health and wellness, in addition to her culinary curiosity fits well with the evolution of Laxmi brand. In today's world, we need to engage with our consumers, let them know we are listening. After refreshing the Laxmi logo,



it was time to give the brand a new voice. We could not be happier that the voice is Shilpa's."

Laxmi is dedicated to keeping the South Asian culinary traditions alive and thriving by continuing to fulfill our desi cooking needs by offering range of superior products from the extra-long basmati rice to the purest haldi (turmeric), ghee and the newly launched

range of Ayurvedic spices.

Speaking of category challenges in the marketplace, Chief Sales and Marketing officer Sundeeep Lamba mentioned that "With the explosion of brand options at the store, for a consumer it is a difficult choice to make especially not knowing how these products are sourced and handled. Laxmi has always stood for quality, trust and value and with our new

association with Shilpa Shetty Kundra, our brand promise will come to life".

The origins of the Laxmi brand are based in traditions and family values and therefore it is no surprise that their latest campaign revolves around bringing those values to life.

Commenting on the campaign inspiration, Suhasinee Patil, VP Marketing shared some thoughts on what makes this campaign so special. According to her, "This past year with all its challenges has proven to us that nothing matters more than family and one way we all stayed positive and connected was through cooking. The pandemic brought out the chef in all of us and induced us to try new foods, focusing on reducing stress and boosting our immunity. It inspired us to change our lifestyle and prioritize health and family."

With this campaign, our message to the consumers is simple: It's time to bring home foods that stand for quality and purity; it's time to bring home a brand you have trusted for over 50 years; It's time to bring LAXMI home!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT Neeta Bhasin: media@asbcommunications.com**

## Diaspora Welcomes Modi Government's Simplification of OCI...

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

It says the Modi Government has decided to simplify the process. This decision has been taken on the directions of the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The OCI Card has proved to be very popular amongst foreigners of Indian Origin and spouses of foreign origin of Indian citizens or OCI cardholders, as it helps them a hassle-free entry and unlimited stay in India. So far about 37.72 lakh OCI Cards have been issued by the Government of India.

As per the extant law, a foreigner of Indian origin or a foreign spouse of an Indian citizen or foreign spouse of an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, can be registered as an OCI cardholder. OCI card is a lifelong visa for entry into and stay in India with a number of other major benefits attached to it which are not available to other foreigners.

Presently, the OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age, in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant.

With a view to facilitate the OCI cardholders, it has now been decided by the Government of India to dispense with this requirement. A person who has got registration as OCI cardholder prior to attaining the age of 20 years will have to get the OCI card re-issued only once when a new passport is issued after his/her completing 20 years of age, so as to capture his/ her facial features on attaining adulthood. If a person has obtained registration as OCI cardholder after attaining the age of 20 years, there will be no requirement of re-issue of OCI card.

With a view to update the data regarding new passports obtained by the OCI cardholder, it has been decided that he/she shall upload a copy of the new passport containing his/her photo and also a latest photo on the online OCI portal, each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age. These documents may be uploaded by the OCI cardholder within 3 months of receipt of the new passport. However, in the



*GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham welcomed the simplification of process with regard to the OCI card, but urged the government of India to treat OCI Card holders who have invested in business and creating jobs in India at par with Indian citizens*



*Jaipur Foot, USA Chairman Prem Bhandari who has been a relentless critic of the government policies on OCI Card, questioning how it could be a lifelong card when it required renewal time and again, said the Indian government has made a good beginning, but it has yet to meet the aspirations of the NRI community.*

case of those who have been registered as OCI cardholder as spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or an OCI cardholder, the person concerned will be required to upload on the system, a copy of the new passport containing the photo of the passport holder and also a latest photo along with a declaration that their marriage is still subsisting each time a new passport is issued. These documents may be uploaded by the OCI cardholder spouse within three months of receipt of his/ her new passport.

The details will be updated on the system and an auto acknowledgement through e-mail will be sent to the OCI cardholder informing that the updated details have been taken on record. There will be no restriction on the OCI cardholder to travel to/ from India during the period from the date of issue of new passport till the date of final

acknowledgement of his/ her documents in the web-based system.

All the above services of uploading documents will be provided on gratis basis to the OCI cardholders.

Commenting on the government's latest decision, USA based Global organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO International) Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham said GOPIO welcomed the new directives simplifying the OCI Card process.

"This will remove the confusion to many OCI card holders on the process of renewing the card at the age of 20 and 50 and one doesn't have to go through the whole OCI card renewal process again," said GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham. This will also encourage more overseas Indians to become OCIs and it will benefit India, through their travel, business and investment in India.

"However, GOPIO strongly urges the government to treat OCI Card holders who have invested in business and creating jobs in India at par with Indian citizens and they shouldn't be termed as foreign nationals by various Govt. agencies while doing business including manufacturing and research in India," Dr. Abraham added.

The government was forced to grant these concessions after the Diaspora leaders across the world raised their voice against the discriminatory policies which some openly condemned as double standards.

Jaipur Foot USA Chairman Prem Bhandari in particular has been in the forefront of demanding revision of rules to simplify the process of renewal of OCI card. He is the one who questioned the nomenclature "lifelong card" when it had to be got renewed so often.

Asked by The Indian Panorama for his reaction to the revised "simplified" process, he said, it is still not an ideal situation. OCI card holders need to be treated at par with Indian citizens, living in India, and should be allowed the benefits and privileges which an Indian citizen in India normally enjoys. He added that much more needs to be done, a sentiment which Dr. Thomas Abraham also voiced.

The Indian Panorama will welcome readers' comments on the issue which will keep kicking dust until a more NRI friendly approach is adopted by the government of India.

# Indian American Frontline Healthcare Workers Protest at US Capitol the Green Card Backlog

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Urging American lawmakers to pass a legislation that ends the archaic per country quota for legal permanent residency in the US, a group of frontline Indian American healthcare professionals, stuck in the 150-plus-year Green Card backlog, held a peaceful demonstration in front of the Capitol.

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.

In a joint statement on Monday, the Indian-American doctors said that they are in a 150-plus-year Green Card backlog due to archaic country caps that allows no nation to get more than seven per cent of employment-based green cards.

"India is a land of a billion plus people but the number of green cards it gets is the same as a country as small as Iceland. There is no cap on H-1B visa though and Indians make 50 per cent of the H-1B work force. This discrepancy between H-1B and green cards has created an inhuman backlog that is adversely affecting our professional and personal lives," they said.

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.

The protesters said that the fairness bill removes country caps and allots green cards as a first come first serve basis. It passed in the House of Representatives



Indian American healthcare workers protesting in front of the Capitol the archaic per country quota for legal permanent residency in the US

by 365 votes in 2019 and its Senate equivalent S386 passed the Senate in 2020. Now the bill is back to the House as a modified version.

They urged Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren to bring it to vote as a bipartisan solution to end the suffering of skilled professionals. "The Green Card backlog is taking a toll on the frontline health care workers and their families. They are living in fear and anxiety," Dr Namita Dhiman, a child and adolescent psychiatrist said. "US President Joe Biden should end the Green Card backlog by allowing USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) to utilize unused green cards from the past years for the frontline

healthcare workers in the backlog," she said.

"COVID-19 has been brutal to frontline healthcare workers and the green card backlog makes it miserable. This is leading to serious mental health issues in this group," Dr Dhiman added.

Baltimore-based Dr Santanu Samanta, a radiation oncologist, said he feels threatened about the consequences to his family and his job, if there is no change brought in the Green Card system.

"I would desperately want to see changes that would help us become permanent green holders to serve people in this country," he said.

"Due to being stuck in the Green Card backlog, I couldn't get fellowship training for four years despite being the most worthy candidate. After training is finished, I couldn't find an appropriate job. My wife and daughter got so scared during COVID Pandemic that they wanted to go back to India," said Dr Saurabh Ranjan, an interventional cardiologist.

"If I die while on H-1B visa, I don't get any benefits and my family will be deported. After serving the last 10 years as a physician, I still am alien and feel so desperate and hopeless how we have been treated in regard to green cards and citizenship," Dr Ranjan said.

Infectious disease and critical care physician from Wisconsin Dr Raj Karnatak said that they are fighting to save lives on the frontline knowing that if they get sick or die serving on the frontline, their families will get deported.

"We need immediate relief from the miserable Green Card backlog," he said.

## Indian American Congressman Ro-Khanna Introduces Resolution in the Congress 'To Honor' BR Ambedkar

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** An Indian American Congressman has introduced a resolution in the US House of Representatives for a second consecutive year to honor Bhimrao Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution, on his 130th birth anniversary so that young leaders around the world can be inspired by his vision for equality.

India is celebrating the 130th birth anniversary of Ambedkar this year.

"Ambedkar stood for an India and America where we respect the dignity of all," Indian American Democratic Congressman Ro Khanna said in a tweet after introducing the legislation in the US House of Representatives on Wednesday.

"Today, I'm reintroducing my resolution to honor B R Ambedkar, in the hopes that young leaders around the world will read his work and be inspired by his vision for equality," he said.

Ambedkar stood for an India and America where we respect the dignity of all.

Today, I'm reintroducing my resolution to honor BR Ambedkar, in the hopes that young leaders around the world will read his work and be inspired by his vision for equality. pic.twitter.com/dckRS2Kgmz

- Rep. Ro Khanna (@RepRoKhanna) April 14, 2021

Introduced by Mr. Khanna for the second consecutive year, the resolution acknowledges the profound impact of America's discriminatory practices, specifically the systematic



"Today, I'm reintroducing my resolution to honor B R Ambedkar, in the hopes that young leaders around the world will read his work and be inspired by his vision for equality," said Ro Khanna.

discrimination of African-Americans and women in the United States, as influential in his pursuit to guarantee equal rights for every human being in the Indian Constitution.

Honoring the accomplishments of Ambedkar and the impact of his legacy on the Constitution of India and jurisprudence and legal scholarship around the world; the resolution affirms the prohibition of untouchability and caste discrimination in all forms, as enshrined in the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Recognizing that equality, justice and liberty are essential rights for all people, the resolution says that Dr Ambedkar's contributions to economics, political science, civil rights, religious harmony, and jurisprudence have had a profound impact around the world, promoting

democratic values, unfettered equality, and justice for peoples of all castes, races, genders, religions, and backgrounds.

The resolution notes that former US president Barack Obama invoked BR Ambedkar's contribution to the Indian Constitution and society in an address before the Indian parliament in 2010.

"We believe that no matter who you are or where you come from, every person can fulfil their God-given potential. Just as a Dalit like Dr Ambedkar could lift himself up and pen the words of the Constitution, that protects the rights of all Indians," he had said.

Dr Ambedkar, the resolution said, led one of the largest civil rights movements in history, working to establish basic rights for hundreds of millions of Dalits, and succeeded in including Article 17 in the Constitution of India which abolishes untouchability and its practice in any form.

His influence as an economist is evidenced by his seminal texts on India's financial systems, his establishment of the Finance Commission of India, and his role in the creation of The Reserve Bank of India, the resolution says.

Dr Ambedkar championed labor reforms such as changing the daily work schedule from 12 hours to 8 hours and introduced measures like employee insurance, medical leave, "dearness pay", equal pay for equal work for women, minimum wages, and timely revision of scale of pay, it said.

## Indo- Canadian Punjabi diaspora seeks direct flights to Amritsar



**TORONTO (TIP):** Punjabi diaspora in Canada and NGOs in India have urged to introduce direct air connectivity from Vancouver and Toronto to Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International (SGRDJI) Airport, Amritsar, to facilitate travel keeping in view the year-long celebrations of the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Sikh Guru who was born in Amritsar.

Seeking direct connectivity with Amritsar ahead of the historic occasion, Sameep Singh Gumtala, convener of the Fly Amritsar Initiative, said direct flights to SGRDJI Airport had been a long-pending demand of thousands of Punjabis across Canada and Punjab.

Gumtala said Amritsar would be the hub of celebrations of the 400th Prakash Purab, with the Punjab and Central Governments already announcing many programs in India and abroad for the centennial celebrations. Lakhs of devotees from India and abroad were also expected to travel to the country for the year-long celebrations and members of the Punjabi community were reaching out to the Prime Minister of Canada, their parliamentary representatives, and Government of India for direct flights.

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

# Indian American Officials Meera Joshi, Radhika Fox named for key jobs

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Joe Biden is tapping two Indian American women already working in his administration as part of a 10-member team to lead on climate and transportation matters across key agencies.

While Meera Joshi is being named as Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, Radhika Fox would become Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency.

Biden's intent to elevate Joshi, an attorney with over 16 years of experience leading government oversight agencies, and Fox, a water issues expert, both working for his administration since January 20 inauguration day, was announced by the White House Wednesday.

Appointed as the Deputy Administrator and senior official of the agency she would now head on day one, Joshi was previously Chair and CEO of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission.

At the nation's largest for-hire transportation regulator, Joshi spearheaded novel Vision Zero campaigns using data tools to keep high risk drivers and unsafe vehicles off the road, according to his official biography.

She also led landmark policy, including establishing robust open transportation data standards for app-based providers; enacting the nation's first for-hire driver pay protection program and providing broad access to for-hire transportation for passengers who use wheelchairs.

Prior to transportation regulation, Joshi was the



While Meera Joshi is being named as Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, Radhika Fox would become Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency.

Inspector General for New York City's Department of Corrections, responsible for investigation of corruption and criminality at all levels of New York City's jail operations and the First Deputy Executive Director of New York City's Civilian Complaint Review Board, leading investigations of police misconduct.

In addition to her government positions, Joshi served as General Manager for the New York Office of Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants and was a visiting scholar at New York University's Rudin Center for Transportation Policy.

Joshi was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She holds a BA and a JD from the University of Pennsylvania. Appointed Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water at the

Environmental Protection Agency on Jan. 20, Fox currently serves as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Water.

The EPA's Office of Water works to ensure that drinking water is safe, wastewater is safely returned to the environment, and surface waters are properly managed and protected.

Prior to joining EPA, Fox served as Chief Executive Officer for the US Water Alliance, where she established herself as a widely recognized national thought leader on complex water issues, from equitable water management to investing in our nation's water infrastructure.

Her work has helped address the most salient water issues facing the nation-including climate change, affordability, equity, governance, innovative finance, and the evolution of the One Water movement.

Fox previously directed the policy and government affairs agenda for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which is responsible for providing 24/7 water, wastewater, and municipal power services to 2.6 million Bay Area residents.

She also served as the Federal Policy Director at PolicyLink, where she coordinated the organization's policy agenda on a wide range of issues, including infrastructure investment, transportation, sustainable communities, economic inclusion, and workforce development. Fox holds a BA from Columbia University and a Masters in City and Regional Planning from the University of California at Berkeley where she was a HUD Community Development Fellow.

## Indian American Business and Community Leader Sejal Desai named Akanksha Education Fund Executive Director

DALLAS, TX (TIP): Sejal Desai, an Indian American business and community leader from Texas has been appointed the new Executive Director of Akanksha Education Fund to promote educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in India.



Sejal has had an incredible 30-year career and joins the Akanksha family most recently from the Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT), where she led a strategic initiative focused on engaging businesses in the community.

"The Akanksha Education Fund is thrilled to announce that Sejal Desai, of Dallas, Texas, will be the new Executive Director of the Akanksha Education Fund," the not-for-profit organization's Board of Directors said in a message Wednesday.

Sejal has had an incredible 30-year career and joins the Akanksha family most recently from the Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT), where she led a strategic initiative focused on engaging businesses in the community, according to a media release.

At CFT she worked with over 400 companies and also supported many individual donors with their philanthropic giving and engagement.

Among other career highlights, she also started a US-India based social venture, SevaYatra, with one of Akanksha's long-

time friends, Azad Oommen.

"As a business and community leader in Dallas, Sejal and her family will continue living there but she plans to travel regularly to be with the AEF team and engage with our supporters," the message from the board said.

She lived in Mumbai for almost 20 years and has strong family and professional ties there.

Ramesh Srinivasan, AEF's Board Chair noted that Sejal's combined roots in Dallas and Mumbai are perfect for this moment in AEF's growth.

"This is an exciting venture for all of us, as our future outreach depends in part on growing our presence well beyond the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut area. We have some terrific seeds planted already and Sejal is poised to make them grow!"

"I am excited to embark on this new chapter in my life and work together with individuals, corporates and foundations across the US to advance educational outcomes for underserved children in India," said Desai.

## Indian American cast of 'Family Karma' tackles culturally sensitive issues in Season 2

NEW YORK (TIP): Despite Indian Americans being one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States, it is not very often that one gets to see an all-Indian American storyline on mainstream television. While Indians as doctors, yoga practitioners or IT guys have been making their odd presence on US TV shows, it is perhaps for the first time that viewers got to see not one or two, but stories of no less than nine young Indian American friends on TV.

Bravo's docuseries, Family Karma, which completed a hit Season 1, was definitely unique in that aspect. Now, as it returns with a second season, there are more expectations of the series breaking newer grounds. And if the initial storyline progression is any indication, the upcoming season has plenty on offer.

The trailer for the new season got dropped on Tuesday, April 13.

There is a new entry that promises to add more to the show. A character named Monica gets introduced. Those who have been watching Family Karma would know that the new entry would make two characters named Monica in the series.

Monica Vaswani, who has been playing the part from season 1, returns for this season. Other returning members of the cast from season 1 include Anisha Ramakrishna, Amrit Kapai, Bali Chainani and Shaan Patel. New actors joining in this season are Dillon Patel and Rish Karam.

The critically acclaimed show, which explores the personal journeys of nine young Indian American friends trying to



Bravo TV's first docuseries with an all-Indian cast, returns on June 2.

navigate life, friendship, careers, and family, continues to bring in new twists this season.

The season would see Anisha making the decision of freezing her eggs. A culturally sensitive issue, it would be interesting to see whether her Indian family supports her decision or not.

Amrit, along with his boyfriend Nicholas, plans to settle down in Miami but not before an important first step - seeking approval from Amrit's family matriarch - another cultural taboo breaker in the series. But before you think that the new season is becoming more preachy - relax. There is a whole lot of fun as Brian discovers love again - this time again with a woman named Monica!

Family Karma is produced for Bravo by Truly Original with Steven Weinstock, Glenda Hersh, Lauren Eskelin, Michelle Schiefen, Lucas Howe, Swaga Deb, and Michael Meinecke serving as executive producers. Westley Harris and Ariel Algu serve as co-executive producers.

If you haven't already, catch up on the series. It will give you a tantalizing peek into many layers of Indian American life.

# GoFundMe campaign launched for slain Indian couple's daughter found dead in New Jersey

**NEW JERSEY (TIP):** Friends of an Indian couple found dead at their New Jersey home last week have started a GoFundMe campaign to help their surviving three-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Viha Rudrawar.

Bodies of the couple - identified as Balaji Rudrawar, 33, and Aarti B. Rudrawar, 31 - were found inside their North Arlington apartment in Bergen County, New Jersey Wednesday. Their daughter, who was found crying in the balcony, was unharmed.

'Contribute to Viha's future' fundraiser has collected over \$70, 000 in less than 24 hours of starting the campaign, according to its organizer Gobind Singh Nihalani.

Nihalani said they were in the process of creating a Trust Fund for this money to be used for Viha's well-being and her education.

They were also working with child welfare to arrange the kid's custody to her grandparents living in the temple town of Ambajogai in Maharashtra's Beed district, about 300 miles from Mumbai.

Rudrawar, an IT professional and his homemaker wife moved to the US in August 2015 after they got married in December 2014.

To view the GoFundMe, please visit: <https://gf.me/v/c/67xy/contribute-to-vihas-future>.

Balaji Rudrawar, working for Larsen & Toubro



*Friends of the deceased couple Balaji Rudrawar and Aarti B. Rudrawar have started a GoFundMe campaign to help their surviving three-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Viha Rudrawar Infotech Ltd, and Aarti Rudrawar "were happily married and a couple of few words but many smiles," wrote Nihalani.*

"In this immensely unfortunate moment, while we all get together to pray to the almighty to rest their souls in peace, we are also starting an effort to think for the future of the small child."

"While nobody can ever fulfill the void in Viha's life, as friends and family, the least we can do is to come

together and contribute our share towards the future of Viha," Nihalani wrote.

"No contribution is big or small - please do whatever you can to help Viha, as that will have some financial support for the future," he added.

Meanwhile, the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and the North Arlington Police Department are continuing to investigate the deaths.

Both Balaji and Aarti had suffered from multiple stab wounds, according to Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella.

They believe Aarti Rudrawar died as a result of stab wounds inflicted by her husband, the prosecutor said Friday.

Balaji Rudrawar "also died as a result of multiple stab wounds, but his manner of death is undetermined pending the completion of an autopsy and investigation," the prosecutor said in a release.

Investigators said they do not believe anyone else was involved in the deaths.

North Arlington Police responded to the Garden Terrace apartment complex after receiving a 9-1-1 call from a neighbor reporting that she looked through the mail slot in the front door of and saw two people lying on the floor in the living room area, Musella said in a release.

## Hindu American Foundation to take action to stop bans on Swastika

**NEW JERSEY (TIP):** Describing the Swastika as a "symbol of peace, well-being and prosperity," the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) has asked its supporters to take action to stop Maryland and New Jersey legislators from banning its public display.

"The Maryland House of Delegates is considering House Bill 0418 (HB0418) a bill that falsely defines the swastika as a symbol of hate. TAKE ACTION TODAY TO STOP THIS," it tweeted Saturday.

The New Jersey State Assembly is also "considering AB1749, a bill that would amend a state statute that criminalizes display of symbols, objects, or graffiti exposing another to threats of violence to specifically include swastikas," it said in an earlier post.

The prominent Hindu group wants its supporters to email the Governors and state legislators in Maryland and New Jersey to urge them to oppose the two bills.

"The bills make no distinction between the Nazi emblem and the sacred history and meaning of the swastika for over two billion Hindus, Buddhists and Jains in the United States and around the world as a Sanskrit word and symbol of peace, well-being and prosperity," it says.

While the Maryland bill "conflates the Nazi emblem or hooked cross with the swastika," the New Jersey bill "tries to distinguish the Nazi emblem or hooked cross from the swastika by calling it the 'Nazi swastika'" HAF says.



Noting the Nazi Party adopted the hooked cross (Hakenkreuz in German) as its emblem in 1920, HAF describes Nazism as "the hateful ideology that is responsible for the killing of millions of Jewish people and other innocents."

"The swastika, a Sanskrit word and symbol central to Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain spiritual life, invokes wellbeing and prosperity," it said.

"It's used in daily religious practice, special rites, and displayed in our homes, temples, and places of business. It may also be displayed in jewelry, clothing, and art," HAF said.

"These two symbols, and their history and meanings are NOT the same and should not be conflated," the Hindu group said.

"Imagine the shame and bullying our children could face as a result of the state's mis-portrayal of the swastika. Imagine the devastating impact it could have on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain families to freely practice their religion and pass traditions on to the next generation," HAF said.

HAF also asked supporters to educate

friends, neighbors, and colleagues and spread awareness about the ancient history and sacred significance of the swastika.

In Sanskrit, the word swastika is a combination of 'su' (meaning 'good') and 'asti' (meaning 'to exist'), it said. Popularly, this gets translated as 'all is well.'

"The swastika is thus understood to be a symbol of auspiciousness and good fortune, and is regularly donned on Hindu homes, businesses, printed materials, cars, temples, and ashrams," HAF said.

Many Hindus adorn the threshold of the front entrance to their homes with the swastika, it said noting, other faith traditions originating in India also regularly use the swastika, with similar auspicious meaning.

The swastika had a major resurgence of usage in Europe and North America in the 19th century as a good luck symbol, HAF said.

Prior to its appropriation by the Nazis, swastikas appeared on Coca-Cola and beer bottles, it said. The Boy Scouts in the US and other scouting groups in Europe used swastikas on badges.

"To this day, there is a town of Swastika, Ontario, Canada, founded in 1908," HAF said.

"The US Army's 45th infantry division used it as a sleeve insignia during the 1920s up until the rise of the Nazis. The UK's Royal Air Force had it on planes up until 1939."



# Changes (and potential changes) coming to \$28.6B Restaurant Revitalization Grant Fund

## National Restaurant Association offers 39 questions and answers on program that could be lifeline for many

**EDISON, NJ (TIP):** The coverage period for the Restaurant Revitalization Grant Fund may be extended by 14 months (until March 2023) ... the definitions of bakeries, breweries and inns may change, based on percentage of onsite sales ... the gross receipts total for 2020 may no longer include Paycheck Protection Program loans and other debt relief awards, says a news report published April 9 in RIONJ.Com

Applications for the \$28.6 billion Restaurant Revitalization Grant Fund are still expected later this month. But, before they come out, the National Restaurant Association released a list of 39 answers to the most frequently asked questions the group has received since the program was introduced.

"Eligible entity" definition may have new context for bakeries, breweries, brewpubs, distilleries, taprooms and wineries, only if onsite sales to the public comprise at least 33% of gross receipts (presumably in 2019). For inns, onsite sales of food and beverage to the public may need to comprise at least 33% of gross receipts.

Permanently closed entities might be ineligible.

Bankrupt entities without approved

plans for reorganization might be ineligible.

The minimum grant award might be set at \$1,000.

### Some of the items with additional clarification include:

For gross receipt totals in 2020, applicants might not need to include PPP loans, SBA debt relief, COVID-19-related Economic Injury Disaster Loans, EIDL advances, targeted EIDL advances or any other state and local small business grants (via CARES Act or otherwise). This was a recommendation from the National Restaurant Association to SBA.

PPP first-draw loans, returned before the safe harbor deadline, might not be counted against grant fund amount. This was also a recommendation to SBA from the National Restaurant Association.

Self-certification for prioritization eligibility is the likely path for targeted groups and differs from SBA certification for traditional loan programs.

The FAQ also provides specific details about the documents that might be required for application:

Application form.

IRS Form 4506-T.

### Acceptable documentation of gross receipts and, if applicable, eligible expenses, might include:

Business tax returns (IRS Form 1120 or IRS 1120-S).

IRS Forms 1040 Schedule C; IRS Forms 1040 Schedule F.

For a partnership: partnership's IRS Form 1065 (including K-1s).

Bank statements.

Externally or internally prepared financial statements such as income statements or profit and loss statements.

Point of sale report(s), including IRS Form 1099-K.

Sean Kennedy, executive vice president of public affairs for the National Restaurant Association, said the group is determined to provide this much-needed information.

### Good news for restaurants seeking Revitalization Fund grants

"These updates are essential for the small business restaurants that are trying to prepare their application while working long hours to keep their doors open," he said. "For that reason, the association and our state partners are committed to getting these details to

operators as we learn them.

"We appreciate the speed at which the SBA is working to set up this program, and we are doing everything we can to make sure that it will work well for the restaurants that have been hoping for this relief over the last 12 months."

### How much money is available?

Grants will be equal to 2019 gross revenue minus 2020 gross revenue - with a maximum grant of \$5 million (\$10 million for restaurant groups).

Will it be taxed? Grant funds will not be taxed like income.

What can it be used for? A variety of uses, including:

- Payroll costs.
- Principal and interest payments on a mortgage.
- Rent payments.
- Utilities.
- Maintenance expenses.
- Supplies, including personal protective equipment and cleaning materials.
- Covered supplier costs.
- Operational expenses.
- Paid sick leave.

(Source: ROI.NJ. Com)

## -: CONTD FROM PAGE 1 :-

### U.S. imposes new sanctions on Russia

expelled 10 diplomats who include alleged spies, and blacklists 32 individuals alleged to have tried to meddle in the 2020 presidential election, the White House said in a statement.

Mr. Biden's executive order "sends a signal that the United States will impose costs in a strategic and economically impactful manner on Russia if it continues or escalates its destabilizing international action," the White House said.

The U.S. barrage came the same week as Mr. Biden offered to meet President Vladimir Putin for their first face-to-face talks, suggesting that the summit could take place in a third country.

After the White House unveiled its measures, the Russian Foreign Ministry said a response was "inevitable."

"The United States is not ready to come to terms with the objective reality that there is a multipolar world that excludes American hegemony," spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

The latest tension comes amid worries both in the U.S. and its European allies over Russia's recent troop buildup on the border of Ukraine.

The imprisonment of Alexei Navalny, who is effectively the last open political opponent to Mr. Putin, has further spiked concerns in the West.

The White House statement listed in first place Moscow's "efforts to undermine the conduct of free and fair democratic elections and democratic institutions in the U.S. and its allies and partners." This referred to allegations that Russian intelligence agencies mounted disinformation and dirty tricks campaigns during the 2016 and 2020

presidential elections, in part to help Donald Trump's candidacy.

The White House said the sanctions likewise respond to "malicious cyber activities against the U.S. and its allies and partners," referring to the massive so-called SolarWinds hack of U.S. government computer systems last year.

The statement also called out Russia's extraterritorial "targeting" of dissidents and journalists and undermining of security in countries important to U.S. national security.

In addition, the Department of Treasury, together with the EU, Australia, Britain and Canada, sanctioned eight individuals and entities associated with Russia's occupation of Crimea in Ukraine.

In Brussels, the NATO military alliance said U.S. allies "support and stand in solidarity with the U.S., following its announcement of actions to respond to Russia's destabilizing activities". (With inputs from agencies)

### India's worries grow as Coronavirus...

A total of 33.13 lakh doses of vaccines were administered in the 24 hours ending at 7 a.m. on April 15. It is about 6.6 lakh doses more than what was recorded in the previous 24 hours. However, it is about 8.2 lakh doses lower than what was recorded the previous Thursday (April 8).

India continues to lead the world in terms of average daily cases detected. The nation now accounts for one in every four cases reported globally every day. As of April 14, India recorded over two times the average daily cases detected in the United States. The U.S. records the second-most number of average daily cases - about 71,200 infections. As of April 14, India recorded the second most number of average daily deaths. Brazil,

with more than 3,000 average daily fatalities, is leading the world in this category.

### President Joe Biden greets Indian...

"Wishing a happy Vaisakhi to all the Sikhs and Sikh Americans celebrating in Illinois and across the world," tweeted Senator Dick Durbin.

"Warm wishes on Vaisakhi to everyone in the Sikh community who call New Jersey home. This is a time to focus on what matters most - family and standing in solidarity with our neighbors," said Senator Bob Menendez, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

AS I SEE IT

# Kerala Elections: Will the power shift back to Congress?



BY GEORGE ABRAHAM

Elections in Kerala are over. Now it is a long wait. Unfortunately, the elections were not conducted towards the end of April; these EVMs are in storage until May 2nd anyway. We do not know anymore what factors drive the election commission to make these decisions on timings. However, there are ample speculations that decisions may have been borne out of travel conveniences of the political hierarchy more than an average voter's wishes!

When I landed in Kerala 3 weeks before the election, Pinarayi Vijayan, the Chief Minister of Kerala, was on billboards everywhere, guaranteeing success. Most of the media outlets have come out with their own surveys that predicted an LDF victory. Many of us felt that history is about to take place in the continuation of a ministry. Kerala has a tradition of alternating between these two fronts' coalitions, UDF and LDF, as anti-incumbency always plays a role. However, the mood slowly began to shift as the election date neared. Many folks who have ignored those mushrooming scandals targeted by the opposition started to take a second look.

The most compelling argument for many for a change is the underlying feeling that Congress Party may become irrelevant if UDF loses again. Kerala stands out as the last citadel against the BJP's goal of 'Congress Mukta Bharat,' and people started to grasp that reality. In the absence of two fronts, UDF and LDF, BJP will likely begin to consolidate their hold in a secular Kerala and, at the minimum, may become the major opposition force in the State.

The other factor is how people started perceiving Pinarayi Vijayan's autocratic ways and a growing number of voters vary of a future where he may go unchallenged in another LDF victory. There are already rumblings inside CPM about arbitrary rulings and dictatorial ways the Government is being run, and more and more, the governance is growingly perceived to be a one-man show. There are rumors of hard feelings within the party cadre about denying tickets to popular leaders such as G. Sudhakaran, Thomas Issac, and Raju Abraham. There is a good possibility that Congress may even snatch at least two of those seats. Mr. Pinarayi, who is also dubbed as 'Captain' is fully in charge, and his unquestionable authority and arrogant attitude is a matter of discomfort to many.

The lack of integrity and transparency by him and his colleagues in the Government are so evident when they tend to deny any charges of scandals first and then slowly acknowledge them piece by

The author who hails from the State of Kerala is a keen observer of politics in his State. He was in Kerala, campaigning for the Congress candidates, many of whom are his personal friends. Fresh from the battlefield, he has made his assessment of the political situation and electoral fortunes of the political parties in the fray.

The Indian Panorama requested Mr. Abraham to share his assessment, and we are glad, he obliged.

Here is the article he wrote exclusively for The Indian Panorama readers.



piece until it is full-blown upon their faces. The Deep-Sea fishing project, an NRI venture, is one such scandal where people of Kerala were totally deceived by this Government and repercussions have been indeed felt at the polling stations.

Then again, CPM appears to be having the misconception that if they drive the Congress out of town, LDF would be better positioned as the lone ranger fighting for secularism and diversity with BJP as their main opposition, and given the demographics, they could continue to rule the State forever. They appear to have short memories and have forgotten already about their current dilemma in Bengal and Tripura! There were even rumors of secret collaboration between CPM and BJP to that effect, and BJP would be allowed to bag ten seats. The Lavlin case, a long-running scandal involving Pinarayi, is being postponed by CBI, and indecisions by many central authorities regarding various scams, mainly the Gold smuggling and Life mission, may have led many to believe that something rotten is happening behind the scenes.

There is no doubt that Ramesh Chennithala looks more and more like a hero unearthing one scam after another. There is a realization among the people that credit should be given where credit is due. Whether he will be allowed to form the Government remains to be seen. However, nobody can deny the fact that he has kept

the pressure on the Pinarayi government and a positive outcome in the elections may vindicate him as an effective Opposition leader. The other important factor that may have turned the fortune in favor of UDF was Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi's effective campaigning across the State. Keralites appeared to have given thumbs up how they have identified themselves with locals, whether it is jumping into the sea with the fishermen or sharing an Easter meal with the poor children in their habitat.

BJP leaders are busy talking about their potential to win up to 35 seats in Kerala. Nobody I spoke to could attest to that possibility. There was no doubt that races in 43 constituencies on all three fronts were competitive. However, when senior BJP leaders continued to herald that possibility and a new entry like Metroman E. Sreedharan being talked about as a Chief Minister candidate, secular minded Keralites should start worrying about that prospect. Some even went as far as to speak about a hung assembly where BJP could be the broker. The recent tradition we have witnessed in the Kerala Elections is that other fronts will cross-vote and negate that possibility when BJP appears to be in the lead. Whether that would happen this time remains to be seen. People who are knowledgeable about the vulnerabilities of EVMs have expressed their concerns as well, and if something unexpected happens in Kerala, it may question the whole

Some predict a thumping victory for the UDF, while other left-leaning pundits keep believing that their governance in the last five years will be rewarded with continuity. BJP supporters are thinking of shock and awe for the rest of us. The truth is somewhere in between. The calculus from many quarters is that if BJP's share of vote increases, it may hurt Congress more. Currently, the BJP share is around 15 %, and any decrease would assure UDF a stunning victory

credibility of our election process, the EVMs in particular.

There is no doubt that a few in the majority community tag Congress as a party of the minorities. Some of the policies that the last UDF government pursued may have contributed to such an indictment. Questions are being asked why the Muslim League, a coalition partner of the UDF, has a monopoly over certain portfolios covering a large chunk of the mandatory spending and why their ministers do not hire any non-Muslim in their staff. Suppose it is genuinely a secular party, except for tokenism, why they appear to be so reluctant to run female candidates or non-Muslim candidates for that matter. Some politicians like P.C. George and few Bishops from the Catholic Church amplified some of these issues like 'Love Jihad' and 'minority benefits' that created a chasm between Christians and Muslims.

The Prime Minister himself, who has no time to meet with the protesting farmers, found time to hear the Bishops' stories from the Jacobite Church, which continues to feud with the Orthodox, their sister church. There is no doubt that Modi is fishing in troubled waters, and BJP would like to see a Hindu-Christian consolidation as a short-term strategy to get their foot inside the door. It may be anybody's guess what would happen once they have accomplished that goal. It is still fresh in our memory that BJP made an alliance with PDP in Jammu Kashmir that led to the President's rule, abrogation of Article 370, and their former allies' imprisonment.

Some predict a thumping victory for the UDF, while other left-leaning pundits keep believing that their governance in the last five years will be rewarded with continuity. BJP supporters are thinking of shock and awe for the rest of us. The truth is somewhere in between. The calculus from many quarters is that if BJP's share of vote increases, it may hurt Congress more. Currently, the BJP share is around 15 %, and any decrease would assure UDF a stunning victory. As everyone knows, it is the traditional Congress votes that flow towards BJP. Keralites are an intelligent electorate, and in the final analysis, they tend to believe that a change is necessary. Only on May 2nd may we learn the size of that mandate. Therefore, I remain cautiously optimistic.

(The author is a former Chief Technology Officer, United Nations, and Vice Chairman of Indian Overseas Congress, USA. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)



## OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BIDEN

**Compensation Is Due from China; and If We Were Pearl Harbored, Then Reparations too- Ravi Batra**

New York based attorney Ravi Batra, on 14th April 2020 wrote an open letter to then President Trump making out a case against China for the pandemic havoc, which has taken away millions of lives, created terrible health issues, and ruined the global economy. Mr. Batra called upon President Trump

to demand from China due compensation for causing colossal losses in terms of men and material to America and Americans, and additionally, if China Pearl Harbored America, reparations.

A year later, Mr. Batra wrote an open letter to President Biden repeating his accusation against China

and asking the US President to demand due compensation, and reparation, if required.

**We are publishing here Mr. Batra's open letter to President Biden, without editing it. -EDITOR**

"April 13, 2021

**H.E. Joseph R. Biden, Jr.**  
**President of the United States of America**

**H.E. Nancy Pelosi**  
**Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives**

**H.E. Chuck Schumer**  
**Majority Leader, U.S. Senate**

Re: 1 Year after My April 14, 2020 "Open Letter" - M/O Novel Coronavirus Aka Covid19 Aka "2019-n-CoV" or "2019-nCoV" - Compensation Is Due from China; and If We Were Pearl Harbored, Then Reparations too. Honorable President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and Majority Leader Schumer:

As an un-conflicted American, I love and admire the Chinese culture; always have, and find Confucius wiser as I age. With God's Grace I and my family survived Covid19 on or about March 29, 2020. Treating this Virus as a cancer case that I needed to crack, and after learning biochemistry and epidemiology during an intense effort, I did so, and a year ago, on April 14, 2020, I wrote a 6-page "Open Letter" to then-President Trump, Speaker Pelosi and then-Senate Majority Leader ("OL"; copy enclosed, with uniform spelling of "Wuhan"), and for POTUS, emailed it to a former Marine: Deputy NSA Matt Pottinger at 8:31pm. In the OL, I had the science, the facts, and recommendations, including, bringing our "supply chains" home. The next day, April 15, 2020, about 1 p.m. the United States opened a preliminary investigation into inter alia the origin of SARS-CoV2 from PLA-run Wuhan Virology Lab, and the motives of CCP China in causing its global-spread without sounding a pandemic-alarm directly or thru the WHO. I remain grateful for the start of the April 15, 2020 "all hands-on deck" Investigation.

It remains an open secret that my analysis was and is correct, and that this is a lab-created Frankenstein that transplanted the "Spike Glycoprotein(S)" ("Spike") from Bats - a unique feature in bats, as they are either "cold" or "warm" blooded, and still, a warm Bat can procreate with a cold Bat due to the "Spike." OL at 3. I called "Covid19," aka "Wuhan Virus," a Trojan Horse, as its Spike feature does not cause our immune system to sound an alarm upon infection (and the T-cells remain asleep). Disturbingly, CCP has not turned over, to this day, the genome of Patient Zero who was admitted in Wuhan hospital on or about December 1, 2019, while a different protein string-virus was released on or about December 31, 2019 at the Wuhan Wet Market. The animal farms about 1000 miles away from Wuhan, did not experience a Covid19 outbreak, thereby decimating the WHO's coddled-team's report, after a 3-hour chaperoned visit to the Wuhan Virology lab, falsely asserting a virus jump from an animal to a human.

WHO dishonored its high fiduciary obligations, and did not promptly alert the leaders of every nation that a pandemic was afoot and ask to lock-down CCP's China. President Trump said we were fighting an invisible enemy. I disagree; the cascading events in just the South China Sea - from creating Mischief Reef, to sinking of Filipino Fishing boats with Fishermen to their death, to sinking Vietnamese Fishing boats, to the recent squatting of 245 Chinese Militia ships, lashed together to appear as part of "9-Dashes" in Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone - are in violation of inter alia the UN



Wuhan Lab

Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS"). The Virus is surely invisible, but this string of protein, despite its lab-based default programming, has no animus towards us and does not benefit by causing death and destruction - and by my last count, our needlessly dead well exceed our losses at Pearl Harbor. A substantial question arises: is Covid19 a biowarfare agent? The death and destruction we have suffered suggests a motivated animus, which is a human phenomenon that renders us unworthy in the eyes of God.

Despite Truth-in-Labeling laws, CCP has succeeded in blocking this Virus from being origin-labeled by deeming it racist. Our misguided citizens criminally attacking innocent law-abiding Asian-Americans has provided cover, while shaming us as a nation that celebrates diversity, and staining E Pluribus Unum. Our shameful chapter of interning innocent and loyal Japanese-Americans during WWII, when we did no such thing to German-Americans while fighting Nazi Germany, is a lesson we need to learn perpetually, exactly, as Kristallnacht teaches: remember always. It is a singularly important ingredient in our effort to form a more perfect union - a point recently well made by Secretary Blinken in Anchorage.

I write to seek from you dear and respected President Biden, given your distinguished tenure and natural God-given abilities - a clear American policy - both as to our injury from Covid19 and holding the sending-nation reasonably responsible (turnover all biomedical information, indemnify our losses, etc.), and to restore global peace and security, by avoiding a war if we can. Indeed, pre-Covid19, troubled by the years-long effort by China to create Mischief Reef into a military base, in September 2017, I had a respectful conversation with China's distinguished FM Wang Yi, which in sum and substance, I explained the above facts and said, you are inviting a little war now or a big war later, and since I don't like wars, I prefer a little war now. Minister Wang, with concern, immediately responded: No war! No war!, and left to end this conversation.

Diplomacy is always needed, even to arrange a surrender to end a war. It has been reported that President Xi, whom I consider to be at least as much an exceptional mastermind as Chairman Mao was, if not more, has asked his diplomatic corps to unsheathe their swords to be Wolf Warriors - a function or definition that defies diplomacy, even as it weaponizes it. Given that backdrop, we, as hosts

at Captain Hook Hotel in Anchorage on March 18, 2021 - instead of a protocol-based public welcome, private candid talks, and a public press conference at the end - started with our honest expressions in public. In a moment that evokes - albeit, in part - a declaration of independence [sadly, from us], CCP's Foreign Affairs Chief Yang Jiechi effortlessly responded in public, what I believe was intended for private talks. We are at the cusp of a modern-day Gordian Knot.

While I take note of William Stanton's recent April 9, 2021 piece on "Agents of Influence," I particularly take note of former NSA H.R. McMaster's May 2020 piece in The Atlantic, entitled "How China Sees the World," I freely admit that it was our then-President Nixon who opened the world for China and granted CCP a permanent seat on the UNSC. Whether we have a rules-based or law-based system of sovereigns co-existing in the comity of nations, we ought not be in the position of having to pick between the ever-reasonable and well-calibrated go-along and get-along Neville Chamberlain or Winston Churchill as being necessary to maintain our cherished freedoms and never surrender our sovereignty. Methinks, a new joint Yalta and Brentwood Conference is needed, before over-due structural reforms can occur, and global peace and security re-harnessed, without endless regional wars.

Mr. President, you and I have had several meaningful exchanges, including, in the White House, and most relevantly, in the UN's Hall of Flags in Fall 2015 - when I urged you to run in 2016, as an election you were born for - to revive the American Dream. The American Dream belongs more to everyday Americans, than Wall Streeters, custodians of international money and achiever of maximum profit, as it was everyday Americans in 1814 who during heavy bombardment of Fort McHenry, kept our Flag high by paying the ultimate sacrifice repeatedly, and caused Francis Scott Key to pen our Star-Spangled Banner. Please let it wave high, and free, in this 21st Century.

If I can assist, as you wished of me during our substantive talk in the Hall of Flags, as a citizen-patriot, devastated by January 6th more than by 9/11, I would be happy to re-find diplomacy's respect-based ability to "round the edges" and fashion justice-based remedies that are equitable - as the Jesuits teach us everything must be. Sometimes, davening with the right Minyan helps to be better able to turn swords into ploughshares. As Honor and WWII walk into the ring to face off, the time is now for your leadership to make foreign policy into domestic policy - just as your infrastructure plan is our OBOR/BRI within our borders. Retail solutions will not work in the East or in the West; but, wholesale solutions will turn adversaries into allies. God Bless you, and continue to Bless these United States of America - I prefer "united," the verb.

Respectfully,

/S/

RAVI BATRA

Encl: April 14, 2020 Open Letter to POTUS et al

C: Leader Addison Mitchell McConnell, Jr., Leader Kevin McCarthy, HFAC Chairman Greg W. Meeks, Ranker McCall, Chair Carolyn B. Maloney, Ranker Jim Jordan, SFRC Chairman Bob Menendez, Ranker Risch, Secretary Anthony Blinken, Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, NSA Jake Sullivan."

**Brown Women in Art - a new trend started by Indian origin artist Sujata Tibrewala aims to bring equality in Art**

**San Jose based Tibrewala has been creating powerful images of brown women in her paintings to create a balanced narrative in art**



Featured in Museum of American History.

**SAN JOSE, CA (TIP):** Artist and activist Sujata Tibrewala believes that art can change narratives and can bring important changes in the world as we see it. To mark the ongoing Women's History Month, Tibrewala who is known for her feminist paintings has started a new social media trend. Entitled #BrownWomenInArt Sujata is urging all women artists to come ahead and show women of colors in their artwork. Talking about this initiative Sujata says, "As an artist of color, living and working in the United States, I have myself seen how the art space can be skewed in one direction. We do not very often see women artists of color in mainstream and worse still we rarely do see women of color as the subject of paintings or art works. The whole idea is to make our presence mainstream. The aim of this campaign is to invite all women of color in the West to share their art and show the power of choosing what we want the world to see."

On what inspired Sujata to start this trend, she says, "A number of things happening around us in America herald change and our unmistakable presence. We have a woman first ever Vice President who is proud of her heritage, we just had a South Asian origin woman Swati Mohan leading the Mars mission, even the otherwise period white drama Bridgerton on Netflix announced that their next season would have an Indian origin lady in the lead. These are all important moments. It is how we use these signs to pave our way that will make all the difference."

Talking about her paintings, Sujata says, "From the moment I began painting, I felt drawn to the idea of presenting the story from a woman's perspective, in my paintings."

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

# Biden announces withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by September 11

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** President Joe Biden on Wednesday, April 14, formally announced his decision to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan before September 11, the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that led the US into its longest war.

"We cannot continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan hoping to create the ideal conditions for our withdrawal, expecting a different result," Biden said.

"I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan. Two Republicans. Two Democrats," he added. "I will not pass this responsibility to a fifth."

In a sign he views his remarks as a historic bookend to the prolonged conflict, he delivered them from precisely the same spot in the White House Treaty Room that President



"We cannot continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan hoping to create the ideal conditions for our withdrawal, expecting a different result," Biden said.

George W. Bush announced the start of the war on October 7, 2001. Afterward he'll visit the section of Arlington National Cemetery where many of America's war dead from Afghanistan are buried.

Biden will say that American diplomatic and humanitarian efforts will continue in Afghanistan and would support peace efforts between the Afghan government and the Taliban. But he'll be unequivocal that two

decades after it began, the Afghanistan war is ending.

"It is time to end America's longest war. It is time for American troops to come home," he said.

Biden said the withdrawal will begin on May 1, in line with an agreement President Donald Trump's administration made with the Taliban. He said the complete withdrawal will be done by September 11.

The deadline Biden has set is absolute, with no potential for extension based on worsening conditions on the ground. Officials said after two decades of war, it was clear to the President that throwing more time and money at Afghanistan's problems wasn't going to work.

"This is not conditions-based," a senior administration official heavily involved in the deliberations said on Tuesday. "The President has judged that a conditions-based approach, which has been the approach of the past two decades, is a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever." - (Source: CNN)

## US Senate to Vote on Indian American Lawyer Vanita Gupta's Nomination to Serve as Associate Attorney General

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The US Senate would go through a rare procedure to discharge a nomination from the judiciary committee for Indian American lawyer Vanita Gupta to serve as Associate Attorney General, a senior lawmaker said on Thursday, April 15.

If confirmed, Ms. Gupta, 46, would be the first woman of color to serve as Associate Attorney General, which is the third-ranking official at the powerful Department of Justice.

Senate Majority Leader senator Chuck Schumer had to file this rare motion of discharge because the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 25 voted her nomination 11-11. The discharge motion would allow a full Senate vote on her nomination.

"This afternoon, the Senate will need to go through a rare procedure to discharge a nomination from the Judiciary Committee... Miss Vanita Gupta to serve as Associate Attorney General," Schumer said on the Senate floor.

"The daughter of immigrants from India, Miss Gupta is the first woman of color to ever be nominated for Associate Attorney General, the third-ranking official at the Department of Justice. Her public track record is nothing short of exemplary," Schumer said before a bitterly divided Senate.

Given that the 100-member Senate is equally divided among Republicans and the Democrats with 50 seats each, the ruling party now depends on Vice President Kamala Harris to break the tie in favor of Ms. Gupta.

Later in the day, Schumer is expected to make a motion to proceed to Executive Session in order to move to discharge the



If confirmed, Vanita Gupta, 46, would be the first woman of color to serve as Associate Attorney General, which is the third-ranking official at the powerful Department of Justice.

nomination of Gupta to be Associate Attorney General from the Committee on the Judiciary and the Senate will proceed to a roll call vote relative to that motion.

There will then be up to four hours of debate on the motion to discharge the Gupta nomination from the Committee on the Judiciary. The Senate will proceed to a roll call vote on the motion to discharge the Gupta nomination from the Committee on the Judiciary.

Schumer said Ms. Gupta will make an outstanding Associate Attorney General. The Senate should discharge her nomination from the Judiciary Committee this afternoon, he said.

"In her very first case after law school, Ms. Gupta won the release of several African-Americans who had been wrongly convicted by all-white juries in Texas, clients who eventually won a pardon from Texas Governor Rick Perry. She continued her work at the ACLU, where she launched a bipartisan criminal justice reform effort, before going on to lead the civil rights division of the Justice Department under President Obama," the senator said.

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

## Three Indian origin persons charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, heroin, opium and ketamine

Parminder Aujla

**SACRAMENTO (TIP):** Three men were booked into the Sacramento County Main Jail on Thursday and were scheduled to appear in federal court Friday afternoon following a six-month investigation that court records say included undercover drug buys in Canada and the United States, cellphone surveillance and encrypted communications conducted in Punjabi.

Parampreet Singh, 55; Ranvir Singh, 38; and Amandeep Singh Multani, 33, are charged in a federal criminal complaint with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, heroin, opium and ketamine, which the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency describes as a "short-acting anesthetic with hallucinogenic effects" that is "sometimes used to facilitate sexual assault crimes."

They also face a count of distribution of a substance containing cocaine.

All three are being held without bail, and online court records did not list an attorney for them Friday morning.

The three men "have offered to supply up to hundreds of kilograms of cocaine, heroin, opium, and ketamine at a time, in both Canada and the United States," according to an affidavit filed in court by U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Joshua Matas. "They have also stated that they have drug trafficking connections to Mexico, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Germany, in addition to the United States and Canada."

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

# Pakistan deploys paramilitary forces to quell deadly Islamist protests

**LAHORE (TIP):** Paramilitary forces deployed overnight in the eastern Pakistani province of Punjab as police struggled to clear violent sit-ins by Islamists protesting against the arrest of their leader.

Two police officers were killed and 125 policemen were hurt in clashes with protesters in Lahore, Punjab's capital, the city's police chief Ghulam Mehmood Dogar said on Wednesday during a visit to a hospital treating the injured.

The protests were called by Tehrik-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), a hardline Islamist group that has made the denunciation of blasphemy against Islam its rallying cry. Their leader Saad Rizvi was arrested in Lahore on Monday ahead of the demonstrations.

On Tuesday, Rizvi was charged with instigating the murder of a police constable, who authorities say was kidnapped by protesters and later beaten to death. Major roads across the country were blocked by the protesters on Monday and Tuesday, but by Tuesday evening police had been able to clear most of the crowds, except in Lahore.

Local news outlets reported similar incidents of protesters overpowering police in other cities, as did videos shared on social media that Reuters could not independently verify.

In one, a police officer with a bloodied face is frog-marched along a road by protesters. In another, a group of officers



are seated on the ground surrounded by protesters, with one bleeding and appearing to be badly injured.

The TLP group blocked one of the main roads into the capital late last year and called off their protest only after the government signed a deal with them, agreeing to endorse a boycott of French products.

At the time, protests had broken out in several Muslim countries over France's response to the killing of a teacher who showed cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad to pupils during a civics

lesson.

For many Muslims, depictions of the Prophet are blasphemous.

The group's agreement with the government was revised earlier this year, extending to April 20 the deadline for a parliamentary resolution to expel the French ambassador, when the group had plans to hold countrywide rallies.

Pakistan's parliament in October condemned the display of images in France of the Prophet Muhammad, urging the government to withdraw its ambassador from Paris. Reuters

## Sri Lanka bans IS, 10 other groups

**COLOMBO (TIP):** Sri Lanka has banned 11 hardline Islamist organisations, including the Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda. It warned that any person who conspires with them would be sentenced to prison terms between 10 and 20 years.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in a special gazette notification issued on Tuesday proscribed the radical groups under the Prevention of Terrorism (temporary) Provisions Act. This has been done in good faith to ensure peace, the notification said. — PTI

## 5 miners die, 4 missing in coal mine collapse in Afghanistan

**KABUL (TIP):** A makeshift coal mine collapsed on Tuesday in northern Afghanistan, burying five miners and leaving four more missing, a provincial security official said.

Jawed Basharat, a spokesman for the provincial police chief in northern Baghlan province said a rescue team is at the site in Nahrin district.

Collapsing coal mines are happening more often in Afghanistan. There are no professional ways of mining and extraction in the country. Local workers use traditional techniques and put their lives at risk in remote areas.

According to the US Geological Survey, Afghanistan has reserves of oil, gas, lithium, and other rare metals and minerals worth trillions of dollars, most of which remain untouched due to insecurity and violence in different parts of the country. AP

## Five new animal species discovered in Tibet

**TIBET (TIP):** Five new animal species have been discovered in Tibet, including three kinds of frogs, one old-world monkey and a bushmaster snake, challenging the long-held view that the Himalayan mountains are a desolate and lifeless region.

The discovery of the five new species was the result of an eight-year investigation of the terrestrial wildlife in the Tibet Autonomous region carried out by the regional forestry bureau, state-run Global Times reported on Monday.

Covering an area of 6,346 sq kms, this was a second such investigation carried out by the bureau, the report said.

The discovered species are: a type of macaque (a genus of gregarious Old World monkeys), bushmaster snake (venomous), and three kinds of frogs.

The investigation also discovered 20 species that were not previously known to habitat in Tibet.

PTI

# Myanmar security forces arrest key protest leader

**YANGON (TIP):** Myanmar security forces arrested on Thursday one of the main leaders of the campaign against military rule after ramming him with a car as he led a motorbike protest rally, friends and colleagues said.

Opponents of a February 1 coup that ousted an elected government led by Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi have kept up their campaign against the military this traditional New Year week with marches and various other displays of resistance.

"Our brother Wai Moe Naing was arrested. His motorbike was hit by an unmarked police car," Win Zaw Khiang, a member of a protest organising group, said on social media.

Wai Moe Naing, a 25-year-old Muslim, has emerged as one of the most high-profile leaders of opposition to the coup. Earlier, Reuters spoke to Wai Moe Naing by telephone as he was setting off to lead the rally in the central town of Monywa,



about 700 km (435 miles) north of the main city of Yangon. — Reuters

**TAX MATTERS**

# IRS suspends requirement to repay excess advance payments of the 2020 Premium Tax Credit; those claiming net Premium Tax Credit must file Form 8962



**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 suspends the requirement that taxpayers increase their tax liability by all or a portion of their excess advance payments of the Premium Tax Credit (excess APTC) for tax year 2020. A taxpayer's excess APTC is the amount by which the taxpayer's advance payments of the Premium Tax Credit (APTC) exceed his or her Premium Tax Credit (PTC).

The Internal Revenue Service announced today that taxpayers with excess APTC for 2020 are not required to file Form 8962, Premium Tax Credit, or report an excess advance Premium Tax Credit repayment on their 2020 Form 1040 or Form 1040-SR, Schedule 2, Line 2, when they file.

Eligible taxpayers may claim a PTC

for health insurance coverage in a qualified health plan purchased through a Health Insurance Marketplace. Taxpayers use Form 8962, Premium Tax Credit to figure the amount of their PTC and reconcile it with their APTC. This computation lets taxpayers know whether they must increase their tax liability by all or a portion of their excess APTC, called an excess advance Premium Tax Credit repayment, or may claim a net PTC.

Taxpayers can check with their tax professional or use tax software to figure the amount of allowable PTC and reconcile it with APTC received using the information from Form 1095-A, Health Insurance Marketplace Statement.

The process remains unchanged for taxpayers claiming a net PTC for 2020. They must file Form 8962 when they file their 2020 tax return. See the Instructions for Form 8962 for more information. Taxpayers claiming a net PTC should respond to an IRS notice asking for more information to finish

processing their tax return.

Taxpayers who have already filed their 2020 tax return and who have excess APTC for 2020 do not need to file an amended tax return or contact the IRS. The IRS will reduce the excess APTC repayment amount to zero with no further action needed by the taxpayer. The IRS will reimburse people who have already repaid any excess advance Premium Tax Credit on their 2020 tax return. Taxpayers who received a letter about a missing Form 8962 should disregard the letter if they have excess APTC for 2020. The IRS will process tax returns without Form 8962 for tax year 2020 by reducing the excess advance premium tax credit repayment amount to zero.

Again, IRS is taking steps to reimburse people who filed Form 8962, reported, and paid an excess advance Premium Tax Credit repayment amount with their 2020 tax return before the recent legislative changes were made. Taxpayers in this situation should not file an amended return solely to get a

refund of this amount. The IRS will provide more details on IRS.gov. There is no need to file an amended tax return or contact the IRS.

As a reminder, this change applies only to reconciling tax year 2020 APTC. Taxpayers who received the benefit of APTC prior to 2020 must file Form 8962 to reconcile their APTC and PTC for the pre-2020 year when they file their federal income tax return even if they otherwise are not required to file a tax return for that year. The IRS continues to process prior year tax returns and correspond for missing information. If the IRS sends a letter about a 2019 Form 8962, we need more information from the taxpayer to finish processing their tax return. Taxpayers should respond to the letter so that the IRS can finish processing the tax return and, if applicable, issue any refund the taxpayer may be due.

See the Form 8962, Premium Tax Credit, and IRS Fact Sheet for more details about the changes related to the PTC for tax year 2020.

## IRS reminds taxpayers to make April 15 estimated tax payment

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service, April 8, reminded self-employed individuals, retirees, investors, businesses, corporations and others who pay their taxes quarterly that the payment for the first quarter of 2021 is due Thursday, April 15, 2021.

The extension to May 17, 2021 for individuals to file their 2020 federal income taxes does not apply to estimated tax payments. The 2021 Form 1040-ES, Estimated Tax for Individuals, can help taxpayers estimate their first quarterly tax payment.

Income taxes are pay-as-you-go. This means, by law, taxes must be paid as income is earned or received during the year. Most people pay their taxes through withholding from paychecks, pension payments, Social Security benefits or certain other government payments including unemployment compensation.

Most often, those who are self-employed or in the sharing economy need to make estimated tax payments. Similarly, investors, retirees and others often need to make these payments because a substantial portion of their income is not subject to withholding. Other income generally not subject to withholding includes interest, dividends, capital gains, alimony and rental income. Paying quarterly estimated taxes will usually lessen and may even eliminate any penalties.

Exceptions to the penalty and special rules apply to some groups of taxpayers, such as farmers, fishermen, casualty and disaster victims, those who recently became disabled, recent retirees and those who receive income unevenly during the year. See Form 2210, Underpayment of Estimated Tax by Individuals, Estates and Trusts, and its

instructions for more information.

### How to pay estimated taxes

Form 1040-ES, Estimated Tax for Individuals, includes instructions to help taxpayers figure their estimated taxes. They can also visit IRS.gov/payments to pay electronically. The fastest and easiest ways to make an estimated tax payment is by using IRS Direct Pay, the IRS2Go app or the Treasury Department's Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS). For information on other payment options, visit IRS.gov/payments. If paying by check, taxpayers should be sure to make the check payable to the "United States Treasury."

Publication 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax, has additional details, including worksheets and examples, that can be especially helpful to those who have dividend or capital gain income, owe alternative minimum tax or self-employment tax, or have other special situations.

### IRS.gov assistance 24/7

Tax help is available 24/7 on IRS.gov. The IRS website offers a variety of online tools to help taxpayers answer common tax questions. For example, taxpayers can search the Interactive Tax Assistant, Tax Topics, Frequently Asked Questions, and Tax Trails to get answers to common questions.

The IRS is continuing to expand ways to communicate to taxpayers who prefer to get information in other languages. The IRS has posted translated tax resources in 20 other languages on IRS.gov. For more information, see "We Speak Your Language."

## Treasury, IRS provide guidance on tax relief for deductions for food or beverages from restaurants

### Businesses can temporarily deduct 100% beginning Jan. 1, 2021

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service, April 8, issued Notice 2021-25 providing guidance under the Taxpayer Certainty and Disaster Relief Act of 2020. The Act added a temporary exception to the 50% limit on the amount that businesses may deduct for food or beverages. The temporary exception allows a 100% deduction for food or beverages from restaurants.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2022, businesses can claim 100% of their food or beverage expenses paid to restaurants as long as the business owner (or an employee of the business) is present when food or beverages are provided, and the expense is not lavish or extravagant under the circumstances.

Where can businesses get food and beverages and claim 100%?

Under the temporary provision, restaurants include businesses that prepare and sell food or beverages to retail customers for immediate on-premises and/or off-premises consumption. However, restaurants do not include businesses that primarily sell pre-packaged goods not for immediate consumption, such as grocery stores and convenience stores.

Additionally, an employer may not treat certain employer-operated eating facilities as restaurants, even if these facilities are operated by a third party under contract with the employer.

More information for business seeking coronavirus related tax relief can be found at IRS.gov.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS**

# Individuals experiencing homelessness can receive Economic Impact Payments and other tax benefits; permanent address not required

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service, April 15, continued an ongoing effort to help those experiencing homelessness during the pandemic by reminding people who don't have a permanent address or a bank account that they may still qualify for Economic Impact Payments and other tax benefits.

While Economic Impact Payments continue to be made automatically to most people, the IRS can't issue a payment to eligible Americans when information about them isn't available in the tax agency's systems.

To help people experiencing homelessness, the rural poor and other historically under-served groups, the IRS urges community groups, employers and others to share information about Economic Impact Payments and help more eligible people file a tax return so they can receive everything they're entitled to. IRS.gov has a variety of information and tools to help people receive the Economic Impact Payments.

"The IRS has been continuing to work directly with groups inside and outside the tax community to get information directly to people experiencing homelessness and other groups to help them receive Economic Impact Payments," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "The IRS is working hard on this effort, enabling millions of people who don't normally file a tax return to receive these payments. But we need to do more, and we appreciate all the help we've been receiving from national and local groups to assist in this effort to reach the people who desperately need this help."

Economic Impact Payments, also known as stimulus payments, are different from most other tax benefits; people can get the payments even if they have little or no income and even if they don't usually file a tax return. This is true as long as they have a Social Security number and are not being supported by someone else who can claim them as a dependent.

The IRS needs information from people who don't usually file a tax return - even if they did not have any income last year or their income was not large enough to require them to file. The only way for the agency to have that information is for people to file a basic 2020 tax return with the IRS. Once that return is processed, the IRS can quickly send stimulus payments to an address selected by the eligible individual. People do not need a permanent address or a bank account. They don't need to have a job. For eligible individuals, the IRS will still issue the payment even if they haven't filed a tax return in years.

People in this group can still qualify for the first two Economic Impact Payments when they file their 2020 return by claiming the Recovery Rebate Credit. There's a special section on IRS.gov that can help: Claiming the 2020

Recovery Rebate Credit if you aren't required to file a tax return. For the current third round of payments, people who are experiencing homelessness usually qualify to receive \$1,400 for themselves. If they are married or have dependents, they can get an additional \$1,400 for each of their family members.

Filing a 2020 federal income tax return that provides very basic information about the person is something that can be done electronically using a smartphone or a computer. When the IRS receives the return, it will automatically calculate and issue the Economic Impact Payments to eligible individuals.

### Permanent address not required

People can claim an Economic Impact Payment or other credits even if they don't have a permanent address. For example, someone experiencing homelessness may list the address of a friend, relative or trusted service provider, such as a shelter, drop-in day center or transitional housing program, on the return filed with the IRS. If they are unable to choose direct deposit, a check or debit card for the tax refund and the third Economic Impact Payment can then be mailed to this address.

### Individuals experiencing homelessness can receive the EITC

A worker experiencing homelessness can get an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). To get the credit, federal law requires that a worker live in the U.S. for more than half of the year and meet other requirements. This means living in a home in any of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Therefore, individuals experiencing homelessness, including those who reside at one or more homeless shelters, can meet that requirement.

### No bank account? No problem

Many financial institutions will help a person lacking an account to open a low-cost or no-cost bank account. Individuals who open accounts will then have an account and routing number available when they file and claim a direct deposit of the Economic Impact Payment.

Visit the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) website for details, in both English and Spanish, on opening an account online. Among other things, people can also use the FDIC's BankFind tool to locate a nearby FDIC-insured bank. In addition, BankOn, American Bankers Association, Independent Community Bankers of America, National Credit Union Administration have all compiled lists of banks and credit union that can open an account online.

For veterans, see the Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP) for access to financial services at participating banks.

For those with a prepaid debit card, they may be able to have their refund

applied to the card. Many reloadable prepaid cards or mobile payment apps have account and routing numbers that can be provided to the IRS. Individuals would need to check with the financial institution to ensure the card can be used and to obtain the routing number and account number, which may be different from the card number.

### File for free

The fastest and easiest way to claim the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or to get the third Economic Impact Payment is to file a return electronically using IRS Free File. People can use a smartphone or computer to visit IRS.gov and click the Free File link.

Through the Free File system, anyone who qualifies for the EITC also qualifies to use brand-name software to prepare and electronically file their return for free. The IRS urges anyone experiencing homelessness who has a smartphone or access to a computer to take advantage of this service.

### Get free help from IRS partners

Alternatively, anyone who qualifies for the EITC or does not have a filing requirement but is filing to get an Economic Impact Payment also qualifies for free tax help from a trained community volunteer tax preparer. Through VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) and TCE (Tax Counselling for the Elderly), volunteers prepare basic tax returns at thousands of tax help sites nationwide.

Please note that some VITA/TCE sites are not operating at full capacity and others are not opening this year. To find the nearest location, visit the Free Tax Return Preparation site on IRS.gov, or call 800-906-9887. VITA/TCE site availability is updated throughout the filing season, so check back if there aren't any sites listed nearby.

The IRS also continues to work extensively with community groups across the country to get people to file tax returns and receive all the Economic Impact Payments and credits they're entitled to. These efforts helped lead to more than 8 million people last year to submit tax returns who normally don't file.

### Direct deposit speeds payments

Direct deposit is the safest and fastest way to receive a refund and Economic Impact Payments. People will need to include direct deposit information on their 2020 tax return to get their payment directly deposited.

Anyone with a savings, checking, or brokerage account can choose to have their refund electronically deposited in that account. Direct deposit is available even for people who file a paper tax return, but processing of paper returns takes longer.



### More details on the Earned Income Tax Credit

For people experiencing homelessness who have a job, filing a return often carries an added bonus-getting a refund based on various tax benefits, especially the EITC for low-and moderate-income workers and working families.

Like many other workers, some workers experiencing homelessness still qualify for the credit even if they earned too little income during 2020 to owe tax. For 2020, the income limit is \$15,820 for singles with no children (\$21,710 for couples with no children). The income limit is higher for people with children. For example, the limit is \$50,594 for singles with three or more children (\$56,844 for couples with three or more children). Those who make less than this amount must also meet other eligibility requirements.

Because it's a refundable credit, those who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax, or even get a tax refund. The EITC can put up to \$6,660 into a worker's pocket. The amount varies depending upon the worker's income, marital status, and other factors.

The IRS recognizes that eligible workers experiencing homelessness often encounter unique challenges not faced by other people.

To find out if they're eligible, people can use the EITC Assistant on IRS.gov. It's available in both English and Spanish.

### Help spread the word

Employers can help by making their employees aware of the third Economic Impact Payment, 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit and Earned Income Tax and Child Tax Credit, and by encouraging them to file for these benefits based on tax year 2020 rules. In addition, the American Rescue Plan, enacted in March 2021, expands EITC and the Child Tax Credit benefits for the 2021 tax year.

Some people will be able to get advance payments of the Child Tax Credit later this year. There is nothing those who qualify need to do at this point other than file a 2020 tax return.

Employers can also help by making it easy for employees to obtain or access their 2020 W-2 forms. For more information, check out the outreach material, available on IRS.gov.



## Former CBI director Ranjit Sinha passes away

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Former CBI director Ranjit Sinha died here on Friday, April 16, morning in what is believed to be a COVID-19 related death, senior officials said. He was 68.

It is understood that he was confirmed positive for coronavirus on Thursday night and breathed his last at 4.30 am on Friday, the officials said.

Sinha, a 1974-batch officer of the Bihar cadre and who had cracked the coveted UPSC examination at the age of 21, had taken over as the CBI chief in 2012. He had previously headed the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force, the Railway Protection Force and served at senior positions in the CBI in Patna and Delhi during his four-decade-long career in police service.

"DG and all ranks of ITBP express their deepest condolences on sad demise of Sh Ranjit Sinha, former DG ITBP today. He served the force from September 1, 2011 to December 19, 2012 as DG and earlier as ADG and will always be remembered for his professional acumen and exceptional leadership. May his soul rest in peace," the ITBP said in a statement.

An MPhil from the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Sinha was an avid reader and writer and a regular contributor on police-related issues in various journals and magazines.

# FIR against Mamata Banerjee in Cooch Behar for 'instigating' people to gherao central forces

**KOLKATA (TIP):** An FIR has been lodged against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at a police station here, alleging that she instigated voters to gherao central forces and that, in turn, led to the incident of firing in Sitalkuchi and the subsequent death of four persons.

Siddique Ali Mia, the zilla president of BJP's minority cell in Cooch Behar, cited the TMC supremo's comments during a rally in Banerswar area as he filed a complaint on Wednesday claiming that her address provoked people to attack CISF personnel during the fourth phase of state elections.

He attached a video clip of Banerjee's speech in his complaint at Mathabhanga police station.

Villagers, after being provoked by such provocative statements of Mamata Banerjee, tried to snatch fire arms of the deployed paramilitary forces, Mia said.

"The said villagers including women launched attack upon the paramilitary forces with the intention of causing bodily injury, knowing it to be likely to cause death of the deployed paramilitary forces," he wrote in the FIR, a copy of which is with the PTI.

The BJP leader, when contacted, said he would launch a massive protest demanding the chief minister's arrest, if the police "sit idle" on the FIR in the next



few days.

"She is solely responsible for the death of those four people. She is answerable to all the voters of our district," Mia stated.

At least four persons died outside a polling booth in Sitalkuchi assembly constituency on April 10 when CISF personnel opened fire in "self defence" allegedly after coming under attack from locals.

The Election Commission had suspended the voting exercise at the booth following the incident.

In its statement, the EC said, "The joint report of the two special observers has been received ... wherein they interalia stated that recourse to open fire by the CISF personnel became absolutely

necessary in order to save the lives of the voters lined up at the polling booth, those of other polling personnel and their own lives as the mob had attempted snatching their weapons."

The poll panel had also banned political leaders from entering the district for three days. Mamata Banerjee met the family members of those killed in the firing on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of India on Thursday said it has no plans as of now to club the remaining phases of the West Bengal Assembly election and hold polling for them together.

The comment comes at a time when India is reeling under a raging second wave of Covid-19. On Thursday, the

country for the first time reported more than 2 lakh Covid-19 cases in a day.

There is no plan to club remaining phases of West Bengal elections. A meeting has been called by the Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal to ask political parties to adhere to EC's Covid-19 guidelines and ensure strict compliance, an EC official said.

This time, election to the West Bengal Assembly is being held in eight phases. Polling for four phases have ended and for the fifth phase it will be held on Saturday. Polling for the sixth, seventh and the eighth phase will be held on April 22, April 26 and April 29, respectively.

Votes for all the phases will be counted on May 2.

## Time has come for a woman Chief Justice of India: CJI SA Bobde

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Chief Justice of India SA Bobde on Thursday, April 15, said the time had come when a woman should be the Chief Justice of India. He also said there was no need for a change of attitude of the Collegium to ensure greater representation of women in the judiciary.

A special bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Surya Kant said, "Why higher judiciary. We think the time has come when a woman should be Chief Justice of India".

The bench said, "We have the interest of women in mind. There is no attitudinal change in it. Hopefully, they (women) will be appointed".

SA Bobde also said several women lawyers turned down proposals to accept judgeship citing domestic responsibilities.

CJI SA Bobde said, "Chief Justices of

High Courts have told me that there is a problem that when women lawyers are asked for appointment as judges, they often deny it saying that they have domestic responsibility or they have to take care of the studies of their children".

However, the CJI's comment invited a strong response from women in the bar.

"There are many men who refuse judgeship because they have a successful practice and do not want to take a cut in their earnings. But has that stopped the collegium from seeking more men and making them judges?" The Indian Express quoted Bombay-based advocate Veena Gowda as saying.

The Delhi High Court Women Lawyers' Forum also tweeted, "We are ready and more than happy to take this responsibility and serve the institution."

## 2020 Delhi riots: Court grants bail to Umar Khalid

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A Delhi court on Thursday, April 15, granted bail to former JNU student Umar Khalid in a case related to the communal violence in northeast Delhi in February last year, saying that he cannot be made to incarcerate in jail for infinity.

Further, the court said the investigation in the case has been completed and the charge sheet has been filed and it is the case in which Khalid was not physically present at the scene of the crime on the date of the incident.

"The applicant is not visible in any CCTV footage/viral video(s) pertaining to the scene of crime on the date of the incident. There is no identification of the applicant either through independent public witness

or any police witness of he being present at the scene of crime on the date of incident," Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav noted in the order.

Khalid, however, will remain in jail as he is accused in some other cases, including one related to the criminal conspiracy lodged under stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The former JNU student leader was granted bail in the case in which the FIR was registered on the statement of Constable Sangram Singh, where he stated that on February 24, 2020 at about 2 PM, a large crowd gathered on the road in a locality in the northeast Delhi and started pelting stones in which he and other police officials got injured as they were thrashed by the mob.

# China-India border tensions remain high despite pullback from LAC: US intel report

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A United States intelligence report has said that despite some force pullback from the Line of Actual Control, the tension between India and China remains high as China seeks to use coordinated tools to demonstrate its growing strength and compel regional neighbours to acquiesce to Beijing's preferences, including its claims over disputed territory.

"China-India border tensions remain high, despite some force pullbacks this year China's occupation since May 2020 of contested border areas is the most serious escalation in decades and led to the first lethal border clash between the two countries since 1975. As of mid-February, after multiple rounds of talks, both sides were pulling back forces and equipment for some sites along the disputed border" the Annual Threat assessment of the US intelligence community, by the office of the director of the national intelligence read.

The report states that Beijing is increasing combining its growing military power with its economic, technological, and diplomatic clout to secure what it views as its territory and regional preeminence and pursue international cooperation at Washington's expense.

As per the US intelligence report, in the South China Sea, Beijing will continue to intimidate rival claimants and will use growing numbers of air, naval, and maritime law enforcement platforms to signal to Southeast Asian countries that China has effective control over contested areas. China is similarly pressuring Japan over contested



areas in the East China Sea.

"China will continue pursuing its goals of becoming a great power, securing what it views as its territory, and establishing its preeminence in regional affairs by building a world-class military, potentially destabilizing international norms and relationships. China's military commitment includes a multiyear agenda of comprehensive military reform initiatives", the report reads. The report suggests that China has been building a large and increasingly capable nuclear missile force that is more survivable, more diverse, and on higher alert than in the past, including nuclear missile systems designed to manage regional escalation and ensure an intercontinental second-strike capability.

Source: News 18

## SC asks CBI to probe cops' role in ISRO spying case

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Supreme Court on Thursday, April 15, sealed the report submitted by the Jain Committee on the 1994 espionage case against former Isro scientist Dr S Nambi Narayanan. The apex court said that the report's contents would not be disclosed to any party involved and directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe its findings further.

The Jain Committee report was prepared by the three-member panel, headed by former top court judge Justice (ret'd) DK Jain, on the role of erring police officials in the 1994 espionage case relating to Isro scientist Nambi Narayanan who had been acquitted and was eventually awarded Rs 50 lakh compensation by the top court.

Hearing the Centre's plea to consider the report, the Supreme Court said that the committee found "acts of omission and commission" by "responsible officials" of Kerala police.

The SC bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar directed the CBI to treat the Jain Committee report as a preliminary inquiry report and further investigate the issue. The central probe agency has been given three months to submit its findings.

"The report indicates something serious, thus, appropriate action will have to be taken on the report. The report referred to several circumstances and events. They will have to be investigated thoroughly," the SC bench observed.

The SC revealed that the report identified the police officials who were responsible for the Isro scientist's arrest.



## India has administered 117 million Covid doses till now

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India had administered over 117 million coronavirus vaccine doses across the country by Thursday, April 15, evening even as the national Capital tightened curbs in its attempt to curb the surge in infections. In a boost to India's vaccination drive, the national drug controller also assured that it will take just three days to process applications of foreign-made vaccines once they've been approved for emergency use in the country.

In all, 117,096,037 vaccine doses have been given in the country till now. This includes 9,082,153 healthcare workers who have had their first dose and 5,633,982 who have got their second dose as well. As many as 10,290,850 frontline workers have had their first dose while 5,151,557 have got their second dose too.

In the 45-59-year age group, 38,676,098 people have got their first dose and another 984,785 have had their second dose as well. In the 60+ category, 44,190,147 people have been administered their first dose while 3,086,465 have had their second dose as well. Source: HT

## India to import 50,000 MT medical oxygen amid COVID surge

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The government on Thursday, April 15, said it would import 50,000 metric tonnes of medical oxygen to assure supplies to states even as it added that oxygen availability in the country was adequate.

As hospitals reeled under oxygen shortages, the empowered group of officers addressing the issue met today and started mapping of oxygen sources for 12 high burden states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Medical oxygen is a critical component in the treatment of COVID affected patients and demands have been rising unusually in the high burden states.

"There has been increasing demand for medical oxygen, especially from the 12 states with high burden of active COVID cases. While the demand in Maharashtra is expected to be beyond available production capacity of the state, Madhya Pradesh does not have any production capacity to meet their demand for medical oxygen. There is also a trend of increasing demand in other oxygen producing states such as Gujarat, Karnataka and Rajasthan," the government said.

After the meeting with manufacturers today, the government said 4880 MT, 5619 MT and 6593 MT have been assured and factored for 12 high burden states to

meet their projected demand as on April 20, 25 and 30.

The assured supply will be notified through a government order, sources said.

The meeting also decided to import 50,000 MT of medical oxygen to be ready for the increasing demand.

Health Ministry has been asked to finalise the tender and explore possible sources for import identified by the missions of MEA.

Meanwhile 162 Pressure Swing Adsorption plants (plants manufacture oxygen and help hospitals become self-sufficient in their requirement for medical oxygen while also reducing the burden on the national grid for supply of medical oxygen) sanctioned under PM-Cares are being closely reviewed for early completion of 100 percent of the plants to enhance self-generation of oxygen in hospitals especially in remote areas.

The empowered group asked the Health Ministry to identify another 100 hospitals in far flung locations for consideration of sanction for installation of PSA plants.

The government said it was monitoring the situation to ensure uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen. India's daily medical oxygen production capacity is 7127 MT. Current national oxygen stocks are 50,000 MT - more than daily consumption of 3842 MT but the government is readying for what it calls unusual surge in demand.

Source: The Tribune

## Monuments, museums under central govt closed till May 15 amid Covid-19 spike

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** All centrally protected monuments, museums and sites under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have been closed with immediate effect till May 15 due to the surge in coronavirus cases in the country, the Union culture ministry said on Thursday. An order to this effect was issued by the ASI and it was tweeted by Culture Minister Prahlaad Patel this evening.

"Due to the prevailing COVID situation, it has been decided to close all centrally protected monuments, sites and museums under the ASI with immediate effect and till May 15 or until further orders," the ASI said. These include 3,693 monuments and 50 museums.

In live monuments like Puri Jagannath Temple and Somnath Temple, daily 'puja' will be conducted but no public gathering will be allowed, said Nitin Tripathi, the ministry's media advisor. Last year, too, all monuments and sites maintained by the ASI were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic on March 17. They reopened in July with strict restrictions like mandatory wearing of masks, cap on the number of visitors and social distancing.

135 DECIDED, 159 TO GO

# Why 5th phase of Bengal election is crucial for Mamata

The West Bengal Assembly election is passing through its most crucial phase. Four of eight phases of the Bengal Assembly election are over. Altogether, voters have decided the fate of candidates in 135 of 294 seats. The remaining 159 will go to the polls between April 17 and 29.

The fifth phase, polling for which will happen on Saturday, April 17, completes the most significant troika of election phases in Bengal -- phases three to five for 120 seats.

Here is how the Bengal election stands at the halfway mark:

## Phase 1: 30 seats

Polling for the first phase took place on March 29, when 30 seats went to the polls. Of these seats, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had won 27 in the 2016 West Bengal election. The Congress bagged two and the RSP (Left Front) one.

The TMC had strengthened its position in 2016 over 2011 when it had won 19 of these 30 seats. The BJP drew a blank here in 2016. But it changed the election calculus in Bengal in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The BJP was leading in 20 of the 30 seats that voted in the first phase.

## Phase 2: 30 seats

Another 30 seats went to the polls in the second phase on April 1. Of these seats, the TMC had won 21 in 2016, almost maintaining its 2011 figure of 22. The BJP had won one of these seats five years ago. The Congress-Left alliance bagged eight.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the TMC maintained its lead despite the BJP's massive challenge. It took lead in 18 of the 30 constituencies that voted in the second phase of the West Bengal Assembly election. The BJP took the lead in 12.

Nandigram voted in this phase. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took a huge gamble by standing against local heavyweight and her former aide Suwendu Adhikari, who joined the BJP in December last year.

## Phase 3: 31 seats

In the third phase, 31 seats went to the polls. This phase saw voting in areas



where the TMC had enjoyed complete dominance in previous polls. In 2016, the TMC had won 29 of these seats. The Congress-Left alliance had won two, winning one seat each in Howrah and South 24 Paraganas.

In 2011, the TMC had won 25 and the Congress-Left alliance five. The BJP drew a blank. Even in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the TMC maintained its hegemony by taking lead in 29 of these 31 constituencies. The BJP, however, replaced the Congress-Left with lead in two other constituencies.

The TMC's performance in this phase and the next two phases would, to a large extent, decide whether Mamata Banerjee returns as the Bengal chief minister on May 2 or not.

## Phase 4: 44 seats

Polling in the fourth phase of the Bengal election took place on April 10 for 44 seats. This was the phase in which Singur went to the polls. Along with Nandigram, Singur had played the catapulting role in the 2011 Bengal election in which the TMC defeated the Left Front.

In 2011, the TMC had won 33 of these 44 seats. The party bettered its record in 2016 winning 39 of these seats. The Congress had won two and the Left Front eight.

The BJP did not win any of these seats in 2011 but it got one in the 2015 Bengal polls. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP surprised the TMC in its stronghold by taking lead in 19 seats.

The TMC was still ahead with a lead in 25 seats but it was a serious jolt to Mamata Banerjee's party. The Congress and the Left had been pushed out of the race.

## Phase 5: 45 seats

Bengal will vote for 45 assembly seats on Saturday. The fifth phase has the maximum number of seats going to the polls. This is a crucial phase of the 2021 Bengal Assembly election.

The 45 assembly constituencies that vote in the next phase are the ones where the BJP collectively had more votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha election than the TMC. The BJP got nearly 45 per cent votes compared to the TMC's 41.5 per cent. However, in terms of seats, the TMC led 23 and the BJP 22.

In 2016, the TMC had won 32 of these seats -- six more than 2011 -- going to the polls in the fifth phase. The BJP drew a blank. The Congress and the Left combined won 10 seats.

If the TMC does not crawl back to regain its lost foothold in this phase, Mamata Banerjee's road to the Writers' Building might be rough and bumpy.

## Phase 6: 43 seats

Forty-three seats will go to the polls in the sixth phase. It is again a TMC-dominated region that will be voting on April 22. In 2011, the TMC had won 28 of these seats and improved its tally to 32 in 2016.

The Congress-Left had won 11 of these seats in 2016. But the real fight is likely to be between the TMC and the BJP. They had taken a lead in 24 and 19 assembly segments, respectively during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

## Phase 7: 36 seats

The final two phases of the Bengal election will see polling in 71 seats. Of the 36 seats that go to the polls on April 26 in the seventh phase, the TMC held 14 in 2016 and 17 in 2011.

The Congress-Left alliance got the better of the TMC in 2016 on these seats as it won 22 seats here. In 2011, their combined share was 18.

During the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP matched the TMC, sharing the lead in 16 constituencies each. In the remaining four, Congress was in the lead.

## Phase 8: 35 seats

Among the 35 seats going to the polls in the eighth phase, the TMC had 14 in 2011 and 17 in 2016. The Congress-Left alliance won 16 of these seats in 2016 with the Congress winning 13 alone. In 2011, their combined share was 21. The Congress had back then won 14 seats.

Of all the seats that will go to the polls in the last phase, the BJP won just one. But in 2019, the BJP secured a lead in 11 constituencies. The TMC was ahead in 19 and the Congress in five.

## Up next

The 2019 Lok Sabha election brought a sharp change in the electoral dynamics of West Bengal.

Going by the latest electoral output, the TMC has a tougher fight at hand in the last three phases of the Bengal election (phases 6, 7 and 8). As per the trends seen in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, it led in 59 of the seats in these phases, while the BJP was close behind, leading in 46 seats. *Source: India Today*

## EC bars Bengal BJP chief for 24 hours for 'inciteful remarks'

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday, April 15, banned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s West Bengal chief Dilip Ghosh from campaigning in the state for 24 hours for his "highly provocative and inciteful remarks" on the Sitalkuchi firing incident, in which four people were killed as polling was underway last week.

A day after violence broke out during fourth phase of polling in Cooch Behar district on April 10, Ghosh had said at a

rally in Baranagar in North 24 Parganas that "there will be Sitalkuchi in several places".

Four people were killed in firing by Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel in Sitalkuchi. While the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) alleged the firing was unprovoked, the poll watchdog and central forces said it was in "self-defence" as the security personnel at the polling booth were under attack by a mob.

On Sunday, the TMC filed a complaint against Ghosh for his statement, prompting the ECI to seek his response.

"The commission sternly warns Dilip Ghosh and advises him to desist from using such statement while making public utterances during the period when Model Code of Conduct is in force and imposes a ban of 24 hours..." the ECI order said, adding that the "highly provocative and inciteful remarks" can "adversely impact law and order thereby adversely affecting the election

process".

The ban for violating the Model Code of Conduct is applicable from 7pm Thursday till 7pm Friday, April 16, the order stated.

Ghosh, when asked about the ban, said on Thursday he will take the time off campaigning to rest. "The ECI ordered whatever it thought was right. I will stay at home and take rest. I was not getting proper sleep and time to have a proper meal because of the campaigning," he said.



On Jallianwala Bagh Massacre anniversary

# Remembering the martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre



BY MIKE  
GHOUSE &  
PROF. I.S.  
SALUJA



- 102 years ago, on April 13, the Vaisakhi Day, General Dyer of the British Government opened fire on peaceful protestors in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, India. Killing 379 Indians, according to official sources.
- Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood as "a symbolic act of protest".

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, was a seminal event in the British rule of India. On 13 April 1919, a crowd of non-violent protestors, along with Vaisakhi pilgrims, had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh garden in Amritsar, Punjab to protest the arrest of two leaders despite a curfew which had been recently declared.

An hour after the meeting began as scheduled at 16:30, Dyer arrived with a group of sixty-five Gurkha and twenty-five Baluchi soldiers into the Bagh. Fifty of them were armed with .303 Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles. Dyer had also brought two armored cars armed with machine guns; however, the vehicles were left outside, as they were unable to enter the Bagh through the narrow entrance.

The Jallianwala Bagh was surrounded on all sides by houses and buildings and had few narrow entrances. Most of them were kept permanently locked. The main entrance was relatively wide but was guarded heavily by the troops backed by the armored vehicles. The people had nowhere to go and were boxed in like caged animals.

Dyer (without warning the crowd to disperse) blocked the main exits. He explained later that this act "was not to disperse the meeting but to punish the Indians for disobedience." Dyer ordered his troops to begin shooting toward the densest sections of the crowd to inflict maximum damage. Firing continued for approximately ten minutes. Cease-fire was ordered only when ammunition supplies were almost exhausted, after approximately 1,650 rounds were spent.

Many people died in stampedes at the narrow gates or by jumping into the solitary well on the compound to escape the shooting. A plaque, placed at the site after independence states that 120 bodies were removed from the well. The wounded could not be moved from where they had fallen, as a curfew was declared,



Entrance to the present-day Jallianwala Bagh.



The Jallianwala Bagh in 1919, months after the massacre



Jallianwala Bagh well into which people jumped to save themselves from bullets

shooting is disputed. While the official figure given by the British inquiry into the massacre is 379 deaths, the method used by the inquiry has been subject to criticism. In July 1919, three months after the massacre, officials were tasked with finding who had been killed by inviting inhabitants of the city to volunteer information about those who had died.

This information was incomplete due to fear that those who participated would be identified as having been present at the meeting, and some of the dead may not have had close relations in the area. When interviewed by the members of the committee, a senior civil servant in the Punjab admitted that the actual figure could be higher.

Since the official figures were probably flawed regarding the size of the crowd (15,000-20,000), the number of rounds shot and the period of shooting, the Indian National Congress instituted a separate inquiry of its own, with conclusions that differed considerably from the Government's inquiry.

The casualty number quoted by the Congress was more than 1,500, with approximately 1,000 being killed. The Government tried to suppress information of the massacre, but news spread in India and widespread outrage ensued. Yet, the details of the massacre did not become known in Britain until December 1919.

The day after the massacre Kitchin, the Commissioner of Lahore as well as General Dyer, both used threatening language. The following is the English translation of Dyer's Urdu statement directed at the local residents of Amritsar on the afternoon of 14 April 1919, a day after the Amritsar massacre:

"You people know well that I am a Sepoy and soldier. Do you want war or peace? If you wish for a war, the Government is prepared for it, and if you want peace, then obey my orders and open all your shops; else I will shoot. For me the battlefield of France or Amritsar is the same. I am a military man and I will go straight. Neither shall I move to the right nor to the left. Speak up, if you want war? In case there is to be peace, my order is to open all shops at once. You people talk against the Government and persons educated in Germany and Bengal talk sedition. I shall report all these. Obey my orders. I do not wish to have anything else.

I have served in the military for over 30 years. I understand the Indian Sepoy and Sikh people very well. You will have to obey my orders and observe peace. Otherwise, the shops will be opened by force and Rifles. You will have to report to me of the Badmash.

and many more died during the night.

The number of deaths caused by the

CONTD ON PAGE 34

# Farm unions say agitation to continue, announce march to Delhi on April 21

Farmer unions in Punjab have announced a march towards Delhi on April 21, indicating that the over four-month-long protest is not going to end soon. They said that farmers, activists and women protesters will begin a massive march toward Delhi on April 21. Farmer leaders made the announcement at a Baisakhi Conference called by Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) in Talwandi Sabo of Bathinda.

The conference was organised to pay tribute to Jallianwala Bagh martyrs and to mark 'Khalsa Sajna Diwas'. It was attended by thousands of farmers. The Baisakhi Conference was held at 38 other spots in the state as well in protest against the controversial farm laws. BKU (Ekta Ugrahan) state president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said that the April 21 Delhi march would be led by the union's state general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan and state treasurer Jhanda Singh Jehtuke. He said that the farmers' protest will continue till they get their rights.

Citing the example of India's fight against Britishers, he said that after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, people fought unitedly rising above caste, creed, religion and the fight against the Narendra Modi



BKU (Ekta Ugrahan) Punjab president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said that the farmers' protest will continue till they get their rights.

government will also be fought unitedly by the farmers, labourers, women and other countrymen. Ugrahan also said that another massive march towards Parliament will be undertaken in May.

SKM leader Balbir Singh Rajewal said that the protest movement started by the farmers of Punjab had now turned into a nationwide mass movement and people from across the country are supporting it.

Thousands of farmers have been camping at Delhi's Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur border in protest against the newly enacted three farm laws.

There had been 11 rounds of talks between the Centre and the farmer unions but it did not yield a result. The farmers are demanding a rollback of the three laws while the government is proposing to amend the clauses with which farmers have an issue.

## Farmers at Singhu, Tikri borders refuse to move amid virus surge

NEW DELHI (TIP): Farmers protesting at the Singhu and Tikri borders for over four months against the Centre's three farm laws are not planning to call off their stir anytime soon amid the worsening Covid-19 situation in Delhi.

According to the farmers at Singhu and Tikri borders, Covid is being "over-glorified" so that the government can finish all the opposition and protests against them.

"We will boost our immunity, take care of our health and start vaccination drives at protest sites. But we will not get up," protesting farmers said.

Last week, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait, who has been camping at the Ghazipur border, said farmers protesting the contentious new farm laws are ready to talk if the Centre invites them, maintaining that the dialogue would resume where it had ended on January 22 and the demands remain unchanged.

He said for the talks to resume, the government should invite the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an



umbrella body representing the protesters who are camping at the three border points of Delhi at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur since November 2020.

"The talks with the government would resume from the same point where it had ended on January 22.

The demands are also the same -- all three 'black' farm laws should be repealed, a new law made to ensure MSP (minimum support price) for crops," Tikait was quoted as saying in a statement issued by BKU media in-charge Dharmendra Malik.

Source: India Today



The tents damaged in fire at the Singhu border on April 15.

## Two tents, car allegedly set ablaze by miscreants at Singhu border farmers protest site

NEW DELHI (TIP): Two tents and a car were allegedly set on fire by unidentified people at the Singhu border on Thursday, April 15, morning where farmers have been protesting against the Centre's three farm laws over the last few months. Furniture and luggage inside the two tents were gutted. The police said no casualties were reported and the protesters at the border doused the fire in time.

A member of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha said, "Around 12 noon, a man was seen near a tent. He was trying to set it on fire. When farmers saw the blaze, they rushed with water to douse the fire immediately. The man then set fire to another tent and left. A group of farmers tried chasing him but he escaped."

The farmers lodged a complaint at Kundli police station against the accused. A senior police officer said, "We have been told that a man came from BRTS side and set fire to two tents or shanties. These structures were built by farmers for the summers. They kept their luggage, installed air coolers and put some furniture inside these small tents. Nobody was injured in the incident. The fire was doused within an hour."

"We were told that after the incident he (accused) joined a group of locals nearby and couldn't be recognised. We are looking into the matter," said the officer.

Police have initiated an inquiry into the matter. No case has been registered.

## Canadian party condemns India's three farm laws

The Canadian New Democratic Party (NDP), led by Jagmeet Singh, has passed a resolution condemning India with regard to the ongoing protests against three farm laws enacted last year.

In fact, the 'Resolution for International Solidarity with Indian Farmers' was given the top priority in its agenda in the section, Redefining Canada's Place in the World, a reflection of the party's foreign policy stances.

It took top position in the convention's prioritisation list, ahead of justice and peace in Israel-Palestine.

Even as two Canadians remain jailed in China, and Canada's House of Commons on February 22 passed a resolution that defined Chinese actions in Xinjiang as meeting the threshold to be termed as "genocide", that issue only appeared at eighth place in the list, while Hong Kong Freedom of Expression came even lower at number 12.

The resolution for 'International Solidarity with Indian Farmers' was moved by members of the party from Brampton East. While he contested elections in 2019 to the House of Commons from Burnaby South in British Columbia, the town of Brampton, in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), is Federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh's home base.

# 2.17 lakh Covid cases in new daily record; Maha, UP, Delhi among top contributors

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India added a record 2,17,353 new coronavirus infections in a day taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 1,42,91,917, while active cases surpassed the 15-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday, April 16.

This is the second consecutive day that the country has reported over two lakh cases.

The death toll increased to 1,74,308 with 1,185 new fatalities, the highest since September 19, 2020, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase for the 37th day in a row, the active cases have increased to 15,69,743, comprising 10.98 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID recovery rate dropped to 87.8 per cent.

The active caseload was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12 and it was at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18, 2020.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,25,47,866, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.22 per cent, the data stated.

According to the ICMR, 26,34,76,625 samples have been tested up to April 15 with 14,73,210 samples being tested on Thursday.

Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 61,695. It is followed by Uttar Pradesh with 22,339 while Delhi reported 16,699 new cases.

Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (349), followed by Chhattisgarh with 135 daily deaths, Delhi with 112, Uttar Pradesh 104, Gujarat 81, Karnataka 66, Madhya Pradesh 53, Punjab 50, Rajasthan 33 and Tamil Nadu 29.



- Top five states that have contributed more to the daily count (2.17 lakh) today are Maharashtra (61,695 cases), Uttar Pradesh (22,339 cases), Delhi (16,699 cases), Chhattisgarh (15,256 cases) and Karnataka (14,738 cases).
- 360.14 per cent of the new Covid-19 cases have been reported from these five states, with Maharashtra alone responsible for 28.38 per cent of the new cases.
- A total of 1,185 deaths were reported in the country in the past 24 hours. The maximum casualties have been reported in Maharashtra (349), followed by Chhattisgarh with 135 deaths due to the infection.
- India has also seen 1,18,302 discharges, pushing the total recoveries in the country to 1,25,47,866. There are 15,69,743 active cases in India.
- Former Madhya Pradesh CM and Congress leader Digvijaya Singh has tested positive for Covid-19. Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani today tweeted to say that he has tested positive. Former Union Minister and SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal, too, tested positive for the infection.
- A report of the Lancet Covid-19 Commission by India Task Force members has said that the country may see 1,750 coronavirus related deaths per day, rising to approximately 2,320 by the first week of June.

## Delhi surpasses Mumbai to become worst-hit COVID city in India

**D**elhi recorded over 17,000 cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday to become the worst-affected city in the country, leaving financial capital Mumbai far behind in the daily tally.

Mumbai's single day peak so far is 11,163, registered on April 4, according to officials figures. Delhi recorded 17,282 fresh cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, the highest single-day surge in the national capital since the onset of the pandemic, while over 100 fatalities were reported, according to data shared by the health department.

### Weekend Lockdown In Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday, April 15, decided to impose a weekend lockdown in the city in a bid to control the spread of Covid-19.

- Only essential services will be allowed during weekends
- Gyms, malls, auditoriums will remain closed
- Cinema halls will operate at a 30% capacity
- Dine-in at restaurants will not be allowed
- Takeaway and home delivery will be allowed
- One weekly market per zone will be allowed

## Covid surge: Night curfew in Uttarakhand, but not at Kumbh mela

**HARIDWAR (TIP):** Uttarakhand clamped night curfew across the state and curbed the occupancy of people in large gatherings on Thursday, April 15, but exempted the Mahakumbh from all restrictions despite experts saying the rampant violation of mask protocol and social distancing guidelines at the event was a matter of serious concern.

The government imposed curfew from 10.30pm to 5am every day and allowed only 50% occupancy on public transport. All social, religious, political, or weddings of over 200 people were barred and all cinema halls, restaurants, bars and gyms were asked to operate at 50% capacity. All educational coaching institutes and swimming pools will be closed, said the government.

The order came hours after the state reported its highest one-day spike of Covid infections, posting 2,220 cases. But the order said in case of the Mahakumbh – which is ongoing in Haridwar – the standard operating procedure (SOP) issued by Centre in January and the state government in February will remain in effect. The standard operating procedure does not place any restrictions on the gathering of people and only seeks social distancing and Covid negative test report to enter the Kumbh area.

Activists said the decision was inexplicable. "It is a strange decision at a time when the state has reported



the highest daily spike...exempting Mahakumbh area from these restrictions will make it difficult to check Covid in the state in particular and in India in general. Just on Wednesday, Haridwar witnessed pilgrim rush of over 1.3 million people at a time when we are witnessing a sharp surge in Covid cases," said Anoop Nautiyal, from Social Development for Communities Foundation, a non-governmental organisation.

Source: HT

## CBSE Class 10 exams cancelled, Class 12 exams postponed

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** After CBSE cancelled and postponed class 10 and 12 board exams 2021, several state boards have also announced the decision on the same line.

Currently, the nation is witnessing an alarming situation as the COVID-19 cases are rapidly increasing every day. Owing to this, several states and boards, such as CBSE, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, among others, have cancelled or postponed Board Exams 2021.

Recently, Punjab, UP, Odisha and Gujarat cancelled and postponed the board exams of class 10 and 12. Some states have announced summer vacation from classes 1 to 8 till June end. As the states are taking strict measures to curb the outspread of the virus, we have brought you the compiled list of states that have decided to cancel and postpone the exams.

The central board has cancelled the Class 10th board exams and have postponed the class 12th board exams till May 30. Class 10th students will be marked on the basis of their internal assessment and pre-board exams. The revised date sheet of class 12th will be released after the situation is under control.



## Deepika Padukone steps down as MAMI chairperson

In 2019, Deepika Padukone replaced Kiran Rao as the chairperson of MAMI. Now after serving as the head honcho for nearly two years, the actor has decided to step down from the position. Deepika took to her Instagram story and released a statement regarding the same citing her slate of work as the reason behind it. The actor said she will not be able to give undivided attention to the festival it requires.

Deepika's statement read as "Being on the board of MAMI and serving as Chairperson has been a deeply enriching experience. As an artist, it was invigorating to bring together cinema and talent from all over the world to Mumbai, my second home.

I have come to realise, however, that with my current slate of work, I will be unable to give MAMI the undivided focus and attention it requires.

I depart knowing that MAMI is in the best hands possible and that my bond and connection with the academy is one that will last a lifetime."

# Radhika Apte turns director; says 'I loved the process'

Radhika Apte has donned many hats while portraying different roles for her films, now has taken up direction too. The actress released her directorial debut *The Sleepwalkers*' trailer in the lockdown at Palms Spring International short film festival which won The Best Midnight Short award.

Making her directorial debut with the short-film titled *The Sleepwalkers*, the actress in a recent interview with a leading publication shared, "I had never thought of making films. There was no such plan. I just had the urge to write because sometimes you want to create content that challenges you. Roles that come your way are not necessarily from the space that you want them to come from. I just wanted to write something that interested me. There are things that I passionately want to do. When I bounced off the story to Honey Trehan and Abhishek Chaubey, they decided to make it. I had 10 days for the prep and shoot. When I finished writing, I realised I didn't want to act in it, but I wanted to direct it. And, I absolutely loved the process."

Fans of the actress cannot wait to witness the magic Radhika has created, this time being behind the lens. The trailer of her short-film has been showered with so much love and appreciation from the audiences.



## Ranveer Singh and Shankar come together for *Anniyan* Hindi remake

Ranveer Singh will star in Tamil film *Anniyan* Hindi remake. The *Gully Boy* actor shared a picture with director Shankar Shanmugham and producer Dr Jayantilal Gada to announce the same. Shankar had written and directed the original film.

Calling it a proud moment, Ranveer wrote, "Proudly announcing my collaboration with the pioneering visionary of Indian cinema, the maverick master craftsman SHANKAR @shanmughamshankar powered by veteran film producer Dr. Jayantilal Gada @jayantilalgadaofficial @penmovies."

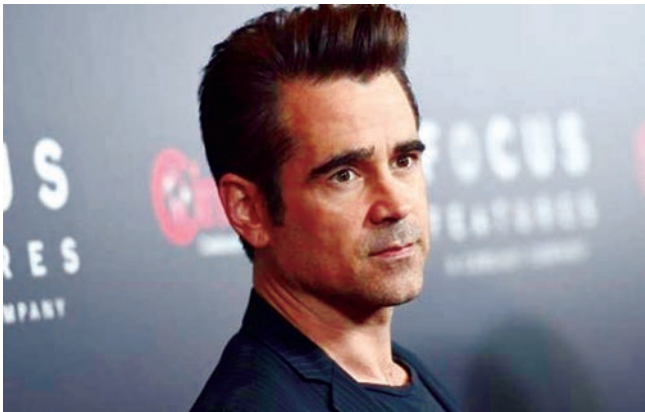
Shankar shared the same picture and expressed his happiness. He wrote, "In this moment, no one will be happier than me, bringing back the larger than life cinematic experience with @ranveersingh in the official adaptation of cult blockbuster *Anniyan*. @jayantilalgadaofficial @penmovies."



## Mandira Bedi says her 'blood boils' at what trolls say about daughter Tara

Mandira Bedi, who earlier this week named and shamed a couple of trolls for attacking her daughter Tara, has said that she doesn't give 'two hoots' if they target her, but her 'claws come out' when her children are subjected to abuse. In two Instagram stories, Mandira highlighted the sort of abuse that Tara, whom she adopted last year, gets from certain sections of the internet. One person had called the child a 'street kid' who didn't appear to fit into the family. In an interview, Mandira reflected on her moment of anger, and said that her friends had dissuaded her from commenting about the abuse on social media. "I don't know what struck me that I went through the comments on this one photograph of my family. It was appalling to see those nasty comments for a little child. What kind of people say such disgusting things about a harmless kid? While I normally ignore trolls and haters, these two-three messages that I saw late at night on Monday upset me, and this time, I felt the need to respond. Tara is innocent and too young to understand what happened, but it hurt me," she told a leading daily.





## Colin Farrell found Voyagers script a page-turner

Hollywood star Colin Farrell says the script of his upcoming sci-fi thriller "Voyagers" was quite a page-turner. "Voyagers" tells the story of 30 men and women sent on an interstellar mission to save the human race. Talking about his role and the potential he saw in it, Farrell said: "I saw the part that I had, as quite obviously on the page was a father figure and somebody that was there to kind of corral and guide and care for and monitor these children as they go from birth into young adulthood. I loved it."

Delving deeper into the character, Farrell gained a new perspective on his character's psyche. He said: "I think Richard (his character) is lonely, I mean he's got to be lonely. He's in space and he is again the only senior member of this team heading into the void. So, I think he has no one!"

A big fan of the script, he shared how invested he was in first reading it: "It was a page-turner! It was really, really lovely. It was very unusual. I thought it was very cleverly drawn, and the questions that it provoked in me as a reader were fairly profound and substantial questions."

# Hugh Jackman and Laura Dern set to star in Florian Zeller's next movie The Son

Hollywood stars Hugh Jackman and Laura Dern are all set to star in the upcoming movie 'The Son', which will be writer-director Florian Zeller's follow-up to the BAFTA-winning and Academy award-nominated 'The Father'. According to Variety, the film will be adapted from Zeller's acclaimed stage play by Zeller and Christopher Hampton, who is Oscar-nominated for adapting 'The Father' with Zeller, and has won an Oscar for 'Dangerous Liaisons'.

Oscar-winners Iain Canning and Emile Sherman, and Joanna Laurie of See-Saw Films, will produce the movie with Christophe Spadone alongside Zeller. Film4 will be co-financing the production.

In 'The Son', Peter (Jackman) has a busy life with his new partner Emma and their baby. This is thrown into disarray when his ex-wife Kate (Dern) turns up with their teenage son, Nicholas. Something is amiss from the first moment that audiences meet Nicholas. He is troubled, distant, and angry, playing truant from school for months - both son and mother need his father's help. Nicholas's wish is to live with his father for a change.



## Jennifer Aniston's rep denies reports of actor's secret adoption plans

American actor Jennifer Aniston's representative recently set the record straight after reports circulated that the 'Friends' star is reportedly in the process of adopting a child.

Fox News quoted a report by People magazine that the 52-year-old actor made a personal announcement to her co-stars during the taping of the 'Friends' reunion for HBO Max.

The news was reported that she's in the process of adopting a child. However, Aniston's rep denied the reports to the outlet on Tuesday, calling it a "fabrication." Her team also told TMZ that any so-called announcement is "false" and "never happened."

In 2017, Aniston had a sharp response to those who have posted false rumours about her having her first child. "I would say, I think the best one would be a picture of me with a hand over my stomach, saying 'Finally Pregnant!'" she explained to Glamour at the time.

Aniston continued: "I mean, it's like they take a picture of you and create this story. If your body is in a normal moment of having had a bite or two, or you're having a moment of bloat, then there's arrows circled around your stomach, telling you that you're pregnant. And it's like, actually no, it's just my body."

"Not that it's any of your business to begin with. Having a child, as we know, is no one's business except the couple or individual that's going through it," she added.



## Matrix star Carrie-Anne Moss says she was offered grandmother's role at 40

Matrix star Carrie-Anne Moss says she experienced Hollywood's double standards on ageing firsthand when she was offered the role of a grandmother the day after she turned 40.

Moss spoke about her experience while moderating a conversation to promote actor-author friend Justine Bateman's new book Face: One Square Foot of Skin, which looks at the ways society responds to women as they age, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Prior to the offer, Moss said she thought female actors not finding good roles to play at 40 was a myth.

"I had heard that at 40 everything changed. I didn't believe in that because I don't believe in just jumping on a thought system that I don't really align with. But literally the day after my 40th birthday, I was reading a script that had come to me and I was talking to my manager about it. She was like, 'Oh, no, no, no, it's not that role (you're reading for), it's the grandmother,'" Moss said.





# BROADWAY'S BEST TO THE RESCUE!

BY MABEL PAIS

## THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS

BY YORK THEATRE COMPANY WITH

TOM D'ANGORA, MICHAEL D'ANGORA, AND TIM GUINEE

ALL-SINGING, ALL-TALKING, ALL-VIRTUAL

PRESENTATION OF ROCKWELL AND BOGART'S OFF-BROADWAY HIT

"THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS"

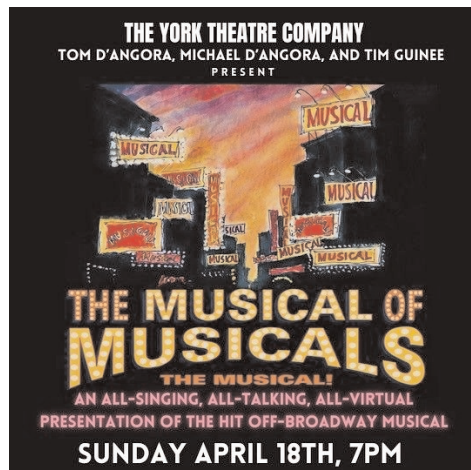
ON-DEMAND BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

BEGINS STREAMING SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021 AT 7:00PM

CONTINUING THROUGH WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021

DONOR MATCHING CHALLENGE CONTINUES THROUGH APRIL 17!

The York Theatre Company (James Morgan, Producing Artistic Director), in association with Tom D'Angora, Michael D'Angora, and Tim Guinee, has Broadway's best to the All-Singing, All-Talking, All-Virtual special benefit presentation of the Off-Broadway hit THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS (THE MUSICAL!).



"Musical Of Musicals", Poster  
Photo/ Courtesy York Theatre

With music by Eric Rockwell, lyrics by Joanne Bogart, and book by Joanne Bogart and Eric Rockwell, this special presentation is directed by Tom D'Angora and Michael D'Angora, with music direction and arrangements by Deniz Cordell and associate music director Annie Pasqua. Original director Pamela Hunt is serving as artistic supervisor.

This event raises funds to help The York recover and rebuild after its recent

physical devastating damage.

Joining the all-star roster of cast members are Alexandra Billings, Charles Busch, Robert Creighton, Ana Gasteyer, Beth Leavel, Lauren Molina, Sarah Stiles and many more.

Joining the star-studded evening of special appearances are Iain Armitage, Joel Grey, Perez Hilton, Megan Hilty, Amanda Lopez, Darlene Love, Julianne Moore, Jinks Monsoon, Bernadette Peters, Anthony Rapp, George Salazar, Brooke Shields, Renée Taylor, and many more. They join special guests Matthew Broderick, Lewis Black, Giancarlo Esposito, Jane Krakowski, Audra McDonald, Debra Messing, Isaac Mizrahi, Mandy Patinkin, Martha Plimpton, and Mercedes Ruehl.

The evening will also include remarks from Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

A loving parody and homage to Broadway's Golden Age, it is made up of five hilarious mini musicals telling the same story in the style of legendary musical theatre writers: Rodgers & Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, Jerry Herman, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and Kander & Ebb. The original cast album is



York Theater at 50 Logo.  
Photo/ Courtesy York Theatre

on JAY Records.

"THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS (THE MUSICAL!)" premieres on Sunday evening, April 18, 2021 at 7:00PM and will be available to view on demand through April 21, 2021. Free stream at YorkTheatre.org. Donations may be made by visiting the GoFundMe link at gf.me/u/znnvib. For additional information, visit

Website: [yorktheatre.org](http://yorktheatre.org)

Twitter: @yorktheatrenyc

Facebook: [facebook.com/yorktheatrecompany](https://www.facebook.com/yorktheatrecompany)

YouTube: [youtube.com/user/yorktheatre](https://www.youtube.com/user/yorktheatre)

## FFTP CONTINUES SEASON

BY MABEL PAIS

**FFTP Award-Winning Theatre Company CONTINUES 2021 SEASON**

**With Theme - We Persist!**

**PENNY FULLER & BOB DISHY**

**Star In**

**ARTHUR MILLER'S**

**"I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING"**

**April 19th, 2021 at 2:00pm**

**Live At Theatre 80 St. Marks**

**And Zoomed "Live" Out To The World**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT PRODUCTIONS (FFTP), now in its 21st year, continues celebrating the oft-neglected one-act play and theatre at its best with Award-winning actors, writers and directors, with a tremendously fun second production on April 19th, 2021.

Following the successful season kick-off, Christopher Durang's "For Whom The Southern Belle Tolls," and Tennessee Williams' "Life Boat Drill," which starred Bob Dishy, FFTP is back at Theatre 80 with Bob Dishy again, this time joined by Penny Fuller in Arthur Miller's "I Can't Remember Anything."

The show is directed by FFTP's resident director Antony Marsellis. Revolving around a widow, her husband's best friend and her inability to remember much of the past, this compelling drama is filled with humor throughout.

In addition, the audience will enjoy "Did You Know My Husband?" written by Susan Charlotte and originally presented by FFTP, was broadcast on PBS Channel WSKG back in December of 2018. Now, the play is brought to the FFTP audience via Zoom.

"Did You Know My Husband?" stars Emmy nominated actress Louise Lasser and two-time Tony-award winning actress Carole Shelley. Written by award-winner Susan Charlotte, the piece is directed by Antony Marsellis. Lasser and Shelley are a perfect match for this heartfelt drama, scored by four-time

Emmy award winner Billy Goldenberg. The story revolves around two older women who have met before. But only one of them remembers and is not certain if she should reveal the truth. This hour long show also includes a behind the scenes segment with the cast, writer and composer. Total running time is approximately one hour.

### POST PERFORMANCE

Following the performance, is a Q&A with the cast and led by FFTP Founder Susan Charlotte with reminiscences of Arthur Miller.

Tony Award-winner JAMES NAUGHTON joins the post-performance discussion. TONY ROBERTS too joins the show on April 19. Tony Roberts will read a chapter called "The Accident" from his book "Do you Know Me?" A perfect match for Miller's "I Can't Remember Anything." Both deal with memory, loss and persistence.

### OTHER DATES WITHOUT Q&A:

Tuesday, April 20th, from 6-7pm.; Thursday, May 6th from 7-8pm; Saturday, May 15th from 2-3pm.

Repeat Zoom Performances Available On Saturday, April 24 & Sunday, April 25.

SPECIAL ZOOM ON THURSDAY, April 29th, from 7-8pm, followed by Q&A with Louise Lasser and Susan Charlotte.

### LOCATION, TICKETS

The April 19th, 2:00pm performance will be available live via Zoom as well as a limited in-theatre 'audience' who will be part of a documentary being filmed on FFTP. The entire FFT series will be presented at Theatre 80 St. Marks.

Tickets for the 'live' performance are FREE to first-come patrons, who have agreed to be part of the documentary on FFTP.

All social distancing precautions will be respected.

There will be a medical professional onsite to check temperatures and audience members must wear masks and have recently tested negative for Covid-19. There will be a nominal charge for the streaming. For those who can't make the zoom on Monday, the program will be repeated on Saturday and Sunday. For additional information and tickets, contact FFTP at: 646-366-9340 or email: info@foodforthoughtproductions.com

### FFTP

It was only a year ago the world came to an abrupt halt. Our lives changed for once and forever. But FFTP PERSISTED, becoming the first company to bring live theatre back into our world last July, and continued presenting monthly performances through all of 2020. And FFTP, which has provided over 20 years of theatre, continues to persist with humor in different forms-parodies, satires and dramas filled with comedy.

### FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

FFTP's next production on May 24th is "The Hairdresser" by Susan Charlotte. A light comedy turns into a serious drama with a twist ending. A six-time Tony nominated actress insists on the perfect haircut from her hairdresser/best friend. She is going to the 'Tonys' later that evening and hopes to win.

Other dates set for FFTP productions are June 28th, July 26th, Sept 13th, Oct 25th, Nov 22nd and Dec. 20th. Many of the performances will have two one-acts included in the event. Besides those mentioned above, there will be plays by the likes of A.R. Gurney, Neil LaBute, Dorothy Parker, Horton Foote and performances by Kathleen Chalfant, Tony Roberts, Cady Huffman, Larry Pine, and Laila Robins and more.

For additional information and tickets to all FFTP shows, contact FFTP at: 646-366-9340 or email: info@foodforthoughtproductions.com. To learn more about FFTP, visit foodforthoughtproductions.com

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

## Iran nuclear talks restart amid tension over enrichment move

**VIENNA (TIP):** Iran and global powers resumed talks on Thursday to rescue the 2015 nuclear deal in an effort potentially complicated by Tehran's decision to ramp up uranium enrichment and what it called Israeli sabotage at a nuclear site. Casting a shadow over the Vienna talks, Tehran on Tuesday announced its decision to enrich uranium at 60% purity, a big step closer to the 90% that is weapons-grade material, in response to an explosion at its key Natanz facility on Sunday. — Reuters

## France asks citizens to leave Pakistan after violent protests

**FRANCE (TIP):** The French embassy here on Thursday advised all French nationals in Pakistan to temporarily leave the country after violent protests by a radical religious group that has now been banned by the government.

The Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) took to streets on Monday to launch violent protests to force the government to expel the French ambassador over blasphemous caricatures published last year.

### Precautionary measure

Though no French citizen was reportedly targeted so far, the embassy has urged all French citizens to leave Pakistan, apparently as a precautionary measure. Though no French citizen was reportedly targeted so far but the embassy has urged all the French citizens to leave Pakistan, apparently as a precautionary measure. "Due to the serious threats to French interests in Pakistan, French nationals and French companies are advised to temporarily leave the country," the embassy said in an email message to its citizens in Pakistan. It said that the departures will be carried out by existing commercial airlines. — PTI

## Beijing skies turn yellow as sand, dust engulf Chinese capital

**BEIJING (TIP) :** The skies above Beijing turned yellow and air pollution soared to severe levels as a giant cloud of sand and dust particles rolled into the city, propelled by strong winds from the north of China. Beijing's air quality index rose to 324 as of 4 p.m. local time (0800 GMT) on Thursday, mainly due to larger particles of sand and dust, municipal authorities said. It worsened in the evening, exceeding 1,300 in some parts of the city, according to the Swiss IQAir app. The particles originated from Mongolia and the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia, and high winds are expected to carry the pollutants to central and eastern China by Friday, the China Meteorological Administration said. Reuters

# Canadian lawmaker caught naked during video conference

**OTTAWA (CANADA) (TIP):** A Canadian Parliament member was caught stark naked in a virtual meeting of the House of Commons.

William Amos, who has represented the Quebec district of Pontiac since 2015, appeared on the screens of his fellow lawmakers completely naked Wednesday. The pandemic has meant many Canadian lawmakers participate in sessions via video conference instead of in person.

A screenshot obtained by The Canadian Press shows Amos standing behind a desk between the Quebec and Canadian flags, his private parts hidden by what appears to be a mobile phone in one hand.

"This was an unfortunate error,? Amos said in a statement sent by email." "My video was accidentally turned on as I was changing into my work clothes after going for a jog. I sincerely apologize to my colleagues in the House of Commons for this unintentional distraction. Obviously, it was an honest mistake and it won't happen again." Claude DeBellefeuille,



a legislator for the opposition Bloc Quebecois party, raised the incident in a point of order after question period, suggesting that parliamentary decorum requires male Parliament members to wear a jacket and tie — and a shirt, underwear and trousers.

Speaker Anthony Rota later thanked DeBellefeuille for her "observations" and clarified that while he had not seen anything, he checked with technicians and confirmed they saw something. He

reminded lawmakers to always be vigilant when they are near a camera and microphone.

Amos, the parliamentary secretary to Industry Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, was visible only to Parliament members and staffers on an internal video conference feed. Because he was not speaking, his image did not show up on the public feed.

Liberal Party colleague Mark Holland said Amos was "utterly mortified." Holland said he was satisfied with the explanation from his colleague.

"I don't think there was any ill intent. It's certainly an unfortunate circumstance,? Holland said.

"This is a warning to everybody," Holland added. "You've got to really always assume that camera is on and be very careful any time you wander anywhere near that camera that you're dressed appropriately."

Asked if he will be issuing a warning to all Liberal lawmakers to that effect, Holland said: "Oh, big time!" AP

## 20 KILLED, 3 INJURED WHEN BUS, TRUCK CRASH IN SOUTHERN EGYPT

**CAIRO (TIP):** A bus has overturned while trying to pass a truck on a highway in southern Egypt, causing a collision that killed at least 20 people and injured three others, authorities said on Wednesday.

The bus was travelling from Cairo on Tuesday when it turned over and was hit by the truck on a road in the southern province of Assiut, 320 kilometers south of Cairo, Assiut Governor Essam Saad said in a statement.

Both vehicles caught fire, it added.

Photos released by the governor's office showed a burned out bus, with rescue teams looking for survivors. The victims were taken to nearby hospitals, the statement said.

Traffic accidents kill thousands every year in Egypt, which has a poor transportation safety record. Crashes are mostly caused by speeding, bad roads or poor enforcement of traffic laws.

The country's official statistics agency says around 10,000 road accidents took place in 2019, the most recent year for which statistics are available, leaving over 3,480 dead. In 2018, there were 8,480 car accidents, causing over 3,080 deaths. (AP)

## China protests Raisina Dialogue remarks

**BEIJING (TIP):** The Chinese embassy here has sought to counter remarks made against Beijing during the ongoing Raisina Dialogue by several western political and military leaders whose participation is high as this year's version is fully digital.

The Chinese embassy spokesperson Wang Xiaojian protested remarks made by US Indo-Pacific Command chief Admiral Phil Davidson and others about Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan, by describing happenings in these regions as China's internal affairs. "Making baseless and irresponsible remarks is not acceptable. We are firmly opposed to interference in China's internal affairs by any country or anyone under any pretext," he said.

Wang also objected to some western officials stating that 'China does not share our values'. "China has been calling for upholding values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom. Aren't these the values that all of us should be committed to," he asked. (TNS)

## London police charge man seen with axe near Buckingham Palace

**LONDON (TIP):** British police say they have charged a London man who was spotted carrying an axe near Buckingham Palace.

The city's Metropolitan Police force said private security guards working on The Mall, a main road outside the palace, detained a suspect on Tuesday evening after they were alerted to reports of a man carrying what appeared to be an axe.

Police said 46-year-old Vladyslav Dryhval was charged Thursday with possessing an offensive weapon and a bladed article.

Dryhval was remanded into custody and was due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court later Thursday.

The police force previously said there were no reports of injuries and that the incident was not being treated as terrorism-related. AP



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## France's Covid death toll surpasses 100,000

France's Covid-19 death toll passed the 100,000 mark on Thursday, April 15, and a further jump in intensive care (ICU) admissions was also reported in the past 24 hours, suggesting that the coronavirus continues to spread unabated.

Government figures showed 296 new deaths in one day, bringing the total number of fatalities to 100,073, Xinhua news agency reported.

The number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care units increased by 22 to 5,924 in total. The country initially had only 5,100 resuscitation beds.

Some 30,668 people with Covid-19 remained hospitalized, down by 200 in a single day. Since the start of the pandemic, over 5.18 million people in France have been infected with the virus, with 38,045 new cases confirmed in the past 24 hours. As of Thursday, France has vaccinated nearly 12 million people (22.8 per cent of the adult population) with a first shot and 4.26 million with both shots.

## UK records another 2,672 coronavirus cases

Another 2,672 people in Britain have tested positive for Covid-19, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 4,380,976, according to official figures released on Thursday, April 15.

The country also reported another 30 coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 127,191. These figures only include the deaths of people who died within 28 days of their first positive test, Xinhua news agency reported.

More than 32.4 million people have been given the first jab of the coronavirus vaccine, according to the latest official figures.

Latest data have also revealed the number of people in England waiting to begin hospital treatment has risen to a new record high in February this year. Figures from National Health Service (NHS) England showed a total of 4.7 million people were waiting for routine operations or procedures at the end of February -- the highest figure since records began in August 2007.

Experts have warned that despite progress in vaccine rollout, Britain is "still not out of the woods" amid concerns over new variants and the third wave of pandemic in the European continent.

Professor Kevin Fenton, London's regional director of Public Health England (PHE), said Thursday that further genetic sequencing of positive tests had detected more cases in London of the variant that first emerged in South Africa.

# Global Covid-19 caseload tops 138.8mn

WASHINGTON (TIP): The overall global Covid-19 caseload has topped 138.8 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 2.98 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Friday, April 16, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 138,827,781 and 2,984,236, respectively.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 31,495,164 and 565,283, respectively, according to the CSSE.

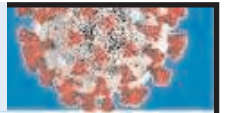
In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 14,074,564 cases.

The other countries with more than two million confirmed coronavirus cases are Brazil (13,746,681), France (5,248,853), Russia (4,622,464), the UK (4,396,008), Turkey (4,086,957), Italy (3,826,156), Spain (3,396,685), Germany (3,095,016), Poland (2,642,242), Argentina (2,629,156), Colombia (2,602,719), Mexico (2,295,435) and Iran (2,168,872), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 365,444 fatalities.

Nations with a death toll of over 50,000 are Mexico (211,213), India (173,123), the UK (127,437), Italy (115,937), Russia (102,667), France (100,232), Germany (79,520), Spain (76,882), Colombia (67,199), Iran (65,680), Poland (60,612), Argentina (58,925), Peru (55,812) and South Africa (53,571). Source: IANS

## TRACKING THE VIRUS



### GLOBAL

Cases | Deaths  
**138,827,781** | **2,984,236**

### INDIA

Cases | Deaths  
**1,42,91,917** | **1,74,308**



## Trust in J&J vax dips after pause over blood clot

WASHINGTON (TIP): Trust in the safety of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine has plunged 15 percentage points among Americans after federal health agencies recommended a "pause" in its use following blood clot cases, according to a new poll.

Adults who said they believed the single-dose shot was safe dropped from 52 per cent before the pause was announced on Tuesday to 37 per cent afterward, Xinhua news agency quoted the poll conducted by the global opinion and data firm YouGov along with The Economist.

The poll was released on Thursday, April 15. Respondents who felt the Johnson & Johnson vaccine "unsafe" increased from 26 per cent to 39 percent.

Americans broadly trusted the other two vaccines approved in the US, with 59 per cent of respondents saying they thought the Moderna vaccine was safe and 58 per cent trusting the safety of the Pfizer vaccine.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration recommended halting the use of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine on Tuesday, after rare blood clot cases emerged in six recipients.

In these cases, a type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets.

All six cases occurred among women between the ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination.

### 3rd vax dose likely needed within 12 months: Pfizer CEO

Pfizer Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla said people will likely need a third dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine within 12 months of getting fully inoculated.

Bourla told CNBC News on Thursday that it is possible



people will need to get vaccinated against the coronavirus annually, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We need to see what would be the sequence, and for how often we need to do that, that remains to be seen," he told CNBC.

"A likely scenario is that there will be likely a need for a third dose, somewhere between six and 12 months and then from there, there will be an annual re-vaccination, but all of that needs to be confirmed. And again, the variants will play a key role," he said.

Pfizer said earlier this month that its Covid-19 vaccine was more than 91 per cent effective at protecting against the coronavirus, and more than 95 per cent effective against severe disease up to six months after the second dose.

The data was based on more than 12,000 vaccinated participants.

Researchers are still working on how long protection against the virus lasts once individuals has been fully vaccinated.

# Mizoram: The land of Blue Mountains

Tucked away in the thickets of green on the southern tip of Northeast India, Mizoram, the “Land of Blue Mountains”, is a nature lover's paradise. Sandwiched between Bangladesh and Myanmar, this fifth smallest state in India is big on adventure with rugged terrains and gurgling rivers. It also boasts a rich historical and cultural heritage. That's not all, visit Mizoram, and be ready to be surprised by the locals' style quotient, apart from everything else.

## Tourist Attractions

### Aizawl

Lying at a height of 1132 m above sea level, Aizawl is a quaint city and the capital of the state of Mizoram in northeast India. Primarily dominated by the Mizo Tribe, Aizawl and its surrounding areas are lush with rolling hills and abundant greenery. The city, along with the majority of the state is known for its agricultural produce and ethnic handicrafts and apparel. Aizawl is well connected via roads and air connectivity to other major hubs of northeast India such as Silchar and Guwahati in Assam. An important thing to note is that an Inner Line Pass or ILP is required for entry into Mizoram which is available on Guwahati, Silchar, Shillong, New Delhi and Kolkata.

Among one of the oldest cities in the north eastern region of India, Aizawl, pronounced eye-zole, is a perfect place to relax while enjoying the local food and culture. Home to the Mizoram State Museum and few other tourist complexes, tourists have few options to enjoy a sightseeing tour in the city. Apart from these, one can take a tour to the nearby hilly areas of Hmuifang, Tamdil Lake and Chanmari.

### Serchhip

Most famous for being the district with the highest literacy rate in India, Serchhip in Mizoram is a place that can provide you a unique and vibrant experience.

This small town can give one the experience of a small village, the life, activities and colors that it sustains in the everyday. Some of the popular villages one can visit are the Neihloh and Buangpuri. The nature too plays a role in tourism with spots such as the Vantawng Khawhltha water fall. Other places here include the Chhingpui Thlan and Hriantrengna lung.

### Lunglei

Literally meaning 'the bridge of rock', Lunglei is famous for its scenic beauty and natural setting. It is a small town, located around 170 km south of Aizawl whose name is derived from a bridge shaped rock found along Nghasih which is a tributary of the river Tlawng. Lunglei is an ideal offbeat destination for those who love natural sightseeing and adventure activities bundled into one. Trekking, bird watching and camping



are among the popular activities opted by tourists coming to visit Lunglei.

Lunglei is a biodiverse region, home to Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary and Saza Wildlife Sanctuary. While Saza Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for hosting migratory and endemic bird species, Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary is home to several animal species such as leopards, tigers, porcupines and leaf monkeys among many. Visiting the Lunglei Rock Bridge at the Nghasih

stream is another popular activity while here. For those looking to learn about the culture and traditions of the region, the Saikuti Hall is a must-visit.

### Mamit

The Mamit district is the fourth largest district of the state of Mizoram. The town of Mamit, the administrative headquarters of the district, is located around 95 kms from Aizawl to the west. Known for its exquisite scenic locales

and magnificence, don't miss out to add this place in your itinerary in Mizoram. The Dampa Tiger Reserve, among the famous natural protected regions of India, is a popular tourist attraction here. Adventure enthusiasts will also love visiting the longest cave network of Mizoram in Pukzing. Oranges are a major produce from this district, earning it the nickname, the 'Orange Garden of Mizoram'.

The town of Mamit and the district is primarily an agricultural hub of the state of Mizoram. Culturally, this region is quite vibrant, with several festivals being celebrated with pomp and vigour throughout the year. While the traditional festivals of Christmas and New Year are at the forefront of the yearly festivities, the more ethnic festivals of Chapchar Kut and Mim Kut, in celebration of the yearly agricultural harvests are also very significant here.

### Saiha

Saiha is known as the fastest growing town in Mizoram, as the population has significantly risen in the last decade. Saiha is a census town in the Saiha district in Mizoram located at an average height of 729 meters above sea level. This town is considered to be a haven for angling enthusiasts.

Revealing the mystery behind the name of the town, the name of the town was originally Siaha where 'Sia' stands for elephant and 'ha' meaning tooth - An elephant tooth. But the Mizos traditionally call it Saiha.

### Kolasib

Among the newer districts and the smallest of the eleven in Mizoram, Kolasib lies in northern Mizoram sharing a border with the Cachar district of Assam. It lies at a distance of 79 Kms north of Aizawl. Like most other districts of Mizoram, Kolasib is bountiful in culture and natural beauty. Tlawng river is the best attraction of Kolasib with its beautiful river banks and adjoining forests serving as a countryside getaway. Leisurely boating can be done by requesting some locals who would be willing to ferry around tourists. Apart from sightseeing, experiencing the local food and learning about handicrafts is another activity which travellers can partake in.

### Reiek

At a height of 1465 meters, Reiek Tlang or simply Reiek is one of the highest hills of Mizoram. Located at a distance of 29 km away from the city of Aizawl, Reiek Tlang is an excellent viewpoint overlooking panoramic views of Aizawl and the surrounding valley with the backdrop of sceneries borrowed from the Mizo Hills. The journey to the peak is also an excellent trekking opportunity usually reserved for calm sunny days. As is the case with most North Eastern destination of India, the peak of Reiek is also relatively unexplored and sits pretty as a pearl in the hills.

# Home remedies that will cover your greys

**H**air turns grey when melanin is stopped being produced by your cells. If your hair turns grey below your late 30s, it is considered premature greying. There are multiple reasons for this early greying to occur of which some include stress and genetics. The myth is, if you pluck one grey hair out, two will sprout up in its place! So what's one supposed to do in a situation like this? Here are some home remedies that don't cause extra damage to your locks and can slow down the process of greying.

## Amla powder

While it is not a permanent solution, Amla is known to slow down the process of greying and also helps in preventing hair loss. For the perfect Amla hair treatment, mix some powder with coconut oil or olive oil and apply it at night. Let your hair soak in all the nutrients and wash it off in the morning. Do this once a week for best results.

## Bhringraj

A popular Ayurvedic pick, Bhringraj works effectively against greys. The black dye got from this works best when mixed with hot oil



and then massaged on the scalp. Leave this on for an hour before washing off, for best results.

## Onion juice

While onion juice is already known for making the hair soft and silky, it also drastically improves

the quality of hair and slows down the process of ageing. Mix a little onion juice with lemon and olive oil and massage this on your scalp. This will not only darken your hair over time but also aid hair growth and add lustre to your dull and dry hair. *Source: Pinkvilla*

# Build your skin's health and immunity

**T**he skin is the largest organ of the body. It is the first line of defense and helps protect from harmful elements, microbes and also regulates body temperature. This is why it becomes extremely important to keep the skin healthy and maintain its immunity, which can be compromised if the protective barrier is depleted.

To ensure that the good bacteria on your skin continues to thrive without affecting the barrier, take a look at some simple skin care tips shared by Rajat Mathur, senior skincare expert from Kiehl's India.

## Start your skincare routine with cleansing

"Cleansing is the most integral part of your skincare routine. The first step in your skincare routine should be to carefully clean your face to remove any makeup, dirt, or excess oil. Opt for a pH-neutral, soap-free face purifier that removes contamination without stripping your skin of its natural oil," says Mathur.

Weekly exfoliation is a must

The skin deals with a lot of external stressors and that is why exfoliating it once a week is a must. "This helps in deep cleansing the skin and removing dirt and dead skin cells. For both oily and dry skin, it is recommended to use a mild scrub," he suggests.

## Moisturise and hydrate your skin

These two are different concepts; a good moisturiser helps in locking in the natural moisture of the skin and also keeps the cells hydrated. While hydration maintains the water levels in your skin.

Mathur says, "With summers around the corner, we tend to spend more time indoors and in AC. This leads to the skin becoming dry and devoid of moisture. Moisturising twice, in a span of 8 hours, is a must. This helps in keeping the skin hydrated and doesn't make it look chapped and dry." Opt for something which is lightweight, non-comedogenic or has the hydrating



qualities of avocado to keep the skin's texture at its best.

## Vitamins essential for healthy skin

They play an important role in keeping your skin healthy -- such as the use of vitamin C helps fight radical damage and works as a great anti-ageing agent for the skin.

## Sunscreen for skin protection

Whether you step out or not, sunscreen is a must. "Lather your skin with sunscreen so that it act as a barrier and protects the skin. Don't forget to apply it to the back of your neck and your arms as they are also very susceptible to the sun," he says. *Source: The Indian Express*



By Tript Arora

## Nutri kulcha

**T**his famous Street food from Punjab is finger licking good. Nutri is basically Soya chunks in a gravy. Soya chunks are high on protein. So they fulfill the requirement of protein in vegetarians. Very quick and easy to cook. It is a full meal at any time of the day. I prefer it when I want to have something spicy and quick. The Kulchas are easily available at bakery shops. So what are we waiting for? Let's get started.



## What we need

Nutri Mini Soya Chunks 2 cups (if you have big chunks just cut it into 2 pieces after boiling), Tea Bag 1, Onions 2 finely chopped, Ginger 2 tsp grated, Tomatoes 4 medium sized grinded to a fine paste. (You can use 6 tsp tomato puree alternately), Green chillies 2 grinded with tomatoes, Cumin seeds 2 tsp, Cumin powder 2 tsp, Coriander powder 2 tsp, Turmeric powder three fourth tsp, Kashmiri red chilli powder 2 tsp, Kasuri Methi 2 tsp, garam masala 2 tsp, Mango Powder (amchoor) 2 tsp, Soya sauce dark 2 tsp, Cooking Oil 6 tsp, Butter 4 tsp, Ghee 4 tsp, Salt to taste.

## Here we go

- Boil Nutri Soya chunks in 6 cups of water along with a tea bag and one tsp of salt until soft. Drain water but don't discard the water. Keep it to be later used in gravy. Press the Soya chunks with a spatula and drain excess water. Chunks will now be of blackish colour because of the tea bag.
- Heat a pan and add oil to it. Now add cumin seeds when they start spluttering and add finely chopped onions to it.
- Saute till onions turn reddish in colour. Add grated ginger and 4 tsp water to it. When water evaporates and the mixture turns homogeneous, add tomato chilli paste and kasuri methi to it.
- Now add salt, Turmeric powder, coriander powder, Kashmiri red chilli powder, cumin powder and saute till oil separates from the masala.
- Add Soya chunks, butter and saute for 2 minutes.
- Add the tea water we have kept aside and adjust the consistency of gravy.
- Add mango powder, garam masala and Ghee.
- Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
- Garnish with ginger julians and fresh coriander.

## For Kulchas :

- Heat a nonstick pan, Smear butter on kulcha with a brush.
- Then roast it in a pan from both the sides till golden brown. Accompany it with green chilli and jullians of onion dipped in lemon juice.
- Your street food of Nutri Kulcha is ready. Don't bother about calories. Just Enjoy.

## Tips

- While putting salt in gravy remember there is Salt in soya chunks also.
- A little Turmeric powder enhances colour but too much of it will spoil the taste and colour both.

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# Lose weight while you fast

For many, Navratri fasting is the ideal way to detox. Observing a fast not only enhances the digestive capacity of one's body but also ensures that the harmful toxins are flushed.

However, one needs to keep in mind that fasting, if not done the right way, can have negative repercussions on our body and disturb the balance.

So, here is a short guide by Anshu Arora, creator of Trell, on the best way to fast during Navratri that not only benefits the body but also helps shed a few kilos.

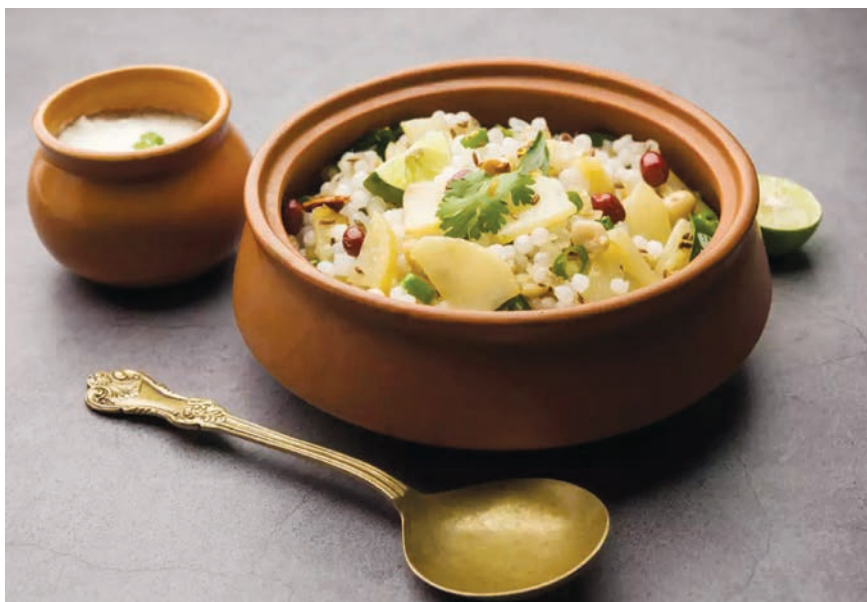
## Hydration to the rescue

Water is the most effective way to fight hunger pangs while fasting. Drinking water also keeps you hydrated, and energetic all day long. "Instead of drinking plain water, include lemon water, coconut water or buttermilk in your diet plan," she said.

## Consume seasonal fruits

What is Navratri if you do not indulge in seasonal fruits? Mangoes, grapes or even bananas in the form of salads, smoothies, fruit juices and raitas will keep you feeling fuller. "Fruits have natural sugar and give you more fibre, iron and vitamin B6 which helps recharge your metabolism," Arora told indianexpress.com.

## Reduce caffeine intake



"Caffeine causes dehydration, which in turn causes more food cravings. Say no to soft drinks because they have too much sugar and artificial substances. Replace these drinks with options such as green tea, tulsi or lemon tea," she added.

## No packaged, fried food

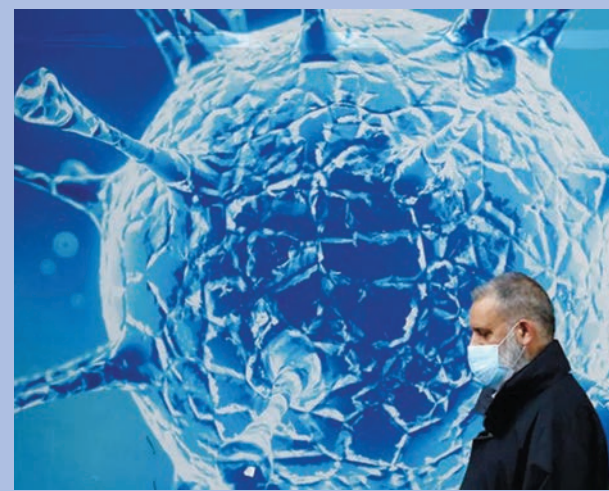
Opt for homemade healthy snacks, like dry fruits, which are high in calcium, potassium, and zinc. "You can roast nuts like makhana, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, almonds, melon seeds and flax seeds in little ghee or just dry roast them

in a pan. It is a healthy snacking option. Instead of having fried or oily food such as pakoras, have a handful of this nuts mixture," she suggested.

## Try samak rice

Since we are skipping wholewheat flour, it is important to make sure the body gets its dose of fibre. For this, samak rice is the best because it is loaded with a high amount of fibre and essential minerals like iron and magnesium. Hence, it is a great source of energy. Samak rice is gluten-free and beneficial for weight loss too.

Source: The Indian Express



## UK variant more transmissible, but does not increase Covid severity: Lancet

The novel coronavirus variant first identified in the UK is not associated with more severe illness and death, but appears to lead to higher viral load which makes it more transmissible, suggests an observational study.

The study of patients in London hospitals is consistent with emerging evidence that this lineage is more transmissible than the original COVID-19 strain.

A separate observational study using data logged by 37,000 UK users of a self-reporting COVID-19 symptom app found no evidence that the B.1.1.7. variant altered symptoms or likelihood of experiencing long COVID.

Authors of both studies acknowledge that these findings differ from some other studies exploring the severity of the B.1.1.7. variant and call for more research and ongoing monitoring of COVID-19 variants.

The studies, published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases and The Lancet Public Health, found no evidence that people with the B.1.1.7. variant experience worse symptoms or a heightened risk of developing long COVID compared with those infected with a different COVID-19 strain.

However, viral load and R number -- the number of people that one infected person will pass on a virus to -- were higher for B.1.1.7., adding to growing evidence that it is more transmissible than the first strain detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

The emergence of variants has raised concerns that they could spread more easily and be more deadly, and that vaccines developed based on the original strain might be less effective against them.

Preliminary data on B.1.1.7. indicates that it is more transmissible, with some evidence suggesting it could also be associated with increased hospitalisations and deaths.

However, because the variant was identified only recently, these studies were limited by the amount of data available.

Source: PTI

## BP pills may cause skin cancers in elderly

Common medications used to treat hypertension (high blood pressure) may adversely raise the risk of skin cancers in people aged 66 and above, claims a new study.

Long-term intake of antihypertensive medications called thiazide diuretics, including hydrochlorothiazide, is linked with higher rates of non-melanoma and melanoma -- the two major types of skin cancers, globalnews.ca reported.

The findings have been published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ).

However, other common blood pressure drugs such as angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin II receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers and beta-blockers, did not raise this risk, the study showed.

Hydrochlorothiazide is known to make the skin more sensitive to ultraviolet radiation and sunlight, meaning patients can get sunburned more easily, according to Health Canada.

"The theory is that by making our skin cells more sensitive to the damage caused by ultraviolet radiation from the sun or a tanning bed, that medication might increase skin cancer risk," Aaron Drucker, study co-author and dermatologist at the Women's College Hospital, in Canada was quoted as saying to globalnews.ca.

The study included 3,02,634 patients in Ontario who have prescribed an antihypertensive medication between 1998 and 2017.



Patients with a higher risk of skin cancer must consider other treatment alternatives, the researchers suggested, adding patients taking thiazide diuretics must periodically monitor for skin cancer.

While most skin cancers do not lead to death and can be treated with a simple surgery, an advanced squamous cell skin cancer or melanoma may put a patient's life at risk, Drucker said.

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## Instagram launches test where users can choose to hide likes

Instagram is launching a small global test on Wednesday where users can choose whether to hide like counts on their own posts or other people's posts, a Facebook spokeswoman said.

The photo-sharing site, which is owned by Facebook Inc, said this latest test came after seeing mixed responses to its experiments in which it removed likes, commonly used as a measure of popularity. "In 2019, we started hiding like counts for a small group of people to understand if it lessens some pressure when posting to Instagram," the spokeswoman said in a statement.

"Some people found this beneficial but some still wanted to see like counts so they could track what's popular."

Facebook is also exploring a similar experience which will roll out in the coming weeks, she said, in response to users calling for more controls over how they interact with content on the platform. Facebook has previously tested hiding likes on others' posts in Australia.

## Scientists discover new method to lengthen lifespan of electronic devices

Research by scientists at the University of Sydney claim to have developed a technology that would lengthen the lifespan of electronic devices. This marks a significant step in the field of materials science, for the first time providing a full picture of the occurrence of fatigue in ferroelectric materials.

Ferroelectric materials are used in many devices, including memories, capacitors, actuators and sensors. These devices are commonly used in both consumer and industrial instruments, such as computers, medical ultrasound equipment and underwater sonars.

Over time, ferroelectric materials are subjected to repeated mechanical and electrical loading, leading to a progressive decrease in their functionality, ultimately resulting in failure. This process is referred to as 'ferroelectric fatigue'.

It is the main cause of the failure of a range of electronic devices, with discarded electronics a leading contributor to e-waste. Globally, tens of millions of tonnes of failed electronic devices go to landfill every year.

# Physicists use rapidly spinning black holes to look for dark matter

Clouds of ultralight bosons — such as axions — can form around a rapidly spinning black hole, if the black hole radius is comparable to the bosons' wavelength.

The cloud rapidly extracts angular momentum from the black hole, and reduces it to a characteristic value that depends on the boson's mass as well as on the black hole mass and spin.

Therefore, a measurement of a black hole mass and spin can be used to reveal or exclude the existence of such bosons.

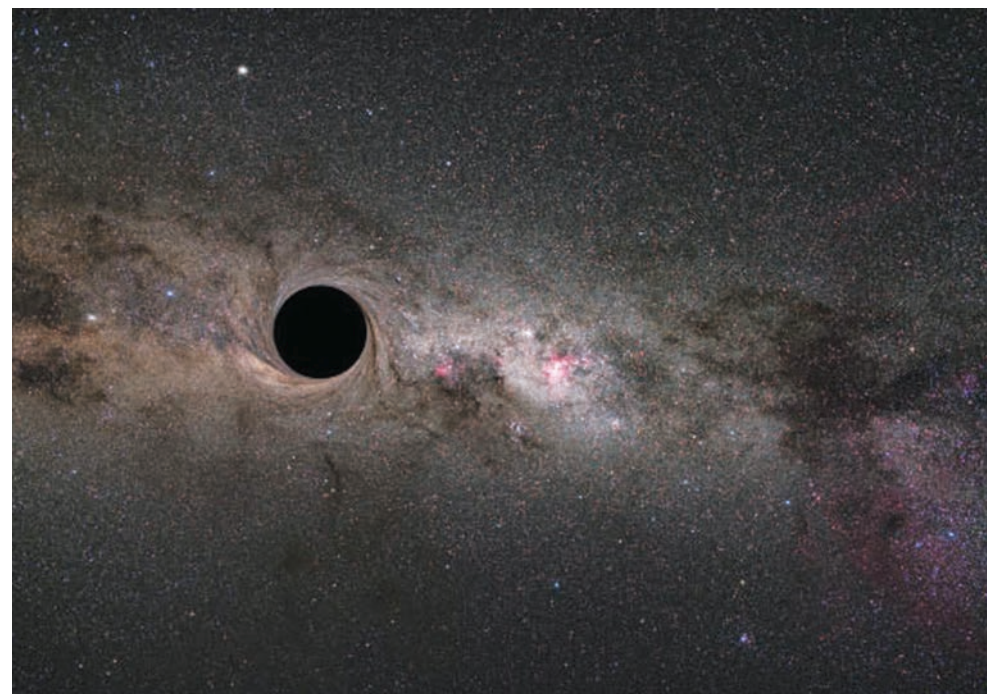
"If bosons exist, we would expect that old black holes of the appropriate mass don't have large spins, since the boson clouds would have extracted most of it," said Kwan Yeung (Ken) Ng, a graduate student at MIT's Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research.

"This implies that the discovery of a black hole with large spins can rule out the existence of bosons with certain masses."

In their study, Ng and colleagues looked through 45 black hole binaries reported by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) and its companion detector Virgo.

The masses of these black holes — between 10 and 70 solar masses — indicate that if they had interacted with ultralight bosons, the particles would have been between  $1 \times 10^{-13}$  eV (electronvolts) and  $2 \times 10^{-11}$  eV in mass.

For every black hole, the researchers calculated the spin that it should have if the black hole was spun down by ultralight bosons within the



corresponding mass range.

From their analysis, two black holes stood out: GW190412 and GW190517.

Just as there is a maximum velocity for physical objects — the speed of light — there is a top spin at which black holes can rotate. GW190517 is spinning at close to that maximum.

The scientists calculated that if ultralight bosons existed, they would have dragged its spin down by a factor of two.

"If they exist, these things would have sucked up a lot of angular momentum,"

said Dr. Salvatore Vitale, a physicist at MIT.

The team also accounted for other possible scenarios for generating the black holes' large spins, while still allowing for the existence of ultralight bosons.

For instance, a black hole could have been spun down by bosons but then subsequently sped up again through interactions with the surrounding accretion disk, a disk of matter from which the black hole could suck up energy and momentum.

## Google Assistant will now find your iPhone, help order takeout

Google on Wednesday launched some new skills for Google Assistant, the AI-powered assistant found across devices. It's also encouraging Google Assistant users to set up "routines," which perform multiple actions with a single command.

The most notable new Google Assistant skill is the ability to find your iPhone, even when the device is on silent or Do Not Disturb is enabled. The "find my phone" feature is already one of the most popular Google Assistant features. It works on Nest smart speakers and other smart displays. To use it to find your iPhone, you have to opt in to receiving notifications and critical alerts from the Google Home app.

Next, Google Assistant users can find the AI tool to complete online food orders. The feature only works with restaurants that have added an "order" button to their Google Business Profiles on Search and Maps.

After a customer hits the "order" button from the Google App on Android, they choose from the menu and hit "check out." At that point, Google Assistant can take over, automatically filling in the customer's contact and payment details, based on what's saved in Google Pay and synced to Chrome Autofill.



## Facebook testing video speed dating app 'Sparked'

After Facebook Dating, the social networking platform is now testing a video speed-dating app called Sparked that will first allow 4-minute dates to help users find if they are compatible to each other.

Once you "both have a great time," dates will then be scheduled for a 10-minute duration.

After that point, Sparked can let the users exchange contact information and stay in touch via Instagram, iMessage, or email, The Verge reported on Tuesday.

Sparked is developed by the company's in-house NPE (New Product Experimentation) team.

The free-to-use app will offer no public profiles, no swiping and no direct messages (DMs) but a simple video speed-chat. During the sign-up process, users need to explain what makes them a kind dater.

The responses will be "reviewed by a human at Sparked" before you can go on speed dates. "Users also have to choose whether they want to date men, women, or nonbinary people, and then are asked if they are open to dating trans people," the report noted.

*Oil holds near 1-month high as demand forecasts raised*

Oil prices were lower on Thursday, April 15, though holding near one-month highs after futures jumped in the previous as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and others upgraded forecasts for oil demand as major economies recover from the pandemic.

Brent crude was down by 21 cents, or 0.3%, at \$66.37 a barrel by 0129 GMT, after gaining 4.6% on Wednesday and closing at the highest since March 17.

US West Texas Intermediate futures dropped 25 cents, or 0.4%, to \$62.9 a barrel, having risen 4.9% in the previous session.

US crude inventories were down by 5.9 million barrels last week, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) said on Wednesday, more than double analysts' expectations for a 2.9 million-barrel decline. East Coast crude stocks hit a record low.

"We see robust stock draws even after factoring in bearish risks as refinery runs are set to rise sharply in the coming months," Citi Research analysts said in a note.

Gasoline supplied to the market last week, an indicator of US consumption of the fuel, increased to 8.9 million barrels per day (bpd), the highest since August, the EIA report said.



**Elon Musk's SpaceX raises \$1.16 billion in equity financing**

Billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX has raised about \$1.16 billion in equity financing over the last two months, the private rocket company said in an amended regulatory filing on Wednesday, April 14.

The filing comes after SpaceX, whose investors include Alphabet Inc and Fidelity Investments, in February disclosed that it raised about \$850 million, which had reportedly lifted its valuation to about \$74 billion.

The private space company had raised \$1.9 billion in August in its largest single fundraising round, according to financial software and data provider PitchBook.

In February, a prototype of SpaceX's Starship rocket, SN9, blew up on its final descent, like SN8 before it. The SN9 was a test model being developed to carry humans and 100 tons of cargo on future missions to the moon and Mars.

Following this, the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said last month it was investigating a SpaceX commercial space launch that regulators determined violated U.S. safety requirements and its test license.

Musk, who also leads several futuristic companies, including Tesla Inc, Neuralink and Boring Co, said last month SpaceX will be landing its Starship rockets on Mars well before 2030.

**Is Elon Musk's Favorite Meme Cryptocurrency the Next Bitcoin?**

It started as a joke, but now the joke appears to be on the people who didn't take Dogecoin seriously. The meme-cryptocurrency Elon Musk wouldn't stop tweeting about has reached an all-time high. According to Coindesk, it has risen to 70.22% in the last 24 hours – the highest ever recorded. Currently (at the time of writing this article) Dogecoin's value is \$0.122680, or almost 12 cents. The market cap of Dogecoin — which started as a joke and is literally classified as "a memecoin" — is currently over \$14



billion. This is the highest-ever for the cryptocurrency, and the result of a semi-ironic movement that's involved thousands of buyers, tens of thousands of online posters and the world's richest man, Elon Musk.

In early January, each token was worth less than one cent. In late January, when both the GameStop and Dogecoin movements hit their stride, the value of Dogecoin shot up to 7.5 cents, well over a 10-magnification, before sliding down to 2.5 cents. The coin has spent the past few months in the three- to seven-cent range. On Sunday, its price began to rise, from around six cents, before it smashed the 10-cent milestone, reports CNET.

Tesla CEO, SpaceX boss and currently world's richest person, Elon Musk had announced that he "bought some Dogecoin for lil X, so he can be a toddler holder." Dogecoin surged as much as 16% following the tweet, spiking from \$0.069 to \$0.08.

The Shiba Inu-themed digital coin surpassed 8 cents for the first time, just a week after crashing to 2.5 cents and sparking an outcry on Reddit. It rose 53 per cent in the last 24 hours to 8.2 cents, breezing through its recent record of 7.8 cents posted in late January.

*At Rs 20.16 lakh cr, FY21 tax collection tops revised estimate*

With all major tax heads yielding significantly higher than the respective revised estimates (RE) shown in the Budget, the Centre has appropriated an additional Rs 78,000 crore as net (post-devolution) tax revenue in FY21. This means if other inflows and outflows stick to budgeted numbers, the fiscal deficit for the year could be 46 basis points lower than budgeted 9.5 per cent of the nominal GDP, if one goes by the second advance estimate of national income.

According to two statements issued by the Finance Ministry this month, gross tax receipts (GTR) — net of refunds but before transfers to the states — last financial year were up Rs 1.22 lakh crore, or 6.4 per cent, over the RE at Rs 20.16 lakh crore. In FY20, GTR saw a rare decline — the collections in the year were Rs 20.04 lakh crore, compared with Rs 20.76 lakh crore in FY19.



**Asian stock markets advance after new Wall Street high**

Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher on Wednesday after US inflation ticked up and Japanese machinery orders fell.

Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Sydney rose. Tokyo was off less than 0.5%.

Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index closed 0.3% higher in choppy trading. Tech and consumer stocks gained on optimism the vaccine rollout will allow business activity to return to normal. Johnson & Johnson declined after US regulators suspended use of its single-dose vaccine to investigate possibly dangerous blood clots.

The US government reported consumer prices increased by a stronger-than-expected 0.6% in March, the fastest rate since 2012. Higher inflation normally fuels fears interest rates might be raised to keep prices stable, but the Federal Reserve has said the economy will be allowed to "run hot" to ensure a recovery is in place.

Traders "took the well-telegraphed inflation 'pick-up' in stride," said Stephen Innes of Axi in a report. Market also are "seemingly unfazed" by the J&J suspension.

The Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.2% to 3,401.72 and Hang Seng in Hong Kong advanced 1.2% to 28,850.00.



*Bitcoin touches \$64,000 high as traders eye coinbase listing*

Bitcoin advanced Wednesday, breaching the \$64,000 level for the first time after eclipsing its most recent record in March a day earlier as the mood in cryptocurrencies turned bullish ahead of Coinbase Global Inc.'s listing this week.

The token climbed as much as 1.6 percent to as high as \$64,207 in Asia trading. Cryptocurrency-exposed stocks such as Riot Blockchain Inc. and Marathon Digital Holdings Inc. advanced during US trading hours.

Crypto bulls are out in force as a growing list of companies embrace Bitcoin, even as skeptics doubt the durability of the boom. In one of the most potent signs of Wall Street's growing acceptance of cryptocurrencies, Coinbase will list on the Nasdaq on April 14 at a valuation of about \$100 billion.

Coinbase's debut "will mark the first official juncture between the traditional financial avenue and the alternative crypto path," Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a



senior analyst at Swissquote, wrote in a note. "As such, a successful addition to Nasdaq should act as endorsement of cryptocurrencies by traditional investors."

Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley have announced plans to offer their clients access to crypto investments. Tesla Inc. earlier this year disclosed a \$1.5 billion investment in Bitcoin and more recently started accepting it as payment for electric cars.

**Shree Ganeshaya Namah**



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*Chirag Bejan Daruwalla with his father late Bejan Daruwalla*

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**WEEKLY HOROSCOPE  
April 19-25, 2021**

**Aries:**

Ganesha says You will learn a lot of business lessons because of difficult circumstances this week, although it will come as a big hurdle to you and leave you upset for some time, this is the realization you need to save your business from falling apart and recognizing people who are hurting your business. You might be down with a cold, in the middle of this week. You will be very fatigued by the end of the week. You need to consult a doctor and leave your work to take care of your own health this week. Even though other aspects of your life are going well you. You will feel fine sooner if you completely focus on your health and do not let it mentally affect you.

**Taurus:**

You need to stay calm and composed as you will have to face a lot of unhappy people this week. Something crucial will take place in your business this week that will keep you occupied throughout this week. If you do not let the events overwhelm you this week, you will navigate through this week's challenges in your business very easily hence focus on working on finding solutions this week. Anger, fatigue, and frustration dominate your week. You will have to create your own positive space this week by making time for yoga meditation and preferably playing music or indulging in any hobby you have.

**Gemini:**

You may be feeling overjoyed by the work you have this week. You have a lot of expectations, from yourself you feel your partner does not believe in your ideas, but you need to approach the issue delicately. Try to see your partner's point of view as well. If you explain carefully, they would understand that you are as capable as them. Frequent stress due to work purposes might lead to stomach-related problems if you do not hydrate and eat well. You will have to either cancel your work plans by the end of this week or seek immediate professional help as your health will take up all of your attention and will bother you a bit by the end of this week.

**Cancer:**

You will have a lot of work to do this week from a new prospect has arrived and that work will keep you busy throughout the week. You will thoroughly enjoy this week's work as you have been waiting for a new prospect for quite a while now. Take each step with caution as you move forward with this huge business opportunity. Your relationships, in general, will improve a lot this week. Your work will require your

maximum attention this week, but all of your hard work will be very fruitful in the upcoming weeks. Rest assured that everything you work hard for will bear fruitful results accordingly for your business this week. It will all get better than you have ever imagined. You will face no troubles in your business but you will have to have the dedication and focus to spend the entire week working this week.

**Leo:**

This is the happiest week of the month for you. You will come across a lot of people this week whose company you will thoroughly enjoy. This week is all about having lots of fun for you. Your social battery usually runs out pretty quickly hence this week will be surprisingly good for you. Mental anxiety and stress might come and go this week. Even though it is not that prominent at all, you can avoid it by calming yourself. You should make it a habit to meditate and take care of your health daily

**Virgo:**

Your energies will be high this week; It is a good week for you to hustle as much as you can. If you're single, you'll come across many new love interests. If you're in a relationship. You will feel blessed to have your partner this week as they will be your biggest cheerleader throughout this week. New opportunities will arise this week. Be cautious about them. Only take risks if they are well calculated and strategized. New opportunities will come to you but in a very unconventional and hidden manner. Be aware yet open-minded, with the new opportunities you receive this week.

**Libra:**

Your business will be great and obstacle-free this week. Your business will grow a lot this week and you will acquire new clients. This week you will get the expected results in the professional as well as personal aspect of your life. You just have to make sure that you are determined to tread ahead with discipline. This week will provide you with a lot of opportunities to prove yourself at work as well, which, in turn, may also lead to your promotion.

**Scorpio:**

You might face some significant changes in your life this week and you will be susceptible to fatigue this week. You sometimes forget to look after yourself when you are busy with work; hence you are vulnerable to health issues this week which will be related to your stomach. This week you may see things turning out in your favor because of your good

luck. Be careful not to get so caught up in the series of new events in your life that you overlook your loved one's needs and spend your week dreaming this week.

**Sagittarius:**

A lot of growth will happen in your life this week. This will take you very far in life and your career as well. Pay attention, make sure to implement whatever advice you have been given this week as it will work out a lot in your favor. You will do your best when it comes to your love life and show your gentle approach to maintain a great and serene life this week. You will feel generous and tolerant and will not easily lose your patience when something goes wrong in your relationship and an argument arises as Venus is very dominant in your sign this week.

**Capricorn:**

Great positive energies are aligned in your favor. You need to do the hard work to achieve great success in your professional life. If you chose to work hard this week, the financial profit you will make this week will last you a long time. You will need to focus more on your health. Your body might show signs that you have been avoiding repeatedly It is nothing major to worry about but might be if you keep neglecting your health.

**Aquarius:**

You seem to be going on a positive streak this week as this week will be a perfect week for you. Relish the positive energy you have been experiencing and be as productive as you can be. If you want to start a new project now is a perfect time. You will feel at a very safe place in your relationship this week and it will progressively get better. Although things will go way too fast for you this week, it will all feel surreal and magical to you.

**Pisces: :**

All of the positive energies are protecting your health. Your health will not bother you; at the same time, you should try to maintain this state for a long time. If you try to accommodate some health care routines like exercise or yoga and start eating more nutritious food, you will feel even better. You will feel as if this week is a little bit challenging. Your life seems to be falling apart, but it is actually the beginning of your growth. You need to work on becoming the best version of yourself this week from the lessons that you learn. All in all, today will be a fun yet lucrative day for you.



**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE**  
April 19-25, 2021

**April 19**

You will have a great day today. Everything will work out perfectly fine for you and you will go through an amazing positive shift mentally and physically today. Your day is filled with happiness, joy and celebrations today. You might want to stay alone at some point today out of exhaustion which won't be possible because you will be surrounded by people today.

**April 20**

You will notice absence of some people in your life today that you really expected to be present for your special day. This might keep you upset throughout the day if you let it, but you need to look at the positive side of things and focus on the fact that there are people who really care about you and love you. Although you will receive a few surprises today, you are likely to be a little upset today.

**April 21**

A great day for you to work on your skills and improve yourself discipline. You have been lazy since a lot of time now and today you could decide

to follow a regime and have new resolutions to achieve this year as the planetary motions turn out to be in your favor, you need to focus on being your best today, behavior wise as well as at work.

**April 22**

You might spend the day worrying about a loved one's health today as anxiety seems to be on the rise for you. Even though you won't celebrate you will be happy that everyone considered and listened to you and did not bother you today. You will feel like you are able to be at peace even though you are worried about your loved one. Everything will turn out fine by the end of the day hence rest assured.

**April 23**

A beautiful beginning to the day will set a very happy mood which will last throughout the day for you. You will go through a very loving day today because all you will receive today is love, gifts surprises and a lot of your favorite food. Satisfaction is what defines your day today, you might feel sad and lonely towards the end of the day because nothing can match the amount of fun

you have had today. Try to be optimistic and daydream about the memories you have created today.

**April 24**

You will have an okay day today. You were expecting grand surprises and celebrations which won't happen today and might disappoint you, but if you keep your expectations aside you will have a very fun day today celebrating with your close friends and your family. You might have to work today as well but it won't be a problem for you as you won't face any obstacles in anything that you do today.

**April 25**

If you're in a relationship you're very likely to elope with your partner today leaving everyone confused and upset with you, but you won't care as you will be very deeply in love today and all you will care about today is spending time with your partner. You need to focus on giving yourself enough importance get some time alone for yourself as well.

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*On Jallianwala Bagh Massacre anniversary*

# Remembering the martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

CONTD FROM PAGE 17

"I will shoot them. Obey my orders and open shops. Speak up if you want war? You have committed a bad act in killing the English. The revenge will be taken upon you and upon your children."

Brigadier Dyer designated the spot where Marcella Sherwood was assaulted sacred and daytime pickets were placed at either end of the street. Anyone wishing to proceed in the street between 6am and 8pm was made to crawl the 200 yards (180 m) on all fours, lying flat on their bellies. The order was not required at night due to a curfew. The order effectively closed the street. The houses did not have any back doors and the inhabitants could not go out without climbing down from their roofs. This order was in effect from 19 April until 25 April 1919. No doctor or supplier was allowed in, resulting in the sick, that were shot, being unattended and left to die in Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

After General Dyer reported to his superiors that he had been "confronted by a revolutionary army", Lieutenant-Governor Michael O'Dwyer wrote in a telegram sent to Dyer: "Your action is correct and the Lieutenant Governor approves." O'Dwyer requested that martial law should be imposed upon Amritsar and other areas, and this was granted by Viceroy Lord Chelmsford.

Both Secretary of State for War Winston Churchill and former Prime Minister H. H. Asquith however, openly condemned the attack. Churchill referring to it as "monstrous", while Asquith called it "one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history".

Winston Churchill, in the House of Commons debate of 8 July 1920, said, "The crowd was unarmed, except with bludgeons. It was not attacking anybody or anything... When fire had been opened upon it to disperse it, it tried to run away. Pinned up in a narrow place considerably smaller than Trafalgar Square, with hardly any exits, and packed together so that one bullet would drive through three or four bodies, the people ran madly this way and the other.

When the fire was directed upon the center, they ran to the sides. The fire was then directed to the sides. Many threw themselves down on the ground, the fire was then directed down on the ground. This was continued to 8 to 10 minutes, and it stopped only when the ammunition had reached the point of exhaustion."

**After Churchill's speech in the House of Commons debate, MPs voted 247 to 37 against Dyer and in support of the Government.**



*British Genocide and Terrorism against unarmed civilians, including women and children.*



*Bullet marked wall at Jallianwala Bagh*

Rabindranath Tagore received the news of the massacre by 22 May 1919. He tried to arrange a protest meeting in Calcutta and finally decided to renounce his knighthood as "a symbolic act of protest". In the repudiation letter, dated 30 May 1919 and addressed to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, he wrote "I ... wish to stand, shorn, of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings"

Gupta describes the letter written by Tagore as "historic". He writes that

Tagore "renounced his knighthood in protest against the inhuman cruelty of the British Government to the people of Punjab", and he quotes Tagore's letter to the Viceroy "The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India ...

The very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror.

The time has come when badges of honor make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation..."

Dyer was met by Lieutenant-General Sir Havelock Hudson, who told him that he was relieved of his command. He was told later by the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Charles Monro, to resign his post and that he would not be reemployed.

The British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, Michael O'Dwyer died the kind of death he had brought upon many on April 13, 1921.

**On 13 March 1940, at Caxton Hall in London, Udham Singh, an Indian independence activist from Sunam who had witnessed the events in Amritsar and was himself wounded, shot and killed Michael O'Dwyer, the British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab at the time of the massacre, who had approved Dyer's action and was believed to be the main planner. Dyer himself had died earlier in 1927.**

We pay our tribute to those who lost their lives in Jallianwala massacre, and salute Udham Singh who avenged their death. A nation is known by its heroes and martyrs

*(With inputs from DiscoverSikhism.com and Center For Pluralism)*

# Ram Navami: Celebrating the birth of Lord Rama

The Indian Panorama wishes its readers a happy Ram Navami that falls on Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Ram Navami is one the most celebrated Hindu festival that is observed on the ninth day of the Shukla Paksha in the month of Chaitra (Hindu calendar). As per the Gregorian calendar, the day usually falls between the months of March and April.

Ram Navami is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Lord Rama, the descent of god Vishnu as Rama avatar, through his birth to King Dasharatha and Queen Kausalya in Ayodhya. On this day many people conduct homa and conclude the nine days festivities of Chaitra Navratri, due which the festival is known as Ram Navami or Rama Navratri.

This year, Rama Navami falls on Wednesday, April 21, 2021. The birth of Lord Rama took place during the Madhyahna (mid of a day), this period lasts for 2 hours and 24 minutes. Hence, one should perform all the Puja rituals related to Rama Navami during this phase.

According to drikpanchang.com, the auspicious time for puja during the Rama Navami festival are as follows:

Rama Navami Madhyahna Muhurat is from 11:02 to 13:38. (Duration: 02 hours 36 mins)

Rama Navami Madhyahna Moment is 12:20.

Navami Tithi begins at 00:43 on Apr 21, 2021, and ends at 00:35 on Apr 22, 2021.

## Background

Bhagwan Rama exemplified the perfect person (maryada purushottam). He was the embodiment of compassion, gentleness, kindness, righteousness and integrity. Although he had all the power in the world, he still was peaceful and gentle.

His reign in Ayodha is referred to as Ramarajya, the epitome of perfect governance. Ayodhya was the capital founded by the king-rishi Manu. During the reign of King Dasharath, Ayodhya reached a period of great prosperity. But Dasharath had one problem—he had no children. Therefore he decided to perform the ashvamedh sacrifice. Elaborate and difficult rituals had to be observed. Rishi Rishyashring presided over the yagya. The performance of this sacrifice was a great event in Ayodhya. At the end, Rishyashring recited a Mantra and made an offering to the fire. Then the gods, gandharvas, siddhas, and rishis present around began to pray to Brahma. During that time Ravana, the king of Lanka, was terrorizing the people, and they were longing for liberation from his menace. Ravana had acquired great power because he had obtained from God Brahma the boon that he would never die at the hands of gods, or gandharvas, or yakshas

(demigods) or demons. As he was not afraid of men, he did not care to include men in the list of his potential slayers. So Brahmadev declared that Ravana would die at the hands of a man. Then the gods went to Vishnu for help and requested him that since Dasharath was a glorious king, that He take birth in the wombs of his three queens in four different incarnations of His divinity. When Dasharath's sacrifice came to an end, a shining figure appeared over the sacrificial kund, and offered the king a divine beverage called "payasam", which was to be given to his queens Kausalya, Kaikayi, and Sumitra. In due time, Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikayi to Bharat and Sumitra to Laxman and Shatrugna.

The Sun is considered to be the progenitor of Rama's dynasty, which is called the Solar Dynasty (Raghukula or Raghuvamsa –Raghu means Sun and Kula or Vamsa mean familial descendant). Rama is also known as Raghunatha, Raghupati, Raghavendra etc. That all these names begin with the prefix Raghu is also suggestive of some link with Sun-worship. The hour chosen for the observance of the Lord's birth is that



when the Sun is overhead and is at its maximum brilliance. In some Hindu sects, prayers on Ramnavami day start not with an invocation to Rama but to Surya (Sun). Again the syllable Ra is used in the word to describe the Sun and brilliance in many languages. In Sanskrit, Ravi and Ravindra both mean "Sun".

## Significance of Ram Navami

The story of the Ramayan is a classic, eternal, universal message of Dharma versus adharma, of deva versus demon, of good versus evil, as represented in the battle between Rama and Ravana.

Ravana was a brahmin; he was a great scholar who wrote numerous works on scriptural philosophy. He was powerful, dynamic, and beautiful in appearance. As the brilliant, handsome king of Lanka, he had everything one would need to be happy and peaceful. Yet, he was arrogant, egoistic, greedy and lustful. His insatiable desires led him to crave more and more power, more and more money, and more and more ladies to fulfill his every whim.

There is one main difference: Bhagwan Rama's heart overflowed with divinity, love, generosity, humility, and a sense of duty. Ravana's heart, in contrast, was filled with avarice, hatred, and egoism. Under Bhagwan Rama's divine touch, the animals became his devotees and his divine helpers. Under Ravana's touch, even humans became animals.

Through his noble and divine choices, he teaches the world to choose dharma over Artha (when he leaves for the forest rather than be coronated as King) and to choose Moksha over Kama (when he chooses his kingdom over his marriage).

Ravana's ego led to his own demise, first the demise of his spirit and heart and then the demise of his body. He thought he was the one who ran everything. He thought that he was the "doer" of it all. On the other hand, Bhagwan Rama was always humble, and he never took credit for anything. At the end of the war in Lanka, Bhagwan Rama was giving Sitaji a tour of the city, showing her where all of the various events had occurred. When, they reached the

place where he victoriously slew Ravana, he reported it to Sitaji only as, "and this is where Ravana died." He didn't say, "This is where I crushed the demon," or "This is where I killed Ravana."

The story of Lord Rama as told in the great epic Ramayana is one that most Indians know irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Lord Rama is a legendary figure, the epitome of all that is good and true, the man who vanquished the demon king, Ravana. Lord Rama is not just a hero, but has been given the status of a god by the Hindus. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that his birth is celebrated year after year with great pomp and enjoyment on the ninth day after the new moon in Sukul Paksh (the waxing moon), which falls sometime in the month of April.

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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."

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## Arsenal, Man Utd, Roma, Villarreal into Europa League semis

With their season on the line, Arsenal's players produced a devastating first-half performance Thursday, April 15, to beat Slavia Prague and reach the Europa League semifinals.

They'll meet a familiar face there.

Arsenal's 4-0 win in the Czech capital — secured courtesy of a three-goal burst in six minutes from the 18th — clinched a 5-1 aggregate victory and set up a last-four match against Villarreal, which is managed by Unai Emery.

The Spanish coach spent an underwhelming 18 months at Arsenal as Arsene Wenger's replacement in 2018-19 and is rebuilding his managerial career at Villarreal, which beat Dinamo Zagreb 2-1 and advanced 3-1 on aggregate.

Manchester United and Roma complete the semifinal lineup.

United is back in the last four for a second straight season after beating Spanish team Granada 2-0 for a 4-0 aggregate win.

Arsenal and Roma were under pressure to advance because the Europa League represents their only chance of winning a trophy this season and their only realistic route into next season's Champions League, owing to their lowly current placing in their domestic leagues.

Arsenal is ninth in the Premier League and Roma seventh in Serie A.

The winner of the Europa League earns an automatic spot in the far more lucrative Champions League.

Arsenal sent a message before and during the win over Slavia.

The hosts learned the day before the game that their defender, Ondrej Kudela, had been banned for 10 games for racially abusing Rangers' Glen Kamara during a round-of-16 game last month.

Before kickoff, as Slavia's players stood in a line at the center circle, Arsenal's players took a knee in a symbolic gesture in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, with Alexandre Lacazette doing so right in front of the Slavia team and staring at the players.

Arsenal responded to having an early goal by Emile Smith Rowe ruled out for offside by VAR by scoring three times in quick succession, first though Nicolas Pepe in the 18th and then Lacazette — from the penalty spot — and Bukayo Saka.

That meant Slavia, the runaway leader of the Czech league which hadn't lost at home in nearly 18 months, needed to score four goals to qualify. By halftime, the hosts had essentially given up as they removed some of their key players to preserve their condition for the league.

IPL 2021

## Morris, Miller star as RR edge DC in low-scoring thriller

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Rajasthan Royals' expensive buy this IPL Chris Morris delivered as he hit an unbeaten 18-ball 36 (4×6) to power his side to a stunning three-wicket victory over Delhi Capitals in the IPL match on Thursday, April 15.

Chasing a modest target of 148, Royals lost half of the side 42 runs in the 10th over. But David Miller scored a strokeful half-century (62 off 43, 7×4, 2×6) to revive their innings. But his departure in the 16th over with 44 needing from last four overs put Capitals ahead. However, Morris turned the match in Royals' favour with his big hits. He smashed Kagiso Rabad for 15 runs in the 19th over with two sixes to bring down the target to 12 from last over. He then smacked Tom Curran for two sixes to finish the match with two balls to spare.

Earlier, an inspired bowling performance by Jaydev Unadkat, Morris, and Mustafizur Rahman helped Rajasthan Royals restrict Delhi Capitals to 147/8. Delhi kept on losing wickets at regular intervals, and although skipper Rishabh Pant played a knock of 51, Rajasthan managed to maintain a stranglehold over the opposition.

Asked to bat first, Delhi Capitals got off to a bad start as the side lost its first three wickets — Prithvi Shaw (2), Shikhar Dhawan (9), and Ajinkya Rahane (8) with just 36 runs on the board. All three batters were sent back to the pavilion by Jaydev Unadkat.

Delhi would have been hoping for a big



David Miller of Rajasthan Royals plays a shot during his half-century knock in the IPL match against Delhi Capitals at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

partnership from skipper Rishabh Pant and Marcus Stoinis, but this was not to be the case as Mustafizur Rahman had Stoinis (0) fooled by a slower delivery in the seventh over, and as a result, Delhi was reduced to 37/4.

Lalit Yadav and Rishabh Pant then revived the innings for Delhi by stitching a partnership of 51 runs for the fifth wicket, and this saw skipper Pant going past his 50-run mark. However, as soon as

Delhi's innings started to come on track, Pant (51) was sent back to the pavilion via a run-out. Soon after, Lalit Yadav (20) was dismissed by Chris Morris, reducing Delhi to 100/6 in the 15th over.

In the final overs, Tom Curran (21), Ravichandran Ashwin (7), and Chris Woakes (15\*) added some crucial runs to the total and as a result, Delhi Capitals posted a total of more than the 140-run mark.

## BCCI Central Contracts: Virat, Rohit, Bumrah remain in top bracket; Pandya promoted to grade A

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The star trio of India captain Virat Kohli, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah retained their top bracket BCCI contracts, worth Rs 7 crore each, while all-rounder Hardik Pandya earned a promotion despite an injury-plagued season.

A total of 28 cricketers were awarded central contracts in four categories on Thursday, April 15.

At this moment in Indian cricket, there are only three certainties across formats and the scenario hasn't changed with Kohli, Rohit and Bumrah being the elite of elites.

All-rounder Pandya is one of the notable promotions to Grade A, which is worth Rs 5 crore, despite the fact that he endured a back injury which has prevented him from bowling for much of the last year. He was in Grade B last year.

"Hardik is very much in line to play Test matches in England and will be one of the most important players after our A+ cricketers when we play the T20 World Cup. So Hardik's promotion is about what he brings to the team. That's what the selectors have factored in," a senior BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Rookies Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj have got their maiden central contracts worth Rs 1 crore in grade C while Shardul Thakur has been elevated to group B.

The trio has been rewarded for lion-hearted performances during India's historic Test triumph in Australia this year.

Among the demotions, pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has dropped to Grade B, which is worth Rs 3 crore, while Kedar Jadhav has been dropped for good.

Bhuvneshwar's demotion from A to B comes in the wake of prolonged absences due to different injuries and he is no longer an all-format regular.

The biggest setback has come for left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who has been pushed down two notches from



Grade A to C.

"Kuldeep is slowly slipping down the radar and he should consider himself lucky that he has managed to retain his contract," said the source.

However Shikhar Dhawan, who is now a certainty in only one format (ODI), has managed to remain in category A along with Test specialists Ravichandran Ashwin and Cheteshwar Pujara.

Axar Patel's 27-wicket haul against England at home has also got him back in the central contracts fold. One is required to play a minimum of three Test matches to enter the lowest bracket.

# IRS reminds U.S. territory residents about U.S. income tax rules relating to pandemic unemployment compensation

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service reminds eligible residents of the U.S. territories that if they receive unemployment compensation payments that are otherwise subject to U.S. income tax, they may be eligible to exclude up to \$10,200 per person of unemployment compensation from U.S. income tax for 2020, following legislation that was passed March 11, 2021.

Taxpayers with modified adjusted income of less than \$150,000 may exclude the first \$10,200 of unemployment compensation from their 2020 federal income tax return. In the case of taxpayers that are married filing jointly, the maximum exclusion would be \$10,200 for each spouse for a maximum of \$20,400. Taxpayers who filed before the law was passed should not file an amended return.

Last year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed legislation providing eligible individuals with two new types of pandemic-related unemployment compensation, which are subject to the same U.S. tax rules that apply to other unemployment compensation:

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**  
**Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)**  
**The \$10,200 exclusion applies to these new types of unemployment compensation for U.S. income tax purposes.**

The IRS also notes that for U.S. income tax purposes, unemployment compensation is generally considered

sourced where the taxpayer performed the underlying services. For guidance on the U.S. income taxation of residents of the U.S. territories, see Publication 570, Tax Guide for Individuals with Income from U.S. Possessions.

The U.S. territories are American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the



Department of the Treasury  
**Internal Revenue Service**

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

U.S. territory residents should contact their territory tax department with questions relating to the taxation of COVID-related unemployment compensation at the territory level.

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**ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS**

# IRS, Treasury disburse 2 million more Economic Impact Payments under the American Rescue Plan

**VA beneficiaries bring total to approximately 159 million as payments continue**

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of the Fiscal Service announced, April 14, they are disbursing nearly 2 million payments in the fifth batch of Economic Impact Payments from the American Rescue Plan.

April 14 announcement brings the total disbursed so far to approximately 159 million payments, with a total value of more than \$376 billion, since these payments began rolling out to Americans in batches as announced on March 12.

The fifth batch of payments began processing on Friday, April 9, with an official payment date of April 14, with some people receiving direct payments in their accounts earlier as provisional or pending deposits. Here is additional information on this batch of payments:

In total, this batch includes nearly 2 million payments with a value of more than \$3.4 billion.

More than 320,000 payments, with a total value of \$450 million, went to Veterans Affairs (VA) beneficiaries who receive Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefit payments but who don't normally file a tax return and didn't use the Non-Filers tool last year.

Nearly 850,000 payments, with a total value of nearly \$1.6 billion, went to eligible individuals for whom the IRS previously did not have information to issue an Economic Impact Payment but who recently filed a tax return.

This batch also includes additional ongoing supplemental payments for people who earlier this year received

payments based on their 2019 tax returns but are eligible for a new or larger payment based on their recently processed 2020 tax returns. This batch included more than 700,000 million of these "plus-up" payments, with a total value of more than \$1.2 billion.

Another 72,000 payments went to Social Security beneficiaries who didn't file a 2020 or 2019 tax return and didn't use the Non-Filers tool last year.

Overall, this fifth batch of payments contains nearly 1.2 million direct deposit payments (with a total value of just under \$2 billion) and nearly 800,000 paper check payments (with a total value of over \$1.4 billion).

Additional information is available on the first four batches of Economic Impact Payments from the American Rescue Plan, which began processing on April 2, March 26, March 19 and March 12.

A larger percentage of payments was made electronically during this round of payments than during previous rounds. This accelerated the delivery of payments to millions of American families whose payments would otherwise have been sent by mail. Over 95% of all Social Security beneficiaries have been paid electronically during this round of payments, compared to 70% in the first round and 72% in the second round.

The IRS will continue to make Economic Impact Payments on a weekly basis. Ongoing payments will be sent to eligible individuals for whom the IRS previously did not have information to issue a payment but who recently filed a

tax return, as well to people who qualify for "plus-up" payments.

Special reminder for those who don't normally file a tax return

Although payments are automatic for most people, the IRS continues to urge people who don't normally file a tax return and haven't received Economic Impact Payments to file a 2020 tax return to get all the benefits they're entitled to under the law, including tax credits such as the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Filing a 2020 tax return will also assist the IRS in determining whether someone is eligible for an advance payment of the 2021 Child Tax Credit, which will begin to be disbursed this summer.

For example, some federal benefits recipients may need to file a 2020 tax return - even if they don't usually file - to provide information the IRS needs to send payments for a qualifying dependent. Eligible individuals in this group should file a 2020 tax return as quickly as possible to be considered for an additional payment for their qualifying dependents.

People who don't normally file a tax return and don't receive federal benefits may qualify for these Economic Impact Payments. This includes those experiencing homelessness, the rural poor, and others. Individuals who didn't get a first or second round Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amounts may be eligible for the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit, but they'll need to file a 2020 tax return. See the special section on IRS.gov: Claiming the 2020



Recovery Rebate Credit if you aren't required to file a tax return.

Free tax return preparation is available for qualifying people.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that the income levels in this new round of Economic Impact Payments have changed. This means that some people won't be eligible for the third payment even if they received a first or second Economic Impact Payment or claimed a 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit. Payments will begin to be reduced for individuals making \$75,000 or above in Adjusted Gross Income (\$150,000 for married filing jointly). The payments end at \$80,000 for individuals (\$160,000 for married filing jointly); people with Adjusted Gross Incomes above these levels are ineligible for a payment.

Individuals can check the Get My Payment tool on IRS.gov to see the payment status of these payments. Additional information on Economic Impact Payments is available on IRS.gov.

## IRS urges participants of abusive micro-captive insurance arrangements to exit from arrangements

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Internal Revenue Service officials, April 9, urged participants in abusive micro-captive insurance arrangements to exit these transactions as soon as possible. The IRS has stepped up examinations of these arrangements and has recently won yet another case in U.S. Tax Court that such arrangements are not eligible for the tax benefits claimed.

On March 10, 2021, the U.S. Tax Court held in *Caylor Land & Dev. v. Commissioner*, T.C. Memo. 2021-30 (2021), that yet another micro-captive arrangement failed to qualify as insurance for federal tax purposes. This decision follows several earlier Tax Court decisions that also confirmed the IRS's determinations that certain micro-captive arrangements were not eligible for the claimed federal tax benefits. In *Caylor*, the Tax Court also sustained the IRS's

determination of accuracy-related penalties and rejected the taxpayer's claim of reliance on tax advice.

Taxpayers who engaged in abusive micro-captive transactions are once again encouraged to consult an independent tax advisor prior to filing their 2020 tax returns. Taxpayers should consider exiting the transaction and not reporting deductions associated with abusive micro-captive insurance transactions.

"In multiple cases before the courts, judges have held that these 'fanciful' and 'unreasonable' arrangements don't add up to insurance in the commonly accepted sense," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "I strongly urge participants in these arrangements to get independent legal advice separate from those who helped steer them into these abusive arrangements."

In the past several years, the IRS has ratcheted up its efforts to combat abusive micro-captive insurance arrangements. In 2020, the IRS deployed 12 newly formed micro-captive examination teams to substantially increase the examinations of ongoing abusive micro-captive insurance transactions. The IRS will disallow tax benefits from transactions that are determined to be abusive and may also require domestic captives to include premium payments in income and assert a withholding liability on foreign captives. The IRS will continue to assert penalties, as appropriate, including the strict liability penalty that applies to transactions that lack economic substance.

In Notice 2016-66, the IRS advised that micro-captive insurance transactions have the potential for tax avoidance or evasion. The notice designated

transactions that are the same as or substantially similar to transactions that are described in the notice as "Transactions of Interest." The notice established reporting requirements for those entering into such transactions on or after Nov. 2, 2006 and created disclosure and list maintenance obligations for material advisors.

In March and July 2020, IRS issued letters to taxpayers who participated in a Notice 2016-66 transaction alerting them that IRS enforcement activity in this area will be expanding significantly and providing them with the opportunity to tell the IRS if they've discontinued their participation in this transaction before the IRS initiates examinations. Early responses indicate that a significant number of taxpayers who participated in these transactions have exited the transaction.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS**

# IRS, Treasury disburse 25 million more Economic Impact Payments under the American Rescue Plan

**Social Security and other beneficiaries bring total to more than 156 million payments**

**WASHINGTON(TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the Bureau of the Fiscal Service announced, April 7, that they are disbursing more than 25 million payments in the fourth batch of Economic Impact Payments from the American Rescue Plan.

April 7 announcement brings the total disbursed so far to more than 156 million payments, with a total value of approximately \$372 billion, since these payments began rolling out to Americans in batches, as announced on March 12.

The fourth batch of payments began processing on Friday, April 2, with an official payment date of April 7, with some people receiving direct payments in their accounts earlier as provisional or pending deposits. Here is additional information on this batch of payments:

In total, this batch includes more than 25 million payments, with a total value of more than \$36 billion.

The largest block of these payments went to Social Security beneficiaries who didn't file a 2020 or 2019 tax return and didn't use the Non-Filers tool last year. More than 19 million payments, with a total value of more than \$26 billion, went to these beneficiaries, which include Social Security retirement, survivor or disability (SSDI) beneficiaries.

More than 3 million payments, with a total value of nearly \$5 billion, went to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries.

Nearly 85,000 payments, with a total value of more than \$119 million, went to Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) beneficiaries.

This batch includes additional ongoing supplemental payments for people who earlier in March received payments based on their 2019 tax returns but are eligible for a new or larger payment based on their recently processed 2020 tax returns. This batch included more than 1 million of these "plus-up" payments, with a total value of more than \$2 billion.

More than 1 million payments, with a total value of nearly \$3 billion, went to people for whom the IRS previously did not have information to issue a payment but who recently filed a tax return and qualified for an Economic Impact Payment. Payments to this group -- and the "plus-up" payments noted above -- will continue on a weekly basis going forward as the IRS continues processing tax returns from 2020 and 2019.

Overall, this fourth batch of payments contains nearly 24 million direct deposit payments (with a total value of over \$33 billion) and more than 1 million paper



check payments (with a total value of nearly \$3 billion).

Additional information is available on the first three batches of Economic Impact Payments from the American Rescue Plan, which began processing on March 26, March 19, and March 12.

No action is needed by most people to obtain this round of Economic Impact Payments. People can check the Get My Payment tool on IRS.gov on to see if their payment has been scheduled.

**Payments to non-filer VA beneficiaries will be disbursed on April 14**

The IRS continues to review data received from Veterans Affairs (VA), which covers veterans and their beneficiaries who receive Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefit payments who don't normally file a tax return. If no additional issues arise, the IRS expects to begin processing these VA payment files at the end of this week. Because the majority of these payments will be disbursed electronically, they would be received on the official payment date of April 14. The IRS projects VA beneficiary payment information would be available in the Get My Payment tool this weekend, April 10-11.

**Payments continue to be made rapidly and effectively**

The IRS and Treasury are disbursing Economic Impact Payments authorized by the American Rescue Plan quickly and successfully, while improving on previous rounds of payments.

Within two weeks of the American Rescue Plan becoming law, the IRS and Treasury had started disbursing 127 million payments, including 107 million completed direct deposits. At a similar point during the first round of Economic Impact Payments authorized a year ago, the first payments had yet to be completed.

to Social Security and other federal beneficiaries are being issued faster than they were during the first round of payments a year ago.

Approximately 85% of the current round of payments have been made by direct deposit, up from 74% in the first round of payments and 77% in the second round. This helps to expedite payments for

millions of American families.

Direct deposits are also more likely to be successfully delivered than mailed payments, and the return rate of direct deposits is also lower than in previous rounds of payments.

Over 3.1 million Direct Express cardholders have received payment electronically, more than a half-million more than in previous rounds. Making most of these payments to Direct Express cards enables cardholders, many of whom are unbanked, to receive their Economic Impact Payment the same way they typically receive their federal benefits.

**Special reminder for those who don't normally file a tax return**

Some federal benefits recipients may need to file a 2020 tax return, even if they don't usually file, to provide information the IRS needs to send payments for a qualified dependent. Eligible individuals in this group should file a 2020 tax return to be considered for an additional payment for their qualified dependent as quickly as possible.

People who don't normally file a tax return and don't receive federal benefits may qualify for these Economic Impact Payments. This includes those experiencing homelessness, the rural poor, and others. Individuals who didn't get a first or second round Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amounts may be eligible for the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit, but they'll need to file a 2020 tax return. See the special section on IRS.gov: Claiming the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit if you aren't required to file a tax return.

**Free tax return preparation is available for qualifying people.**

The IRS reminds taxpayers that the income levels in this new round of Economic Impact Payments have changed. This means that some people won't be eligible for the third payment even if they received a first or second Economic Impact Payment or claimed a 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit. Payments will begin to be reduced for individuals making \$75,000 or above in Adjusted Gross Income (\$150,000 for married filing jointly). The payments end at \$80,000 for individuals (\$160,000 for married filing jointly); people with Adjusted Gross Incomes above these levels are ineligible for a payment. Individuals can check the Get My Payment tool on IRS.gov to see the payment status of these payments. Additional information on Economic Impact Payments is available on IRS.gov.

## IRS reminds foreign bank and financial account holders the FBAR deadline remains April 15

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The Internal Revenue Service is reminding U.S. citizens, resident aliens and any domestic legal entity that the deadline to file their annual Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) is still April 15, 2021.

The extension of the federal income tax filing due date and other tax deadlines for individuals to May 17, 2021, does not affect the FBAR requirement.

**Who must report**

**The Bank Secrecy Act requires U.S. persons to file a FBAR if they have:**

Financial interest in, signature authority or other authority over one or more accounts, such as a bank account, brokerage account, mutual fund or other financial account in a foreign country, and

The aggregate value of all foreign financial accounts exceeds \$10,000 at any time during the calendar year.

Because of this threshold, the IRS encourages U.S. persons or entities with foreign accounts, even relatively small ones, to check if this filing requirement applies to them.

A U.S. person is a citizen or resident of the United States or any domestic legal entity such as a partnership, corporation, limited liability company, estate or trust.

The 2021 FBAR must be filed electronically with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) and is only available through the BSA E-Filing System website. Taxpayers who are unable to e-file their FBAR must call FinCEN at 800-949-2732, from outside the U.S. 703-905-3975.

**Penalties for failure to file an FBAR**

Those who don't file an FBAR when required may be subject to significant civil and criminal penalties that can result in a fine and/or prison. The IRS will not penalize those who properly

reported a foreign account on a late-filed FBAR if the IRS determines there was reasonable cause for late filing.

**More details and help available IRS.gov has several resources available 24 hours a day:**

- Fact Sheet 2021-07
- International Taxpayers page,
- IRS Tax Map
- IRS FBAR Reference Guide
- FAQs About International Individual Tax Matters
- FinCEN's website Reporting Maximum Account Value.

To help avoid delays with tax refunds, taxpayers living abroad should visit Helpful Tips for Effectively Receiving a Tax Refund for Taxpayers Living Abroad on IRS.gov.



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To know more about the work of Eye Foundation of America or to donate, visit [www.eyefoundationofamerica.org](http://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!

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