



Attorney Ravi Batra sues Peter Daszak - Anthony Fauci Friend - in NYS Supreme Court

ALLEGES DASZAK FUNDED PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY-CONTROLLED AND OPERATED "WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY"

I.S. SALUJA

NEW YORK CITY, NY (TIP): Covid19-survivor Ravi Batra sues "cover up artist" Peter Daszak, EcoHealth Alliance Inc., and his immunologist wife Janet Cottingham in NYS Supreme Court, New York County, Index #157709/2021, for funding People's Liberation Army-controlled and operated "Wuhan Institute of Virology" as it weaponized SARS-CoV2 with gain-of-function by transplanting cold-blooded Heterothermic Bats' Spike Glycoprotein(s) to make it highly transmissible and virulent, and inter alia, with NIAID Anthony Fauci's thanked-for-help, covering up the Wuhan lab-leak in Summer and Fall 2019 to delay WHO's timely alarm of a pandemic and demand



Covid-19 survivor Ravi Batra who has been investigating the origins of the COVID-19 and felt convinced it originated from Wuhan Laboratory, has sued Peter Daszak and his immunologist wife Janet Cottingham in NYS Supreme Court, New York County for funding People's Liberation Army-controlled and operated "Wuhan Institute of Virology", responsible for virus leak

every nation to impose "travel bans" in 2019, which would have prevented most people from being infected by SARS-CoV2, including, Batra, and China not to engage in its charade on December 30, 2019 at the Wuhan Wet Market.

The attached 80-plus page Verified Complaint explains the science, including, why "Bats are special," that bat-bites or snakebites are naturally not transmissible, and that:

1. Batra "cracked the case" on April 14, 2020 and wrote to POTUS Trump, via Deputy NSA Matt Pottinger, of why SARS-CoV2 is a "Trojan Horse" infection, as it has (the heterothermic) Bat's "Spike"/"master key" to enter and infect a person's body while fooling his/her immune system that "all is well," so "T" soldier-cells stay sleeping instead of fighting the intruder-infection; asked CCP China to be held liable (per inter alia, International Health Regulations of 2005), and if we were deliberately "Pearl Harbored" with a biowarfare agent, to seek war reparations; and proposed amending the UN Charter to create a new UN Pandemic Council (UNPC),

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TALIBAN KILLED MINORITIES, FUELING AFGHANS' FEARS: REPORT
Thousands continue to flock to Kabul's airport, braving checkpoints manned by Taliban fighters as they seek desperately to get on evacuation flights out



Taliban fighters patrol in Kabul, Afghanistan on August 19, 2021 - Photo /PTI

KABUL (TIP): Taliban fighters tortured and killed members of an ethnic minority in Afghanistan after recently overrunning their village, Amnesty International said, fueling fears that they will again impose a brutal rule, even as they urged imams to

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WITH AN EYE ON 2024, 19 OPPOSITION PARTIES DECIDE TO HOLD NATIONWIDE PROTEST

NEW DELHI (TIP): Leaders of 19 Opposition parties, on August 20, 2021 announced a joint agitation plan from September 20 to 30 after Congress president Sonia Gandhi urged them to rise above political compulsions to defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

IT'S TIME TO RISE ABOVE POLITICAL COMPULSIONS - SONIA GANDHI, CONGRESS

ALL SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC FORCES MUST JOIN HANDS - SHARAD PAWAR, NCP

MAMATA PROPOSES CORE COMMITTEE TO STEER FIGHT AGAINST BJP

TEJASWI YADAV SEEKS 'DRIVING SEAT' FOR REGIONAL PARTIES

In a signed statement, Opposition stalwarts, including NCP's Sharad Pawar, TMC's Mamata Banerjee, DMK's MK Stalin, Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray and JMM's Hemant Soren, called upon the people of India to defend



Sonia Gandhi and Sharad Pawar

"the secular, democratic, republican order with all their might".

11 demands

- Augment production and ensure free vaccination
- Give Rs7,500 a month to families outside income tax bracket
- Reduce prices of fuel
- Repeal three farm laws & guarantee MSP to farmers
- Pegasus probe under SC
- Release political prisoners, including those in Bhima Koregaon case, anti-CAA protests
- Restore J&K's full statehood
- Stop, reverse privatization
- Revive MSMEs
- Expand MGNREGA

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US SUGGESTS WORLD LEADERS SKIP GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN-PERSON

NEW YORK (TIP): The United States on Wednesday, August 18, urged the leaders of nearly 200 countries to consider giving video addresses at the United Nations General Assembly in September instead of traveling to New York where the event is being held to prevent a possible "super-spreader event."

In a memo from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations the U.S. called on 192 other member nations to consider giving video messages instead of traveling to the U.S. in the midst of a wave of new COVID-19 cases.

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SHASHI THAROOR DISCHARGED IN WIFE SUNANDA PUSHKAR'S DEATH CASE

FAITH IN JUDICIARY STANDS VINDICATED, SAID THAROOR



Shashi Tharoor File photo

NEW DELHI (TIP): A Delhi court on Wednesday, August 18, discharged senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor in a case related to his wife Sunanda Pushkar's death in a luxury hotel here.

Special Judge Geetanjali Goel passed the order in a virtual hearing. Tharoor thanked the judge saying it was "an absolute torture for last seven-and-a-half-years" and that it was a "great relief".

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-: GUEST COMMENT :-

Reboot to reset: On India-U.S. trade ties

WITH INDO-U.S. TRADE DEAL OFF, IT IS TIME INDIA REORIENTS ITS GLOBAL ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

India's largest trading partner, and one with whom it has a significant trade surplus, the U.S., is no longer interested in securing a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), as per indications from the Joe Biden administration. An official acknowledgement of this, from Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, suggests that years of negotiations towards a 'mini-trade deal' followed by a full-blown trade pact that Mr. Biden's predecessor oversaw may well be infructuous now. The Government will now seek to work on market access issues on both sides, he said, adding that lowering of non-tariff barriers, mutual recognition pacts and adopting common quality standards can also help Indian exports in the interim. There is a possibility that even these issues, which include long-festering dissonances over providing access to U.S. agricultural products or easing import duties on automobiles and Bourbons, would have to be discussed afresh. On Friday, the

U.S. envoy to India met Mr. Goyal for what he said was a parley on attaining the \$500 billion bilateral trade vision of the U.S. President. The trade target, set when Mr. Biden was the Vice-President in the Barack Obama regime, remains unchanged, but the tools for achieving it are no longer clear. India was pulled out of the U.S.'s Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) that granted some tariff relief to its exports by the Trump government in 2019 and hopes of its reinduction through a mini-trade deal now appear bleak. While India was expected to gain from the Sino-U.S. trade wars under the Donald Trump administration, its retaliation to the GSP status revocation with hiked tariffs on U.S. products had led to frictions that perhaps stymied the conclusion of a mini-trade deal before the change at the helm in the White House.

The U.S.'s no-go stance on the FTA implies ambitions may have to be pared down but also provides an opportunity for India to holistically review its stance

on global trade. It is refreshing that Mr. Goyal has signaled a revamped approach towards FTAs and reminded Indian industry there cannot be one-way traffic. This needs to be matched by actions that start unwinding India's creeping walls of import tariffs. The Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign has further exacerbated that view - as the advent of a protectionist 'closed market' project. Strenuous exhortations that the self-reliance drive is one that seeks to integrate with global value chains can only go so far. Trade policy cannot be perpetuated in isolation and, in fact, affects investments too. Having walked out of RCEP, India needs to demonstrate to its potential FTA partners, including the EU and the U.K., with which rivals like Vietnam have already sealed a deal, that it is a viable alternative to China in a post-COVID world. To be a major trading and manufacturing nation, India can ill-afford to keep sending mixed signals.

(The Hindu)

-: LETTER TO THE EDITOR :-

Toppling of Ghani's regime in Afghanistan and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Statue in Pakistan

After recently reading the news item on how the government of Afghanistan collapsed to Taliban onslaught with complete melt down of its defense forces, we are all in state of disbelief. Then followed the news of vandalization of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Statue in Lahore rekindling the gruesome scenes witnessed by many at the partition of the country in August 1947. Incidentally, this is not the first time, but the third time the statue has been vandalized since its installation in 2019. The gory act of vandalization and that of overrunning of a country separated by few hundreds of miles geographically are two unrelated events on the surface, yet the underlying cause is common. The genesis of both these incidents is direct result of indoctrination that everything we associate with is right and superior, while other person, legacy or his ideas are not equal but inferior.

The fall of Ghani government and Taliban gaining control over the country is creating a very fluid situation. The significant section of society there wants to move out of the mess they find themselves in since 1979, the time of Soviet invasion. At that time about 1 million Afghans lost their lives. But then after that the last forty years have been a time of turmoil on and off there. Then

after the Soviet exit we saw the USA entry there. Now 20 years later USA is departing. The departing circumstances are grave and have been dubbed as "Saigon Moment". As this is stark reminder of helicopter airlift of USA while the Vietcong had overrun the capital of South Vietnam. While talking about the comparison reminds of another acronym coined to describe Afghanistan as "Graveyard of kingdoms" for the invaders. The historical track records go back to the time of invasion by Alexander the great, in 330 BC. This is a long-checked history, where even the British could not tame the region almost a century before. The present ground realities bring out the following major challenges now:

1. Restoration of order and a semblance of peace so that the normal life as usual can resume.
2. Safeguarding of the rights, status of women, minorities and others who do not belong to the so-called "our" club.
3. How to protect and save the religious, spiritual, architectural, and intellectual assets of the minorities that will be left behind in Afghanistan, as well as safeguard those in Pakistan. The issue in Pakistan that the minority population is concentrated in pockets and heritage sites spread out



providing opportunity for premier location land grab. So, the issue is how to save, protect, maintain, and preserve those historical relics. Although, PETPB has been managing and maintaining some historical minority shrines in Pakistan reasonably despite encroachments and efforts to erase them. Still overall the bigger problem remains, which has been exacerbated by the recent events in Afghanistan.

4. The evacuation of remaining minority population along with their families, out of Afghanistan to safety and their resettlement has become a high priority. The insecurity being experienced by them is frightening. They need our help today. Already the vivid images of chaotic situation with citizens there trying to escape from the country are making shocking news.

This is not a complete or comprehensive list of priorities, but just a starting point to start thinking about them.

BHUPINDER 'BO' SINGH
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INDIA'S EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JAISHANKAR MAKES REMARKS AT THE UNSC



UNITED NATIONS (TIP): On Wednesday, August 18, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar made remarks on UN Peacekeeping efforts and the critical role technology plays in gathering intel and information, the second pillar of India's presidency at the UNSC. He announced India's decision to support to the UNITE Aware Platform, an initiative which will support UN peacekeeping missions to visualize, coordinate, and monitor all events on a real time basis. He further emphasized that attacks on a

peacekeeper or a civilian should be predictable, preventable, or responded to immediately. You can find the text of his remarks here.

On Thursday, August 19, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar chaired a UNSC session on terrorism. He proposed an eight-point action plan for consideration, including: no justification and support to terrorism, no double standards on terrorists, support and strengthen FATE, and increased funding to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at the UNSC

FIA unfurls biggest Tricolor at Times Square to celebrate India's 75th Independence Day

NEW YORK CITY, NY (TIP): The Federation of Indian Associations of the tri-state areas of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (FIA NY-NJ-CT) kick-started the celebrations of the 75th Independence Day of India on Sunday with the hoisting of the Tricolor at the Times Square. This year's Tricolor was the biggest one ever to be unfurled at the iconic destination.

The flag measured 6 ft x 10 ft and was hoisted on a 25-foot pole.

Hundreds of Indian-Americans as well as friends and well-wishers of the community had gathered at the venue to participate in the flag-hoisting.

The day's ceremony began with the playing of the American national anthem. Consul General of India Shri Randhir Jaiswal then hoisted the Tricolor as the Indian national anthem played along.

On the occasion, he conveyed his wishes to the Indian community, friends of India and all "those who are deeply connected" to the country. He thanked the Indian-American community and FIA in particular for leading these celebrations.

Jaiswal felicitated New Jersey boy Abhimanyu Mishra who is now the youngest Grandmaster in the history of chess. Abhimanyu also received the proclamation from the office of Brooklyn Borough president Eric Adams.

FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya wished everyone a happy, healthy and safe 75th Independence Day.

FIA president Anil Bansal called it a privilege to be

living in US where they have the freedom that they "as Americans can celebrate our history, culture and love for our motherland." He thanked the New York City and its police for allowing them to enjoy the day safely.

Besides Jaiswal, those who addressed the gathering included Deputy CGI-New York Shatrughna Sinha, Captain Amandeep Singh Sandhu who is the only Indian American in the whole of the New York police department and first Sikh captain in the country, FIA board member Anand Patel who was representing Dunkin, one of the event sponsors, Jackson Heights representative in New York City Council Daniel Dromm, and district leader from Queens-New York Neeta Jain.

On the occasion, Jaiswal also unveiled the 'India at 75 Cricket Cup' by the '22 yards court', a non-profit that promotes cricket in North America.

A special performance was given by the band Dhol Tasha Pathak of Maharashtra Mandal who had come all the way from Michigan to participate in the celebration.

24 hours of India at Times Square

In another first, FIA reserved the biggest jumbotron at the Times Square for display of Independence Day messages and other images related to India. The jumbotron was reserved for full 24 hours.

Later in the day



As part of yet another celebration, the Empire State Building was lit up in the colors of the Indian National Flag later on Sunday.

The celebration continued into the evening with FIA's annual gala on board a yacht on the Hudson, which was attended by dignitaries, special guests and FIA members.

Times Square's biggest Tricolor came from Ahmedabad, India

It was a proud moment for Ahmedabad, a city in the state of Gujarat in India, when the biggest Tricolor in the history of Times Square was unfurled. The flag, and all other paraphernalia used during the celebration, had been sent to New York from Ahmedabad. The entire consignment had been put together and shipped for FIA by Gracia Marcom, an advertising agency in the city. According to Gracia Marcom managing partner Rohit Korat, they supplied flags and other items for FIA New England as well. (Press Release)

Indian American information scientist Dr. Nitin Agarwal to investigate covert online influence

ARKANSAS (TIP): Indian American information scientist Dr. Nitin Agarwal working at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is part of a Department of Defense funded international research project to investigate covert online influence.

Agarwal, Jerry L. Maulden-Entergy endowed chair and distinguished professor of information science and director of the Collaboratorium for Social Media and Online Behavioral Studies (COSMOS), will serve as principal investigator for UA Little Rock, according to a university press release.

UA Little Rock is part of an international research cohort that has received about \$2.35 million in funding from the DoD to investigate the use of social cyber forensics to understand covert online influence. It will receive \$691,339 for its part of the project, which began in February and will conclude in 2025.

The four-year project, "Fusing Narrative and Social Cyber Forensics to Understand Covert Influence," is headed by Dr. Scott Ruston, a research professor with Arizona State University's Global Security Initiative.

Additional research partners include Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and experts from Indonesia and the Philippines.

Countries can use the ease of

information access via new media technologies to create manipulation through disinformation and propaganda, which can cause adverse effects on sovereignty and political stability, the release said.

This research will help fill the knowledge gap the US faces with regard to China's engagement in "informationized" warfare and will more broadly establish a model for effective analysis of strategic influence in the Middle East, Europe, and other regions.

"Increasing proliferation of social media provides tremendous opportunities for gaining situational awareness to assist with strategic policy making, particularly in defense, security, diplomacy, and foreign policy," said Dr. Agarwal.

"However, social media data is often riddled with challenges such as high volume and velocity, noisy data, missing data, and incomplete data," he said.

"This project will develop computational, systematic, and rigorous methods that are grounded in social science theories and cyber forensic methodologies to study big social media data and surmount the challenges," Agarwal said.

"We live in a dynamic world, and many of the challenges we face are social or have social elements," said Dr. Bindu Nair, director of the Basic Research

Office in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering.

"The knowledge and methodologies generated by (DoD's) Minerva teams are fundamental to understanding how social forces shape regions of the world of strategic importance to the United States."

The researchers will study online influence targeting Indonesia and the Philippines that uses narratives to manipulate public opinion and create political action favoring China.

Subject matter experts in Indonesia and the Philippines will identify issues prone to influence in each country, as well as insight into online venues of influence, propaganda, and disinformation.

They will also analyze how narratives circulating in the information environment align with Chinese strategy and national interests.

Dr. Agarwal and his team at COSMOS will conduct social network and cyber forensic analysis to examine online activity and the dissemination of ideas and elements of these narratives. They will also observe virtual proxies of political action.

"The grant will allow us to develop research-based models and operationalize them in our social media monitoring tools, Blog Tracker and



Dr. Nitin Agarwal is part of a Department of Defense funded international research project to investigate covert online influence.

Video Tracker, to assist the United States defense in countering cyber-threats in an emerging socio-technical context, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region," Dr. Agarwal said.

The grant is managed by the Office of Naval Research and awarded under the DoD's Minerva Research Initiative which supports basic research focusing on topics of particular relevance to US national security.

Through its network of faculty investigators, Minerva also strengthens the department's connections with the social science community and helps DoD better understand and prepare for future challenges, including National Defense Strategy priorities such as great power competition, the release said.

INDIAN-ORIGIN NALINI JOSEPH VYING FOR CITY COUNCIL SEAT IN SALISBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

MASSACHUSETTS (TIP): India-origin businesswoman Nalini Joseph is hoping to become the first Indian American to serve on the City Council of Salisbury, a small coastal beach town and summer tourist destination in Massachusetts.

Joseph, 53, who was born and grew up in India after her father moved there to begin a ministry, came to the US after high school, to attend Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Joseph, who spent decades compromising in the court system, calls herself a visionary with the ability to see into the future of what Salisbury could be, according to local media.

She wants to bring those skills and her ability to reach agreements regardless of political and ideological viewpoints to the city level as a council member, it said.

Joseph told the Post she became interested about a year ago in improving the community with her skills and experience, which includes building



Nalini Joseph hopes to serve on the City Council of Salisbury

nonprofit organizations, managing budgets and personnel and collaborating with judges and other stakeholders.

She identified public safety as a major concern for the city at this time, which calls for supporting law enforcement, crime reduction and proper budget management.

Joseph came to Salisbury in 2011 and has served as district administrator of the Guardian ad Litem Program, which advocates for abused and neglected

children through the state's district courts, for Iredell and Alexander counties.

Joseph also owns and operates Lini's Mahal, a concierge chef business, and Lini's Burgers. She also founded William Jones Scholars LLC, a nonprofit educational organization for children.

"I have a lot of deep-rooted connections in the judicial system, and I have a very good understanding of what happens that creates our rates of incarceration," Joseph said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

INDIAN-ORIGIN SIKH ENGINEER'S LOW-COST WASHING MACHINES TO HEAD TO INDIA

LONDON (TIP): A London-born Indian-origin engineer's project to supply low-cost washing machines to countries such as India, where hand washing of clothes remains a time-consuming exercise, has got off to a good start following field research in camps in Iraq.

Navjot Sawhney, who set up his Washing Machine Project three years ago to provide energy efficient manual washing machines to low-income regions, has been working with volunteers and partners to conduct research ahead of supplies.

The organization has also launched a crowd funding appeal on Just Giving to raise 10,000 pounds to aid the delivery process.

"At the Washing Machine Project, we believe in the power of innovation to empower lives. That is why we have developed an off-grid, manual washing machine, which saves 60-70 per cent of time and 50 per cent of water, for people in low-income and displaced communities," notes the charity's fundraising drive.

"This idea was born out of a friendship. Nav, our founder, was on a sabbatical in rural South India, making clean cook stoves when he met his neighbor, Divya. It was through their conversations at the end of each day that Nav came to realize the significant



Navjot Sawhney, who set up his Washing Machine Project three years ago to provide energy efficient manual washing machines to low-income regions, has been working with volunteers and partners to conduct research ahead of supplies.

burden unpaid labor places on women," it notes.

Sawhney was on a sabbatical from his engineering career in the UK when the idea of a hand-cranked washing machine struck him.

"While in Tamil Nadu, I lived in a small village called Kuilapalayam. The community had limited access to continuous electricity, and water was switched on twice a day," recalls Sawhney.

"My next-door neighbor Divya and I became excellent friends. While we talked, she would hand wash her clothes. I was always so shocked at how long and how much effort it would take to conduct the relatively unproductive task," he said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Abhishek Singh recognized for extraordinary research on Artificial Intelligence



Rhode Island Governor Daniel Mckee (left) presenting award to Abhishek Singh

BOSTON (TIP): Abhishek Singh, an IT professional working in the Boston area, has received the Outstanding Research and Technology Award on Sunday, 15th August 2021 at Rhode Island State House by the Honorable Governor of Rhode Island, Mr. Daniel Mckee. The award has been given to him for his extraordinary research work in the field of Information technology work related to Artificial Intelligence, and for his tireless commitment and dedication to the other information technology research work.

Abhishek is an Information Technologist by profession. After completion of his master's degree in Computer science, he has started his career with giant Information

technology companies HCL (Hindustan Computer Limited) & TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) and lead a large team of research Engineers in solving 21st Century problems. He has



Rhode Island Governor Daniel Mckee (left) presenting award to Abhishek Singh

more than one and a half-decade of experience in the information technology sector.

On the same day his new book 'New Era of Artificial Intelligence and Information System' was also released by Honorable Governor Mckee, and his mentors and guides Prof. Balram Singh of the Boston Center of Excellence and Prof. S.P. Kothari of Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"I am very humbled by this kind gesture of the Governor, and am encouraged to continue my scholarly work", said Abhishek. "Artificial intelligence is the need of the hour to solve many contemporary problems", said Prof. Bal Ram Singh while congratulating Abhishek.

Five Indian Americans among Asian American Hotel Owners Association 2020 Award Winners



Nanda Patel, Mitesh Jivan, Priti Patel, Saajan Patel and Bijal Patel have won Asian American Hotel Owners Association 2020 Award

DALLAS TX (TIP): Five Indian Americans have won all but one of the annual awards given out by the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) recognizing achievement and excellence in the hospitality industry.

Winners received their awards during the 2021 AAHOA Convention & Trade Show held in Dallas, Texas earlier this month.

While Nanda Patel won the 2020 AAHOA Award of Excellence, Cecil B. Day Community Service Award went to Mitesh Jivan IAHA

Priti Patel was declared Outstanding Women Hotelier of the Year, while Saajan Patel won the honors as Outstanding Young Professional of the Year.

The Political Forum Award for Advocacy went to Bijal Patel, chairman of the California Hotel & Lodging Association for 2020-2021.

The award recognizes the Indian American for guiding numerous successful advocacy initiatives on behalf of hotel owners during "the year of the pandemic."

"Government officials have a more profound impact than ever on the bottom line of hotel owners," said Patel in accepting the award, according to a media release.

"Our advocacy activities focus on making sure that hoteliers are helped more and harmed less by the decisions of legislators and regulators.

"I'm honored and humbled that this award salutes the many proactive hours invested by our members and allies," the award winner added. "Political advocacy is never 'one and done' - the issues may change but our mission on behalf of hoteliers always continues."

Hotel Lexen won the award as Independent Hotel of the Year, while Outreach Award for Philanthropy went to Bangladeshi American Masudur Khan.

"Each year, AAHOA recognizes and honors hoteliers who go above and beyond in service to the hospitality industry," said Immediate Past Chairman Biran Patel.

"During such a challenging year, these individuals made significant contributions to the industry and to AAHOA. We are all honored to highlight their service and commitment to excellence."

"These awards recognize the best of the best. Following an extremely difficult year for AAHOA Members and the entire industry, these award recipients demonstrate their commitment to excellence in the hospitality industry, regardless of the landscape," said Interim President & CEO Ken Greene.

"Their hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed, and it is through their leadership, grit, and determination that the industry continues to thrive."

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The nearly 20,000 AAHOA members own 60 percent of hotels in the United States, according to a recent study conducted by it in partnership with Oxford Economics.

The study, noted a press release, shows that AAHOA supports a total economic impact of \$680.6 billion of business sales (representing revenue plus sales and lodging taxes); 4.2 million jobs with \$214.6 billion of wages, salaries and other compensation; \$368.4 billion contributed to US GDP; and \$96.8 billion of federal, state and local taxes.

TELGU DIASPORA TO INSTALL PV NARASIMHA RAO'S STATUES IN FIVE COUNTRIES

The first such statue will be installed in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States coming November



PV Narasimha Rao - File photo

HYDERABAD / NEW YORK (TIP): The Telugu diaspora has announced the setting up of statues of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao in five countries to acknowledge his contribution to the development of India.

The first such statue will be installed in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States coming November, as part of celebrations for the birth centenary.

Supported by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), who floated the idea, representatives of various Indian and Telugu organizations have convened coordination and preparatory meeting, according to Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) NRI wing coordinator Mahesh Bigala.

He pointed out that the statue of Mahatma Gandhi was also installed in Atlanta, and accordingly, efforts were being made to install the statue of Narasimha Rao in the same state as well.

"We will consult TRS Parliamentary Party leader and PV Centenary Celebrations Committee Chairman K Keshava Rao as well as the family members for their advice on the statue installation," he said.

The other locations where the statue of the former prime minister is to be installed would be decided in consultation with the Telugu diaspora.

In this regard, a meeting has been held that was attended by the Indian American Cultural Association (IACA) founding member Dr Padi Sharma, who chaired the meeting.

Plasterers Recruit Apprentices

WHITESTONE, NY (TIP): Northeast District Council of the OPCMIA apprenticeship fund will conduct a recruitment from September 20, 2021 through October 1, 2021 for one Plasterer apprentice, the New York State Department of Labor announced, July 1, 2021.

Applications must be completed on site at the OPCMIA apprenticeship fund office, 150-50 14th Road, NY, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, during the recruitment period. This is a limited-application recruitment. Only 100 applications will be distributed, on a first-come, first-serve basis. The

recruitment will be offered for 10 business days or until 100 applications have been issued, whichever comes first.

The Committee requires that applicants:

- Must be at least 18 years old. Proof will be required after selection and prior to enrollment in apprenticeship.
- Must have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma (such as TASC or GED).
- Must pass a physical agility test by scoring at least 28 out of 35 possible points. The test includes:

- Lifting two "legs" (4x4x8 Lumber, Total 52lbs), placing them on a shoulder, carrying them for approx. 75 feet and placing them neatly back on floor.
- Lifting two ribs (3x4x14 Lumber 70lbs), placing them on a shoulder, carrying them for approx.75 feet and placing them neatly back on floor.
- Lifting two #8 bars (One inch in diameter steel rods 85lbs) placing it on a shoulder, carrying it approx.75 feet and placing it neatly back on floor.
- Lifting one bag of Portland cement (94lbs), placing it on a shoulder, carrying it approx.75 feet and placing it neatly back on floor.
- Lifting one rubber concrete pump

hose (60lbs), placing it on a shoulder, carrying it approx.75 feet and placing it neatly back on floor.

- Lifting one steel concrete pipe (80lbs), placing it on a shoulder, carrying it approx.75 feet and placing it neatly back on floor.
- Filling a 16 cubic foot wheelbarrow with ¾' gravel, walking with it approx. 50 feet and dumping it neatly back into the original pile.
- Must have reliable transportation to and from job sites and required classes at the approved school.
- Must pass a drug screening, at the expense of the sponsor, after selection and prior to enrollment in apprenticeship. *(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)*

contd from page 1

Attorney Ravi Batra sues Peter...

- modeled on the UN Security Council (UNSC), but with 12 Permanent and 9/13 Rotating members from the 5 Regional Groups, and "the Veto" circumscribed to only be valid if supported by at least 1 Permanent Member from each Regional Group;
2. Next day, April 15, 2020, POTUS launched America's preliminary investigation of China's PLA-controlled and operated Wuhan Lab for COVID19 Origins;
 3. Batra's Letter, on April 13, 2021, to POTUS Biden seeking enforcement and updates;
 4. After out-of-control Delta-variant ravaging nations, including, India and China, Batra evolved on holding China liable, and on May 6, 2021, wrote to PM Modi to embrace Archbishop Desmond Tutu's

"Truth and Reconciliation Commission" paradigm, in place of Tort and Crime & Punishment principles, so as to get President Xi Jinping to fully cooperate with Truth and Honor and help disarm this out-of-control biowarfare agent, an ICBM of a Virus; and inter alia

5. On May 26, 2021 POTUS Biden ordered our Intelligence Community to report back by August 24, 2021 on Covid19 Origins. This Complaint helps the "Intel Community," including DNI Avril Haines, better understand the actual scientific facts hiding in "plain sight" as "mumbo jumbo." The Complaint's attached "Schedule of Exhibits" lists 43 exhibits, including, Ralph Baric's and Anthony Fauci's damning self-inculpatory emails with Daszak, and inter alia, HFAC's Ranker McCall's recent Addendum on Covid19 origins.

The Verified Complaint details the gross negligence

and negligence of defendants, serious life-long injuries secondary to being infected with Covid19, an opportunistic disease, such as diabetes and painful skin-ruptures, and seeks nominal, compensatory and punitive damages from defendants, who betrayed Americans and the world, to put them out of business.

Courtesy Copies of this complaint are being sent to DNI Avril Haines, key Congress committee chairs, rankers and members, the distinguished Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and inter alia, NYS Attorney General Tish James, given her critical jurisdiction over the defendants' "defrocking" misconduct: "Benedict Arnold" & 200+ "Pearl Harbor" combined.

Press Inquiry, contact: Ravi Batra, 914-882-6382; Twitter: @RaviBatra

(With information provided by Ravi Batra)



Happy Onam 2021

Onam Greetings from Pioneer Club of Keralites, North America



Jacob George: (President), Thomas T Oommen (Secretary), John Paul (Treasurer) V.M. Chacko, George Thaila, George Abraham

World Photography Day 2021

WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY DAY IS MARKED EVERY YEAR, ON AUGUST 19. THE DAY COMMEMORATES THE IMPORTANCE OF CAMERAS AND PHOTOGRAPHY IN OUR LIVES

Photography is an inseparable part of our lives. People use the medium in a variety of ways, from taking selfies to documenting wars and human rights abuses. Photography is an art form that can be intensely personal and also project ideas publicly in a simple manner. The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" remains true even now.

Photography enthusiasts around the world celebrate the art of capturing pictures on this occasion.

History of World Photography Day:

The origins of World Photography Day can be traced back to 1837. In France, Joseph Nicephore Niepce and Louis Daguerre invented the daguerreotype, the first-ever photographic process.

In 1861, the first durable color photograph was captured. From then on, the medium of photography kept evolving. The first digital photograph was created in 1957, two decades before the digital camera was

invented.

The French Academy of Sciences officially announced the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839 to the public. On 19 August 1839, the French government is believed to have purchased the patent for the device and made it freely available to the world. Later on, the day began to be marked as World Photography Day.

Significance of World Photography Day:

World Photography Day marks the occasion to celebrate the art, craft, and passion for photography. The day is also used to recognize how the medium has evolved, from documentation of historic events to a mode for personal fulfillment.

From amateur enthusiasts to professional photographers and photo journalists, everyone observes this day by spreading awareness and ideas about photography. People also use the opportunity to exhibit and promote their work. (Source: First Post)

The Indian Panorama has chosen to feature ace Photographer Jay Mandal on the World Photography Day this year.

Jay Mandal is a globetrotting photojournalist who in mid 70s took a challenging task, circumnavigating the world on a bicycle. He spent 17 years and logged 387000 kms through 154 nations.

Based in New York, he has assignments from many organizations and governments, including the government of India's External Affairs Ministry.

He can be reached at jay@jaymandal.com / jaymandal@yahoo.com / [Twitter @jaymandal](https://twitter.com/jaymandal)



HERE ARE SOME OF HIS PHOTOGRAPHS



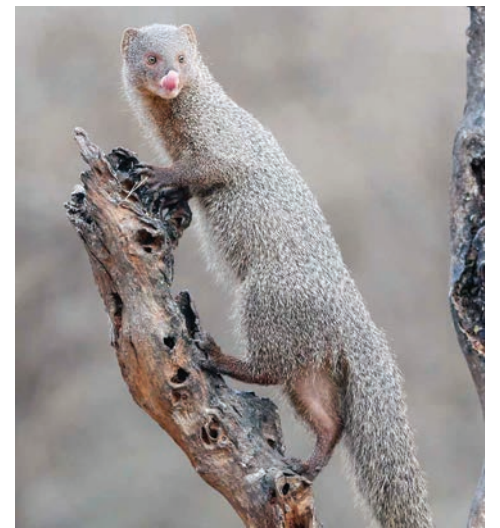
Palm Tree in Maldives



Hatching of Pigeon chicks...!



Reptile on a tree



Mongoose



Swan at a lake in London



The Weaver Bird builds her nest in Bishnupur, West Bengal



The Taj Mahal at Agra



Boatman ferries people on Dwarkeswar River in Bishnupur, WB

AS I SEE IT

Lack of debate is weakening Parliament

PARLIAMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY NORMS HAVE BEEN UNDERMINED BY THE RISE OF ADVERSARIAL POLITICS (PERCEIVING THE OPPOSITION AS AN ADVERSARY RATHER THAN A PARTNER IN THE LAWMAKING PROCESS) AND A DOMINEERING EXECUTIVE THAT HAS SIDELINED ALL OTHER INSTITUTIONS. PARLIAMENT WAS INTENDED TO FUNCTION AS A BODY THAT KEEPS THE EXECUTIVE IN CHECK BUT IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING THE OTHER WAY NOW.

"THE BASIC PROBLEM STARTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGITIMACY OF THE OPPOSITION AND GIVE SPACE TO IT TO EXPRESS ITS POSITION ON ANY ISSUE. INSTEAD, THE EFFORT HAS BEEN TO PAINT THE ENTIRE OPPOSITION AS SORE LOSERS AND FRUSTRATED DISRUPTORS WHO AREN'T RECONCILED TO THE PM'S POPULARITY AND THE BJP'S ELECTORAL VICTORIES. WITH THE OPPOSITION NOT FALLING IN LINE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS USED ITS MAJORITY TO PUSH THROUGH IMPORTANT BILLS WITHOUT DISCUSSION."

The stormy monsoon session of Parliament, adjourned sine die last week, was a virtual washout because of the deadlock between the government and the Opposition over issues ranging from the Pegasus phone-hacking row to the government's handling of the pandemic and the farmers' protest. The government attacked the Opposition, accusing it of not allowing the Parliament's monsoon session to function.

To put all the blame on the Opposition for the impasse in Parliament obscures the government's share of responsibility for this denouement. A closer look at parliamentary proceedings reveals that the session was disrupted by the ruling party's deliberate deflection and stubborn refusal to discuss issues of national importance.

The faceoff between the government and Opposition escalated over the Pegasus issue, resulting in the non-stop disruption of Parliament. This government, having a huge majority, has nothing to fear, and yet it refused to be flexible and accommodating towards the Opposition or even acknowledge the public issues raised by the latter.

With both sides unwilling to give in, acrimonious events marked the session with legislators on both sides engaging



No checks: The way Bills are passed these days shows disregard for the democratic system.

Photo / PTI

in competitive disruption. The embarrassing turn of events led the government to field seven ministers at a press conference to take on the Opposition on the adjournment issue and to determinedly dismiss the snooping scandal as an issue of no consequence.

Besides the Pegasus issue, government-Opposition relations hit rock bottom on the controversial Bill to enhance the private sector's role in public sector insurance companies. Opposition MPs asked for the Bill to be sent to a select committee but the government didn't agree. The Insurance Business Amendment Bill was passed amidst high drama which rocked the Rajya Sabha, culminating in allegations of physical violence from both sides. Only an impartial inquiry can establish the veracity of the charges and counter-charges. But the issue is why we have come to this pass.

The basic problem starts with the government's refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Opposition and give space to it to express its position on any issue. Instead, the effort has been to paint the entire Opposition as sore losers and frustrated disruptors who aren't reconciled to the PM's popularity and the BJP's electoral victories. With the Opposition not falling in line, the government has used its majority to push through important Bills without discussion.

The extent to which parliamentary

proceedings have degenerated can be seen from the astonishing speed in passing Bills. The Lok Sabha, on an average, took less than 10 minutes to pass a law, and the Rajya Sabha passed laws in less than half an hour. There were 13 Bills in this LS session in which no Member of Parliament spoke, other than the minister in charge of the Bill.

In addition to this, the PRS Legislative Research data has shown a significant decrease in the involvement of standing committees in legislative matters. So far, only 17 of the 82 Bills since the NDA government was re-elected in 2019 have been referred to standing committees for review. No Bills had been sent to the Select Committee in the monsoon session. All this raises legitimate concerns of bypassing important checks and balances in the parliamentary system. What is more, Bills were passed in the midst of din and noise with no consideration to the Opposition protests.

Not surprisingly, the government accomplished its entire legislative agenda without a debate on the Pegasus affair, Covid-19 mismanagement, farm laws, and the deepening economic crisis. However, passing Bills without debate in the House or scrutiny by a committee reduces Parliament to a clearance window for legislations. This effectively means Parliament was neither fulfilling its function of deliberative lawmaking nor of holding the executive accountable.

Democratic accountability demands



BY ZOYA HASAN

that the executive decisions be subjected to legislative scrutiny. While this session might represent a new low in this regard, the lack of scrutiny is not new.

Take the case of the national lockdown which was never debated in Parliament as sessions were either cut short or adjourned. Unlike parliaments elsewhere, the Indian Parliament did not devise modalities to be functional during the pandemic. No proposal to allow digital meetings of standing committees was taken up at the top level even though the Opposition repeatedly demanded it. Parliament's functioning was even more severely restricted in the second wave of the pandemic. Standing committees of the Parliament didn't meet after the second wave. Virtual meetings weren't permitted even though plenty of public meetings and election rallies were held during the second wave.

Even when Parliament assembled, laws were passed without adequate deliberation. Both the farm laws and labor codes were passed without discussion. The labor codes were passed in the absence of Opposition MPs who had boycotted the session. The government pushed the farm Bills, ignoring the demand to send them to select committees, provoking fierce protests from the Opposition benches.

The manner in which the Bills have been passed in this and in some previous sessions shows utter disregard for the democratic system, disdain for the parliamentary processes and contempt for the Opposition. This has weakened the significance of Parliament to the point of inconsequence. The proposal to turn Parliament House into a museum is emblematic of this new reality.

Finally, Parliament and parliamentary norms have been undermined by the rise of adversarial politics (perceiving the Opposition as an adversary rather than a partner in the lawmaking process) and a domineering executive that has sidelined all other institutions. Parliament was always intended to function as a body that keeps the executive in check but it seems to be working the other way round now.

The MPs exercise accountability on behalf of the people they represent. Questions and debates are used for this purpose, but neither of these tools is functioning effectively these days, which greatly damages our democracy.

The government has weaponized the electoral mandate to dispense with the need for consultation and debate both inside and outside Parliament. This compounds the problem of accountability and representation as the meaning of democracy shifts from a representative to a majoritarian one, giving the executive the upper hand in most matters.

(The author is Professor Emerita, Centre for Political Studies, JNU)

The Afghanistan Tragedy: Will there be an end to endless wars?



BY GEORGE
ABRAHAM

"MANY OF THESE BUREAUCRATS IN WASHINGTON WHO ARE THE TRUE ARCHITECTS OF THESE INFAMOUS WARS HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON WITH THE FOLKS WHO ARE SENT TO THESE GODFORSAKEN PLACES TO FIGHT THESE UNSEEN ENEMIES. THEY ARE PART OF THE ELITE SOCIETY, MOSTLY COME WITH IVY LEAGUE CREDENTIALS AND LIVE IN THEIR MULTI-MILLION ABODES IN WASHINGTON SUBURBS. MOST OF THEM MIGHT NOT HAVE SERVED A SINGLE DAY IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES, AND SOME OF THE OLDER ONES MIGHT EVEN HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH WAIVERS DURING THE TIME OF THE DRAFT. AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT IS EITHER THOSE BOYS FROM THE MIDWEST WHO BELIEVE THAT IT IS THEIR DUTY TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY AND HONOR ITS FLAG OR THE POOR BLACK AND LATINO KIDS WHO ARE HOPING TO BUILD A BETTER LIFE AFTER COMPLETING THEIR SERVICE IN THE MILITARY ARE THE ONES WHO FALL PREY TO THESE ODIUS DESIGNS OF THE SO-CALLED ESTABLISHMENT."

As the tragedy in Afghanistan unfolds before our very eyes, the question is whether this could have been avoided? There is no doubt that this shameful exit by the United States has not only tarnished the reputation of the superpower but put thousands of Afghan lives in danger. There is little doubt that the current administration has failed miserably in



People thronging the Hamid Karzai Airport in Kabul trying to flee Afghanistan

executing a proper exit strategy. History will harshly judge those who have authored and run such an ill-conceived plan.

Who are the victims of this unfolding strategy? The United States went to Afghanistan to root out Al Qaeda that has planned and staged the attacks on the World Trade Center that killed around 3000 Americans on September 11, 2001. There is no doubt that American intervention prevented more such episodes from the Afghan soil in the U.S., and the chief strategist of the 9/11 attack, Bin Laden, was pursued and eliminated. However, the United States got bogged down in this protracted struggle with the Taliban, who found a haven in Pakistan for their hit and run attacks.

Therefore, this was a fight lost by the United States that had no patience to outlast the enemy's will. Taliban once boasted that "NATO has watches, but we have the time." The truth is that the Taliban simply waited out the NATO forces and the American resolve to recapture Kabul in lightning speed that may have shocked the bureaucrats in Washington. The infantile justification by Jake Sullivan, the National Security Advisor to the President, that this chaos was inevitable is symptomatic of the mindset of the Washington establishment that is so detached from reality and back to their business as usual.

George W. Bush, who initiated the foray into Afghanistan, was never content with one war. Instead of focusing on eliminating the Taliban, which was dubbed as a terrorist organization, and securing the freedom for the people of Afghanistan from these regressive and evil elements reminiscent of medieval times, he started another war in Iraq that ended in disaster. Along with destabilizing the entire Middle East paving the way for the creation of a Caliphate by ISIS, American invincibility that was seen at the initial stages of the Afghan invasion was not only lost, but the American people simply got tired of these endless wars.

Many of these bureaucrats in Washington who are the true architects of these infamous wars have little in common with the folks who are sent to these godforsaken places to fight these unseen enemies. They are part of the elite society, mostly come with Ivy League credentials and live in their multi-million abodes in Washington suburbs. Most of them might not have served a single day in the United States armed forces, and some of the older ones might even have gotten away with waivers during the time of the draft. At the end of the day, it is either those boys from the Midwest who believe that it is their duty to serve their country and honor its flag or the poor black and Latino kids who are hoping to build a better life after completing their service in the Military are the ones who fall prey to these odious designs of the so-called establishment.

Making war has become the primary business for many of these bureaucrats who are part of this military-industrial complex. People like Dick Cheney, who has never served in the Military, are prime examples who promoted wars and stood to profit. To them, these young men and women who are sent to these battlefields to die or permanently scarred for life are only of peripheral interests. Thousands of others who are caught up in the crossfire and lost their lives are simply collateral damages.

President Dwight Eisenhower once gave the nation a dire warning. "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." He called the military-industrial complex a formidable union of vested interests and a threat to democratic government.

Take, for example, the folly of continuing to provide billions of dollars in funding to the Pakistan government while allowing bases for Afghan insurgents and actively supporting their mission. According to various reports,

President Dwight Eisenhower once gave the nation a dire warning. "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." He called the military-industrial complex a formidable union of vested interests and a threat to democratic government.

the Pakistani Military was also engaged in providing training and tactical support to terrorist groups crossing the border and creating havoc in Kashmir. How could the United States justify supporting the counter-insurgency funding for Pakistan while the country remained a factory for brainwashing young minds with fundamentalist ideology and turn them loose to commit horrendous crimes across the globe?

Taxpayers of the United States indeed have lost Trillions of dollars fighting these regime-changing wars. Still, all is not lost for these conniving bureaucrats who represent potent lobbies and special interests in the Capitol. Washington suburbs have become the most expensive real estate on American soil today as these folks continue to rake in riches while the rest of the country is undergoing economic hardships and facing an uncertain future.

'Powell doctrine,' named after the four-star general Colin Powell, said that "war should be the politics of last resort. And when we go to war, we should have a purpose that our people understand and support; we should mobilize the country's resources to fulfill that mission and then go in to win". The precipitous withdrawal from Vietnam, Iraq, and now Afghanistan runs contrary to that principle, and Powell himself may have violated the spirit of his own proclamation with his WMD speech at the United Nations while promoting the invasion of Iraq.

Obviously, people have lost control of their 'greatest democracy.' Once again, they are reeling from a shameful and disheartening scenario in Kabul as thousands who risked their lives supporting U.S. policies are stranded and fearing for their lives simply as the result of terrible decision-making in Washington. In the meantime, the powerful establishment may be plotting for yet another conflict somewhere around the world in the name of 'promoting democracy and freedom!'

(The author, a former Chief Technology Officer at the United Nations, is Vice President of IOC USA. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

HORROR OF HORRORS

AS A NATION, WE DO NOT NEED A DAY TO REMIND US OF THE ATROCITIES DURING PARTITION



BY JULIO RIBEIRO

"ANOTHER AREA THAT MODIJI SHOULD NOT TINKER WITH IS THE DEFENSE SERVICES. OUR ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OUR PRIDE AND OUR JOY. THE CITIZENS OF EVERY CASTE AND CREED REPOSE IMMENSE FAITH IN THE INSTITUTION. A THOUGHT HAS BEEN RECENTLY FLOATED THAT THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE CHIEFS SHOULD BE CHOSEN PURELY ON MERIT, DISREGARDING SENIORITY. THIS MOVE HAS DISTURBED THE DOVECOTES. AT PRESENT, THE CHOICE IS ALMOST CERTAIN. SINCE THE PROMOTIONS AT EVERY STEP OF THE LADDER HAVE BEEN ON THE BASIS OF MERIT AND PERFORMANCE THE PROCESS OF SIFTING THE CHAFF FROM THE GRAIN HAS BEEN IN PLAY FROM THE VERY START OF THEIR MILITARY CAREERS. EVERYONE KNOWS WHO IS GOING TO BE THE NEXT CHIEF, LIKE ALL SUPREME COURT JUDGES KNOW WHO IS TO BE THE NEXT CJI. WHY CHANGE A PRACTICE THAT HAS WORKED WELL FOR AS LONG AS MEMORY HOLDS?"

Why does Modiiji fall back on divisiveness after flirting with the unifying? Sports unites! Modiiji's breakfast at his home with our sportspersons who constituted our Olympic contingent was a welcome step in uniting castes and creeds. Those of us who strive and dream of unity in our country were overjoyed when he displayed leadership of an extraordinary



Contrast: Modi should not fall back on divisiveness after flirting with the unifying - Photo / PTI

kind when interacting with our athletes, encouraging them, consoling those who lost and celebrating those who won.

And then on August 15, a day of national rejoicing, he spoils our good humor by announcing that August 14 every year will be observed as 'Horrors Day' because the subcontinent was partitioned, Pakistan declared its Independence Day and terrible atrocities were recorded on both sides of the demarcated borders.

Every Indian knows of those awful days when men turned into savages. Why spoil the nation's mood by an unneeded announcement? Who wants to be perpetually reminded of the blood spilt while crossing borders in search of genial neighbors where co-religionists would be there to welcome you?

Whenever mention is made of the Gujarat killings of 2002, my circle of friends recommend a memory loss and a more positive frame of mind moving on to the future! Modiiji himself always harps on positivity as opposed to negative feelings about men and matters! Then why is a positive leader seeking to perpetuate 'horrors', an intrinsically negative concept? A museum depicting those horrors already exists in Amritsar, something on the lines of the Holocaust museums in Poland and Germany. (My wife and I have visited the museum at Treblinka outside Warsaw.)

The horrors of Partition will never be forgotten. The Armenians never forget the horrors they were subjected to by the Turks in 1915 and thereafter. Women and children were marched through the desert adjoining Aleppo in Syria. They died of hunger and thirst. Their men had been shot earlier in their own villages. The Armenians never forget that genocide. How can they? Now, Turkish ambassadors the world over are

equipped with bullet-proof cars to protect them from young Armenians seeking revenge.

So, also, the purge of Bengalis in East Pakistan by the Pakistan army in the time of Gen Yahya Khan, then the military ruler of Pakistan. Hindu Bengalis were specifically targeted. Can Bangladeshis ever forget those atrocities? I doubt it. These are facts of history.

But we expect Modiiji to move ahead without stirring up emotions further by declaring a 'Horrors Day' to be observed every year a day before our national day of rejoicing. He should realize that citizens of India will forever remember what happened during the Partition, when people on both sides of the border lost their power of reasoning.

What could have moved Modiiji to ruffle feathers by that unexpected announcement? The Hindu right has always bemoaned the Partition of the subcontinent, which they consider sacred land that should be rechristened Hindu rashtra. Could Partition have been avoided? Can Gandhiji and Nehru be held responsible for agreeing to the Partition of the country? The political commentator, Swaminathan Anklesaria Aiyar, writing last Sunday on the occasion of Independence Day, gave valid historical reasons why he felt the Partition was inevitable.

From the perspective of law and order alone this old policeman feels that a population almost evenly divided between Hindus and Muslims would be perpetually at 'war' on the streets of our cities. The Islamic concept of religion being so diametrically different from the Hindu way of life and with religion playing such an outsized role in the life of a Muslim, the probability of clashes would be extremely high, almost certain, unless power was shared in near equal

proportion, something that would not be palatable to the proponents of a Hindu rashtra.

Another area that Modiiji should not tinker with is the defense services. Our Army, Navy and Air Force have always been our pride and our joy. The citizens of every caste and creed repose immense faith in the institution. A thought has been recently floated that the Army, Navy and Air Force Chiefs should be chosen purely on merit, disregarding seniority. This move has disturbed the doves. At present, the choice is almost certain. Since the promotions at every step of the ladder have been on the basis of merit and performance the process of sifting the chaff from the grain has been in play from the very start of their military careers. Everyone knows who is going to be the next Chief, like all Supreme Court judges know who is to be the next CJI. Why change a practice that has worked well for as long as memory holds?

Merit is a nebulous entity. In any case a certain amount of subjectivity has already entered the process of selection at every stage. If at the last stage the factor of merit is going to be left to the discretion of politicians, allowing ideology and sycophancy to assume prime importance, then the whole ethos of discipline, camaraderie, loyalty to the men under your command, justice, fair play, etc. will have to be discarded. And that would be disastrous!

The armed forces will be reduced to a civilian unit, like the police, where lobbying for high office has become so commonplace that often the wrong people are put in charge of delivering not what the law commands but its very opposite!

(The author is a highly decorated retired IPS officer)

Pak's 'iron lady', who treated hundreds of victims of crisis situations, calls it a day

KARACHI (TIP): Its curtains down for Pakistan's "iron lady" Dr Seemin Jamali, who has treated hundreds of victims of terror attacks and other crisis situations in her over three decades of service and takes pride in how she has been able to tide over all the challenges she has faced during her tenure.

Having served at the state-run Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) in various capacities for 33 years, her name is synonymous with the emergency ward at the hospital located near the central cantt area of Karachi in Sindh province.

"It has been a very fulfilling journey for me because while we saw hundreds of lives snuffed out, we also saved thousands in the emergency ward," she said during her retirement ceremony on Thursday.

During her service, she has treated hundreds of bomb blast, terror attack, building collapse victims in the emergency ward.

Dr Jamali, who is also known as the "bullet lady" or "bomb-proof lady", has also faced threats to her life, attacks and targeted campaigns aiming to malign her because of her position.

"I don't think I would have been able to manage all these years without the support of my family," Jamali, who retired as the Executive Director at the JPMC, said adding that her life was in



the emergency ward.

JPMC is the city's largest tertiary care hospital and its emergency ward treats up to 2,000 patients on an average daily and almost all are tended to free of charge.

"It is not only about the daily care at the emergency ward. I am proud of the way we have responded when hundreds of people have been brought here from bomb blasts, terror attacks, plane

crashes, building collapses, fires or mob violence," she said.

"It is about how we did respond when under pressure dealing with angry relatives, families, political parties, shortage of medicines, beds and what not," she said.

She was also diagnosed with colon cancer last year but she continued working and successfully managed to get treatment and defeat it as well. PTI

400 PEOPLE BOOKED FOR HARASSING, MOLESTING PAKISTANI YOUTUBER GIRL

LAHORE (TIP): Lahore police have booked 400 people who allegedly harassed and molested a YouTuber girl on Pakistan's Independence Day at the historic Minar-i-Pakistan, officials said.

The police got into action following the videos of her harassment and molestation that went viral on social media, with calls to Prime Minister Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar to take action against the culprits.

The incident took place on August 14 when hundreds of youngsters were celebrating Independence Day at Azadi Chowk near Minar-i-Pakistan in Lahore.

In the videos, hundreds of young men can be seen throwing the girl in the air for fun, dragging her, tearing her clothes and molesting her. They also took off her shalwar (trouser) and molested her.

"After the videos went viral on Tuesday, the police approached the girl on the order of the high-ups and persuaded her to register FIR," a senior police official told PTI. He said the girl was still traumatised and broke into tears while narrating what had happened to her on Independence Day.

She said in the FIR that she and six other members of her YouTube channel visited Azadi Chowk to record a video clip of the Independence Day celebrations. (PTI)

Sri Lanka to impose 10-day nationwide lockdown from Friday night

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has ordered a 10-day nationwide lockdown from August 20 night, amidst mounting pressure from medics and the powerful Buddhist clergy to curb the raging third wave of Covid-19 infection.

The National Operations Centre for Covid Prevention said that the lockdown would start from August 20 10 pm till 4 am of August 30.

"The quarantine curfew will be in force from 10 pm tonight until 4 am on August 30," Army chief Gen. Shavendra Silva, who is also the head of National Operations Centre for Covid Prevention, told reporters here. Rajapaksa earlier refused to heed to calls by medics as coronavirus infections overwhelmed hospitals, morgues and crematoriums. He held that closing down the country was badly impacting the island's fragile economy. However, he was compelled to relent as the powerful Buddhist clergy and his own political alliance members demanded the lockdown in view of the grave situation facing the island nation.

On Thursday, the daily death toll due to Covid-19 hit a record 186. The country also reported 3,800 fresh cases, another record.

Official figures show 6,790 people have died of the virus while 373,165 have been infected so far.

Health experts say the Western



province with the capital district of Colombo was the worst hit. Over 75 per cent of the cases in Colombo were from the rapidly spreading Delta variant.

This will be the first time since mid-June that the country will be re-imposing a lockdown. The ongoing third wave of infections is blamed on the traditional Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrations held in mid-April.

The stepped up vaccination drive was another reason why the government was not keen on re-imposing a lockdown.

Over 5 million out of the 21 million population have been given two doses of a vaccine.

Sri Lanka, which has witnessed a series of lockdowns and curfews to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country, has been impacted in terms of its economy. Tourism sector, which generates a huge quantum of revenue for the island nation, has seen a drastic fall. — PTI

NEPAL'S LARGEST COMMUNIST PARTY SPLITS

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal's main opposition CPN-UML, the largest communist party in the country, has officially split, with one of its factions led by dissident leader Madhav Kumar Nepal applying for registering a new political party after the government backed a controversial ordinance to make it easier for political parties to split.

Nepal on August 18 submitted an application at the Election Commission (EC), for registering a new political party named CPN-UML (Socialist). Earlier on August 18, on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, President Bidya Devi Bhandari issued an ordinance to amend the Political Parties Act, 2017, aimed at easing the procedure for political parties to split.

The amendment ordinance stipulates that 20 per cent or more members of the parliamentary party and the central committee of a political party can split their mother party. — PTI

MALAYSIA EX-DY PM POISED TO CLINCH PREMIERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Former Malaysian Deputy PM Ismail Sabri Yaakob moved closer on August 19 to forming the next government after securing a parliamentary majority from the same coalition that collapsed earlier this week.

Muhyiddin Yassin resigned as PM on Monday after conceding he had lost support from his alliance, bringing to an end a fraught 17 months in office and throwing the country into further political chaos amid a Covid surge and economic slump. — Reuters

PAKISTAN ISSUING VISAS TO DIPLOMATS, FOREIGNERS

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan is issuing visas upon arrival to all diplomats, foreigners and journalists who want to leave Kabul over security concerns.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on August 18 that since Sunday, 900 foreigners, including diplomats and staff working for international organisations, have arrived in Pakistan from Kabul via air travel.

He said transit visas were also being issued to foreigners upon arrival from Afghanistan at airports and land crossings so that they could travel on to their home countries.

Ahmed said hundreds of Pakistanis and Afghans crossed into Pakistan from two key land border crossings in recent days.

He said all Pakistanis who want to leave Afghanistan will be brought back over the coming two days. AP

AAPI's National Blood Donation Drive and Stem Cell Registry Launched, Honoring Fallen Covid Warriors

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): "I am grateful to the dozens of local AAPI Chapters who have initiated and organized Blood Donation Drives and Stem Cell Registration across the nation, in honor of the Fallen Heroes of Covid-19, and as India is celebrating 75 years of our Independence, we have taken this initiative to do National AAPI Blood Donation Drives in 75 cities," said Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, President of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the largest ethnic organization in the United States.

"On the occasion of the 75th Independence Day of India, we the physicians of Indian origin serving every 7th patient in the United States, are excited to launch this unique and noble initiative and Stem Cell Drive" in 75 cities across the United States," Dr. Gotimukula added.

The launch event of the Blood Drive was organized in Chicago on August 7th under the leadership of Dr. Meher Medavaram, Chair of AAPI's Blood Donation Initiative. "Several cities that have organized the Blood Donation Drive, include Dayton (OH); Oakbrook village (IL); Ridgeland, Mississippi; Dallas (Tx), and Columbus (SC). Dozens of other cities have planned to organize similar events across the nation in next few months," she said.

"AAPI has launched 75 city blood donation drive. It only takes 15 minutes of one's time and can save and sustain 3 lives with each pint of blood. So let us all be the



The AAPI leadership is enthusiastic about the National Blood Donation Drive and Stem Cell Registry

heroes and life savers. We all are one humanity and one family, Vasudhaiva Kutubakam," said Dr. Ravi Kolli, President-Elect of AAPI.

Describing the benefits of Blood Donation, Dr. Meher Medavaram said, a single donation can save three lives. Each blood component of whole blood transfusion can help up to three different people. Pointing to the fact that Blood cannot be manufactured despite medical and technological advances. The only way we can give blood to those who need it is through donation. It doesn't cost us anything to donate but your donation saves lives. Blood is needed every two seconds.

Nearly 21 million blood components are transfused in the U.S. every year. While

not everyone is able to donate blood, Dr. Gotimukula pointed out that only 37 percent of the country's population is able to donate blood. On why she and the AAPI leadership chose this as a priority, Dr. Gotimukula said, "The 3rd Covid Wave is causing increased ICU admissions again. There is a dire need for blood. Your friends or family may need blood someday. And this noble cause helps save many lives."

Dr. Kusum Punjabi the Chair of Board of Trustees of AAPI, said "As the pandemic has exhausted all the resources, especially the lifesaving and much needed Blood across the nation and the world, AAPI is in the forefront, once again, spreading the message for the need to donate blood and save lives."

Dr. Anjana Samadder, Vice President of AAPI, said, who herself has experienced the ordeal with Covid -19, and has come out stronger, resilient and tenacious, quoting Red Cross said, "Blood is essential for surgeries, cancer treatment, chronic illnesses, and traumatic injuries. Whether a patient receives whole blood, red cells, platelets or plasma, this lifesaving care starts with one person making a generous donation."

"With the ongoing pandemic, the United States and the world need the help of blood and platelet donors and blood drive hosts to meet the needs of patient care," said Dr. Satheesh Kathula, Secretary of AAPI, he being an Oncologist is much aware of the national shortage

"It is very difficult to find a matched stem cell donor for Southeast Asians should they need a bone marrow or stem cell transplant and this drive will help increase the number of potential donors." Dr. Krishan Kumar, Treasurer of AAPI said, "Blood donation helps save lives. Since blood has a limited shelf life, the supply must constantly be replenished by generous blood donors."

I urge others to take the lead in your town and help in AAPI's blood donation drive. Thank you and truly appreciate your support in helping our blood banks." For more details to organize Blood Donation Drive in your city/town/region, please contact: Vijaya Kodali, AAPI Office Manager at: vkodali@aapiusa.org. For more details on AAPI, please visit: www.aapiusa.org (Press Release)

As Covid situation improves, US eases travel advisory for India



WASHINGTON (TIP): The US eased its travel advisory for India on Monday, August 16 lowering it to Level 2: Moderate. The new travel advisory of Level 2 - which is considered safe - came in the wake of the significant improvement in Covid situation in India.

Early this year, the US had put India in Level 4, asking its citizens not to travel to India, which at that point of time was experiencing an unprecedented second wave of Covid.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has now issued a Level 2 Travel Health Notice for India due to Covid, indicating a moderate level of Covid in the country.

"Your risk of contracting Covid and developing severe symptoms may be lower if you are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine. Before planning any international travel, please review the CDC's specific recommendations for vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers," the State Department said.

At the same time, the State Department urged Americans not to travel to Jammu and Kashmir (except the eastern Ladakh region and its capital Leh) due to terrorism and civil unrest.

They have also been advised not to travel within 10 km of the India-Pakistan border due to the potential for armed conflict. (Source: PTI)

CHILD TAX CREDIT: NEW UPDATE ADDRESS FEATURE AVAILABLE WITH IRS ONLINE PORTAL; MAKE OTHER CHANGES BY AUG. 30 FOR SEPTEMBER PAYMENT

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Internal Revenue Service has launched a new feature allowing any family receiving monthly Child Tax Credit payments to quickly and easily update their mailing address using the Child Tax Credit Update Portal, found exclusively on IRS.gov. This feature will help any family that chooses to receive their payment by paper check avoid mailing delays or even having a check returned as undeliverable.

Any family can easily have their September check and all future checks sent to their new address by using the portal to make an address change request. To have the change take effect in September, people need to complete the request before midnight Eastern Time on Monday, Aug. 30. Families can still make changes after that date, but their request will not be effective until the next scheduled monthly payment.

If you change your mailing address using the Child Tax Credit Update Portal, the IRS will use this updated address for all future IRS correspondence so the address change feature can also be helpful to taxpayers that are receiving payments by direct



deposit. For example, the IRS will mail a year-end summary statement (Letter 6419) to all taxpayers who have received advance Child Tax Credit payments during 2021, and having a current address on file with the IRS will ensure prompt delivery of this statement.

Families will need Letter 6419 to quickly and accurately fill out their 2021 federal income tax return next year. This is important because, for most families, the advance payments they are receiving during 2021 cover only half of the total credit. They will claim the remaining portion on their 2021 tax return.

The address change feature joins a growing set of services available through the Child Tax Credit Update Portal.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

FIA Hosts a grand India's Independence Day Gala



Consul General Amit Kumar lighting the lamp. Gala Grand Marshall Bollywood actor Neetu Chandra is seen behind the Consul General



Organizers with the Consul General and Neetu Chandra



A scintillating dance performance
Photographs / Courtesy Asian Media USA

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Federation of Indian Associations [FIA] hosted a grand glittering 75th Indian Independence Day Gala Banquet marking a dazzling milestone celebration ostensibly enhanced with illuminating traditional, patriotic and contemporary dance presentations depicting the majestic elements and the magnificent soul of India matched only by the inspiring remarks that sparked the patriotic fervor of the enthusiastic guests in a grand ballroom of the Hoffman Marriot on Friday, August 13, 2021 in Hoffman Estate, Illinois.

The Independence Day "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" Banquet hosted on an impressive scale filled the Grand Ballroom to its full capacity with the patriotic spirit in full enthusiastic display at the celebration symbolizing the spirit of India lifted by awe-inspiring remarks from prominent honored guests: Consul General of India Amit Kumar, U.S. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Mayor Rodney Craig, Mayor Tom Dailly and several other ranking elected officials each heaping praise on the 75th milestone celebrations. The gala banquet reminisced the golden moments in the history of India and paid rich tributes to the vanguard of freedom fighters who accorded the Independence to India. Ms. Neetu Chandra, Bollywood Actress, National Award Winner, International Taekwondo Player graced the occasion as the Grand Marshall to the gala. Angel Tetarbe, World Peace Messenger Los Angeles 2019 and Miss Glamorous World India 2017 was also invited to be a part of the Gala.

The evening gala kicked off with lamp lighting ceremony led by FIA's Founder Sunil Shah inviting the honored guest, Honorable Consul General of India, Chicago Mr. Amit Kumar, State Senators Cristina Castro and Laura Murphy, State representative Michelle Mussman and Mayor of Schaumburg Tom Dailly, Village President of Hoffman Estates William McLeod, Mayor of Hanover Park Rodney Craig and Village President of Oak Brook Gopal Lalimalani, Dr. Umang Patel, Dr. Sreenivas Reddy and the FIA's Founder & Past President Onkar Singh Sangha, President Dr. Kamal Patel Advisory Board and Founding Members & Past Presidents Rita Singh, Dhitu Bhagwakar, Mukesh Shah, Neil Khot, Gurmeet Singh, Ninad Daftari and Sunny Kular to the dais to mark the auspicious beginning of the evening's grand celebrations that set in motion a series of cultural dance presentations and rousing remarks.

Consul General of India Mr. Amit Kumar in his address outlined India's triumphant journey since its independence and the rapid strides it is making towards global eminence. Consul General Mr. Amit Kumar thanked the Indian diaspora for playing a significant proactive role as ambassadors in further cementing the ties between India and the United States and added that the trajectory of Indo-US relations is heading in the upward direction. Consul General Mr. Amit Kumar gave away the awards to several community and business leaders.

State Senators Cristina Castro and Laura Murphy, State representative Michelle Mussman and Mayor

of Schaumburg Tom Dailly, Village President of Hoffman Estates William McLeod, Mayor of Hanover Park Rodney Craig and Village President of Oak Brook Gopal Lalimalani in their address to the gathering each paid glowing tributes to the indomitable and enduring spirit of Indian democracy and the contribution the Indian Diaspora has made in the US and the Indo American relations that have been fast paced and improved over the years.

Deepakant Vyas, Dr. Umang Patel, Dr. Sreenivas Reddy, Syed Hussaini, Amarbir & Harry Ghoman, Brij Sharma, Asha & Anil Oroskar, Santosh Kumar, Pinky Thakkar, Ajeet Singh, Vijay Prabhakar, Keerthi Reevori were recognized presented a plaque by the Consul General Amit Kumar and Ms. Neetu Chandra on behalf of FIA for their service to the community

Earlier, the evening's celebrations began with the beautiful rendition of the Indian and American national anthem led by Rita Shah & Mir Ali. Bharat Goradia a prominent National Promoter for US tours of Bollywood Personalities was invited to the stage to address the gathering and introduce Ms. Neetu Chandra. Students of SR Dance Academy a Founder Member and Past President Rita Singh's company provided dance numbers that enthralled the audience. Beautiful Ideas, a Neelam Saboo concept showcased Indian Fashion at the gala with an India themed Fashion Show. The Gala ended with Rita Shah, Mir Ali, Raju Bankapur regaling the audience with foot tapping Bollywood songs to live music.

(Based on a Press Release by Asian Media USA)

Biden calls to let extra jobless benefits expire

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Biden administration said in a letter to lawmakers Thursday, August 19 that it's "appropriate" for expanded unemployment benefits to expire as scheduled in a little more than two weeks, but that states and local governments can use pandemic-relief funds for added help beyond the deadline amid the surge of the delta variant.

"There are some states where it may make sense for unemployed workers to continue receiving additional assistance for a longer period of time, allowing residents of those states more time to find a job in areas where unemployment remains high," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh wrote. "The delta variant may also pose short-term challenges to local economies and labor markets."

The White House came under fire from Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill late last month when it requested that Congress pass an extension of an



eviction moratorium just days before it expired. Congress didn't do so, and the White House couldn't put off the expiration unilaterally due to a Supreme Court ruling. Instead, the administration scrambled to write a new moratorium that covered fewer renters and homeowners.

That crisis prompted questions about whether the administration would seek to extend other pandemic-relief programs. But the White House has been

reluctant to endorse a lengthening of the \$300 weekly supplemental unemployment payments past the Sept. 6 end-date.

Many Republicans have argued that the measure made Americans disinclined to return to work, and GOP-run states across the country moved to end the assistance early. The White House has disputed those claims, attributing the mismatch between record numbers of job openings alongside still-elevated

unemployment to reasons including health and childcare concerns.

Record level of open jobs is bigger than number unemployed

"We still have more work to do, but the trend is clear: thanks to the grit and ingenuity of the American people and with the federal government executing on a plan to bring our economy back, our nation is getting back to work," Yellen and Walsh wrote in the letter to Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden and House Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Neal.

The administration said that while it is not asking Congress to extend expanded unemployment benefits, states and local governments are able to use their allocations from the \$350 billion in funding included in the American Rescue Plan, enacted in March, to continue providing assistance to unemployment workers. The administration is also announcing \$47 million in grants for reemployment services.

India extends support to Afghans

Following the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Indian government, under the directive of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has announced the extension of help to Afghans who are approaching authorities for help. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has set up a Special Afghanistan Cell to evacuate both Indians and Afghans. Due to uncertainty regarding the security situation in Afghanistan, the Government of India successfully evacuated all its embassy staff and security forces from Kabul and continues to operate special flights to bring back stranded Indian citizens. As India holds the presidency in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) this month, it called for a special session on Monday, August 16, to discuss the deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan.

India working on trade deals with Australia & UK

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday, August 19 that India is working towards "early harvest" agreements with the U.K. and Australia as part of a larger trade pact. At the moment, India is at a 'positive momentum' with respect to inking FTAs with the European Union (EU), UK, Australia, Canada, Bangladesh, UAE and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations, as well as Israel. The U.S. has indicated that they are not looking at a new trade agreement with India.

Pegasus: SC won't stay WB notification

The Supreme Court on Wednesday, August 18, refused to stay the West Bengal Government's notification setting up a commission headed by former Justice (retd) Madan B Lokur to inquire into alleged snooping on politicians, journalists and activists using the Pegasus spyware. Acting on a petition challenging the setting up of Justice Lokur Commission of Inquiry, a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, however, issued notices to the Centre and West Bengal. *Source: TNS*

FB takes down Rahul's post on rape victim's family

Facebook on Friday, August 20, removed content posted by former Congress president Rahul Gandhi that contained photographs of the family of a nine-year-old Dalit girl who was allegedly gang-raped and murdered in Delhi on August 1.

"We have taken action to remove the content as it was in violation of our policies," a Facebook spokesperson said.

According to Facebook, its content enforcement decisions are neutral for anyone using its platform, irrespective of their political position or party affiliation. The company takes action against content if it violates its community standards or upon receiving a valid legal request under Indian laws.

"In this case, the family has pleaded for their safety in court. In view of their safety and to maintain the dignity of the victim, we have decided to take down the content from our platform," a person familiar with the matter said.

Two protesting farmers charged with sedition in Haryana

CHANDIGARH (TIP): Haryana home minister Anil Vij on Friday, August 20, informed the state assembly that during the ongoing agitation against agriculture laws, two farmers had been booked for sedition, while 136 other protesting farmers have been booked under different sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

This information was given by Vij in a written reply during the first day monsoon session of the state assembly.

According to the minister, two FIRs were registered under Section 124-A (sedition). One case was registered on July 11, 2021 in Sirsa, and according to the complaint recorded by the duty magistrate, the agitating farmers attacked the convoy of Deputy Speaker of Haryana Vidhan Sabha. The second case, registered on January 15, 2021 in Bahadurgarh of Jhajjar, was based on a video uploaded on social media by the accused who is seen saying that if the government did not pay heed to the protesting farmers, he would attack the government with a cannon.

Earlier in the day, Congress MLAs marched to the assembly, led by former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on the issues of paper leak scam, atrocities on farmers, rising unemployment, inflation and rising crime graph in the State.

The party MLAs raised slogans against the BJP-JJP government and displayed placards.

Hooda said the government was trying to suppress all the scams



Farmers protest against the farm laws, near Kundli in Haryana on March 6, 2021. Photo Credit: REUTERS

including liquor, registry, mining, electricity meters and paddy purchase. "The government also wants to cover up the recruitment paper leak scam, but the Congress demands that there should be a CBI inquiry into the matter under the supervision of the sitting judge of the High Court," he said.

"It is the responsibility of the Opposition to raise the voice of the public from the street to the House on issues of public interest. The government does not want the Opposition to raise public issues in the House and hence today an attempt was made to stop the Congress MLAs by putting up barricades far away from the Assembly," he alleged.

On the first day of the session six Bills were tabled in the House, including the Haryana Management of Civic Amenities and Infrastructure Deficient Municipal Areas (Special Provisions) Amendment Bill, 2021, Maharishi Balmiki Sanskrit University, Kaithal (Amendment) Bill, 2021, the Haryana Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill 2021, the Haryana Enterprises Promotion (Second Amendment) Bill, 2021, Pandit Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts, Rohtak (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Haryana Amendment) Bill 2021.

RSS-affiliated farmers' group plans nationwide protest on Sept 8

NEW DELHI (TIP): Farmers affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will stage a nationwide agitation on September 8 to demand guaranteed remunerative prices for their produce.

On Thursday, August 19, leaders of the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh said the Centre should either bring in a law to ensure that minimum support prices (MSP) are actually paid to farmers or amend 2020's farm reform laws to do so.

This is also a demand of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha platform of farm unions, which is opposed to the BJP and has been vociferously protesting the three farm reform laws for almost a year now.

"There is no point in announcing MSP rates if most of the farmers are not actually getting that price in the mandis. Many farmers are not

even getting their production costs covered," BKS general secretary Badri Narayan Chaudhary told The Hindu on Thursday. "We will give the government time to take action and respond to our concerns until the end of this month. But if they do not, we are prepared to carry out a dharna at the national level on September 8," he added. He said the BKS was not asking the government itself to necessarily procure all crops at MSP rates, but rather to ensure that no buyer, whether government, private or corporate, is allowed to pay below MSP rates.

In Nagpur, organization secretary Dinesh Kulkarni told the Press Trust of India that a legal guarantee must be provided. "The government should ensure this remunerative price in the present farm laws or make a separate legislation for the same. The government should make

guidelines in respect of contract farming wherein crops are not purchased below MSP. This should be at least implemented for the 23 crops that are currently under the MSP regime," he said.

The protesting unions of the SKM have also been demanding a legal guarantee for MSP, along with a full repeal of the farm reform laws. Chaudhary said that the BKS' stance on the farm laws is more nuanced. "Yes, there are improvements and amendments needed in the laws. But the government has said it is willing to amend the laws. Rather, it is those unions' demand for full repeal which has halted negotiations," he said. He added that the Supreme Court has stayed the implementation of the laws for the last eight months, even though its committee had submitted its report over six months ago.

CBI forms 4 teams to probe Bengal post-poll violence

The CBI has constituted four teams, each having seven members and headed by a joint director, to probe cases of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

Officials in the agency said the probe by individual teams would be monitored by CBI's Additional Director Ajay Bhatnagar. The members of each team would include a deputy inspector general and three superintendents of police (SPs) from across the country.

Meanwhile, the CBI has written to the West Bengal Director General (DG) of Police to provide details of all cases of murder, attempt to murder and rape reported during the post-poll violence.

The agency has sought details of such cases from the DG in line with a Calcutta High Court order that directed the CBI to take over cases of murder, rape and crime against women.

The CBI's four teams would be headed by joint directors Ramnish, Anurag, Vineet Vinayak and Sampat Meena.

The High Court on Thursday, August 19, ordered a CBI inquiry into alleged cases of murder, rape and crime against women during the post-poll violence.

A five-judge Bench, while pronouncing a unanimous verdict on a batch of PILs seeking an independent probe into the incidents of post-poll violence, also ordered the formation of an SIT.

India's biggest oil, gas reserve sees 40% dip in production

Oil and gas production in Rajasthan witnessed a 40% dip in the past two years due to less extraction, primarily due to Covid-19, officials said, even as the government plans to further expand oil exploration in the region.

Oil prices in the country have been on the rise for the past few months due to an increase in crude oil prices in the international market. In some places in Rajasthan, such as Sri Ganganagar, not very far from oil producing Barmer, the price of petrol is close to Rs 110 per litre.

Barmer is the country's biggest source of oil and natural gas, and contributed Rs 1,904.79 crore to state revenue in 2020-21, down from Rs 3,883.22 in 2018-19. This means that oil fields contributed Rs 10 crore a day to the state government, whose other big revenue sources are mines, excise, and stamp and registration.

"The state revenue from oil declined majorly due to less extraction of oil, affecting the production and crude oil prices, and partly Covid-19," an official said, talking about the reasons for the dip in the revenue.

Barmer's Gudamalani area has reserves of 10 billion cubic metres of gas, of which only 30% has been explored. India's total oil and gas reserves are 28.1 billion cubic metres, according to the petroleum ministry website. *Source: HT*

Bhindranwale's grandnephew among two arrested as police bust terror module

JALANDHAR (TIP): Punjab Police on Friday, August 20, arrested two militant operatives and claimed to have busted a terror module. One of the arrested militants, police said, was the son of the nephew of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale — the Sikh religious leader and political revolutionary whose violent campaign for autonomy for the state of Punjab and armed occupation of the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) complex in Amritsar led to a deadly confrontation with the Indian military in 1984.

Police said a huge cache of live grenades, a tiffin bomb and some pistols and ammunition has been seized from the arrested suspects.

Investigators identified the arrested men as Gurmukh Singh Brar alias GB, a resident of Hardy Nagar, Garha, Jalandhar, who is the son of Jasbir Singh Rode, the nephew of Jarnail Bhindranwale, and Gagandeep Singh, a resident of Gurunanak Pura in Phagwara.

Later in the day, the police also conducted a raid at the office of Punjabi Daily 'Aaj Di Awaaz' where Gurmukh was working as the editor.

A press release by Punjab Police later said that Kapurthala police had nabbed Gagandeep, a resident of Phagwara, and recovered one illegal pistol from his possession. During follow-up interrogations, Gagandeep had revealed that the pistol recovered from him was part of a bigger consignment of weapons that had been sent from across the border via drones over the last few months. He also disclosed that the major part of the consignment had been hidden by his close friend, who he identified as one Gurmukh Singh, in Jalandhar.

"Acting on this input, police teams immediately raided the house of Gurmukh Singh and arrested him, while

Both Operatives of ISI-backed outfit

- The two were operatives of the International Sikh Youth Federation, backed by the ISI in Pakistan, claim police
- Akal Takht ex-Jathedar Jasbir Singh Rode's brother Lakhbir Singh, settled in Pakistan, 'heads' the outfit



also recovering two live hand grenades, one box of detonators, two tubes suspected to contain RDX, one roll of high explosive yellow wire, cash of Rs 3.75 lakh, one licensed pistol a .45 bore, 14 Indian passports, one .30 pistol along with two magazines from his possession," said Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kapurthala, HPS Khak, adding that one live tiffin bomb and other explosive material was also said to have been hidden in the office of Gurmukh Singh near Jalandhar bus stand.

The teams next raided the Jalandhar bus stand office of Gurmukh and recovered 3 live hand grenades, 1 tiffin bomb, 4 Glock pistol magazines, and packaging foam material from there.

Preliminary investigations carried out so far have revealed that the consignment was sent by Pakistan's ISI and by other Pakistan-based pro-Khalistan terrorist groups, such as the ISYF, to carry out multiple terror attacks in Punjab in its ongoing efforts to revive militancy, and disturb peace and communal harmony in the state.

Source: The Indian Express

Ex-Punjab DGP Saini freed day after HC said his arrest 'patently illegal'



CHANDIGARH (TIP): Former Punjab DGP Sumedh Singh Saini was released from the custody of the state Vigilance Bureau on Friday, August 20, on the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which termed his arrest as "patently illegal".

The court order on Thursday, August 19, came on a habeas corpus plea filed by Saini's wife a day after he was arrested by the Vigilance Bureau in connection with a case registered in September 2020 for cheating, forgery, corruption and other offences.

Ruling that Saini's arrest was in violation of three earlier orders of the High Court, a single bench of Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi ordered his immediate release. Saini was released at around 2 am from a Mohali court.

Saini's lawyers contended that he was illegally arrested in the FIR No. 11, dated September 17, 2020, "due to mala fides, malice and ulterior motives as a result of political vendetta". Also, Saini has been granted interim anticipatory bail in FIR No. 13, dated August 2, on the same allegations.

Lawyers representing Punjab said Saini was arrested in a case which did not have any connection to his service career and thus not violative of earlier HC orders.

India's national security challenges becoming complex, says Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI (TIP): Noting that India's national security challenges are increasing and becoming "complex" in view of the changing geopolitical situation globally, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday, August 19, strongly pitched for a strong, capable and completely 'self-reliant' defense industry in the country.

Singh's comments came amid growing concerns in India and elsewhere over the Taliban sweeping across Afghanistan this month, seizing control of Afghanistan following the collapse of the US-backed government.

"Today, the security scenario in the whole world is changing very fast. Because of this, the challenges to our national security are increasing and



becoming complex. There are constant changes in the global geopolitical

situation," Singh said, without making specific references.

He was speaking after launching the 'Defense India Startup Challenge 5.0', an initiative under the Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX) that acts as an umbrella organization to promote technology development for the defense sector.

Singh said considering the fast-changing security challenges, India must focus on having strong, capable, and 'self-reliant' defense industry to cater to the needs of the armed forces.

"It is necessary that we not only create strong, modern and well-equipped forces, but also develop our defense industry, which is equally strong, capable, and most importantly, completely 'self-reliant'," the defense minister said. *Source: PTI*

India Clocks 34,457 infections, active cases lowest since March 2020

NEW DELHI (TIP): India logged 34,457 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 32,393,286, while the national recovery rate improved to 97.54%, the highest since March 2020, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday, August 21.

The death toll climbed to 4,33,964 with 375 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The active cases have declined to 3,61,340, the lowest in 151 days, and comprise 1.12 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, the ministry said.

A reduction of 1890 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,15,97,982 while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80



lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

High Proportion of Delta Variant Found in India's Breakthrough Infections

Breakthrough infections of coronavirus cases comprise a very high proportion of the Delta variant, the INSACOG, a genome sequencing government consortium of laboratories, has said.

The continuing COVID-19 outbreaks across India are attributable to the Delta variant, a susceptible population and reduced vaccine effectiveness in blocking transmission, the INSACOG added.

However, vaccination continues to be very effective in reducing severe disease and death, and public health measures to reduce transmission and inoculation remain critical, the INSACOG stressed in its latest bulletin dated August 16.

"As of now, sequencing of vaccination breakthroughs in India is also showing a very high proportion of Delta variant. Investigations for any new variants are ongoing," the INSACOG said. Of the 30,230 samples of Variants of Concern and Variants of Interest sequenced by the INSACOG, 20,324 were of Delta, it said.

ZyCoV-D, world's first plasmid DNA vaccine, okayed

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila on Friday, August 20, received emergency use authorisation from the drug controller for its three-dose ZyCoV-D Covid-19 vaccine, the world's first plasmid DNA-based shot.

The three-dose ZyCoV-D is India's sixth approved Covid shot after Covishield, Covaxin, Sputnik V, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson.

Zydus Cadila calls the vaccine "a no injection", saying it has a needle-free application system in place to administer the shots.

The vaccine is also the first in India to be tested among 12 to 18 year olds, with the company saying it is safe for children.

"ZyCoV-D is the world's first and India's indigenously developed DNA-based vaccine for Covid-19 to be administered to humans, including children and adults 12 years and above. It has been developed in partnership with the Department of Biotechnology," said DBT secretary Renu Swarup.

The three-dose vaccine when injected produces the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and elicits an immune response.



Over 50 crore samples tested for Covid in India till now: ICMR

NEW DELHI (TIP): The number of samples tested for Covid in the country has crossed the 50 crore-mark and in this month, the average daily testing has been over 17 lakh, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said on Thursday, August 19.

The last 10 crore tests were done in only 55 days, the ICMR said in a statement.

"On July 21, 2021, India had tested 45 crore Covid samples, which reached the 50-crore mark on August 18, 2021," the ICMR said.

According to its website, 50,03,00,840 samples have been tested up to August 18.

"ICMR has been enhancing Covid testing capability across the country by expanding and diversifying testing capacity by leveraging technology and facilitating innovation in affordable diagnostic kits. The testing strategy has been carefully calibrated to increase access and availability of testing," the ICMR said.

It said that in this month, the average daily testing was of more than 17 lakh.

ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said, "We have seen that exponential increase in testing led to early identification, prompt isolation and effective treatment of Covid cases."

"This testing milestone is testimony to the fact that India has



been successful in implementing strategy of '5T' approach 'Test, Track, Trace, Treat and use of Technology' efficiently, which will enable us to contain the spread of the pandemic," he said.

Further, enhanced production of diagnostic kits has made India 'atma nirbhar' (self-reliant), which has resulted in reduction of cost and improved availability of testing kits, Bhargava said.

571 million Covid vaccine doses administered

India had administered at least

571 million Covid vaccine doses by Thursday, August 19. Elsewhere, a study involving 350,000 people in the UK said the effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vaccine appears to decline faster than that of the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab.

Meanwhile, by 7pm on Thursday, August 19, 571,671,264 vaccine doses were given across the states and UTs. As many as 4,884,440 doses were administered on the day. Of this, 3,635,752 beneficiaries were vaccinated with the first dose and 1,248,688 beneficiaries received the second dose of vaccine.

India in history this Week

AUGUST 20- 26, 2021

August 20

1597: Dutch East India Company's first ship returned from East Asia.

1828: The first session of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahma Samaj was held in Calcutta (now Kolkata).



1897: Ronald Ross identified malaria-causing anopheles mosquito while working at the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1921: Start of Mopala Rebellion in Malabar, Kerala.

1944: Former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi was born.

1979: Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh resigned from his post.

1988: A magnitude 6.5 earthquake in India and Nepal killed a thousand people.

2011: India's famous historian Ram Sharan Sharma died.



2018: Vinesh Phogat of India won the gold medal in the 50 kg category of the Jakarta Asian Games women's wrestling competition. She became the first woman wrestler in the country to achieve this feat.

August 21

1790: The British army, led by General Meadows, captured Dindigul in Tamil Nadu.

1931: Pandit Vishnu Digambar died.

1972: The Wildlife Protection Act was passed in India.

1988: One thousand people died due to the severe earthquake that hit the Indo-Nepal border.

2005: The ceasefire agreement between Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force concluded.



2006: Renowned Shehnai player Ustad Bismillah Khan passed away with Bharat Ratna.

2008: The Caravan-e-Aman bus service plying between Muzaffarabad, the capital of Srinagar and 'Pakistan-occupied Kashmir', resumed.



2008: In 2008, India joined hands with NASA on the Moon mission.

2009: The Indian Navy's fighter aircraft 'Sea Harrier' crashed in the Arabian Sea after flying from Goa in 2009. Commander Saurabh Saxena died.

August 22

1639: The British East India Company established Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu (erstwhile Madras).

1818: Warren Hasting, the first Governor General of India, died.

1918: India's first proficient pilot Indralal Rai was killed in an air battle with Germany in London during the First World War.

1921: Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi lit Holi of foreign clothes.



2012: Pranab Mukherjee was elected the 13th President of India.

1996: The state government changed the name of Madras to Chennai.

August 23



1944: The famous heroine of Indian films Saira Banu was born.

1947: Vallabhbhai Patel was appointed as the Deputy

Prime Minister of the country.

1986: Bombay's Shambhu Apashane won the longest typing marathon by winning a world record.

1995: The country's first cellular phone was commercially introduced in Calcutta.

2011: Scientists at the Chinese Academy of Sciences discovered the origin of the Brahmaputra and Indus rivers and completed a comprehensive satellite study of the length of their route.

1960: The world's largest frog (3.3 kg) was caught.

2008: The Government of Uttar Pradesh nominated 16 members in the State Women's Commission in 2008

August 24

1908: The revolutionary Rajguru was born.

1600: The first ship of the East India Company, Hector, reached the coast of Surat.

1690: Calcutta city was established.

1969: VV Giri became the fourth President of India.

1974: Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed became the fifth President of India.

1999: Pakistan refused to consider the 8 prisoners of war captured by India during the Kargil operation as a prisoner of war.

1910: ITC Limited bought the third largest tobacco company in Kolkata, India.

1925: Social reformer Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar died.



1971: India beat England by four wickets in the Oval Cricket Test match to register their first win on the ground.

August 25

1351: Sultan Ferozeshah Tughlaq III was crowned.

1917: In 1917, 7 Indians serving in the British India Army received the Kigs Commission for the first time.

1957: India won the title of world winner by winning the final of the Polo World Championship in France.

2003: The 2003 car bombings near Mumbai's Gateway of India and Mumbi Devi Temple killed more than 50 people and injured more than 150.

2008: The Government of Madhya Pradesh in 2008 requested to insure all students of government schools for the year 2008-09.

August 26

1303: Alauddin Khilji captured Chittorgarh after defeating Rana Bhim Singh.

1910: Nobel Peace Prize-awarded Mother Teresa was born in Skopji, Yugoslavia.

1914: Bengal revolutionaries attacked the British fleet in Calcutta and looted 50 mausers and 46 thousand rounds.

1975: Dr. Narayan Subbarao Hardikar, a freedom fighter, journalist and Padma Bhushan, died.



Afghanistan in turmoil

Afghanistan is in a state of disarray as the Taliban seized control of the country at a lightning speed following the pullout of troops by the United States and Nato. Within weeks, the Taliban swept from province to province until the group reached the presidential palace on Sunday, seizing power in the war-torn country.

The stunning military takeover has triggered a massive panic across the capital with thousands of Afghans swarming to the airport in a desperate attempt to flee the country, fearing a repeat of the Taliban's brutal Islamist rule from 1996 to 2001.

On Monday, August 16, dramatic footage posted on social media showed hundreds of men running alongside a US air force plane as it rolled down the runway, with some clinging to the side of it. In other videos, civilians frantically clambered up an already overcrowded and buckling jetway.

President Ashraf Ghani fled as the Taliban reached Kabul on Sunday. Ghani left Afghanistan with the chief of staff, national security advisor and his family, as many on social media called him a coward and said they felt betrayed. However, Ghani said that he left to avoid further "bloodshed" in Afghanistan. As of now, it's not clear where he went.

What next?

The US and international community are piling pressure on the Taliban to reach some kind of deal with the Afghan government. This will likely lead to Ghani stepping down from his post or he will be moved to a figurehead role.

The Taliban now control most of Afghanistan's border crossings, which denies revenue for the government and enables the Taliban to tax trade to fund their fighting.

The Taliban might also permit groups like al Qaeda to train and operate from there, which is likely to make the country hotbed of terrorist activities.

Controlling the customs posts and border crossings (aside from Kabul airport) and with the Afghan military collapsing, the Taliban hold the cards. Russia and China will be comfortable engaging with the group's leaders, according to experts.

An exodus of people from Afghanistan could include terrorists and Uyghur separatists, worrying the neighbouring countries including Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the northern side.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in late December 1979. The Soviet Union intervened in support of the Afghan communist government in its conflict with anti-communist Muslim guerrillas during the Afghan War (1978-92) and remained in Afghanistan until mid-February 1989.

In April 1978 Afghanistan's centrist government, headed by Pres. Mohammad Daud Khan, was overthrown by left-wing military officers led by Nur Mohammad Taraki. Power was thereafter shared by two Marxist-Leninist political groups, the People's (Khalq) Party and the Banner (Parcham) Party—which had earlier

Afghanistan has fallen to the Taliban and the frenzy for Afghans and diplomats trying to flee the country reached a fever pitch Monday. Additional U.S. troops are on their way to help with evacuations as the Taliban retake power 20 years after the American invasion



Afghan people sit inside a U.S. military aircraft to leave Afghanistan, at the military airport in Kabul on Aug. 19, 2021 after Taliban's military takeover of Afghanistan. Photo source: AFP via Getty Images

emerged from a single organization, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan—and had reunited in an uneasy coalition shortly before the coup. The new government, which had little popular support, forged close ties with the Soviet Union, launched ruthless purges of all domestic opposition, and began extensive land and social reforms that were bitterly resented by the devoutly Muslim and largely anti-communist population. Insurgencies arose against the government among both tribal and urban groups, and all of these—known collectively as the mujahideen (Arabic mujahidun, "those who engage in jihad")—were Islamic in orientation.

These uprisings, along with internal fighting and coups within the government between the People's and Banner factions, prompted the Soviets to invade the country on the night of December 24, 1979, sending in some 30,000 troops and toppling the short-lived presidency of People's leader Hafizullah Amin. The aim of the Soviet operation was to prop up their new but faltering client state, now headed by Banner leader Babrak Karmal, but Karmal was unable to attain significant popular support. Backed by the United States, the mujahideen rebellion grew, spreading to all parts of the country. The Soviets initially left the suppression of the rebellion to the Afghan army, but the latter was beset by mass desertions and remained largely ineffective throughout the war.

The Afghan War quickly settled down into a stalemate, with more than 100,000 Soviet troops controlling the cities, larger

towns, and major garrisons and the mujahideen moving with relative freedom throughout the countryside. Soviet troops tried to crush the insurgency by various tactics, but the guerrillas generally eluded their attacks. The Soviets then attempted to eliminate the mujahideen's civilian support by bombing and depopulating the rural areas. These tactics sparked a massive flight from the countryside; by 1982 some 2.8 million Afghans had sought asylum in Pakistan, and another 1.5 million had fled to Iran. The mujahideen were eventually able to neutralize Soviet air power through the use of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles supplied by the Soviet Union's Cold War adversary, the United States.

The mujahideen were fragmented politically into a handful of independent groups, and their military efforts remained uncoordinated throughout the war. The quality of their arms and combat organization gradually improved, however, owing to experience and to the large quantity of arms and other war matériel shipped to the rebels, via Pakistan, by the United States and other countries and by sympathetic Muslims from throughout the world. In addition, an indeterminate number of Muslim volunteers—popularly termed "Afghan-Arabs," regardless of their ethnicity—traveled from all parts of the world to join the opposition.

The war in Afghanistan became a quagmire for what by the late 1980s was a disintegrating Soviet Union. (The Soviets suffered some 15,000 dead and many more injured.) Despite having failed to

implement a sympathetic regime in Afghanistan, in 1988 the Soviet Union signed an accord with the United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and agreed to withdraw its troops. The Soviet withdrawal was completed on February 15, 1989, and Afghanistan returned to nonaligned status.

The rise of Taliban

The Taliban were removed from power in Afghanistan by US-led forces in 2001, but the group has seized control of the country once again following a rapid offensive.

The capital, Kabul, was the last major city to fall to the offensive that began months ago but accelerated as the hardline Islamists gained control of territories.

The group entered direct talks with the US back in 2018, and in February 2020 the two sides struck a peace deal that committed the US to withdrawal and the Taliban to preventing attacks on US forces. Other promises included not allowing al-Qaeda or other militants to operate in areas it controlled and proceeding with national peace talks.

But in the year that followed, the Taliban continued to target Afghan security forces and civilians, advancing rapidly across the country.

Rise to power

The Taliban, or "students" in the Pashto language, emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It is believed that the

From Page 18

predominantly Pashtun movement first appeared in religious seminaries - mostly paid for by money from Saudi Arabia - which preached a hardline form of Sunni Islam.

The promise made by the Taliban - in Pashtun areas straddling Pakistan and Afghanistan - was to restore peace and security and enforce their own austere version of Sharia, or Islamic law, once in power.

From south-western Afghanistan, the Taliban quickly extended their influence. In September 1995 they captured the province of Herat, bordering Iran, and exactly one year later they captured the Afghan capital, Kabul, overthrowing the regime of President Burhanuddin Rabbani - one of the founding fathers of the Afghan mujahideen that resisted the Soviet occupation. By 1998, the Taliban were in control of almost 90% of Afghanistan.

Afghans, weary of the mujahideen's excesses and infighting after the Soviets were driven out, generally welcomed the Taliban when they first appeared on the scene. Their early popularity was largely due to their success in stamping out corruption, curbing lawlessness and making the roads and the areas under their control safe for commerce to flourish.

But the Taliban also introduced or supported punishments in line with their strict interpretation of Sharia law - such as public executions of convicted murderers and adulterers, and amputations for those found guilty of theft. Men were required to grow beards and women had to wear the all-covering burka.

The Taliban also banned television, music and cinema, and disapproved of girls aged 10 and over going to school. They were accused of various human rights and cultural abuses. One notorious example was in 2001, when the Taliban went ahead with the destruction of the famous Bamiyan Buddha statues in central Afghanistan, despite international outrage.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied that it was the architect of the Taliban enterprise, but there is little doubt that many Afghans who initially joined the movement were educated in madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan.

Pakistan was also one of only three countries, along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which recognised the Taliban when they were in power in Afghanistan. It was also the last country to break diplomatic ties with the group.

At one point, the Taliban threatened to destabilise Pakistan from areas they controlled in the north-west. One of the most high-profile and internationally condemned of all Pakistani Taliban attacks took place in October 2012, when schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai was shot on her way home in the town of Mingora.

A major military offensive two years later following the Peshawar school massacre greatly reduced the group's influence in Pakistan though. At least three key figures of the Pakistani Taliban had been killed in US drone strikes in 2013, including the group's leader, Hakimullah Mehsud.

Al-Qaeda 'sanctuary'

The attention of the world was drawn to the Taliban in Afghanistan in the wake of the 11 September 2001 World Trade Center attacks in New York. The



Taliban fighters display their flag on patrol in Kabul, Aug. 19, 2021. The Taliban celebrated Afghanistan's Independence Day on Thursday by declaring they beat the United States.

Photo Source: AP

Taliban were accused of providing a sanctuary for the prime suspects - Osama Bin Laden and his al-Qaeda movement.

On October 7, 2001, a US-led military coalition launched attacks in Afghanistan, and by the first week of December the Taliban regime had collapsed. The group's then-leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, and other senior figures, including Bin Laden, evaded capture despite one of the largest manhunts in the world.

Many senior Taliban leaders reportedly took refuge in the Pakistani city of Quetta, from where they guided the Taliban. But the existence of what was dubbed the "Quetta Shura" was denied by Islamabad.

Despite ever higher numbers of foreign troops, the Taliban gradually regained and then extended their influence in Afghanistan, rendering vast tracts of the country insecure, and violence in the country returned to levels not seen since 2001.

There were numerous Taliban attacks on Kabul and, in September 2012, the group carried out a high-profile raid on Nato's Camp Bastion base.

Hopes of a negotiated peace were raised in 2013, when the Taliban announced plans to open an office in Qatar. But mistrust on all sides remained high and the violence went on.

In August 2015, the Taliban admitted they had covered up Mullah Omar's death - reportedly of health problems at a hospital in Pakistan - for more than two years. The following month, the group said it had put aside weeks of infighting and rallied around a new leader in the form of Mullah Mansour, who had been the deputy of Mullah Omar. At around the same time, the Taliban seized control of a provincial capital for the first time since their defeat in 2001, taking control of the strategically important city of Kunduz.

Mullah Mansour was killed in a US drone strike in May 2016 and replaced by his deputy Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, who remains in control of the group.

Seizing power

In the year following the US-Taliban peace deal of February 2020 - which was the culmination of a long spell of direct talks - the Taliban appeared to shift their tactics from complex attacks in cities and on military outposts to a wave of

targeted assassinations that terrorised Afghan civilians.

The targets - journalists, judges, peace activists, women in positions of power - suggested that the Taliban had not changed their extremist ideology, only their strategy.

Despite grave concerns from Afghan officials over the government's vulnerability to the Taliban without international support, the new US president, Joe Biden, announced in April 2021 that all American forces would leave the country by 11 September - two decades to the day since the felling of the World Trade Center.

Having outlasted a superpower through two decades of war, the Taliban began seizing vast swathes of territory, before once again toppling a government in Kabul in the wake of a foreign power withdrawing.

They swept across Afghanistan in just 10 days, taking their first provincial capital on 6 August. By 15 August, they were at the gates of Kabul.

Their lightning advance prompted tens of thousands of people to flee their homes, many arriving in the Afghan capital, others heading for neighbouring countries.

The Taliban's return to rule brings an end to almost 20 years of a US-led coalition's presence in the country.

American presence in Afghanistan

Following the Taliban's capture of Kabul on Aug. 15, the two-decade American era in Afghanistan appears to be finally over, and it is worth reflecting on what led up to this point. Here is an overview of some of key periods in the conflict.

The George W. Bush administration

The US entered Afghanistan as part of its War on Terror following 9/11, with a goal of defeating Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. But what was intended to be a quick and decisive show of force turned into a long and deadly war.

2001: The Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon marked the beginning of the War on Terror. The US invaded Afghanistan.

2003: In May, US defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced that "major combat" operations had ended in

the country, and that efforts would be shifted to reconstruction.

2004-2006: Several years of fighting ensued between a US-led military coalition and the Taliban. In this time, the Afghanistan government (with US support) established a new constitution, and elected Hamid Karzai as president. By mid-2006, Taliban forces were resurgent.

The Obama administration

The early Barack Obama years were marked by an increased US presence in Afghanistan. After overseeing the killing of Osama bin Laden, Obama set out a plan to leave Afghanistan in his second term.

2009-2010: Obama made a renewed commitment to Afghanistan. This included sending a surge of 17,000 troops to the country in Feb. 2009, and shifting strategy to focus on fighting Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants in Pakistan as well.

2011: US Navy SEALs carried out a successful mission to kill Osama bin Laden.

2013: NATO forces (led by the US) officially handed over security responsibility to Afghan military forces. The US military stayed on mostly in a training capacity and for specific counterterrorism efforts.

2014: President Obama announced a timeline for the withdrawal of US troops, but the Taliban were once again active in various parts of the country, and the Americans stayed longer.

The Trump administration

In a reversal of policy, Trump initially escalated engagement and promised to "fight to win." Trump did eventually withdraw some forces, but Taliban power continued to grow. There were unsuccessful peace talks between the US, Taliban, and Afghan governments.

2017: In August, president Trump introduced a new policy towards Afghanistan, ramping up the US presence on the ground for as long as it took to win instead of focusing on timetables for withdrawal.

2019: The Taliban and US government entered a round of peace talks that one US special envoy described as "more productive than they have been in the past." The two sides reached a tentative peace agreement that involves US withdrawal of troops and a commitment that the Taliban will not harbor other jihadist groups. By September, Trump had canceled the deal.

2020: In February, US and Taliban leaders signed a peace deal, but it didn't hold; conflict quickly resumed. In November, the Pentagon announced plans to withdraw troops as Trump's presidency ended.

The Biden administration

Biden came into office with a commitment to ending the US' war in Afghanistan. This approach has garnered criticism for the humanitarian and national security crises that could arise from the absence of US forces in the region.

2021: As president-elect, Joe Biden promised to withdraw all US troops from Afghanistan. By April, he said that this process would be complete by September, on the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. As the Taliban closed in on Kabul in August, Biden temporarily deployed a total of 5,000 troops to evacuate US embassy personnel.

A historical timeline of Afghanistan

The land that is now Afghanistan has a long history of domination by foreign conquerors and strife among internally warring factions. At the gateway between Asia and Europe, this land was conquered by Darius I of Babylonia circa 500 B.C., and Alexander the Great of Macedonia in 329 B.C., among others.

Mahmud of Ghazni, an 11th century conqueror who created an empire from Iran to India, is considered the greatest of Afghanistan's conquerors.

Genghis Khan took over the territory in the 13th century, but it wasn't until the 1700s that the area was united as a single country. By 1870, after the area had been invaded by various Arab conquerors, Islam had taken root.

During the 19th century, Britain, looking to protect its Indian empire from Russia, attempted to annex Afghanistan, resulting in a series of British-Afghan Wars (1838-42, 1878-80, 1919-21).

1921

The British, beleaguered in the wake of World War I, are defeated in the Third British-Afghan War (1919-21), and Afghanistan becomes an independent nation. Concerned that Afghanistan has fallen behind the rest of the world, Amir Amanullah Khan begins a rigorous campaign of socioeconomic reform.

1926

Amanullah declares Afghanistan a monarchy, rather than an emirate, and proclaims himself king. He launches a series of modernization plans and attempts to limit the power of the Loya Jirga, the National Council. Critics, frustrated by Amanullah's policies, take up arms in 1928 and by 1929, the king abdicates and leaves the country.

1933

Zahir Shah becomes king. The new king brings a semblance of stability to the country and he rules for the next 40 years.

1934

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1934

The United States formally recognizes Afghanistan.

1947

Britain withdraws from India, creating the predominantly Hindu but secular state of India and the Islamic state of Pakistan. The nation of Pakistan includes a long, largely uncontrollable, border with Afghanistan.

1953

The pro-Soviet Gen. Mohammed Daoud Khan, cousin of the king, becomes prime minister and looks to the communist nation for economic and military assistance. He also introduces a number of social reforms including allowing women a more public presence.

1956

The pro-Soviet Gen. Mohammed Daoud Khan, cousin of the king, becomes prime minister and looks to the communist nation for economic and military assistance. He also introduces a number



A Taliban fighter walks past a beauty saloon with images of women defaced using a spray paint in Shar-e-Naw in Kabul on August 18, 2021. Photo source: AFP via Getty Images

of social reforms including allowing women a more public presence.

1956

The pro-Soviet Gen. Mohammed Daoud Khan, cousin of the king, becomes prime minister and looks to the communist nation for economic and military assistance. He also introduces a number of social reforms including allowing women a more public presence.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev agrees to help Afghanistan, and the two countries become close allies.

1957

As part of Daoud's reforms, women are allowed to attend university and enter the workforce.

1965

The Afghan Communist Party secretly forms. The group's principal leaders are Babrak Karmal and Nur Mohammad Taraki.

1973

Khan overthrows the last king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, in a military coup. Khan's regime, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, comes to power. Khan abolishes the monarchy and names himself president. The Republic of Afghanistan is established with firm ties to the USSR.

1975-1977

Khan proposes a new constitution that grants women rights and works to modernize the largely communist state. He also cracks down on opponents, forcing many suspected of not supporting Khan out of the government.

1978

Khan is killed in a communist coup. Nur Mohammad Taraki, one of the founding members of the Afghan Communist Party, takes control of the country as president, and Babrak Karmal is named deputy prime minister. They proclaim independence from Soviet influence, and declare their policies to be based on Islamic principles, Afghan nationalism and socioeconomic justice. Taraki signs a friendship treaty with the

Soviet Union. But a rivalry between Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, another influential communist leader, leads to fighting between the two sides.

At the same time, conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who objected to social changes introduced by Khan begin an armed revolt in the countryside. In June, the guerrilla movement Mujahadeen is created to battle the Soviet-backed government.

1979

American Ambassador Adolph Dubs is killed. The United States cuts off assistance to Afghanistan. A power struggle between Taraki and Deputy Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin begins. Taraki is killed on Sept. 14 in a confrontation with Amin supporters.

The USSR invades Afghanistan on Dec. 24 to bolster the faltering communist regime. On Dec. 27, Amin and many of his followers are executed. Deputy Prime Minister Babrak Karmal becomes prime minister. Widespread opposition to Karmal and the Soviets spawns violent public demonstrations.

By early 1980, the Mujahadeen rebels have united against Soviet invaders and the USSR-backed Afghan Army.

1982

Some 2.8 million Afghans have fled from the war to Pakistan, and another 1.5 million have fled to Iran. Afghan guerrillas gain control of rural areas, and Soviet troops hold urban areas.

1984

Although he claims to have traveled to Afghanistan immediately after the Soviet invasion, Saudi Islamist Osama bin Laden makes his first documented trip to Afghanistan to aid anti-Soviet fighters.

The United Nations investigates reported human rights violations in Afghanistan.

1986

The Mujahadeen are receiving arms from the United States, Britain and China via Pakistan.

1988

In September, Osama bin Laden and 15

other Islamists form the group al-Qaida, or "the base", to continue their jihad, or holy war, against the Soviets and other who they say oppose their goal of a pure nation governed by Islam. With their belief that the Soviet's faltering war in Afghanistan was directly attributable to their fighting, they claim victory in their first battle, but also begin to shift their focus to America, saying the remaining superpower is the main obstacle to the establishment of a state based on Islam.

1989

The U.S., Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union sign peace accords in Geneva guaranteeing Afghan independence and the withdrawal of 100,000 Soviet troops. Following Soviet withdrawal, the Mujahadeen continue their resistance against the Soviet-backed regime of communist president Dr. Mohammad Najibullah, who had been elected president of the puppet Soviet state in 1986. Afghan guerrillas name Sibhatullah Mojadidi as head of their exiled government.

1992

The Mujahadeen and other rebel groups, with the aid of turncoat government troops, storm the capital, Kabul, and oust Najibullah from power. Ahmad Shah Masood, legendary guerrilla leader, leads the troops into the capital. The United Nations offers protection to Najibullah. The Mujahadeen, a group already beginning to fracture as warlords fight over the future of Afghanistan, form a largely Islamic state with professor Burhannudin Rabbani as president.

1995

Newly formed Islamic militia, the Taliban, rises to power on promises of peace. Most Afghans, exhausted by years of drought, famine and war, approve of the Taliban for upholding traditional Islamic values. The Taliban outlaw cultivation of poppies for the opium trade, crack down on crime, and curtail the education and employment of women. Women are required to be fully veiled and are not allowed outside alone. Islamic law is enforced via public executions and amputations. The United States refuses to recognize the authority of the Taliban.

1995-1999

Continuing drought devastates farmers and makes many rural areas uninhabitable. More than 1 million Afghans flee to neighboring Pakistan, where they languish in squalid refugee camps.

1997

The Taliban publicly executes Najibullah.

Ethnic groups in the north, under Masood's Northern Alliance, and the south, aided in part by Hamid Karzai, continue to battle the Taliban for control of the country.

1998

Following al-Qaida's bombings of two American embassies in Africa, President Clinton orders cruise missile attacks against bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan. The attacks miss the Saudi and other leaders of the terrorist group.

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2000

By now considered an international terrorist, bin Laden is widely believed to be hiding in Afghanistan, where he is cultivating thousands of followers in terrorist training camps. The United States demands that bin Laden be extradited to stand trial for the embassy bombings. The Taliban decline to extradite him. The United Nations punishes Afghanistan with sanctions restricting trade and economic development.

March 2001

Ignoring international protests, the Taliban carry out their threat to destroy Buddhist statues in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, saying they are an affront to Islam.

Sept. 4, 2001

A month after arresting them, the Taliban put eight international aid workers on trial for spreading Christianity. Under Taliban rule, proselytizing is punishable by death. The group is held in various Afghan prisons for months and finally released Nov. 15.

Sept. 9, 2001

Masood, still head of the Northern Alliance and the nation's top insurgent, is killed by assassins posing as journalists.

Sept. 11, 2001

Hijackers commandeer four commercial airplanes and crash them into the World Trade Center Towers in New York, the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., and a Pennsylvania field, killing thousands. Days later, U.S. officials say bin Laden, the Saudi exile believed to be hiding in Afghanistan, is the prime suspect in the attack.

Oct. 7, 2001

Following unanswered demands that the Taliban turn over bin Laden, U.S. and British forces launch airstrikes against targets in Afghanistan. American warplanes start to bomb Taliban targets and bases reportedly belonging to the al-Qaida network. The Taliban proclaim they are ready for jihad.

Nov. 13, 2001

After weeks of intense fighting with Taliban troops, the Northern Alliance enters Kabul. The retreating Taliban flee southward toward Kandahar.

Dec. 7, 2001

Taliban fighters abandon their final stronghold in Kandahar as the militia group's hold on Afghanistan continues to disintegrate. Two days later, Taliban leaders surrender the group's final Afghan territory, the province of Zabul. The move leads the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press to declare "the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan has totally ended."

Dec. 22, 2001

Hamid Karzai, a royalist and ethnic Pashtun, is sworn in as the leader of the interim government in Afghanistan. Karzai entered Afghanistan after living in exile for years in neighboring Pakistan. At the U.N.-sponsored conference to determine an interim government, Karzai already has the support of the United States and by the end of the conference is elected leader of the six-month government.



Afghans celebrate Independence Day with the national flag in streets of Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 19, 2021. Photo source: AFP

2002

In June, the Loya Jirga, or grand council, elects U.S.-backed Hamid Karzai as interim leader. Karzai chooses the members of his government who will serve until 2004, when the government is required to organize elections.

2003

Amid increased violence, NATO takes over security in Kabul in August. The effort is the security organization's first-ever commitment outside of Europe.

January 2004

The Loya Jirga adopts a new constitution following input from nearly 500,000 Afghans, some of whom participate in public meetings in villages. The new constitution calls for a president and two vice presidents, but the office of prime minister is removed at the last minute. The official languages, according to the constitution, are Pashto and Dari. Also, the new constitution calls for equality for women.

October 2004

Presidential elections are held. More than 10.5 million Afghans register to vote and choose among 18 presidential candidates, including interim leader Karzai. Karzai is elected with 55 percent of the vote.

2005

The nation holds its first parliamentary elections in more than 30 years. The peaceful vote leads to the parliament's first meeting in December.

2006

Amid continuing fighting between Taliban and al-Qaida fighters and the Afghan government forces, NATO expands its peacekeeping operation to the southern portion of the country. After the forces take over from American-led troops, Taliban fighters launch a bloody wave of suicide attacks and raids against the international troops.

2007

The Afghan government and NATO confirm that Taliban commander

Mullah Dadullah was killed during a U.S.-led operation in southern Afghanistan.

2008

The international community pledges more than \$15 billion in aid to Afghanistan at a donors' conference in Paris, while Afghan President Hamid Karzai promises to fight corruption in the government.

2009

President Barack Obama names Richard Holbrooke as a special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Mr. Obama announces a new strategy for the Afghanistan war that would dispatch more military and civilian trainers to the country, in addition to the 17,000 more combat troops he previously ordered.

The strategy also includes assistance to Pakistan in its fight against militants.

2010

President Barack Obama accepts Gen. Stanley McChrystal's resignation as the top commander in Afghanistan, over critical comments he made in a Rolling Stone article, and nominates Gen. David Petraeus, head of U.S. Central Command, as his replacement.

2011

U.S. forces overtake a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and kill al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden on May 2 local time.

2012

President Hamid Karzai calls for American forces to leave Afghan villages and pull back to their bases after a U.S. soldier kills 16 Afghan civilians inside their homes.

2013

The Afghan army takes over all military and security operations from NATO forces.

May 2014

Obama announces timetable for significantly reducing U.S. troop sizes in Afghanistan by 2016.

September 2014

Ashraf Ghani becomes president of Afghanistan in September after two rounds of voting, claims of election fraud and a power-sharing agreement with main rival Abdullah Abdullah.

December 2014

NATO officially ends its combat mission in Afghanistan. U.S.-led NATO troops remain to train and advise Afghan forces.

Oct. 15, 2015

Obama abandons plan to withdraw U.S. forces by the end of his presidency and maintains 5,500 troops in Afghanistan when he leaves office in 2017.

Aug. 21, 2017

Trump commits to continued military involvement to prevent emergence of "a vacuum for terrorists."

February 2019

U.S. and Taliban sign agreement on a peace deal that would serve as the preliminary terms for the U.S. withdrawal from the country by May 2021.

September 2019

Trump calls off peace talks after U.S. soldier is killed in a Taliban attack.

November 2020

U.S. announces plans to cut U.S. troop size in half — down to 2,500 by January — days before Biden was inaugurated

April, 2021

Biden announces aim to complete U.S. troop withdrawal by 9/11.

July 5, 2021

U.S. leaves Bagram airfield without telling the base's new Afghan commander.

Aug. 10, 2021

White House says Taliban takeover "is not inevitable" following the U.S.' speedy withdrawal from the country.

Aug. 15, 2021

The Afghanistan government collapses as the Taliban takes over Kabul.

Source: PBS NewsHour

CELEBRATE NJSO SUMMER... IN THE PARK

BY MABEL PAIS



NJSO Audience at a Park Concert - Photo / Courtesy NJSO

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) celebrates summer with a series of outdoor concerts featuring music from composers across the Americas, with José Luis Domínguez at the podium. The Orchestra performs free concerts at Ocean County College in Toms River (August 18 at 7:30 pm) and Branch Brook Park in Newark (August 26 at 7:30 pm), and it returns to the Giralda Music and Arts Festival in Madison (August 28 at 5 pm).

The concert program features music by John Williams, Pedro Elías Gutiérrez, Oscar Lorenzo Fernández and the late New Jersey composer George Walker. Highlights include trailblazer Florence Price's "Nimble Feet" from "Dances in the Canebrakes," patriotic favorites and Aaron Copland's "Saturday Night Waltz" from "Rodeo."

The programs at Ocean County College and Branch Brook Park are free and open to the public. The Giralda Music & Arts Festival, presented by

Morris Arts, returns for its 37th year. The event features children's activities, an art show, picnic contest and more. Tickets are available at morrisarts.org.

To learn more, visit njsymphony.org/events COVID Safety and Precautions

The safety of NJSO's patrons, musicians and staff is of utmost importance to the organization. Please visit njsymphony.org for constantly updated details focused on attendees' well-being at the performances.

The Orchestra's online hub for free musical content is njsymphony.org/virtual.

Connect with NJSO:

Website: njsymphony.org

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @NJSymphony

YouTube: @NewJerseySymphony

Email: information@njsymphony.org

RAMY TAKES NJPAC'S STAGE BY MABEL PAIS



Ramy Youssef - Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

Ramy Youssef takes NJPAC's stage for one night of comedy!

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) presents NJ native RAMY YOUSSEF LIVE on

Sunday, August 22, 2021 at the Victoria Theater on the Lizzie & Jonathan Tisch Stage.

Ramy Youssef is a Golden Globe-winning Egyptian-American creator, actor, producer, director, and comedian who brings his unique voice and perspective to his storytelling. He won the 2020 Golden Globe Award® on behalf of "Ramy" in the category of 'Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series - Musical or Comedy.' Youssef created, produced and stars in the hit show which is inspired by his own experiences centering around a first-generation Egyptian-American Muslim on a spiritual journey in his politically divided New Jersey neighborhood. Youssef grew up in Rutherford, New Jersey and went to college at Rutgers University.

Most recently, the Television Academy nominated Youssef for two 2020 Emmy Awards® in the categories of "Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series" and "Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series" on behalf of the second

season of "Ramy." Youssef was also nominated for a Critics' Choice Award and a Writers Guild Award for his one-hour HBO comedy special "Ramy Youssef: Feelings" produced by A24. Youssef, through his partnership with A24, is working on creating and developing subsequent projects. The first show will star "Ramy" series regular Stephen Way in a story illustrating the perspective and experience of a disabled person and their family in a real way. Youssef will executive produce both this series and an untitled show currently in production with Netflix.

TICKETS : For Tickets, visit ticketmaster.com

(ticketmaster.com/ramy-youssef-live-newark-new-jersey-08-22-2021/event/00005B0EB7425224) or the NJPAC Box Office at 1 Center Street, Newark, New Jersey or call 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

COVID Safety and Other Restrictions For COVID health and safety, visit njpac.org/visit/covid-health-and-safety This event is a phone-free experience.

Use of phones, smartwatches, and accessories, will not be permitted in the performance space. To learn more, visit njpac.org/event/ramy-youssef-live

NJPAC : The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, N.J., is America's most diverse performing arts center, and the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey - where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted nearly 10 million visitors (including over 1.7 million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. To learn more, visit njpac.org

NJPAC SEEKS NEXT BEST JAZZ SINGER BY MABEL PAIS



Sarah Vaughan Competition Poster Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) opens the search for the World's Next Great Jazz

Singer!

NJPAC opens the 10th Annual Sarah Vaughan Competition.

Do you sing or know someone who is a phenomenal jazz singer? If so, Enter at njpac.org/sarah-vaughan-international-jazz-vocal-competition/application or visit njpac.org

The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition is open to solo vocalists of all nationalities and can be from anywhere in the world. Singers are judged on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation, and ability to swing. They can't be signed to a major record label.

This year, NJPAC will be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition's 10th known as the "The

SASSY Awards." The special event will feature jazz greats Christian McBride and Dianne Reeves as co-hosts and guest performers. The competition showcases five yet-to-be-announced finalists of outstanding jazz singers. These gifted young contestants from around the world will be evaluated on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation, and ability to swing. The winner receives a \$5,000 cash prize. Anyone interested in participating in the competition, can visit njpac.org.

Sarah Vaughan : Newark teenager Sarah Vaughan (allmusic.com/artist/sarah-vaughan-mn0000204901), on a Wednesday night in 1942, went to the Apollo Theater (New York) to compete in an amateur singing contest. It was the chance to win \$10 and a week-long

engagement performing on the Apollo stage. Instead, Vaughan's win launched a career that would transform America's original art form and an icon who elevated the craft of jazz vocal music and garnered the respect and adoration of millions. Now, it's time for history to repeat itself.

The deadline to enter is September 7, 2021 at 5:00PM. The Sarah Vaughan Jazz Competition is scheduled for Sunday, November 14, 2021, at 3PM.

#sarahvaughancompetition
#NJPACvocalcompetition
#SarahVaughan #vocalsearch
#singingcompetition #jazzsingers
#jazz

To learn more about NJPAC, visit njpac.org

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

SIDEWALK FILM FEST @ 23 BY MABEL PAIS



SideWalk Logo - Photo / SideWalkFest.com/WildWorks PR

OPENING NIGHT: Jeff Daniels' "TELEVISION EVENT"

CLOSING NIGHT: Jim Cummings and PJ McCabe's "THE BETA TEST"

NARRATIVE FEATURE: ROSHAN SETHI'S "7 DAYS"

The 2021 Sidewalk Film Festival, the 23rd edition of the popular and nationally acclaimed Birmingham, Alabama film festival, takes place August 23-29.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS & FEATURE FILMS: OPENING NIGHT

"Television Event"

DIR: Jeff Daniels | USA/Australia | 1h 30m



Opening Night - Photo / SideWalkFest.com/WildWorks PR

"Television Event" (based on the 1983 made-for-TV movie, "The Day After") is a fictional account of nuclear aftermath in a small Kansas town. With little context regarding the "how" or "why," the film focused on the horrific outcome and scared the hell out of the vast majority of the country. So much so that (rumor has it) Ronald Reagan changed his policy on nuclear armament after viewing the film.

CLOSING NIGHT

"The Beta Test"

DIRS: Jim Cummings & PJ McCabe | USA | 1h 33m



Closing Night - Photo / SideWalkFest.com/WildWorks PR

What happens when a happily (?) married, ladder-climbing Hollywood agent receives a mysterious letter containing a proposition for an anonymous sexual encounter with an "admirer"? Things get super out of

hand. Packed with murder, mystery, horror tropes, hackers, Weinstein references, neurotic humor and compulsive teeth whitening, "The Beta Test" is strange, funny, occasionally borderline-surreal and wholly original.

SPECIAL SCREENINGS AND EVENTS

"3 Ninjas"

DIR: Jon Turteltaub | 1992 | USA | 1h 25m

"Contagion": Fact or Fiction Roundtable

DIR: Steven Soderbergh | 2011 | USA | 2h 20m

"The French"

DIR: William Klein | 1982 | France | 1h 35

"Great Muppet Caper"

DIR: Jim Henson | 1981 | USA | 1h 37m

"Heavy Metal Parking Lot" & Friends

DIRS: John Heyn & Jeff Krulik | 1986 | USA | 16m

"Mrs. Doubtfire" Live Score

DIR: Chris Columbus | 1993 | USA | 2h 5m

Saturday Morning Cartoons

USA | 1h 40m

For the ninth year in a row, Sidewalk programmers have compiled an awesome selection of 1980s and '90s cartoons and vintage commercials for the start of your Sidewalk weekend. To accompany the fun-packed screening there will be a free cereal bar. So, launch into your 2021 festival weekend the right way, by loading up on carbs, crazy cartoon antics and good company. Fun for all ages!

SIDEWALK FILM FEST'S SUPER SECRET SCREENINGS

Secret Screening - Award-winning Filmmaker | USA | 1h 40m

Secret Screening - Alabama Special | USA | 1h 40m

Sunday Secret Screening - Movies for Grown Ups Edition | USA | 1h 31m

Sidewalk's Rock n' Roll Double Feature

"We Were There to Be There"

DIRS: Mike Plante & Jason Willis | USA | 27m

"Blondie: Vivir En La Habana"

DIRS: John Heyn & Jeff Krulik | USA/Cuba | 1h

Sidewalk ScreenTalks Podcast Live | 1h 20m

To learn more, visit

sidewalkfest.com/class/sidetalks-podcast

"The Target Shoots First" (2000)

DIR: Christopher Wilcha | 2000 | USA | 1h 10m

"Thelma & Louise" (1991) With Roundtable

DIR: Ridley Scott | 1991 | USA | 2h 10m

ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE TITLES



7 Days." - Photo /TFF 2021

"7 Days"

DIR: Roshan Sethi | USA | 1h 26m

"Acts of Love"

DIRS: Isidore Bethel & Francis Leplay | USA | 1h 11m

"Catch The Fair One"

DIR: Josef Kubota Wladyka | USA | 1h 25m

"Ema"

DIR: Pablo Larraín | Chile | 1h 47m

"The Feast"

DIR: Lee Haven Jones | UK | 1h 35m

"John and the Hole"

DIR: Pascual Sisto | USA | 1h 38m

"Mandibles"

DIR: Quentin Dupieux | USA | 1h 17m

"The Novice"

DIR: Lauren Hadaway | USA | 1h 34m

"Poser"

DIRS: Ori Segev & Noah Dixon | USA | 1h 27m

"The Shocklosers Survive Camp Analog"

DIR: Lee Fanning | USA | 1h 16m

"Sibyl"

DIR: Justine Triet | France/Belgium | 1h 40m

"Swan Song"

DIR: Todd Stephens | USA | 1h 45m

"We Need to Do Something"

DIR: Sean King O'Grady | USA | 1h 37m

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTARY TITLES

"Accepted"

DIR: Dan Chen | USA | 1h 31m

"Ailey"

DIR: Jamila Wignot | USA | 1h 22m

"Building A Bridge"

DIRS: Shannon Post & Evan Mascagni | USA | 1h 36m

"The Capote Tapes"

DIR: Ebs Burnough | USA | 1h 38m

"Carterland"

DIRS: Jim Pattiz & Will Pattiz | USA | 2h 2m

"Claydream"

DIR: Marq Evans | USA | 1h 35m

"Foosballers"

DIR: Joe Heslinga | USA | 1h 36m

"Karen Dalton: In My Own Time"

DIRS: Richard Peete & Robert Yapkowitz | USA | 1h 26m

"Kid Candidate"

DIR: Jasmine Stodel | USA | 1h 7m

"The Kids"

DIR: Eddie Martin | USA | 1h 28m

"Kubrick by Kubrick"

DIR: Gregory Monro | France/Poland | 1h 13m

"Lady Boss: The Jackie Collins Story"

DIR: Laura Fairrie | USA | 1h 36m

"LFG"

DIRS: Sean Fine & Andrea Nix Fine | USA | 1h 45m

Country: US; Running Time: 105 min

"Lily Topples the World"

DIR: Jeremy Workman | USA | 1h 30m

"The Lost Leonardo"

DIR: Andreas Koefoed | USA | 1h 35m

"The Magic City Nutcracker"

DIR: Evan Lanier | USA | 1h 24m

"The Neutral Ground"

DIR: CJ Hunt | USA | 1h 30m

"North by Current"

DIR: Angelo Madsen Minax | USA | 1h 25m

"Not Going Quietly"

DIR: Nicholas Bruckman | USA | 1h 38m

"On Broadway"

DIR: Oren Jacoby | USA | 1h 22m

"On The Divide"

DIR: Leah Galant | USA | 1h 22m

"The Passing On"

DIR: Nathan Clarke | USA | 1h 10m

TICKETS : For Tickets, Passes and more information, visit sidewalkfest.com

SIDEWALK : SIDEWALK is dedicated to encouraging filmmaking in Alabama and building audiences for independent film. The organization produces the nationally recognized Sidewalk Film Festival, the SHOUT LGBTQ Film Festival; organizes a wide variety of educational programs for filmmakers and holds other events that create interest in and enthusiasm for independent film. For twenty-one years the organization's premiere event has been the Sidewalk Film Festival, which showcases the work of more than 250 filmmakers and welcomes 15,000 film lovers to Birmingham annually. The Festival continues to thrive with increases in submissions, ticket sales, and press coverage. To learn more, visit sidewalkfest.com

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



Sayani Gupta fears getting cheated on in marriage

Sayani Gupta's latest series to arrive online is an Amazon Mini TV anthology, *Kaali Peeli Tales*. The six stories in the series trace the lives of a few Mumbaikars hoping to find love, acceptance, or some closure.

Sayani stars in *Single Jhumka* with Priyanshu Painyuli and Bhuvan Arora. She plays a woman who cheats on her partner but isn't sure if all it lost between them. Of the half-dozen stories that feature in this series, as many as four touch upon or take a deep dive into infidelity in relationships.

Mainstream Hindi cinema has mostly shied away from exploring infidelity. A more mature, nuanced and sensitive take has usually been deemed 'too forward' for our desi, 'cultured' sentiments. In 1981, Yash Chopra's attempt—*Silsila*—was met with raised eyebrows and shunned by audiences. Years later, Karan Johar's *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* got a softer landing on comparison. Since then, films on the topic have been rare to come by.

Khushi to make acting debut with Suhana Khan, Agastya Nanda? Dad Boney reacts

Amid reports that Khushi Kapoor, the daughter of late actor Sridevi, is eyeing her acting debut alongside Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan and Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda, her father Boney Kapoor said that he doesn't know anything about it.

It was recently reported by *Pinkvilla* that Kushi Kapoor, Suhana Khan and Agastya Nanda would make their acting debuts in an adaptation of the Archie comics produced by Zoya Akhtar for Netflix. The streamer also holds international rights to *Riverdale*, a teen drama based on the Archie comics.

"I don't know anything about this. I don't know what you are talking about," Boney Kapoor told a leading daily when asked about the development. Previously, he'd told the leading daily that he is reluctant to 'launch' Khushi himself.

"I have the resources, but I would rather have someone else launch her because I am her father and one tends to get indulgent. You can't afford to do that as a filmmaker and nor is it good for the actor," he'd said. Hinting at Khushi being launched by another noted filmmaker, he further said, "I would want Khushi to find her own footing. She will be launched by someone I respect and someone I feel secure and safe about."

Khushi, in an appearance on *BFFs* with *Vogue*, hosted by Neha Dhupia, had said that she trusts Karan Johar to



launch her, but that choosing her first co-star is her father's responsibility. Khushi's sister, Janhvi Kapoor, was also launched by Karan.

Suhana, meanwhile, has been

prepping for her acting debut for a while, but Shah Rukh had said that he'd insisted that his children first complete their studies before entering the world of films. *Source: HT*

Tiger 3: Salman, Katrina to shoot international leg of actioner in Russia, Austria and Turkey

Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif are currently busy filming *Tiger 3*. The pair will be heading to Russia on Wednesday in order to shoot the international portions of the actioner. Salman and Katrina will be filming in at least five different locations abroad, including Austria and Turkey.

However, the pandemic is still a big part of our lives, and to avoid any untoward incident, producer Aditya Chopra has decided to fly his *Tiger 3* team in a jumbo charter.

"YRF is chartering everyone including Salman, Katrina, director Maneesh Sharma, the entire cast and crew for this intense international leg that will see the team pull off some spectacular shooting schedules. The direction team under Maneesh has prepped for months for this schedule, and Aditya Chopra is clear that the shoot needs to happen smoothly," a source revealed.

Adding that the Maneesh Sharma directorial will see the duo perform never-seen-before action scenes, the source further stated, "Salman and Katrina will land in Russia first and then head to multiple shooting destinations like Turkey and Austria. Aditya Chopra and Maneesh Sharma didn't want to compromise on the scale of the film despite the pandemic and they have planned *Tiger 3* to be a visually spectacular theatrical experience. Thus, this schedule will add a lot to the film's visual extravaganza and some never seen before action sequences will be filmed."

Source: The Indian Express



Riteish Deshmukh to make his digital debut with Netflix film Plan A Plan B

Actor Riteish Deshmukh on Monday announced he is set to make his digital debut with a quirky coming-of-age Netflix film *Plan A Plan B* co-starring Tamannaah Bhatia. Directed by Shashanka Ghosh and written by Rajat Arora, the film also stars veteran actor Poonam Dhillon and Kusha Kapila.

According to the streamer, the film follows the story of a matchmaker who believes marriage is for everyone—except herself—and a successful divorce lawyer with a secret.

"What happens when they cross paths? Can opposites coexist, let alone attract?" the synopsis read.

Deshmukh, who was last seen on the big screen in the 2020 action movie *Baaghi 3*, said he was thrilled to be making his digital debut with *Plan A Plan B*.





Jennifer Lopez unfollows ex Alex Rodriguez on Instagram

Actor-singer Jennifer Lopez, it appears, is further cementing her rekindled relationship with Oscar winning actor Ben Affleck as she has recently unfollowed her most recent ex, Alex Rodriguez. She has also deleted every photo with him from her Instagram account.

According to Page Six, Jennifer has deleted all the photos with ex-fiance Alex Rodriguez, including the one that features the duo kissing in front of the Capitol Building -- from her Instagram account.

The Boy Next Door star has also unfollowed Alex on Instagram.

The former couple announced their split in April 2021. Jennifer has since rekindled her romance with her ex-beau Ben, whom she dated for 18 months before their 2004 split. The couple, who have worked together in films Gigli and Jersey Girl, went Instagram official on Let's Get Loud singer's 52nd birthday.

Emilia Clarke, Jason Momoa have mini Game of Thrones reunion

Actor Emilia Clarke's recent Instagram post has ushered a wave of nostalgia among the Game of Thrones (GoT) fans. On Sunday, Emilia took to the photo-sharing application and uploaded a picture from her recent meeting with her GoT co-star Jason Momoa.

In the image, Jason can be seen lifting Emilia. "When your sun and stars roll into town you check that he can still bench press a Khaleesi. # @prideofgypsies #drinkingwithdrogoimamazedwesurvived #theboysarebackintown#likeheneverleft," she captioned the post.

Fans were excited to see them sharing smiles with each other in the picture. "Priceless," a user commented. "My favourite on-screen couple," another fan wrote.

Jason also dropped few pictures with Emilia and wrote: "MOON OF MY LIFE. you are wonderful love u forever @emilia_clarke #smileyeyes happy birthday benioff you handsome generous badass leo aloha j." For the unversed, Khal Drogo and Khaleesi are the fictional characters played by Jason and Emilia respectively on the TV show Game of Thrones.



Cameron Diaz opens up about stepping away from acting



During a sit-down interview with actor-comedian Kevin Hart for his Peacock talk show, Hart to Heart, Hollywood star Cameron Diaz opened up about how acting occupied much of her life which ultimately led her to take a step back and reevaluate everything.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, "When you do something at a really high level for a long period of time, you're the person who's the talent, all parts of you that isn't, that has to sort of be handed off to other people," the 48-year-old explained.

She went on to explain that from the spotlight perspective, it's as if she was "a machine" but for her "personal spiritual self" she realized when she was 40-years-old that the part of her that "functioned at a high level wasn't enough".

Cameron also reiterated that though she has a "love" for acting, there were "so many parts" of her life that she "wasn't touching" and "wasn't managing".

"For me, I just really wanted to make my life manageable by me. My routine in a day is literally what I can manage to do by myself. It's the best feeling," she explained.

Scarlett Johansson welcomes her second child, first with husband Colin Jost

Black Widow actor Scarlett Johansson has welcomed her first child, a son, with husband Colin Jost. The comedian confirmed the news of their baby by sharing a post on his Instagram account. "Ok ok we had a baby," Colin wrote.

The Saturday Night Live star also revealed, "His name is Cosmo. We love him very much." He then requested fans for some privacy. "Privacy would be greatly appreciated. For all inquires please contact our publicist @chethinks [sic]," jokingly tagging his SNL Weekend Update co-anchor Michael Che.

He shared the post with the hashtags, "We got away with it for a long time," "no kids policy," and "we're going to disney world".

While Cosmo is the couple's first baby together, Scarlett already has a six-year-old daughter Rose Dorothy, from her marriage with ex-husband Romain Dauriac.

The news of Scarlett and Colin's son comes shortly after the comedian confirmed that the couple is expecting their first child. On Thursday, a Page Six report said that during his stand-up comedy performance at the Ridgefield Playhouse in Connecticut over the weekend, Colin confirmed that Scarlett is pregnant. Colin said, "We're having a baby, it's exciting," according to a source in the audience.



VANDALISING MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S STATUE AN EXTREMIST ACT, SAYS BRITISH SIKH MP

TANMANJEET DHESI
The MP from Slough hopes the authorities swiftly repair it



Vandalising Maharaja Ranjit Singh's statue an extremist act, says British Sikh MP Tanmanjeet Dhesi. File photo

LONDON (TIP): Saddened after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's statue was vandalised in Lahore, British Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi on Wednesday said the court of the Sikh ruler was run by the Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs. "Saddened by this from extremists in Pakistan (western) Punjab, specially as Maharaja Ranjit Singh was no foreign invader, but fellow Punjabi whose court was run by Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, and who donated to building their shrines," Dhesi tweeted. "Hope authorities swiftly repair it," the Sikh MP from Slough added.

A day earlier, India expressed concern at the development, saying incidents of violence against Pakistan's minorities are increasing at an "alarming rate".

Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri described Maharaja Ranjit Singh 'the great unifier of India', saying the incident must be strongly condemned.

"This act which attempts to erase the shared history of the subcontinent shows how extremist ideologies feel emboldened in our volatile neighbourhood," Puri tweeted. This was the third attempt of vandalising the statue since its unveiling in 2019 at the Lahore Fort on Ranjit Singh's 180th death anniversary. IANS

UK SANCTIONS SEVEN INTEL AGENTS OVER NAVALNY POISONING

LONDON (TIP): The United States is joining with Britain in taking action against those responsible for poisoning Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, the two countries said in a joint statement released by the US State Department on August 20. Earlier, Britain sanctioned seven men it said were Russian intelligence operatives suspected of involvement in the poisoning Navalny, describing the move as a warning to Russia over its use of chemical weapons. The statement did not outline any specific actions. — Reuters

MEXICAN JOURNALIST SHOT TO DEATH IN GULF COAST STATE

MEXICO CITY (TIP): A radio journalist was shot and killed in the Mexican Gulf coast state of Veracruz on August 19, according to his station and state authorities.

Jacinto Romero Flores was gunned down in the community of Potrerillo, in the township of Ixtaczoquitlán, according to Hugo Gutiérrez Maldonado, the head of Veracruz state security agency, via Twitter.

Gutiérrez said state police were carrying out an operation in the area following the killing.

Romero worked for Ori Stereo 99.3 FM. The station expressed its sadness for his death. "The media are not the cause nor the effect of violence in the country, but we do suffer the consequences for carrying out journalism and communication," it said in a statement.

The State Commission for Attention to and Protection of Journalists condemned the killing and called on the state prosecutor's office to open a full investigation, including into what role, if any, Romero's journalism played in his murder.

Press freedom organisation Article 19 said Romero had received threats. The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists said via Twitter that it had "learned of and strongly condemns the



murder of reporter Jacinto Romero in the state of Veracruz and urges authorities to undertake a swift, transparent and exhaustive investigation into the killing".

Veracruz has for years been one of Mexico's most deadly states for reporters. Multiple organised crime groups operate within the state and have infiltrated local and state government.

Journalists marched on Thursday in the port city of Veracruz to protest

Romero's killing.

Press groups say nine journalists were killed in Mexico in 2020, making it the most dangerous country for reporters outside of war zones. Romero is at least the fifth journalist killed in Mexico this year.

Earlier this month, the Jalisco New Generation cartel publicly threatened to kill a prominent television news anchor. AP

IAEA: Iran has upped uranium enrichment

VIENNA (TIP): Iran has accelerated its enrichment of uranium to near weapons-grade, the UN atomic watchdog said in a report on August 15, a move raising tensions with the West as both sides seek to resume talks on reviving Tehran's nuclear deal.

Iran increased the purity to which it is refining uranium to 60 per cent from 20 per cent in April in response to an explosion and power cut at its Natanz site that damaged output at the main underground enrichment plant there.

Iran has blamed the attack on Israel. Weapons-grade is around 90 per cent purity.



In May, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Iran was using one cascade, or cluster, of advanced centrifuges to enrich to up to 60 per cent at its above-ground pilot enrichment plant at Natanz. The IAEA

BREACHING LIMITS
Iran has breached the restrictions imposed under the 2015 nuclear deal, which capped the purity to which Tehran can refine uranium at 3.67 per cent.

informed member states on Tuesday that Iran was now using a second cascade for that purpose, too. — (Reuters)

52 migrants feared dead at sea off south of Spain's Canary Islands

LISBON (TIP): A woman who was the only person pulled from a sinking dinghy in the Atlantic Ocean told her rescuers that the boat had left Africa a week earlier carrying 53 migrants, Spain's Maritime Rescue Service said August 20.

A merchant ship spotted the inflatable dinghy on Thursday, 255 kilometers (158 miles) south of Spain's Canary Islands, and alerted Spanish emergency services, an official said.

The woman was clinging to the

sinking craft with a dead man and a dead woman next to her, the rescue service official said.

She told rescuers that the boat had embarked from the Western Sahara coast and that the passengers were from Ivory Coast.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with departmental rules, had no information about the woman's health or her age.

Migrants risk their lives trying to reach European soil by land and sea, and

deaths are not uncommon in the area of the Atlantic that separates the west coast of Africa and Spain's Canary Islands.

Shipwrecks on the route are hard to verify, and most victims' bodies are never recovered. The UN's International Organization for Migration reported that at least 250 migrants died on the route to the Canary Islands in the first six months of 2021. Migrant rights group Walking Borders counted almost 2,000 deaths in the same period. — AP

China approves three-child policy with sops to encourage couples to have more children

BEIJING (TIP): China's national legislature on August 20 formally endorsed the three-child policy mooted by the ruling Communist Party, in a major policy shift aimed to prevent a steep decline in birth rates in the world's most populous country.

The revised Population and Family Planning Law, which allows Chinese couples to have three children, was passed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC).

In an apparent attempt to address the reluctance of the Chinese couples to have more children due to mounting costs, the amended law has also passed more social and economic support measures to address the concerns.

The new law stipulates that the country will take supportive measures, including those in finances, taxes, insurance, education, housing and employment, to reduce families' burdens as well as the cost of raising and educating children, state-run China Daily reported.

The NPC has revised the law to implement the central leadership's decision to cope with new circumstances in social and economic development and promote balanced long-term population growth, the report said.

In May this year, the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) approved a relaxation of its strict two-child policy to allow all couples to have up to three children.



China permitted all couples to have two children in 2016, scrapping the draconian decades-old one-child policy which policymakers blame for the demographic crisis in the country.

Chinese officials claim the one-child policy implemented for over three decades has prevented over 400 million births.

The decision to permit the third child

came after this month's once-in-a-decade census showed that China's population grew at the slowest pace to 1.412 billion amid official projections that the decline may begin as early as next year.

The new census figures revealed that the demographic crisis China faced was expected to deepen as the population of people above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7 per cent last year. PTI

CHINA PREMIER VOWS TO PUNISH OFFICIALS OVER FLOOD DEATHS

BEIJING (TIP): Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has vowed to hold officials accountable over mistakes during recent floods that led to the deaths of hundreds of people in a major provincial capital, including 14 who were trapped when the city's subway system was inundated.

More than 300 people were killed in last month's floods in Henan province, including at least 292 in the provincial capital Zhengzhou.

Li on August 18 visited the tunnel of the Zhengzhou's subway line where passengers recorded harrowing video of flood waters pouring in and filling cars above head height on July 20.

City residents, who laid flowers at a station entrance despite police efforts to block off the area, have complained that officials should have closed the subway because of torrential rains.

China regularly suffers seasonal flooding, but this year has been particularly severe with torrential rains reaching from the centre of the country as far north as Beijing.

The floods came on top of efforts to contain an outbreak of the delta variant of Covid-19 that has particularly affected Henan and the eastern province



of Jiangsu.

China's worst floods in recent years were in 1998, when more than 2,000 people were killed and almost 3 million homes were destroyed, mostly along China's mightiest river, the Yangtze.

Direct losses from this summer's flooding are estimated at more than \$14 billion.

Li was once a top official in Henan for six years, during which the province was hit by a major AIDS outbreak, deadly fires and other man-made disasters. He was promoted to higher office in Beijing and had at one time been seen as China's potential future president and party secretary before being eclipsed by Xi Jinping. AP

UK LIFTS 'ALL BUT ESSENTIAL' TRAVEL ADVICE FOR INDIA AS COVID PRESSURE EASES

The update means travellers are better placed on their travel insurance options

LONDON (TIP): The UK government on Tuesday updated its official travel advisory for India to reflect the country's upgraded status under the Covid-19 based traffic light system, no longer advising against "all but essential travel".

India moved from the UK's red list travel ban to amber on August 8 and now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advisory has been updated to coincide with the easing of rules.

"Following the peak of India's second Covid-19 wave in May, pressure on the Indian health care system has lifted, as the number of Covid-19 cases has fallen," reads the FCDO update.

"A limited number of flights between India and the UK continue to operate. To book tickets and to see important guidance prior to travel, you should check airline websites," it notes.

"Before you travel, check the 'Entry Requirements' section for India's current entry restrictions and requirements. These may change with little warning. Monitor this advice for the latest updates and stay in contact with your travel provider," it adds.

The update means travellers are better placed on their travel insurance options.

Under the amber list rules, fully vaccinated British nationals returning from India no longer need to quarantine, but must arrange a pre-departure test while still in the country as well as a day two PCR test after returning home to the UK. To qualify as fully vaccinated, only UK, EU and US approved vaccines are recognised and require passengers to have had their second vaccine injection two full weeks before you travel.

Other nationals, vaccinated abroad or unvaccinated, are required to self-isolate at their declared address on the compulsory passenger locator form. They are also required to get a pre-departure PCR test and another test on day two and day eight of their entry to the UK.

Over the weekend, UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid had confirmed a cut in costs of these compulsory tests and also commissioned the country's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to address complaints of steep prices and discrepancies in the administration of these tests. - PTI

LA crosses grim milestone of 25,000 Covid deaths

Los Angeles has crossed a grim milestone of more than 25,000 Covid-19 deaths with a daily count of 35 fatalities, local health authorities said. The most populous county in the US home to over 10 million residents, also reported 3,239 new cases in the last 24 hours, bringing the overall tally since the start of the pandemic to 1,362,848 positive cases with 25,002 related deaths, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

The Department said that there were 1,790 people with Covid-19 currently hospitalised in the county in California and 23 per cent of them are in the intensive care units, reports Xinhua news agency.

The county's seven-day cumulative case rate is now 204.2 new cases per 100,000 residents, which represents a 5 per cent increase from last week. Between July 11 and August 11, hospitalisations rose by 333 percent to an average of 1,622 beds filled with people testing positive on any given day, and deaths rose 275 per cent to an average of 15 deaths per day, said the Department. County health officials noted they are monitoring school cases in outbreaks among staff and students as many school districts countywide are reopening this week. California Governor Gavin Newsom announced last week that the state would implement first-in-the-nation measure to require all teachers and school staff to get vaccinated as schools return from summer break amid the Delta variant spread.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 209.9 mn

WASHINGTON (TIP): The global coronavirus caseload has topped 209.9 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.40 million and vaccinations soared to over 4.82 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Friday, August 20, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll and vaccination tally stood at 209,915,414, 4,401,878 and 4,824,177,807, respectively.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 37,291,739 and 625,153, respectively, according to the CSSE.

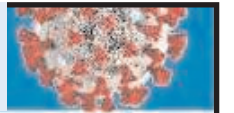
In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 32,322,258 cases.

The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (20,494,212), Russia (6,592,705), France (6,635,417), the UK (6,422,367), Turkey (6,157,742), Argentina (5,116,803), Colombia (4,880,516), Spain (4,758,003), Italy (4,464,005), Iran (4,587,683), Indonesia (3,930,300), Germany (3,854,529) and Mexico (3,152,205), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 572,641 fatalities.

Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (433,049), Mexico (250,469), Peru (197,659), Russia (170,716), the UK (131,690), Italy (128,634), Colombia (123,901), Indonesia (122,633), France (113,366) and Argentina (109,841).

TRACKING THE VIRUS



GLOBAL

Cases **209,915,414** | Deaths **4,401,878**

INDIA

Cases **32,393,286** | Deaths **4,33,964**



Antibodies elicited by COVID vaccination effective against delta variant: Study

The Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, that causes COVID-19, is unable to evade the antibodies generated by vaccination, according to a lab study. The findings, published in the journal Immunity, help explain why vaccinated people have largely escaped the worst of the Delta surge.

Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in the US analysed a panel of antibodies generated by people in response to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and found that Delta was unable to evade all but one of the antibodies they tested. Other variants of concern, such as Beta, avoided recognition and neutralisation by several of the antibodies, they said.

In previous studies, Ali Ellebedy, an associate professor at Washington University, had shown that both natural infection and vaccination elicit lasting antibody production. However, the researchers noted that the length of the antibody response is only one aspect of protection, and breadth matters too.

An ideal antibody response includes a diverse set of antibodies with the flexibility to recognise many slightly

different variants of the virus, they said. According to the researchers, breadth confers resilience, adding that even if a few antibodies lose the ability to recognise a new variant, other antibodies in the arsenal should remain capable of neutralising it.

"The fact that Delta has outcompeted other variants does not mean that it's more resistant to our antibodies compared to other variants," said co-senior author Jacco Boon, an associate professor at Washington University. "A variant that replicates better is likely to spread faster, independent of its ability to evade our immune response. So Delta is surging, yes, but there's no evidence that it is better at overcoming vaccine-induced immunity compared to other variants," Boon added.

To assess the breadth of the antibody response to SARS-CoV-2, the researchers extracted antibody-producing cells from three people who had received the Pfizer vaccine. They grew the cells in the laboratory and obtained from them a set of 13 antibodies that target the original strain which began circulating last year.

Source: PTI

New Zealand national lockdown extended as Covid outbreak spreads to Wellington

The whole of New Zealand will remain in lockdown until midnight Tuesday, prime minister Jacinda Ardern has announced, as the country's coronavirus outbreak grew to 31 people and spread to Wellington.

The first case in the outbreak emerged in Auckland on Tuesday, August 17, prompting the government to put the entire country into a level-4 lockdown – the highest level of restrictions. Genome sequencing has linked the cluster to a returnee from Australia.

Since then, some of the cases that have emerged include a high school teacher, students at two more high schools, a nurse at Auckland City Hospital and an Air New Zealand cabin crew member.

Another 11 cases were announced on Friday, including a patient at Auckland's North Shore Hospital, which forced the emergency care and short-stay surgical care departments to close, and a postal worker. Nineteen of the cases are linked to the first case, a 58-year-old man. The Air New Zealand worker is not linked, while the rest of the cases are yet to be genome-sequenced. Initial investigations show



Prime minister Jacinda Ardern with Dr Ashley Bloomfield, New Zealand's director general of health, on the way to a Covid media conference in Wellington. The country's outbreak has grown to 31 cases. Pic credit: AP

they are likely to be connected to the first case. The Wellington cases announced on Friday had visited locations of interest in Auckland before returning to the capital prior to the lockdown.

Initially, Auckland and the Coromandel peninsula, a nearby area visited by the first case, were placed into lockdown for a week, with the rest of the country locked down for three days. The whole country is now in lockdown for the same period.

Raksha Bandhan: The bond of love and protection

Raksha Bandhan celebrates the purity and sanctity of the bond that exists between siblings. Raksha means safety and Bandhan means bond. This festival is celebrated between siblings for their undying support and a vow of protection of each other under any dire circumstance. This year, Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated on 22nd August which falls on Sunday.

This festival is full of joy, merriment, exchange of gifts and sweets. Like all other festivals, even Raksha Bandhan has a deeply traditional and cultural significance.

History

The traditional Hindu festival 'Raksha Bandhan' (knot of protection) was came into origin about 6000 years back when Aryans created first civilization - The Indus Valley Civilization. With many languages and cultures, the traditional method to Rakhi festival celebration differs from place to place across India. Following are some historical evidences of Raksha Bandhan celebration from the Indian history.

Rani Karnawati and Emperor Humayun

The story of Rani Karnavati and Emperor Humayun is the most significant evidence in the history. During the medieval era, Rajputs were fighting Muslim invasions. Rakhi at that time meant a spiritual binding and protection of sisters was foremost. When Rani Karnawati the widowed queen of the king of Chittor realised that she could in no way defend the invasion of the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, she sent a rakhi to Emperor Humayun. The Emperor touched by the gesture started off with his troops without wasting any time.

Alexander The Great and King Puru

The oldest reference to the festival of rakhi goes back to 300 B.C. at the time when Alexander invaded India. It is said that the great conqueror, King Alexander of Macedonia was shaken by the fury of the Indian king Puru in his first attempt. Upset by this, Alexander's wife, who had heard of the Rakhi festival, approached King Puru. King Puru accepted her as his sister and when the opportunity came during the war, he refrained from Alexander.

Lord Krishna and Draupathi

In order to protect the good people, Lord Krishna killed the evil King Shishupal. Krishna was hurt during the war and left with bleeding finger. Seeing this, Draupathi had torn a strip of cloth from her sari and tied around his wrist to stop the bleeding. Lord Krishna, realizing her affections and concern about him, declared himself bounded by her sisterly love. He promised her to repay this debt whenever she need in future. Many years later, when the pandavas lost Draupathi in the game of dice and Kauravas were removing her saari, Krishna helped her divinely elongating the saari so that they could not remove it.

King Bali and Goddess Lakshmi

The demon king Mahabali was a great devotee of lord Vishnu. Because of his immense devotion, Vishnu has taken the task of protecting bali's Kingdom leaving his normal place in Vikundam. Goddess lakshmi - the wife of lord Vishnu - has become sad because of this as she wanted lord Vishnu along with her. So she went to Bali and discussed as a Brahmin woman and taken refuge in his palace. On Shravana purnima, she tied Rakhi on King Bali's wrist. Goddess Lakshmi revealed who she is and why she is there. The king was touched by Her and Lord Vishnu's good will and affection towards him and his family, Bali requested Lord Vishnu to accompany her to vaikuntam. Due to this festival is also called Baleva as Bali Raja's devotion to the Lord vishnu. It is said that since that day it has become a tradition to invite sisters on sravan pournima to tie sacred thread of Rakhi or Raksha Bandan.

Traditions & Customs

Generally, the fancy Rakhis and delicious sweets are prepared long before the Shravana Purnima. According to

Raksha Bandhan is a celebration of the pure bond that exists between siblings. The promise to always be there, to always protect, no matter what the circumstances. This year, the festival falls on August 22, Sunday



the Indian tradition, the family members get ready for the rituals early in the morning. They take a bath to purify mind and body before starting any preparations. Sisters prepare the puja thali which consists of roli, tilak, Rakhi threads, rice grains, aggarbattis (incense sticks), diyas and sweets. After offering the rituals to the deities of the family, the sister perform aarti of their brothers and ties Rakhi on their wrist. Then, they put kumkum powder on the forehead of their brother and offer sweets.

Legends

For the siblings it is the eternal tie of love, for Brahmins the day to take the pledge of Brahmanik rites and for those who depend sea and monsoon, it is the beginning of the new season. Indian festivals are based on the weather changes and their significance in the lives of people but they do have a story to support the celebrations. The rich Indian Mythology provides a religious reason to celebrate the day in a specific way. Many epics are related to the day and the origin of Raksha Bandhan. The festival finds a mention in most of the epics and its origin can be traced back to the mythological Pouranik times.

The legend in the Bhavishya Puran

The legend refers to a war between the Gods and the Demons. The demon King Brutra was advancing and the

Gods lead by lord Indra, were on verge of defeat. The king of Gods, Indra approached Guru Brihaspati to find a solution to the situation. Brihaspati asked Indra to tie a sacred thread on his wrist, powered by the sacred mantras on the Shravana Purnima. Lord Indra's Queen Sachi also called Indrani, empowered the thread and tied it on to his hand on the decided day. The power of the sacred thread called Raksha helped the Gods to victory.

The tradition of thread tying still continues. It is a gesture of goodwill.

Yama and the Yamuna

It is said that the Raksha Bandhan was a ritual followed by Lord Yama (the Lord of Death) and his sister Yamuna. Yamuna tied rakhi to Yama and bestowed immortality. Yama was so moved by the serenity of the occasion that he declared that whoever gets a rakhi tied from his sister and promised her protection will become immortal.

In the Epics

Raksha Bandhan finds a mention in Mahabharata when Lord Krishna advised Yudhishtir to perform the ceremony to protect himself and the army from the dangers of the war. It is said that Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas tied rakhi to her grandson Abhimanyu and Draupadi to lord Krishna.

Natural remedies to remove stubborn makeup

Parties, weddings, festive occasions or workplace-when done right, makeup can bring you no possible harm. Whether it is just eyeliner or a dab of blush on our cheeks, the correct application of makeup helps you go a long way. But what comes after the makeup is as important as the main act.

We often forget that taking off the makeup off requires equal time and attention, because if left on over night, this very makeup can become a cause for several beauty problems, facial marks, freckles or even acne. While we have enough products in the market to remove all the colour from our face, most of them contain chemicals that aren't exactly wonderful for the skin. While finding the correct product for your skin is a tough task, nature-as always-has several surprises in store. Apart from being cheap and natural, these products are also easily available-five of which we list down below.

Baking Soda and Honey

This remedy is good for any skin type. Grab some honey lying in your kitchen and put it on a piece of cotton or a clean cloth. Sprinkle some baking soda on the honey and watch it act as great cleanser as well as exfoliator. Just rub the cloth or cotton gently on your face to wipe off the makeup and rinse it off. You can use a face wash but it can take away the after effect of honey on your skin, so it is better if you just rinse with lukewarm water and let the effect of honey repair your skin cells all night long.

Coconut oil

Coconut oil is a natural ingredient which the skin absorbs like magic. With a low molecular weight and beneficial fatty acids, coconut oil repairs the skin.

If you have coconut oil at home, there is literally nothing better to remove all the makeup on your face. This is particularly useful for heavy make-up and even waterproof make-up.

Simply rub some coconut oil all over your face and neck, and wipe it off with cotton pads. You can even make natural wipes, by putting lots of cotton balls soaked in a small jar full of coconut oil.

It is a natural moisturiser and is great for the winter season. It repairs and moisturises your skin well while restoring the natural oils on our face.

Milk

Remember stories where everyone from Cleopatra to Mughal princesses took milk baths?

Milk is known for its health benefits and for being a wonderful ingredient for your skin. The essential fats and protein found in whole milk allow our skin to retain moisture and repair damaged cells.



Milk has strong bleaching properties and is a natural ingredient for skin lightening, in case you're interested.

Simply soak your cotton pads in a small bowl of milk and use them to wipe off your makeup. You can even mix a tablespoon of almond oil in it for heavier make-up. This remedy will refresh your face and will keep your skin hydrated. If you have excessively oily skin, it is better to use a face wash followed by a night cream after washing off the milk.

Cucumber juice

Many commercial beauty products including face washes and cleaners have cucumber as an ingredient. That's because this common kitchen ingredient is a no-fuss healer. It has anti-inflammatory properties and can soothe irritated or acne prone skin. It is a water-based vegetable and is an excellent makeup remover particularly for oily skin.

So the next time you face a beauty woe, or want to remove all that makeup without hassle, look no further from your own refrigerator. Use a blender to mash cucumber until it becomes like a paste, add some olive oil to this paste and watch your home-made cleanser change your life. The natural mixture will tackle your makeup

troubles and will soothe your skin. Rinse your face with lukewarm water and try to avoid any other product afterwards to let the facial moisture repair your skin.

Steam

Steaming is also a natural way to remove your makeup. It is also one of the most soothing cleanser that replenishes the skin from within. You can use steam and wipe your face with a cotton pad and rinse off. If you are wearing heavy or waterproof makeup it is best to use any of the treatments above and then use steam to remove any leftover impurity. Steam is the secret skincare for many celebrities as well, it is simple, hassle-free and helps unclog pores to remove dirt and impurities.

You can invest in a steamer which is available at most departmental stores, or simply fill a bowl with piping hot water with a few drops of oil, cover your face with a towel and let the steam clear your skin and calm your senses.

These natural makeup removal remedies are simple-yet-effective. They repair the skin, which can keep your skin glowing and prevent any damage from makeup products, so that you can continue glowing and looking great.

Source: India Today

FOOD CORNER

Chilli garlic noodles



It is a popular indo-chinese noodles recipe prepared with fresh hakka noodles with garlic and chilli flavour. It is a perfect starter recipe for your next party or for any birthday celebrations. It is ideally served by itself without any side dish but tastes good with chilli paneer or gobi manchurian gravies.

Ingredients

- Noodles - 1/2 cup, cooked
- Onions - 1/2 cup, chopped
- Carrot - 1/2 cup, grated
- Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 tbslp
- Chilli Paste - 1/2 tbslp
- Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped
- Oil - 2 tbslp
- Salt - as per taste

Method

- Heat oil in a pan over moderate flame.
- Add the onions, carrot, ginger garlic paste, salt and chilli paste.
- Stir to mix well.
- Add the noodles and mix well to combine all ingredients. Garnish with coriander leaves.
- Serve warm.

Kale pakoda chaat

Ingredients

- Kale leaf 400gms
- Mint chutney 50gms
- Saunth chutney 50gms
- Yoghurt 50gms
- Sugar syrup 20 ml
- Red chili powder 5 gms
- Chat masala 5gms
- Besan (Chickpea flour) 100gms
- Rice flour 50gms
- Corn flour 25gms
- Salt to taste
- Pomegranate seeds 20gms
- Sev 10gms
- Green coriander to garnish
- Ajwain 5gms
- Turmeric powder 5gms
- Refined oil for fry

Method

- Batter - Add besan, rice flour and corn flour in a bowl and mix well. After mixing, add salt, turmeric powder, red chilli powder and ajwain. Add water and make a smooth batter of the mixture.
- Blanch the kale leaves, cool it in ice water and then dry with paper towel. Heat oil in a frying pan. Fry the leaves with batter till it become crispy and golden brown. Mix yogurt with sugar syrup, to make the yogurt sweet.
- Chaat - Keep the fried kale leaves in a serving plate. Pour mint chutney, tamarind chutney and sweet yoghurt on top. Sprinkle chaat masala.

Simple ways to reduce stress in the workplace



Stress is one of the most daunting obstacles to employee engagement in the modern workplace. Workload, lack of job security, and personnel problems gang up on and overwhelm employees, dragging down their satisfaction levels. In fact, the negative consequences from stress are so strong that it has been declared a World Wide Epidemic by the World Health Organization.

Greater physical activity at the office can help reduce psychological stress during after work hours, a new study reveals. Workers in open office seating had less daytime stress and greater daytime activity levels compared to workers in private offices and cubicles, according to new research led by the University of Arizona. This is the first known study to investigate the effects of office workstation type on these objective measures.

The study evaluated 231 people who work in federal office buildings and wore stress and activity sensors around the clock for three workdays and two nights.

The intent was to evaluate the workers' activity and stress levels both inside and outside of the office environments. The study showed that workers in open bench seating arrangements were 32% more physically active at office than those in private offices and 20% more active than those in cubicles. Significantly, workers who were more physically active at office had 14% less physiological stress after working hours as compared to those with less physical activity at work.

"This research highlights how office design, driven by office workstation type, could be an important health-promoting factor," said senior study author Sternberg. Office workers are at a particularly high risk for low levels of physical activity and the associated poor health outcomes. According to a 2015 report published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, workplace-related illnesses cost the U.S. economy more than 225 billion USD a year.

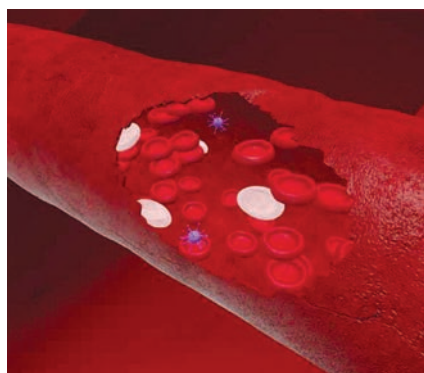
Blood clotting may be behind long Covid syndrome: Study

Patients with Long Covid syndrome continue to have higher measures of blood clotting, which may help explain their persistent symptoms, such as reduced physical fitness and fatigue, finds a research.

While the dangerous clotting has been observed in patients with severe acute Covid-19, far less is known about Long Covid syndrome, where symptoms can last weeks to months after the initial infection has resolved and is estimated to affect millions of people worldwide.

Researchers from RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences in Ireland, examined 50 patients with symptoms of Long Covid syndrome to better understand if abnormal blood clotting is involved.

They discovered that clotting markers were significantly elevated



in the blood of patients with Long Covid syndrome compared with healthy controls. These clotting markers were higher in patients who required hospitalisation with their initial Covid-19 infection, but they also found that even those who were able to manage their illness at home still had persistently high clotting markers.

In the study, published in the Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis, the team observed that higher clotting was directly related to other symptoms of Long Covid syndrome, such as reduced physical fitness and fatigue. Even though markers of inflammation had all returned to normal levels, this increased clotting potential was still present in the Long Covid patients.

"Because clotting markers were elevated while inflammation markers had returned to normal, our results suggest that the clotting system may be involved in the root cause of Long Covid syndrome," said lead author Dr Helen Fogarty, doctoral student at the Irish Centre for Vascular Biology in the RCSI School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences.

Source: IANS



Higher BMI may increase your BP as well: Study

If you have a higher body mass index (BMI) then there are chances that you may have increased blood pressure (BP) too, a new study has found.

The findings, published in the journal JAMA Network Open, showed a strong correlation between the degree of obesity and high blood pressure.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to several cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack, stroke and heart failure.

For the study, the research team involved 1.7 million Chinese men and women aged between 35 and 80 years and recorded the participants' blood pressure from September 2014 to June 2017.

They observed an increase of 0.8 to 1.7 mm Hg (kg/m²) in blood pressure per additional unit of BMI in individuals who were not taking anti-hypertensive medication.

Overall, the population had a mean BMI of 24.7 and a mean systolic blood pressure of 136.5, which qualifies as stage-I hypertension, according to American Heart Association guidelines.

"If trends in overweight and obesity continue in China, the implication of our study is that hypertension, already a major risk factor, is likely to become even more important," said senior author Harlan Krumholz from Yale University in the US.

"This paper is ringing the bell that the time is now to focus on these risk factors," he added.

"The enormous size of the dataset -- the result of an unprecedented effort in China -- allows us to characterise this relationship between BMI and blood pressure across tens of thousands of subgroups, which simply would not be possible in a smaller study," said author George Linderman from the varsity.

This research has been supported by grants from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences Innovation Fund for Medical Science, the Ministry of Finance of China and the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China to name a few.

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Twitter allows some users to flag a Tweet as 'misleading'

Micro-blogging platform Twitter is testing a new feature for users to flag tweets containing misinformation around politics, Covid-19/health or any other category.

The new feature is available for some users in the US, Australia and South Korea, Twitter said on Tuesday.

"We're testing a feature for you to report Tweets that seem misleading—as you see them. Starting today, some people in the US, South Korea and Australia will find the option to flag a Tweet as 'It's misleading' after clicking on Report Tweet," the company said in a tweet.

Twitter said that not every report will be reviewed as the platform continues to test the feature.

"We're assessing if this is an effective approach so we're starting small. We may not take action on and cannot respond to each report in the experiment, but your input will help us identify trends so that we can improve the speed and scale of our broader misinformation work," Twitter elaborated.

To curb the spread of misleading tweets on its platform, the micro-blogging company Twitter last month said it was testing a new label design with more context.

The company last year introduced new labels and warning messages that provide additional context and information on some Tweets containing disputed or misleading information.

"Last year, we started using labels to let you know when a Tweet may include misleading information. For some of you on web, we'll be testing a new label design with more context to help you better understand why a Tweet may be misleading," the company had said in a tweet.

IIT researchers develop smart road monitoring system to prevent crashes

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, have developed a Smart Road Monitoring System to help reduce manual intervention in traffic management and prevent accidents caused at sharp or blind turns.

According to the team which has also acquired a patent for the innovation, the system can be used for speed detection, vehicle counts, enhanced traffic control and road usage, by employing the Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies.

"With a surge in traffic, the manual interface becomes a challenge to control and prevent road accidents, and traffic management especially in the hilly terrains. Traffic Police intervention, convex mirrors installation, and other techniques, though helpful in these situations, become difficult to manage in severe and extreme conditions like rainfall, snow, foggy weather and high number of sharp curves," said K V Uday, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, IIT Mandi.

Dr Uday explained that the developed system comprises two layers of detection units on each side of the turn and two signalling units to alert the drivers. When a vehicle passes through the two consecutive layers of detection units, the sensing system detects the speed, direction and type of vehicle (two/four/multiple wheels). The detected direction confirms if the vehicle is advancing towards the turn, and a corresponding signal (light, sound or barrier) is displayed on the other side to alert the drivers of an oncoming vehicle. If the vehicle moves away from the curve, no signal is displayed.

The signals are decided based on the speed, direction, gradient of slope and type of vehicle. At a prototype development stage, the system costs less than Rs 20,000 excluding the alerting



units per curve. However, the innovators are currently working on the commercial aspects and trying to bring down the overall product cost, by lowering operating and maintenance costs, and utilising other energy sources to make the system self-sustainable using solar energy.

"This technique will not only reduce the accident risk in sharp curves, but will also help in reducing human intervention on traffic counts, management and helps in decision making," he said. The developed system can also be used for vehicle counts and its advanced versions will also be able to detect the load of the vehicle. "This data can be used for enhanced traffic management, road use, traffic flow on single line tunnels and restricted areas by employing Artificial Intelligence and machine learning tools. The prediction

on traffic jams, increased flows and diversion alerts also can also be generated after sufficient data collection," he said.

The team claimed that besides being mechanical in nature, the developed system can work in any weather including rain, snow, fog or other poor visibility conditions and the data can be encrypted and shared to only appropriate stakeholders. "Though existing technologies are effective, their effectiveness drastically is affected during adverse weather conditions, that is where our system is robust," he added.

Other members of the team included Naman Chaudhary and Shishir Asthana from Mechanical Engineering; Amudhan Muthaiah from Electrical Engineering and Nidhika Kadela from Civil Engineering departments of the institute.

Indian tops global cyber attacks on education sector: Report

NEW DELHI (TIP): The education sector in India was attacked significantly more compared to other industries in the month of July globally, experiencing 5,196 attacks per week on average, a new report has showed.

By region, organisations in the education sector in South Asia experienced the highest volume of attacks. The most targeted countries were India, Italy, Israel, Australia and Turkey, according to Check Point Research (CPR).

In India, schools, universities and research centres make for attractive targets to cyber criminals because they are often under resourced from a security perspective. The short-notice, on-and-off shift to remote learning exacerbates the security risk," said Sundar Balasubramanian, Managing Director, Check Point, India and SAARC.

The UK region experienced a 142 per cent increase in weekly cyberattacks on its education sector, while the East Asia



region marked a 79 per cent increase.

"With so many students logging on from their home networks using their personal devices, the current school season presents a range of new security threats that many aren't prepared to address," he added.

In more than half of the countries studied by CPR, the education sector is the most attacked sector, and in 94 per cent of them, the education sector is in the top three most attacked sectors.

Google introduces new Fitbit smartwatch designer collections

Google has introduced two new stylish Designer Collections, plus new accessory choices, for Fitbit Sense and Versa 3 smartwatches.

Fitbit's latest Designer Collection features styles from Brother Vellies, a luxury accessory brand built on the ideal of uplifting artisan communities and cultures through design.

The collection takes a high-fashion twist on the iconic scrunchie, made with Horween leather.

"The lightweight leather bands are handcrafted with premium oils and dyes, and tanned through traditional techniques so they mold to your wrist and develop an aged patina finish over time," Google said in a statement.

The Brother Vellies for Fitbit Sense and Versa 3 collection is available in black and oak for \$54.95 each on fitbit.com.

Fitbit launched its first designer accessory collection in 2014.

Fitbit has also partnered with Victor



Glemaud for a second season, bringing a new collection of knit bands in an expansive variety of skin tones.

The collection introduces a metallic ombre band with shimmering flecks of varying nude shades that transition from light to dark. It also includes a metallic stripe band with a deep brown strip down the center of a dark brown backdrop with gold flecks.

Crisil upgrades India Inc's credit outlook to positive

Crisil Ratings on Wednesday said a broad-based recovery is on for India Inc currently, and upgraded its credit quality outlook to 'positive' from the earlier 'cautiously optimistic'.

It said the credit ratio, which illustrates the number of upgrades to downgrades, rose to over 2.5 times in the first four months of the fiscal, as compared to 1.33 times in the second half of FY21, it said.

Crisil has also done a study of 43 sectors, excluding the financial sector, accounting for 75% of the overall Rs 36 lakh crore in outstanding debt, which shows that the current recovery is broad-based.

The rating agency said the credit ratio, which illustrates the number of upgrades to downgrades, rose to over 2.5 times in the first four months of the fiscal, as compared to 1.33 times in the second half of FY21.

Afghanistan low on dollars with currency reserves stuck abroad

SINGAPORE (TIP): Afghanistan's currency reserves are mostly held in foreign accounts and are probably inaccessible to Taliban rulers, leaving the country desperately low on dollars, Ajmal Ahmady, who led the central bank until the capture of Kabul, said.

Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) controlled about \$9 billion, some \$7 billion of which was held as a mixture of cash, gold, bonds and other investments at the U.S. Federal Reserve, Ahmady, the acting governor, who has now fled Afghanistan, said on Twitter.

Most of the rest is in other international accounts and at the Bank for International Settlements, a bank for central banks based in Switzerland, and not physically in DAB vaults, he said - leaving about 0.2% or less of the total accessible to the Taliban.

"Given Afghanistan's large current account deficit, DAB was reliant on obtaining physical shipments of cash every few weeks," he said.

"The amount of such cash remaining is close to zero due a stoppage of shipments as the security situation deteriorated."

No international reserves were "ever compromised" and "no money was stolen from any reserve account," Ahmady



added. Afghan currency dives on Taliban takeover

A U.S. administration official has also told Reuters that no assets of the Afghan government held in the United States would be made available to the Taliban.

The Taliban, who now control Kabul, have said treasury, public facilities and government offices were the property of the nation. Ahmady said he had been told Taliban were asking bank staff about the location of assets, but added that they should have foreseen it would be impossible to access them.

He now expects the local currency, the

Afghani, to fall as the central bank cannot supply enough dollars to local banks and for the Taliban to use capital controls to prevent outflows.

"Inflation will rise as currency pass-through is very high," he said. "This will hurt the poor as food prices increase."

'Taliban will not get access to Afghan reserves held in US'

Earlier, AFP reported that Taliban will be denied access to any Afghan reserves held in US accounts, quoting a US administration official on Monday.

As US forces were evacuating Afghanistan's capital after the Taliban's swift takeover, the official said: "Any Central Bank assets the Afghan government have in the United States will not be made available to the Taliban."

The central bank's gross reserves totaled \$9.4 billion at the end of April, according to the IMF.

But most of those funds are held outside of Afghanistan, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The Taliban's seizure of power comes after NATO withdrew its 9,500-strong mission on the back of a decision from US President Joe Biden to pull out his troops. *Source: Reuters/AFP*

Software startup Postman raises \$225 mn, turns most valuable SaaS unicorn

BENGALURU (TIP): Application program interface (API) development platform Postman on Wednesday said it raised \$225 million at a valuation of \$5.6 billion, a little over a year after it entered the unicorn club with a valuation of \$2 billion.

The Series D funding round was led by Insight Partners, an existing investor based in New York.

This makes Postman India's highest valued software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform, overtaking Browserstack (\$4 billion), Freshworks (\$3.5 billion) and Icertis (\$2.8 billion). The company last raised \$150 million in a Series C round in June 2020.

New investors Coatue Management LLC, Battery Ventures, and BOND, along with existing investors CRV and Nexus Venture Partners, also participated in the round. The round also saw investments from DoorDash's product leader Gokul Rajaram; and Freshworks' founder Girish Mathrubootham.

The company has raised more than \$430 million to date.

Postman's fundraising signals the trend of global investors flocking to entities that are established in their sectors. Over the course of this year, companies such as DailyHunt, Infra.Market, Cred, and Digit have more than doubled their valuations within months of raising their previous rounds.

Postman said the new funds will help it expand sales, marketing,



From left: Postman founders, Abhinav Asthana, Ankit Sobti, Abhijit Kane.

product and engineering teams.

The company will also continue to invest in its developers worldwide, support students through innovative API literacy programmes and contribute toward open-source projects to foster a strong and thriving API ecosystem.

"We are thrilled to have the support of our community and customers who continue to propel us forward, and this new round of funding will help Postman dramatically increase the speed of that forward motion. We're committed to helping developers who are building the future with APIs," said Abhinav Asthana, co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO), Postman.

The seven-year-old startup is an enterprise SaaS platform for API

development, which helps product management, developer operations and engineering departments to collaborate to accelerate the software development process.

Postman currently has more than 17 million users and 500,000 organizations on its platform.

"APIs have quickly become the fundamental building blocks of software used by developers in every industry, in every country across the globe—and Postman has firmly established itself as the preferred platform for developers. Postman has the opportunity to become a key pillar of how enterprises build, deliver products, and seamlessly enable partnerships," said Jeff Horing, managing director, Insight Partners. *Source:*

Facebook, telcos to extend subsea cable to four countries

Facebook and a team of African and global telecoms companies will add four more countries to its world's largest subsea cable project, widening the build project in Africa earlier than planned, they said in a joint statement.

Internet connectivity will be expanded to the Seychelles, the Comoros Islands, Angola, and bring a new landing point to south-east Nigeria. This is in addition to the recently announced extension to the Canary Islands, the companies said.

The consortium of the project, called 2Africa, comprises South Africa's MTN GlobalConnect, Facebook, Mauritius-based infrastructure provider WIOCC, China Mobile International, France's Orange SA, Saudi Arabia's stc, Telecom Egypt, and Vodafone.

Alcatel Submarine Networks (ASN) has been selected to deploy the new "branches", which will increase the number of 2Africa landings to 35 in 26 countries, further improving connectivity into and around Africa, they added. "Most of the subsea route survey activity is now complete. ASN has started manufacturing the cable and building repeater units in its factories in Calais and Greenwich to deploy the first segments in 2022," the companies said.

The consortium launched the cable, which is expected to go live in late 2023, in May 2020 to connect those countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

Subsea cables form the backbone of the Internet, carrying 99 percent of the world's data traffic.

Africa's big economies have a large and fast growing population of Internet users, with growth in internet use fuelled by rapidly expanding mobile broadband networks and more affordable phones.

However, with a population of just above 1.3 billion, Africa is still a laggard in Internet connectivity, with average mobile Internet users at around 26 percent against a world average of 51 percent.

The companies said 2Africa will be the largest subsea cable project in the world.

Onam: The festival of harvest

The festival of harvest 'Onam' is celebrated every year in Kerala and by the Malayalee community across the world. According to the Gregorian calendar, the celebration is marked in the Chingam month on the 22nd Nakshatra Thiruvonam that comes in August and September. The celebrations start on Atham Day and go on for ten days till Thiruvonam day which is considered as the festival's most auspicious day.

This year, the festivities of Onam started on 12 August and will end on 23 August. While the main celebrations will take place on 21 August.

Significance

People celebrate Onam to honor a kind-hearted, benevolent demon King Mahabali, who is believed to return his kingdom during Onam time.

According to Vaishnava mythology, King Mahabali had defeated all the Gods and was ruling in all three worlds. Unlike other demons, Mahabali was sweet and less torturous. People loved this demon king. Yet, the Gods felt insecure and asked Lord Vishnu for interference.

Lord Vishnu disguised as Vamana, a Brahmin dwarf went to meet King Mahabali. Vamana is supposed to be Vishnu's fifth avatar. When the king asked for his wishes, Vamana replied with "three pieces of land." The king granted his wish, and he grew in size, appearing before all the three worlds. When he was about to reach heaven, King Mahabali offered his own head and Lord Vishnu was impressed by this act of benevolence. He granted his wish that he could visit his kingdom during the time of Onam.

Hence, Onam is a celebration of the return of King Mahabali to his kingdom.

Celebrations

All the 10 days which are celebrated during Onam has their own significance and importance. Each day has its value and even after 10 days, some places still celebrate Onam.

Here's a list of all the 10 days of the Onam festival:

Atham

To celebrate the arrival of King Mahabali, people decorate their houses with yellow flowers and have Pookalam (flower rangoli). A new layer is added after each passing day.

Chithira

The second day is usually deep cleaning of houses and making sure that everything is clean and neat. They also add another layer of flower in Pookalam. This day is highly auspicious for purchasing fresh vegetables, fruits and other provisions.

Chodi

On day 3, people buy gold, clothes, gifts to celebrate Onam. People gift new clothes, also called Onakodi to each other.

Vishakam

This fourth day marks the start of Onam Sadhya. Families start the preparation of Sadhya. The number of dishes differs from family to family but usually, families make 26 delicacies.

Anizham

Aranmula Uthraattathi Vallamkali also



Sadhya – The Traditional Feast

Sadhya comprises more than 26 dishes. It includes Avial (vegetables in coconut curry), Kalan (sweet potato and yam with coconut curry), Chor (rice) and all-time favourite dessert Parripu Payasam (kheer). Sadhya also includes pickles, dry curries, pappadam (papad), poovan pazham (smaller bananas) and a lot more!

Customs

The grand secular festival of Kerala, Onam, has numerous customs and traditions associated with it. The zest and enthusiasm imbibed in Onam is so huge it make the people of Kerala break all the barriers of caste and creed and unite. During the week-long festival, the state is decorated like a newlywed with lot of merriments going on. Families in Kerala have get together with the elder member of the family gifting new clothes to the younger members and kids. Onam is also the harvest festival of Kerala and as it is celebrated after monsoon, the land would be lush green with rivers and streams overflowing. This is exactly the reason why the captivating boat races become the striking feature of Onam. In the days following Onam, the state also witness Pulikali and Kummattikali. Read further to know to know more about the customs and traditions of Onam.

Onappookkalam or Floral Mat

Floral carpets or Onappookkalam is one of the beautiful customs of Onam. During the ten day festival of Onam, houses and thresholds are cleaned and Pookkalam of different flowers are made in front of

every house. It requires lots and lots of flowers and leaves to complete this Onappookkalam and as per the customs, it must grow bigger in size as the day progresses and the tenth day should witness the biggest Pookkalam. The families and kids of the houses in Kerala take great pride in preparing these pookkalams. In early days, it was a way of making kids familiarize about flowers and nature.

Vallamkali or Boat Race

The most enchanting of the Onam celebration customs is the Boat race or Vallamkali. One of the most admired and engrossing events associated with Onam, it is held during the Onam festival. Though there is numerous boat races held all through the state, the most famous of them is 'Aranmula Uthraattadi Vallamkali' at Pathanamthitta' and 'Nehru Trophy Boat Race' in Alappuzha. What makes this striking is that huge canoes are decorated with hundreds of boatmen racing it. The rhythmic music and songs tempts people to flock to the event.

Pulikali

Pulikali, a folk art, form one of the most entertaining customs the ten day festival of Onam witness. Pulikali means, 'play of tigers'. Celebrated in the central districts of Kerala like Thrissur and Palghat, pulikali include trained artists dress themselves as tigers by painting their body with yellow, red and black patterns. A captivating custom which is dated back to 200 years, in pulikali, artists dance to instruments like Udukku and Thakil.

Thumbi Thullal

Thumbi Thullal is a gracious folk art form performed by women during the ten day Onam festival in Kerala. Though slowly disappearing, this beautiful art is one which imbibes the true spirit of Onam. In this, performers wear attractive jewelry and clothes, form a ring with the lead performer sit in the middle and sing a fast paced song. The other performers join her by clapping the hands and swaying to the rhythm of the song.

Kaikottikali

An elegant dance form performed during the Onam festival, Kaikottikali witness Kerala women, irrespective of young and old wear the traditional attire and dance to songs praising the mighty King Mahabali who ruled Kerala during the ancient days. In some places in Kerala, women dance around Pookkalam or floral mat in the center of which there will be a bronze lit lamp (nilavilakku).

Athachamayam

Athachamayam is a grand procession which marks the beginning of the ten day of festival of Onam. This is a grand tradition which is held on the 1st day of Onam (Atham) in places like Thripunithura and Piravam. This event is held to commemorate the royal tradition in which the kings of the state of Cochin travelled from their Thripunithura Fort to the Thrikkakara temple with the royal entourage. Nowadays, the event has huge fanfare which is often accompanied by folk artistes, musical ensembles and dance shows by skilled artists even without the royal charm.

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**The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday
Horoscope by NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - 23 August to 29 August 2021

Aries

Ganesha says your week will be filled with surprises! You will get involved in activities you never thought you would participate in. The first three days will bring you opportunities you were waiting for but in the last two days, you will feel uneasy and derailed from your schedule. This week you should be very selective avoid people you invest your emotions in as their possessive nature may harm yours later. There will be dull moments due to the transition of the moon. Your aggressive behavior will harm the people you love the most and you will regret overspending therefore control your emotional hype this week.

Taurus

This is an amazing week for you. you will be provided with ample opportunities to prove yourself at work which, in turn, may also lead to your promotion this week. If you're single, Venus is in your favor this week. You will have wonderful adventures this week with your partner. You will move on to the next level with your partner. You will experience a positive shift in your feelings, the world has never seemed this beautiful to you before and you will simply be high on life.

Gemini

You will work hard, and hard work will reward you with very satisfying returns in this week itself. At the start of a week, you will feel better the level of happiness will keep increasing. And because of that, you will get very generous throughout the week. So, you are advised to control your spending and manage your money. Your good deeds can convert into overspending and because of that, you can end up creating problems with your family.

Cancer

A normal start to the week is likely for you. You will make use of the first two days of the week to improve your knowledge. You will crave for something new in your life. You will procure new items. Results will mirror the hard work that you have put in the past few days but all in all this week might be quite boring for you if you keep it like that. You will have a lot of free time at your hands and pretty much nothing to do as your business is flourishing by the work of outsources hence you will only need to dedicate a little amount of time and attention to your business.

Leo

This week you are likely to shift gears and are ready to begin a new phase of your life. You may feel as though you have stepped upon a lottery ticket as you will receive good luck in abundance this week. You have always desired freedom, and you are willing to do what it takes to get there starting this week.

You're very likely to start a new business in which you will have immense beginners' luck and you will make progress like wildfire this week.

Virgo

This week is all about getting uncomfortable and stepping your foot into untouched waters for you. A lot of travelling, most likely to be solo trips is in your cards this week. Though it may initially seem like a bad thing, stepping beyond the usual will be better for your life, it could be a real adventure and you'll realize in the end how far you've come. This week you will be loving and kind and the people you love will reciprocate your behavior and feelings. this week, you will have the opportunity to improve relationships with roommates or family members and to dissolve tension.

Libra

Once you decide to achieve a goal, nothing stands in your way this week. This power that you will carry throughout the week can make you or break you. The ball is in your court, but you will have to choose between being kind and considerate or being revengeful. Reflect on the consequences first. Follow your intuition and listen to your gut feeling.

Scorpio

Your focus will be good, and you will have good patience. You will be able to utilize your strength to implement your plans in the business or work, in terms of growth in the work and business. You will get help from your network to make it possible. Expect some changes in your place, position or responsibilities at work, in terms of promotions. Your destiny will help you to get benefits in terms of gains in business. You are advised to initiate your postponed projects.

Sagittarius

Some solace will do you good this week, as you have been ignoring your feelings by staying busy.

Your business and finances will work out on its own this week, without you having to pay much time and attention. Although you need to do something to show your appreciation and gratitude towards your employees as you have got a lucky bunch. They have been trustworthy and have got your back throughout all the difficulties that your business has faced. You will receive a lot of love from your partner this entire week. Plan fun and cute dates for yourself and your partner to get to know each other even more.

Capricorn

You will be able to make some huge investments in this week. You're likely to rush the process and skip the analyzing and strategizing part, which can ruin all the profit you have made from the new prospect. You need to listen to your financial advisor and take your time. Managing such a huge amount of money can make you or break you. Your love life will be quite confusing throughout the week, your partner will act very caring and loving, but immediately be distant as soon as you mention your future together or taking the next step in your relationship

Aquarius

You are likely to travel for business this week and Jupiter will bring you good deals from this travelling. Your communications skills will help in finding solutions to the issues your institution is facing. Along with that, you are likely to find a right guide who will help you stabilize your profits. On the negative side, you may harm some of the closest people in your life just by your harsh opinions so measure your words before you spill them. Negative thoughts will make you nervous, but you are known to be someone who fight their fears. You will also feel urge to be detached from your responsibilities but gradually you will find your way back.

Pisces

Last week's messy situations will become easy this week and help from your siblings will push you towards progress in career. Avoid being involved in any kind of litigation this week. Love will bloom in unexpected directions at unexpected timings, wait and watch! You may have a little sleeplessness and feel tired due to hectic schedule. Expect new opportunities coming your way in terms of business and work this week, which will boost your confidence to a new level. You will start a new venture with the help of your partner, which will increase your business in the near future.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : 23 August to 29 August 2021

CONTD FROM PAGE 36

August 23

Your infectious energy will attract a lot of people today towards you. You will experience a lot of positive changes in your partner which will coerce you to take the next step. Your work life will be the most positive part of your day. A very productive day is on its way for you today. You will have a neutral day, relaxing and working as well.

August 24

You will have such impressive ways of presenting your project to your clients that everyone that comes across it will be infatuated with the way you present your work and yourself. Today you will earn yourself a lot of business prospects and finances. You will enjoy the day today like never before. As you have been working really hard since the past few days you will see exponential growth today.

August 25

The positive highlight for you today is you will gain a lot of clarity and insight into your love life. Positive energies are present for you today. You will see your partner and their behavior the way it is, and your love life will improve even more. This will make it very easy for you to make decisions and will be beneficial for you.

August 26

You will experience a great amount of prosperity today. Work on being social and presenting yourself like you own the place you walk into. Do not let second thoughts hinder your confidence today. Today is a fun filled day for you. As you spend your time working and exploring nature throughout the day.

August 27

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 today, the financial profit you will make today will last you a long time.

August 28

The moon is in your sign today which means love in abundance. You will spread cheer and happiness everywhere you go and everyone that you meet today, will be in awe of your energy. Today will go far better than your past few days. Your adjusting nature and leadership skills will help you move past any hurdles without much effort.

August 29

Today is full of love and peace for you. You will come across a lot of people today whose company you will thoroughly enjoy. Today is all about social interaction for you. You will receive a lot of love support and understanding from your partner today. You will enjoy the pampering you receive a lot today; you will need to reciprocate it back today itself.

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Gayatri Jayanti

Gayatri Jayanti is observed as the birth anniversary of Goddess Gayatri, the Goddess of Veda. Being the Goddess of all Veda, Goddess Gayatri is also known as Veda Mata.

This year, Gayatri Jayanti falls on August 22.

It is believed that Goddess Gayatri is manifestation of all phenomenal attributes of Brahman. She is also worshipped as the Goddess of Hindu Trimurti. She is considered as the mother of all Gods and embodiment of Goddess Saraswati, Goddess Parvati and Goddess Lakshmi.

Most people, especially in South India, observe Gayatri Jayanti during Shravana Purnima. According to Matantara i.e. due to the difference of opinions to observe Gayatri Jayanti, it is also observed on Shukla Paksha Ekadashi during Jyeshtha lunar month. Matantara Gayatri Jayanti is usually observed on the next day of Ganga Dussehra.

Devotees observe Gayatri Jayanti by making special prayers to Gayatri Mata and by repeatedly chanting Gayatri Mantra.

In modern India, Gayatri Jayanti day during Shravana Purnima is observed as Sanskrit Diwas, a day to mark the importance of Sanskrit language. Various activities, seminars and workshops are organized on the day of Sanskrit Diwas to promote the Vedic language. In current time, the usage of Sanskrit has been limited to only Puja-Patha and academic activities.

Significance Of Goddess Gayatri & The Gayatri Mantra

Gayatri Mata or Goddess Gayatri is the representation of the divine essence of Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati and Mahakali. The word Gayatri is a combination of 'Gaya' which translates to mean the hymn of wisdom and 'Tri' represents the combined strength of the three Goddesses.

Goddess Gayatri is worshipped as the deity, which expresses the untiring pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. As per the Vedic literature, she is portrayed as the female form of the light of the sun. The light itself denotes the wisdom that enlightens the soul.

The Gayatri Mantra extols the form of Gayatri Mata. The Gayatri Mantra is the Mula mantra or the most basic mantra in Hinduism. It helps the devotee attain and follow the 'Sanatana Dharma', which is the ideal of perfection.

Mythology Of The Goddess Gayatri

According to mythology, Goddess Gayatri is considered as a form of Goddess Saraswati and is the spouse of Lord Brahma. As the story goes, Brahma was once conducting a ritual that required the presence of his wife Devi Saraswati.

Goddess Saraswati was delayed for some reason and couldn't arrive on time. This made Brahma furious. He asked the priests to wed him to any woman available, so that she can sit through the ritual as his wife.

The priests searched for a woman who could take Saraswati Devi's place and found a beautiful shepherdess Gayatri Devi. Brahma was married to her and the ritual was completed. It is believed that the shepherdess was an incarnate of Goddess Saraswati.

It is said that as Brahma's wife, Gayatri Devi presented him with the four Vedas. This is why Gayatri Devi is known as the Veda Mata. She is also the patron Goddess of artisans, poets and musicians.

Depiction Of Goddess Gayatri

Goddess Gayatri is shown to have five heads. Each head represents a pancha vayu or pancha prana - Samana, Udana, Prana, Apana and Vyana. Alternatively, they are said to represent the pancha tatwas - Prithvi (earth), Vayu (air), Jala (water), Aakash (sky/ether) and Teja (fire).

In her ten hands, she carries a shankha, chakra, varada, kamala, kasha, abhaya, ujjwala patra (utensil), ankusha and rudraksha mala.

The Gayatri Mantra

There is no other mantra in Hinduism that is more popular than Gayatri Mantra. It is one of the basic



mantras that even the uninitiated devotee can chant. A person needs basic knowledge of the religious rituals before chanting the Gayatri Mantra. Caste and creed are no bars for chanting this mantra that absolves the worshiper of all sins and sufferings.

The Gayatri Mantra follows the Vedic meter and has 24 syllables. The Gayatri Mantra is as follows:

"Om Bhoor Bhuwah Svaha, Tat Savitur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi, Dheeyo Yonah Prachodayat."

'Om' is the primeval sound that existed before the creation of the world.

'Bhoor, Bhuwah and Svaha' translate to the physical, mental and spiritual worlds respectively.

'Tat' denotes the Paramatma, 'Savitur' is the creator or the sun, 'Varenyam' means the highest and the word 'Bargo' means luster and tejas.

'Devasya' denotes the supreme God and 'Dheemahi' means to meditate upon. 'Dheeyo' is the understanding and intellect, 'Yo' refers to the word who and 'Nah' means our.

The last word 'Prachodayat' is the act of enlightenment. When put together, the Gayatri Mantra translates to: "We meditate and bow to thee, the most supreme creator who inspires and directs our intelligence and understanding." There is a collection of Gayatri mantras for the various other deities in Hinduism, 24 to be specific. These are said to be very effective in invoking the blessings of the respective gods.

Worship Of Goddess Gayatri

Other than the Gayatri Mantra, there is also a simple method of worship or pooja dedicated to the Goddess Gayatri. You may perform the pooja by following the steps given below:

Things Needed: An image of Goddess Gayatri, Lamp Incense Camphor, Milk, Yoghurt, Panchagavya (concoction prepared by mixing cow dung, cow's urine, milk, curd and ghee), Water, Fruit, Flowers.

Chant the following mantras as you offer each of the items to the Goddess.

- Light the lamp and offer the light Esha deepah om Gayatri devyai Namah ||
- Offer the incense Esha dhoopah om Gayatri devyai Namah ||

- Offer Camphor Om gam Gayatri devyai namah aratrikam samarpayami||
- Offer milk bath Om gam Gayatri devyai namah paya snanam samarpayami||
- Offer yoghurt Om gam Gayatri devyai namah dadhi snanam samarpayami||
- Offer Panchagavya Om gam Gayatri devyai namah panchamrita snanam samarpayami||
- Offer Water Bath Om gam Gayatri devyai namah ganga snanam samarpayami||
- Offer fruit Om gam Gayatri devyai namah phalam samarpayami||
- Offer fragrant flowers Eth gandha pushpe Om gam Gayatri devyai||
- Finally, go on to chant the below Mantra
Agaccha varade devi japye me sannidha bhava| Gayantam trayase yasmad Gayatri tvamatah smritah|| Ayahe varade devi tryaksare bhramhavadini| Gayatri chandasam matarbhamha yoni namo stute||
You may also chant 'Om gam Gayatri devyai namaha'.

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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."

Sikkim: Where nature smiles

Sikkim situated in the Eastern Himalayan region with an area of 7,096 sq km and altitude ranging from 300m to 8,586m above sea level is a wonderland blessed with natural abundance from icy cold deserts, flowering alpine meadows, to lush green forests and emerald mountain lakes. The crowning glory of this wonderland is undoubtedly the magnificent Mt. Khangchendzonga (8,586m), the third highest mountain of the world. The mountain is not merely a physical entity but the abode of guardian deity whose benign watchfulness ensures peace and prosperity of the land.

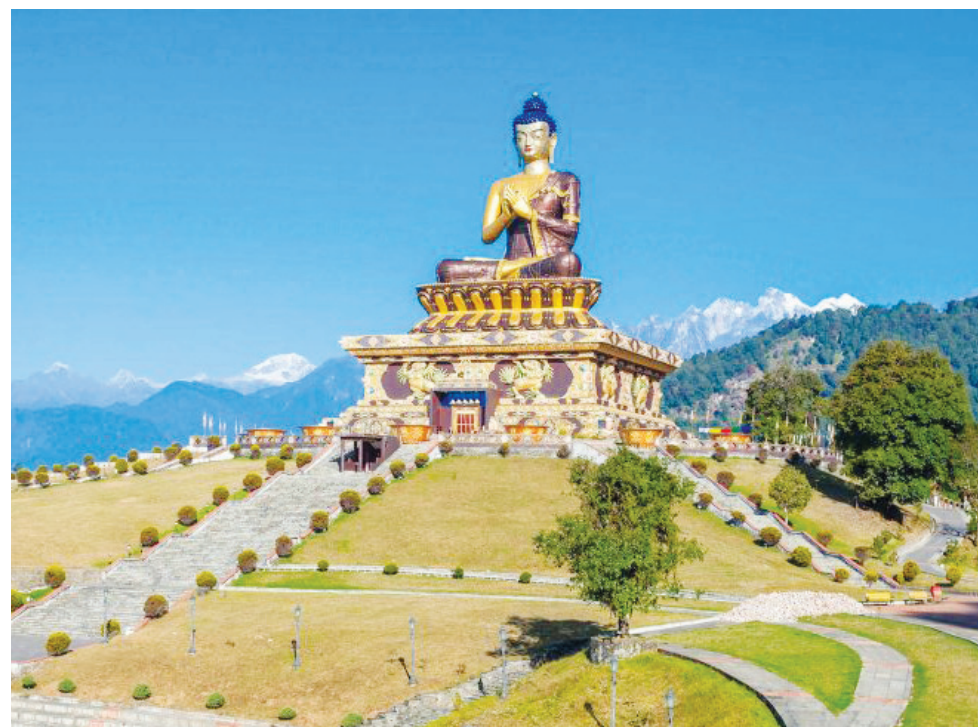
It is possible to move from the sub-tropical heat of the lower valleys to the cold of the rugged mountain slopes that ascend up to the areas of perpetual snow in a matter of few hours. Such a steep rise in altitude over a very short distance, allows the land to host a robust natural heritage and wealth. The snow-capped mountain ranges, lush thick forests, plunging mountain valleys flush with rich flora and fauna, picture perfect villages, groves of rhododendrons, hot springs, waterfalls, perennial streams and grand rivers Teesta and Rangit all contribute to shape Sikkim as a magical, mystical wonderland.

Keeping in tune with the natural diversity, Sikkim has an equally rich and diverse demographic structure with myriad of communities and religions and intricately knit colourful cultures, the basic connecting factor being the warm, welcoming nature of the people everywhere. The phrase "Atithi Devo Bhava" finds its true meaning in Sikkim. Diverse rituals, songs, dances, traditional dresses, folklores and legends fill up the cultural canvas of the State. The chimes of bells in the temples and the flutter of prayer flags in the monasteries create a feeling of righteousness and healing of spirit and soul. Feel rejuvenated, energised and spirituality enlightened in this holy land. Nature is revealed in its entire splendour in the serene lakes, cascading rivers and pristine waterfalls. Sacred lakes, waterfalls and hot water springs dot the mountainous landscape. Sikkim has a spectacular diversity of natural habitats and wildlife within a small geographic area of just 7,096 Sq. Km. From the river valleys and verdant forests to alpine meadows with rainbow of flowers blooming in monsoon; to the ice barren high glaciers and cold deserts – the vistas are endless and captivating for a visitor who is taken aback by such splendour.

DESTINATIONS

GANGTOK

With magnificent views of the Kanchenjunga peak, uniqueness and vibrancy in colours of culture and tradition infused into the stunning sceneries and just the right dash of subtle city life is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the area. The name meaning hilltop, Gangtok can be safely said to be one of the most beautiful hill stations in the country.



YUMTHANG

Situated at a height of 11,800 feet,

Yumthang is also known as the 'Valley of Flowers'. It is considered a paradise for nature lovers due to its magnificent

blend of rich flora and rare fauna coupled with its breathtaking scenic beauty. The best season to visit is spring, where the entire landscape is filled with colours of Primulas and Rhododendrons making Yumthang immensely popular among tourists. The Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary cannot be missed especially with its 24 species of Rhododendron flowers. The hot spring located on the right side of Yumthang River is also a popular tourist attraction. Apart from the beautiful landscape, the valley is surrounded by Silver Fir and Pine trees, as well as cascading waterfalls and streams.

CHUNGTHANG

A small town on way to Yumthang in Sikkim, stands at the confluence of the rivers Lachen Chu and Lachung Chu. The North Sikkim highway bifurcates from here with one road leading to Lachen and the other to Lachung. Chungthang Valley is believed to be a holy place which has been blessed by Guru Padmasambhava, the patron saint of Sikkim. There is a rock here which to this day bears the hand and footprints of Saint Padmasambhava. From a small opening in the rock there is continuous flow of mineral water. There is a small patch of land here from which grows paddy every year. The nature defying miracle is believed to be the blessing of Guru Padmasambhava who sprinkled a handful of grain on the spot that has sprouted paddy ever since. Chungthang is a good place to halt before one takes off for the more alpine regions of Lachen, Lachung and the Yumthang Valley. Chungthang is mired in myths and legends, one such being that this is the place from where the word 'Demazong' [the hidden valley of rice, as Sikkim is known] first originated.

LACHUNG

Lachung, about 118kms from Gangtok in North Sikkim, is situated at an altitude of 8,858 ft. Also known as the 'Small Pass', Lachung is embraced by snow capped mountain peaks, breathtaking waterfalls, sparkling streams and apple orchards, also peaches and apricots. The market of this city is filled with handicrafts such as exquisitely woven rugs and blankets that make this town ideal for shopping sprees. The residents of Lachung who are mostly Bhutias call themselves Lachungpas.

PELLING

Pelling, a beautiful town in the West District of Sikkim, is becoming the second biggest tourist destination in Sikkim after Gangtok. The main attraction of the place is the breathtaking sight of the Khangchendzonga and the neighbouring peaks. The famous Pemayangtse monastery is less than a kilometre from here and is a major tourist spot. It also provides sites for mountain biking, rock climbing, village tours, meditation, educational studies and several other activities. The scenic town of Pelling is a perfect holiday destination for all nature lovers.

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HOCKEY: TOKYO TRIUMPH MAY MARK REVIVAL OF INDIAN HOCKEY

INDIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM AT OLYMPIC GAMES AFTER 13 YEARS

It is not just a bronze medal. It is an expression of the sentiments of millions of Indian hockey fans that have sieved through the grinds of Olympic hockey for the past 41 years.

It is India's third bronze medal in the sport that every Indian thinks of as the country's national sport. With eight gold medals - last won in Moscow in 1980 - and one silver other than three bronze medals, India put up a gallant fight to oust four times Olympic gold medalist Germany for this elusive medal.

Hockey may not have directly engineered the return of the Indian national anthem at a victory ceremony as it did 57 years ago but it certainly created the right atmosphere for it.

Tokyo, once again, marked the turning point for Indian hockey. Remember 1960 when India lost its supremacy in hockey for the first time. The Rome Olympic games will always be remembered as there was no "Jana Mana" sung or played at the Olympic games.

Led by center half Charanjit Singh, the 1964 Indian Olympic hockey team had some of the greats, including penalty corner specialist Prithipal Singh (no drag flicker but a powerful hitter of the leather ball with his 29-ounce mulberry hockey stick - no Carbon/graphite). It was he who sank many a team with his lethal penalty corner strikes and emerged as the top scorer with 11 goals to his credit. It was his penalty corner shot that got India the decisive penalty stroke. It was Mohinder Lal who made no mistake with the dreaded spot push.

And this time again, India's success story was mainly scripted by penalty corner strikers or drag flickers - Rupinder Pal Singh and Harmanpreet Singh. After a long gap of 41 years, India was back on the podium. Though no



The Bronze medal winning Men's Hockey team

Indian national anthem was played at Oi Hockey Stadium, Tokyo did reverberate with Jana Gana a day before the closing ceremony after the Javelin thrower gave India its first ever medal in athletics, a gold.

When hockey teams, men, and women, left the shores of the country, expectations started soaring especially after the men's team defeated New Zealand in the opener. While the women's team suffered reverses in its first three pool games, men were lucky to limit their setbacks to only one, against Australia, by a big margin of 1-7.

Confidence reposed in young faces by the team coach Graham Reid (Australia) in preference to some experienced players, especially in the forward line,

has shown very encouraging results. These are the new faces - Simranjit Singh, Gurjant Singh, Hardik Singh and Dilpreet Singh - who compensated for their lack of experience with their determination, grit, and skills. Besides experienced goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and dependable deep defenders and drag flickers - Rupendra Pal Singh and Harmanpreet Singh - Indian team stood out as a cohesive and purposeful unit.

Tokyo 2020 was an Olympic with a difference. Never any Olympics got postponed. But the Corona pandemic forced the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Tokyo Olympic Games Organising Committee besides the Japanese government to postpone the mega sporting event by a year.



BY PRABHJOT SINGH

"TOKYO, ONCE AGAIN, MARKED THE TURNING POINT FOR INDIAN HOCKEY. REMEMBER 1960 WHEN INDIA LOST ITS SUPREMACY IN HOCKEY FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE ROME OLYMPIC GAMES WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS THERE WAS NO "JANA MANA" SUNG OR PLAYED AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES."



They also decided not to allow any spectators, including families and friends of participating athletes. Playing before empty stands and restricting their movements from Olympic Village to venues, 11,000 odd athletes put up credible performances.

After Mirabai Chanu gave a silvery start with a medal in weightlifting, a new wave of enthusiasm swept Indian camp in Tokyo. Both men and women teams deserved praise for quickly putting behind their pool game reverses and continued to focus on their goal of making the last eight.

They did and did it with style. Not content with their quarterfinal destination, they had revised their expectations to an Olympic medal.

(Photo H 2 of Indian Women Hockey team at the Olympics)

What a game Indian girls played against the once powerhouse of women's hockey, Australia, in the quarterfinals. A penalty corner goal by Gurjit Kaur was enough to upset the applecart of the Hockeyroos.

The men's team took measure of Great Britain in the last eight rounds. It was a great consolation for India to oust its mentor from the medal round. If India had failed to make it to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, it was because Great Britain had defeated them in the Olympic Qualifier in Chile in 2008.

The bronze medal triumph was sufficient provocation for hockey lovers the world over to burst into celebrations. This bronze for them is much bigger, larger, and more valuable than any other medal, including gold, won in any other sport.

(The author is a senior journalist. He can be reached at Prabhjot416@gmail.com)



The Women's Hockey team gave a sterling performance - Photo / Courtesy Hockey India

Australia name full-strength squad in search of elusive T20 World Cup title

Steve Smith, David Warner and Pat Cummins were on Thursday recalled as Australia named a full-strength squad in search of an elusive ICC T20 World Cup title later this year.

The 15-man Australia squad for the showpiece, to be held in Oman and the UAE in October, is a mixture of pace, spin and hard-hitters keeping in mind the slow, spin-friendly conditions of the pitches in the UAE.

The trio had opted out of Australia's limited overs tour of the West Indies and Bangladesh recently.

In a major development, Australia has included uncapped Josh Inglis as a backup to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade.

Inglis, who is yet to make his international debut, has been chosen ahead of Alex Carey and Josh Philippe.

Having dominated the ODI World Cup with record five titles and two runner-up finishes, Australia would be eager to break their jinx in the T20 World Cup.

Australia has endured a poor run in the T20 format of late, losing back-to-back series to West Indies and Bangladesh recently.

But the return of Marcus Stoinis, Glenn Maxwell, Warner, Cummins, Smith and Kane Richardson after opting out of recent white-ball tours of the West Indies and Bangladesh, will add much-needed firepower to Australia's team.

Smith has been included despite his ongoing elbow injury, while limited overs skipper Aaron Finch, who missed the Bangladesh series to undergo knee surgery, is expected to be fit on time for the tournament.

'He is full of energy, let him flourish': Boycott calls India pacer Siraj an 'asset'



The Indian bowlers put up quite the show on the final day of the Lord's Test which helped the team bundle England out for 120 in chase of 272. India required 51.5 overs to skittle the hosts and register a memorable win at Lord's to go 1-0 up the five-Test series with Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah sharing seven wickets to inflict the bulk of the damage.

Ravindra Jadeja once again went wicketless in the match, which means this was only the third instance in history – twice in two matches – that all 20 wickets in a Test match were claimed by India's pacers. If at Trent Bridge, it was Bumrah who made the noise by picking up a five-for in the second innings and thus, finishing the match with a nine-wicket-

haul, at Lord's, it was pacer Siraj, who shone through.

Siraj picked up eight wickets in the Test – 4/94 and 4/32 – to emerge as India's standout bowler. Watching the youngsters excel has left former England captain Geoffrey Boycott highly impressed. Siraj is not even a year into his Test career but Boycott feels the fast bowler has turned into an 'asset' for the team.

"I like Siraj. He is full of energy. No one should tell him to curb anything. Let him flourish in his own way. He's an asset for India, although he is fairly new," Boycott told mid-day from the UK on Wednesday.

Boycott reflected on the atmosphere that exists within the Indian team, adding that the positivity around the unit is

amazing to watch. This was most visible when India's ninth-wicket pair of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami – who had added an unbeaten 89-run partnership – headed back to the change room during the lunch interval on Day 5, as the group of Indian players had come down from the balcony to welcome the batting pair with claps and cheers.

"I liked the way the Indian team rallied around each other. When Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah were batting [during their match-defining 89-run stand], the whole team was shouting from the balcony. They even came down to receive them. These things bring about solidarity," Boycott pointed out.

Source: HT

U20 World championship: Indian 4x400 quartet wins bronze

NEW DELHI (TIP): The mixed relay team of Barath S, Priya Mohan, Summy and Kapil gave the Indian contingent a perfect start at the athletics U20 World Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on Wednesday, August 18.

The quartet opened India's account with a season's best timing of 3 minutes, 20.60 seconds to clinch a creditable bronze medal in the mixed 4x400 metres relay event.

The Nigerian team won the gold medal with a championships record of 3:19.70, while the Polish quartet won the silver medal with a season's best timing of 3:19.80.

Interestingly, the final was the third race for both Priya and Summy. After running the first heats as part of mixed team, where the team briefly held the championship record with a timing of 3:26.36, the duo also took part in the women's 400m individual heats. "We were OK after the first heat in the morning. I only pushed my body 80 per cent," Priya said during the press meet organised by the Athletics Federation of



India's 4x400 metres mixed relay team celebrates after winning bronze at the U-20 World Championships in Nairobi. Photo: AFI

India (AFI).

"I felt a little tightness after the second race but our

team physio and support staff got us ready for the race and I was happy and proud to win this medal as this was a first final for many of us," she added.

The Indian team switched Abdul Razak Rasheed, who ran in the morning heats, with Barath for the finals and it paid off for the team. Chief coach Kamal Ali Khan said Rasheed was a shade slower than Barath and it was necessary to change the team for the finals.

"We knew that we would be on the podium with a start of 47 seconds in the final. Rasheed has been clocking 48 seconds throughout and so we had to change the team. The strategy worked and I want to thank AFI for giving me the freedom to make the change," Khan said.

Barath, who is the Federation Cup junior champion, had been carrying an ankle injury and had to be patched up by the support staff before the race.

"I was told not to run but the support staff worked throughout the day to get me ready for this race. If not for them I would not have realised my dream of winning a medal for the country," he said.

HISTORY THIS WEEK AUGUST 20 TO 26, 2021

"RULERS, STATESMEN, NATIONS, ARE WONT TO BE EMPHATICALLY COMMENDED TO THE TEACHING WHICH EXPERIENCE OFFERS IN HISTORY. BUT WHAT EXPERIENCE AND HISTORY TEACH IS THIS - THAT PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS NEVER HAVE LEARNED ANYTHING FROM HISTORY OR ACTED ON PRINCIPLES DEDUCED FROM IT. EACH PERIOD IS INVOLVED IN SUCH PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES, EXHIBITS A CONDITION OF THINGS SO STRICTLY IDIOSYNCRATIC, THAT ITS CONDUCT MUST BE REGULATED BY CONSIDERATIONS CONNECTED WITH ITSELF, AND ITSELF ALONE."- G. W. F. HEGEL

August 20



President Benjamin Harrison

BIRTHDAY - Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) the 23rd U.S. President was born in North Bend, Ohio. He was the grandson of William Henry Harrison, the 9th President.

August 21

AUGUST 21, 1863 - During the American Civil War, William Quantrill led 450 irregular Confederate raiders on a pre-dawn terrorist raid of Lawrence, Kansas, leaving 150 civilians dead, 30 wounded and much of the town a smoking ruin. In 1862, Quantrill had been denied a Confederate commission by the Confederate Secretary of War, who labeled Quantrill's notions of war as 'barbarism.'



President Dwight D. Eisenhower

AUGUST 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.

AUGUST 21, 1983 - Filipino opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., was assassinated at the Manila airport while leaving his plane. Public outcry over the killing ultimately led to the collapse of the government of Ferdinand E. Marcos and the inauguration of

Corazon C. Aquino, widow of the slain man, as president.

August 22

AUGUST 22, 1986 - Deadly fumes from a volcanic eruption under Lake Nios in Cameroon killed more than 1,500 persons.

BIRTHDAY - French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was born in St. Germain-en-Laye, France. His unusual chords, based on the whole-tone scale, laid the groundwork for a new style of music called impressionism.

August 23

AUGUST 23, 1927 - Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were electrocuted inside a prison at Charlestown, Massachusetts. They had been convicted of a shoe factory payroll robbery during which the paymaster and a guard had been killed. Following their convictions, all appeals for a new trial had failed, despite the lack of hard evidence and a later admission by a known criminal that he had participated in the robbery with an organized criminal gang. The days and weeks leading up to their execution aroused worldwide protests amid accusations of unfair treatment because they had radical political views and were Italian.

August 24



Eruption of Mount Vesuvius; lava covering dwellings. Gouache painting by Mauton, 1834. | Wellcome Collection (Picture for representation)

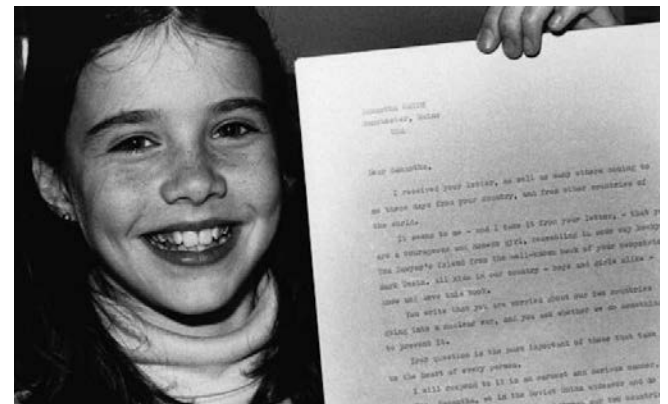
AUGUST 24, 79 A.D. - Vesuvius, an active volcano in southern Italy, erupted and destroyed the cities of Pompeii, Stabiae and Herculaneum.

AUGUST 24, 1572 - Thousands of Protestant Huguenots were massacred in Paris and throughout France by Catholics, in what became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

AUGUST 24-25, 1814 - During the War of 1812, Washington, D.C., was invaded by British forces that burned the Capitol, the White House and most other public buildings along with a number of private homes. The burning was in retaliation for the earlier American burning of York (Toronto).

August 25

AUGUST 25, 1985 - Samantha Smith died in an airplane crash in Maine. In 1982, the 11-year-old American schoolgirl had written a letter to Soviet Russia's leader Yuri Andropov asking, "Why do you want to conquer the whole world, or at least our country?" To her surprise, Andropov replied personally to her and offered an all-expense paid trip to the U.S.S.R. She toured Russia for two weeks amid worldwide



Samantha Smith

publicity and came to symbolize American and Russian hopes for peaceful co-existence.



Leonard Bernstein

BIRTHDAY - American conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Considered one of the finest conductors in American music history, his works included West Side Story, On the Town, and the opera Candide.

August 26

AUGUST 26, 1883 - One of the most catastrophic volcanic eruptions in recorded history occurred on the Indonesian island of Krakatoa. Explosions were heard 2,000 miles away. Tidal waves 120 ft. high killed 36,000 persons on nearby islands, while five cubic miles of earth were blasted into the air up to a height of 50 miles.

Le de Frost



BIRTHDAY - American inventor Lee De Forest (1873-1961) was born at Council

Bluffs, Iowa. He held hundreds of patents for inventions and was also a pioneer in the creation of wireless radio broadcasting and television.

contd from page 1

Taliban killed minorities, fueling Afghans' fears: Report

push a message of unity at the first gathering for Friday prayers since the capital was seized.

Terrified that the new de facto rulers would commit such abuses, thousands have raced to Kabul's airport desperate to flee following the Taliban's stunning blitz through the country. Others have taken to the streets to protest the takeover - acts of defiance that Taliban fighters have violently suppressed.

The Taliban have sought to project moderation and have pledged to restore security and forgive those who fought them in the 20 years since a US-led invasion. Ahead of Friday prayers, leaders urged to imams to use sermons to appeal for unity, urge people not to flee the country, and to counter "negative propaganda" about them.

But many Afghans are skeptical, and the Amnesty report provided more evidence that undercut the Taliban's claims they have changed.

The rights group said that its researchers spoke to eyewitnesses in Ghazni province who recounted how the Taliban killed nine Hazara men in the village of Mundarakht on July 4-6. It said six of the men were shot, and three were tortured to death.

The brutality of the killings was "a reminder of the Taliban's past record, and a horrifying indicator of what Taliban rule may bring," said Agnes Callamard, the head of Amnesty International.

The group warned that many more killings may go unreported because the Taliban have cut cellphone services in many areas they've captured to prevent images from there from being published.

Separately, Reporters without Borders expressed alarm at the news that Taliban fighters killed the family member of an Afghan journalist working for German broadcaster Deutsche Welle on Wednesday.

"Sadly, this confirms our worst fears," said Katja Gloger of the press freedom group's German section. "The brutal action of the Taliban shows that the lives of independent media workers in Afghanistan are in acute danger." Many Afghans fear a return to the Taliban's harsh rule in the late 1990s, when the group largely confined women to their homes, banned television and music, chopped off the hands of suspected thieves and held public executions.

Thousands continue to flock to Kabul's airport, braving checkpoints manned by Taliban fighters as they seek desperately to get on evacuation flights out.

Mohammad Naim, who has been among the crowd at the airport for four days trying to escape the country, said he had to put his children on the roof of a car on the first day to save them from being crushed by the mass of people. He saw other children killed after they were unable to get out of the way.

Naim, who said he had been an interpreter for US forces, said he had urged others not to come to airport.

"It is a very, very crazy situation right now and I hope the situation gets better because I saw kids dying, it is very terrible," he said.

The Pentagon said Thursday that about 2,000 people were brought out on American flights on each of the previous two days, and the State Department said 6,000 more were expected to leave that day. But thousands of Americans and their Afghan allies may be in need of escape.

Dozens of other flights have already brought hundreds more Western nationals and Afghan workers to Europe and elsewhere.

Chaos at the airport itself has sometimes hindered flights but getting to the facility is the major challenge. Germany was sending two helicopters to Kabul to help bring small numbers of people from elsewhere in the city to the airport, officials said.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison noted that Australian citizens have not been able to be evacuated from outside Kabul, and even in the capital the

situation is difficult.

"The situation in Kabul does remain chaotic," he said.

In recent days, some Afghans have protested the Taliban in several cities - a remarkable show of defiance that fighters often met with violence. At least one person was killed Wednesday at a rally in the eastern city of Jalalabad, after demonstrators lowered the Taliban's flag and replaced it with the Afghan tricolor. Another person was seriously wounded at a protest a day later in Nangarhar province.

The demonstrations have come to the capital as well. On Thursday, a procession of cars and people near Kabul's airport carried long black, red and green banners in honor of the Afghan flag - a banner that is becoming a symbol of defiance.

Meanwhile, opposition figures gathering in the last area of the country not under Taliban rule talked of launching an armed resistance. It was not clear how serious a threat they posed given that Taliban fighters overran nearly the entire country in a matter of days with little resistance from Afghan forces.

In addition to concerns about Taliban abuses, officials have warned that Afghanistan's already weakened economy could crumble further without the massive international aid that sustained the toppled Western-backed government. The UN says there are dire food shortages and experts said the country was severely in need of cash with much of the government's funds abroad frozen. (Agencies)

With an Eye on 2024, 19 Opposition parties decide to hold nationwide protest

Jabs for teachers, pupils

"Save India today, so that we can change it for a better tomorrow," they said listing 11 demands, including restoration of full statehood and elections in Jammu and Kashmir, repeal of three farm laws and institution of an SC-led inquiry into the Pegasus snooping row.

The statement followed a major Opposition outreach in which Sonia Gandhi said, "Our ultimate goal is the 2024 Lok Sabha poll for which we have to begin planning systematically with the single-minded objective of giving to our country a government that believes in the values of the freedom movement and in the principles and provisions of our Constitution. This is a challenge, but together we can and must rise to it because there is simply no alternative to working cohesively together. We all have our compulsions, but clearly, a time has come when the interests of our nation demand that we rise above them."

Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee proposed the formation of a core group of Opposition leaders to chalk out joint programs. The like-minded parties "needed to unite to defeat the BJP", she said.

The meeting was attended by leaders of the TMC, NCP, DMK, Shiv Sena, JMM, CPI, CPM, NC, RJD, AIUDF, VCK, Loktantrik Janta Dal, JDS, RLD, RSP, Kerala Congress Mani, PDP and IUML. The BSP, AAP and SP skipped the event, but the Congress claimed SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had intimated about his absence.

In the meeting, symbolically organized on the birth anniversary of her husband and late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia blamed the government for the recent Parliament washout. (Agencies)

US suggests world leaders skip General Assembly in-person

The mission also suggested that all U.N.-hosted meetings and events be virtual, saying meetings that gather large groups of people together in places like New York "needlessly increase risk to our community, New Yorkers and the other travelers."

According to the media reports, the mission said that the Biden administration was particularly concerned about Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the incoming General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid hosting events about climate change and vaccines.

"The United States is willing to make every effort to



make these important events on shared priorities successful in a virtual format," the mission said.

The 76th session of the U.N. General Assembly is expected to begin on Sept. 21 and end on Sept. 30. Last year's assembly was not held in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the U.S. decided to allow world leaders the option of attending in-person or virtually this year.

The U.S. is currently experiencing a surge of new cases, with hospitalizations around the country rising.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the national seven-day average for new cases is currently over 130,000. Around 86 percent of counties in the U.S. are rated as having a "high" rate of transmission, according to the CDC.

Shashi Tharoor discharged in wife Sunanda Pushkar's death case

During the arguments, while police had sought framing of various charges, including 306 (abetment of suicide), senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, appearing for Tharoor, told the court that the investigation conducted by the SIT completely exonerated the politician of all the charges levelled against him.

Pushkar was found dead in a suite of a luxury hotel in the city on the night of January 17, 2014. The couple was staying in the hotel as the official bungalow of Tharoor was being renovated at the time.

Tharoor was charged under Sections 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) and 306 of the Indian Penal Code by Delhi Police but was not arrested in the case.

The senior Congress leader said his faith in the Indian judiciary stands vindicated and the ruling brings a "significant conclusion to the long nightmare" which had enveloped him.

Taking to Twitter, Tharoor posted his statement, "This brings a significant conclusion to the long nightmare which had enveloped me after the tragic passing of my late wife Sunanda."

"I have weathered dozens of unfounded accusations and media vilification patiently, sustained by my faith in the Indian judiciary, which today stands vindicated," the former Union ministersaid. (Source: PTI)

Pharmacy of the World turning into center for innovation

India is now the 3rd largest by volume and 10th largest by value in case of production of drugs and Pharmaceuticals. Presently India is contributing 8 percent global production. India recorded its turnover of \$40 billion in 2018-2019 and it is expected that it will cross 55 billion US\$ by 2030. India exported \$19.13 billion worth of drugs and Pharmaceuticals in 2018-2019 among 350 countries. Indian pharmaceutical Industry recorded a growth of 9.4 percent CAGR in 2018-2019, which is one of the highest among industries. India is producing almost 50 percent of vaccines consumed worldwide and exported vaccines to about 250 countries. This showed the strength of Indian Pharmaceutical industries in case of pharmaceutical industry. The same trend is continuing during the Covid pandemic situation.

During this Covid-19 pandemic about 19.6 crore people has been infected and 42.0 lakh died globally and in India 3.1 crore people infected and 4.2 lakh died.

Role reversal:

During this covid period Indian pharmaceutical industry showed much progress in drug development and innovation by way of getting emergency approval of several drugs and vaccines for fighting Covid-19.

India has made notable progress in case of innovating vaccines for Covid-19 and its manufacturing. Bharat Biotech in collaboration with Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Virology (NIV) has invented a Covid vaccine having brand name Covaxin and marketing for use after receiving approval from Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on 3rd January 2021. This Covid vaccine has been developed indigenously in India and now approved by more than 14 regulatory agencies. It is expected it will be listed by World Health Organization (WHO) within a month. This is a unique occasion where a research laboratory in Government sector joined hand with a private entrepreneur for innovation of a vaccine.

Similarly, Serum Institute of India has joined with AstraZeneca and developed technology for



Dr. Subhash C Mandal and Mrs. Manjiri Ghara

manufacturing another Covid vaccine and marketed with a Brand name Covishield which is being available in several countries throughout the world. Dr. Reddy's joined hand with RFID and Gamaleya National Research Center of Russia and conducted clinical trials of Sputnik-V in India and Sputnik V is in use in India.

Using these three Covid-19 vaccines India delivered 46.20 crore doses and made full vaccination of 10.20 crore Indian people (7% of population) till 29th July 2021.

A good number of Covid vaccines are under pipeline in India. One of them is an rDNA vaccine is under phase three clinical trial by Zydus and it is expected that it will get approval from DCGI very soon.

Government policy change and amendment of Rule for improving access to essential medicines and vaccines:

Change in Government policies and amendment of Drug Rules have given opportunities for improving access to medicines and vaccines. The newly introduced New Drugs and Clinical trial Rules have provisions to market drugs and vaccines under rule 75 (7) without local clinical trials with prior permission of the Central licensing authority (DCGI) which states that- "(7) The local clinical trial may not be required to be submitted along with the application referred to in sub-rule

- (1) if, _
- (i) the new drug is approved and marketed in countries specified by the Central Licensing Authority under rule 101 and if no major unexpected serious adverse events have been reported; or
- (ii) the application is for import of a new drug for which the Central Licensing Authority had already granted permission to conduct a global clinical trial which is ongoing in India and in the meantime such new drug has been approved for marketing in a country specified under rule 101; and
- (iii) there is no probability or evidence, on the basis of existing knowledge, of difference in Indian population of the enzymes or gene involved in the metabolism of the new drug or any factor affecting pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, safety and efficacy of the new drug; and
- (iv) the applicant has given an undertaking in writing to conduct Phase IV clinical trial to establish safety and effectiveness of such new drug as per design approved by the Central Licensing Authority:

Provided that the Central Licensing Authority may relax this condition, where the drug is indicated in life threatening or serious diseases or diseases of special relevance to Indian health scenario for a condition which is unmet need in India such as XDR tuberculosis, hepatitis C, H1N1, dengue, malaria, HIV, or for the rare diseases for which drugs are not available or available at a high cost or if it is an orphan drug."

Thereafter CDSCO has published a guideline in this matter and the process of approving new vaccines becomes easier. This guideline stated that no local clinical trials are required if a vaccine for Covid-19 already approved by USFDA, MHRA, PDMA Japan and listed by WHO for emergency use for Covid-19. These two steps help quick approval for emergency use of vaccines already approved by USFDA, MHRA, PDMA Japan and WHO listed Covid-19 vaccines. Using these provisions Covid-19 vaccines developed by Moderna in US already got approval for import by Cipla limited and hope that some more vaccines will be available in India in future using these provisions.

New Government schemes under "Atmanirbhar Bharat" mission:

This mission was launched by Government of India in the year 2020 to make Indian Industries self-reliant. Atmanirbhar Bharat will go beyond self-sufficiency to the pharmaceutical Industry of India, both in case of pharmaceutical products and Active Principal Ingredients (APIs). Along with accelerating domestic manufacturing, it will facilitate innovation and expand the global export base to create 'Brand India' in the global pharmaceutical space.

The government of India has taken active steps by releasing the Production Linked Incentive (PLI 1.0 and 2.0) schemes to take forward the Atmanirbhar mission for the pharmaceutical industry. These initiatives will be important to build on the strength of the Indian pharmaceutical industry to manufacture high quality affordable medicines and be a dependable supplier around the globe for the benefit of the patients.

About the authors

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SR. NO	DRUG	INVENTOR	REPURPOSED	COVID-19	DATE OF APPROVAL
1	Remdesivir 100 mg Injection	Gelad Sciences (USA), for Ebola	Gelad, Hetero and 19 more firm is manufacturing subsequently	For emergency use for hospitalized patients suffering from Covid-19. In these cases, informed consent of the patient or his /her representative in the prescribed form is mandatory before initiating the treatment.	01.06.2020 (Gelad) 20th June 2020 (Hetero)
2	Favipiravir 200 mg Tablet	Favipiravir is an anti-influenza drug which was developed by FUJIFILM Toyama Chemical Co., Ltd, Japan	Glenmark etc.	Mild to moderate Covid-19 patients in India. In both the cases, informed consent of the patient or his /her representative in the prescribed form is mandatory before initiating the treatment.	19th June 2020
3	Itolizumab injection	Cuba Biocon (Psoriasis since 2013)	Biocon	Restricted Emergency Use of the drug for the treatment of Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS) in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) patients due to COVID-19	11th July 2020
4	Tocilizumab iv Injection	Roche Originally used for Arthritis	Cipla	Slow down the cytokine response in COVID-19 patients by modulating a protein called IL6	
5	Dexamethasone	Old drug	Several manufacturers	For patients on ventilators, the treatment was shown to reduce mortality by about one third, and for patients requiring only oxygen, mortality was cut by about one fifth.	27th June 2020

IAS India 75th Independence Day Celebrations - Parade at California State Capitol & Celebrations



SACRAMENTO (TIP): Over five thousand people, who used to come every year from the Greater Sacramento area and further away in the California-USA, to witness the India Day celebrations



organized by the Indian Association of Sacramento (IAS) for the past 15 years. In the United States, Indian American organizations celebrate their motherland's Independence annually at numerous venues, with parades, and other functions. This year, all indoor events are obviously out of question due to Covid-19 pandemic, delta variant presence, and social distancing measures in place. On Aug 15th, 2021 at 10AM, IAS unfurled the Indian tricolor flag in the lawn area in front of the California State Capitol. On the same day at 9AM, IAS conducted a car parade at State Capitol, Sacramento with over 30 decorated cars to mark the 75th year of Indian Independence

Paresh Sinha, Parade Lead and Vandana Sharma the IAS Vice President planned and led the car parade. Over 30 cars were decorated with Indian and US flags, Indian regional leaders & distinguished personnel, monuments, and cultural representative symbols. Dr. Bhavin Parikh, Venu Mallesara, Shekher Tiwari, and Venkat Nagam helped with the car parade event coordination. The IAS board members, local Folsom city council member YK Chalamcherla, IAS supporting organization's members, and several community members joined the car parade. The local Folsom Cordova Unified School District Board Member, Chris Clark said that the Indian Independence was marked largely by non-violent resistance and civil disobedience, and Independence Day is celebrated by the Indian diaspora worldwide. Rancho Cordova City Councilmember, Siri Pulipati said Sacramento would not be the place it is without our thriving Indian-American community.

Paresh and Vandana decorated their cars with colorful Indian flags and led the car parade. Other Indian-American participants decorated their respective cars with tricolor flags and rallied around the State Capitol for about 15 mins. According to IAS President Bhaskar Vempati, "It was the first time ever in region history that India's largest tricolor flag has been unfurled at the iconic CA State Capital venue in all its glory. On this very special day when our mother country is celebrating her 75th birthday, I wish everyone a very happy Indian Independence Day".

"This year's Independence Day will mark a new chapter in IAS's history, organizing India Day car parade, celebrating India's Independence Day at the State Capitol building and an online event for the second time in a row,"

organizers said. IAS Board of Trustee Dr Bhavin Parikh said with the unfurling of the tricolor at the California State Capitol Building, history has been created for the 2nd time in a row. A large number of people, dressed in traditional Indian clothes and wearing masks, joined the celebration in front of the CA State Capitol building. Waving the Indian and American flags, the people shouted slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jai Hind'. The Indian national anthem was sung by the crowd. Sudheer Padinchara, Amar Pawar, Rajesh Yakkali, Sathish Moola, and Venu Acharya welcomed the attendees. The crowd erupted in huge cheers and applause as the Indian tricolor flag was raised in front of CA State Capital, alongside the American flag, commenting that it was indeed a proud and historic moment created for all.

IAS vice president Vandana Sharma said it was a historic moment for the Indian community that the tricolor was unfurled in front of the CA State Capitol. "It is indeed a proud moment for all of us," she said. IAS Joint Secretary Gobi Ramasamy said, "Over the last 75 years, India emerged as a largest democratic country and an example of global peace". The Indian Association treasurer, Amitab Shaikh said "it is great to see the attendees joining the Capitol event in their regional traditional attire. The United States has a Vice President who is of Indian origin - which is special for this year". Another IAS ex-president Ajit Natu thanked everyone who participated in the car parade beating the COVID pandemic in Sacramento.

Later that day on 15th, at 5PM hundreds of members of the Indian-American community-based in Greater Sacramento & across the world participated in the IAS Virtual India Day Celebrations live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube. They all were mesmerized by watching colorful rich Indian cultural performances for about 2.0 hrs non-stop and congratulated the cultural show participants and show leads, Madhuri Natu, Darshana Amin, Ranju Verma, Shivesh Sinha, and Romesh Trivedi. Consulate General of India at San Francisco's Indian Consulate, Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad attended IAS India Day virtually and wished the Sacramento Indian Community on the occasion of 75th Independence Day. He spoke about the services provided by the consulate and how they are trying to help people to make it easier for them to get what they need in the pandemic.

Virtual show viewer Swarnarekha Roy said, "I am so proud to be an Indian!!! Stunning choreography and excellent performance. Kudos to the team behind this piece of creation". IAS representative Venugopal Acharya said, "the performers have worked hard in the middle of the pandemic to put up a nice show for India Day". Another virtual show viewer Mangatram Lachhani said



"Stunning performances. Unity in diversity. IAS India Day is a real example".

IAS thanked everyone for supporting IAS's new way of celebrating India Day 2nd year in a row during COVID-19 pandemic. For those who missed the IAS India Day event, IAS encourages them to enjoy the event records using these links.

Facebook link:

<https://tinyurl.com/IASIndiaDay2021>
Video

Youtube link:

<https://tinyurl.com/IASIndiaday2021>
Youtube

The list of top three virtual performance winners are MMSAC, Light of Dance Academy, and Ankur. The virtual show also provided raffle prizes to the 10 attendees. IAS thanked Annachikdai Restaurant - Folsom, The Grand Cuisine - Roseville, Sanskrit Restaurant - Folsom, Chicago Pizza, Folsom, and Curry Bowl - Folsom for sponsoring the raffle prizes.

IAS officers Ranju Verma, Amitab Shaikh, and Gobi Ramaswamy expressed sincere thanks to the virtual show sponsors, Hindu American Foundation, Five Star Bank, Stratus Environmental, Manabadi Telugu school, Annapoorna USA Foundation, Suvridha International Foundation, and Kavita Sood, Insurance and Financial Services and the annual sponsors, Shankar Pathi - Realtor & Loan Officer, Reliance Super Mart, Satheesh Nagaraj - Realtor & Loan Officer, and Dr. Amar Pawar.

Established in 2005, the Indian Association of Sacramento is one of the largest umbrella organizations in the Indian community. Since 2006, the IAS has been organizing India Day annually, which showcases India's cultural heritage and history. Since its inception, IAS has raised over \$160,000 in funds for helping out several non-profits in and out of the USA. In the last one and a half year, IAS raised \$12,000 funds and assisted needy people living in Greater Sacramento with face masks, meals, groceries, medical and school supplies. IAS media representatives Venu Mallesara, and Venkat Nagam suggested the readers visit the IAS website: <http://www.iassac.org/> & FB page <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaDaySacramento> for more information about IAS and its events/activities spread throughout the year.

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Message from Peter J. McDonnell, M.D. Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University, USA on the occasion of laying the foundation stone on December 10, 2020



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