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IDA WILL BE ONE OF THE STRONGEST HURRICANES TO HIT LOUISIANA SINCE THE 1850S, GOVERNOR SAYS



NEW YORK (TIP): Hurricane Ida, which is expected to strike Louisiana as a life-threatening Category 4 storm with wind speeds of 140 mph, will be one of the strongest to hit the state since at least the 1850s, the governor told reporters Saturday.

Forecasters with the National Weather Service "are extremely confident in the current track and the intensity as forecasted for Hurricane Ida, and you don't really hear them speaking very often about that level of confidence," Gov. John Bel Edwards said during an afternoon briefing.

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Drone strike against ISKP not the 'last' response, says Biden

WE WILL CONTINUE TO HUNT DOWN, SAYS THE U.S. PRESIDENT



WASHINGTON (TIP): U.S. President Joe Biden said that a retaliatory drone strike he ordered to be carried out against the Islamic State group's affiliate in Afghanistan would not be his "last" response to the group for carrying out a deadly attack against U.S. troops and Afghan civilians near the Kabul airport.

Mr. Biden said in a statement on August 28, 2021, that he discussed the strike with top military commanders, who briefed him on the ongoing evacuation of Afghans and U.S. citizens from the airport, which is set to wind down on Tuesday, August 31.

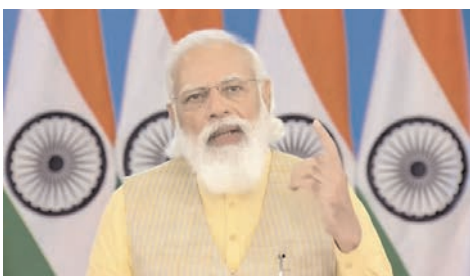
The U.S. President said commanders told him that another attack "is highly likely in the next 24-36 hours." Two IS members were killed and another was wounded in the drone strike early Saturday in eastern Afghanistan.

"I said we would go after the group responsible for the attack on our troops and innocent civilians in Kabul, and we have," Mr. Biden said. "We will continue to hunt down any person involved in that heinous attack and make them pay."

U.S. President Joe Biden during a virtual briefing at the White House in Washington, U.S., August 28, 2021.

India bringing people, holy scriptures from Afghanistan despite many challenges: PM Modi

CITING GURBANI, MODI SAID THAT HAPPINESS EMANATES FROM SERVING OTHERS AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR PAIN



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses during the inauguration of the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Martyrs memorial, via video conferencing, in New Delhi. - Photo / PTI

AMRITSAR (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday, August 28, that despite many challenges India is evacuating its people from Afghanistan, asserting that if any Indian is in trouble anywhere in the world, the country stands up to help him with all its might.

The prime minister, who was speaking

after dedicating to the nation the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh memorial in Amritsar through video-link, said that not just people, India has been able to bring back holy scriptures - 'swaroop' of Guru Granth Sahib-from Afghanistan.

Citing Gurbani, Modi said that happiness emanates from serving others and understanding their pain.

"So today, if any Indian is in trouble anywhere in the world, then India stands up to help him with all its might. Be it the corona period or the current crisis of Afghanistan, the world has experienced it continuously. Hundreds of people from Afghanistan are being brought to India under Operation Devi Shakti," the prime minister said. India's complex mission to evacuate its citizens and Afghan partners from Kabul after its takeover by

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Indian American community showers praise and love on the outgoing Deputy Consul General Mr. Shatrughna Sinha



Mr. Shatrughna Sinha (3rd from left) and Mrs. Sinha (2nd from left) are flanked by Ranju Batra (extreme left), (L to R) Ravi Batra, David Weprin and Prem Bhandari

NEW YORK (TIP): Mr. Shatrughna Sinha, the Deputy Consul General at the Indian Consulate General in New York who is moving over to New Delhi to take up a new assignment at the Ministry of External Affairs, was given a farewell dinner here on Thursday, August 26.

The dinner hosted by Prof. Indrajit Saluja, publisher and editor of The Indian Panorama was attended by leaders of the Indian American community, officials of the government of India undertakings, elected officials and the mediapersons.

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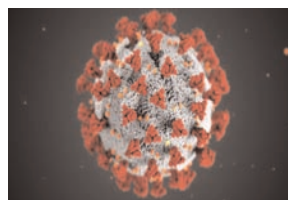
COVID-19 ORIGINS- U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES FAIL TO REACH CONCLUSION

WASHINGTON (TIP): In May, U.S. President Joe Biden asked U.S. intelligence agencies to assess the data and produce a report that "could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion" on the origins of coronavirus.

The U.S. intelligence community has failed to reach any firm conclusion on the exact origin of COVID-19 and is split

on whether it leaked from a lab in China or emerged in nature, even though it does not believe the virus was developed as a biological weapon, according to results of a detailed review ordered by President Joe Biden.

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Andy Singh

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-: GUEST COMMENT :-

Near and present: On the Afghan crisis and India

INDIA DOES NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF DISTANCE FROM THE TICKING BOMB IN ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

The suicide bombing at Kabul airport which claimed close to 100 lives has shattered any residual optimism the world had that the West pulling out forces and handing the country over to the Taliban, as part of negotiations in Doha, would result in a more peaceful Afghanistan. Instead, what the complex attack claimed by the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) has proven is that no matter what assurances the Taliban's new regime or its benefactors in Pakistan may provide, they are unable or unwilling to stem the terror threat emanating from the country, despite being provided key intelligence inputs about the attack. There are also suspicions of some collusion within the Taliban regime, as the Haqqani group that is securing Kabul and the airport periphery, is a UN designated terror entity that has carried out attacks with the IS-K in the past. That the U.S. maintains that it continues to "coordinate" with the Taliban on

security should further set the seal on any idea of investigations or operations against the Taliban. As this is an alarming scenario, the Government must now acknowledge and prepare for the threats to India. The situation will further enhance India's already hostile continental flanks, in consonance with threats from Pakistan at the LoC and support to cross-border terrorism, as well as China's LAC aggressions.

New Delhi must also focus on diplomacy to highlight its concerns, beginning with the UN where India will have a salient role. As a UNSC member, and President, India must ensure that the UN's most powerful body does not appear helpless in the face of the Taliban's challenge, and must make the red lines clear for the kind of government it must guarantee - including one that recognizes human rights, adopts some form of representation for its people, and distances itself from terror groups.

Chief among these will be the need to ensure that the Haqqani group, including its chief Sirajuddin Haqqani who is the Deputy to Taliban chief Haibatullah Akhundzada, is not included in the official power structure. The group has been responsible for terror and suicide attacks on Indian consulates and the Embassy in particular in 2008-09. As Chairman of the 1988 Sanctions Committee that lists 135 Taliban members as designated terrorists, India must stand firm on any move to ease sanctions on them, including travel, funds access and weaponry. The UN General Assembly (UNGA)'s accreditation committee must also decide on whether to allow a future Taliban-led government to occupy Afghanistan's seat. Given Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.S. later in September, where he is expected to address the UNGA, and then the Quad summit, it is important that India's position on the Afghan situation and its impact on Indian security are articulated strongly. While briefing MPs, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Government is pursuing a "wait and watch" policy, but that assumes the luxury of distance from the ticking time bomb in India's neighborhood, which New Delhi does not have.

(The Hindu)

Chaotic evacuation

US, OTHER NATIONS MUST ENSURE SAFETY OF THEIR CITIZENS

The death of at least 110 people, including 13 US troops, in Thursday's bombings near Kabul's international airport has tragically laid bare the messy evacuation that began after the Taliban captured the Afghanistan capital on August 15. The attacks were certainly not a bolt from the blue - these were on expected lines and should have been pre-empted. It was the deadliest day for the US forces in the war-torn country since August 2011, when 31 personnel were killed as a helicopter was shot down. 'We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down and

make you pay,' US President Joe Biden said in his address from the White House, even as he stuck to the fast-approaching deadline of August 31 for pulling out American troops. His words sounded strikingly similar to those spoken by the then President George W Bush, days after the 9/11 attacks: 'I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it'.

It's a catch-22 situation for the US. Biden's call for revenge may not only impede the withdrawal but also prompt the Islamic State's Afghanistan affiliate to launch more attacks in the coming days, thus endangering the lives of hundreds of citizens of the US and other countries who are still stranded there. The US runs the risk of shooting itself in

the foot all over again if it pursues the perilous course of retribution. With the Islamic State bent on causing damage to the US as well as the Taliban, various nations have no option but to work in coordination with the Taliban for the safety of their residents.

Several countries, including Spain, Australia and New Zealand, have completed the evacuation process. It's a race against time for the others, including India. Briefing an all-party meeting on Thursday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the government was committed to 'full evacuation' of Indians from Afghanistan. This task needs to be concluded at the earliest, considering the likelihood of more bombings at or around the Kabul airport.

(Tribune, India)

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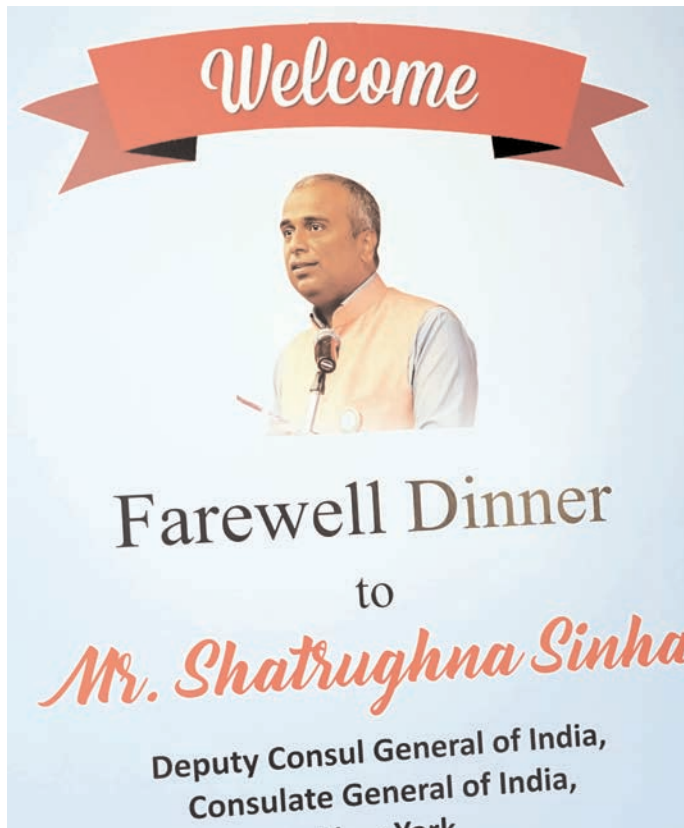
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Indian American community showers praise and love on the outgoing Deputy Consul General Mr. Shatrughna Sinha

GLIMPSES OF FAREWELL DINNER TO MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL



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Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sinha expressed his appreciation of the Indian American community which, he said, had given him abundant cooperation and made his task of discharging his duties easier and pleasant. Mr. Sinha related with a touch of feeling how the Indian Americans community came forward to help out their brethren in the difficult period of Covid-19. The amount of donations in terms of equipment and otherwise is historic, he added. He said he was overwhelmed by the love the community gave him during his tenure and now that he was leaving. He

wished the gathering all happiness and prosperity.

Earlier, Prof. Saluja extended a warm welcome to Mr. Sinha who was accompanied by his wife and their two children - a daughter and a son. In his brief remarks, Prof. Saluja described Mr. Sinha as the most upright officer he had come across at the Consulate during the last 20 years. Prof. Saluja appreciated Mr. Sinha for being helpful to all for which, he said, the Indian American community would always remember him. The very fact that so many people from so many walks of life had come to the farewell dinner to him is a testimony of how much love and respect he has earned

with his work and his friendly disposition.

Mr. Ravi Batra, an eminent attorney and Chair National Advisory Council of South Asian Affairs, who has known every senior official at the consulate for decades praised Mr. Sinha for his dedicated services to the community. He said the consulate had to work under very pressing circumstances created by the pandemic which required much help to Indian American community as well as to people in India. The selfless and dedicated services of Mr. Sinha will always be remembered, he said.

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INDIAN AMERICANS ARE THE WEALTHIEST, MOST EDUCATED AND LEAST POOR AS PER LATEST US CENSUS DATA



WASHINGTON (TIP): With a population of almost four million, Indian Americans make up just 1.2 percent of the US population but they are the wealthiest, best educated and least poor going by the latest US Census data.

"People of Indian descent hold a significant share of jobs in several high-paying fields, including computer science, financial management and medicine," according to reports.

Nine percent of doctors in the United States are of Indian descent, and more than half of them are immigrants, it notes.

The median household income of Indians in the US is now \$123,700, almost double the national figure of \$63,922.

A remarkable 79 percent of Indians are college graduates, compared to the national figure of 34 percent, attesting to the emphasis on education in Indian families.

The household incomes of people of Asian descent exceed the overall US population's household incomes. Educational attainment is similarly higher. But among groups, there is quite a large variation, the report notes.

"Economically, Indians are consistently wealthier, while residents of Bhutanese descent have the lowest income and are unlikely to own a home. Many are Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees, who were stranded for years in camps with limited access to education."

Taiwanese and Filipinos, coming in at \$97,000 and \$95,000 respectively are the next wealthiest communities after Indians. Median household income of Chinese in the US is \$85,229 and that of Japanese is \$84,068.

Indians also have the least poor people with only 14 percent reporting median family income below \$40,000 compared to a 33 percent nationally.

A healthy 25 percent of Indian households reported an income of over \$200,000 compared to the national figure of 8 percent.

The census data shows that Indian immigrants on visas and US born citizens of Indian origin have approximately the same median family income of about \$115,000. But naturalized US citizens from India report a higher median income \$140,000. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian-origin Dubai-based businessman Oberoi claims he did not accept AAP leader's offer that he be party's CM face in Punjab

DUBAI (TIP): Reacting to AAP leader Raghav Chadha's tweet, Dubai-based businessman Dr Surinder Pal Singh Oberoi replied not only one but many top AAP leaders, including several Delhi-based top functionaries, were in touch with him, asking him to become the "party's CM face in Punjab."

"Three months ago, Chadha had come to meet me but I declined to meet him due to my busy schedule. However, he asked his people to remain in touch with me. Later, several senior leaders of the party approached me asking me to join their ranks," said Oberoi.

Didn't meet Chadha

AAP's Raghav Chadha had called on me once, but I declined to meet him due to my busy schedule. Later, several senior AAP leaders approached me, asking me to join their ranks. -Dr SPS Oberoi, Dubai-based businessman

"I agree Chadha has neither met me nor called me on the telephone ever. However, several other senior leaders have regularly sent messages asking for an audience," clarified Oberoi.



SPS Oberoi told a Chandigarh newspaper that he was not interested in joining any political outfit. "I am more interested in helping the downtrodden through my charitable organization 'Sarbat-da-Bhala'. I will continue to do charity," he had said.

Talking to The Tribune, the Dubai-based businessman had yesterday (August 26) made it clear that he was not interested in joining any political outfit. "I am more interested in helping the downtrodden through my charitable organization 'Sarbat-da-Bhala'. I will continue to do charity," he had said.

During his last visit to Punjab, the businessman set up five oxygen plants. Earlier, during both the phases of Covid, he had donated PPE kits, sanitizers and masks worth crores of rupees to people, Punjab Police and district administrations across the state.

3 INDIAN-ORIGIN PUNJABI MEN ARRESTED IN CANADA FOR SEX TRAFFICKING

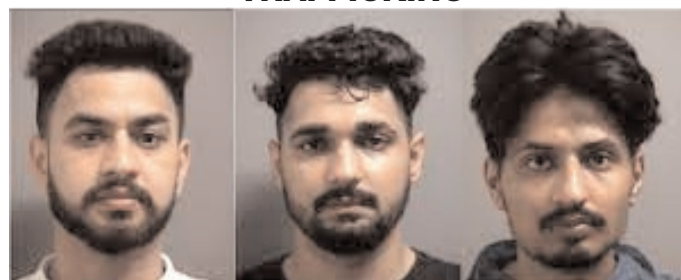


Photo caption: Amritpal Singh, 23, Harkuar Singh, 22, and Sukhmanpreet Singh, 23, have been arrested in Canada for using an underage girl in sex trade

TORONTO (TIP): Three Punjabi men have been arrested from Brampton city in Canada for using an underage girl in sex trade. While Amritpal Singh, 23, Harkuar Singh, 22, and Sukhmanpreet Singh, 23, have been arrested; the hunt is on for a fourth accused.

The case came to light on August 21 when police got a call that a girl under 18 was being held against her will, assaulted and was being trafficked in sex trade. The victim was rescued and taken to a hospital with serious injuries. The police then raided a house in Brampton and arrested the three men.

While Amritpal Singh and Harkuar Singh have been charged with sex trafficking, advertising sexual services, and benefiting from sexual services, Sukhmanpreet Singh has been charged with forcible confinement and aggravated assault.

Police say they are looking for the fourth suspect who is also a South Asian.

Cops suspect there could be more victims of sex trafficking by the accused men.

INDIAN AMERICAN EX-CEO OF MOBILE APP STARTUP CHARGED WITH FRAUD

WASHINGTON (TIP): An Indian-origin former CEO of a technology company has been arrested in the US and charged with defrauding investors to the tune of USD 80 million by overstating the startup's revenue and other key financial metrics.

Manish Lachwani, 45, co-founder and former CEO of Headspin, was arrested on Wednesday, August 25, on charges stemming from his years of fundraising for his mobile app, according to the Department of Justice (DoJ).

The federal complaint states that from 2015 to March 2020, Headspin, a mobile app testing platform, raised more than USD 100 million from investors.

The charges stem from a period of fundraising starting no later than November 1, 2019, when Lachwani allegedly "reported false revenue and overstated key financial metrics of the company."

"Among other information, Lachwani provided investors false information that overstated Headspin's annual recurring revenue (ARR) - a key metric for evaluating the success of companies that provide "software as a service" - by approximately USD 51 to USD 55 million," a DOJ statement reads.

Lachwani also reportedly, on multiple occasions, instructed employees to "include revenue from potential customers that inquired but did not engage Headspin, from past customers who no longer did business with Headspin, and from existing customers whose business was far less than the reported revenue," according to the complaint. An auditing firm reviewed the company's unaudited financial statements in May 2020.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



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Rashi Kulkarni is the First Indian American to be selected for Universal Composers Initiative

LOS ANGELES (TIP): Los Angeles based composer and pianist, Raashi Kulkarni, is the first person of Indian-origin to be selected for the 2021-23 Universal Composers Initiative.

She is one of the eight diverse composers, five of which are female, unveiled Friday by NBCUniversal's Global Talent Development & Inclusion (GTDI) team.

The first-of-its-kind initiative aims to elevate artists that possess unique and global perspectives translating into distinctive musical expressions, according to a press release.

Kulkarni has been working with Emmy-nominated composer, Blake Neely, since 2017 and composes additional music on series such as The CW's Supergirl, DC's Legends of Tomorrow, and The Flash.

In 2019, she composed and orchestrated the music for the DC Universe's first Bollywood-inspired musical, featured on DC's Legends of Tomorrow.

Raashi earned her Master of Music degree from University of Southern California, where she was a recipient of the Joe and Alice Harnell Scholar Award for Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television.

Prior to USC, Raashi graduated with a

Bachelor of Science in Economics and a minor in Music from The George Washington University, where she was a Presidential Arts Scholar and recipient of the Barry Manilow Endowed Prize in Music.

In the last decade, Raashi has performed in concert tours across the globe and as a featured pianist at the Shrine Auditorium, Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Museum, Patriot Center, Warner Theatre, Kodak Hall, and more. In addition, Raashi's two independent music albums debuted at #1 (2018) and #2 (2020) on the iTunes World Music Charts, respectively.

She is a voting member of both the Television Academy and Recording Academy.

Besides Kulkarni, the other selected composers are Jina Hyojin An, Jocelyn Chambers, Pierre Charles, Pakk Hui, Jesi Nelson, Daniel Rojas, and Dara Taylor with representation from countries such as Costa Rica, Hong Kong and Korea.

"Bringing to the table a wide range of varied life experiences with backgrounds in accounting, stand-up comedy and healthcare, this group of lauded violists, pianists, guitarists, vocalists and composers is brought

together with a shared passion for music, which was undeniable from an early age: watch the moment they fell in love with music," the release says.

"We're incredibly proud of the career momentum this initiative has generated with the support of NBCUniversal's film and television music teams," said Janine Jones-Clark, Executive Vice President, Inclusion - Talent & Content, NBCUniversal.

"Along with our music partners, we are excited to welcome this talented and versatile group of musical multi-hyphenates and we look forward to giving them access and finding production opportunities across NBCUniversal's portfolio."

All eight composers from the inaugural group secured production credits either during or following the initiative, with 75% of those credits affiliated with NBCUniversal content.

Launched in 2018, the two-year Universal Composers Initiative was created to address a void in data tracking diversity and female representation amongst composers.

Confronting the issue head-on, GTDI, in partnership with Universal Global Film Music President Mike Knobloch and his team, set out to identify up-and-

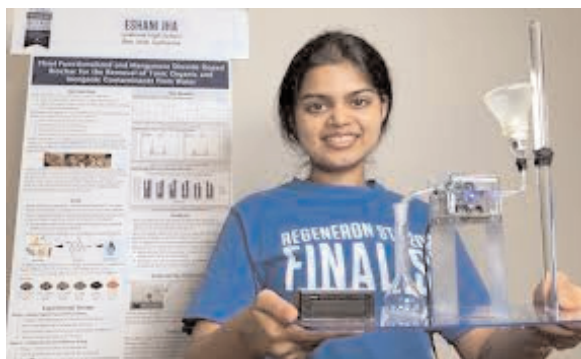


Raashi Kulkarni, is the first person of Indian-origin to be selected for the 2021-23 Universal Composers Initiative

coming talent at various points in their creative journeys for music production opportunities across the Studio, the release said.

The initiative has since expanded across the NBCUniversal portfolio, partnering closely with additional divisions including DreamWorks Animation Television Music and Universal Studio Group Music Services, it added.

Indian American Eshani Jha wins Stockholm Junior Water Prize



Eshani Jha from San Jose, California, has won the prestigious 2021 Stockholm Junior Water Prize. for her research on simple and affordable ways to purify water

SAN JOSE (TIP): Eshani Jha, an Indian American girl from San Jose, California, has won the prestigious 2021 Stockholm Junior Water Prize. for her research on simple and affordable ways to purify water.

Stockholm Junior Water Prize is an international competition where students between the ages of 15 and 20 present solutions to major water challenges.

With water contamination being a growing global problem, Jha's research can in the future help saving lives, particularly in places where state of the art water filtration is not available or simply too costly.

"The simplicity of this solution is that it addresses multiple, varied contaminants with a single device, and that device is potentially scalable to global use, with the added benefit of localized manufacture," the Water Prize jury said acknowledging the potential of Jha's work.

She was awarded the prize by its official patron

Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, during an online ceremony on Aug. 24 as part of World Water Week.

"I am honored and humbled, and I would like to thank everyone involved for the amazing experience that Stockholm Junior water Prize provides," Jha said.

"I have got to know many of the other participants along the way and we are determined to find ways to work together. As young scientists we really are the future of the water world," Jha said.

The friendly atmosphere has always been at the heart of the event and even though the 2021 edition was an entirely digital affair, Jha said that the interaction with other participants was still one of the highlights.

Her own research has been going on for some years and she said that it started with a strong wish to find a simple and cost-effective alternative to using active carbon for water filtration. This led her to biochar, which at the time was already used to purify soil.

"I thought that if it could purify soil, why not water too? Biochar's advantage is that it is much more affordable than active carbon, with added benefits such as the possibility of local production."

Jha's invention targets certain classes of contaminants, particularly pesticides, emerging contaminants, and heavy metals. She has enhanced the biochar's existing ability to act like a sponge for these contaminants, essentially creating a 'super sponge'.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

INDIAN AMERICAN SIKHS SEEK WHITE HOUSE INTERVENTION IN EVACUATION OF AFGHANISTAN SIKHS, HINDUS

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Sikhs have met with White House representatives over the issue of evacuation of Afghanistan Sikhs and Hindus.

Dr Rajwant Singh, co-founder of the National Sikh Campaign (NSC) and chairman of the Sikh Council on Religion and Education, along with Gurwin Singh Ahuja, co-founder of the NSC, apprised key White House officials of the Sikh community's concerns about the fallout of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"We conveyed that the Sikh community will be ready to assist the Biden administration if the Sikhs and Hindus are evacuated to the US. We are thankful to the Indian Government for stepping in and evacuating the first batch of Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan. We would like the American troops to assist the Sikhs to be evacuated from the Kabul airport as the Indian Air Force is ready for the task."

They also reminded the White House officials that the Canadian Government had offered to accept many Sikh refugees from Afghanistan.

The US Sikhs were concerned about the impact on the community in the US of the images of gun-wielding Taliban. "Hate groups are ready to exploit these situations to create havoc on racial and religious minorities in the US," he said.

They also reminded the White House officials that the Canadian Government had offered to accept many Sikh refugees from Afghanistan.



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GLIMPSES OF FAREWELL DINNER TO MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL

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Mr. Prem Bhandari, Chairman, Jaipur Foot USA said that Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, envisioned an India where the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary would evolve as public servants of the citizens of the country in every sense of the word. Mr. Bhandari said Mr. Sinha proved himself to be the one that Dr. Prasad spoke of, and expressed gratification in collaborating with Mr. Sinha, especially during the Vande Bharat Mission, and wished him a bright future ahead.

New York State Senator John Liu and New York State Assemblyman David Weprin who presented a Citation to Mr.

Sinha also had word of praise for Mr. Sinha.

Many community leaders, and there were many representing dozens of organizations, spoke appreciatively of Mr. Sinha and wished him well. They included Leela Maret, President FOKANA, Mr. Harish Thakkar, President of AIA, Beena Kothari, President of GOPIO, New York, Indu Jaiswal, President AIF, Mr. Somnath Ghimire, President of Nepalese Association, Master Mohinder Singh, Founder President of Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana, Mr. Harpreet Singh Toor, Former Chairman of Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society, and Paramjit S Bedi, a leader of Afghan Sikhs.

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GLIMPSES OF FAREWELL DINNER TO MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL

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Mr. Tirlok Malik, Emmy nominated Film maker, Mr. Sudhir Vaishnav, Executive Director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sunil Hali, a senior journalist and Yoshita Singh, PTI special correspondent at the United Nations also addressed the gathering.

Citations were presented to Mr. Sinha on behalf of Congressman Tom Suozzi and Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar while Assemblyman David Weprin was himself around to present the citation.

Padma Bhushan Sant Chatwal, Padma Shri Dr. Dattatreyudu Nori and Dr. VK Raju sent their greetings and good wishes to Mr. Sinha.

Several organizations presented souvenirs and plaques to Mr. Sinha which included GOPIO, New York,

FOKANA, Global Indian Trade and Cultural Council, Afghan Sikh Association, The Indian Panorama, among others

Souvenirs were presented by Mr. Ravi Batra, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Mr. Somnath Ghimire, and some others.

The gathering which received Prof. Saluja's immense gratitude for their presence, wished the Sinha family all happiness and hoped Mr. Sinha will come back to the U.S. soon on a new assignment, and give us again the pleasure of his sweet company.

Mr. Jarnail Singh, the owner of the Richi Rich Palace, the venue of the dinner, received much appreciation for the warm hospitality and the delicious food.

CONTD ON PAGE 13

AS I SEE IT

US EXIT SPELLS FEAR, UNCERTAINTY FOR AFGHANS



BY CMDE C UDAY
BHASKAR (RETD)

"THE HASTY WITHDRAWAL PROJECTS THE IMAGE OF AN INEPT AND BRUISED AMERICA THAT FUMBLING AND STUMBLING ITS WAY OUT OF AFGHANISTAN AFTER 20 YEARS, IN THE MOST UNSEEMLY MANNER. THE IRONY IS THAT US-LED EXTERNAL AID, INCLUDING THAT BY INDIA, ENABLED AFGHANISTAN TO IMPROVE ITS HUMAN SECURITY INDICATORS. BUT THE ATTEMPT AT NURTURING A DEMOCRATIC ETHOS FLOUNDERED ON THE DEEPLY EMBEDDED TRIBAL RIVALRIES AND ETHNIC DISCORD, DISTINCTIVE TO AFGHANISTAN."

US President Joe Biden has asserted that the August 31 deadline for the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will not be extended despite the urging of his major NATO allies who wanted more time to evacuate their troops and citizens working in the war-ravaged country. This Biden decision was resolute, notwithstanding the fact that the proposed evacuation of thousands of US-NATO personnel, foreign nationals and Afghan citizens is unlikely to be completed by August 31.

The images that have been beamed from Kabul with thousands of desperate Afghan nationals trying to enter the airport with or without travel documents is testimony to an unfolding human



Chaotic departure: The US withdrawal from Afghanistan leaves Afghans in fear and uncertainty

tragedy whose scale is yet to be fathomed for this is only the first phase. The August 31 exit from Kabul will be recalled as a temporal punctuation of profound significance and tainted connotation for the US-led alliance that embarked on the global war on terror (GWOT) in October 2001.

Two decades later, the same Taliban who were ousted from Kabul and 'bombed into the Stone Age' have wrested power in the most unexpected manner and are now engaged in political negotiations with the global community. They have the tacit backing of two of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and this was reflected in the mild and watered-down statements adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on August 24.

The hasty US withdrawal is confounding and projects the image of an inept and bruised America that fumbled and stumbled its way out of Afghanistan after 20 years, in the most unseemly and unplanned manner after expending considerable treasure and human lives.

The irony is that after ousting Taliban 1.0 in 2002, US-led external aid, including that by India, enabled Afghanistan to improve many of its human security indicators - particularly for women and girls and an improvement in per capita GDP and infant mortality. However, the attempt at nurturing a credible and participatory democratic ethos floundered on the deeply embedded tribal rivalries and ethnic discord, distinctive to Afghanistan, and the final collapse was symbolized by the manner in which the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled his country and the security forces melted away even as the Taliban moved into Kabul with not a shot being fired.

Thus, the abiding perception of the

hasty US exit is that it has left the country with little or no substantive gains. Thousands of Afghan citizens were also killed and injured in the long drawn out GWOT which also witnessed numerous acts of state-sponsored terrorism involving different Taliban factions that ruthlessly targeted minorities across the country and also attacked the Indian embassy in Kabul. For many Afghan citizens, the Taliban remains a dreaded entity and their desperation to flee their country has been sadly captured in a recent image of young Afghans falling to their death from the under-carriage of a US military aircraft as it was taking off from Kabul in the most chaotic and dangerous circumstances. The other image is that of a traumatized Afghan mother handing over her baby to a US soldier across an airport barrier in the fond hope that the child would be evacuated to safety.

Could this exit from Kabul have been conducted differently and in a more competent manner? The answer is an unambiguous yes and many perplexing questions arise. The fact that the USA would leave Afghanistan was formally announced in 2020 by the Trump administration. To that extent, President Biden inherited a major policy decision that he chose not to review or reverse - as he did with the Paris climate accord. Be that as it may - having concluded that the Taliban would take over Kabul soon, why did the US and NATO not draw up detailed exit plans for their personnel (uniformed and civilian) and ensure the disposal of sizable military inventory?

Many rounds of talks were held with the Taliban in the course of the year - and it was evident that the USA and the NATO allies would exit Afghanistan before September 11 - the 20th anniversary of 9/11. Under the circumstances, it appears that the lead

FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY SWIRLS IN THE AIR. THE KABUL AIRPORT IS NOT THE ENTIRETY OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE TALIBAN IS ALSO PAWING IN THE AIR. THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11 COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE BLEAK AND CHAOTIC THAN WHAT IS NOW UNSPOOLING IN KABUL.

time of many months was not utilized appropriately to prepare for a planned evacuation of Afghan nationals who had worked with the US and NATO forces and whose personal security would be in jeopardy under a Taliban dispensation.

This number is estimated to be about 60,000 and with family members included, this is in the range of 300,000 individuals who would need contingency plans for an exit from Afghanistan. This did not happen, as the last-minute issue of travel documents turned into a tragedy in the human cascade that swarmed towards the US military aircraft. Furthermore, the quiet and almost furtive US exit from its main air base in Bagram - north of Kabul on July 2 is incomprehensible - given the scale of the evacuation that had to be undertaken a few weeks later.

Hypothetically, had Bagram been retained and kept operational till the last of the US and NATO troops had left Afghanistan - the current chaos and desperation could have been reduced considerably. Evacuation of a large number of individuals who are vulnerable or stranded for different reasons by airlift is an arduous challenge and war zones are that much more hazardous.

Under the circumstances, the sheer volume of numbers evacuated by the US military in a single day (Wednesday) - upwards of 80,000 - is a commendable achievement. But the vast numbers of those Afghans evacuated and the compressed timelines have made the long journey from Kabul to Doha and onwards to Texas a logistic nightmare. Even as the August 31 deadline comes closer, the Taliban has declared that Afghan citizens will not be allowed to get to the Kabul airport and the US in turn seems to have prioritized its own nationals and green card holders, while President Biden has stated that the ISIS could mount a terror attack.

Fear and uncertainty swirls in the air. The Kabul airport is not the entirety of Afghanistan and the Taliban is also pawing in the air. The 20th anniversary of 9/11 could not have been more bleak and chaotic than what is now unspooling in Kabul.

(The author is Director, Society for Policy Studies)

The fall of Kabul, the future of regional geopolitics



BY HAPPYMON JACOB

THE POST-AMERICAN POWER VACUUM IN THE REGION WILL AID CHINA AND SHAPE INDIA'S STRATEGIC CHOICES AND BEHAVIOR

"The return of the Taliban to Kabul has effectively laid India's 'mission Central Asia' to rest. If New Delhi could not find its way to Central Asia with encouraging partners such as Iran and the Hamid Karzai/Ashraf Ghani governments, the possibility of New Delhi doing so now is next to nil. India's diplomatic and civilian presence as well as its civilian investments will now be at the mercy of the Taliban, and to some extent Pakistan. If there is a concerted effort by China, Pakistan and the Taliban to erase the Indian presence from Afghanistan, there is little India can do about it."

The fall of Kabul in the wake of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will prove to be a defining moment for the region and the future shape of its geopolitics; it would be as defining, if not more, as the Soviet intervention in 1979 and the American one in 2001. While a lot depends on the Taliban's actual conduct both domestically as well as on the southern and western Asian geopolitical chessboard in the months ahead, the Taliban are likely to continue as a 'useful villain' in the unfolding great power competition. For New Delhi, the fall of Kabul is a moment of reckoning and it must rethink its regional strategies and options. Unfortunately, of the latter, it does not have many.

A vacuum

What is most disconcerting is the regional power vacuum in the Eurasian heartland created by the haphazard manner in which the United States withdrew from Afghanistan and its potential knock-on effects. An axis of regional powers such as China, Pakistan, Russia, and the Taliban, have already started filling this power vacuum, shaping, thereby, the contours of the region's geopolitics based on their individual and common interests. Iran might also jump on this opportunistic bandwagon under the Chinese leadership.

What is abundantly clear is that each of these countries harbor deep anti-American feelings in varying degrees which will further shrink the American influence in the Eurasian heartland. While it is too early to determine whether what these countries have on their hands is an opportunity or a ticking bomb, the U.S., as a direct consequence of the formation of this axis, might decide to explore new ways of working with them to stabilize the region, if it desires to do so, and remain relevant there. If indeed that happens, could it result in a potential softening of the American rhetoric against China, Pakistan, Russia and perhaps even Iran? More so, what would that mean for India? While a healthy conversation among the great powers - the U.S., China and Russia - on global and regional challenges is a good sign, India is neither a great power nor present at the table. New Delhi must ensure that it does not become a casualty on the south-western Asian geopolitical chessboard.



The Taliban pour into Kabul

Advantage China; extremism

The post-American power vacuum in the region will be primarily advantageous to China and its grand strategic plans for the region. Beijing will further strengthen its efforts to bring every country in the region, except India, on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative bandwagon, thereby altering the geopolitical and geoeconomics foundations of the region. More so, the much-feared Chinese encirclement of India will become ever more pronounced. Having been further emboldened by the U.S.'s withdrawal and in stamping its writ on the region, Beijing is likely to become less accommodative towards India including on the Line of Actual Control. Even in trade, given the sorry state of the post-COVID-19 Indian economy, India needs trade with China more than the other way round. Unless New Delhi can find ways of ensuring a rapprochement with China, it must expect Beijing to challenge India on occasion, and be prepared for it.

The bigger challenge for India though would be a near-certain increase in terrorism and extremism in the region. The U.S. presence in Afghanistan, international pressure on the Taliban and Financial Action Task Force worries in Pakistan had a relatively moderating effect on the region's terror ecosystem. With the Taliban now back in Kabul, things are bound to change. The visuals of the Taliban releasing terrorists from Afghan jails would send a powerful message to their fellow travelers, handlers, and sympathizers in the region.

While the neighboring countries are also worried about terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, the reality is that they are busy making their own private deals with the Taliban to not host terror organizations targeting them. There is little appetite for a regional approach to curbing terrorism from a Taliban-led Afghanistan. This enables the Taliban to engage in a selective treatment towards terror outfits present there or they have relations with. Moreover, given that the international community may have no choice but to recognize the Taliban regime - UN Security Council members such as China and Russia have already indicated their intent to do so - would also mean that the Taliban would hold more power in a bargain on the terror question. Sanctions are unlikely to deter an outfit that does not need to bother about the next election.

It is unlikely that the Taliban will proactively export terror to other countries unless of course for tactical purposes by, say for instance, Pakistan against India. The real worry, however, is the inspiration that disgruntled elements in the region will draw from the Taliban's victory against the world's sole superpower.

To that extent, the triumphalism in Pakistan over the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan could eventually become counterproductive for Pakistan itself. Whether Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan refers to them as a

force that has 'unshackled the chains of slavery' or the country's deep state considers them as a strategic asset, the reality is that many anti-Pakistan terror organizations would be emboldened as well.

Impact on regional interests

The return of the Taliban to Kabul has effectively laid India's 'mission Central Asia' to rest. If New Delhi could not find its way to Central Asia with encouraging partners such as Iran and the Hamid Karzai/Ashraf Ghani governments, the possibility of New Delhi doing so now is next to nil. India's diplomatic and civilian presence as well as its civilian investments will now be at the mercy of the Taliban, and to some extent Pakistan. If there is a concerted effort by China, Pakistan and the Taliban to erase the Indian presence from Afghanistan, there is little India can do about it. Had New Delhi, as I had argued earlier, cultivated deeper relations (which by no means would have meant recognizing the outfit) with the Taliban, Indian interests would have been more secure in a post-American Afghanistan. New Delhi's lack of strategic foresight will prove to be costly.

What is perhaps not yet understood is how the rise of the anti-America axis (China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and a Taliban-led Afghanistan) and anti-American sentiments in the region would impact India's regional interests given that it has become closer to the U.S. than ever before in its history. We have to wait and see what this mismatch between the region's mood and India's strategic choices would mean for the country. There is little doubt that because of these developments, India's regional ambitions will take a major hit in the months and years ahead.

The fall of Kabul and the consequent knock-on effects in the region will have several potential implications for India's foreign policy and its strategic choices and behavior. For one, given the little physical access India has to its north-western landmass, its focus is bound to shift more to the Indo-Pacific even though a maritime grand strategy may not necessarily be an answer to its continental challenges. Second, New Delhi might also seek to shed the arrogance it displayed towards its smaller neighbors during Modi 1.0 and cultivate friendly relations with them. Myanmar is a case in point. India has already indicated that it would not challenge the junta on the coup and its widespread human rights violations. This policy is likely to continue even if the Joe Biden administration seeks New Delhi's help in turning up the heat on Myanmar's generals. The last thing New Delhi needs now is an angry neighbor rushing to China.

India-Pakistan ties

Third, the developments in Afghanistan could nudge New Delhi to seek stability, if not peace, with Pakistan. While there is little desire in New Delhi today to reopen a broad-based dialogue process with Pakistan, even a 'cold peace' would be in India's interest. For Pakistan too, such a 'cold peace' will help it to focus its energies on consolidating its interests and gains in Afghanistan. As a result, both sides might refrain from indulging in competitive risk-taking unless something dramatic happens which is always a possibility between the two rivals. That said, stability between India and Pakistan depends a great deal on how politics in Kashmir plays out, and whether New Delhi is able to pacify the aggrieved sections in the Valley.

The lesson for India in the wake of these developments is clear: It will have to fight its own battles. So, it must make enemies wisely, choose friends carefully, rekindle flickering friendships, and make peace while it can.

(The author is Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

The ugly face of a crime-fighting move



BY FAIZAN MUSTAFA
&
UTKARSH LEO



"In sum, even if facial recognition technology is needed to tackle modern-day criminality in India, without accountability and oversight, facial recognition technology has strong potential for misuse and abuse. In the interest of civil liberties and to save democracy from turning authoritarian, it is important to impose a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology till we enact a strong and meaningful data protection law, in addition to statutory authorization of NAFRS and guidelines for deployment."

In the monsoon session of Parliament, no meaningful debate could take place due to the controversy over Pegasus, the spyware. Some Indian journalists, civil society activists and political leaders, and a top election strategist were possibly under surveillance. There has been no categorical denial by the Government and that the Israeli software was not purchased. But above this, there is a much bigger issue of the privacy of the entire citizenry which has not received much public attention. On June 23, 2021, the Joint Committee examining the Personal Data Protection Bill (2019) was granted a fifth extension by Parliament. While informational privacy is not the Government's priority, it has been simultaneously exploring the potential of facial recognition technology.

A prying technology

To empower the Indian police with information technology, India approved implementation of the National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) to "facilitate investigation of crime and detection of criminals" in a quick and timely manner. On its implementation, it will function as a national-level search platform that will use facial recognition technology: to

facilitate investigation of crime or for identifying a person of interest (e.g., a criminal) regardless of face mask, makeup, plastic surgery, beard or hair extension.

The technology is absolutely intrusive: computer algorithms map unique facial-landmarks (biometric data) such as shape of the cheekbones, contours of the lips, distance from forehead to chin, and convert these into a numerical code - termed a faceprint. Thus, for the purposes of 'verification' or 'identification', the system compares the faceprint generated with a large existing database of faceprints (typically available to law enforcement agencies) through a database on driver's license or police mugshots). But the real problem is that facial recognition does not return a definitive result - it 'identifies' or 'verifies' only in probabilities (e.g., a 70% likelihood that the person shown on an image is the same person on a watch list). Though the accuracy of facial recognition has improved over the years due to modern machine-learning algorithms, the risk of error and bias still exists. For instance, there is a possibility of producing 'false positives' - a situation where the algorithm finds an incorrect match, even when there is none - resulting in wrongful arrest. Moreover, much research suggests facial recognition software is based on pre-trained models. Therefore, if certain types of faces (such as female, children, ethnic minorities) are under-represented in training datasets, then this bias will negatively impact its performance.

As NAFRS will collect, process, and store sensitive private information: facial biometrics for long periods; if not permanently - it will impact the right to privacy. Accordingly, it is crucial to examine whether its implementation is arbitrary and thus unconstitutional, i.e., is it 'legitimate', 'proportionate to its need' and 'least restrictive'? What is its potential for abuse and misuse with the pending-status of the Personal Data Protection Bill (PDPB), and the absence of clear guidelines for its deployment? How does it impact other fundamental rights such as the right to dissent? Should NAFRS be banned or simply regulated?

The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States uses facial recognition technology for potential investigative leads; police forces in England use facial recognition to tackle serious violence. In other cases, countries such as China use facial recognition for racial profiling and mass surveillance - to track Uighur Muslims. Policing and law and order being State subjects, some Indian States have started the use of new technologies without fully appreciating the dangers involved.

Test of 'proportionality'

Facial recognition being an intrusive technology has an impact on the right to privacy. The Constitution of India does not explicitly mention the right to privacy. However, a nine-judge Bench of

the Supreme Court, in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India (2017) recognized it as a precious fundamental right. Since no fundamental right can be absolute and thus even in respect of privacy, the state may impose reasonable restrictions on the grounds of national integrity, security of the state, public order, etc.

The Supreme Court, in the K.S. Puttaswamy judgment provided a three-fold requirement (which was reiterated in Anuradha Bhasin while examining denial of the 'right to Internet' to the people of Kashmir) to safeguard against any arbitrary state action. Accordingly, any encroachment on the right to privacy requires the existence of 'law' (to satisfy legality of action); there must exist a 'need', in terms of a 'legitimate state interest'; and, the measure adopted must be 'proportionate' (there should be a rational nexus between the means adopted and the objective pursued) and it should be 'least intrusive.' Unfortunately, NAFRS fails each one of these tests.

First, NAFRS lacks 'legitimacy'. It does not stem from any statutory enactment (such as the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018 proposed to identify offenders or an executive order of the Central Government. Rather, it was merely approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2009 during United Progressive Alliance rule. Second, and more importantly, even if we assume that there exists a need for NAFRS to tackle modern day crimes, this measure is grossly disproportionate. This is because to satisfy the test of 'proportionality', benefits for the deployment of this technology have to be sufficiently great, and must outweigh the harm. For NAFRS to achieve the objective of 'crime prevention' or 'identification' will require the system to track people on a mass scale - avoiding a CCTV in a public place is fiendishly difficult - resulting in everyone becoming a subject of surveillance: a disproportionate measure. In the absence of a strong data protection law or clear guidelines on where this technology can be used or who can be put on a watch list? And, how long the system will retain sensitive personal data of those the surveilled people, NAFRS will indeed do more harm than good.

Impact on rights

From a technical angle, facial recognition technology can be tasked to 'identify', among other uses, cases. In doing so, one faceprint is compared to many other faceprints stored in a database (known as 1:N matching). In some cases, it is known that the person to be identified exists in the database, whereas, in other scenarios, it is not (for e.g., when persons are checked against watch lists). This is where its deployment becomes hugely worrisome. With the element of error and bias, facial recognition can result in profiling of some overrepresented groups (such as Dalits and minorities) in the criminal justice system.



The implementation of the National Automated Facial Recognition System in India lacks adequate safeguards

Further, as anonymity is key to functioning of a liberal democracy, unregulated use of facial recognition technology will dis-incentivize independent journalism or the right to assemble peaceably without arms, or any other form of civic society activism. Due to its adverse impact on civil liberties, some countries have been cautious with the use of facial recognition technology. The Court of Appeal in the United Kingdom ruled the use of facial recognition technology by South Wales as unlawful in the absence of clear guidelines. In the United States, the Facial Recognition and Biometric Technology Moratorium Act of 2020 was introduced in the Senate to prohibit biometric surveillance without statutory authorization. Similarly, privacy watchdogs in the European Union have called for a ban on facial recognition.

Unchecked pathway

At present, the Information Technology Act 2000, and the Rules framed thereunder offer broad powers to the Central government to infringe privacy in the name of the sovereignty, integrity or the security of the state. The Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 is not much different. It gives the central government unchecked power for the purposes of surveillance - it can exempt any agency of the Government from the application of the proposed law in the name of legitimate state interest.

Without adequate safeguards such as penalties that are dissuasive and sufficiently deterrent, police personnel may routinely use facial recognition technology. In sum, even if facial recognition technology is needed to tackle modern-day criminality in India, without accountability and oversight, facial recognition technology has strong potential for misuse and abuse. In the interest of civil liberties and to save democracy from turning authoritarian, it is important to impose a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology till we enact a strong and meaningful data protection law, in addition to statutory authorization of NAFRS and guidelines for deployment. If the Government has the will, it can get any law passed with god speed just like the recently passed 20 Bills including the OBC Bill or three Farm Bills.

(Faizan Mustafa is Vice-Chancellor, National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSA) University of Law, Hyderabad. Utkarsh Leo is Assistant Professor at NALSAR, Hyderabad.)

Installation of Shri Guru Granth Sahib

One of the classic simplifications of Sikh history pertains to the preparation of the sacred scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. The event is generally described in the briefest terms.

The Holy Volume was compiled by Guru Arjan (A.D. 1563-1606) and the first copy was calligraphed by Bhai Gurdas at his dictation—this is all we learn from most of the sources.

What amount of planning, minute attention to detail and labour went into this work is slurred over. An old text which gives some detailed information is the Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi. Written in AD. 1718, this, in fact, is the oldest source. Although it does not go into the technical and literary minutiae, it narrates the entire process from the beginning of the transcription of the Holy Volume to its installation in the newly built Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar.

Why Guru Arjan undertook the task is variously explained. One commonly accepted assumption is that the codification of the Gurus' compositions into an authorized volume was begun by him with a view to preserving them from garbling by schismatic groups and others. According to the Mahima Prakash (AD. 1776), he set to work with the announcement: As the Panth (Community) has been revealed unto the world, so there must be the Granth (Book), too. The bani, Gurus' inspired utterance, had always been the object of highest reverence for the Sikhs as well as for the Gurus themselves. It was equated with the Guru himself. The bani is the Guru and the Guru bani, sang Guru Ram Das in measure Nat Narain. By accumulating the canon, Guru Arjun wished to affix the seal on the sacred word. It was also to be the perennial fountain of inspiration and the means of self-perpetuation for the community.

Guru Arjan called Bhai Gurdas to his presence and expressed to him the wish that the compositions of the Gurus as well as those of some of the saints and sufis be collected. Messages were sent to the disciples to gather and transmit to him the hymns of his predecessors.

Baba Mohan, son of Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, had two manuscript collections of the Gurus' hymns inherited from his father. Bhai Gurdas travelled to Goindwal to bring these pothis, but the owner refused to see him. Bhai Buddha, one of the oldest Sikhs from Guru Nanak's days, was similarly turned away from his door. Then Guru Arjun went himself. He sat in the street below Mohan's attic serenading him on his tambura. Mohan was disarmed to hear the hymn. He came downstairs with the pothis and presented these to the Guru. As says the Gurbilas, the pothis were placed on a palanquin bedecked with precious stones. The Sikhs carried it on their shoulders and Guru Arjun walked behind barefoot. He refused to ride his horse, saying that the pot his were the very spirit of the four Gurus—his predecessors.

The cavalcade broke journey at Khadar Sahib to make obeisance at shrines sacred to Guru Angad. Two kos from Amritsar, it was received by Hargobind, Guru Arjan's young son, accompanied by a large number of Sikhs. He bowed at his

The compilation of the Sikh scripture Shri Guru Granth Sahib was completed on 29 August, 1604, and was first installed inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar on 1 September, 1604



father's feet and showered petals in front of the pot his. Guru Arjan, Hargobind, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Buddha now bore the palanquin on their shoulders and marched towards Amritsar, led by musicians, with flutes and drums. In Amritsar, Guru Arjun first went to the Harimandir to offer karah prasad in gratefulness.

The making of the Granth was no easy task. It involved sustained labour and a rigorous intellectual discipline. Selections had to be made from a vast amount of material. Besides the compositions of the four preceding Gurus and the Guru Arjan who him self was a poet with a rare spiritual insight, there were songs and hymns by saints, both Hindu and Muslim. What was genuine had to be sifted from what was counterfeit. Then the selected material had to be assigned to appropriate musical measures and transcribed in a minutely laid out order.

Guru Arjan carried out the work with extraordinary exactness. He arranged the hymns in thirty different ragas, or musical patterns. A precise method was followed in setting down the compositions. First came sabdas by the Gurus in the order of their succession. Then came chhands, vars, and other poetic forms in a set order. The compositions of the Gurus in each raga

were followed by those of the Bhaktas in the same format. Gurmukhi was the script used for the transcription.

A genius, unique in spiritual insight and not unconcerned with methodological design, had created a scripture with an exalted mystical tone and a high degree of organization. It was large in size—nearly 7,000 hymns, comprising compositions of the first five Sikhs Gurus and fifteen Bhaktas and sufis from different parts of India, including Shaikh Farid, Kabir and Ravidas. The Sacred Volume consisted of 974 leaves, or 1948 pages, 12×8, with several blank ones at the end of a raga when there were not sabdas enough to fill the section assigned to it. The site of these marvellous labours is now marked by a shrine called Ramsar.

The completion of the Granth Sahib was celebrated with much jubilation. In thanksgiving, karah prasad was prepared in huge quantities. Sikhs came in large numbers to see the Holy Book. They rejoiced in their hearts by a sight of it and bowed before it in veneration. Among the visitors was Bhai Banno, who had led a group of Sikhs from Mangat, in western Punjab. Guru Arjan, who knew him as a devoted Sikh, instructed him to go to Lahore and have the Book bound. Banno sought the Guru's permission to be allowed to take the Granth Sahib first

to Mangat for the Sikhs there to see it. The Guru allowed this, but enjoined him not to tarry at Mangat, or at any other place, more than a night.

As Banno left Amritsar with his sacred charge, it occurred to him to have a second copy transcribed. The first copy, he argued, would remain with the Guru. There must be an additional one for the sangat. The Guru's direction was that he should not stay longer than one night at a place, but he had said nothing about the time to be spent on the journey. So he proceeded with his plans and sent a Sikh to purchase paper. He proposed to his companions that they should travel by easy marches of five miles a day. The time thus saved was utilized in transcribing the holy text. Sikhs wrote with love and devotion and nobody shirked his duty whether it was day or night. By the time they reached Lahore, the second copy was ready. But Banno had added to it some apocryphal texts. He had both volumes bound and returned to Amritsar as fast as he could.

At Amritsar, he was received with due ceremony, though Guru Arjun was not a little surprised to see two volumes instead of one. Bhai Banno spoke truthfully: Lord, there is nothing that is hidden from you. This second copy I have had made for the sake of the sangat. But the Guru put his seal only on the volume written by Bhai Gurdas's hand. He enjoined the Sikhs to own the Granth equal with the Guru and make no distinction between the two. He who would wish to see the Guru, let him see the Granth. He who would seek the Guru's word, let him read the Granth with love and attention.

Guru Arjan asked his Sikhs where the Granth Sahib be installed. Bhai Buddha said, You are omniscient, Master! But there is no place more suitable than the Harimandir. The Guru was happy to hear these words like one who has sighted the new moon. He then recited the praise of the Harimandir: There is nothing like it in all the three worlds. Harimandir is like the ship—the means for the people to cross over the worldly ocean triumphantly. A new joy pervades here every day. A sight of it annuls all sins.'

It was decided to spend the night at Ramsar and return to Amritsar the next morning. The Granth Sahib rested on a seat under the canopy, whereas the Guru and the Sikhs slept on the ground.

A disciple had to be chosen to take charge of the Granth Sahib. As says the Gurbilas, Guru Arjan lay awake through the night reflecting on the question. His choice finally fell on Bhai Buddha whose devotion was universally applauded. As they awoke, the Guru and his Sikhs made ablutions in Ramsar. The former thereupon practised his wonted meditation. At dawn, the entire sangat marched towards Harmandir Sahib. Bhai Buddha carried the Holy Book on his head and Guru Arjun walked behind swinging the whisk over it. Musicians sang sabdas. Thus they reached the Harimandir. The Granth Sahib was ceremonially installed in the centre of the inner sanctuary on Bhadon Sudi 1, 1661 BK/August 16, 1604. Bhai Buddha opened it with reverence to obtain from it the divine command, as Guru Arjan stood in attendance behind.

Indian American Republican Nikki Haley blasts Biden Administration over Taliban scenario

WASHINGTON (TIP): Leading Indian American Republican leader Nikki Haley has blasted the Biden administration for its execution in withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, saying it "completely surrendered to the Taliban."

"They're not negotiating with the Taliban. They've completely surrendered to the Taliban," Haley, first Indian American to get cabinet rank as US Ambassador to the United Nations under former President Donald Trump, said on Sunday.

She was responding to a question on a leading New channel Show " if she agreed with the Biden administration's assertion that it is not negotiating with the Taliban as it continues to evacuate American citizens and allies.

"They surrendered Bagram Air Force Base, which was a major NATO hub. They surrendered \$85 billion worth of equipment and weapons that we should have gotten out of there," Haley said.

"They have surrendered the American people and actually withdrew our troops before they withdrew the American people. And they've abandoned our Afghan allies who kept people like my husband safe," she said.

However, Haley also acknowledged that the Biden administration must now do "whatever it takes to get our Americans out. This is an unbelievable scenario where literally the Taliban has our Americans held hostage."

Haley also shot back at arguments that the withdrawal from Afghanistan was put in place by the Trump administration and that blame must be shared between Biden and his predecessor.



Republican leader Nikki Haley has blasted the Biden administration for its execution in withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, saying it "completely surrendered to the Taliban."

"Under four years of Trump, Afghanistan was safe. We made sure that we kept terrorism at bay, and we came from a position of strength," Haley said.

"There are times where you have to negotiate with the

devil, but you negotiate with the devil from a point of strength. You don't do it from a point of weakness. We literally have no leverage right now with the Taliban."

Haley called on the Biden administration to extend the Aug. 31 deadline for evacuations and said the US must make sure that the Taliban knows they've got to let people into the airport in Kabul safely.

"We've got to get our Americans out. We've got to stay true to those Afghan allies that we made promises to. And we've got to make sure we do this in a very strong way going forward," she said.

Expressing her apprehensions on Afghanistan, Haley said, "You're going to have sex slaves. You're going to have child marriages. You're going to have kids that are - girls that are no longer allowed in school.

"You're going to have our Americans. Any that are there will be in danger. And all of our Afghan allies will be killed if we don't do something," she said.

Meanwhile, Indian American lawmaker Ro Khanna has said the strategic partnership between India and the US is more critical than ever in containing the Taliban and preventing terrorism.

"The US-India strategic partnership is now even more critical in containing the Taliban and preventing terrorism," Khanna, who represents Silicon Valley in the House of Representatives, said in a tweet.

Khanna, Democratic Vice Chair of the Indian American Congressional Caucus, said he will be working with the leadership of the India Caucus to strengthen the India-US partnership on national security.

Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna emphasized upon India-US partnership in combating Taliban, terrorism



Indian origin Congressman Ro Khanna

WASHINGTON (TIP): The strategic partnership between India and the United States is more critical than ever in containing the Taliban and preventing terrorism, an influential American lawmaker said on Friday, August 20.

"The US-India strategic partnership is now even more critical in containing the Taliban and preventing terrorism," Indian-American

Congressman Ro Khanna said in a tweet.

Khanna, who represents Silicon Valley in the House of Representatives, is Democratic Vice Chair of the Indian American Congressional Caucus in the House.

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#1

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GLIMPSES OF FAREWELL DINNER TO MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL

CONTD FROM PAGE 7



CONTD ON PAGE 40

Tamil Nadu CM Stalin moves resolution in assembly against 3 farm laws

Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin on Saturday moved a resolution opposing the three contentious farm laws of the central government in the state assembly, which was adopted through a voice vote. With this, Tamil Nadu becomes the seventh state to oppose the farm laws after Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Kerala and West Bengal.

Ever since the three farm laws were enacted by the Centre, Stalin's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has been demanding that the Centre withdraw the laws, which the chief minister has said are "against the interests of farmers," reported news agency PTI. "The government has made a clear decision to pass a resolution seeking the withdrawal of these three farm laws reflecting the feelings of farmers across the country," Stalin said in June, adding there is no change on that decision.

In May, Stalin said that the government will bring a resolution in the assembly asking the Centre to withdraw the three farm laws. He recalled that one of the promises made in the DMK's assembly election manifesto which promised efforts to insist the Union government revoke the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.

Sidhu warns against power being curtailed; aide quits

Combative Navjot Singh Sidhu issued a veiled threat to the Congress as one of his key advisers was forced to quit over controversial remarks on Kashmir on Friday, deepening the party's factional crisis in poll-bound Punjab.

Sidhu's comments came on Thursday night, hours after his rival, chief minister Amarinder Singh, held a show of strength with 55 of the party's 80 lawmakers in the state. It appeared to be in response to party general secretary Harish Rawat asking the Punjab Congress chief to remove two of his advisers after their comments kicked up a row.

"I've conveyed to the high command that if I meet public expectations through the Punjab model, I'll not let the Congress lose ground in politics for 20 years. But if you don't allow me to take decisions, I'll hit back hard," Sidhu told a gathering of traders and businessmen in Amritsar.

"Without having the right to decide, being a mere showpiece is useless," he added.

At the event, Sidhu also indirectly attacked Singh and his policies. "I neither take an oath nor do I promise, but I commit," he said.

Rawat, who is also the Punjab affairs in-charge, downplayed Sidhu's remarks.

"I will see the context in which Sidhu made these remarks. Mr Sidhu is the respected chief of the Punjab unit. Who else has the power to take decisions if not the state presidents?" he said.

Singh and Sidhu have been locked in a bitter war for control of the party in Punjab since May.

In June, the central leadership brokered a truce and elevated Sidhu to state unit chief overriding the CM's objections. But the fragile peace was shattered earlier this week when leaders close to Singh and Sidhu publicly attacked each other, throwing the party in turmoil.

'Very disturbing trend': SC on filing of sedition cases after govts change

NEW DELHI (TIP): Filing of sedition cases when regimes change is a disturbing trend, the Supreme Court said on Thursday, Aug 27, granting protection from arrest to a suspended senior IPS officer against whom two criminal cases for offence of sedition and amassing disproportionate assets have been filed by the Chhattisgarh government.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana directed the state police not to arrest its own suspended senior IPS officer Gurjinder Pal Singh in the cases.

It however directed Singh to cooperate with the agencies in the ongoing investigation.

This is a very disturbing trend in the country and the police department is also responsible for this... When a political party is in power, police officials take side of the particular (ruling) party.

Then when another new party comes into power, the government initiates action against the police officials. This needs to be stopped, the bench said.

The bench, also comprising Justice Surya Kant, directed the state government to file its responses to the two separate petitions within four weeks during which the police officer will not be arrested.

Senior lawyers F S Nariman and Vikas Singh appeared for the suspended police officer and the



state government was represented by senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Raeksh Dwivedi. Two cases pertaining to the offence of sedition and for amassing disproportionate assets respectively have been lodged against Singh by the Congress-led Chhattisgarh government.

Man arrested for making indecent remarks against Adityanath

The Uttar Pradesh police on Friday arrested a man for allegedly using inappropriate language against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a phone call.

A complaint was filed by district unit secretary of Hindu Yuva Vahini (Hiyuva), Rajiv Singh

Chandel on Thursday that he got a call from an unidentified man who verbally abused him and gave him death threats.

He alleged that the caller also made indecent remarks against the chief minister, Ballia Superintendent of Police Ramkaran Nayyar said.

"A case was registered against the man under relevant sections of IPC and the Information Technology Act at the Nagra Police Station on Thursday," he said.

The police later found that the mobile number in question belonged to Ankit Yadav of Kothwa village and he was arrested, the officer added.

Farmers' protest: Samyukt Kisan Morcha calls for Bharat Bandh on September 25

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Friday called for a Bharat Bandh on September 25. The SKM said the move is aimed at further strengthening and expanding the farmers' agitation at Delhi borders, which completed nine months.

Addressing a press conference at Singhu border, Ashish Mittal from SKM said, "We are calling for a Bharat bandh on September 25. This is happening after a similar 'bandh' which was organised on the same date last year. We hope that it would be more successful than the last one as it was held during the pandemic."

Mittal also said that the all-India convention by the farmers was a success and saw the participation of representatives from 22 states. About 300 farm unions and members of organisations that work for the welfare of women, labourers, tribals as well as youth and students



Social activist Medha Patkar and others during Samyukt Kisan Morcha's press conference at Singhu Border. (Photo/ PTI)

participated. During the convention, discussions and deliberations took place on the farmers' struggle that has been going on for the last nine months and it focused on making their agitation against the farm laws a pan-India movement.

"We understood how the government has been attacking the farming community with the pro-

corporate laws and how by capturing the market, farmers' produce will be bought at lower prices," he said. Mittal further added, "The government which is on the verge of bankruptcy, is trying to recover the money from the farmers, labourers and the common man by increasing the fuel prices and prices of cooking gas."

Chhattisgarh Congress crisis: Bhupesh Baghel CM for now, shows his strength but not all-clear yet

Bhupesh Baghel will continue as Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh "for the time being" and the proposal to replace him with T S Singh Deo, in line with the formula of rotational chief ministership agreed upon by the two in 2018, was "not a closed chapter," sources in the Congress said Friday after Baghel met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for more than three hours amid an unprecedented show of strength by him in New Delhi.

The Congress leadership, sources said, was miffed with the Chief Minister for bringing over 40 MLAs including ministers — one of them claimed they totalled 51 — to New Delhi to demonstrate his support despite a clear direction from the high command not to do so. The Congress has 70 MLAs in the 90-member Assembly. Baghel was told to send back the MLAs immediately, sources said. Neither Gandhi nor AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal met the MLAs. All eyes are now on Gandhi, who the Chief Minister said will be visiting Chhattisgarh next week. Sources said the party leadership is still keen on implementing the rotational chief minister formula and hopes that Baghel will honour it. "He will continue as Chief Minister for the time being," a senior leader told The Indian Express when asked about the outcome of the meeting. On the rotational chief minister formula, the leader said "it is not a closed chapter."

Air taxis will be possible in coming days under drone rules

Air taxis that will traverse the airspace instead of roads will be very much possible in the coming days under the drone rules announced on Thursday, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said. "Air taxis are being researched and invented globally and many startups are coming up," the minister said during a press conference here. "That time is not far when taxis, like the ones of Uber etc that you see on roads, you will see in the air under the drone policy. I believe this is very much possible," he added. The minister said that the Defence Ministry, the Home Ministry and BCAS (Bureau of Civil Aviation Security) have been working together so that "counter rogue drone technology" can be developed and adopted quickly. In a notification dated August 25, the Ministry of Civil Aviation eased the rules regarding drone operations in the country by reducing the number of forms that need to be filled to operate them from 25 to 5 and decreasing the types of fees charged from the operator from 72 to 4.

BRICS nations call for differentiated responsibilities on climate change

NEW DELHI (TIP): The BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, released a New Delhi Statement on Environment at the 7th meeting of BRICS environment ministers on Friday, Aug 27, emphasising the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) that means countries will act on climate change based on their respective capabilities.

The statement said BRICS countries will cooperate closely ahead of the critical UN climate change negotiations (COP 26) and underlined that developed countries will have to honour their financial commitment of USD 100 billion per year to developing countries for climate change mitigation. "We agree to cooperate closely in the run up to the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) in the United Kingdom and the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in China. We took note of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 1 contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report and noted that it is a clarion call for rapid, sustained and effective science-based responses to climate change," the statement said.

"We underscored the need to honour the commitments made by developed countries in the pre-2020 period even as we have moved into the post-2020 era, including the yearly US\$ 100 billion goal for climate finance. We noted with grave concern the proposals for introducing trade barriers, such as unilateral carbon border adjustment, that are discriminatory," it added. On March 10, the European Parliament adopted a



resolution titled: "A WTO-compatible EU carbon border adjustment mechanism" which will put a carbon price on imports of a targeted selection of products so that ambitious climate action in Europe does not lead to 'carbon leakage,' according to the European Commission.

The ministers acknowledged the importance of global action against climate change by recognizing the "fundamental equality of all people in accessing economic growth and sustainable development." The statement also acknowledged the need to address marine plastic litter, cleaning of rivers, biodiversity and forest cover management.

Union environment minister, Bhupender Yadav who chaired the meeting stated that India gives great importance to BRICS—"2021 is a very crucial year not only for the BRICS but for the whole world as well, as we have UN Biodiversity COP 15 in October and UNFCCC COP 26 in November. BRICS Countries can play a very significant role in addressing the contemporary global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, air pollution, marine plastic litter, etc." *Source: HT*

Govt introduces new registration mark under BH-series for new vehicles

The Government introduced a new registration mark for new vehicles under the "Bharat series (BH-series)" to facilitate seamless transfer of vehicles, informed the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways on Saturday. "Government has taken a host of citizen-centric steps to facilitate mobility. An IT-based solution for vehicle registration is one such effort. However, one of the pain points in the vehicle registration process that needed attention was re-registration of a vehicle while moving to another state," said the Ministry in a statement.

Station relocation occurs with both Government and private sector employees. Such movements create a sense of unease in the minds of such employees with regard to the transfer of registration from the parent state to another state as, under section 47 of the vehicles-act">Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, a person is allowed to keep the vehicle for not more than 12 months in any state other than the state where the vehicle is registered, but a new registration with the new state- registering authority has to be made within the stipulated time of 12 months.

A passenger vehicle user takes steps to re-register a vehicle including no objection certificate from the Parent State for assignment of a new registration mark in another state; Assignment of new registration mark after the road tax on pro-rata basis is paid in the new State and Application for refund of the road tax in the parent State on pro-rata basis.

This provision to get a refund from the parent State on a pro-rata basis is a very cumbersome process and varies from one State to another.

Luck shines on MP farmer for sixth time as he mines 6.47 carat diamond in Panna

PANNA (TIP): For the sixth time in two years, a farmer in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh has mined a high-quality diamond - this time weighing 6.47 carat - in a land taken on lease from the government.

Prakash Majumdar found the diamond from a mine at Jaruapur village on Friday, said Nutan Jain, in-charge diamond officer. The 6.47 carat diamond would be put up for sale in the upcoming auction and the price would be fixed as per the government guidelines, she said.

Majumdar said he would share the amount received from the auction with his four partners engaged in quarrying the mine.

"We are five partners. We got the diamond weighing 6.47 carat, which we deposited at the Government Diamond Office," he told reporters on Friday.

He said he had found a 7.44 carat diamond last year. Besides, he had also mined four other precious stones weighing 2 to 2.5 carat in the past two years. Officials said the raw diamond would be auctioned and the proceeds would be given to the farmer after deduction of government royalty and taxes.

As per the private estimates, the 6.47 carat diamond is likely to fetch around Rs 30 lakh.



The diamond is likely to fetch around Rs 30 lakh.

Panna district is estimated to have diamond reserves of 12 lakh carat. The state government gives small patches of land on lease in Panna diamond reserve area to local farmers and labourers to mine diamonds and deposit them with the district mining officer. *Source: PTI*

With 46,759 Covid-19 cases, India sees highest single-day rise in 2 months

NEW DELHI (TIP): India on Saturday, Aug 28, reported 46,759 new cases of coronavirus disease—the highest in nearly two months—pushed mainly by the surge in Kerala, according to the Union ministry of health and family welfare. The fresh infections have now taken the nationwide tally to 32,649,947, while the death toll climbed to 437,370 with 509 daily fatalities, the health ministry data showed. This is the third consecutive day that India is seeing more than 40,000 daily Covid-19 cases.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has asked Kerala and Maharashtra to consider night curfews in areas with high infection numbers. The southern state logged 32,801 cases on Friday, up from 30,007 on Thursday and the test positivity rate stood at 19.22 per cent, an increase from 18.03 per cent on August 26. Kerala has accounted for more than half of the total active cases, followed by 16 per cent in Maharashtra.

Active cases rose by 14,876 to stand at 359,775 in the same period, according to data released by the health ministry at 8am. Active cases constitute 1.06 per cent of total cases, the lowest since March 2020, and the national Covid-19 recovery rate

Active cases rose by 14,876 to stand at 359,775 in the same period



stands 97.6 per cent, the Union health ministry said.

As many as 17,61,110 Covid-19 tests were

conducted on Friday, taking the total number of tests conducted so far to 51,68,87,602. The number of people who

have recuperated from the disease surged to 31,852,802 while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, it said.

Meanwhile, India on Friday administered more than 10 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine in a single day across the nation for the first time since the start of the mass inoculation programme on January 16, according to data on the Union health ministry's Co-WIN dashboard. "Record vaccination numbers today! Crossing 1 crore is a momentous feat. Kudos to those getting vaccinated and those making the vaccination drive a success," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted on Friday night.

More than 40.5 million Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with states and Union territories for inoculation, the Union health ministry said on Friday. Over 588.6 million vaccine doses have been provided to the states and Union Territories so far, the ministry said in a statement. The Covid-19 vaccination drive has been ramped up through the availability of more vaccines, advanced visibility of vaccine availability to states and Union Territories for enabling better planning by them and streamlining the vaccine supply chain. *Source: HT*

'Tremendous milestone': Bill Gates after India's 10 mn vaccine doses in a day

American billionaire and philanthropist Bill Gates on Saturday congratulated India for reaching a "tremendous milestone" of administering 10 million vaccine doses against coronavirus disease (Covid-19) on Friday, thus recording the highest single-day vaccine coverage so far. This, Gates said, was the result of the collective efforts of the government, the research and development (R&D) community, vaccine manufacturers, and all the health workers who made this feat possible.

"Congratulations, India, on reaching this tremendous milestone," Gates wrote in a tweet as he shared a news article on vaccine coverage. "The collective efforts of the government, R&D community, vaccine manufacturers, and millions of health workers have made this feat possible." Gates also tagged the Twitter handles of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union ministry of health and family welfare which, in turn, retweeted his post.

A total of 10,064,376 doses were administered in India on Friday, bettering the previous high of 8.82 million doses set on August 16. About 6.9 million vaccine doses were administered on average across the country every day for the past week, the highest pace of the inoculation drive ever recorded in the country since the start of the mass programme on January 16.

Soumya Swaminathan, the chief scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO), was also among those who praised India for administering more than 10 million Covid-19 vaccines a day, amid fears of another surge in infections. "Congratulations to the thousands of personnel involved," she said in a tweet. "Vaccination, along with public health & individual preventive measures will protect everyone!"

PM Modi called the record vaccination milestone a "momentous feat" for the country. Applauding those getting vaccinated as well as those making the nationwide vaccination drive a success, the Prime Minister said crossed 10 million vaccine doses is a new record for the country.

Making sense of surging Covid cases in Kerala

On August 1, Kerala reported more than 20,000 new Covid-19 cases. Among the infected ones, nearly 2,400 people needed hospitalisation.

Twenty-five days later, on August 25, the southern state, under fire for not being able to contain the spread of Coronavirus, reported a big surge with more than 31,000 new cases. However, the new hospitalisation count was lower at 2,078.

It is very likely that someone getting infected today will need hospitalisation with a lag. A surge today may reflect in hospitalisation numbers only after a few days.

However, data analysed by India Today's Data Intelligence Unit (DIU) shows that even as Kerala has been consistently reporting daily confirmed cases on the higher side the whole of August, there is no surge in demand for hospital beds.

Palakkad-based internal medicine expert Dr Arun NM says that the recent surge is mainly because of the highly transmissible Delta variant and large gatherings due to festivals may have played its part too. Because of the presence of Delta variant "it is very difficult to prevent transmission as there are so many susceptible people around and also because of gatherings due to festivals," Dr Arun said to India Today.

Available data show that while 28,596 people were in hospitals in the state with Covid-19 related symptoms on August 1, the number



dropped to 26,586 on August 22. The number of daily new hospitalisation needs too has remained flat with a downward bias all through August.

Not just the rate of hospitalisation, the fatality numbers also don't quite reflect the surge in new cases. Between August 19 to 25, the state added 1.3 lakh new cases, which is 2 per cent more than what was reported a week before. However, there was a marginal drop of 1 per cent in weekly fatalities in the same period.

In this sense, Kerala has been mirroring a trend of highly vaccinated countries like the U.S. and the U.K., where cases keep going up. But the demand for hospital beds has remained subdued, and the case fatality rate, a

key metric measuring the severity of the infection, has stayed low.

Kerala remains one of the most vaccinated states in India. Nearly 70 per cent of the eligible population have received at least one vaccine dose, and nearly 27 per cent are fully vaccinated.

Data show that even as the second wave ebbed elsewhere in the second half of May and cases began to drop significantly, the number of daily confirmed cases rarely dropped below the 10,000 marks in Kerala.

Through the whole of May, Kerala continued to report daily confirmed Covid-19 cases in excess of 20,000. When the second wave across India was at its ferocious worst, the southern state was mirroring the national trend.

Source: India Today

India in history this Week

AUGUST 27- SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

August 27

1859: Dorabji Tata, who laid the foundation of Tata Steel, was born.
1972: Indian professional wrestler and lifter Dalip Singh Rana aka Great Khali was born.
1870: The working union was established on this day. It was the first trade union of India.
1976: Major General G. Ali Ram, the first woman general of the Indian Armed Forces, was appointed Director of the Military Nursing Service.
1976: The great singer Mukesh died.



1999: Sonali Banerjee became India's first female Marine Engineer.
2008: Retired Supreme Court Judge A.K. Mathur was made the first chairman of the Armed Forces Tribunal.
2013: One of the infamous riots in Uttar Pradesh was the rioting in Muzaffarnagar.

August 28

1896: Famous Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri was born.



1986: Bhagyashree Sathé became the first woman in India to become a grandmaster in chess.
1999: Major Sameer Kotwal martyred in an encounter with a faction of militants in Assam.
2018: Manjit Singh of India won the gold medal in the men's 800 meter race of the Jakarta Asian Games.
2008: International magazine Forbes included Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati among 100 powerful women in the world.

August 29

1898: Goodyear Tire Company was established.
1905: Hockey magician Major Dhyanchand was born.
1976: India's famous poet Kazi Nazrul Islam died in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
2014: Richard Attenbarra, the Oscar-winning director for the film Gandhi, died.
1612: An important event took place in the colonial



era of India. The Portuguese had to face defeat in the battle of Surat at the hands of the British.
1833: The British Slave Abolition Act was given the form of law.
1887: Ever been a doctor of Gandhiji and born Jivraj Mehta, the first Chief Minister of Gujarat.
1931: The death of Naga spiritual master Jadonang, who laid the foundation of the powerful Naga movement.
1949: One of the top scientists of India. Birth of Radhakrishnan. Under his leadership, India made its Mangalyaan on Mars in the first attempt.
1952: Sister Euprasia, the Indian Christian woman saint known as the Praying Saint.
1957: The Civil Rights Act, 1957 was passed.
1969: Major Manoj Talwar, who was martyred in Kargil war, was born.
1974: Chaudhary Charan Singh founded the Lok Dal Party.
1980: Birth of Madhav Shrihari Ane, who became a freedom fighter and Governor of India after independence.
1998: Former Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar honored with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award.
2008: Important event of industrial history of Bengal. Tata Motors started the Nano project in Singur, which was strongly opposed by Trinamool Congress workers. Enraged by the protest, Tata removed his employees from the Nano project site.

August 30

1559: Birth of Jahangir, son of the great emperor Akbar and ruler of the Mughal dynasty.
1659: Aurangzeb hanged his elder brother Dara Shikoh to occupy his father's throne.
1928: Ras Bihari Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru founded The Independence of India League in India. Its purpose was to inspire the diaspora to remove the British rule in India.



1947: A committee was formed under the leadership of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar to draft the Indian Constitution.
1952: Osborne Smith, the first governor of the Reserve Bank of India passed away.
1976: Good storyteller, besides a better actor G.P. Shrivastava passed away.
2003: Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the third time.
2008: The death of the famous industrialist of the Birla family, Krishna Kumar Birla.
2014: The famous historian Bipin Chandra passed away.
1574: Guru Ram Das became the fourth Guru of the Sikhs.
2013: India's first defense satellite GSAT-7 was launched from French Guiana in South America.

August 31

1919: Famous litterateur Amrita Pritam was born.
1778: During the British Revolution, 17 Sharebridge Indians were killed in the British Bronx.

1956: The then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad approved the State Reorganization Bill.
1968: Two-stage rounding rocket Rohini-MSV1 was successfully launched in India.
2010: The Indian Parliament passed the Nuclear Public Liability Bill to ensure prompt compensation in the event of an accident at the nuclear plant.
1983: India's satellite INSAT-1B was aired from the US space shuttle Challenger in 1983.
2010: In 2010, the Government of India increased the amount of assistance for Pakistani flood victims from 50 lakh to 25 million dollars.

September 1



1956: India's largest life insurance company "Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)" was established.
2008: Thomas J. Bata passed away as CEO of Bata Shoe Company
1947: Indian Standard Time was adopted.
1956: Tripura was made a union territory after the reorganization of Indian states.
1964: Indian Petroleum Company Indian Oil Refinery and Indian Oil Company were merged to form Indian Oil Corporation.
2000: India's neighboring country China had closed its only route to Nepal via Tibet.
2008: Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram announced the appointment of D. Subbarao as the 22nd Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

September 2

1969: The ATM machine came in the banking world for the first time today.
1573: Akbar, the third ruler of the Mughal dynasty, won the decisive battle near Ahmedabad and captured Gujarat.
1946: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, was sworn in as Prime Minister of the Interim Government of undivided India.
2009: Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and National Congress Party leader Dr. Yeduguri Suspicious Rajasekhara Reddy died in an air crash.
1956: 125 people died after a bridge collapsed between Jadcherala and Mehboob Nagar, 100 km from Hyderabad.
1970: Vivekananda memorial was inaugurated at Kanyakumari in 1970.
1999: Indian swimmer Bula Chaudhary became the first Asian woman to cross the English Channel twice.
2008: In 2008, the former vice chancellor of Kanpur University, Prof. B.N.Asthana was announced by the Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Department for the Saraswati Samman.
1941: Famous Indian actress Sadhana was born.

CELEBRATING BIPOC FILMS

BY MABEL PAIS



BIPOC Poster - Photo / SRFF 2021

REJOICE, RESIST WITH SRFF

"This series focuses on stories by and about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that deserve a spotlight of their own in the mainstream. It is important to point out that a rich cultural heritage lies behind the lenses of BIPOC filmmakers who have so much to give world cinema and activism."

Nora Armani, Founding Artistic Director - SR Film Festival, NY

Rejoice, Resist: Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Films

Rejoice, Resist: Spotlight on BIPOC Films presented by SR Socially Relevant™ Film Festival NY, ImageNation, and Black Independent Filmmaker App

Rejoice: In-person VIP cocktail and a block party in Harlem (August 29)

Resist: Screening at Marcus Garvey Park (August 30) preceded by a panel.

Online streaming of films and live broadcasts from Aug 31 through Sept 2nd

Rejoice, Resist: Black Indigenous People of Color Films (August 29-September 2nd) is a film series celebrating Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) films and filmmakers, marking the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and advocating social justice for all oppressed people. It is organized by SR Socially Relevant Film Festival New York together with festival partners and sponsors. It highlights a FREE block party on August 29 in Harlem, and a panel and FREE in-person film screenings at Marcus Garvey Park on August 30. A series of films streams online from August 31st to September 2nd inclusive.

On August 30, an in-person panel will discuss the state of activism in the BIPOC cultures, and PBS's award-winning film "The Neutral Ground" - a documentary about memory, monuments, and breaking up with the confederacy will screen FREE.

Films streaming online on August 31st, September 1st, and 2nd include a slate of award-winning narrative features, documentaries, and shorts by BIPOC filmmakers programmed in previous editions of SRFF (www.ratedsrfilms.org) and newcomers dealing with social issues relating to Black and Indigenous People of Color.

"Through the unfiltered truth of the powerful lens, Black cinema has not only been a window into our joy, celebration, and resilience, but it has also been a motivating agent for social justice by exposing the injustices that BIPOC communities continue to face. It is

an honor to carry the baton of this tradition into the critical times of our present moment through communal work with our partner organizations." - Justin Thomas, Founder of Black Independent Filmmaker App

"ImageNation is thrilled to share resources to express what we have in common that outweighs our differences." - Gregory Gates, Executive Producer of ImageNation Film Festival

For more information, visit ratedsrfilms.org

UNAPOLOGETIC

DIR: Ashley O'Shay | 2020 | USA | Doc | 1h 26m

After two police killings, Black millennial organizers challenge a Chicago administration complicit in state violence against its Black residents. Told through the lens of Janaé and Bella, two fierce abolitionist leaders, UNAPOLOGETIC is a deep and insightful look into the ongoing work in the Movement for Black Lives, from the police murder of Rekia Boyd to the election of Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

Website: www.unapologeticfilm.com

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

Instagram: [UnapologeticDoc](https://www.instagram.com/UnapologeticDoc)

Twitter: [UnapologeticDoc](https://twitter.com/UnapologeticDoc)

For the In-Person Screenings on August 27 & 28 and Q&A schedule, visit unapologeticfilm.com.



Barbara Lee, Congresswoman, CA
Photo Greenwich Entertainment

BARBARA LEE: Speaking Truth To Power

DIR/PROD: Abby Ginzberg | 2021 | USA | Doc | 1h 23m

THE HIGHEST-RANKING AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN IN THE U.S. CONGRESS

Featuring interviews with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cory Booker, Alice Walker, John Lewis, and Van Jones, "BARBARA LEE: Speaking Truth To Power," is an intimate, inspiring, and timely portrait of Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a true pioneer on behalf of racial and economic justice and the lone voice in opposition to the authorization of military force after the September 11th attacks. A unique selection of political commentators, activists, politicians, and family members add depth to the story of the highest-ranking African American woman in the United States Congress.

Watch the trailer - vimeo.com/300396633

For screenings schedule, visit barbaraleefilm.com

Currently in Theaters and On Demand Nationwide - available on iTunes / Apple TV and Amazon Prime Video

MR. SOUL!

DIR: Melissa Haizlip | 2020 | USA | Doc | 1h 23m
2020 TRIBECA FILM FEST - World Premiere
PBS INDEPENDENT LENS - Aired for Black

History Month 2021

"We hope our film and the music, artists and creators it celebrates will help to center Black excellence and Black joy. It's so exciting to see audiences discovering Ellis Haizlip as this hidden figure and unsung hero. Creating this love letter to Black culture helps to elevate all of the significant contributions African Americans and people of color have made to the culture and to the nation." - Melissa Haizlip, director

Just in time for a mid-summer celebration of life, music and art. The award winning and critically acclaimed MR. SOUL! has launched on HBO Max!

Before Oprah, before Arsenio, there was Mr. SOUL! From 1968 to 1973, the public television variety show, SOUL! guided by the enigmatic producer and host Ellis Haizlip, offered an unfiltered and uncompromising celebration of music, politics, dance, Black literature, and poetry. SOUL! was the first national variety show to provide expanded images of African Americans on television, shifting the gaze from inner-city poverty and violence to the vibrancy of the Black Arts Movement. With participants' recollections and myriad archival clips, Mr. SOUL! captures a critical moment in our nation's cultural rise, whose impact continues to resonate across generations and cultures.

Mr. SOUL! celebrates rich cultural moments with astonishing footage of interviews and rare live performances by icons and luminaries such as: Al Green, Stevie Wonder, Patti LaBelle, Gladys Knight, James Baldwin, Cicely Tyson, Harry Belafonte, Muhammad Ali, Sidney Poitier, Maya Angelou, Billy Preston, Toni Morrison, Bill Withers, Sonia Sanchez, many more and a 16-year-old Arsenio Hall making his television debut performing magic tricks.

The much-anticipated Mr. SOUL! soundtrack will be available on Hillman Grad Records / Def Jam Recordings, a division of UMG Recordings, Inc. The first single off the soundtrack will be "Show Me Your Soul," performed by Lalah Hathaway, and written by Robert Glasper, Lalah Hathaway, Muhammad Ayers and Melissa Haizlip.

For more information on Mr. SOUL! visit mrsoulmovie.com and @mrsoulthemovie on Instagram and Twitter.

THE SONG OF THE BUTTERFLIES

DIR: Núria Frigola Torrent | 2020 | Peru | Spanish & Munuka / Eng subs | 1h



The Song of the Butterflies
Photo / Cinema Tropical

"The Song of the Butterflies" spotlights indigenous histories of storytelling and processes of collective memory, trauma, and healing in the Peruvian Amazon. Airing on August 30 at pbs.org/pov

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

MOMA CELEBRATES VEINTE POR VEINTE BY MABEL PAIS

Veinte por veinte (20 for 20):

Celebrating Cinema Tropical
August 26 - October 5, 2021
MoMA, Online

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), commemorating the 20th anniversary of Cinema Tropical, the leading presenter of contemporary Latin American filmmaking in the United States, presents 20 debut feature films by key Latin American writer-directors whose careers Cinema Tropical has helped champion over the past two decades - films that have never before enjoyed theatrical runs in New York, by now-celebrated artists like Lisandro Alonso (Argentina), Nicolás Pereda (Mexico), Sebastián Silva (Chile), and Dominga Sotomayor (Chile).

The exhibition opens with a special Sculpture Garden in-person screening of Matías Piñeiro's "The Stolen Man" on Thursday, August 26, with the director in attendance.

"EL HOMBRE ROBADO" / THE STOLEN MAN

2007. Argentina. Written and directed by Matías Piñeiro. With María Villar, Romina Paula. In Spanish; English subtitles. 91 min.

Thursday, August 26, 8:30. MoMA Sculpture Garden
Virtual Cinema, August 27-September 3

"DE JUEVES A DOMINGO" / THURSDAY TILL SUNDAY

2012. Chile. Written and directed by Dominga Sotomayor. With Santi Ahumada, Francisco Pérez-Bannen, Paola Giannini. In Spanish; English subtitles. 96 min.

Virtual Cinema, August 27-September 3

"RAPADO"

1992. Argentina. Written and directed by Martín Rejtman. With Ezequiel Cavia, Mirta Busnelli, Damián Dreizik. In Spanish; English subtitles. 75 min.

Virtual Cinema, August 31 - September 7

"EL LUGAR MÁS PEQUEÑO" / THE TINIEST PLACE

2011. Mexico. Written and directed by Tatiana Huezo. In Spanish; English subtitles. 100 minutes.

Virtual Cinema, August 31-September 7

"25 WATTS"

2001. Uruguay. Written and directed by Juan Pablo Rebella, Pablo Stoll. With Daniel Hendler, Jorge Temponi, Alfonso Tort. In Spanish; English subtitles. 92 minutes.

Virtual Cinema, September 2-9

"MELAZA" / MOLASSES

2012. Cuba/France/Panama. Written and directed by Carlos Lechuga. With Yuliet Cruz, Armando Miguel Gómez, Luis Antonio Gotti. In Spanish; English subtitles. 80 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 2-9

"LA LIBERTAD" / FREEDOM

2001. Argentina. Written and directed by Lisandro Alonso. With Misael Saavedra, Humberto Estrada, Rafael Estrada. In Spanish; English subtitles. 75 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 7-14

"SANGRE"



"SANGRE." - Photo / Cinema Tropical

2005. Mexico/France. Written and directed by Amat Escalante. With Cirilo Recio Dávila, Claudia Orozco, Martha Preciado. In Spanish; English subtitles. 90 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 7-14

"ACNÉ"

2008. Uruguay/Argentina/Spain/Mexico/USA. Written and directed by Federico Veiroj. With Alejandro Tocar, Ana Julia Catalá, Gustavo Melnik. In Spanish, Hebrew; English subtitles. 97 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 9-16

"AGUA FRÍA DE MAR" / COLD WATER OF THE SEA

2010. Costa Rica/France/Spain/Netherlands/Mexico. Written and directed by Paz Fábrega. With Monserrat Fernández, Lil Quesada Morúa, Luis Carlos Bogantes. In Spanish; English subtitles. 83 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 9-16

"BALNEARIOS"

2002. Argentina. Directed by Mariano Llinás. In Spanish; English subtitles. 80 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 14 - 21

"EL SALVAVIDAS" / THE LIFEGUARD

2011. Chile. Directed by Maite Alberdi. Screenplay by Alberdi, Sebastián Brahm. In Spanish; English subtitles. 64 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 14-21

"MULHER À TARDE" / AFTERNOON WOMAN

2012. Brazil. Written and directed by Affonso Uchôa. With Renata Cabral, Luísa Horta, Ana Carolina Oliveira. In Portuguese; English subtitles. 70 min.

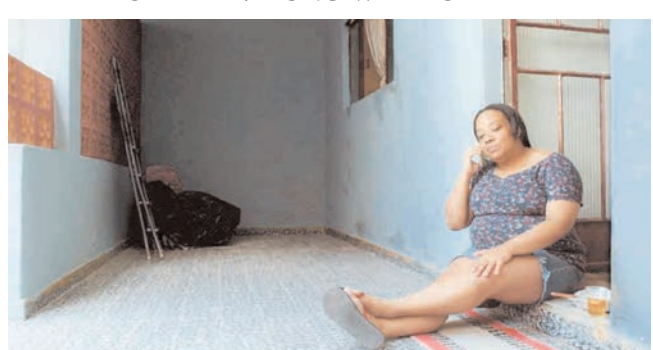
Virtual Cinema, September 16-23

"SANTA TERESA Y OTRAS HISTORIAS" / SANTA TERESA AND OTHER STORIES

2015. Dominican Republic/Mexico/USA. Written and directed by Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias. With Judit Gómez, Priscilla Lazaro, Cristina Kahlo. In Spanish; English subtitles. 65 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 16-23

"TEMPORADA" / LONG WAY HOME



"TEMPORADA." - Photo / Cinema Tropical

2018. Brazil. Written and directed by André Novais Oliveira. With Grace Passô, Russo Apr, Rejane Faria. In Portuguese; English subtitles. 113 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 21-28

"DÓNDE ESTÁN SUS HISTORIAS" / WHERE ARE THEIR STORIES?

2007. Mexico/Canada. Written and directed by Nicolás Pereda. In Spanish; English subtitles. 73 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 21-28

"LA PERRERA" / THE DOG POUND

2006. Argentina/Canada/Uruguay/Spain. Written and directed by Manuel Nieto Zas. With Pablo Riera, Martín Adjemián, María Sofía Dabarca. In Spanish; English subtitles. 109 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 23-30

"HISTORIA DEL MIEDO" / HISTORY OF FEAR

2014. Argentina/France/Germany/Qatar/Uruguay. Written and directed by Benjamín Naishtat. With Jonathan Da Rosa, Tatiana Giménez, Mirella Pascual, Claudia Cantero, Francisco Lumerman. In Spanish; English subtitles. 79 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 23-30

"GENTE DE BIEN"

Colombia/France. Directed by Franco Lolli. Screenplay by Lolli, Catherine Paillé, Virginie Legeay.



"GENTE DE BIEN." - Photo / Cinema Tropical.

With Carlos Fernando Pérez, Alejandra Borrero, Santiago Martínez. In Spanish; English subtitles. 86 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 28 - October 5

"LA VIDA ME MATA" / LIFE KILLS ME

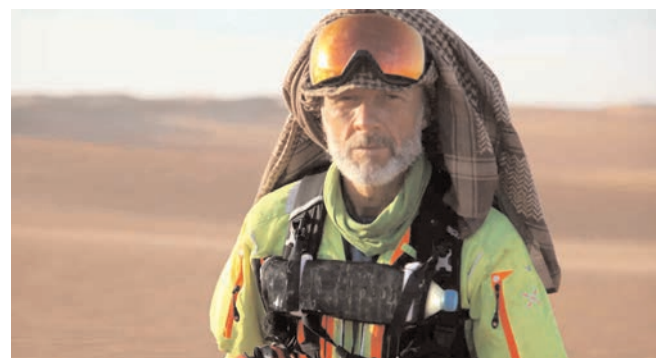
2007. Chile. Directed by Sebastián Silva. Screenplay by Silva, Pedro Peirano. With Gabriel Díaz, Diego Muñoz, Claudia Celedón. In Spanish; English subtitles. 92 min.

Virtual Cinema, September 28-October 5

For more information, visit: moma.org/film

FILMS CURRENTLY RUNNING

INTO THE LOST DESERT



"INTO THE LOST DESERT." Photo / Billy Sprague

DIR: Christopher Cassel | 1h 23m

INTO THE LOST DESERT, follows extreme desert explorer, Max Calderan as he pursues his lifelong dream to cross the last uncharted desert, most inhospitable places on earth, the Rub' al Khali, the massive 700-mile west-to-east desert in the Arabian Peninsula. It's a story about perseverance and passion.

Watch the trailer - youtu.be/fLi7JYwBTUw

Available on FOX Entertainment's free streaming service, tubitv.com

Website: emptyquarterstudios.com

TRY HARDER!

DIR: Debbie Lum | 2021 | USA | 1h 25m

Nominee for Grand Jury Prize at Sundance

At Lowell High School, the top public school in San Francisco - where cool kids are nerds, nearly everyone has an amazing talent, and most of the student body is Asian American - the things that usually make a person stand out can feel commonplace. With humor and heart, director Debbie Lum captures the reality of the American college application process and the intersection of class, race, and educational opportunity as young adults navigate a quintessential rite of passage.

Website: www.tryharderfilm.com

Facebook: @TryHarderFilm, Twitter: @TryHarderFilm

MATERNA

DIR: David Gutnik | 1h 45m

Available on digital platforms and VOD

MATERNA follows the journeys of four New York women who are isolated by city life, separated by class, politics, race and religion, and yet bound by a shared hunger for identity and connection. With their futures at stake, the characters' lives are upended by a fateful encounter underground, where their stories of personal transformation become a battle for survival.

Available on digital platforms + VOD

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



Shibani gets boyfriend Farhan's name tattooed on her neck

Actor and television host Shibani Dandekar has tattooed the name of her boyfriend Farhan Akhtar on her neck, as a birthday gesture. Taking to Instagram Stories, Shibani on Friday gave a glimpse of the new tattoo.

In the picture, her face isn't visible but the word Farhan is written on the side of her neck. She wrote, "Inked by the best," along with the picture. In another photo, Shibani also got a tattoo on her hand.

The original post was shared by tattoo artist Mr K, tagging both Shibani and Farhan Akhtar. Shibani dedicated the tattoo to Farhan on her 42nd birthday.

Shibani and Farhan have been in a relationship for three years now. Previously, Farhan was married to hairstylist Adhuna Bhabani and the duo are parents to two daughters -- Shakya and Akira.

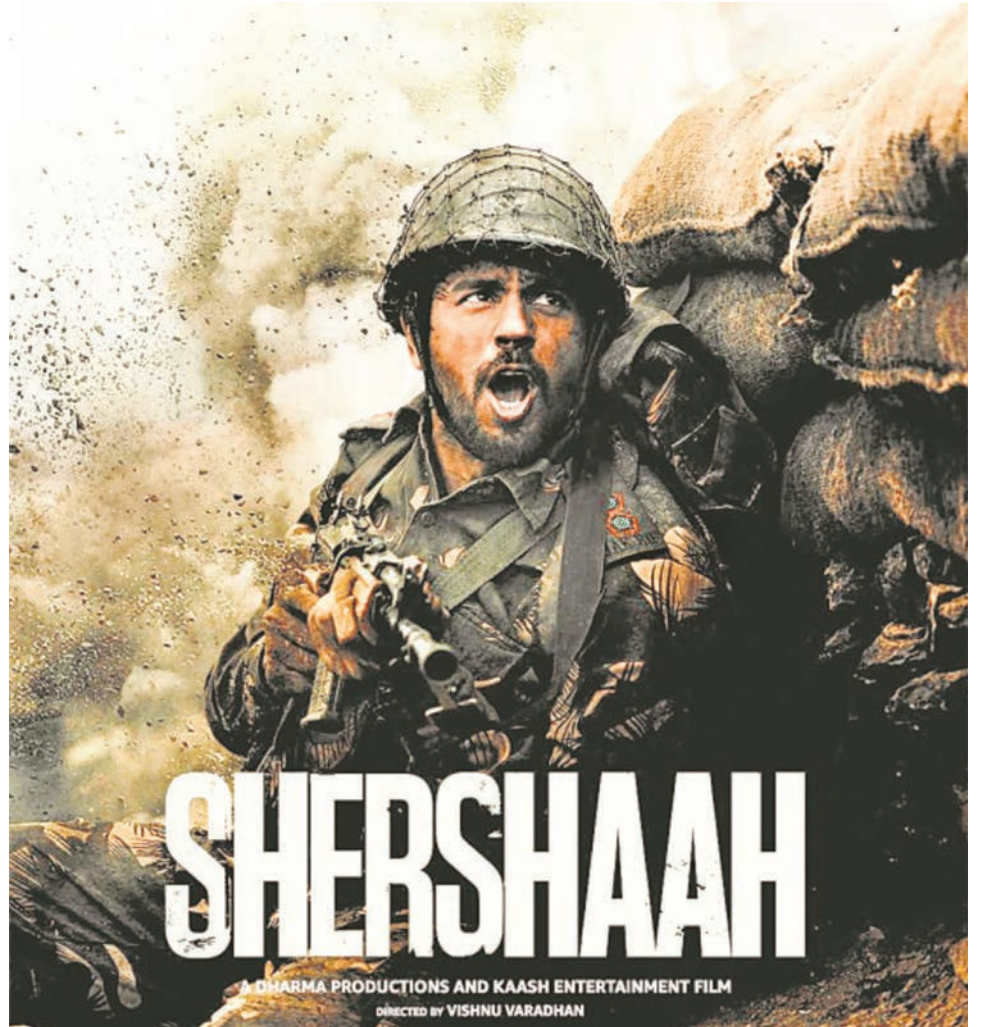
Kangana showers praise on Karan Johar's Shershaah

Kangana Ranaut, who has been embroiled in a public battle of words with producer-filmmaker Karan Johar for a few years now, on Thursday morning took to her Instagram story to share a couple of notes on late Captain Vikram Batra, and his recently released biopic Shershaah.

However, this time around, the Thalaivi actor only had good things to write about Karan Johar-produced Shershaah. The actor congratulated the team of the film for a 'glorious tribute' to the decorated officer. "National hero Vikram Batra was a Himachali boy from Palampur, very popular and loved soldier. When the tragedy happened, news spread like wildfire in Himachal, it slit through our hearts. As a kid, I remember being tormented for days," read Ranaut's first post.

Heaping praise on lead actor Sidharth Malhotra, Kangana penned, "What a glorious tribute @sidmalhotra. Congratulations to entire team. It was a big responsibility and you all excelled." The team of Shershaah is yet to respond to the praise.

Shershaah has been receiving love from all quarters. The movie was lauded by south superstar Kamal Haasan as well. The actor had stated that watching Shershaah made his 'chest swell with pride.' "Right from my childhood as a film fan and a patriot's son I resented the way Indian army was depicted in some of our Cinemas. Shershaah is that exception that makes my chest swell with pride for my soldiers. Thanks @DharmaMovies for promoting a talented director like @vishnu_dir. Congrats @SidMalhotra



and @advani_kiara, excellent work," Haasan's post read.

Shershaah stars Sidharth Malhotra as Captain Vikram Batra, while his real-life rumoured partner Kiara Advani

plays the decorated army man's fiancée, Dimple Cheema. The war film has been helmed by debut director Vishnu Vardhan, while it has been bankrolled by Dharma Productions.

Yami Gautam: It has been a life-enriching experience shooting for Lost

Actor Yami Gautam has wrapped up her upcoming film Lost. Sharing pictures from the sets of the Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury directorial, Yami opened up about her experience of working on the "special film".

"As I wrap up Lost today, I reminisce the lovely moments I experienced while working on this special film with a big smile in my heart. A big thank you to the entire cast and crew of Lost, who as days went by, became part of this journey. My heartfelt gratitude to Tony da who is not only one of the most incredible directors I've worked with but also an amazing human being. A film like 'Lost' can only be directed by someone who has the purest intentions!" Yami wrote.

The actor also spoke about the "challenges" and "chaos" the team of Lost faced while shooting for the film. "We faced many challenges with the weather, the chaos of shooting at live locations, the battles of shooting at congested places in covid times... but we stuck together as a team & it was all worth it in the end. My gratitude to dada's lovely wife, Indrani ma'am for all the warmth & unmatched hospitality and for feeding me the most amazing home cooked Bengali food everyday so that I didn't miss home."

On a concluding note, Yami Gautam called Lost "an unforgettable experience" that she is truly thankful for. "It has been a life enriching experience shooting for 'Lost', all thanks to the supportive cast and crew who went beyond their tasks and duties to make everything seamless for all those involved," she concluded.



Shilpa Shetty admits to making 'a mistake' in cryptic new post

Actor Shilpa Shetty admitted to making a mistake, in a cryptic social media note that she shared on Thursday. Shilpa has been communicating via book excerpts recently, amid an ongoing controversy that her family is involved in. Shilpa's husband, businessman Raj Kundra, is under the scanner for his alleged connection to a pornography racket, and was recently remanded in judicial custody for several days.

The excerpt posted by Shilpa Shetty on Instagram Stories appears to be from the same book that inspired her to share a couple of other pictures from it. It begins with a quote by Sophia Loren, which reads, "Mistakes are part of the dues one pays for a full life."





Emma Stone: Cruella de Vil character so much fun, intoxicating

Academy award-winning actor Emma Stone will be seen playing the title role in the film 'Cruella'. She described the character as "fun and intoxicating".

Talking about how she bagged the role, Stone said: "I met with the folks at Disney. They were playing around with the idea of an origin story of Cruella de Vil and wanted to know if I would be interested."

She added: "There was a lot to figure out and to see if it made sense to tell a story about her. But the character's so much fun and so intoxicating, they had an interest in finding what that story could be."

Stone said that it is fun to "see the origins of Cruella".

"And we've had fun exploring what makes a villain. How people can be affected by the events that have happened in their lives, or how they can choose to kind of crumble underneath the weight of something, or rise up above it and maybe, not always, take it to the best or most 'moralistic' place."

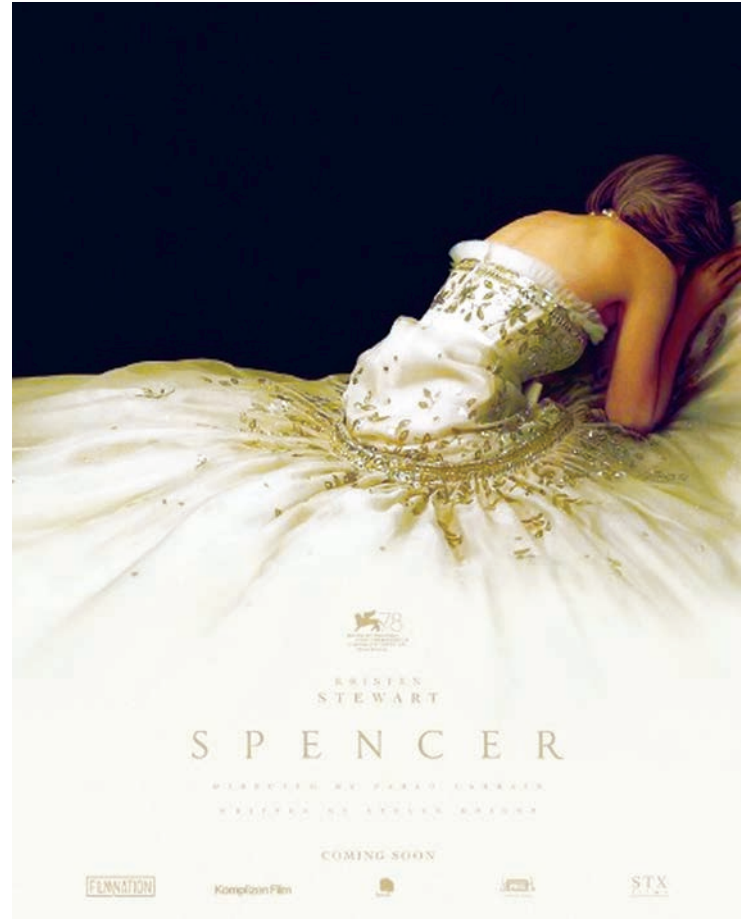
Spencer's first poster hints at Princess Diana's tragic life after becoming a royal

The first poster of Kristen Stewart-starrer Spencer is out, and it hints at the tragic life Princess Diana led after she married into the royal family. The poster does not show Diana's face, but instead has her face hidden in the massive iconic gown she wore at her much-hyped wedding with Prince Charles.

The makers recently showed the trailer of Spencer at the Neon CinemaCon. As per Deadline, Kristen Stewart has nailed the accent of Lady Diana. Stewart previously told InStyle magazine, "The accent is intimidating as all hell because people know that voice, and it's so, so distinct and particular. I'm working on it now and already have my dialect coach. In terms of research, I've gotten through two and a half biographies, and I'm finishing all the material before I actually go make the movie."

Spencer is set during a Christmas weekend at Sandringham when Princess Diana is struggling with the exaggerated media attention and marital troubles with Prince Charles. Jack Farthing plays Charles in the film.

The movie has been directed by Pablo Larrain, who previously helmed Jackie. On casting Stewart, Pablo Larrain previously told Deadline, "Kristen can be many things, and she can be very mysterious and very fragile and ultimately very strong as well, which is what we need. The combination of those elements made me think of her. The way she responded to the script and how she is approaching the character, it's very beautiful to see."



Matrix 4: Keanu Reeves, Priyanka Chopra sci-fi film gets an official title

The fourth chapter in the popular sci-fi film franchise The Matrix is titled Resurrections, studio Warner Bros has announced. The studio also unveiled the first footage of the film, fronted by Hollywood star Keanu Reeves, at a downsized CinemaCon, billed as "the largest gathering of movie theater owners from around the world" in Las Vegas.

Lana Wachowski, one half of the Wachowskis who directed all the three films in the franchise with sister Lilly, has penned and directed the new project. Besides Reeves, original trilogy star Carrie-Anne Moss also returns for the fourth installment.

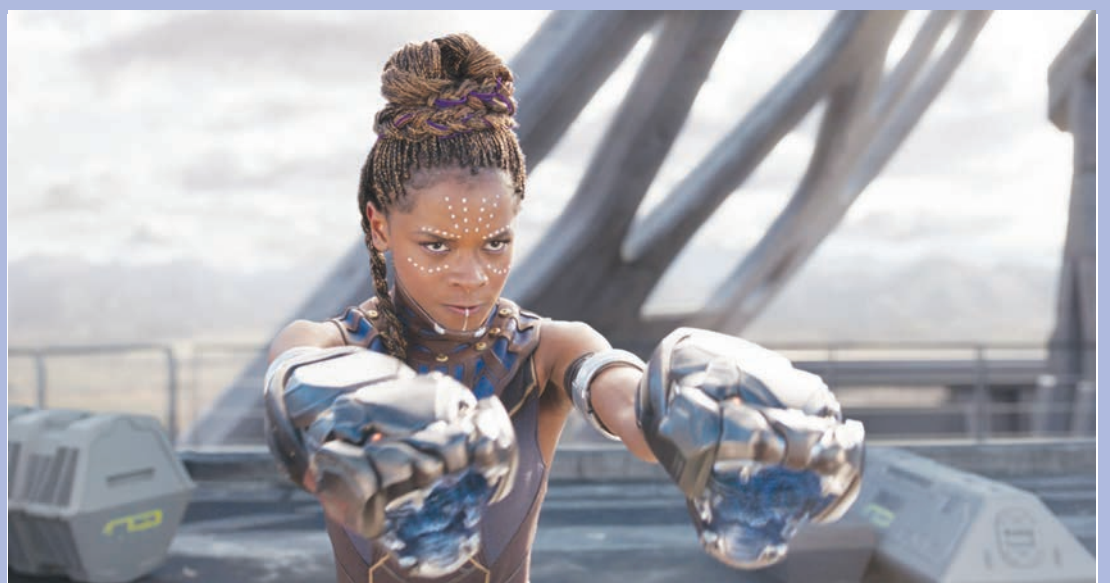
According to The Hollywood Reporter, the trailer was played for the CinemaCon audiences but not released online.

The trailer began with Reeves' character Thomas Anderson, not Neo — his name in the original trilogy — in therapy, telling his therapist (Neil Patrick Harris), "I had dreams that weren't just dreams. Am I crazy?"

He senses something is off with the world, but has no memory of what The Matrix is. Later, he runs into a woman (Moss) at a coffee shop. They shake hands but neither one remembers the other. Meanwhile, Thomas spends his days taking prescription blue pills, and wondering why everyone is glued to their phones, him being the odd one out.



Black Panther Wakanda Forever star Letitia Wright injured during stunt



Actress Letitia Wright was injured overnight during production of Marvel's "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," a source close to the production tells CNN.

The news was first reported by Variety. "Letitia Wright sustained minor injuries today while filming a stunt for Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. She is currently receiving care in a local hospital and is expected to be released soon," a spokesperson for Marvel told the publication on Wednesday.

A representative for Wright told CNN on Thursday that she had been discharged from the hospital and was recuperating.

The incident took place while filming in Boston. Wright's injuries are not expected to impact the movie's production schedule, according to the source.

Wright is reprising her role as Shuri, a Wakandan princess and accomplished inventor. Ryan Coogler has returned to direct the sequel to the 2018 hit which starred the late Chadwick Boseman in the titular role.

PERUVIAN BUS CARRYING MINING WORKERS PLUNGES INTO ABYSS, KILLING 16

LIMA (TIP): A bus in the Peruvian Andes transporting contract workers at MMG Ltd's Las Bambas copper mine plunged off a cliff on August 27, the company said, killing 16 people and injuring two.

The accident took place early in the morning while the vehicle navigated hairpin turns through the province of Cotabambas in Peru's Apurimac region, where the mine is located, the company said in a statement.

Workers from contract companies Manpower, Geotec, MB Renting, AKD Drilling, Lavalin, M&RC, JRM and JP Natlian were involved in the crash, MMG said.

The company said authorities were investigating the cause of the accident and expressed its willingness to cooperate.

The sprawling Las Bambas mine, one of Peru's largest, lies between the province of Cotabambas and a neighboring one. Peru is the world's second copper producer.

Accidents in which buses plunge off cliffs are not infrequent in Peru. The Andes mountain range traverses the length of the country, with harrowing roads overlooking tall cliffs.

Local Peruvian radio station RPP earlier reported that the bus fell some 200 meters (656 feet). Reuters

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PLATES, CUTLERY, CUPS MAY FACE BAN IN ENGLAND

LONDON (TIP): Single-use plastic plates, cutlery and cups are among a raft of items that could be banned in England as part of a new public consultation being launched in the autumn, the British government said on August 28.

"We will also introduce a world-leading plastic packaging tax from April 2022, set at 200 pounds (\$275.32) per tonne, on plastic packaging which doesn't meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content", the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs said in a statement.

It is estimated that each person uses 18 single-use plastic plates and 37 single-use plastic items of cutlery each year in England, the government said.

"We have made progress to turn the tide on plastic, banning the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds, while our carrier bag charge has cut sales by 95% in the main supermarkets", Environment Secretary George Eustice said.

"Now we are looking to go a step further", he added.

The full list of single-use items under review and other consultation details will be announced in the coming weeks, the government said. Reuters

Pope replaces Australian bishop in alleged misconduct probe

VATICAN CITY (TIP): Pope Francis on August 28 replaced an Australian bishop who stepped down amid a Vatican investigation into what Australian media have described as allegations of sexual misconduct.

The Vatican said Francis accepted Bishop Christopher Alan Saunders' resignation as head of the Broome diocese in western Australia. Francis appointed another prelate, Bishop Michael Henry Morrissey of the Geraldton diocese, to temporarily administer the sprawling Catholic diocese in Broome.

The Vatican, in keeping with its custom for announcing bishop resignations, did not cite a reason for replacing Saunders. At 71, he is four years younger than the age when the Vatican requires bishops to offer their resignations to the pontiff.

Australian media have quoted Saunders as strongly denying any wrongdoing and voluntarily offering to step aside. The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported earlier this year that police and prosecutors decided against filing criminal charges.



Parishioners in the diocese were informed in May that the Vatican investigation was ongoing, according to Australian media reports.

Details of the case weren't immediately available. Saunders has reportedly been on sabbatical.

After decades of sexual abuse

scandals in many nations, Pope Francis has vowed to root out predator clergy. Cases involving bishops who systematically covered up for such priests also led Francis to try to rebuild the collapsed trust of many faithful by pledging to bring accountability to the church hierarchy. AP

Chinese actress slapped with whopping USD 46.1 million fine for tax evasion

BEIJING (TIP): A top Chinese film and television actress has been slapped with a whopping USD 46.1 million fine for tax evasion, as China tightened supervision on celebrities under its new policy for reducing the wealth gap.

The Shanghai Municipal Tax Service fined Zheng Shuang on August 27 for tax evasion and undeclared income between 2019 and 2020 while filming a TV series.

Tax officials said Zheng's case is typical of the "yin and yang" contract situation in the film and television industry.

THE "YIN AND YANG" CONTRACT REFERS TO TWO DOCUMENTS MADE FOR THE SAME AGREEMENT--THE TRUE DOCUMENT IS KEPT BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WHILE THE OTHER CONTAINING A LOWER DECLARED SALARY IS PRESENTED TO TAX AGENCIES TO MINIMISE TAXATION.

The move to fine Zheng was interpreted as part of attempts to enhance regulation of the high-earning entertainment industry. Several celebrities, who have violated the law or have moral taints, were not allowed spotlight and got their works removed



from online platforms, state-run Global Times reported.

National Radio and Television Administration announced on Friday that all programmes in which Zheng has participated should be taken off the air.

Zheng had faced severe public criticism over allegations that she abandoned her two surrogate babies in the US earlier this year.

The clampdown on wealthy stars came following a new policy shift by the ruling

Communist Party of China headed by President Xi Jinping making common prosperity the central theme during the current five-year plan.

Recently, the Chinese government has mounted unprecedented crackdowns on Alibaba and other top corporate firms from various sectors within the economy, including technology, online education and real estate to tackle widening income inequality, rising debt levels and slowing consumption. PTI

Chinese regulators to exercise more control over algorithms

BEIJING (TIP): Chinese regulators will exercise greater control over the algorithms used by Chinese technology firms to personalise and recommend content, the latest move in a regulation spree across the internet sector.

China's internet watchdog, the Cyberspace Administration of China, on Friday released a draft proposal of "algorithm recommendation management regulations" aimed at managing how technology companies use algorithms when providing services to consumers.

The move expands the crackdown on the internet sector in China, as regulators seek to strengthen data privacy and consumer rights and curtail anticompetitive practices in order to curb the outsized influence of technology companies.

Under the draft regulations, companies must disclose the basic principles, purpose and operation mechanism of its algorithm recommendation services, and must include convenient options for users to turn off the recommendation service.

Algorithms should also not be used in ways that may cause addictive behaviours in users, or induce them to spend excessively. It was not immediately clear how that would be enforced.

Companies who use algorithms in ways that could influence public opinion must also submit their algorithms for



approval, or risk having their service terminated and a fine of up to 30,000 yuan (USD 4,630).

The draft algorithm management regulations could affect companies like ByteDance, which owns short video platforms Douyin and TikTok, as well as e-commerce firm Alibaba.

ByteDance uses recommendation algorithms to push videos to users, while Alibaba's algorithms tailor product recommendations to each user on its e-commerce platform Taobao based on their browsing and purchasing history.

China's largest technology firms, such as Alibaba and Tencent, have experienced breakneck growth in the

decade as hundreds of millions of Chinese internet users rapidly adopted smartphones.

These companies offer everything from payments, games, entertainment and e-commerce. Algorithms and data collected from users became valuable assets, as companies could mine data for important trends or recommend more personalised content to users.

However, a lack of regulation in this sector also saw an uptick in excessive collection of user data, online fraud and unfair consumer practices across the technology sector. In some cases, algorithms were also used in differential pricing for consumers. — AP

QUEEN ELIZABETH II TO ATTEND UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

LONDON (TIP): Queen Elizabeth II will attend the United Nations climate change conference in Scotland in November, organizers said Friday.

British official Alok Sharma, president of the COP26 conference, said he is "absolutely delighted" the queen will be at the event, which is due to be held in Glasgow Nov. 1-12.

Details of the monarch's schedule have not been released.

World leaders, climate campaigners and activists from around the world are due to attend the UN conference, which was postponed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The host, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, hopes to secure emissions-cutting commitments to limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial times. Countries agreed that goal at a 2015 conference in Paris, but a UN report this month said the world is on course to break the 1.5C threshold within a decade. — AP

'ROME OF BRITAIN' RISKS LOSING UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

LONDON (TIP) : Described as the "Rome of Britain", the Unesco World Heritage city of Canterbury faces the risk of being recklessly destroyed, one the UK's leading heritage groups has warned.

As a major tourism city 107 km south east of London, Canterbury is in danger of losing its beauty and history by allowing an increasing number of ugly and outsized developments within, or adjacent to, the city's historic core, still enclosed within its circuit of medieval walls, SAVE Britain's Heritage said in a report on August 27.

The state of Canterbury is coming close to a national emergency, it added.

The city could follow Liverpool which recently was stripped of its World Heritage Site status, Ptolemy Dean, president of the Canterbury Society, also warned.

"Canterbury is different and uniquely special from elsewhere, and yet it is being treated as if it were just another economic regeneration site.

"With Liverpool recently stripped of its World Heritage Site status and the World Heritage Site in Westminster under review, if Canterbury does not take care, it could be heading in the same direction," Dean added.

Latest available figures show tourism is worth nearly \$700 million a year to Canterbury's economy.

The city attracted around 65 million tourists a year before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Canterbury is famed for its stunning cathedral, ancestral home of the Church of England, founded in the year 597 AD, with the current building dating back to 1070.

IANS

WWII pilot's remains found in Europe, to be buried in Maine

MILLIONOCKET (MAINE) (TIP): The remains of a World War II pilot whose body was lost in Europe's Adriatic Sea have been recovered and will be buried in his home state of Maine, the US Department of Defence said August 27.

The remains of US Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Ernest N. Vienneau were accounted for in April and will be buried in his hometown of Millinocket on Oct. 9, the Defence POW/MIA Accounting Agency said. Vienneau was 25 at the time of his death.

Vienneau had been based in Italy, and a bomber on which he served as co-pilot came under fire over present-day Slovenia on Nov. 6, 1944, the Defence Department said. Vienneau was mortally wounded, and the pilot was forced to ditch the bomber off Vis Island, Croatia. His body could not be recovered from the sinking bomber, the department said.

The wreck of the bomber was found in a dive in 2017, the department said. Possible remains were recovered and



submitted for analysis in fall 2020, it said. Dental records and other evidence confirmed they belonged to Vienneau.

A rosette will be placed next to

Vienneau's name on Tablets of the Missing at the Florence American Cemetery in Italy, indicating he has been accounted for, the Defence Department said. AP

Over 3,000 Covid cases reported across LA schools

More than 3,000 coronavirus cases have been reported across Los Angeles County K-12 schools, the county's public health director reported on Thursday, Aug. 26, offering an early snapshot of the status of local schools in protecting against on-campus transmission of the delta variant.

"The early data we have on schools is somewhat sobering," said Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer during a public briefing.

The data, measured between Aug. 16 and Aug. 22 as students came back to campus en masse for the first time in more than a year, revealed that most of county's new cases were reported in the mammoth Los Angeles Unified School District.

At LAUSD sites, 2,666 cases were reported, with another 484 posted at K-12 sites across the county, officials said.

Most school sites reported only one case. But 15 LAUSD sites — where all students are tested weekly, per the district's assertive policies aimed at slowing the virus' spread — and 48 other school sites reported two cases; 84 LAUSD school sites and 39 other school sites across the county reported three or more cases.

So far, even the schools that have reported at least three cases have not necessarily been determined to be outbreak sites, as defined by county Public Health.

Global COVID-19 caseload tops 215 mn

WASHINGTON (TIP): The global coronavirus caseload has topped 215 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.48 million and vaccinations soared to over 5.12 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

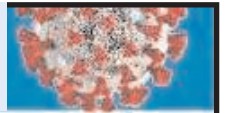
In its latest update on Saturday, Aug 28, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll and vaccination tally stood at 215,357,973, 4,484,434 and 5,123,427,298, respectively.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 38,700,164 and 636,667, respectively, according to the CSSE. In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 32,603,188 cases.

The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (20,703,906), France (6,778,133), Russia (6,747,681), the UK (6,697,770), Turkey (6,311,607), Argentina (5,167,733), Colombia (4,901,163), Iran (4,869,414), Spain (4,831,809), Italy (4,517,434), Indonesia (4,056,354), Germany (3,925,190) and Mexico (3,291,761), the CSSE figures showed. In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 578,326 fatalities.

Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (436,861), Mexico (256,287), Peru (198,031), Russia (176,904), the UK (132,566), Indonesia (130,781), Italy (129,002), Colombia (124,648), France (114,291), Argentina (111,270) and Iran (105,287).

TRACKING THE VIRUS



GLOBAL

Cases **215,357,973** | Deaths **4,484,434**

INDIA

Cases **32,649,947** | Deaths **437,370**



Aus approves Covid vaccines for adolescents

CANBERRA (TIP): Amid the third wave of the pandemic, Australia on Friday, Aug 27, approved vaccination against Covid-19 for all individuals from 12 years of age, extending the current recommendation for those aged 16 years and older.

Earlier in the day, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) advised the government that the Pfizer vaccine is safe and effective for children aged 12-15, reports Xinhua news agency.

"ATAGI concludes that the benefits of offering COVID-19 vaccination to all younger adolescents aged 12-15 years outweigh the known or potential risks," it said in a statement.

"As such, ATAGI recommends inclusion of this age group in the Australian Covid-19 vaccination program over time."

Following the announcement, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said in Canberra that vaccine appointments for children would open in September.

"Principally I would see that happening especially through the General Practitioner (GP) network, and that provides the opportunity for family vaccinations, for the family to go along



together across those age groups."

On Friday, Australia reported 982 new locally-acquired cases of Covid, as the country continued to battle the third wave.

Of the news cases, 882 were from New South Wales (NSW), the current epicentre.

Victoria, the second-most populous state reported a further 79 new cases, and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) recorded another 21, the highest in three days.

So far, about half the Australian population in NSW, Victoria, and ACT is still in lockdown.

As of Friday, there has been 47,840 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Australia, with 989 deaths.

Canada approves Moderna vax for kids aged 12-17 years

OTTAWA (TIP): Health Canada has approved the usage of the Moderna Covid-19 to inoculate children between 12 to 17 years.

The Moderna vaccine had been approved for use in adults over the age of 18 in Canada since December 2020, reports Xinhua news agency.

After a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, Health Canada said on Friday that it has determined that the vaccine is safe and effective at preventing Covid-19 in youth aged 12 to 17.

Health Canada approved the Pfizer vaccine for the same age group in May.

Although children are less likely to become really ill from Covid-19, Health Canada highlighted the importance of having them vaccinated because they can still get sick, be infected and not have any symptoms, spread the virus to others, and may experience long-term effects if they do contract it.

Children and youth with underlying medical conditions may also have a higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19, Health Canada said.

Health Canada data show that as of August 21, 76.9 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 had



received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine and 63.57 per cent were fully vaccinated with two doses.

There is still no Covid-19 vaccine approved for use in children under the age of 12 in Canada.

Health Canada said clinical trials are currently underway to determine the safety and effectiveness for those in this age group.

Canada reported 1,461 new cases of Covid-19 on Friday, bringing the cumulative total to 1,484,144, with 26,881 deaths. Since July 30, Canada's daily Covid-19 case counts have continued to increase. *Source: IANS*

Taliban largely seal off Kabul airport as airlift winds down

KABUL (TIP): The Taliban deployed extra forces around Kabul's airport on August 28 to prevent large crowds from gathering after a devastating suicide attack two days earlier, as the massive US-led airlift wound down ahead of an August 31 deadline.

New layers of checkpoints sprang up on roads leading to the airport, some manned by uniformed Taliban fighters with Humvees and night-vision goggles captured from Afghan security forces. Areas where large crowds of people have gathered over the past two weeks in hopes of fleeing the country following the Taliban takeover were largely empty.

A suicide attack on Thursday by an Islamic State affiliate killed 169 Afghans and 13 US service members, and there are concerns that the group, which is far more radical than the Taliban, could strike again.

Many Western nations have completed their evacuation operations ahead of Tuesday's deadline for the withdrawal of all US forces.

An Afghan who had worked as a translator for the US military said he was with a group of people with permission to leave who tried to reach the airport late Friday.

After passing through three checkpoints, they were stopped at a fourth. An argument ensued, and the Taliban said they had been told by the Americans to only let US passport-holders through.

"I am so hopeless for my future," the man told The Associated Press after returning to Kabul, speaking on



condition of anonymity because of security concerns.

"If the evacuation is over, what will happen to us?" On Saturday, the Taliban fired warning shots and deployed some kind of coloured smoke on a road leading to the airport, sending dozens of people scattering, according to a video circulating online that was consistent with AP reporting.

More than 1,00,000 people have been safely evacuated through the Kabul airport, according to the US, but thousands more are struggling to leave and may not make it out by Tuesday.

In Kabul itself, hundreds of protesters, including many civil servants, gathered outside a bank while countless more lined up at cash machines. The protesters said they had not been paid for the past three

to six months and were unable to withdraw cash. ATM machines are still operating, but withdrawals are limited to around \$200 every 24 hours.

The economic crisis, which predates the Taliban takeover earlier this month, could give Western nations leverage as they urge Afghanistan's new rulers to form a moderate, inclusive government and allow people to leave after August 31.

Afghanistan is heavily dependent on international aid, which covered around 75% of the toppled Western-backed government's budget. The Taliban have said they want good relations with the international community and have promised a more moderate form of Islamic rule than when they last governed the country, but many Afghans are deeply sceptical. (AP)

21 KILLED AS BOAT CAPSIZES IN BANGLADESH

DHAKA (TIP): At least 21 people were killed after a boat carrying over 100 passengers capsized in Bangladesh's Titas river following a head-on collision with a sand-laden vessel, which got hit by another ship from behind, authorities said on August 28.

A passenger, Ali Akhter Rizvi, told IANS that the boat left the Champaknagar ghat of Vijaynagar upazila of Brahmanbaria district at around 4.30 pm on August 27. It was heading to Anandabazar ghat of Sadar upazila.

The collision took place in the Laisca Beel area after which the boat overturned and sank, Rizvi added.

Hayat Ud Daula Khan, Deputy Commissioner of Brahmanbaria, confirmed the toll and added that the families of those who died were being paid 20,000 taka each and the injured had been hospitalised.

Authorities said many were still missing, but did not give an exact figure.

Meanwhile, several rescue teams and divers from the fire service are trying to locate the missing persons. IANS

15 LABOURERS KILLED IN FIRE AT CHEMICAL FACTORY IN PAKISTAN'S KARACHI

KARACHI (TIP): At least 15 labourers were killed after a massive fire broke out in a chemical factory in Pakistan's commercial capital of Karachi on August 28, police said.

The factory, located in the populated Korangi industrial area, caught fire when around 26 workers were present in the building, Korangi SSP Shah Jehan said, adding that rescue operations were on to find the other workers.

Fire brigade officials said that the incident happened when the blaze started in a drum of chemical used to manufacture various items and spread across the factory, Geo TV reported.

Faisal Edhi, a rescue official, said 15 bodies have been taken out from the fire site.

"It is a chemical factory and apparently the fire broke out due to some short circuit but we are assisting in locating all the workers," he said.

Jehan said there were still some people trapped inside the building and might have died.

"We were inside the building and we had started working when the fire broke out and spread quickly. We shouted for help but no one heard us," Shahid, a worker at the factory, was quoted as saying by Geo TV.

He said that the dead included four brothers who worked at the factory.

Two fire fighters were injured while trying to put out the flames, the report said. PTI

Pakistan to restrict entry of Afghan evacuees to only Islamabad: Report

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The Pakistan government has decided to accept evacuees from Afghanistan—mostly transiting passengers to stay for a limited period—only in capital Islamabad, dropping plans of using Karachi and Lahore as two other transport bases, according to a media report on August 28.

The US embassy here had requested the Pakistan government to help in the evacuation efforts ahead of the August 31 deadline to completely withdraw from Afghanistan to cap its longest foreign war, spanning over 20 years after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Officials said the Embassy sought permission for landing or transiting the passengers under three categories: US diplomats/citizens, Afghan nationals and people from other countries.

About 4,000 people, including the Afghans who supported the NATO forces during the war, were expected to be brought to Karachi and Islamabad for stay before being flown to the US.



However, official sources told the Geo News that the federal government would be using Karachi and Lahore airports only as standby options, restricting the entry of the Afghan evacuees to only Islamabad. The transit passengers would be present in Islamabad only for a few hours, before being flown to pre-decided countries.

Only emergency cases would be permitted accommodation in hotels in

Islamabad, the sources told Geo News.

The plan to suspend entry of evacuees to Lahore and Karachi was taken in view of security concerns.

The Sindh government has been alerted of the changed plans, the news report said.

Officials said security has been increased around the Islamabad airport and the main highway linking the airport with the capital. PTI

Strawberry face packs for glowing skin

We all love fruits, don't we? Then it's time to give a fruity treat not just for your palette but for your skin as well. Strawberries do wonders for your skin. Being rich in nutrients, you can expect Strawberry to perform miracles for your skin. These strawberry tales have been around since Roman and Egyptian eras and they used them for medicinal properties especially for acne treatment.

Benefits of Strawberries for Skin:

Today, scientifically it has been proven that strawberries with their anti-oxidants, astringent and anti-inflammatory properties help slowing down aging process, treat burns and offer best form of UV protection.

Being rich in alpha-hydroxylic acid, Strawberries help get rid of dead skin cells.

They have a high content of salicylic acid making them the ideal agents to treat acne.

It also includes extensive Vitamin C content that boosts up collagen production and minimizes fine lines and wrinkles. Omega-3 fatty acids found in strawberries lighten the skin tone and reduce dark circles.

You can also use this fruit to tone your skin, improve skin texture, and lighten pigmentation and acne marks.

Strawberries and Fresh Cream Mask:

Take strawberry puree, mix with



fresh cream (dry skin) or yogurt (oily skin) and add a tablespoon of honey. Apply all over face, and leave it on for 10 minutes and wash with warm water. You can deep freeze and store this mask like how I regularly do. This Mask helps reduce Acne.

Strawberries & Lime Face Pack:

Helps in de-tanning your skin and lightens pigmentation marks on your skin. Mix strawberries and a tablespoon of lime juice. Apply all over face for 15 minutes and wash off with warm water.

Strawberry & Chocolate

Mash strawberries along with a tablespoon cocoa powder and honey. Apply on face for 15 minutes and wash off with warm water. It helps to make you skin glow and also makes it soft.

Honey and Strawberry Face Mask:

Mash few strawberries with fork until it turns into a smooth paste. Add a tablespoon of honey and apply this mask for 15 minutes and wash with warm water. Honey is an anti-oxidant that helps to fight skin impurities and acne.

FOOD CORNER

Cheesy Potato Wedges



INGREDIENTS

6 potato, 2 teaspoon mixed herbs, 2 teaspoon chilli flakes, 1 cup chopped onion, 1 tablespoon dijon mustard, 1/2 cup fresh cream, 4 teaspoon butter, 1/2 teaspoon salt, water as required

Method

- Wash potatoes under running water, peel and slice them into thick wedges. Then, add the potatoes in a deep-bottomed pan and pour enough water in it, put this pan on high flame and boil the potato slices in it. Once the wedges turn tender, drain the water and keep them aside.
- Next, put a non-stick pan on medium flame and melt butter in it, and quickly add the chopped onions and saute till they get translucent and pink.
- To the sauteed onions, add the boiled potato wedges and stir once. Then, add chili flakes in the pan followed by adding fresh cream, mustard sauce, mixed herbs, and salt. Mix well all the ingredients and cook for another two minutes.
- When done, transfer to a plate and serve hot! (Note: You can sprinkle some mixed herbs as garnishing to increase the flavour.)

Detox for your skin

Do you think your skin is looking dull even after you have indulged it with the latest antioxidant moisturiser? Sure, topical creams have their pluses. But if your dark circles show no signs of receding or zits keep popping on your face, you have to change your approach. You need to start thinking 'inside out', with dermatologists (yes, the ones who swear by chemical peels and laser treatments) believing in the goodness of detox drinks. We get two specialists to suggest their ideal skin and hair detox picks. Try these good old toxin baiters that will put your skin/hair at its best behaviour.

Pack a Pomegranate punch

You need : 1 cup pomegranate seeds, 1 tsp chia seeds soaked in 1/2 cup water, 1 tsp ground sesame seeds, 1 tsp spirulina powder.

To make : Place all the ingredients in a blender and plug it while it's still fresh - ideally in 15 minutes.

How it works : Pomegranate, thanks to its vitamin A content, strengthens skin collagen. Chia seeds help eliminate



toxins, while spirulina with its vitamin B12, iron, and trace minerals, heals inflammation and gives a fresh lease of life to the skin.

Iron booster

You need : 2 leafy bunches of spinach

or kale,

1 cup chopped amla (Indian gooseberry), 1 shot of wheatgrass, 2 medium-sized chopped dates.

To make : Mix all the ingredients in a blender and drink up for its iron-boosting properties.

How it works: This green juice helps in preventing hair fall as well as premature greying of hair. It is also beneficial for those struggling with brittle nails.

Clean your system now

You need: A teaspoon of triphala in warm water to start your day.

How it works: It cleans the colon and purifies the blood - the cornerstones of a problem-free skin. Triphala - a detoxifying staple made from three fruits - works as a gentle laxative by removing built-up stubborn toxins from the intestinal tract. The amla in it is known for its skin brightening and hair strengthening properties.

For a hair raising plan

You need: 1 tbs dried Himalayan nettle leaves (also available online).

To make: Boil water and add it to a teapot. Let the leaves steep for 15 minutes. Sip while it's warm.

How it works: A healing herb found in the remote villages of the Himalayan region, nettle is a great blood purifier and a liver cleanser. It has also been used by beauty enthusiasts for promoting hair growth as it is believed that the chemical silica present in it improves blood circulation to the scalp and minimises hair loss.

Covid most transmissible 2 days before, 3 days after symptoms appear

BEIJING (TIP): People infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes Covid-19, are most contagious two days before, and three days after they develop symptoms, according to a study conducted in China.

The research, published in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine*, also found that infected individuals were more likely to be asymptomatic if they contracted the virus from a primary case -- the first infected person in an outbreak—who was also asymptomatic.

"In previous studies, viral load has been used as an indirect measure of transmission," said Leonardo Martinez, an assistant professor at Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) in the US.

"We wanted to see if results from these past studies, which show that Covid cases are most transmissible a few days before and after symptom onset, could be confirmed by looking at secondary cases among close contacts," Martinez said.

The researchers conducted contact tracing and studied Covid-19 transmission among approximately 9,000 close contacts of primary cases in the Zhejiang province of China from January 2020 to August 2020.

"Close" contacts included household contacts—defined as individuals who lived in the same household or who dined together—co-workers, people in hospital settings, and riders in shared vehicles.



The researchers, including study co-lead Yang Ge from the University of Georgia College of Public Health, US, monitored infected individuals for at least 90 days after their initial positive Covid test results to distinguish between asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic cases.

Of the individuals identified as primary cases, 89 per cent developed mild or moderate symptoms, and only 11 per cent were asymptomatic—and no one developed severe symptoms.

Household members of primary cases, as well as people who were exposed to primary cases multiple times or for longer durations of time, had higher infection rates than other close contacts.

However, regardless of these risk factors, close contacts were more likely to contract Covid-19 from the primary infected individual if they were exposed shortly before or after

the individual developed noticeable symptoms.

"Our results suggest that the timing of exposure relative to primary-case symptoms is important for transmission, and this understanding provides further evidence that rapid testing and quarantine after someone is feeling sick is a critical step to control the epidemic," Martinez said.

In comparison to mild and moderate symptomatic individuals, asymptomatic primary individuals were much less likely to transmit Covid to close contacts—but if they did, the contacts were also less likely to experience noticeable symptoms, the researchers said.

"This study further emphasises the need for vaccination, which reduces clinical severity among people that develop Covid," Martinez added. *Source: PTI*



Breast milk of vaccinated mothers contains antibodies that fight Covid-19

WASHINGTON (TIP): The breast milk of lactating mothers who have received the Covid -19 vaccine contains a significant supply of antibodies that may help protect nursing infants from the illness, according to a study.

The research, published in the journal *Breastfeeding Medicine*, strongly suggests that vaccines can help protect both mother and baby, another compelling reason for pregnant or lactating women to get immunised.

"Our findings show that vaccination results in a significant increase in antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 in breast milk, suggesting that vaccinated mothers can pass on this immunity to their babies," said Joseph Larkin, a senior study author, and an associate professor at the University of Florida, US.

The researchers noted that when babies are born, their immune systems are underdeveloped, making it hard for them to fight infections on their own.

They are also often too young to respond adequately to certain types of vaccines, they said.

"During this vulnerable period, breast milk allows nursing mothers to provide infants with 'passive immunity,'" said Josef Neu, study's co-author and a professor at the University of Florida.

"Think of breast milk as a toolbox full of all the different tools that help prepare the infant for life. Vaccination adds another tool to the toolbox, one that has the potential to be especially good at preventing Covid -19 illness," Neu explained.

The study was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, when the Pfizer and Moderna Covid -19 vaccines first became available to health care workers in the US.

The researchers recruited 21 lactating health care workers who had never contracted Covid-19.

They sampled the mothers' breast milk and blood three times: before vaccination, after the first dose and after the second dose.

High blood pressure driven by obesity, poverty: WHO study

GENEVA (TIP): Nearly 1.3 billion people globally suffer from hypertension, a silent killer often driven by obesity that increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

Hypertension can be easily diagnosed by monitoring blood pressure, and treated with low-cost drugs, but half of affected people are unaware of their condition which is left untreated, the WHO and Imperial College London said in a joint study published in *The Lancet*.

While hypertension rates have changed little in 30 years, the caseload has shifted to lower-income countries as wealthy nations have brought it largely under control, the study said.

"It is far from being a condition of affluence, it's very much a



condition of poverty," Majid Ezzati, professor of global environmental health at Imperial College London, told a news briefing.

"Many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, parts of South Asia, some of the Pacific island nations, they are still not getting the treatments that are needed," he said.

Some 17.9 million people died in 2019 from cardiovascular diseases, accounting for one in three global deaths, with hypertension a major factor, according to the WHO.

"We know that the treatment is cheap, it's low cost medicines. But there is a need to include them in the UHC (universal health coverage) so this is not a cost for the patient, it has to be covered by the insurance system," said Bente Mikkelsen, director of the WHO's department of noncommunicable diseases.

Apart from genetic risk factors for hypertension, there are "modifiable risk factors" linked to lifestyle, Mikkelsen said.

These include unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol consumption, uncontrolled diabetes, and being overweight, she said.

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iPhone 13 likely to feature Face ID that works with masks

Tech giant Apple is likely to unveil all four models of its upcoming 'iPhone 13' lineup in September with larger batteries, an updated chipset and expanded mmWave 5G support.

And now avid leaker Jon Prosser has claimed that the Cupertino-based tech giant maker is testing new Face ID hardware that would allow users to unlock their iPhone while wearing a mask or foggy glasses.

According to Prosser, Apple is testing more advanced Face ID hardware using a case that fits snugly around an iPhone 12. The case allows the iPhone to bypass its built-in Face ID system to use that of the case instead, reports MacRumors.

For the upcoming hardware, tests are being conducted with and without masks or glasses on a wide scale.

Apple is also planning to bring sensor-shift optical image stabilisation to the entire iPhone 13 lineup.

According to industry sources, the next-generation iPhones would come with sensor-shift stabilisation technology.

According to Taiwanese research firm TrendForce, the new iPhones will have a smaller notch above the display but will otherwise have a similar outward design as iPhone 12 models.

The devices will be powered by Apple's next-generation A15 chip manufactured based on TSMC's 5nm+ process.

The entire iPhone 13 range is also expected to sport the LiDAR sensor. The sensor was first appeared in the latest generation iPad Pro in March this year followed by the iPhone 12 Pro and iPhone 12 Pro Max.

New habitable exoplanets to boost search for life out of Solar System

LONDON (TIP): Astronomers have identified a new class of habitable planets, which could greatly accelerate the search for life outside our Solar System.

Dubbed as 'Hycean'—hot, ocean-covered planets with hydrogen-rich atmospheres, the new class of exoplanets are more numerous and observable than Earth-like planets, and can support life, said astronomers from the University of Cambridge in the UK.

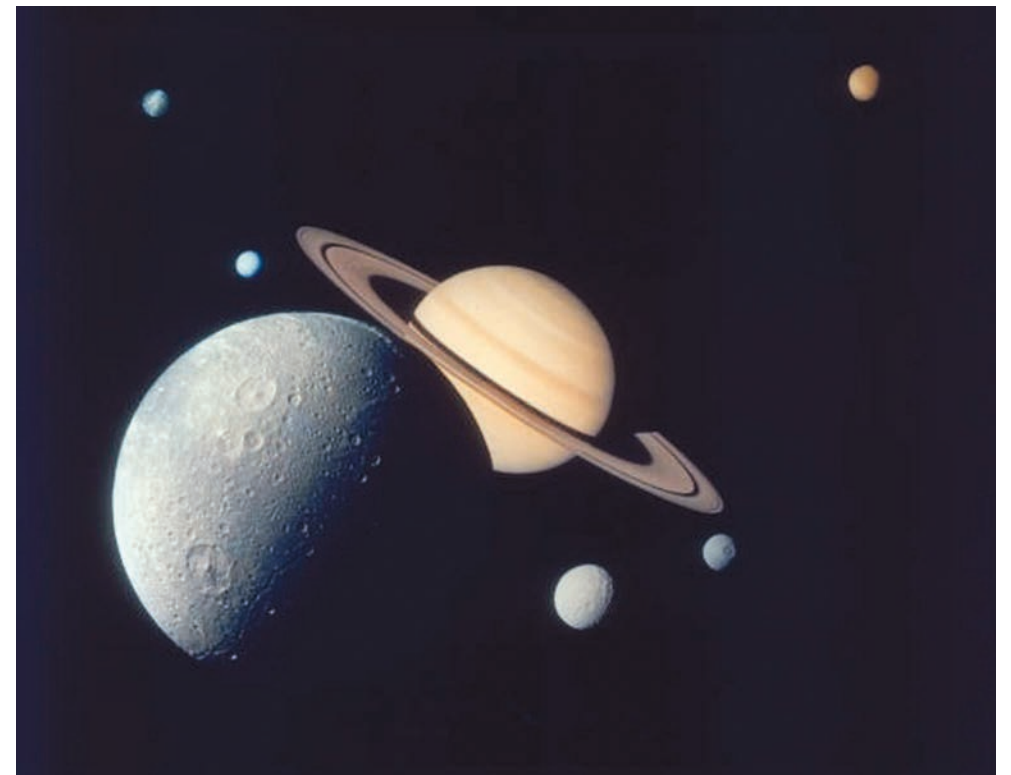
The results, reported in *The Astrophysical Journal*, could mean that finding biosignatures of life outside our Solar System within the next two or three years is a real possibility, they added.

"Hycean planets open a whole new avenue in our search for life elsewhere," said Dr Nikku Madhusudhan from Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy, who led the research.

Hycean planets can be up to 2.6 times larger than Earth and have atmospheric temperatures up to nearly 200 degrees Celsius, but their oceanic conditions could be similar to those conducive for microbial life in Earth's oceans.

Such planets also include tidally locked 'dark' Hycean worlds that may have habitable conditions only on their permanent night sides, and 'cold' Hycean worlds that receive little radiation from their stars.

Planets of this size dominate the known exoplanet population, although they have not been studied in nearly as much detail as super-Earths. Hycean worlds are likely quite common, meaning that the most promising places to look for



life elsewhere in the Galaxy may have been hiding in plain sight.

However, size alone is not enough to confirm whether a planet is Hycean: other aspects such as mass, temperature, and atmospheric properties are required for confirmation, the researchers said.

"Essentially, when we've been looking for these various molecular signatures, we have been focusing on planets similar to Earth, which is a reasonable place to start," said Madhusudhan. "But we think

Hycean planets offer a better chance of finding several trace biosignatures." "It's exciting that habitable conditions could exist on planets so different from Earth," said co-author Anjali Piette, also from Cambridge.

Madhusudhan and his team found that a number of trace terrestrial biomarkers expected to be present in Hycean atmospheres would be readily detectable with spectroscopic observations in the near future. *Source: IANS*

WhatsApp to get message reactions

WhatsApp seems to be in no mood to slow down as it is adding a lot of new features to its messaging app to offer a better experience to users. The messaging app is soon expected to get message reactions, as per the screenshots shared by WaBetaInfo.

Popular apps like Instagram and Twitter are already offering message reaction feature to users. Now, WhatsApp is all set to get it, as per the latest report by WaBetaInfo. In case you are not aware, the feature will allow you to react to messages with emoji icons, which is similar to how you can react to posts on Facebook.

On Instagram, to send emojis all you need to do is to long-press on a message and select from any of the emojis that pop up. Once you select your favourite one, the person to whose message you responded will get a notification for the same reaction. There is a possibility that WhatsApp will introduce this feature in a similar fashion.

It is currently unknown whether the choice of emojis will differ from Facebook and Instagram or will be similar. The cited source suggests that those who are using the outdated version of WhatsApp won't be able to use the message reaction feature.



The messaging app will display a message alerting you that you are using an old version that does not support reactions. In this case, the user won't be able to see the reaction and WhatsApp will ask you to update it to the latest version.

The feature will first be available on the Android version of WhatsApp and then for iOS users. The cited source reported that the feature is currently under development and will be made available in a future update.

Microsoft warns thousands of cloud customers of exposed databases

Microsoft on Thursday, August 26, warned thousands of its cloud computing customers, including some of the world's largest companies, that intruders could have the ability to read, change or even delete their main databases, according to a copy of the email and a cyber security researcher.

The vulnerability is in Microsoft Azure's flagship Cosmos DB database. A research team at security company Wiz discovered it was able to access keys that control access to databases held by thousands of companies. Wiz Chief Technology Officer Ami Luttwak is a former chief technology officer at Microsoft's Cloud Security Group.

Because Microsoft cannot change those keys by itself, it emailed the customers Thursday telling them to create new ones. Microsoft agreed to pay Wiz \$40,000 for finding the flaw and reporting it, according to an email it sent to Wiz.

"We fixed this issue immediately to keep our customers safe and protected. We thank the security researchers for working under coordinated vulnerability disclosure," Microsoft told Reuters.

Microsoft's email to customers said there was no evidence the flaw had been



exploited. "We have no indication that external entities outside the researcher (Wiz) had access to the primary read-write key," the email said.

"This is the worst cloud vulnerability you can imagine. It is a long-lasting secret," Luttwak told Reuters. "This is the central database of Azure, and we were able to get access to any customer database that we wanted."

Luttwak's team found the problem, dubbed ChaosDB, on Aug. 9 and notified Microsoft Aug. 12, Luttwak said. The flaw was in a visualization tool called Jupyter Notebook, which has been available for years but was enabled by default in Cosmos beginning in February. After Reuters reported on the flaw, Wiz detailed the issue thousands-of-azure-customers-databases in a blog post. *Source: Reuters*

Second Covid wave hiked banks' asset risks, says Moody's

Moody's Investors Service on Thursday said second wave of Covid infections has increased asset risks for Indian banks, but a severe deterioration is unlikely.

It said the second wave of coronavirus infections in India has exacerbated stress among individuals and small businesses that were hit the hardest by the initial outbreak. Still, a number of factors will prevent sharp increases in problem loans, and banks have sufficient buffers to absorb anticipated loan losses.

"A severe deterioration of banks' asset quality is unlikely despite an expected rise in new loan impairments. This is because government initiatives such as the ECLGS have been effective in providing immediate liquidity for businesses," Moody's vice-president and senior credit officer Alka Anbarasu said.



Half a trillion dollars wiped from China markets in a week as clampdowns shatter confidence

China's tech shares slumped to new lows on Friday and Hong Kong's benchmark index hit a virtually 10-month trough, as an unrelenting sequence of Chinese regulatory crackdowns crushed traders' confidence.

More than \$560 billion in market worth has been wiped off Hong Kong and mainland China exchanges in a week as funds capitulate out of once-favoured shares, uncertain which sectors regulators will go after.

The Hang Seng fell 1.8% and its weekly drop of 5.8% was the biggest because the peak of the pandemic panic in monetary markets in March 2020.

Stocks in Shanghai additionally fell, whereas traders offered dangerous company debt and the Chinese forex. The yuan was poised for its largest weekly loss in two months as traders rushed to security amid international coronavirus issues.

U.S.-listed shares of China-based tech-related firms gained floor as discount hunters took benefit of current sell-offs ensuing from Beijing's ongoing



regulatory crackdown, which has wiped half a trillion dollars from Chinese markets this week. Alibaba Holding Group, Tencent Music Entertainment Group, Didi Global and iQiyi Inc superior between 1% and 4.5%.

"There isn't really one trigger, but many bits and pieces that add to the narrative to stay away from China," mentioned Dave Wang, a portfolio supervisor at Nuvest Capital in Singapore.

"Almost on a daily basis you have negative news coming out, so it forms the impression there's no end in sight."

This week alone China introduced more durable guidelines on competitors in the tech sector, summoned executives at property developer Evergrande to warn them to scale back the agency's huge debt and state media reported looming rules for liquor makers, a favorite tittle for international fund managers.

On the heels of crackdowns spanning from steelmaking to e-commerce and training, the strikes are sapping religion in a market that appears but to seek out a ground after months of promoting.

The Shanghai Composite dropped 1.1% to its lowest shut in greater than two weeks on Friday and blue chips fell 1.9%, with liquor makers main losses.

China Telecom was a uncommon brilliant spot and surged on its debut in Shanghai.

The epicentre of the selloff has been the tech sector, which had been widespread with international traders who are actually afraid they cannot quantify the regulatory danger and are promoting in droves.

Bitcoin jumps above \$50,000 for first time since May

HONG KONG (TIP): Bitcoin broke back above \$50,000 on Monday for the first time in three months as investors piled back into the cryptocurrency on bargain-buying.

The unit climbed around two percent to \$50,249.15, its highest since mid-May, when it began tumbling on a range of issues including China's crackdown on cryptocurrencies and Tesla boss Elon Musk's decision to stop accepting it on concerns about the environmental impact of mining.

The electric car giant has since indicated its support for bitcoin, while several other high-profile investors including Twitter founder Jack Dorsey have also flagged their interest.

Rick Bensingor, at Bensingor Investment Strategies, said Monday that it was "getting nearer the higher end of what I expect as a new trading range in the low-\$40,000s to low-\$50,000s".

Bitcoin is still for now a long way off its record just \$65,000 that it achieved in April.

Cuba to recognise and regulate cryptocurrencies

Cuba's government has said it will recognise and regulate cryptocurrencies for payments on the island.

A resolution published in the Official Gazette on Thursday said the Central Bank will set rules for such currencies and determine how to license providers of related



services within Cuba.

The popularity of such currencies has grown among a technologically savvy group in Cuba as it has become harder to use dollars, in part because of toughened embargo rules imposed under former President Donald Trump. The Central American nation of El Salvador recently announced it would recognize use of the cryptocurrency Bitcoin as a way to encourage remittances from its citizens living abroad.

The currencies, which can wobble wildly up and down in value, are usually independent of any central bank and use widely distributed

blockchain computer codes to keep track of transfers.

Because they can be used for long-distance transactions that are supposedly anonymous, they are often popular with people attempting to evade government regulations presumably including US restrictions on sending money to places such as Cuba.

The resolution says the Central Bank can authorize use of cryptocurrencies "for reasons of socioeconomic interest" but with the state assuring that their operations are controlled. It also explicitly noted that operations could not involve illegal activities.

Rs 3,000 crore from AI unpaid, oil companies seek ministry help

Stopping short of fuel supply cuts to disinvestment-bound Air India, state-owned oil retailers have sought the petroleum ministry's intervention to recover their dues adding up to over

Rs 3,000 crore, government officials and company executives told The Indian Express.

The national carrier, on its part, has approached the central government to get its dues of over Rs 500 crore cleared. The government owes Air India the money on account of VVIP travel, evacuation operations and other official travel.

Typically, oil marketing companies suspend fuel supply to airlines that have not paid past dues — Air India was subjected to such a move in August 2019.

"Oil marketing companies have approached the petroleum ministry as Air India had stopped paying interest on long-term dues and for ongoing consumption," a government official said, on condition of anonymity. Responding to the oil ministry, the civil aviation ministry has requested that oil companies continue supplying fuel to Air India, given that the entire airlines industry is facing financial stress due to the pandemic, the official said, adding that "no one wants to stop the operations" of the national airline.

Source: The Indian Express



Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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**The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday
Horoscope by NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - 30th Aug to 5th Sep 2021

Aries

Your social prestige is likely to increase based on the decisions you have taken in the past few days. You will make new plans to start some new project; your patience will help you throughout this week be it your relationships or your work. You will spend some huge amount of money which might be necessary for your business. Singles will be blessed by the moon. If you're single you might find your soul mate this week if they focus on socializing and meeting new people every day. To those who are already in a relationship, you are likely to take the next step this week. Your health will bother you on and off throughout the week, as it is nothing major relying on home remedies will help you recover.

Taurus

Your inner strength will be on a high level you will perform well at your work. You will get good results for your hard work. Disputes with your colleagues will be resolved now. There is likely to be an increase in your network. You will plan for a short work-related trip, which will give you benefits in near future. Your team members and friends will help you in the completion of some important projects. Job seekers will find good job with the help of a network. You will receive a lot of help from your partner, family as well as friends consistently this week. Make sure to take the help as well as appreciation each and every person, every time they help you.

Gemini

You will keep busy at work, your focus towards your goal as well as your patience will be tested. With the help of patience, you might be able to achieve your goals on time. Your dedication for work will be tested many times. Expect some rewards in the result of hard work at the end of the week. You are likely to make investments in fixed assets as well. Expect to hear good news in terms of parent's health. Your losses will convert into gains by the end of this week. Your past dead investments might become profitable as well.

Cancer

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 boundaries of your life, it could be a real adventure and you'll realize in the end how far you've come. This week is all about being street smart for you. You have been quite delusional when it comes to knowing yourself and your capabilities of managing unexpected situations; this week is all about learning about yourself. As you navigate through unexplored terrains you will realize the true nature

of your existence. Beginning of the week will have you perplexed and upset but as the days go by, you will adjust to the new routine and by the end of this week, learn to love it.

Leo

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. Plan fresh activities and avoid discussions that have the possibility of turning into fights and arguments. You should take the time you have this week to build stronger connections with existing relationships, instead of ruining connections by getting into petty fights and arguments.

Virgo

You will feel extremely loved and appreciated this week, which will boost your confidence. Your partner will make you feel like you're worth a lot more than you have been given till date. Hence you will walk through every place as if it's the most beautiful thing you have ever seen. Be careful of letting yourself come across as rude and snobby to your partner, and seek out new ways to delight your partner. Singles should seek our intellectual stimulation when searching for their special someone. When looking for a connection seeks out people who hold a zest for life and a search for deeper meaning. As you notice that your well being improves over this week, you will have a lot of energy to go on fun adventures with your partner.

Libra

This week is going to be fabulous for you. Positive news at the beginning of the week itself will boost your confidence to a whole another level. This week is going to be full of excitement and unique experiences for you. You will go through a positive shift when it comes to your mental and physical health. This positive shift will help you to participate and indulge more in social events. You will have an overall very positive week. Your competitors will think twice before facing you! People will not dare to pick fights with you this week. You need to use this opportunity starting early this week itself to build better relationships.

Scorpio

Although not every aspect of your life will work out as you would have liked it to be, you'll come through struggles stronger and smarter. You're likely to feel Slightly nervous and excited about how things will work out financially for you this week, as you have already made investments based on estimation of an income that's yet to come. Mid-week

you'll realize that you have been blessed in all aspects of life, you will enjoy your personal as well as work life.

Sagittarius

This week is bringing you a lot of better things. As you foresee the upcoming seven days, the losses incurred in last few weeks will be revived. You will earn trust of everyone in your life. The monotonous nature of your job will make you feel dull but this feeling is temporary. The last three days of the week will be a little bit challenging but this adventure of hardship will bring you growth. Income is going to increase and your family will support you in whatever you do. Your love life is expecting some challenges as there will be some misunderstandings between your partner and you.

Capricorn

You are blessed with the moon this week which will give you inner strength and confidence. Self-respect will stop you from taking some negative decision, specifically in regard to your relationships. Your social prestige is likely to increase based on the decisions you have taken in the past few days. You will make new plans to start some new project; your patience will help you throughout this week be it your relationships or your work. Singles will be blessed by the Venus.

Aquarius

You will gain a lot of profit in your business this week which will set a positive tone for the entire week. You won't need to do things that you hate in terms of work anymore. You will have the time, space and affordability to follow your passion. Financial abundance is in your cards this week, which will keep you satisfied and happy throughout the week. You need to be more analytical about making investments now as managing the funds that you receive this week and in the future as it will make a significant difference in your life.

Pisces

You will have to go through a difficult phase when it comes to your health this week. Your stomach and digestion area seem to be troublesome this week hence you will need to take care and focus on the good things as well as becoming as better as you can. Consulting a specialist in the area that you're facing trouble in will give you a great start when it comes to improving your health. You will have to stay disciplined when it comes to avoiding certain foods and maintaining a very strict eating schedule. You might want to focus on becoming the healthiest version of yourself this week.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : 30th Aug to 5th Sep 2021

CONTD FROM PAGE 30

Aug 30

You will finally receive some reciprocation today of all the love and hard work you have been doing. You will make amazing monetary gains today. This will bring your self-confidence to the next level. You will receive a lot of appreciation from people who did not believe in you and underestimated your intelligence. Your focus, handwork and willpower will grow more and more, and you might surprise yourself and others with your creative and unconventional take on meetings today.

Aug 31

Your day will be full of joy and laughter. You'll spend today doing a lot of physical activity which will be done by you today, which is a great thing. Your mental health and your financial stability are both at peace today. Your personality will make your partner fall in love with you a lot today your

business will do well today as well.

Sept 1

You will have a mixed day today. Even though there are minor positive things that'll happen today. Those sweet little gestures made by your loved one will keep you happy and satisfied throughout the day. Your health is on its way to improvement as well today.

Try to relax as much as you can. Meditation and yoga will help you a lot today.

Sept 2

A very productive day is on its way for you today. You will have a lot of work to do, which is a good thing as you have been waiting for a new prospect for quite a while now.

Take each step with caution as you move forward with this huge business opportunity. Your relationships in general will improve a lot be it with your partner, family or friends.

Sept 3

You will be completely yourself in front of everyone you meet today which will bring you a lot closer to all of your friends. This emotional intimacy will make you and your partner both feel very secured, satisfied and happy in your relationship.

Sept 4

Today you will be provided with ample opportunities to prove yourself at work which, in turn, may also lead to your promotion. For those concerned with business, you may expect some additional benefit from the government or an added advantage from your business partner.

Sept 5

A great day for your love and personal life today. You will come across a lot of interesting people today and make valuable relationships with them. Today is all about quality for you. All in all, except for work you will have a great day today.

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Krishna Janmashtami

India is a diverse country with many festivals that are celebrated throughout the year. One of these festivals is Janmashtami - the day Lord Krishna was born - and is observed with much pomp and fervour. It is also known as Krishna Janmashtami or Gokulashtami. It is marked on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada (July-August) in India.

According to Hindu mythology, Krishna, the human incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was born on this day to destroy Mathura's demon king, Kansa, the brother of Krishna's virtuous mother, Devaki.

This year Krishna Janmashtami will be celebrated on Monday, August 30. Devotees mark this auspicious occasion by observing a fast and praying to Lord Krishna. People adorn their homes with flowers, diyas and lights. Temples are also beautifully decorated and lit.

The temples of Mathura and Vrindavan witness the most extravagant and colourful celebrations, as Lord Krishna is believed to have been born and spent his growing years there. Devotees also perform Raslila to recreate incidents from Krishna's life and to commemorate his love for Radha. As Lord Krishna was born at midnight, an idol of an infant Krishna is bathed and placed in a cradle at that time.

Maharashtra also sees a joyous celebration of this festival as people enact Krishna's childhood endeavours to steal butter and curd from earthen pots. This activity is called the Dahi Handi celebration, for which a matka or pot is suspended high above the ground, and people form a human pyramid to reach it and eventually break it.

This year amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Ashtami Tithi will commence at 11:25 pm on 29 August and will end on 31 August at 1:59 am.

As Krishna is born at midnight, the puja is performed during Nishita Kaal. Therefore, the puja timings are between 11:59 pm (30 August) to 12:44 am (31 August).

Devotees, who observe a fast on Janmashtami, can break it only after 9:44 am on 31 August. If an individual cannot wait this long to break a fast, then they can do the Parana after 5:59 am on 31 August.

During this festival, the Rohini Nakshatra timing is also very significant, this year it will begin from 6:39 am on 30 August and end at 9:44 am on 31 August.

History of Janmashtami

Lord Krishna was born on the eighth (Ashtami) day of the dark fortnight in the Bhadrapada month (August-September) in Mathura. He was Devaki and Vasudeva's son. When Krishna was born, Mathura was ruled by his uncle King Kansa, who wanted to kill his sister's children as a prophecy said that the couple's eighth son would cause Kansa's downfall.

After the prophecy, Kansa imprisoned Devaki and Vasudeva. He killed off their first six children. However, at the time of the birth of their seventh child, Balram, the foetus mystically transferred from Devaki's womb to Princess Rohini's. When their eighth child, Krishna, was born, the entire palace went into slumber, and Vasudeva rescued the baby to Nand Baba and Yashodha's house in Vrindavan.

After making the exchange, Vasudeva returned to the palace with a baby girl and handed her to Kansa. When the evil king tried to kill the baby, she transformed into Goddess Durga, warning him about his impending doom. In this way, Krishna grew up in Vrindavan and finally killed his uncle, Kansa.

Celebrations

Every year on Krishna Janmashtami, devotees observe this auspicious festival by observing a fast and praying to Lord Krishna. The fast is observed to their beloved deity and can only be broken after offering their prayers to him. Meanwhile, the ritual of breaking the fast is called Parana.

On the special day, people decorate their homes with colourful flowers, small diyas, and lights. Even the temples are beautifully decorated and lit for the occasion.

Among the many temples in India, the ones in Mathura and Vrindavan witness the most extravagant



and colourful celebrations which continue for days. As per scriptures, Lord Krishna was born at midnight so an idol of the infant is washed and placed in a cradle at that time in these temples.

Moreover, during these sacred days, devotees perform Raslila to recreate incidents from Lord Krishna's life and also to celebrate his love for Radha.

Krishna Janmashtami puja procedure

Before the day of Krishna Janmashtami, the household is cleaned and decorated. On the day of Krishnashtami, the devotees wake up early in the morning and take a holy bath. Then the puja altar is set up. Preferably, the puja altar can be set up in the puja room itself. If you are planning for an elaborate puja, you can organize the puja altar in the main hall also.

Sri Krishna's idol is the central attraction of the Krishnashtami puja. Some people use the regular idol

or picture they have in their puja room. Some people buy a new image of Krishna every year for the puja. Depending on which material the Krishna idol is made of, you can plan for a holy bath for the idol; or can simply decorate the idol with flowers, clothes, and ornaments.

In many Hindu households, people draw the images of little footsteps leading from the main door to the puja room. This practice symbolically represents Sri Krishna's little feet bringing him into the household to bless the puja and the residents of the house. Krishna's visit to every home during the puja is said to fill the home with prosperity and happiness.

Light the lamp and offer incense to the Lord. Offer Chandan and kumkum. Offer special homemade prasad. Curd/yoghurt, ghee, butter, and other milk products and milk-based sweets are especially suitable to offer to Lord Krishna. Do not forget berries and other fruits. Sing the songs of Krishna and chant some shlokas and mantras related to Krishna. Wave camphor and conclude the puja. Share the prasad with the gathering and family as a mark of Krishna's blessings.

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

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Mysore: The royal city

Located at the base of the Chamundi Hills about 150 kms away from Bangalore, Mysore is the second most populous and the second largest city in the state of Karnataka. One of south India's most famous tourist destinations, Mysore is synonymous to royal past and regal remnants. Glittering royal heritage and magnificent monuments and buildings mark the city's tourism scene. The most famous dynasty that ruled the city is of the Wodeyars. This is also the place that has seen the rise and revolt of Tipu Sultan. Apart from history, Mysore is also known for the production of premium silk, sandalwood and incense. Not to mention the fact that Mysore is one of India's best places to practice yoga.

When you are in Mysore you are so close to royalty that you feel like a king of lost land itself. The reason behind this is simple; almost all the major places to visit in Mysore are related to some story of history and glory. In this city, you are never too far away from a heritage building or a mansion with royal connections and lineages. There is a reason why Mysore is called the City of Palaces! The iconic Mysore palace continues to be the face of all the heritage buildings of the city but there are other places also that will take you a step closer to royal living. These places include Jaganmohan Palace, Royal Orchid Metropole, Clock Tower, Gun House, Town Hall, Wellington Lodge, Rajendra Vilas Palace, Karanji Mansion, Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion, Lalitha Mahal Palace, Crawford Hall, Brindavan Gardens, St. Philomena's Church, Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery, Shri Chamundi Temple and Srirangapatna.

MYSORE PALACE

Set in the centre of sprawling grounds, Amba Vilas Palace overwhelms at first sight. It was built nearly a century ago and designed by British architect Henry Irwin, who was the Madras state consultant. It stands on the same grounds of the old wooden palace which was burned down by fire. The building is a dramatic three-storied stone edifice built of fine gray granite. It has deep pink marble domes dominated by a five-storied 145 ft tower with a gilded dome topped by a single golden flag. It is built in the classic Indo-Saracenic style with its façade flaunting onion domes, turrets, minarets, cupolas, canopies with arches, intricate balconies, porches and colonnades. On Sundays and public holidays, the exterior of the palace is lighted up with some 97,000 light bulbs, which present an ethereal picture. The interiors are equally lavish—the ceilings are of carved mahogany, while beautiful stained glass windows and glazed tiled floors make for an opulent harmony. The palace also houses a huge collection of art and sculpture from all over the world.

GOLDEN THRONE

Though the palace itself is overwhelming and awe-inspiring, the sight that usually stuns people is the magnificent Durbar Hall, with its ornate ceiling and vividly painted colonnades. Also watch out for the intricately carved



wooden doors which lead to more lavish rooms while a massive balcony provides an unhindered view of the parade grounds and of Chamundi Hills beyond. However, even more stunning is the Golden Throne or Ratna Simhasana. It is on display only during special occasions such as Dussehra. It is a magnificent and majestic throne mounted on a platform with steps leading up to the main seat. A beautiful golden umbrella hangs over the seat. The base structure is carved out of fig wood and inlaid with ivory plaques. Covered with gold and encrusted with precious stones, silver and jewellery, the throne looks majestic. It is embellished with the Holy Trinity, female figurines, soldiers, elephants, horses, creepers and other patterns.

RESIDENTIAL MUSEUM

A little lane by the side of the main palace, lined with souvenir shops, leads to the Residential Museum. It is not large but it is filled with paintings from the Thanjavur and Mysore schools, inlaid with precious stones and gold leaf. The museum also houses a collection of royal silver ware, musical instruments, crystal, chandeliers, children's toys, furniture, royal trousseaux, and such others. But the most fascinating aspect is the armoury with its quaint and fierce looking implements including pistols, guns and other weapons. Many of the 725 weapons and military exhibits in the palace have aesthetic as well as historic value. Some of the weapons belonged to the rulers of Mysore, such as the sword that belonged to Kantirava Narasaraaja Wadiyar, who ruled from 1638 to 1659, and those that belonged to Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. They also have interesting inscriptions, such as the one found on a gun captured under Wellesley in 1803. Weapons ranging from swords to maces, daggers and their gripped relatives pachakatari, bows, arrows, spears, lances, cannons, and even deadly walking sticks are displayed. Helmets, armour and shields also form part of the collection.

THE FORT

Faced with the grandeur of Amba Vilas Palace, it is easy to miss the historic fort that surrounds it. The original walls were built under the Wadiyars in 1524 but gradually the defensive glacis was flattened and defensive ditch was filled, but the stone wall is still intact. Over time, the wall was rebuilt and extended several times, the mud walls replaced eventually with stone. Later, Tipu had them pulled down with plans to rebuild but died before the plans came to fruition. Subsequently, they were reconstructed by the British in 1799. Originally, the fort area was a bustling centre of life, packed with houses, but these were moved out in 1910. Taking a walk around the fort's walls will require about one hour during which many landmarks outside the walls and a plethora of temples inside the walls will be visible. If you're pressed for time, hop into a tonga and go around the fort walls, which is amongst Mysore's unique experiences.

India lose third Test by an innings and 76 runs against England



England's Craig Overton (C) celebrates with England's Haseeb Hameed (R) after taking the wicket of India's Ravindra Jadeja on the fourth day of the third cricket Test match between England and India at Headingley cricket ground in Leeds.

LEEDS (TIP): England's Ollie Robinson struck four times with the second new ball as the hosts thrashed India by an innings and 76 runs to level the series on Day 4 of the third Test at Headingley here on August 28.

Resuming on an overnight score of 215/2, the visitors crashed to 278 all out before lunch, with the Indian middle-order once again failing miserably against the pace and guile of the England fast bowlers.

Cheteshwar Pujara (91) was the first to be dismissed, shouldering arms to a Robinson in-swing that was given out leg before wicket on review, before captain Virat Kohli (55) edged one to Joe

Root soon after completing his half-century.

Ajinkya Rahane's dismissal for 10 off James Anderson all but ended India's hopes of overhauling the England lead, with Ravindra Jadeja's late flourish of 30 offering some entertainment but eventually being in vain.

Robinson, who was named Player of the Match, finished with figures of 5/65, while Craig Overton chipped in with three wickets.

Kohli put the collapse down to scoreboard pressure, saying it was a tall order to come back into the game after conceding a huge first-innings lead.

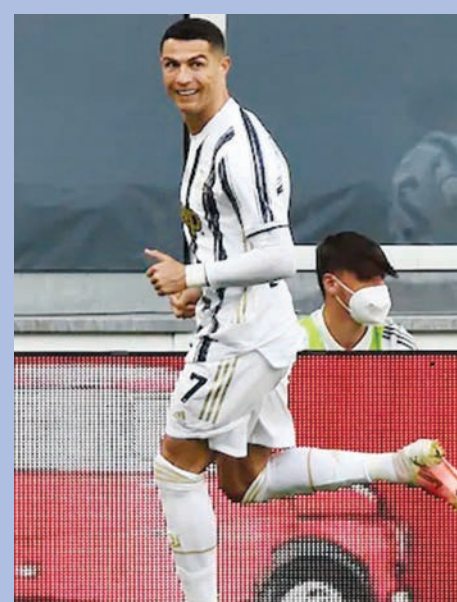
"We did well to stay in the game

yesterday, fight back as much as we could, and gave ourselves a chance. But the pressure today was outstanding from the England bowlers," he said.

Opting to bat on Day 1, India were shot out for 78, undone by a superb spell of new-ball bowling by veteran Anderson.

In reply, England, led by skipper Root's wonderful 121 and half-centuries by Rory Burns, Haseeb Hameed and Dawid Malan, were bowled out for 432, claiming a 354-run lead.

Kohli added: "Quite bizarre (the first innings), it can happen in this country... we thought the pitch was good to bat on, coming on nicely. But the discipline forced mistakes." *Source: Reuters*



Cristiano Ronaldo back at Manchester United

Football legend Cristiano Ronaldo left an emotional message for Juventus fans as he re-signed with Manchester United in a blockbuster deal on Friday. Ronaldo will be returning to Old Trafford after signing a two-year deal worth 25 million euros.

The Portugal captain is headed back to the club where he won eight major trophies from 2003-2009.

"Today I depart from an amazing club, the biggest in Italy and surely one of the biggest in all of Europe. I gave my heart and soul for Juventus and I'll always love the city of Turin until my final days.

"The 'tiffosi bianconeri' always respected me and I tried to thank that respect by fighting for them in every game, every season, every competition. In the end, we can all look back and realize that we achieved great things, not all that we wanted, but still, we wrote a pretty beautiful story together.

"I will always be one of you. You are now part of my history, as I feel that I'm part of yours. Italy, Juve, Turin, tiffosi bianconeri, you'll always be in my heart," Ronaldo posted on social media.

Ronaldo, signed by Juve in 2018 for 100 million euros (\$117.90 million) from Real Madrid in the hope of leading them to an elusive Champions League title, will leave the club with 101 goals, two league crowns and a Coppa Italia to his name.

The 36-year-old won the Ballon d'Or as the world's best player in 2008 at United alongside his team accolades, before sealing a then world record 80 million pounds move to Madrid.

After telling Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri on Thursday of his desire to leave Turin, widespread media reports claimed Ronaldo's agent, Jorge Mendes, had agreed personal terms with Premier League champions Manchester City.

But after City were said to have had a change of heart over the deal, rivals United got the transfer agreed.

Paddler Bhavinaben Patel wins historic silver at Tokyo Paralympics

TOKYO (TIP): Indian table tennis player Bhavinaben Patel signed off with a historic silver medal in her maiden Paralympic Games after going down 0-3 to world number one Chinese paddler Ying Zhou in the women's singles class 4 final here on Sunday, Aug 29.

The 34-year-old Patel's impressive run at the Games ended with a 7-11 5-11 6-11 loss to Zhou, a two-time gold medallist, in the women's singles summit clash which lasted 19 minutes.

With this medal, Indian team opened its account at the Games. Patel, a wheelchair player, had also suffered a loss to Zhou, one of the most decorated para-paddlers of China, in her first group stage match earlier in the week.

Up against an opponent, who has five



Paralympic medals to her name including gold medals in singles at Beijing and London, Patel seemed to struggle as she couldn't execute her strategy and was left to do the catch up job.

Zhou, a six-time World Championship

medallist, didn't allow Patel, currently ranked 12th in her division, to find her angled returns and get into a rally. In the first game, Zhou broke off from 3-3 to move ahead. Patel tried to keep herself within touching distance with a superb serve at 5-7 and a forehand flick but the Chinese managed to earn the bragging right with a deep push at the baseline.

The second game was a one-way traffic as Zhou jumped to a 7-1 lead early on. Patel narrowed it down to 4-7 but the Chinese soon grabbed a 2-0 lead.

Pushed to the brink, Patel tried to script a recovery as she moved neck and neck with her opponent till 5-5 in the third game. But Zhou once again moved ahead and sealed the contest with a backhand shot.

Sanjha-Sunehra Punjab is to spread awareness about challenges facing Punjab!!



BY PRABHJOT SINGH

Diminishing farm productivity notwithstanding, Punjab continues to hold aloft its flag of leading the country in political productivity. Acknowledged as a pioneer in coalition politics, Punjab has given to the country not only one of its oldest regional political parties in Shiromani Akali Dal, it has also thrown on national horizon several political outfits, think tanks and forums representing different sections of society, including vociferous ex-servicemen.

While the elections to the State Assembly are still a couple of months away, a couple of new political outfits and a think tank are already in the process of guiding financially wrecked Punjabis back to their golden days.

A group of eminent superannuated bureaucrats, diplomats, academicians, defense personnel, industrialists, businessmen and social scientists have come together to launch Sanjha-Sunehra Punjab, a forum that will guide this strife torn State back to good old days.

Convenor, K.C. Singh while speaking at the launch event said, the Manch wants to focus on challenges facing Punjab today and take to the people their views. The aim is to solicit the reaction of Punjab residents, both in urban and rural areas. The Manch, he said, hopes to voice the outcome of this interactive dialogue.

The critical issues facing Punjab include farmers' agitation against farm laws; agrarian crisis due to dependence on rice-wheat cycle and its impact on water table, environment etc.; low agricultural growth and deficient investment in industry. He added, then there are issues like poor education facilities, healthcare facilities and housing facilities.

"Equally challenging are issues affecting youth, especially jobs and above all, there is a need for systemic change and ways to check mafias controlling sand extraction, liquor trade and drugs. Systemic reforms are not possible without Punjab deciding what kind of political leadership it elects. Manch's aim is to spread awareness about these challenges, possible solutions and a roadmap for a golden future.", he added.

In his address, Mr. K C Singh shared the vision of the Sanjha-Sunehra Punjab Manch. He said "This platform will work towards finding solutions to the pressing issues facing the people of Punjab. We will offer our solutions, but more importantly go to the people and seek their advice. We wish to become the voice of all Punjabis "He said, Punjab needs a



Convenor and founder Mr. K.C. Singh speaking at the launch function of Sanjha Sunehra Punjab on Wednesday



Audience at the launch function of Sanjha Sunehra Punjab

second Green Revolution, where new markets are created, and farmers ensured dignity and financial prosperity "

Col LJS Gill, who has served in the Indian Army for 24 years and also held senior positions in the corporate world said, "People who say it cannot be done, should not interrupt those who are doing it "

Dr K S Aulakh, Ex Vice Chancellor, PAU, said, "Punjab which used to be the number one State on per capita GDP basis forty years ago has slipped down to the 16th position, 5th most corrupt and most indebted state of India. There is desperation and chaos all around. For this people of unimpeachable integrity, vision, determination and commitment are needed to rehaul and transform it back into a viable State."

Prof Ronki Ram, who has several years of teaching and research experience at Panjab University and other universities besides being a recipient of several awards, said, "We need to promote skill-based education,

supported by a revived government school setup for the generation of respectable employment at the grassroots".

Maj Gen Satbir Singh (retd.), who has served as an instructor at four premier institutions in the Indian Army, said, "Bold measures need to be initiated to reverse the trend to qualitatively improve the Gross Domestic Happiness in tandem with Gross Domestic Product (GDP)."

He added, "The Manch recognizes the services and sacrifices made by our armed forces. Ex-Servicemen must be granted the dignity they deserve, and their services incorporated in the larger interest of Punjab." Presently Chairman of Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM) and Advisor United Front of Ex-Servicemen (UFESM) Jantar Mantar, he has led the One Rank One Pension Movement for Defense Personnel.

Among founder members of the Sanjha-Sunehra Punjab include policechiefs Dr. D R Bhatti and PS Gill,

Diplomats as politicians

Of all civil servants, diplomats have scripted a grand success story in politics.

Starting with Brajesh Mishra, some members of the Diplomatic Corps - K. Natwar Singh, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Meira Kumar, Mani Shankar Aiyar, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (India's External Affairs Minister) and Hardeep Singh Puri (Petroleum Minister)- have had equally successful innings in politics after their stints in Indian Foreign Service.

Then there is Mr. Pawan Varma, who joined Bihar Government after quitting foreign service. Latest to join this clan is Mr. Krishan Chander Singh (KC Singh to his friends). He retired from foreign service after serving as India's Ambassador to both UAE and Iran. He was Deputy Secretary to the President Giani Zail Singh during turbulent (1984) years. He is the brain behind Sanjha-Sunehra Punjab. Though Forum is yet to unfold its poetical cards, it may seek direct or indirect entry to Punjab politics.

Before Mr. KC Singh arrived on scene, a former diplomat Harinder Singh Khalsa, has been successful in getting to Lok Sabha, initially as an Akali and later as Aam Aadmi Party nominee. Now he is with the Bhartiya Janata Party. Punjab has been a fertile land for political experimentation. After Shiromani Akali Dal, the country's oldest regional political party, Punjab was also the first State to give ex-servicemen a political outfit - Rashtriya Raksha Dal.

Air Marshal P S Gill, Bhai Baldeep Singh, Dr. Harshinder Kaur, Capt. Vikram Bajwa, Shooter Gurbir Singh Sandhu (Arjuna Awardee), DPS Gill, Justice Kamaljit Singh Garewal, Amritjit S Narang and Jaideep Singh.

(Prabhjot Pal Singh is a senior journalist)

contd from page 1

IDA will be one of the strongest...

Hurricane Ida was upgraded Saturday to a Category 2 as it continues its path across the Gulf of Mexico toward coastal Louisiana. The storm already has wind speeds of 100 mph, according to the Weather Service.

"We once again stress that if you are under evacuation order or can leave, PLEASE LEAVE. DEVASTATING conditions WILL happen," the agency tweeted.

The National Hurricane Center said earlier Saturday that Ida was expected to rapidly intensify as it moved across the Gulf. Landfall in Louisiana is expected on Sunday evening - 16 years to the day Hurricane Katrina devastated a large part of the Gulf Coast.

"Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion today in the warning area along the northern Gulf Coast," the center said in its 5 p.m. Saturday update.

Weather will start to deteriorate quickly, the governor said. By 8 a.m. Sunday, tropical storm force winds are expected to move across the southern part of the state.

President Joe Biden participated in a briefing Saturday at the White House with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to receive updates on the hurricane's track and strength.

Biden, noting the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, warned the state of Louisiana: "Above all, I'm urging the people in the area to pay attention and be prepared."

He added that the administration has already pre-positioned food, water, generators and other supplies.

For those forced to shelter, Biden reminded those watching about the underlying Covid threat, as well: "Make sure you wear a mask, and try to keep some distance, because we're still facing a highly contagious delta variant as well."

A hurricane warning is in effect for Intracoastal City, Louisiana, to the mouth of the Pearl River as well as for the New Orleans metropolitan area.

The Mississippi/Alabama border to the Alabama/Florida border are under a tropical storm watch. In preparation for Ida's arrival, the governor of Mississippi declared a state of emergency.

Ida is expected to produce heavy rainfall later Sunday into Monday across the central Gulf Coast, resulting in significant flash and river flooding, the center said in a tweet.

Residents in St. Charles Parish, west of New Orleans, are under a mandatory evacuation. President Matthew Jewell said the parish's roughly 50,000 residents should leave no later than 5 p.m. Saturday. The parish said in a tweet that residents should pack enough clothing and essentials to last for at least one week.

India bringing people, holy scriptures...

the Taliban has been named 'Operation Devi Shakti'. "There are many challenges. The circumstances are difficult but we also have 'Guru Kripa' (blessings of gurus)," he said.

The country has done its utmost to assist those in need in recent years, he said, adding that laws have

been made taking inspiration from the teachings of Gurus. "In the past years, the country to discharge this responsibility has worked hard.

Keeping the lessons in humanity given by Gurus in the forefront, the country has made new laws for the people who have suffered," he said, in an apparent reference to the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.

According to the CAA, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, and face religious persecution there will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

The prime minister said that current global conditions underline the importance of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and underscore the need for 'Aatmnirbharta and Aatmvishwas'. (Source: PTI)

COVID-19 origins- U.S. intelligence...

The Director of National Intelligence in a report on Friday said SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, probably emerged and infected humans through an initial small-scale exposure that occurred no later than November 2019 with the first known cluster of COVID-19 cases arising in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

However, there was no unanimity among the intelligence community (IC) on the origins of the coronavirus. "The virus was not developed as a biological weapon. Most agencies also assess with low confidence that SARS-CoV-2 probably was not genetically engineered; however, two agencies believe there was not sufficient evidence to make an assessment either way," said the unclassified version of the report. The report did not name the intelligence agencies. "The IC also assesses that China's officials did not have foreknowledge of the virus before the initial outbreak of COVID-19 emerged," it said.

"After examining all available intelligence reporting and other information, the IC remains divided on the most likely origin of COVID-19. All agencies assess that two hypotheses are plausible: natural exposure to an infected animal and a laboratory-associated incident," the report said.

Acknowledging the receipt of the report, Mr. Biden in a statement said his administration will do everything it can to trace the roots of this outbreak that has caused so much pain and death around the world so that they can take every necessary precaution to prevent it from happening again.

"Critical information about the origins of this pandemic exists in China, yet from the beginning, government officials in China have worked to prevent international investigators and members of the global public health community from accessing it," he said.

"To this day, China continues to reject calls for transparency and withhold information, even as the toll of this pandemic continues to rise," Mr. Biden alleged.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) team, which visited Wuhan, the epicenter of the pandemic in central China, concluded earlier this year that the disease most likely spilled over from an animal sold at a market. This conclusion has been rejected by some scientists.

In May, President Biden asked U.S. intelligence agencies to assess the data and produce a report that "could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion" on the origins of the virus. "Four IC elements and the National Intelligence Council assess with low confidence that the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection was most likely caused by natural exposure to an animal infected with it or a close progenitor virus-a virus that probably would be more than 99% similar to SARS-CoV-2."

"These analysts give weight to Chinese officials' lack of foreknowledge, the numerous vectors for natural exposure, and other factors," the report said.

"One IC element assesses with moderate confidence that the first human infection with SARS-CoV-2 most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident, probably involving experimentation, animal handling, or sampling by the Wuhan Institute of Virology. These analysts give weight to the inherently risky nature of work on coronaviruses," it said.

The report said the intelligence community wouldn't be able to reach a more definitive conclusion unless it receives more information.

"Analysts at three IC elements remain unable to coalesce around either explanation without additional information, with some analysts favoring natural origin, others a laboratory origin, and some seeing the hypotheses as equally likely," the report said.

"Variations in analytic views largely stem from differences in how agencies weigh intelligence reporting and scientific publications and intelligence and scientific gaps," it said.

China's Foreign Ministry attacked the U.S. investigation ahead of the report's release. Fu Cong, a Foreign Ministry director general, said at a briefing for foreign journalists that "scapegoating China cannot whitewash the U.S." According to Johns Hopkins University data, the deadly virus has so far infected 21,52,90,716 people and claimed 44,83,136 lives globally.

The U.S. is the worst-hit nation with a total of 3,86,82,072 infections and 6,36,565 deaths recorded so far. The pandemic has led to a massive global economic slump, affecting the lives of millions of people.

"The world deserves answers, and I will not rest until we get them. Responsible nations do not shirk these kinds of responsibilities to the rest of the world. Pandemics do not respect international borders, and we all must better understand how COVID-19 came to be to prevent further pandemics," Mr. Biden said.

"America will continue working with like-minded partners around the world to press China to fully share information and to cooperate with the WHO's Phase II evidence-based, expert-led determination into the origins of COVID-19 - including by providing access to all relevant data and evidence," he said.

Mr. Biden said the U.S. will also continue to press China to adhere to scientific norms and standards, including sharing information and data from the earliest days of the pandemic, protocols related to biosafety, and information from animal populations.

"We must have a full and transparent accounting of this global tragedy. Nothing less is acceptable," he said. (Agencies)

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HISTORY THIS WEEK

AUGUST 27 TO SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

"People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." - James Baldwin

August 27

BIRTHDAY - Charles Dawes (1865-1951) was born in Marietta, Ohio. He served as U.S. Vice President from 1925-29, and is best remembered for his "Dawes Plan" for German reparations following World War I. He received the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize.

BIRTHDAY - Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973) the 36th U.S. President was born near Stonewall, Texas. He ascended to the presidency upon the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Johnson served until January 20, 1969.



Mother Teresa

BIRTHDAY - Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was born (as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) in Skopje, Yugoslavia. She founded a religious order of nuns in Calcutta, India, called the Missionaries of Charity and spent her life working to help the poor and sick of India.

August 28

AUGUST 28, 1963 - The March on Washington occurred as over 250,000 persons attended a Civil Rights rally in Washington, D.C., at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his now-famous I Have a Dream speech.



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

BIRTHDAY - German author-philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is best known for the dramatic poem Faust, completed in 1831.

BIRTHDAY - The first American-born Roman Catholic saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) was born (as Elizabeth Ann Bayley) in New York. She founded the first American Catholic religious order, the Sisters of Charity of St.

Joseph. In 1809, she opened an elementary school in Baltimore, marking the beginning of the parochial school system in the U.S.

August 29

AUGUST 29, 1792 - In one of the worst maritime disasters, 900 men drowned on the British battleship Royal George. As the ship was being repaired, a gust of wind allowed water to flood into open gun ports. The ship sank within minutes.

AUGUST 29, 1991 - Following the unsuccessful coup of August 19-21, the Soviet Communist Party was suspended, thus ending the institution that ruled Soviet Russia for nearly 75 years.

BIRTHDAY - Physician and author Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He once wrote, "A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience." His poem Old Ironsides aroused popular sentiment in the 1830's which helped to save the historic frigate USS Constitution from destruction.

BIRTHDAY - British philosopher and pioneer in modern political thinking, John Locke (1632-1704) was born in Wrington, England. His ideas greatly influenced American colonists, namely that rulers derive their power only from the consent of the governed - and the doctrine that men naturally possess certain rights, the chief being life, liberty, and property.

August 30

BIRTHDAY - Frankenstein author Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was born in London.



Roy Wilkins

BIRTHDAY - Civil rights leader Roy Wilkins (1901-1981) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. The grandson of a Mississippi slave, he was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

August 31

AUGUST 31, 1786 - Shays' Rebellion began in Massachusetts as ex-Revolutionary War Captain Daniel Shays led an armed mob. The rebellion prevented the Northampton Court from holding a session in which debtors, mostly poor ex-soldier farmers, were to be tried and likely put in prison. Following this, in September, Shays' troops prevented Supreme Court sessions at Springfield, Massachusetts.

Early in 1787, they attacked the Federal arsenal at Springfield, but were soon routed and fled. Shays was sentenced to death but was pardoned in 1788.

AUGUST 31, 1980 - Solidarity, the Polish trade union, was formed at Gdansk, Poland. Led by Lech Walesa, Solidarity opposed Communist rule and was outlawed in 1981. Seven years later, the re-legalization of Solidarity occurred and the government agreed to hold partially free parliamentary elections. Solidarity candidates scored stunning victories in the elections that followed, gaining power in Poland and paving the way for the downfall of Communism there.



Princess Diana

AUGUST 31, 1997 - Britain's Princess Diana died at age 36 from massive internal injuries suffered in a high-speed car crash, reportedly after being pursued by photographers. The crash occurred shortly after midnight in Paris inside a tunnel along the Seine River at the Pont de l'Alma bridge, less than a half mile north of the Eiffel Tower. Also killed in the crash were Diana's companion, Dodi Fayed, 42, and chauffeur Henri Paul. A fourth person in the car, bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, was seriously injured.

September 1

SEPTEMBER 1, 1715 - The "Sun King" (King Louis XIV of France) died. He had ruled since the age of five and was succeeded by his 5-year-old great-grandson Louis XV.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1983 - Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was shot down by a Russian fighter jet while on route from New York to Seoul, killing all 269 persons on board. The Boeing 747 reportedly strayed 100 miles off course over secret Soviet Russian military installations on the Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island. It crashed in the Sea of Japan.

BIRTHDAY - Boxing champ Rocky Marciano (1923-1969) was born in Brockton, Massachusetts (as Rocco Francis Marchegiano). He fought Jersey Joe Walcott for the heavyweight title on September 23, 1952 and knocked him out.

In 1956, he retired as the only undefeated heavyweight champion. He died in a plane crash in 1969.

September 2

SEPTEMBER 2, 31 B.C. - Roman legions under Augustus Caesar defeated Mark Anthony's naval force at Actium.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1666 - The Great Fire of London began in a bakery in Pudding Lane near the Tower. Over the next three days more than 13,000 houses were destroyed, although only six lives were believed lost.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1752 - The British ended their use of the Julian calendar, switching instead to the Gregorian calendar, resulting in a major adjustment as Wednesday, September 2, was followed by Thursday, September 14. The correction resulted in rioting by people who felt cheated and demanded the missing eleven days back.



U.S. Treasury

SEPTEMBER 2, 1789 - The third Presidential cabinet department, the U.S. Treasury, was established by Congress.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 - President Harry Truman declared V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day) commemorating the formal Japanese surrender to the Allies aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.



Ho Chi Minh

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 - Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the independence of Vietnam and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1962 - Soviet Russia agreed to send arms to Cuba, leading to the October Missile Crisis after the shipments were discovered by the U.S.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1963 - Alabama Governor George Wallace forcibly halted public school integration by encircling Tuskegee High School with state troopers.

BIRTHDAY - Christa McAuliffe (1948-1986) was born in Boston (as Sharon Christa Corrigan). On January 28, 1986, the 37-year-old high-school teacher, the first "ordinary citizen" in space, died with six crew members in the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion.

World Vegan Vision hosted a Farewell dinner to Mr. Shatrughna Sinha at the residence of HK and Malti Shah



SEEN IN THE PICTURE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DR. HETAL GOR, VICE-CHAIR CHANDRAMEHTA, TRUSTEES K.K MEHTA/ DIPAK SHAH / PIYUSH PATEL, FOUNDER H.K SHAH, MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, MR. RANDHIR KUMAR JAISWAL, NITIN VYAS (PR), MUKUND THAKAR, KALINDI BAKSHI (VP) NIMISH PATEL , MIKE DESAI (TREASURERS)

GLIMPSES OF FAREWELL DINNER TO MR. SHATRUGHNA SINHA, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL

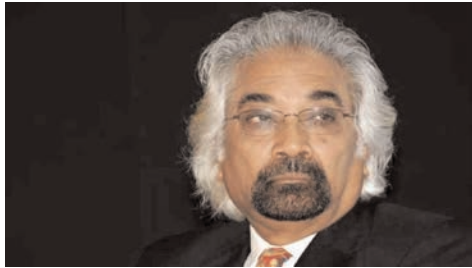
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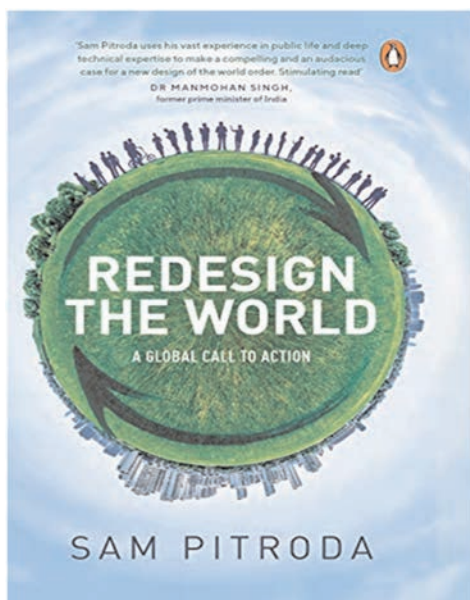
BOOK REVIEW

'Redesign the World'

Author: Sam Pitroda



Publisher: Penguin

Reviewed by
George Abraham

In 'Redesign the World', the architect of the Telecommunication revolution in India shows us that we are at an inflection point in history. With his years of experience in the field of technology and extended to the area of the social and political arena, we are urged to prepare for the next stage in global development. It is indeed a galvanizing new work from Mr. Pitroda, who argues that the current systems in place have outlived their utility and cannot work in today's hyperconnected world.

It is indeed a thought-provoking and brilliant narration of history in a capsule while laying out a case for a whole new approach for this planet and its inhabitants. At the end of the book, a chapter is dedicated as a summary called 'Manifesto to Redesign the World' with the outlines for a new world vision. The manifesto is based on optimizing environmental and human capital while focusing on sustainability, inclusion, and a hyperconnected world with a global call to action.

According to Mr. Pitroda, the world's last design was conceived after World War II with five pillars: democracy, human rights, capitalism, consumption, and the military. The design has served the world reasonably well, preventing another world war, providing nations with economic growth and social development, and lifting millions from poverty. However, conditions have changed due to important world events along with the emergence of technology.

Mr. Pitroda asserts that there are two competing and contradictory visions when it comes to world affairs: the American vision and the Chinese vision. The American vision is open, and assuming those fundamentals that drove the post-

world war era policies focused on its dominance in technology, trade, and markets, as well as military matters, should be allowed to continue. However, a closed Chinese vision is quite selective in providing a lead in geopolitical matters but insists on becoming an alternative to the American vision through initiatives like BRI.

Through his manifesto, he proposes a third vision that puts the earth and all living things at its Centre. It is based on nations building a network to increase understanding, enhance collaboration, and build bridges to promote peace and prosperity to all. The five pillars for the world's redesign are explained as follows: An inclusive world with equality and opportunities for all, fundamental rights to every citizen in the world, a new economy to redress selfish enrichment by few focusing on human capital and environment, conservation and sustainability moving away from mindless consumption and a non-violent environment where all human beings can live and prosper without fear.

Mr. Pitroda shares the belief that there is a crisis of leadership in the world. Many leaders are narrow-minded, parochial, divisive, self-centered, power-hungry, authoritarian, and ineffective. The author demands that we need political will at the highest level and leaders with character, charisma, and global presence to redesign the world. "We must elect leaders with vision, character, capabilities, and commitment towards unity, justice, democracy, and human development. Anti-democratic forces that promote authoritarian attitudes and divisive politics must be rejected", the author encourages.

As someone deeply involved in promoting technology, he believes that it is a significant social leveler, second only to death. "We must believe in science and technology and scientific mindsets, logic, and reasoning. Without science and scientists, there is no future. At the end of the day, innovations will drive and expedite the proposed redesign of the world. "We need egalitarian architectures with flat organizations to network talent and resources for speedy implementation with

openness and accountability," the author argues.

Mr. Pitroda, in his book, emphasized the need to reform the post-world war Institutions like the UN, World Bank, NATO, IMF, WHO, and others in addressing global issues. However, these institutions have served reasonably well in keeping peace alive and managing financial affairs. A level of antiquity has set in their functioning, and a new global conversation is to reform or rebuild the present apparatus.

This third vision to redesign the world is rooted in democracy and based on the model of universal freedom and inclusiveness. "It gains strength from a new form of capitalism that is multi-polar, open, transparent, collaborative, local, and predominantly focused on what is good for the planet and the people. It is hoped that the reform of existing institutions, the creation of new ones, and the focus of a new global constitution, will ultimately lead the global government to network, communicate, collaborate, and cooperate". The author concludes that this will be the foundation on which the aims and aspirations of the people of the world will be achieved.

The real question is whether Mr. Pitroda is weaving an all-encompassing global thesis that may have very little chance to implement in the real-world politics, let alone explore. I congratulate Mr. Pitroda for dreaming because, without a vision for the future, people may perish. He is one of those stalwarts who has accomplished his dream to help catapult India to IT superstardom. However, today, the world is spinning into the opposite direction with hyper-nationalism and narcissist thinking.

There are competing forces that would contribute to our ideas of right and wrong. One is derived from the ancient traditions or religious or moral discourse. The other is the tendency of human beings to look out for themselves and maximize their advantage. Since it is cloaked in the mantle of science, it is the latter that has become increasingly influential in our society today that could even eclipse a great idea like "redesign the world".

(Reviewer is a former Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations)

-: GUEST COMMENT :-

Bonding rites: on
Opposition unity

Opposition unity can come only with a more accommodative Congress leadership

A meeting of 19 Opposition parties on August 20 confirmed the sense of urgency that they feel to come together and build a united front against the BJP. It was also a demonstration of the challenges that they face in that task, in terms of programme and architecture. The meeting convened by Congress President Sonia Gandhi was attended by leaders of 18 other parties, including four Chief Ministers. These parties have strategic or ideological reasons to be part of a formation against BJP hegemony, and see no harm in aligning with the Congress in the process. All the 19 parties see the BJP as a threat to their own politics; some of them view it as endangering the constitutional

values of the country too. There are other non-BJP parties that do not see it that way. The BJD, TRS and YSRCP, ruling parties in Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, see no gain in opposing the BJP or aligning with the Congress. They might also see antagonism with the BJP and affinity with the Congress as detrimental to their politics. Comparable is the situation of the BSP and SP, two influential parties in Uttar Pradesh that elects the largest number of Lok Sabha MPs. Ms. Gandhi has exhorted all parties to rise above compulsions to build a joint front against the BJP, the aim of which is to defeat the BJP in the 2024 general election.

The fact is that the Congress is itself a prisoner of its own compulsions and rigidities such as its institutional antipathy towards the YSRCP and TRS, and the personal fancies of its leader Rahul Gandhi who wields all authority and holds no accountability. Additionally, the Congress of today is vastly diminished compared to its position in the run-up to the 2004 general election

when it could bring a host of parties under a coalition. Regional leaders then deferred to Ms. Gandhi, and her command over the Congress was absolute. The disarray in the Congress leadership is a drag on the attempts at Opposition unity. There is also a vast divergence among these parties on identifying the most critical issues in designing the optimal campaign against the BJP. The Congress and Left want to front-load in any Opposition campaign, the use of a spyware by an unknown government entity to snoop on a wide range of individuals. Parties that are more rural think price rise and agriculture distress and unemployment would have more salience among voters. This divergence need not necessarily be disabling for the Opposition. In fact, various parties could appeal to different constituencies and amalgamate their strengths, as it happened in the UPA experiments between 2004 to 2014. That requires significantly more leadership and management skills than available today in the Opposition gallery.

(The Hindu)



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