



## INDIA-BORN DEVIKA IS CALIFORNIA'S SURGEON GENERAL



Devika Bhushan has been appointed Surgeon General of California

**NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP):** India-born Devika Bhushan has been appointed California's Surgeon General after incumbent Nadine Burke Harris resigned on Wednesday, February 2, following three years in the role. Agra-born Devika is the daughter of Indu Bhushan, who set up India's flagship Ayushman Bharat Mission for annual cashless hospitalization cover of Rs 5 lakh for over 10 crore vulnerable families. The 35-year-old has written policy analyses on preventing gun violence, lead

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# Two Indias-one for the rich and the other for the poor: Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha

**YOU'RE FIDDLING WITH THE IDEA OF INDIA; YOUR POLICIES SHOW A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY**

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** In a scathing attack on Modi and his government, Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of behaving like a "King" and of fiddling with the "idea of India". India faces a challenge that is the creation of two Indias-one extremely wealthy and the other is being pushed deeper into poverty, said Rahul Gandhi.

Gandhi was speaking in Lok Sabha on Wednesday, February 2, on the "motion of thanks" on the Presidential Address.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhB0JGdeWnl>



Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha o February 2 Screenshot

Gandhi, in fact, drew attention to three crucial problems India has been grappling with at the current moment - rising unemployment, strategic failures to corner China and Pakistan, and an unprecedented attack on the country's institutional framework. These are concerns that every opposition political party and scores of civil society groups have been pinpointing and on which they have failed to draw a convincing response from the Union government.

**Also Read : Budget 2022: India's job crisis leading to a 'nowhere generation' - Page 9**

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## TMC MP Mahua Moitra takes the Modi government to task for its dismal misgovernance



"Ours is a living constitution, it breathes as long as we are willing to breathe life into it", Trinamool Congress Member of Parliament Mahua Moitra said in her speech on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in the Parliament - Screenshot

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** TMC MP Mahua Moitra's speech on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address enumerated a number of human rights violations and alleged executive excesses during the last few years of the Narendra Modi government. In her usual belligerent style, she made a note of how the US-based Freedom House

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## Eight Indian Americans among 100 Most Influential Academics in Government

**NIRPAL SHERGILL**

**LONDON (TIP):** As many as eight Indian American academics, including IMF's Gita Gopniath figure in London based Apolitical's latest list of 100 Most Influential Academics in Government whose work influenced policymaking in five key areas.

This year's list recognizes academics working in five timely policy areas that represent problems being faced by government everywhere, and present an opportunity for intergovernmental collaboration, it said.

They are: Recovery from Covid-19; Employment and skills social policy, Climate and sustainability and Policymaking processes and approaches

Gopinath, the First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, its number-two leadership position, since Jan 21, has been recognized in the area of Economics,



Gita Gopniath, Karthik Muralidharan, Nitin Nohria, Devesh Kapur, Pradeep Khosla, Anup Malani, Manoj Mohanan are among Apolitical's latest list of 100 most influential academics in government

employment & skills.

Karthik Muralidharan, Tata Chancellor's Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and Rohini Pande, the Henry J. Heinz II Professor of Economics and Director of the Economic Growth

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## 'Indian intelligence service' bought Pegasus from Israel, coordinated with Mossad: New York Times



The New York Times said the purchase was finalized during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel and cleared by the then Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in 2017. - Image for representation

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The "Indian intelligence service" purchased Pegasus from Israeli company NSO in a deal pegged at "dozens of millions of dollars", a The New York Times (NYT) reporter involved in the newspaper's investigation into the use of the surveillance system worldwide has said. The New York Times said the purchase was finalized during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to

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## GUEST COMMENT

# Big on hopes, short on ideas: On Union Budget 2022-23

**The Budget aims to focus on infrastructure and connectivity, but lacks growth-invigorating proposals**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's fourth successive budget, while commonsensical in its approach, is not exactly bubbling with new ideas. With the economy still in search of durable momentum that could help entrench the recovery from the last fiscal year's record contraction, Ms. Sitharaman has missed an opportunity to address the flagging consumer spending in the wake of erosion in real incomes and savings through a combination of tax breaks for the middle class and cash handouts for the poor. And even as the Minister acknowledges the role public capital expenditure could play in crowding-in private investment at a time when "private investments seem to require that support" and help to 'pump-prime' demand in the economy, the Budget outlay of ₹7.50 lakh-crore for the capital account marks just a 24.4% increase from the revised estimate of ₹6.03 lakh-crore for the current fiscal. To be sure, Ms. Sitharaman's speech highlights the PM GatiShakti, a "transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development" that is to be powered by the 'seven engines' of roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways, and logistics infrastructure. While the broad sweep of the public infrastructure envisioned by the programme could potentially be truly transformative if it were to be executed as imagined, the Budget is largely short on details where it concerns the specifics and pencils in some figures only for the roads and railways components. The Budget lists a 'Master Plan for Expressways' that will be formulated in 2022-23 under the scheme and projects the addition of 25,000 kilometers of roads to the National Highways network. The talk of enabling seamless multimodal movement of goods and people and providing multimodal connectivity between mass urban transit

systems and railway stations, however, all sound a familiar refrain from past speeches.

Spending outlays on several other key sectors including health care, rural development and the vital jobs and income providing national rural employment guarantee scheme have all shrunk as a percentage of overall expenditure in the Budget estimates for fiscal 2023 from the revised estimates for the current year, even if in some cases only marginally. That these sectors have been forced to bear the impact of the Government's keenness to broadly stick to a fiscal consolidation road map - with the Budget projecting a narrowing of the fiscal deficit to 6.4% of GDP in 2022-23, from a revised estimate for 6.9% - reflects on its priorities. Government spending on health care ought to have instead been significantly increased, with the lessons from the ongoing pandemic's first two waves serving to illuminate the need for a sizeable enlargement of the public health infrastructure. A source of some solace, though, is the announcement of a 'National Tele Mental Health Programme' to address mental health problems that have been exacerbated by the claustrophobic lockdowns and plethora of anxieties triggered by the pandemic.

In a nod to the ruling party's nationalist moorings and in line with the Government's push to increase self-reliance or Atma Nirbharta, the Finance Minister has proposed a series of tariff and policy steps that could help bolster domestic manufacturing in the long run. A key policy element is a commitment to reduce import dependence in procurement for the country's defense forces. To that end the Minister has proposed earmarking 68% of the armed forces' capital procurement budget to domestic industry in 2022-23, a not insignificant increase from the current

fiscal's 58% target. The tariff rationalizations, which cover a broad swathe of items ranging from electronics, gems and jewelry, chemicals, inputs used by MSME units and project and capital goods, could, however, have varying short-term impacts. Specifically, the move to phase out the concessional rates in capital goods and project imports gradually and apply a moderate tariff of 7.5% could in the short term hurt infrastructure projects and the setting up of new manufacturing capacity, some proposed exemptions for advanced machinery notwithstanding. The Minister has tried to address the raging debate over how to deal with virtual currencies by adopting a twin-track approach. On the one hand Ms. Sitharaman proposes to introduce in the coming fiscal year a Central Bank Digital Currency that she posits will impart a big boost to the digital economy and "lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system". The RBI-issued Digital Rupee would leverage blockchain and other related technologies. In parallel, she intends to tax income from the transfer of any virtual digital asset at the rate of 30%, with deduction allowed only for the cost of acquisition. It remains to be seen if the Government's efforts at bringing the mushrooming trade and investment in a multiplicity of virtual digital assets including cryptocurrencies under the tax net would have a salutary impact besides adding a revenue stream to the exchequer. The Minister's latest budget also skirts mention of the asset monetization plan mentioned in the last Budget and shows a sharp decline in capital receipts from disinvestment. With just ₹65,000 crore budgeted from asset sale for fiscal 2023, as opposed to ₹78,000 crore as per the revised estimates for the current fiscal, the Minister has had to increase gross borrowings to ₹14.95 lakh-crore, a 24% increase from the current fiscal's budget estimate but a far sharper 43% jump from the revised estimate of ₹10.46 lakh-crore. The resource crunch manifest in the proposed higher debt issuance is ultimately bound to get more acute in the days ahead, given the Budget's lack of growth-invigorating proposals. *(The Hindu)*

# Politics of freebies: ECI should curb menace, ensure level playing field

With five states going to the polls this month, political parties are vying desperately with each other to woo voters through freebies - in cash or in kind. Most of the grand promises, if implemented, are likely to drain the fast-depleting financial resources of states such as Punjab. Calling it a serious issue, the Supreme Court has sought replies from the Centre and the Election Commission of India (ECI) on a petition seeking directions to freeze the election symbol or deregister a party that promises or distributes 'irrational freebies' in the run-up to the polls. The apex court has expressed concern that the freebie budget is exceeding the regular budget, depriving the stakeholders of a level playing field.

The SC Bench has also taken the ECI to task for failing to come up with stringent guidelines to curb the menace.

The competitive populism makes it amply clear that various parties don't want to look beyond the upcoming election. What matters to them is coming to power - or retaining it - at any cost, even as the pressing issues of public interest are put on the backburner. Fund-rich parties get an unfair advantage as they have much more to offer as allurements to the electorate. The telling impact of sops was visible in the 2021 Kerala Assembly elections. Two years after being routed in the Lok Sabha polls, the ruling Left Democratic Front got elected for a second straight term with a thumping majority. What worked for the

CPM-led front was the distribution of free food kits. Though the ECI had suspended the controversial exercise after getting complaints, the Kerala High Court had stayed the poll panel's order, while directing the state government not to give the impression that the doling out of food was aimed at influencing voters.

There is no denying that freebies vitiate the poll process and undermine democratic polity. The ECI needs to frame rules that prohibit or restrict populist announcements during the last six months of a government's tenure, and not just after the model code of conduct is enforced. Only with firm resolve can the sop opera be discouraged and eventually discontinued. *(Tribune, India)*

# New York-India partnership will grow even stronger, says Mayor Adams



India's Ambassador to the US Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu (4th from left) met New York Mayor Mr. Eric Adams (to his left), and the two held delegation level talks on issues of mutual interest

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Ambassador of India to the United States of America Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu met New York City Mayor, Mr. Eric Adams on Sunday, January 30, 2022, at the City Hall. Ambassador Sandhu was accompanied by Mr. Randhir Jaiswal, India's Consul General in New York, and Dr. Varun Jeph, Deputy Consul General while Mayor Adams was joined by New York State Assemblywoman Ms. Jenifer Rajkumar, Deputy Mayor Ms. Meera Joshi and other senior aides.

Ambassador Sandhu congratulated Mayor Adams on his historic election as

the New York City's Mayor and conveyed his best wishes. He thanked the Mayor for his support to India-US partnership and to the Indian diaspora in New York.

They held discussion on further bolstering the strong partnership between India and the City of New York with special emphasis on key areas including affordable healthcare, renewable energy, new and emerging technology, education and knowledge partnership, IT and fintech.

Ambassador Sandhu sought the support and participation of Mayor Adams and his team in the Consulate's programs to

commemorate 75 years of India's Independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, celebrating rich cultural heritage of India in the city of New York, and further strengthening people to people ties.

After the delegation level meeting, the two sides were joined by around thirty prominent members of the City's Indian American diaspora. Indian community in New York and USA is the living bridge between the two countries. Its contribution was acknowledged by Mayor Adams, and he assured that New York-India partnership will grow even stronger under his leadership.

## IDC Commemorates India's Republic Day 2022



**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) and its global affiliates, on the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of India's

Republic Day, extend warm and special congratulations to people of India and Indians living in other countries who take much pride in this annual celebration.

Republic Day marks the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26th January 1950, replacing the Government of India Act, turning the nation into a newly formed republic.

"Freedom is not given; it is taken" - Subha Chandra Bose

Indians sacrificed for many years with struggles and lives lost in attaining their hard fought and wrenching freedom from Britain on 15th August 1947. The Indian people used various independence movements, in particular nonviolent resistance led by Mahatma Gandhi, to become free and independent. The partition with Pakistan resulted in violent riots, mass casualties and dislocation of millions of people.

Despite many initial difficulties, India has made enormous strides and progress, from dependency to becoming a major geo-economic and strategic entity in the global arena. As India continues its transformation and adaptation as it has done for centuries, the future bodes well for continued progress that is beneficial to all Indians and the world. India's enduring vitality is always strong and vibrant.

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

## Democratic District Leader Dr. Neeta Jain organized a Vigil for fallen NYPD heroes



The gathering at the vigil

lost their lives in line of duty. A record number of police officers from 109 and 107 precincts attended the Vigil.

Prayers were started by Head Priest of Hindu Center Dr. K. P. Dixit followed by Jain prayer recited by Dr. Neeta Jain, Rev. Dr. Frank Kaufman from Twelve Gates Communities, Imam Abdel Ghani Benyahya from Muslim Center of New York, Ravi Vaidyanaat Shivcharya from Hindu Temple Society of North America, Dr. Vipul Patel from BAPS, Guru Dileepji from UN, Raghbir Singh Subhanpur from Gurudwara Baba Makhan Shah, Richmond Hill, Detective Rudy from Desi Society of NYPD. Vigil was also attended by Consul Community Affairs Mr. Vijay Krishnan from Consulate General of India in New York, and a representative from Assemblyman David Weprin.

Dr. Urmilesh Arya, National President of AIA stressed the need of nonviolence and gun control. Dr. Ravindra Goyal president of Hindu Center Inc. assured the NYPD officers that our community is there any time they need us. Dr. Jain also said that it is a partnership between community and our law enforcement. Officers. We need to work together to keep both of us safe.

Precinct 109 Commanding Officer deputy Inspector John O'Connell Inspector thanked for support of Community. Commanding officer from precinct 107 Deputy Inspector Kevin advised to say hello and greet when you see a police officer. All prayed to Almighty to rest both brave souls in Peace and give strength to both families to bear tremendous loss. (Press Release)

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Hindu Center Inc. and International Ahimsa Foundation organized a candlelight vigil and interfaith prayers at Hindu Center Inc. Flushing, NY

Tribute Ceremony was organized by Democratic District Leader Dr. Neeta Jain at Hindu Center for our fallen NYPD heroes Detective Jason Rivera and Wilbert Mora, who

## MISS USA 2019 CHESLIE KRYST 'JUMPS TO DEATH' FROM MANHATTAN SKYSCRAPER



Cheslie Kryst

Photo posted on Instagram by Cheslie Kryst.

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Former Miss USA Cheslie Kryst on Sunday, January 30 morning allegedly jumped to death from a New York City high-rise apartment building.

The 2019 pageant winner who had a ninth-floor apartment in Manhattan's 60-storey Orion Building was found dead in the street below.

The 30-year-old was last seen on a terrace in the building's 29th floor shortly after 7am, sources told The New York Post. "In devastation and great sorrow, we share the passing of our beloved Cheslie," her family said in a statement.

"Her great light was one that inspired others around the world with her beauty and strength. She cared, she loved, she laughed, and she shined. Cheslie embodied love and served others, whether through her work as an attorney fighting for social justice, as Miss USA and as a host on Extra."

And they added: "But most importantly as a daughter, sister, friend, mentor and colleague - we know her impact will live on."

The former Miss North Carolina was a lawyer who also worked as a reporter for the Extra TV show.

"Our hearts are broken," the company said in a statement.

Just hours before her death, Kryst wrote on Instagram, "May this day bring you rest and peace."

## Indian diaspora group urges Biden to reject appointment of Masood Khan as Pakistan envoy to US



Masood Khan

WASHINGTON, D.C.(TIP): An Indian diaspora group urged US President Joe

Biden to reject the appointment of Masood Khan as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, alleging that the diplomat is a sympathizer and supporter of terrorist groups.

The Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS), in a statement, on Wednesday, Feb 2, urged Biden to reject the appointment of the "Jihadi-terrorist-sympathizer" Masood Khan as Pakistani Ambassador to the United States.

"We also request Secretary of State

Antony Blinken and members of the Senate and House committees on foreign relations to support this rejection," it said.

"Masood Khan has repeatedly demonstrated a soft spot for Jihadi-terrorists, including Aafia Siddiqui, a convicted terrorist operative known as 'Lady Al-Qaeda'. His support to designated terrorist organizations under the US law such as Hizbul Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), and Jamaat-e-Islami, is not only inimical to US interests, but also to global peace,"

FIIDS said.

FIIDS is a US-based institute for US-India policy studies and awareness.

"Khan's diplomatic role in the United States may open an avenue for access for terrorist organizations to US institutions. Furthermore, his former active role as president of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir will complicate US relations with its strategic partner India. His support to the Taliban will also adversely affect US interests in Afghanistan," it said.

## Punjabi-Canadian truckers, stuck without food and medicines in Alberta, are back home safely

ALBERTA (TIP): Dozens of Punjabi-Canadian truckers who were stranded in Montana, as they were trying to cross into Alberta since the weekend with little access to food or medical assistance, are back safe at home.

Confirming this news, Alberta's minister of transportation Rajan Sawhney on Wednesday, Feb 2, tweeted: "I am happy to report these Alberta truckers who shot a video a few days ago while stranded at Coutts are now safe at home. I spoke with them this morning; they are doing well and are in good spirits."

I am happy to report these Alberta truckers who shot a video a few days ago while stranded at Coutts are now safe at home. I spoke with them this morning; they are doing well and are in good spirits.

- Rajan Sawhney (@RajanJSaw)



Dozens of Punjabi-Canadian truckers who were stranded in Montana, as they were trying to cross into Alberta since the weekend with little access to food or medical assistance, are back safe at home.

A video of the truckers had gone viral, where they had said that they had sort help from the government as they were stuck due to the protest. They said that they have little food and most of them had medical issues. The drivers asked for politicians to help in crossing as their supplies were running low. While one of them claiming that that they were "vaccinated and want to go home".

These are the truckers I want media stories focused on.

- Farrah Khan (@farrahsafiakhan)

The anti-vaccine protest in Canada has spurred outrage. In the aftermath of Canada's biggest pandemic protest to date, the demonstrators have found little sympathy in a country where more than 80 per cent are vaccinated.

## Eight Indian Americans among 100 Most Influential Academics in Government

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Center; Yale University too have been selected in the same category. Nitin Nohria, Dean of Harvard Business School, has been recognized for his work in other policy areas along with Devesh Kapur, Starr Foundation Professor of South Asian Studies and Pradeep Khosla, Eighth Chancellor, University of California San Diego.

Anup Malani, Lee and Brena Freeman Professor at the University of Chicago Law School, and Manoj Mohanan, Associate Professor at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, have been chosen in Recovery from Covid-19 category.

The John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Economics at Harvard University, Gopinath is currently on leave of public service from the economics department. She served as the IMF Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from 1919 to 2022.

Gopinath's research focuses on International Finance and Macroeconomics. She is currently a member of the Group of Thirty and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Earlier she was a member of the economic advisory panel of the Federal

Reserve Bank of New York, a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Economic Adviser to the Chief Minister of Kerala state in India, and member of the Eminent Persons Advisory Group on G-20 Matters for India's Ministry of Finance.

Before coming to Harvard, she was an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. She received her PhD in economics from Princeton University, after earning a BA from Lady Sri Ram College, and MA degrees from the Delhi School of Economics and the University of Washington.

Nohria's intellectual interests center on human motivation, leadership, corporate transformation and accountability, and sustainable economic and human performance. He is co-author or co-editor of 16 books as also author of over 50 journal articles, book chapters, cases, working papers, and notes.

Prior to joining the Harvard Business School faculty in July 1988, Nohria received his PhD in Management from the Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He is a BTEch in Chemical Engineering

from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (which honored him as a Distinguished Alumnus in 2007). He was a visiting faculty member at the London Business School in 1996.

Anup Malani is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. He conducts research in development economics, health economics and law and economics.

During the Covid pandemic, Malani led a modeling team that developed a forecasting model and method of adaptive control for Covid in India; that model was used to inform policy in Bihar and in Indonesia. Malani was an investigator on population-level viral surveys in Bihar, serological (antibody) surveys in Mumbai, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, and a cellular immunity survey in Bangalore.

This work on Covid has won two Emergent Ventures prizes. He worked on vaccine distribution policies for Indonesia and India. He also used a large, panel survey to estimate the number of excess deaths in India during the pandemic and to understand the economic impacts of the pandemic.

He is now conducting verbal autopsies on roughly 30,000 to determine the fraction

of excess deaths that are attributable to Covid. Finally, Malani has studied how Indian households adapted financially to Covid and the impact of Covid on individual income inequality in India.

Prior to the pandemic, Malani's research focused on development economics. He is the co-founder and Faculty Director of the International Innovation Corps, a social service program that sends postgraduates to work on innovative projects with government officials in India and the US.

Malani has a JD and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. He was a law clerk to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the U.S. Supreme Court and the founding Faculty Director of the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago.

Manoj Mohanan's research focuses primarily on the economics of health and development, and health policy. His past research has examined topics including performance incentive contracts, public private partnerships, quality of care, social franchising, accountability interventions, and household health behavior across multiple countries.

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

# Indo-Canadian Sikh truckers protest in Ottawa against Canada's vaccine mandates

**OTTAWA (TIP):** Hundreds of trucks and thousands of protesters, most of them Sikhs migrated from India, have blocked the streets towards downtown Ottawa to protest against the government's vaccine mandates required to cross the Canada-US border.

The protest is part of a self-titled 'Freedom Convoy 2022', which started out as a rally of truckers against the requirement that Canadian truck drivers crossing the border into the US be fully vaccinated as of mid-January.

After being joined by thousands of other protesters, it then turned into a demonstration against the government's overall restrictive measures during the Covid pandemic.

The crowd gathered around the Parliament Hill, waving flags and banners and chanting slogans against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is self-isolating after one of his children tested positive for the coronavirus.

The increasing number of protesters prompted police to prepare for the possibility of violence. As of now, no injuries or deaths have been reported.

Parliament members were advised by the head of House of Commons security, Sergeant-at-Arms Patrick McDonnell, to "go somewhere else" if a demonstration



Thousands of Sikh truckers protest in Canadian capital against the vaccine mandates required to cross the Canada-US border

occurred at their personal residences or constituency offices, and to "refrain from posting anything related to the demonstration on social media".

Due to security concerns, Trudeau and his family left their downtown Ottawa home, the media reported.

His office said it does not comment on security matters.

Ottawa's mayor said the city's residents were

"prisoners in their own homes" as the Freedom Convoy trucker protests continued.

Leaders of the demonstrations vowed on Sunday to stay in the Canadian capital "as long as it takes" for the government to fold and withdraw vaccine mandates.

"Canadian truckers rule" Elon Musk tweeted on Friday, including, "When you scare folks sufficient, they'll demand removing of freedom. That is the trail of tyranny."

Sikhs represent a major share of truckers in US and Canada, with estimates of 150,000 and 200,000 personnel commanding as much as 40 per cent of the enterprise. Lots of them are part of the US-Canada provide chain and they're mentioned to be resentful of the vaccine mandates and different Covid protocols.

There are allegations that the protest is being hijacked by radical White truckers politically against Trudeau for causes aside from vaccine mandates. The division got here to the fore when Jagmeet Singh, chief of the New Democratic Occasion, a Trudeau ally, denounced the protest saying a number of the folks behind it are pushing "false info" with "inflammatory, divisive and hateful feedback."

(With inputs from media reports)

## Ravi & Naina Patel Foundation donates \$1.5 million for Gandhi Center

PARAMINDER AUJLA



"The Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation members appreciate one of Gandhi's most beloved principles, vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the whole world is my family)," the Indian American doctor couple stated.

**FRESNO, CA (TIP):** California State University, Fresno, plans to establish a Gandhi Center to promote the development of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of inner peace and sarvodaya (universal uplift) with a \$1.5 million donation from an Indian American foundation.

"The Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation members appreciate one of Gandhi's most beloved principles, vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the whole world is my family)," the Indian American doctor couple stated.

"In the spirit of this principle, although based in Bakersfield, we had no problem reaching outside our home city to create learning opportunities at Fresno State."

"In a time of increasing unrest and polarization, we are excited by this one of its kind collaborations with the incredible leadership team at Fresno State to create a learning center emphasizing the two central pillars of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy - inner peace and sarvodaya," they added.

The donation from the Foundation would be used to establish an endowed fund to create and support the "M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya" in the College of Arts and Humanities, the University announced in a press release.

The Gandhi Center will promote the development of intellectual understanding and experiential learning of Gandhi's philosophy of inner peace and sarvodaya.

The idea of sarvodaya focuses on the development of the entire person and the construction of a nonviolent, peaceful and equitable society, the release noted.

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

## Two Indian American Democratic women join US Congressional races



Two Indian-American women- Nida Allam and Kesha Ram Hinsdale- are making runs for the US Congress this year.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** After their remarkable run in the 2020 and 2021 elections, several Indian American candidates, including women are vying to make history making runs for the US Congress this year. Among them Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam, running from North Carolina's 6th Congressional District and Vermont State Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale seeking the State's only seat in the US House of Representatives. Both Democratic candidates have received endorsements from AAPI Victory Fund, and Indian American Impact Fund, leading community advocacy organizations. "As elected leaders and champions for the progressive movement in their respective states, Nida and Kesha have made strides for not only the AAPI community but for all of their constituents," AAPI Victory Fund Founder and Chairman Shekar Narasimhan stated.

"They continue to dedicate themselves to ensuring that progress leaves no one behind," he said. "We are honored to endorse these two exemplary candidates who will make history when elected to Congress as they strive to make a positive impact on our country. We look forward to supporting them both on their path to Congress." "Our team is extremely honored to endorse Nida Allam and Kesha Ram Hinsdale for Congress," Indian American Impact Fund Executive Director Neil Makhija stated. "Both Nida and Kesha uphold the progressive and justice-oriented values that we at IMPACT are thrilled to support in tandem." "As Indian-Americans, Nida and Kesha's bids for public office serve as a reminder that Indian-Americans are deeply underrepresented in American government. "The historic strides that they've made in their respective states are just the beginning for Indian-American and AAPI communities to have a seat at the political table, and we're excited to see how they continue to prioritize marginalized communities come midterms, and beyond," Makhija added.

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

## INDIAN-ORIGIN SIKH RANBIR SODHI ELECTED TO FINLAND COUNCIL



Ranbir Sodhi, has been elected as member of the council of governors of the Vantaa-Kerava area (provinces) in Finland

**VANTAA-KERAVA, FINLAND (TIP):** A Punjabi University alumnus, Ranbir Sodhi, has been elected as member of the council of governors of the Vantaa-Kerava area (provinces) in Finland. Sodhi has been living in the country for the past 34 years.

Originally from Dhuri, Sodhi is a three-time legislator and represents the Social Democratic Party. He is among 69 members from the area who will elect its cabinet.

Sodhi said: "The Finland government organized its provinces (barring Helsinki) into counties to oversee the rescue and health services. The powers of health and rescue were shifted from individual provinces to the councils of governors. After a planning for nearly 15 years, the elections of the councils were held for the first time in January. I am one of the members from the Vantaa-Kerava area, which has 69 members."

Sodhi, who moved to Finland at 34, is in the restaurant business. He holds a master's degree in economics from Punjabi University.

"Council of governors oversee provisions of health and rescue operations," he said. -

# Members of Indian diaspora and citizens demand unconditional withdrawal of all charges against 18 activists in India

**18 STUDENTS AND ACTIVISTS ARE IN JAIL FOR OVER A YEAR**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Members of the global Indian diaspora and citizens in many countries have voiced concern over the alleged persecution of 18 students and activists under an anti-terror law for challenging the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA) and sought immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all charges against them.

In a statement coinciding with the Republic Day, the wide-ranging global actors said they "believe the 'Delhi 18' are being targeted as reprisal for their democratic dissent against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019."

It further said their demand is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all charges, including Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), against the Delhi 18 - a reference to 18 students and activists.

The Delhi 18 include Sharjeel Imam, Ishrat Jahan, Khalid Saifi, Tahir Hussain, Saleem Malik, Mohd. Saleem Khan, Meeran Haider, Shadab Ahmed, Gulfisha Fatima, Tasleem Ahmed, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, Umar Khalid, Safoora Zargar, Md. Faizan Khan, Asif Iqbal Tanha, Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita. Of the 18, 13 - all Muslims - have been in jail for over a year as of January 2022.

"Today on India's republic day I with politicians and those concerned with human rights around the globe are raising my voice against the persecution of 18 brave students, activists who are being falsely branded as 'terrorists' by the Indian state," said David Shoebridge,



Sharjeel Imam

a member of the Australian Parliament.

Govind Acharya, India Country Specialist, Amnesty International described their arrest as "a crackdown against free expression" and called for their immediate release.

Representatives of diaspora groups South Africa, Australia, Canada, USA, UK, Germany, Netherlands

and New Zealand also denounced what they called "unjust prosecution of the Delhi 18."

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 following religious persecution there will get Indian citizenship.

The Indian government has been emphasizing that the new law will not deny any citizenship rights but has been brought to protect the oppressed minorities of neighboring countries and give them citizenship.

The organizations which signed the statement included Hindus for Human Rights, USA; International Council of Indian Muslims, Worldwide; International Solidarity for Academic Freedom in India, Worldwide; People Against Apartheid and Fascism, South Africa; the Humanism Project, Australia; Dalit Solidarity Forum, USA; Chicago Coalition for human rights in India, USA and Scottish Indians for Justice, Scotland, among others.

Another joint statement released by the Front Line Defenders, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, FIDH, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), urged authorities in India to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders arrested for protesting against the CAA, dismiss all charges, and cease all forms of harassment against them. (Source: PTI)

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## QUEENS BECOMES FIRST COUNTY IN NEW YORK TO HAVE 2 MILLION RESIDENTS RECEIVE COVID-19 VACCINE

**QUEENS, NY (TIP):** As the city continues to encourage New Yorkers to get tested, vaccinated and boosted to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Queens on Jan. 8 became the first county in New York state to have 2 million residents receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to the city's Health Department.

It's a milestone for the "World's Borough," which was once the original "epicenter of the epicenter" of the greatest public health crisis in our lifetime, according to Queens Borough President Donovan Richards.

"Queens has proven again and again, culminating with today's incredible milestone, no borough has shown more strength, resilience and resolve in our collective comeback than our own," Richards said. "The pandemic is not over yet, as we've learned with the recent surge in cases brought on by the omicron variant, and neither is our fight against it. To all our neighbors who continue to roll up their sleeves to get both vaccinated and boosted and to all our healthcare workers who continue to serve their communities with unparalleled heroism, thank you for stepping up on behalf of our shared borough."

In April 2021, Queens became the first



county in New York state to have 1 million residents receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. As of Jan. 11, 89% of all Queens residents, regardless of age, have received at least one dose - 7 percentage points higher than the city average.

In terms of percentage of residents who are fully vaccinated, Queens leads the five boroughs at 80%. For children ages 5 to 17 in Queens, 66% have received at least one dose of a vaccine and 51% are fully vaccinated - nearly 10 points higher than the city average for both criteria. During the Queens Borough Board meeting held on Monday, Jan. 10, NYC Test & Trace Corps and the city Health Department reported a 960% increase in COVID cases between November 2021 and December 2021.

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

# Seven State Lawmakers Join GOPIO's Northeastern Chapters to Celebrate India's 73rd Republic Day

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Hundreds of Indian Americans representing GOPIO New York, GOPIO Manhattan, GOPIO-CT, GOPIO-Central Jersey and other community organization in a show of unity came together to celebrate India's 73rd Republic Day virtually on Wednesday, January 26th, 2022, paying rich tributes to their motherland, India as she stands tall among nations of the world, proclaiming freedom, democratic values, economic and technological advancements, and the rich cultural traditions.

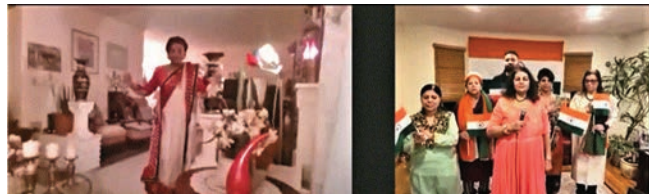
In his inaugural address, Indian Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, a career diplomat with over two decades of diplomatic career serving in Portugal, Cuba, South Africa and at the Permanent Mission of India in New York, greeted the Diaspora in the United States and around the world on the occasion of India's 73rd Republic Day celebrations.



**Dignitaries and elected officials at the celebration, from left Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Impact Executive Director Neil Makhija, Vermont State Senator Kesha Ram, NJ State Senator Vin Gopal, Ohio State Senator Niraj Antani, CT. Rep. Harry Arora, NH Rep. Latha Mangipudi, BY Rep. Jenifer Rajkumar and NJ Rep. Raj Mukherji**

Stating that celebrating India's Republic Day is special each year, but this year it's more so because it is the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Ambassador Jaiswal pointed to the several events that are being organized across the United States to commemorate the event, where a large number of people joined virtually and in person, including Greetings and Proclamations from the Governors of the state of New York And Ohio and from the mayor of New York City as well as from the NY state Senate.

Referring to fact that the "Indian Diaspora in the United States is very strong, and has contributed immensely to the India-US relations and to Mother India," Ambassador Jaiswal said, "The Indian Diaspora is playing a very important role in the cooperation between India and the United States in all areas, especially in the healthcare sector. "Covid is one area where scientists from India and the United States are collaborating in developing vaccines and medicines. We are grateful to the Diaspora for all of your contributions."



**American National Anthem by Mathy Pillai and Indian National Anthem by Jyothi Gupta and her team.**

Referring to the several elected Indian American leaders who attended the event, Ambassador Jaiswal said, "Your presence and greetings mean a lot to us and to the Indian Diaspora and to the Indo-US relationship." Announcing that India has provided 1.6 Billion does of Covid vaccination in the past 1 year, the senior diplomat representing India told the participants, how India's economy is doing remarkably well and that there are 60,000 StartUP Companies established in the past year. He praised India's efforts towards women's empowerment as India continues to contribute towards world peace and prosperity.

Neil Makhija, Executive President of Indian American Impact spoke about how they work towards



**Emcee and singers at the celebration, from l. to r.: Emcee Dr. Jaya Daptardar, Pallavi Belwariar, Kedar Godbole, Srinivas Gunupuru and Tripti Shah**

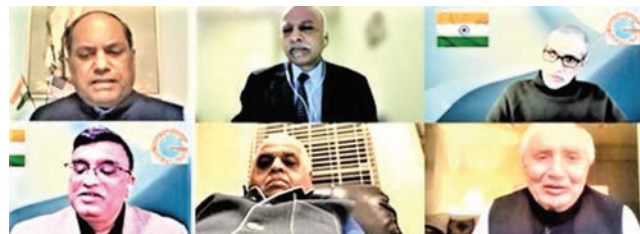
helping NRIs get elected to state and national offices. "Our goal is to increasing the representation of Indian Americans in all states," he said. "Across the country, a record number of Indian-Americans have been elected to the state and national offices. I am thrilled to be where we are today." He went onto introducing each of the elected officials who had joined the celebrations today.

New Jersey State Senator Vin Gopal recalled his visit with New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy traveling to several states in India meeting with several Chief Ministers and building relationships collaborating in several areas between India and New Jersey, which now has the fastest growing Indian American community in the United States. He proudly stated about how New Jersey has passed the legislation including Asian American history in the school curriculum teaching Indian history to all school children in the state. Referring to his frequent trips to India to meet with his grandparents, the young Senator said, "I am inspired by the values taught by family, which we carry them in our lives."

Vermont State Senator Kesha Ram shared of the reasons for her entering politics. "I got engaged with the community for long, where we care for each other." One of the youngest ever to be elected to State Assembly at the age of 21, she said, "I am the first ever woman of color to be elected to the state Assembly in Vermont. Continuing to break through the barriers, we can work together to elect more NRIs. "It's incredible to be of public service, following in the footsteps of my great grandfathers," she said, referring to her ancestry back in India, who had fought for the freedom for India. "We have carried with us that spirit of community service."

Ohio State Senator Niraj Antani, said, he is the 2nd Indian American ever elected to a statewide office and he is one of the only Republicans of Indian Origin to be elected. "Freedom is rare and needs to be upheld and protected. I work hard to reach across the aisle and cooperate with people in both the Parties to legislate." Sharing his early days and inspiration to enter politics, he said, "My parents worked hard to live the American dream. There is a need for us to be at the decision-making table. Everyone is able to realize the dream. We stand on your shoulders, to carry on the Indian values."

New Jersey State Rep. Raj Mukerji said, "We are celebrating the world's largest democracy today and



**GOPIO officials and organizers of the celebration, Top row, from l. to r. GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO-Manhattan Executive VP Prof. Raj Vangapaty and President Shivender Sofat. Bottom row, from l. to r. GOPIO-Manhattan Committee Member Chitranjan Belwariar, GOPIO-CT President Ashok Nichani and GOPIO VP Ram Gadhavi**

India's contributions to building a better world for all." He pointed to how the Indian American Caucuses are growing across the nation and in several states. In the

state of New Jersey, the Indian American representation in state offices has grown from 1 to 7 this year. "That's the way it should be. I am proud of all that GOPIO has contributed socially and financially to make this happen. I am proud of the contributions of the Indian Diaspora, who are in the front lines of global healthcare. NRIs are helping the nation and the world, come out of the Covid. And it's the time to celebrate."

NY State Representative Jenifer Rajkumar from the 28th District thanked GOPIO and the Indian American community for the inspiration she has had in her life, "Indian identity is central to my election to the state assembly in New York. I stand on your shoulders as GOPIO has played a great role in helping me get elected to the State Assembly." Referring to the record three Indian Americans elected to the state, she said, "We made history and I want to thank the community leaders who have made this possible." Rajkumar shared with the audience as to how growing up in a family that emphasized the teachings of Gandhian principles has helped her to appreciate diversity, justice and equality for all. She referred to the Bills she has introduced in the Assembly to celebrate Punjabi culture and declaring and October as Hindu heritage month as well as to celebrate India's Independence Day.



**Participants at the celebration**

New Hampshire State Rep. Latha Mangipudi, who has been elected again to the NH House of Representatives, shared with the audience about her own life, challenges in becoming a female, non-White elected official from a state which is majority White. "It was a very slow and gradual journey after I had come to the US to pursue higher studies in the 1980s." Inspired by Gandhiji's message of non-violence, which Martin Luther and late Rep. John Lewis had imbibed in their public life, the 1st generation Indian American said, "I am a woman, Brown colored, 1st generation Indian and very vocal in expressing my views." Stating that she has introduced traditional health systems of India including Ayurveda in New Hampshire, she thanked the Indian Consulate which has "worked with us to enhance awareness on India and its diverse culture and democratic values."

Connecticut State Representative Harry Arora said, "We know how powerful it is to have set up of laws and rules of laws, the power of a country comes from a beautifully written constitution which was adopted on that day and the fact that we have lived with that beautifully so many years with that constitution in India, which works."

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

# Pegasus: The new Cyber Weapon for dismantling democracy

BY GEORGE ABRAHAM



**"There is little doubt that the use of Pegasus is an assault on the right to privacy everywhere and specifically an attack on the very fabric of Indian democracy. Undoubtedly, the Government is responsible for monitoring people involved in criminal wrongdoings, and there are established procedures involving the judiciary laid out for it. However, targeting opposition leaders, journalists, and regular citizenry for surveilling for their God-given right to express themselves is tantamount to undermining the democracy itself. This Pegasus scandal exposes the mindset of the current leadership, and it does not bode well for the future of India."**

The New York Times recently reported that India had purchased the Pegasus software from an Israeli company, NSO, as part of the multi-billion-dollar armaments deal that included sophisticated weapons and intelligence gear. The report also said that the purchase was finalized during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel and cleared by the then Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2017.

Once again, the Government officials in India kept their silence on the New York Times story. Earlier, the Supreme Court in India has ordered an independent probe into Pegasus upon a ruling that came after petitions were filed which sought an investigation into allegations of unauthorized surveillance. The Court stated while ordering the inquiry that "the mere invocation of national security by the State does not render the Court a mute spectator."

The Court also listed several compelling circumstances that were weighed before issuing an order. The right to privacy and freedom of speech are alleged to be impacted, and the entire citizenry is affected by such allegations due to the potential chilling effect. The bench went on to say that the "right to



Pegasus is a cyber-weapon capable of hacking a target's smartphone, extracting its contents and turning on the device's microphone and camera. - For representation

privacy is directly infringed when there is surveillance or spying done on an individual, either by the State or by an external agency" and "if done by the State, the same must be justified on constitutional grounds ." During the hearing, the Centre had filed a brief affidavit "unequivocally" denying the allegations and said the matter involved national security concerns. The Indian Express recently reported that two Cybersecurity experts had told the Supreme Court-appointed committee on the Pegasus issue that there is concrete evidence that the application was used to spy on the petitioners.

The NSO group claims that the product it sells to government clients is intended to collect data from the mobile devices of specific individuals suspected to be involved in serious crime and terror. However, contrary to their assertion, it has been reported that this spyware has been widely misused. In response, a global consortium of more than 80 journalists from 17 media outlets in 10 countries came together under the 'Pegasus project' coordinated by Forbidden Stories with the technical support of Amnesty International's Security Lab. Their findings shed light on the fact that at least 180 journalists across the globe have been selected as targets in countries like India, Mexico, Hungary, Morocco and France, and others. Potential targets also included human rights activists, academics, businesspeople, lawyers, doctors, union leaders, diplomats, politicians, and several heads of state.

In a recent column, Siddharth Varadarajan, of 'The Wire' wrote further on his interaction with Ronen Bergman of the New York Times stating that the Indian leadership showed 'specific interest' in and 'specific emphasis' on acquiring the controversial spyware. The column went on to say that the forensic tests by Amnesty International's tech lab revealed the presence of military-grade spyware on the smartphones of several journalists, including two of the publication's founding editors, investigative

journalists Paranjay Guha Thakurta and Sushant Singh and the leading opposition strategist Prashant Kishor. Their numbers were part of a leaked database of probable Pegasus targets, including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, former election commissioner Ashok Lavasa, and former CBI director Alok Verma.

What is Pegasus? Pegasus is a spyware that can be covertly installed on mobile phones running most versions of iOS and Android. Pegasus can be installed on the phone through vulnerabilities in common apps such as SMS, WhatsApp, iMessage, or by tricking a target into clicking a malicious link. Once installed, Pegasus can theoretically harvest any data from the device (SMS, Emails, WhatsApp chats, photos, videos, calendar, or contacts) and transmit it back to the attacker. It could also activate a camera or a microphone, record calls, and scan the GPS data. When iPhone is compromised, it's done in such a way that allows the attacker to obtain so-called root privileges, or administrative rights, on the device. Pegasus could easily do more than what the device owner can do.

For a long time, Israel has used the sale of sophisticated weapons as part of its broader efforts to win diplomatic successes abroad or at the United Nations. Subsequently to this agreement, India voted in favor of Israel by denying observer status at the UN's Economic and Social Council to a Palestinian human rights organization. India has maintained a commitment to the Palestinian cause for decades, and its records at the United Nations speak for itself. This sudden about-face by India is viewed as a betrayal of the Palestinian people, and Pegasus may have a lot to do with it. It is not only India that has changed its attitude towards Israel after a Pegasus deal; a few countries, including Mexico and Panama, also appeared to have done the same. After installing Pegasus spyware in Panama City in 2012, Panama's Government voted to oppose the United Nations decision to upgrade the status of the Palestinian

**"THE STATE CANNOT GET A FREE PASS EVERY TIME BY RAISING NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS. NO OMNIBUS PROHIBITION CAN BE CALLED AGAINST JUDICIAL REVIEW."- SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

delegation.

The story of Khadija Ismayilova's is available in the public domain. In Azerbaijan, an oil-rich nation nestled next to the Caspian Sea, has increasingly stifled free speech and dissent in the last decade. Ismayilova's investigation into the ruling family had made her a prime target of her own Government. The authorities had thrown the book at her arresting her: surreptitiously filming her during sex, accusing her of driving a colleague to suicide, and eventually charging her with tax fraud and sentencing her to seven years in prison. However, she was released on bail after 18 months and banned from leaving the country for five years. So, in 2021, at the end of the travel ban, when Ismayilova packed away all her belongings boarded a plane to Ankara, Turkey, she may have thought she was leaving all that behind.

Little did she know the most invasive spy was coming with her. For nearly three years, Khadija Ismayilova's phone was regularly infected with Pegasus. "All night, I have been thinking about what I did with my phone. I feel guilty for the messages I have sent. I feel guilty for the sources who sent me information thinking that some encrypted messaging ways are secure, and they didn't know my phone was infected," she told reporters. "My family members are also victimized. The sources are victimized, and private secrets of the people I have been working with are victimized," she added.

There is little doubt that the use of Pegasus is an assault on the right to privacy everywhere and specifically an attack on the very fabric of Indian democracy. Undoubtedly, the Government is responsible for monitoring people involved in criminal wrongdoings, and there are established procedures involving the judiciary laid out for it. However, targeting opposition leaders, journalists, and regular citizenry for surveilling for their God-given right to express themselves is tantamount to undermining the democracy itself. This Pegasus scandal exposes the mindset of the current leadership, and it does not bode well for the future of India.

(Author is a former Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations and the Vice-Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA. He can be reached at [atgta777@gmail.com](mailto:atgta777@gmail.com))



# Budget 2022: India's job crisis leading to a 'nowhere generation'

## JOB PROSPECTS FOR THE YOUNG LOOK BLEAK IN INDIA



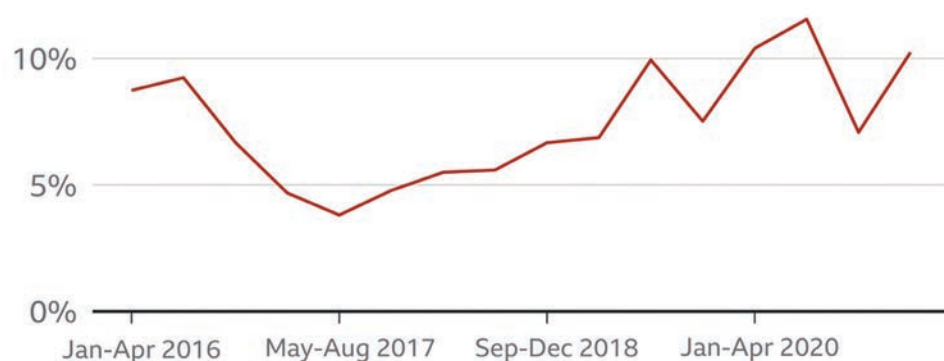
BY CRAIG  
JEFFREY  
AND  
JANE DYSON



**HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF POORLY EMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE, MANY OF THEM HIGHLY EDUCATED, CHALLENGE THE STORY OF INDIA'S RISE AND BOOSTERISH PROJECTIONS OF ASIA BENEFITING FROM A "DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND".**

### Unemployment has been on the rise

Unemployment rate, 2016-21



Source: CMIE

BBC

#### Rising unemployment in India

India aims to create six million jobs over the next five years, according to this week's budget announcements. It will not be easy: the country's unemployment rate has exceeded most emerging economies in recent years. Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson, who have studied joblessness in India, write on the nature of unemployment in India.

In the mid-2000s, a group of students at a college in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, jokingly referred to themselves as a "nowhere generation".

Worn down by years of fruitless attempts to acquire government employment, this group said that they were stuck between their rural homes and dream of urban mobility. "Berozgaari" (unemployment) seemed to have left them high and dry - marooned by modernity.

"Well, our life has just become about timepass," they would say. (Timepass is an Indian English word which means spending time without a purpose in life.)

In the last two weeks, as the scale of India's employment crisis has become more evident, media and popular attention has swung again to the phenomenon of the

"unemployed youth" in India.

Hundreds of millions of poorly employed young people, many of them highly educated, challenge the story of India's rise and boosterish projections of Asia benefiting from a "demographic dividend".

The problem of unemployment, as evident in the mid-2000s, has grown substantially since that time.

As concern about unemployment intensifies, the media spotlight inevitably swings between loud demonstrations and the stump speeches of the politicians.

But if we adjust our gaze and put aside received stereotypes about unemployed youth as a danger to society, we might ask: What are young people actually doing at the everyday level in India? How do they spend their time? How do they relate to their communities? How are they changing India?

Over the past 25 years, we have carried out research in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand states on the experiences and actions of unemployed young people aged between 18 and 35. This research has involved living and working with

unemployed young people for many years in Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh and in Chamoli district in Uttarakhand.

The depth of social suffering is striking. Unemployed young people encounter cluster of disappointments. They lack money, cannot make good on familial expectations, often lack a sense of respect, and frequently face problems managing their marriages.

For men, a lack of a "pukki naukri" (permanent job) often undermines their identity as breadwinners. Added to this, they often feel bitter about the time they invested in education and job searches.

Work is also connected to citizenship. Many young people spent their teens and early twenties dreaming of serving the nation through obtaining jobs in government service that have become ludicrously difficult to secure.

They help people access state services. They circulate new ideas, for example regarding technology, microcredit, religious practice, environmental care, and development.

Sometimes these young people protest, but most often this mobilization is around services and infrastructure rather than politics. They want a better maths teacher or an extension to their school.

One thing that many unemployed young people have told us is that even if they cannot help themselves, they may be able to help the generation coming after them.

Younger youth - teenagers and pre-teens - are grappling with educational and career choices that are new and which their own parents struggle to understand. The generation in the middle, unemployed or underemployed 18-35-year-olds who have had to live through recent struggles of seeking work, become the key "beech ki pidhi" (intermediary generation).

To paint this picture is not to romanticize either young people or unemployment. But it is to acknowledge

a center of energy in the Indian population - unemployed young people in their late teens, twenties or early thirties who live in ordinary places across India. They are crucial to India's and the world's future trajectories.

How could external organizations better support this community of young people? Perhaps India's enormous Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme could be expanded to include structured opportunities for young people to undertake the type of community service they are leading. Maybe efforts could be made to find ways to accredit active unemployed or under-employed young people with skills.

One thing is clear: Youth themselves are desperately eager for such opportunities.

(Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson teach Human Geography at the University of Melbourne. Jeffrey is author of several books on India, including *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Dyson is author of *Working Childhoods: Youth, Agency and the Environment in India*.)

(Source: BBC)



Bihar railways exam violence: 'We are graduates, we are hungry'

Small wonder that many unemployed young people, especially men, have become cynical and detached, describing themselves as people "doing nothing" or engaged only in timepass. Nowhere generation is everywhere, it seems.

But such self-stereotypes of the unemployed and underemployed "doing nothing" - or of them being "nowhere" - should not be taken at face value.

Young people are often closely involved in forms of entrepreneurship at the everyday level. They find "fallback" work, not necessarily of high quality or utilizing all of their skills, but good enough to offer some sense that better employment may materialize in the future.

What is also remarkable is the extent of the community service performed by young people who are unemployed and under-employed. This section of society has become the mainstay of India's civil society.

At the most mundane level, these young people often act as interpreters of social change, volunteers and helpers for others in their villages or town



Unemployed youth demanding jobs in a rally

# Punjab economy, expatriate Punjabis, and the role of Punjab government

BY GURMIT SINGH  
PALAHI



English translation by  
Amarjit Singh Anand

**SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS IN PUNJAB HAVE ONLY EXPLOITED THE EXPATRIATE PUNJABIS FOR THEIR NARROW AND SELFISH ENDS, NEVER PROTECTING THEIR INTERESTS IN THE STATE. THEY ARE DISILLUSIONED, THEIR LOVE OF THEIR NATIVE LAND, NOTWITHSTANDING. THEY COULD YET BE INSPIRED TO LOOK TOWARDS PUNJAB IF THEIR GRIEVANCES ARE REDRESSED, AND THEY ARE TREATED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT, AND NOT MERELY AS ATM MACHINES.**



Kirpal Sahota, who was elected NRI Sabha chief, in March 2021, flashes the victory sign.

Photo / courtesy Sarabjit Singh

Always during the election season, the ruling clique begins remembering the Non-Resident Punjabis. Whether the polls are for local bodies, like panchayats at the village level or for the State Assembly, political aspirants start sending invitations and cherishing reminiscences from the olden-golden days. They make it a point to entice them to Punjab, by offering alluring schemes because the NRIs wield considerably extraordinary influence over their relatives and close acquaintances living in Punjab.

The residents of the Bigger Palace i.e., the Central government initiates dialogue by facilitating various communication channels including organizing glittering Expatriate Conventions and Galas, where the crème de la crème drawn from the uppermost echelons are very selectively invited and are honored with impressive plaques and verbal encomiums from the rostrum. Some hollow promises (to be broken later) are gifted to the 'elite NRIs. Nothing happens. Status-quo is maintained by the promise-makers. The Non-Resident Indians return to their adopted residences, empty-handed, after having emptied their coffers into the deep dark well of party-funds.

The Akali-BJP-combine assembled such annual extravaganzas, for several years, in order to attract the targeted NRIs while trying to prove a 'spirit-of-camaraderie' with them. Myriad dreams were woven and presented by the rulers. Promises were churned out to provide legal redress to the expatriates, pertaining to the latter's properties, which had been usurped by their relatives, using forged documents.

The Congress outfit had actively energized the NRI-Sabha in Jalandhar and had brought their chosen-ones into the limelight. This group in Jalandhar was optimally utilized by the Akalis during their regime, with great enthusiasm. It was highlighted as the great well-wisher and trouble-shooter for the NRIs, but it turned out to be a damp-squib, when the Sabha-outfit became a puppet in the hands of Punjab bureaucracy with their 'rightful-red-tape' and a rubber-stamp of the politicians. After swallowing millions from the pockets of NRIs, no solace, succor and solutions were provided to resolve their issues. Their occupied properties were

not restored to the NRIs. On the contrary, some vested interests including the mighty triumvirate of politicians, police, administrative-cadre, working in cohesive-tandem along with the land-mafia, enhanced the misery and pain of the NRIs, manifold and in multifarious ways. The corrupt system digested the hard-earned wealth of the expatriates, giving them false hopes. Astonishingly, many such NRIs who were unable to present themselves during the court-hearings, were shockingly pronounced declared-absconders. The list of such NRIs, who were defrauded by their own relatives, is pretty voluminous. They had no option but to reconcile with their plight and stay quiet about the whole messy imbroglio. NRI Sabha, NRI-Police stations and the newly instituted NRI-Cell could do absolutely nothing to provide even an iota of relief to the NRIs.

When the Akali-BJP government felt the need for financial support from NRIs, frequent appeals were made. Akalis opened a Single Window, whereby NRIs were encouraged to initiate business ventures and they did make really massive investments in their land of origin with the objective of improving the conditions in their native place, an ailing Punjab. However, the Inspector Raj did not let the motivated NRIs move forward with their noble plans and they had to return abroad, sans achieving anything substantial. Many NRIs opened charitable hospitals and made hefty donations to schools and colleges. Sports facilities were created whereby Tournaments, Heritage Fairs and Cultural Events were also organized to inspire the youth to engage in healthy lifestyle, shunning the menace of drugs. However, NRIs were made to fail in these

divine endeavors and also in preventing the rise in cases of prevalence of the dreaded cancer. NRIs suffered financial losses, desperation, frustration, mental anguish and physical exhaustion. Many NRIs established engineering and management colleges, hotels, banquet and wedding halls. Their aim was not only to make monetary gains, but to revitalize the economy. But the situation is an open secret, as many such colleges are on the verge of closure.

After ruling the roost during his tenure of four years, Captain Congress team has, yet once again, felt the need of reaching out to NRIs. Congress was quite aghast with NRIs who had not openly voted for Aam Aadmi Party but also given it huge donations during the previous Assembly elections. It's a different story, altogether, that Aam Aadmi Party failed to deliver, due to their infighting, and all dreams of NRIs were shattered, regarding refurbishing the economy.

The major areas which were of concern to the NRIs included overall growth, economic progress, rooting-out corruption, wiping-out drugs, enhancing employment avenues, prevention of suicides by desperate farmers and laborers. The NRIs had wished nobody would remain hungry and would get proper nourishment. Congress government in Punjab remained indifferent for four years towards the NRIs. Congress remained evasive and did not facilitate elections in the NRI-Sabha, and all other NRI matters were ignored. Distances increased between Congress and NRIs, but the latter could not be totally sidelined as they have always had an immensely significant role to play in Punjab politics. Therefore, Congress conducted the elections to NRI-Sabha some time ago and appointed their close

confidantes as honorary coordinators in USA, Canada, U.K. and Australia. Amongst these are Daljit Singh Sahota and Manjit Singh Nijjar in the U.K.; In the USA, Sarabjit Singh in California and Rajbir Singh Randhawa and others; Sukhminder Singh Khaira, Nachatar Singh Kooner and others in Canada. NRI Commission has also been activated in Punjab, wherein a DGP rank official oversees the NRI matters. Punjab government has appealed to NRI Punjabis to contribute to the wellbeing of the State. The Minister for NRI-affairs, Gurmit Singh Sodhi appealed to them to lend a helping hand in reviving the economy. Now it remains to be seen how the NRIs would be welcomed by the politicians, bureaucracy and officialdom.

NRIs always wish for the wellbeing of Punjab. They have, always provided massive support to all movements emanating from Punjab. NRIs always provided heavy relief during droughts, floods or any natural calamity. When the central rulers wanted to impose the black laws upon the farming sector, NRI Punjabi groups having divergent ideologies in Canada, USA and UK forgot their rivalries and demonstrated cohesively in favor of the farmers. They were also campaigning pro-actively on the social media. NRIs owe their primary loyalties to their native Punjab. They feel and share the pain of Punjab as they realize that the youth is afflicted with the menace of drugs, unemployment and is flying abroad in search of greener pastures. The Centre has been depriving Punjab of its rich water resources. Cancer is rampant in Punjab. For all these reasons, NRI Punjabi community, individually and as part of conclaves, always come forward to happily discharge their responsibility, whenever a clarion-call is sent in their direction.

However, another discouraging factor is that government officials and some natives in Punjab misbehaved with NRIs, during the Corona-Covid pandemic, which they are unable to forget. They were held in confinement, as if they were responsible for the widespread occurrence of the pandemic in Punjab. NRIs were given the impression that they were foreigners in their own motherland. Announcements were made against them; notices of solitary confinement were slapped outside their houses, and they faced humiliation in government offices. The public, too, misbehaved and became the cause for emotional distress of the NRIs.

PRABHJOT SINGH, A FORMER CHIEF OF BUREAU OF THE TRIBUNE, HAS MADE CERTAIN ASSESSMENTS ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB. WE ARE PUBLISHING HERE TWO OF HIS ARTICLES. -EDITOR

BY PRABHJOT SINGH



## It may not be a Tussle between Congress and SAD any more



Punjab has been one of those states that has not only won against two-decade long terror-driver turbulence but also for its reiteration and trust in strong democratic norms. After partition of the country in 1947, Congress domination in State politics continued till 1966. Since then, Punjab has been witnessing a fierce tussle for power between a national party - Congress - and a regional party - Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

This time, the State may have a new political party or alliance at the helm of affairs. Both Shiromani Akali Dal and Congress have witnessed groups of senior leaders walking out to form their own outfits. Punjab Lok Congress is the offshoot of Congress while Samyukta Akali Dal is the breakaway group of Shiromani Akali Dal.

In the last elections in 2017, the new entrant, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), after its roaring success in

Delhi, managed to push the SAD-BJP alliance to third position by winning 20 seats.

Among new entrants are the Shiromani Akali Dal-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance, Bhartiya Janata Party-Punjab Lok Congress-Samyukta Akali Dal alliance and Samyukat Samaj Morcha (Balbir Singh Rajewal).

Incidentally, SAD had always enjoyed the support of Bharatiya Janata Party, a major national party, as its alliance partner. In 2021, this oldest alliance crumbled after the Union Government passed the three Farm Laws.

The Congress and the SAD, as two major political opponents, have been ruling the state alternately since reorganization of the State on November 1, 1966. Their rules have been punctuated with spells of varying periods of the President's rule. These Presidential intervention on recommendation of the Governor were either because of political uncertainty or because of terrorism that engulfed the state for over two decades since late 1979.

It was because of terrorism that State also witnessed major boycott of the electoral process, first in 1985 when certain wings of the Akalis stayed away and then in 1992 when the mainstream Akali Dal boycotted the elections. In 1991 when Chandrasekhar was Prime Minister and elections were called to restore democracy in the State, Congress decided to stay away. Intriguingly, a day before polling was to be held in the State, elections were called off as the Centre Congress had come back to power and the minority government of Chandrasekhar bowed out.

Akalis had protested the last-minute cancellation maintaining that more than 30 candidates had fallen to the bullets of terrorists while reposing their faith in democracy. Subsequently when elections were called again in February 1992, Akalis led by Parkash Singh Badal, boycotted. Only a fraction of Akalis led by Amarinder Singh contested on 58 of 117 seats and won on three.

BJP, the traditional alliance partner of Akalis, however, participated in the 1992 elections though without much success. Even its Hindu card at that time did not work.

While the Congress has enjoyed seven full-term governments - those of 1952, 1957, 1962, 1972, 1992, 2002 and 2017 the Shiromani Akali Dal that made history in 1997 by becoming the first non-Congress party to complete its first full term in office since Independence, has repeated its 1997 feat in 2007 and 2012.

The only time Punjab electors did not give any party or alliance a clear mandate was the 1967 election, the first after the reorganization of the State. Congress got only 48 in a house of 104.

It was during this time that the Akalis had their first tryst with power by getting the entire Opposition united to form the United Front government. It was the first multi-party coalition government in the State. In 1985, after signing of the Rajiv-Longowal accord, Akalis graduated to absolute power, winning 73 of the 100 Vidhan Sabha seats they contested.

In the 1997 elections, they took this supremacy for power a step further by improving their individual tally to 75 out of 92 seats contested by them.

## Mild Fluctuations in Share of National and Regional Parties



A careful analysis of the election results since 1967 would reveal that the percentage of votes polled by national parties, mainly the Congress, except for 1977 and 1997, has been more than 50.

In 1967, for example, when Punjab had its first coalition government - the United Front - the Congress had polled 36.56 per cent of the total votes against 26.47 per cent votes polled by all state parties. The overall votes polled by national parties, including the Congress, Jana Sangh, CPI, CPM, Praja Socialist Party and Swatantra Party - was 56.60.

In 1969, the share of national parties rose to 58.34 per cent, with the Congress increasing its share to 39.18 per cent while the state parties accounted for only 30.44 per cent of the votes. In 1972, when the Congress returned to power in the State, the share of the national parties increased slightly to 58.77 per cent while those of state parties dropped to 28.73 per cent. The Congress had taken its poll percentage to 42.84, which had been surpassed only twice afterwards, first in 1980 when the Congress got 45.19 per cent of the total votes polled and again in 1992 when it got 43.71 per cent votes.

The 1992 election was exceptional in the history of Punjab. The mainstream Shiromani Akali Dal

boycotted the elections. A faction of the Dal, led by the then rebel Akali leader, Capt Amarinder Singh, contested 58 seats and won only three. This was the only occasion when the percentage of votes dropped to 23.82, the lowest ever. The other lowest being 64.33 in 1980.

The share of national parties dropped to 40.29 per cent, the only time below 50 per cent, in 1997 when besides 26.59 per cent of the votes secured by the Congress, all the national parties, including the BJP, CPI and CPM had aggregated 40.29 per cent.

The most distinguishing aspect of Punjab politics has been that the Akalis, even at times securing clear majority, have been aligning themselves with the Jana Sangh/Bharatiya Janata Party. This combination alienated both Sikh and Hindu votes from the once powerful Congress.

The emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party in the 1992 elections saw this political outfit of the downtrodden getting 16.32 per cent of the valid votes polled which in the 1992 elections was more than three times that secured by the Akali Dal led by Capt Amarinder Singh. Interestingly, the BSP had bagged nine seats against three by the Akalis.

The BSP, however, failed to maintain its tempo and in the 1997 elections, after witnessing a vertical split-leading to the formation of the Bahujan Semaj Morcha headed by Mr. Satnam Singh Kainth - saw its share of vote coming down to 7.48 per cent of the total valid votes and its share in the Vidhan Sabha dropping to one.

The electorate in Punjab have known to participate in the process enthusiastically, averaging more than 64 per cent in all the previous elections held in the State so far.

Till date, the Shiromani Akali Dal has never crossed the 40 per cent barrier. Its best performance was in 1985 when it got 38.01 per cent of the total valid votes. In 1997, this percentage dropped slightly to 37.64.

Besides the Congress and the Akali Dal, other main players in Punjab politics have been Jana Sangh/BJP, CPI, CPM and briefly the Janata Party, which in the 1977 elections polled 14.99 per cent votes to win 25 seats out of 41 candidates put up by it.

The Communists - the CPI and the CPM - put together had been aggregating about 9 to 10 per cent of the total valid votes polled till 1997. The exceptions were the 1967 and 1969 election when they polled less than 8 per cent but since 1972, they have been averaging 9 per cent and above. In the 1967 elections they polled 8.46 per cent votes, 7.91 per cent in 1969, 9.77 per cent in 1972 and 9.60 per cent in 1977 winning eight, six, 11 and 15 seats collectively, respectively.

In 1980, they crossed the double figure mark, aggregating 10.52 per cent to win 14 seats - nine by the CPI and five by the CPM. Since then, their share, both in percentage of valid votes and seats in the Vidhan Sabha, has been dropping as in the 1997 elections, they got only 4.77 per cent of total valid votes with two seats in the Vidhan Sabha. In the last Vidhan Sabha, the Communists went unrepresented. During the first term of Capt Amarinder Singh as Chief Minister, both the Communist legislators, defected and joined Congress. Since then, the Communists had been drawing a blank in Vidhan Sabha elections.

(Prabhjot Singh is a veteran journalist with over three decades of experience covering a wide spectrum of subjects and stories. He has covered Punjab and Sikh affairs for more than three decades besides covering seven Olympics and several major sporting events and hosting TV shows. For more in-depth analysis please visit [probeinge.com](http://probeinge.com) or follow him on [Twitter.com/probeinge](https://twitter.com/probeinge))

IRS IS READY TO WELCOME TAXPAYERS. HERE ARE SOME PRESS RELEASES WHICH CARRY IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF TAXPAYERS.

# IRS warning: Scammers work year-round; stay vigilant

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** As the new year begins, the Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers to protect their personal and financial information throughout the year and watch out for IRS impersonation scams, along with other schemes, that try to trick people out of their hard-earned money.

These schemes can involve text message scams, e-mail schemes and phone scams. This tax season, the IRS also warns people to watch out for signs of potential unemployment fraud.

"With filing season underway, this is a prime period for identity thieves to hit people with realistic-looking emails and texts about their tax returns and refunds," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Watching out for these common scams can keep people from becoming victims of identity theft and protect their sensitive personal information that can be used to file tax returns and steal refunds."

The IRS, state tax agencies and the nation's tax industry - working together in the Security Summit initiative - have taken numerous steps since 2015 to protect taxpayers, businesses and the tax system from identity thieves. Summit partners continue to warn people to watch out for common scams and schemes this tax season.

## Text message scams

Last year, there was an uptick in text messages that impersonated the IRS. These scams are sent to taxpayers' smartphones and have referenced COVID-19 and/or "stimulus payments." These messages often contain bogus links claiming to be IRS websites or other online tools. Other than IRS Secure Access, the IRS does not use text messages to discuss personal tax issues, such as those involving bills or refunds. The IRS also will not send taxpayers messages via social media platforms.

If a taxpayer receives an unsolicited SMS/text that appears to be from either the IRS or a program closely linked to the IRS, the taxpayer should take a screenshot of the text message and include the screenshot in an email to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) with the following information:

- Date/time/time zone they received the text message
- Phone number that received the text message

## Tax Time Guide: Important considerations before filing a 2021 tax return

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** Now that the 2022 tax season is open, the Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers to make sure they've got what they need before they file and to consider free resources available to help them get organized.

This news release is part of a series called the Tax Time Guide, a resource to help taxpayers file an accurate tax return. Additional help is available at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) or in Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax.

## Don't file before ready

While taxpayers should not file late, they also should not file prematurely. People who file before they receive all the proper tax reporting documents risk making a mistake that may lead to processing delays.

Typically, year-end forms start arriving by mail - or are available online - in January. Taxpayers should review them carefully. If any of the information shown is inaccurate or not available, taxpayers should contact



the payer right away for a correction or to ensure they have their current mailing or email address.

New this year, the IRS sent Letter 6419, Advance Child Tax Credit Reconciliation, in January 2022 to help individuals reconcile and receive the full amount of their 2021 Child Tax Credit. This letter includes the total amount of the 2021 advance Child Tax Credit payments issued and the number of qualifying children used to calculate their advance payments. People need this important information to accurately claim the other half of the 2021 Child Tax Credit when filing their 2021 tax return and prevent delays in processing. The IRS reminds people to check this information carefully.

Most eligible people were already issued their third Economic Impact Payment and won't include any information about it when they file. However, people who didn't qualify for a third payment or did not receive the full amount may be eligible for the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit based on their 2021 tax situation. They will need the total amount of their third Economic Impact Payment to file an accurate tax return to avoid a processing delay. Taxpayers can sign into their IRS Online Account to view the total amount of the third-round Economic Impact Payment or wait to receive IRS Letter 6475.

## Individuals not required to file must file a tax return to claim important tax credits

The IRS strongly encourages individuals who are not required to file a tax return to file one this season to claim potentially thousands of dollars in tax credits. By filing a tax return, individuals could claim:

The Recovery Rebate Credit to receive any remaining 2021 stimulus payments that they might not have received (for example, if they added a new child or other dependent in 2021);

The remaining Child Tax Credit for which they are eligible, including any monthly payments that they might not have received (for example, if they added a new qualifying child in 2021); and

The Earned Income Tax Credit, the federal government's largest refundable tax credit for low- to moderate-income families (the amount of which has been nearly tripled for filers without children).

## View IRS account information online

Individuals can use their IRS Online Account to securely access information about their federal tax account, including payments, tax records and more.

To help with filing a return, individuals can view:

The total amounts of Economic Impact Payments issued for tax year 2021

The total amount of advance Child Tax Credit payments

Their adjusted gross income from their last tax return

The total of any estimated tax payments they made, and refunds applied as a credit

They can also now make and track payments and manage communication preferences, including the option to go paperless and request email notifications for certain notices available online. Taxpayers are encouraged to register for an online account, if they haven't already, or sign in to access this information and explore these new features.

## Important 2021 Tax Documents

Organized tax records make preparing a complete and accurate tax return easier and may help taxpayers find overlooked deductions or credits.

Taxpayers should wait to file until they have all their supporting income statements including but not limited to:

## Forms W-2 from employer(s)

Forms 1099 from banks, issuing agencies and other payers including unemployment compensation, dividends and distributions from a pension, annuity or retirement plan

Form 1099-K, 1099-Misc, W-2 or other income statement if they worked in the gig economy

Form 1099-INT if they received interest payments

Other income documents and records reporting virtual or crypto currency transactions

Form 1095-A, Health Insurance Marketplace Statement, to reconcile advance Premium Tax Credits for Marketplace coverage

Letter 6419, 2021 Total advance Child Tax Credit Payments to reconcile advance Child Tax Credit payments

Letter 6475, 2021 Economic Impact Payment, to determine eligibility to claim the Recovery Rebate Credit.

## Free help

Once taxpayers have collected all their tax documents and information, they're ready to consider how they will file.

IRS Free File is a great option for eligible taxpayers who are only filing a tax return to reconcile 2021 advance payments and claim the remaining portion of their Child Tax Credit or to claim the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit, either because they didn't receive a third-round Economic Impact Payment or did not receive the full amount. IRS Free File can also be used to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit, which provides a refundable tax credit based on a filer's income and family size.

IRS Free File is available to any person or family who earned \$73,000 or less in 2021. This year, there are eight IRS Free File products in English and one in Spanish.

Taxpayers can use a "look up" tool to choose from one of the Free File Providers. Each provider sets its own eligibility standards, generally based on income, age and state residency giving taxpayers who earned \$73,000 or less at least one product to use for free.

Free File is just one way the IRS provides free tax preparation options to taxpayers through a partnership model. The IRS also partners with community organizations to train IRS-certified volunteers to prepare and electronically file basic income tax returns for qualified individuals for free.

**(Read more on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))**

# Diaspora has been important pillar of India-US relationship: Ambassador Sandhu

WASHINGTON D.C. (TIP): The Indian-American diaspora has played an important role in strengthening the India-US relationship, the country's top envoy said here on Wednesday, January 26, a day after the Indian government announced Padma Bhushan civilian awards to three eminent Indian-Americans.

"The diaspora has been an important pillar of the relationship, which continues to strengthen ties through its achievements in diverse sectors and contribute to India's development journey," India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu told the community during a virtual celebration of the country's 73rd Republic Day.

Addressing thousands of Indian-Americans, who joined the celebrations through various social media outlets, Sandhu said this year, three of the distinguished diaspora members had been conferred the Padma Bhushan -



Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu - File photo

Madhu Jaffrey for popularizing Indian cuisine, Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai for their leadership in the technology sector.

"This is a matter of pride for all of us, as well as a testament to the strength of the community," Sandhu said from the

lawns of India House, the official residence of India's Ambassador to the US, in Washington DC.

In his remarks, the Indian ambassador said the United States had been a key partner for his country.

"As Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi mentioned in his remarks at the Bilateral Summit with President (Joe) Biden last year, we are witnessing a transformative period in the India-US strategic partnership driven by tradition, talent, technology, trade and trusteeship. All of us are working towards realizing the full potential of this consequential relationship," he said.

Observing that this year is special as the county celebrates the 75th anniversary of its independence as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Sandhu said India today is better placed to face the increasing challenges and complexities that the world encounters. (Source: PTI)

## GANDHI MEMORIAL FOUNDATION OBSERVES GANDHIJI'S 74TH PUNYATITHI AS SHAHEED DIWAS



Mahatma Gandhi Statue in the National Heritage Park on McCormick Boulevard in Skokie, Illinois

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Mahatma Gandhi's 74th death anniversary was observed on January 30, 2022 at 11:00 am at Mahatma Gandhi Statue in the National Heritage Park on McCormick Boulevard in Skokie, Illinois. Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi was remembered with singing of "Gandhi's favorite Bhajans" and Powerful Tributes by Gandhi Memorial Foundation Board Members and Floral tributes by Consulate General of Chicago Mr. Amit Kumar and his wife Mrs Surabhi Kumar.

The contribution of Mahatma Gandhi towards the nation and its independence is well known in Indian History. He was a great freedom fighter who taught the lesson of non-violence to the whole world and worked on building the unity of the nation which was broken by the British. After India got Independence in 1947, Bapu stayed away from politics and started working on harmony, peace, and brotherhood among the people. On Friday - January 30, 1948 at 5:17 PM the Father of the Nation was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in the year 1948 at Gandhi Smriti in the Birla House during the evening prayers. January 30 is the day when Mahatma Gandhi was martyred, and the Government of India announced the day as Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day (Sarvodaya Day).

The event started by Shree Gurusamy welcoming remarks. Prayer songs "Vaishnav Jan to and Raghupati Raghav Rajaram" led by Bhartiben Desai were very inspiring. Consul General Amit Kumar's remembrance of Gandhiji's talisman quotation was very timely. Dr Sriram Sonty remembered the Last few minutes of Mahatma Gandhiji' Life. The White and Red color beautiful Garland was donated by Srinivas and Kavitha. Tea and snacks provided and brought by Consul Ranjit Singhji's team. Diptiji put lots of efforts to call snow removal service because of over 10-inch snow by Mahatma Gandhi Statue in the National Heritage Park. Due to very cold weather (16 Degree Fahrenheit) the event was only for 15 minutes.

(Photographs and Press release by: Asian Media USA)

## US lawmakers join Indians in celebrating 73rd Republic Day



Senator Jim Risch, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, says this Republic Day, he appreciates the strong US-India relationship

WASHINGTON, D.C.(TIP): Top American lawmakers joined 130 crore Indians and the Indian diaspora across the world in celebrating the country's 73rd Republic Day on Wednesday.

"Today we join with people around the world who cherish pluralism, equality and democracy as we celebrate India's birth as a constitutional republic. Wishing India a happy 73rd Republic Day," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, which was also tweeted by its chairman, Senator Bob Menendez.

"To all our friends celebrating today, Happy 73rd Republic Day. On this important day, India celebrates the promise of the world's largest democracy to secure 'all its citizens

justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity,'" tweeted Senator John Cornyn, Co-Chair of the Senate India Caucus. "I wish a Happy Republic Day to our friends and strategic partners in India. When I served as the US ambassador to Japan, I was honored to help raise America's critical Quad partnership with India, Australia and Japan to new heights," Senator Bill Hagerty said. Senator Jim Risch, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said this Republic Day, he appreciates the strong US-India relationship and looks forward to working with his Indian counterparts to further advance a free and open Indo-Pacific region bilaterally and through the Quad. "From the world's oldest democracy to the world's largest democracy, we congratulate India celebrating its 73rd Republic Day today, and marking 75 years of independence this year!" Congressman Jim Costa said in a tweet.

Congressman Steve Chabot, who is the co-chair of the House Caucus on India and Indian Americans, wished a happy Republic Day to the citizens of India. "They gained independence from the British in 1947. Three years later, the Indian Constitution came into effect. India now has the world's largest democracy," he said. (Source: PTI)

## FIA hosts India's 73rd Republic Day 2022 Celebration

### BOLLYWOOD STAR POONAM DHILLON LAUNCHES FIA'S NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Federation of Indian Associations [FIA] Chicago, status 501(c)(3), a premier community umbrella organization -- hosted its first signature event of the year 2022, Celebrating India's 73rd Republic Day with great fervor and enthusiasm, at Chicago Marriott Northwest, at Hoffman Estates, IL on Jan 29th, 2022. This limited seating event was broadcasted virtually via zoom and Facebook live, in adherence to the latest covid 19 guidelines per State of IL regulations.

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



## UP POLLS: AKHILESH PICKS BASTION KARHAL, BHIM ARMY CHIEF TO TAKE ON CM YOGI

LUCKNOW (TIP)

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav will contest the UP Assembly polls from Karhal in Mainpuri district, party's national spokesperson Ashutosh Verma said.

Akhilesh Yadav, an MP from Azamgarh, had on Wednesday, Feb 2, said he would decide on contesting the Assembly polls after talking to the people.

SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav represents Mainpuri constituency in Parliament.

Meanwhile, Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad had been fielded from Gorakhpur Urban seat, from where Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will face his first Assembly poll. Azaad, a prominent face, heads the Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) which announced his nomination. Gorakhpur Sadar goes to polls on March 3 in the sixth phase.

Source: PTI

## SUPREME COURT DEFERS HEARING ON NAVJOT SIDHU ROAD RAGE CASE PLEA TO FEBRUARY 25

LUCKNOW (TIP)

The Supreme Court today deferred to February 25 the hearing on a petition seeking review of its 2018 order letting off Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu with a fine of Rs 1,000 in a 32-year-old road rage case in which one Gurnam Singh had died.

The order by a Bench of Justice AM Khanwilkar and Justice SK Kaul came as a reprieve for the cricketer-turned-politician ahead of the Punjab Assembly poll to be held on February 20.

The deferment came after senior advocate P Chidambaram, representing Sidhu, submitted that the advocate-on-record in the case was changed last night and he needed time to file reply to the review petition. Initially, the Bench proposed to defer it to February 21 but finally it posted the matter for hearing on February 25 as Chidambaram urged that it be listed on any date after February 23. "On a lighter side, two weeks' time is crucial for him," the top court said.

The Bench took exception to a letter circulated by Sidhu's new counsel seeking four-week adjournment that said the matter had been "unexpectedly listed". Source: TNS

# ED arrests Punjab CM Channi's nephew on charges of money laundering ahead of polls

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Bhupinder Singh alias Honey, nephew of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, in a money laundering case linked to alleged illegal sand mining in the border state, officials said on Friday, Feb 4.

They said Honey was arrested under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) late Thursday night after several hours of questioning at the agency's office in Jalandhar.

Sources claimed he was evasive in his replies and was hence taken into custody. The ED will produce him before a special PMLA court in Mohali on Friday seeking his remand.

Honey is the son of Channi's sister-in-law. On January 18, the agency had raided his premises and claimed to have seized about Rs 8 crore cash and "incriminating" documents. Property belonging to a few others were also raided.

The development comes days before Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to announce the party's chief ministerial candidate in the poll-bound state. Gandhi is expected to make this announcement during his virtual rally in Ludhiana on Sunday and Channi is stated to be the front runner. Punjab will go to polls on February 20.

After the raids last months, ED sources had claimed that the agency had recovered over Rs 10 crore in cash and several documents, of which Rs 8 crore and most of the papers were seized from premises linked to Honey alone.



Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi with his nephew Bhupinder Singh (ANI file image)

About Rs 2 crore cash was seized from the premises linked to a person identified as Sandeep Kumar.

The ED had then issued a statement saying those covered in the raids included Kudratdeep Singh, Pinjore Royalty company and its partners/shareholders, Kanwarmahip Singh, Manpreet Singh, Sunil Kumar Joshi, Jagveer Inder Singh, Randeep Singh, Providers Overseas Consultants Pvt Ltd and its other directors, shareholders, including Honey and Sandeep Kumar, at Mohali, Ludhiana, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Pathankot.

Channi had told reporters that as relatives of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were raided during the Assembly polls in that state, the "same pattern" was being followed by the ED in Punjab to "pressure" him, his ministers and the Congress party members.

The ED filed a criminal case under PMLA last November.

The case is based on a 2018 FIR at the Shaheed Bhagat Singh (SBS) Nagar police station that pressed charges under the Indian Penal Code and Mines and Minerals (Regulation of Development) Act, 1957.

Source: PTI

## Haryana law for quota in private sector jobs put on hold

CHANDIGARH (TIP)

In a relief for many private sector companies, the Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday, Feb 3, granted an interim stay on a Haryana government law providing 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for residents of the state.

A bench of justices Ajay Tewari and Pankaj Jain passed the order on pleas filed by various industry associations from Faridabad and other bodies from Haryana including Gurgaon.

Haryana's Additional Advocate General Jagbir Singh Malik said the state will be filing a Special Leave Petition (SLP) against the order before the Supreme Court.

"The court has granted an interim stay and we are filing SLP against this order," Malik said over the phone.

The court admitted multiple petitions against implementation of the law — Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020, counsel of one of the petitioners said.

The interim order has come as a relief for companies in the state which feel that the Act would have a bearing on their

future business operations and investment.

The Act provides 75 per cent reservation in the private sector to job seekers from the state and came into force from January 15 after being notified in November last year. It applies to jobs offering a maximum gross monthly salary or wages of Rs 30,000.

### Haryana govt moves SC challenging HC order

The Haryana government on Friday approached the Supreme Court challenging the stay by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on the state law providing 75 per cent quota to locals in private jobs. The state government, in its plea, argued that the High Court passed the order on the plea after hearing the matter for just 90 seconds.

Appearing for the Haryana Government, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, mentioned the matter before CJI NV Ramana bench and contended that "yesterday the High Court after hearing him for 90 seconds admitted the plea and stayed the Act". On Tushar Mehta's request, the SC bench agreed to hear the matter on February 7, Monday, subject to placing an order of the High Court on record.

Source: PTI

## NEET-PG 2022 deferred by 6-8 weeks

The Union Health Ministry has postponed the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-PG) 2022. The exam was scheduled to be held on March 12. The ministry has deferred the exam by 6-8 weeks and has not announced any new exam schedule as of now. The fresh exam dates will be released in due course of time. The Supreme Court was also hearing a plea seeking postponement of the NEET-PG 2022. On January 25, six MBBS graduates had filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking postponement of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) scheduled on March 12 for admissions in postgraduate medical courses, claiming that many MBBS graduates would not be able to take up the examination due to non-completion of the mandatory internship period.

**4,984 CRIMINAL CASES INVOLVING LEGISLATORS PENDING IN COURTS: AMICUS CURIAE**

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A total of 4,984 criminal cases involving legislators were pending in various courts across the country as on December 1, 2021, according to data compiled by the Amicus Curiae who is assisting the Supreme Court court in a matter in which the top court had ordered setting up of special courts to fast-track cases against MPs and MLAs.

The report by Amicus Curiae Senior Advocate Vijay Hansaria, which is based on data provided by the various High Courts, said that "despite a series of directions by" the SC "and continuous monitoring, as many as 4,984 cases are pending out of which 1,899 cases are more than 5 years old".

The report which was submitted to the top court Thursday by Advocate on Record Sneha Kalita pointed out that "the total number of cases pending as on December 2018 were 4,110; and as on October 2020 were 4,859".

"Even after disposal of 2,775 cases after 04.12.2018, the cases against MPs/MLAs have increased from 4,122 to 4,984. This shows that more and more persons with criminal antecedents are occupying the seats in the Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies," the report said.

Source: *The Indian Express*

**Galwan clash: China suffered higher losses than reported, says Australian newspaper**

NEW DELHI (TIP)

China's losses in the Galwan Valley clash in 2020 were much higher than reported with many soldiers drowning while crossing a fast-flowing river in darkness, an investigative Australian newspaper claimed on Wednesday, February 2.

The Klaxon cited findings by unnamed researchers and mainland Chinese bloggers in the report and said they have declined to be named on security grounds, but their findings appear to "shed significant light on the saga".

"Claims of substantial Chinese casualties are not new, however evidence provided by a group of social media researchers, which The Klaxon has independently built on, appears to support claims that China's casualties extended well beyond the four soldiers named by Beijing," it said.

The report said it also showed the extreme lengths Beijing has gone to silence discussion about the battle.

"China's losses in the high-altitude 2020 Galwan Valley border clash with India —



the deadliest confrontation between the two giants in over four decades — were much higher than reported with many soldiers drowning while crossing a fast-flowing, sub-zero river in darkness, new research claims," the report said.

The eastern Ladakh border row escalated after the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, 2020.

Twenty Indian Army personnel laid down their lives in the clashes that marked the most serious military

conflicts between the two sides in decades.

In February last year, China officially acknowledged that five Chinese military officers and soldiers were killed in the clashes with the Indian Army though it is widely believed that the death toll was higher.

The Klaxon cited a report into the matter titled "Galwan Decoded" that it said has been prepared by a group of social media researchers.

"The researchers have declined to be named on security grounds, but their findings appear to shed significant light on the saga," it said.

The Klaxon said the report cited a year-long investigation involving discussions with mainland Chinese bloggers, information obtained from mainland-based Chinese citizens and media reports that have since been deleted by Chinese authorities.

"A lot of facts about what really happened, what led to the skirmish, have been hidden by Beijing," it quoted from the report. Source: *PTI*

**India records 1.49 lakh new Covid cases, 1,072 more deaths**

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India added 1,49,394 new Covid cases, taking the total tally to 4,19,52,712, while the active cases further declined to 14,35,569, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday, Feb 4.

The death toll climbed to 5,00,055 with 1,072 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprised 3.42 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate improved to 95.39 per cent, the ministry said.

A reduction of 98,352 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The 1,072 new fatalities include 601 from Kerala and 75 from Maharashtra.

Of the 601 deaths in Kerala, 36 were reported in the last 24 hours, 124 were those which occurred in the last few days but were not recorded due to late receipt of documents and 441 were designated as Covid deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, the state government said on Thursday.

A total of 5,00,055 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,42,859 from Maharashtra, 56,701 from Kerala, 39,197 from Karnataka, 37,666 from Tamil Nadu, 25,932 from Delhi, 23,277 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,723 from West Bengal.

**3rd Covid wave affected youngsters more, sore throat commonest sign: ICMR**

The third wave of Covid 19 affected younger people more with sore throat



emerging the commonest symptom.

An ICMR analysis of 1,520 (564 fully jabbed and 956 unvaccinated or half jabbed) Covid 19 patients admitted to 37 hospitals between November 15, 2021 and January 17, 2022 revealed the mean age of the hospitalised at 44 years against 55 years in the second wave.

Nearly half — 46 pc—of the hospitalised young had comorbidities and all symptoms were less severe as compared to the second wave.

Among fully vaccinated, 10.2 pc died and 91 pc of these had comorbidities.

Proportion of deaths among unvaccinated was much higher at 22 pc with 83 pc reporting comorbidities.

Oxygen requirement was lesser among jabbed (36.1 pc needed oxygen) as against the unvaccinated (45.5 pc needed Oxygen.).

Percentage of the vaccinated requiring mechanical ventilation was 5.4 pc as against 11.2 pc un-vaccinated.

Source: *PTI and TNS*

**Privilege notice against Rahul Gandhi for 'Union of States' comment**

NEW DELHI (TIP)

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Thursday, Feb 3, submitted a privilege notice to the Lok Sabha secretariat against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for attempting to "incite" MPs and the nation at large through his remarks during the debate in the House on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address.

Noting that while every MP has a constitutional right to speak in Parliament and express his/her views on various topics, he said it is also one of the foremost duties of every member to maintain decency and should not speak anything that would lower the dignity of Parliament and categorised as 'Contempt of the House'.

"I have submitted a privilege notice to the Lok Sabha secretariat against Gandhi for his comments relating to the 'Union and its Territories,'" Dubey told PTI.

"In his speech, he has uttered that 'India is described as a Union of States and India is not described as a Nation. He has further correlated this with making a hollow, baseless and childish prophecy that the people of Tamil Nadu, etc., would never allow themselves to be ruled by the present government/party'."

"These utterances of Shri Rahul Gandhi is an attempt to 'hint' and 'incite' the other Members of Parliament and also to the citizens of our 'Nation', by means of the live telecast, that any state could easily be separated from our 'Nation' if they do



not want to be ruled by a specific political party and no new state and/or alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing states could be effected in any manner in view of the fact that our country came to existence by means of a 'negotiation' between and amongst various states," the notice said. Calling Rahul Gandhi a "script reader" and a 'drawing room politician', Dubey said it appears that he has even not read the Preamble of our Constitution, which unambiguously states that "We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic."

"By usage of the word 'Republic' in the preamble of our Constitution, it has already made clear to one and all that India is a 'Nation' by all means but, it is quite unfortunate that this simple fact is not understood by a veteran parliamentarian, i.e., Shri Rahul Gandhi, who also share the rare distinction of possessing a questionable academic attainment abroad," the BJP leaders said.

Source: *PTI*

# Sitharaman presents Budget amid oppn taunts, applause from treasury benches

Lok Sabha members heard Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 90-minute budget speech in rapt attention, barring the occasional remarks by opposition members and regular applause from the treasury benches. Keeping in line with changing times, Sitharaman read out the speech from a 'Made in India' tablet personal computer which she carried in a red cover with the National Emblem embossed on it, instead of a brief case or 'Bahi Khata'.

As Sitharaman walked into the Lok Sabha chamber, women ministers Shobha Karandlaje and Darshana Jardosh and member from Madhya Pradesh Riti Pathak were seen greeting her, while Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw gave her a thumbs up.

With Covid pandemic guidelines in force, members were seated in the chambers of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Most of the members, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were seen wearing face masks. However, members had crowded the Lok Sabha chamber, while hardly a handful of others, including union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Piyush Goyal, were seen seated in the Rajya Sabha chamber.

Members from the treasury benches greeted Modi as he entered the Lok Sabha chamber with chants of 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', and 'Har, Har Mahadev'. A BJP member was heard asking about Rahul Gandhi. Gandhi, a Lok Sabha member from Wayanad was seated in his usual seat in the second row, engrossed all the time in his tablet PC.

Trinamool member Saugata Roy and DMK member Dayanidhi Maran were heard criticising the allocation made for setting up an international arbitration centre at GIFT city. "Is this Union Budget or Gujarat Budget? This is good only for Gujarat," Roy and Maran were heard as saying.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman holds a folder-case containing the Union Budget 2022, at North Block in New Delhi on February 1, 2022. (PTI)

The duo also demanded greater allocation for states from the GST collections when the finance minister mentioned gross GST collection of Rs 1.40 lakh crore for January 2022. Opposition members demanded allocation of 5G spectrum to BSNL, when Sitharaman mentioned that the government planned to auction 5G spectrum in the next financial year.

Congress members protested the announcements related to strategic sale of Air India and Neelanchal Ispat Nigam Limited and the planned IPO of Life Insurance Corporation. "It is a sell-off of institutions," Congress member T N Prathapan was heard saying.

Several members were dismayed at the non-availability of the hard copies of the Budget Speech of the Finance Minister. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

said the speech copies would be available after the presentation of the Budget. Power Minister R K Singh was seen ensuring that Sitharaman had her supply of lemonade, which she sipped at regular intervals, during her address.

## In push for Aatmanirbhar defence, procurement budget raised to 68%

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Feb 1 announced 68 per cent of the capital procurement budget for the defence sector will be earmarked in 2022-23 for local industry. The number is up from 58 per cent in the last fiscal year.

The decision aims to reduce the country's dependence on imports of defence equipment and have a more 'self-reliant' defence sector under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. "68%

of the capital procurement budget for Defence to be earmarked for domestic industry to promote Aatmanirbhar," she announced during her Budget speech in Parliament.

She also announced that defence research and development (R&D) will be opened for industry, start-ups and academia. Private industry will be encouraged to take up the design and development of military platforms and equipment in collaboration with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and other organizations through the special purpose vehicle (SPV) model, the Union finance minister also said.

The major increase in the spending comes as the country is countering the threat posed by China and Pakistan. Since April 2020, the Indian Army is in a stand-off with China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in eastern Ladakh. The government has held several rounds of talks with the Chinese officials, however to no resolution as of yet.

The disengagement process is due in areas of Hot Springs, Depsang bulge and Demchok in eastern Ladakh. Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

## CEA: India on track to becoming \$5-trillion economy by FY26

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Tuesday expressed hope that India would become a \$5 trillion economy by FY26 on the back of 8-9% sustained growth.

Gross domestic product (GDP) in dollar terms has already crossed \$3 trillion, he said during the finance minister's post-Budget interaction with the press.

"If we extrapolate it, we should be a \$5 trillion economy in terms of nominal GDP in the FY2025-26 or FY2026-27," Nageswaran said.

Source: PTI and HTC

## Budget lacks any serious measures to boost revenue: Moody's

The Union Budget lacks any tangible measures to increase revenue generation even though the capital expenditure plans have gone up significantly and the fiscal deficit estimate suggests that the government is relying too much on strong growth to help drive fiscal consolidation, rating agency Moody's said in a note.

The budget underscores government's previous emphasis on capex to sustain near-term recovery from the pandemic, while simultaneously paving the way for longer-term restructuring of the economy, it stated.

But the various spending initiatives are not offset by any significant announcements related to further increase revenue generation; rather, the announced revenue-related measures are aimed at other

objectives such as fostering startup innovation, ensuring more equitable treatment for cooperatives and state employees, and promoting tax compliance through simplification, Christian de Guzman, a senior vice-president, sovereign risk group, Moody's Investors Service, said.

On the fiscal consolidation front, he said the target for the central deficit to narrow to 6.4 per cent in FY23 from a 6.9 per cent in FY22 suggests government is relying on strong growth to help drive fiscal consolidation in light of the large bump in capex, which is up by 35 per cent for the next fiscal and this poses some uncertainty given the prevalence of the pandemic-related risks.

The wider-than-expected deficit in the current fiscal in part reflects higher spending on the back of the

second wave as well as a larger subsidy bill that was driven by higher food and commodity prices.

On a general government basis, states' finances also continue to pose challenges to fiscal consolidation given higher spending by way of higher allocation for assistance for states capex and higher 4 per cent of GSDP allowed as fiscal deficit.

He, however, said the budget further cements New Delhi's stated commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

The focus on climate-related initiatives in the budget signals the government's broadening commitment towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. The measures like using sovereign green bonds and to significantly increase subsidies to promote solar power generation are a good start, he said.



# Govt proposes measures to deter tax evasion, cut litigation

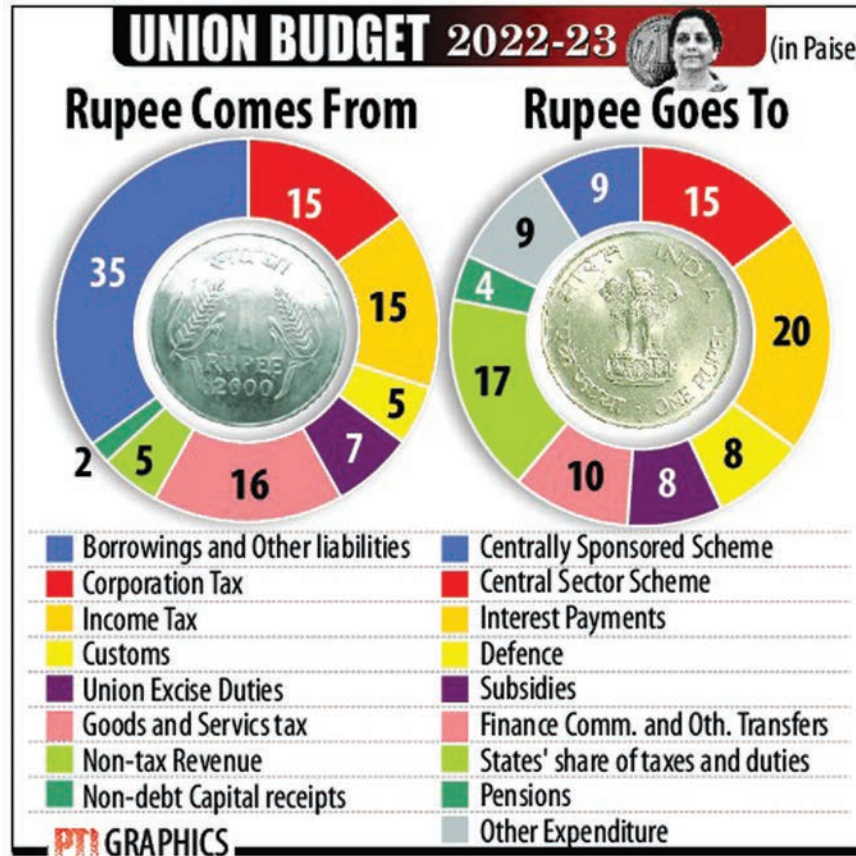
The government proposals related to the direct taxes will further simplify the tax system, promote voluntary compliance by taxpayers, and reduce litigation, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday, Feb 1, while presenting the budget for the fiscal year 2022-23. In order to increase deterrence among tax evaders, Sitharaman proposed to provide no set off, of losses, against undisclosed income detected during search operations.

Underlining the existing ambiguity, Sitharaman said that set off, of losses, are brought forward against undisclosed income detected in search operations to avoid payment of tax.

"It has been observed that in many cases where undisclosed income or suppression of sales etc. is detected, payment of tax is avoided by setting off, of losses," the finance minister said. "In order to bring certainty and to increase deterrence among tax evaders, I propose to provide that no set off, of any loss shall be allowed against undisclosed income detected during search and survey operations," she added.

Sitharaman also proposed new measures to reduce litigation involving identical issues in order to save time and resources. The litigation will be reduced by restricting the filing of a further appeal if the question of law is identical to a question is identical to the one pending in appeal before the jurisdictional High Court or Supreme Court. The filing will be deferred till such question of law is decided by the jurisdictional High Court or the Supreme Court.

"It has been observed that a lot of time and resources are consumed in



Courtesy: PTI

filing of appeals which involve identical issues...This will greatly help in reducing the repeated litigation between taxpayers and the department," Sitharaman said in the budget speech.

**'Didn't increase tax burden on people,' says FM; explains why**

Nirmala Sitharaman said that she did not attempt to increase the taxes in the Union Budget she presented in Parliament today. She added that the government has continued this tradition from last year, when the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi directed the officials to not burden the common man with higher taxes during Covid-19. "I did not increase the taxes. I want to repeat this - I didn't do it last year as well as this year. I did not make any attempt to earn a single paisa through taxes," Sitharaman said at a post-Budget press conference. "Last year, the Prime Minister had ordered us not to increase taxes during the pandemic time, even if there is huge fiscal deficit. He said the public should not face the additional burden of taxes during this time."



## 'Crypto tax' is here. India imposes 30% tax on proceeds of digital assets

In a significant move that is believed to have brought cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) under a tax net, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, Feb 1, announced a 30 per cent tax on any income from the transfer of virtual digital assets, specifying that no deductions and exemptions will be allowed.

The gifts are to be taxed on the hands of the recipient, she said, adding that there will also be a 1 per cent tax deducted at source (TDS) on the payments made for the transfer of digital assets. It was also announced that any loss made on the transaction of such digital assets cannot be set off against any other gain.

"Any income from virtual digital assets is taxable at 30 per cent," the finance minister said while presenting the federal budget. "There will be no deduction with exception of the cost of acquisition. The TDS is applicable beyond a specified monetary threshold, and the gift of virtual currencies is taxable in the hands of the recipient."

In her Budget announcement, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman also said that the country's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), will introduce a digital currency in the next financial year using blockchain and other supporting technology.

"Introduction of a central bank digital currency will give a big boost to the digital economy," Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday while presenting the federal budget. "Digital currency will also lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system." Ahead of the Union Budget announcement this year, speculation was rife regarding the central government's official stance towards cryptocurrencies and any potential taxes that might be imposed on the same. *Source: HT*

# Budget 2022-23: Thrust on mental healthcare

The Union Budget has proposed to raise health sector allocation by nearly 17 per cent, setting aside a major chunk of Rs 747 crore for the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission that seeks to prepare all 734 districts for future challenges and pandemics.

Overall allocation has gone up from Rs 73,932 crore in the Budget estimates of 2021-22 to Rs 86,200 crore in the BE of 2022-23, a rise of 16.59 per cent. Of this year's allocation, Rs 3,200 crore is only for health research.

Major focus areas in the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech were digital and mental health and the need to invest in both segments — a learning of two years of the Covid-19 pandemic. A National Digital Health Ecosystem and National Tele Mental Health Programme will be launched. Also an integrated architecture will be created to improve women and child health and nutrition indicators.



This architecture will include Mission Shakti (for women's health), Mission Vatsalya (for the care of pregnant women); Saksham Anganwadis (empowering anganwadis to improve child health) and Poshan 2.0 (to improve dismal child nutrition indicators). Two lakh anganwadis are to be upgraded to Saksham

Anganwadis.

The above announcements follow National Family Health Survey-5 findings on dismal rate of improvement in child health indicators.

The FM said the three missions were recently launched to provide integrated benefits to women and children and these schemes would be strengthened. The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, launched by PM Narendra Modi in September last year, was part of the Budget speech. It entails maintenance of patient records in a digital format for easy access by doctors and bringing hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and labs on a single online platform for citizens to choose.

On mental health, the FM said, "To better access to quality mental health counselling and care services, a National Tele Mental Health Programme will be launched. This will include a network of 23 tele mental health centres of excellence." *Source: TNS*

# From headphones to umbrellas: What gets cheaper, what's costlier in Budget 2022

From headphones, umbrellas, imitation jewellery, to cocoa beans, and cut and polished diamonds, prices of various commodities will see a rise or dip following Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget on Tuesday, Feb 1.

While imported items, along with umbrellas and unblended fuel will see a rise in prices from April when the Budget comes into effect, chargers and cameras for phones, wearable tech like smartwatches, hearing aids, gemstones and diamonds, farming tools and smart meters, steel scraps and chemicals for petroleum refining will get cheaper.

"Electronic manufacturing has been growing rapidly and customs duty rates are being calibrated to provide a graded rate structure to facilitate local manufacturing of wearable devices, hearable devices, and electronic smart meters," the Finance Minister had said in her speech.

## Following is a list of imported items that will become costlier

- Umbrella
- Imitation Jewellery
- Single or multiple loudspeakers
- Headphones and earphones
- Smart meters
- Solar cells
- Solar modules
- X-ray machines
- Parts of electronic toys

## However, certain goods will become cheaper as the government has slashed the customs duty and they are:

- Frozen mussels
- Frozen squids
- Asafoetida
- Cocoa beans
- Methyl alcohol
- Acetic acid
- Cut and polished diamonds
- Camera lens for cellular mobile phone.

## Farm credit target increased to Rs18 lakh cr

The government has increased the agricultural credit target to Rs18 lakh crore for the 2022-23 fiscal from Rs16.50 lakh crore for the current fiscal. "Of the Rs 16.50 lakh crore target this year, 75 per cent has been disbursed," said Rajesh Verma, Secretary, Department of Financial Services. About Rs7.36 lakh crore agri-credit has been disbursed to farmers during the first six months of the 2021-22, according to the Economic Survey. During the 2016-17 fiscal, an amount of Rs10.65 lakh crore was disbursed.

## New scheme PM-DevINE announced for NE

A new scheme, Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East



(PM-DevINE), was announced in the Budget for the Northeast with an allocation of Rs1,500 crore. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said PM-DevINE will be implemented through the North-Eastern Council. It will fund the infrastructure, in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti, and social development projects based on the needs of the Northeast, a release said. This will enable livelihood activities for youth and women, filling the gaps in various sectors, she said.

## Rs288 cr for training bureaucrats in India, abroad

A budget of over Rs288 crore has been allocated to the Union Personnel Ministry for the training of bureaucrats, both in India and abroad. Besides, Rs44.25 crore has been allocated under "administrative reforms and pensioners' scheme", including for modernisation of offices. Of the Rs288.14 crore, Rs210.75 crore is for the upgradation of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie to a centre of excellence and augmentation of training facilities and other centres.

## Anti-dumping duty on Chinese steel to go

The Union Budget has proposed revocation of anti-dumping duty on some steel products imported from various countries, including China, following pleas from the domestic industry that was faced with high prices. "Certain anti-dumping and CVD on stainless steel and coated steel flat products, bars of alloy steel and high-speed steel are being revoked," said Sitharaman. Anti-dumping duty on certain steel products from China was imposed in 2018 and was followed by a similar cess on some other steel products from Vietnam, Korea, Brazil, China and Germany in 2019.

## No tax up to Rs10 lakh for Covid treatment

The Finance Bill has notified that income-tax will not be charged on the amount received by a taxpayer for medical treatment from employer or from any person for treatment of Covid-19 during FY 2019-20 and subsequent years.

## Deep Ocean Mission gets massive push

India's deep ocean mission that seeks to explore vast marine living and non-living resources has received a massive boost in the Union Budget with the Finance Minister allocating Rs 650 crore for the initiative. The overall allocation to the Earth Sciences Ministry has increased to Rs 2,653.51 crore in 2022-23 from the revised estimates of Rs 2,369.54 crore in the previous Budget. The Budget Estimates of this year include Rs 450 crore on capital expenditure. Sitharaman has allocated Rs 650 crore for the Deep Ocean Mission in the Budget for 2022-23.

## Govt to borrow record Rs. 11.61 cr

The government will borrow a record Rs. 11.6 lakh crore from the market in 2022-23 to meet its expenditure requirement to prop up the economy. This is nearly Rs. 2 lakh crore higher than the current year's Budget estimate of Rs. 9.7 lakh crore. Total market borrowings of the government for 2022-23 are estimated at Rs. 11,58,719 crore, according to the Budget document.

## Rs. 200 cr aid for Afghanistan

India has set aside Rs. 200 crore in its Budget for Afghanistan. It is learnt that the special allocation is a signal of India's commitment to the Afghan people and the money may be spent on paying for old projects, scholarships and providing aid to the Afghan people. Last

year, Rs. 350 crore was allocated, but the revised estimate put the amount at Rs. 200 crore.

## Rs. 6,292 cr for other countries

India has allocated Rs. 17,250 crore to the MEA, of which Rs. 6,292 crore is for development assistance to countries in neighbourhood as well as in Africa and Latin America. Bhutan has got maximum outlay of Rs. 2,266 crore, Mauritius Rs. 900 crore, Nepal Rs. 750 crore, Myanmar Rs. 600 crore, Maldives Rs. 360 crore, Bangladesh Rs. 300 crore and Sri Lanka Rs. 200 crore.

## Diesel to be dearer by Rs. 2

Diesel will cost Rs. 2 per litre more from October 1 after the Budget proposed levied additional excise duty on fuel sold without blending it with ethanol or biodiesel. "Blending of fuel is a priority government's priority. To encourage the efforts for blending of fuel, unblended fuel shall attract an additional differential excise duty of Rs. 2 per litre from the October 1," said the FM.

## Focus remains on Swachh Bharat

The Union government appears to have kept its focus on its flagship Jal Jeevan Mission and the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) while making allocations in the Budget for the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Out of the total budgetary allocations of over Rs. 67,221 crore, the two centrally sponsored schemes account for Rs. 67,192 crore.

## Rs. 13,134 cr for Social Justice Ministry

The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, which caters to the welfare of the Backward Classes and those with disabilities, was allocated Rs. 13,134 crore, a 12% increase from the last fiscal. An amount of Rs. 11,922 crore has been allocated for the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and Rs. 1,212 crore for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

## Targeting 60 lakh jobs

The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) unveiled to help MSMEs extended till March 2023. With this, the government is targeting 60 lakh jobs in next 5 years. The MSME sector has hailed the move.

## Rs. 3,050 cr for Ayush Ministry

The Ministry of Ayush has received an allocation of Rs. 3,050 crore a slight increase of 2.69 per cent from 2021-22 when Rs. 2,970 crore was earmarked. An amount of Rs. 306 crore has been set aside for the Central schemes, while Rs. 110 crore has been allocated for statutory and regulatory bodies. Autonomous bodies have been allocated Rs. 1,759 crore.

# ‘Capitalist Budget’, says Cong; nothing for common man, say Opposition leaders

Relieved that the Budget in the midst of key state elections lacks big-bang vote-catching announcements, the Congress Tuesday, Feb 1, took a leaf out of socialist and communist parties to claim that the government has delivered a “capitalist Budget” giving a short shrift to the poor and offering no roadmap for job creation and plan to address challenges like widening inequality, falling incomes and rising unemployment.

Most of the Opposition leaders, including Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, Aam Aadmi Party’s Arvind Kejriwal and Samajwadi Party’s Akhilesh Yadav argued that the Budget has nothing for the common man. The Left echoed.

Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram welcomed the increase in capital expenditure but pointed out that the government has slashed “every key subsidy” which means that the increased spending would not be on the poor. “Today’s Budget speech was the most capitalist speech ever read by



a Finance Minister,” he said.

The Congress was expecting that the Budget would have announcements with an eye on the elections in five states. The absence of populist pronouncements helped the party, whose economic outlook is more or less same as the BJP, frame the Budget in the communist and socialist jargon of the rich versus the poor. Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi called it a “Zero Sum Budget” which has nothing for the “salaried class, middle class, the poor and deprived, youth, farmers and MSMEs”.

Banerjee shared his view. She said, the “Budget has zero for common people, who are getting

crushed by unemployment and inflation. Government is lost in big words signifying nothing — a Pegasus spin Budget,” she said.

“In the time of Corona, people had big expectations from the Budget. But it had disappointed the people. There is nothing in the Budget for the common people. There is nothing to bring down the prices either,” Kejriwal said.

“Work and businesses are in ruins. There is a historic economic slowdown, lakhs have lost their jobs...the incomes of the common people have come down...Unemployment and disease have dried up people’s savings...And to pick the pockets have come yet another Budget of the BJP,” said Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav.

While Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge called it a Budget for the rich and mentioned the cut in corporate taxes, Chidambaram pointed out that the Finance Minister mentioned the word “poor” only twice in her speech.

Source: *The Indian Express*

## Budget for a modern, self-reliant nation: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday highlighted the provisions and intention of the Union Budget presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1, calling it one that would “take the country on the path towards modernisation”.



“This Budget focuses on the poor, middle class and youth and aims to provide them basic necessities. Our government is working on the provision of basic facilities,” the Prime Minister said, addressing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers virtually in a speech titled “Atmanirbhar Arthvyawastha” (self-reliant economy).

“It is very difficult to explain the whole Budget in one speech... The party has invited me to speak about the government’s vision with the Budget. I will try to explain the basic intent of the Budget,” he started, before listing some of its key provisions and the larger thinking behind them.

“This Budget has several steps to take India on the road towards modernisation. In the last seven years, decisions taken are continuously enlarging the Indian economy. About 7-8 years ago, India’s GDP was ₹1.10 lakh crore. Today, our GDP is nearly ₹2.3 lakh crore,” Modi said.

He added that time has come for fulfilment of new resolutions. “It is very important that India should become self-reliant and a modern India should be built on the foundation of self-reliant India.” Source: *HT*

### Reactions to Budget

**Nischal Shetty, CEO, WazirX:** “Clarity on income tax is a huge positive step for the crypto industry. This also removes any fear people had about the impending ban. We now know that the government is definitely inching towards regulations in this sector.”

**Uday Kotak, MD, Kotak Mahindra Bank:** “Budget: trust based governance to build atmanirbhar bharat. Reposes faith in taxpayers, entrepreneurs, investors. Build an open, digital and inclusive India with a 25 year vision. I am proud to be Indian.”

**Nikhil Kamath, Co-founder, True Beacon and Zerodha:** “Sometimes boring is good. From a market, investor/trader standpoint nothing has changed so this will largely play out as a non-event for the stock markets. It is a positive step to see that this budget will take steps to regulate virtual currency. While how this will be implemented will determine if establishing a CBDC will result in less expensive currency management and a boost to the economy as a whole. International cues have been positive over the last 2 days, and we seem to be following them for now.”

**Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, Partner, Rare Enterprises:** “I can bet on that net tax revenue in current year is ₹3-4 lakh crore higher than budget expectations for the rest of financial year 2021-22. Hence, fiscal deficit will be

1-1.5 percent lower than budget estimates. This clearly indicates that next year collection will be higher than ₹4 lakh crore, so this is ultra conservative estimates of tax collections.”

**Chandan Garg, Chairman & MD, Innovana Group:** “The extension of ECLGS scheme is a welcome move for MSMEs. The credit and fiscal support of ₹5 lakh crore will give a huge boost to this sector encouraging new businesses to come to the fore. This announcement will certainly generate more than 10 lakh of employment opportunities in a short span of time. However, a slight focus on easing the trade and the taxation policies for MSMEs facilitating more freedom to do business was also expected from this year’s budget announcement.”

**Siddharth Maurya, Resource Specialist, Fund Management:** “The Budget session has taken some prudent initiatives for MSMEs and India Inc for start-ups. The tax concession period has been extended by one more year, which in my opinion is a very positive move. Likewise, a 15% tax has been decided for the newly incorporated manufacturing unit. The period of incorporation has been increased by one more year to 31-3-2024. This will further boost manufacturing activities.”

**Gurjodhpal Singh, CEO, Tide (IN):** “The financial support for the digital payments ecosystem is a welcome move

and further reaffirms the Government of India’s digital banking push. This push on digitisation will make way for more inclusion in the ecosystem. The focus on ‘Ease of doing business’ is a great step, as it will further promote entrepreneurship in the economy.”

**Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress:** “Truth of #Budget2022 - ‘Nothing Budget’. The pocket of the poor is empty, nothing. Empty pocket of the employed, nothing. The pockets of the middle class are empty, nothing. Farmer’s pocket empty, nothing. The hope of youth is broken, nothing. To increase consumption, nothing. Promotion of small industry, nothing,” he said in a Twitter post.

**Communist Party India general secretary D. Raja:** The Budget has turned out to be a bag of disasters and deceptions. The budget has not addressed growing unemployment and inequality. No Wealth Tax introduced to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Pandemic has made life difficult for commoners but providing any relief is not on the government’s agenda. The rich stands to gain more.

**Trinamool Congress MP Derek O’Brien:** The Budget is pro-rich. “Diamonds are this government’s best friend. For the rest — farmers, middle class, daily earners, unemployed — this is a PM (Does Not) Care budget,” he tweeted.

**RPG Enterprises chairman Harsh**

**Goenka:** “INDIA LEADS WORLD ORDER.” Goenka shared this Wordle puzzle and tweeted, “With today’s Budget focused on capex, digital and welfare — I can clearly imagine the future. Today’s wordle-Budget edition.”

**Mahindra Group chairman and Padma awardee Anand Mahindra:** “Brevity has always been a virtue. Nirmala Sitharaman’s shortest budget address may prove to be the most impactful...,” the Mumbai-based business mogul tweeted.

**FICCI President Sanjiv Mehta:** “Two things—consistency of policy and consistency of tax rate are important from the business point of view. For this I would thank the Finance Minister for not making much changes in it. New taxes also not implemented.”

**BharatPe CEO Suhail Sameer** welcomed the government’s decision to set up 75 digital banking units across India and also hailed the ‘One Nation One Registration’ initiative aimed at ensuring ease of living and ease of doing business.

**Fullerton India’s Chief Business Officer Ajay Pareek** backed the government for extending ECLGS till March 2023 and expanding the guarantee cover by ₹50,000 crore to ₹5 lakh crore. Pareek also backed the Budget for focusing on utilising the fintech sector to enhance financial inclusion.

# India in history this Week

FEBRUARY 4, 2022, TO FEBRUARY 10, 2022

## 04 FEBRUARY

1628 Shah Jahan was declared Emperor of Agra.  
1881 The first issue of the daily newspaper 'Kesari' appeared in the editing of Lokmanya Tilak.



1938 Birju Maharaj, the famous Kathak artist of the country, was born.

1974 Physicist Satendra Nath Bose, who discovered God Particle, died.

2004 The world-changing social networking site Facebook launched.

1909 Narayan Sane, the batsman and Indian umpire was born in Vidarbha.



1974 The famous mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose died.

## 05 FEBRUARY

1630 The seventh Sikh Guru Har Rai was born in Kiratpu.

1916 Hindi poet Janki Vallabh Shastri was born.

2007 Sunita Williams of Indian origin became the



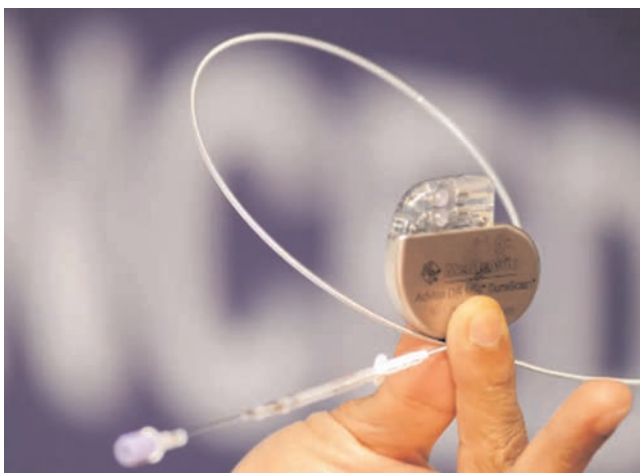
most time woman in space.

1916 Famous poet Janaki Vallabh Shastri was born.

1915 Wireless message sent for the first time by a moving train was received to the railway station.

## 06 FEBRUARY

2002 India sneaks into the border, shoots down Pakistan spy plane.



1999 The country's first Pace Maker Bank was established in 1999 in Kolkata.

2009 On February 6, 2009, India provided financial assistance of Rs 9.45 crore for the construction of three large dams along its border with Nepal.

## 07 FEBRUARY

1931 Freedom fighter and lawyer Motilal Nehru died.

2000 The first meeting of the joint opposition between India and the United States began in Washington on February 7, 2000.

2009 Maharashtra Governor SC Jamir conferred the 12th and the first woman President of Independent India, Pratibha Patil, with the title of D.Litt.



2010 The 19th International Book Fair held at Pragati Maidan in Delhi ended on 7 February 2010. Let us tell you that this fair lasted for 9 days, in which about 2 thousand publishers took part.

1898 Ramabai Ambedkar, wife of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, was born in 1898.

## 08 FEBRUARY

1897 Zakir Hussain, the third President of the country, was born.

1941 Jagjit Singh was born who gave Urdu and Ghazals a place in every house in India.



1943 Freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose left for Japan via a ferry from Kell, Germany.

1986 Prepaid taxi service was started for the first time at Delhi Airport.

## 09 FEBRUARY

1960 Maratha general Dattaji Shinde died.

1951 In 1951, the task of making a list was started to conduct the first census in independent India.

1931 For the first time in India in 1931, a stamp with a picture was issued in honor of a person.

2009 The Supreme Court on 9 February 2009 gave notice to the UP government on illegal construction in and around the Taj.



2010 The Indian government banned commercial cultivation of Bt brinjal on February 9, 2010, indefinitely.

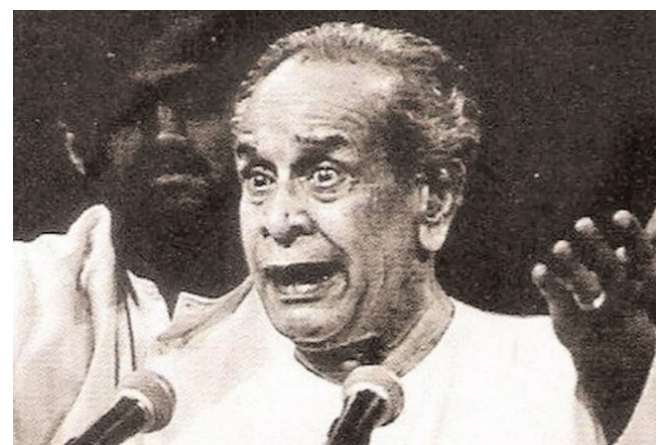
## 10 FEBRUARY

1846 The battle of Sobraon started between the East India Company and the Sikhs.

2013 36 people were killed and 39 others were injured in a stampede during the Kumbh Mela ceremony in Allahabad. 1847: Bengali poet writer Navinchandra Sen was born.

1818 Third and final battle between the British and Marathas was fought at Rampur.

2009 Famous classical singer Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honor.



# IMF approves USD 1 billion loan tranche for Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** The International Monetary Fund has approved the completion of the sixth review of its stalled USD 6 billion programme for Pakistan, paving the way for an immediate disbursement of about USD 1 billion loan tranche for the cash-strapped country.

The IMF's Executive Board held a meeting in Washington DC on February 2 to consider Pakistan's request for completion of the sixth review and release of a USD 1 billion tranche under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

The completion of this review allows for an immediate disbursement of 750 million in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) (about USD 1 billion) to Pakistan, bringing total



disbursements under the arrangement to SDR 2,144 million (about USD 3 billion) or 106 per cent of the country's quota, the Dawn newspaper reported

on Thursday.

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin also confirmed the approval in a tweet.

"I am pleased to announce that the IMF Board has approved the 6th tranche of their programme for Pakistan," he wrote.

In July 2019, Pakistan and the IMF reached a staff-level agreement on economic policies for a three-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Under the agreement, Pakistan was to receive about USD 6 billion for a period of 39 months.

The IMF had pledged to provide support under the EFF programme when Pakistan's economy was in a critical stage and badly needed assistance to meet the balance of payments challenge. (PTI)

## 15 ULTRAS, FOUR SOLDIERS KILLED IN PAK GUNFIGHT

**KARACHI (TIP):** Armed assailants attacked two camps of security forces in Pakistan's restive southwestern Balochistan province, triggering an intense exchange of fire in which 15 terrorists and four soldiers were killed, a senior official said on February 3.

The attacks, claimed later by the banned Baloch Liberation Army, took place in Panjgur and Noshki districts on Wednesday. In Panjgur, terrorists tried to enter a camp of security forces from two locations, while in Noshki, they tried to get into a Frontier Corps post. Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said in a video that nine terrorists and four soldiers were killed in Noshki, while six terrorists were shot dead in Panjgur.

"Terrorists were repulsed from both places by the Pakistan Army," he said, terming it a "great success" against terrorism. PM Imran Khan took to Twitter on Thursday to congratulate the security forces for foiling the terror attacks. (PTI)

## LANKA INKS \$500-MN FUEL DEAL WITH INDIA

**COLOMBO / NEW DELHI (TIP):** Sri Lanka on February 2 signed an agreement with India for a \$500 million credit line to help finance its fuel purchases. The first tranche will be used to buy 80,000 tonnes of petrol and diesel from Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). India's help has come just when Sri Lanka was faced with the spectre of dry fuel pumps. Its Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila had warned of fuel shortages as the country had no money to pay for not just oil imports, but also medicines and food. Power cuts are already the order of the day across the island nation as many turbines have not received diesel supplies.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had, in a letter to his Lankan counterpart GL Peiris on January 18, offered a new line of credit (LOC) of \$500 million to Sri Lanka for the purchase of petroleum products. It was preceded by a meeting between Jaishankar and Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa. India is likely to provide another \$1 billion in credit facility to Sri Lanka for importing food, essential items and medicines. Earlier, it had provided foreign exchange support of more than \$900 million. "These measures are in line with India's commitment to stand with Sri Lanka, contribute to its economic growth and impart greater momentum to bilateral economic and commercial partnership," said the Indian High Commission in Colombo in a statement. Sri Lanka has reciprocated by ending its hesitancy over involving India in a major way in the development of a Colombo port terminal and the vast petroleum storage facilities in Trincomalee. (TNS)

# Afghanistan's Taliban told they can't take their guns to the funfair

**KABUL (TIP):** Taliban fighters will no longer be allowed to carry their weapons in amusement parks in Afghanistan, the group's spokesman said on February 2, in what appeared to be another effort by the country's new rules to soften their image.

Taliban fighters, many of whom have spent most of their lives in a 20-year insurgency against a U.S. backed government, flocked to amusement parks in Afghan cities in towns after they took over in August.

"Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate are not allowed to enter amusement parks with weapons, military uniforms and vehicles," the main Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said on Twitter.

"(They) are obliged to abide by all the rules and regulations of amusement parks."

The Taliban earned a reputation as uncompromising and often brutal enforcers of their strict ways than they last ruled, between 1996 and 2001.

But since taking over in August, they have tried to present a more moderate face to their fellow Afghans and to the wider world, as an interim cabinet



grapples with a looming humanitarian crisis. Of particular attraction for Taliban fighters was one of Kabul's largest amusement parks and a waterside park at the Qargha reservoir, in the city's western outskirts.

Fighters clutching automatic rifles queued for up carousel and swinging

pirate ship rides - with regular visitors looking on nervously.

Most of the fighters Reuters spoke to then had never been to Kabul until the Taliban took control of the capital on Aug. 15, and some were eager to visit the amusement park before returning to duties around the country. Reuters

# LANKA ARRESTS 21 INDIAN FISHERMEN

**COLOMBO (TIP):** The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 21 Indians along with two fishing trawlers for allegedly poaching in the country's territorial waters after being alerted

by local fishermen, the Navy said here on February 2.

The development came as the local fishermen in the North have been protesting for over a week to stop the

Indians from entering the Sri Lankan waters. Navy spokesman Indika Silva said the arrested Indians were handed over to police. (PTI)



## Anand actor Ramesh Deo passes away at 93 due to heart attack

Veteran actor Ramesh Deo who had worked in movies including Anand and Mere Apne passed away at the age of 93 in Mumbai on February 02. His son Abhinay Deo confirmed the news to Indian Express. Abhinay said, "He passed away due to heart attack around 8:30 pm tonight at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital. He was 93." The late actor has credit to numerous movies in his name and was quite acclaimed in the Marathi film industry as well.

Ramesh Deo had worked in several movies including Anand, Aapki Kasam, Mere Apne, Mr. India, Khilona, Hulchul among others. So far, he had worked in around 285 Hindi cinemas and 190 Marathi films. He had also produced feature films, TV serials, and ad films. He has done notable work in the entertainment industry. The news of his death broke the hearts of his fans as they took to social media to express their grief. A fan wrote, "Rest In Peace Ramesh Deo Saab." Another user tweeted, "Marathi cinema has lost a doyen. Rest in Peace Ramesh Deo." Similar tweets flooded in after the sad news came out.

# Ranveer has this reaction after watching Deepika's Gehraiyaan

Ever since the trailer of Gehraiyaan has released fans have been eagerly waiting for the film to release. They cannot keep calm and have been going gaga over everything related to the film. Be it the songs or the clips from the movie, everything has been receiving a lot of love. Well, the actors are on a promotional spree these days and step out to promote the film every day. They have been opening their hearts out about their journey in the film and we are getting to hear new stories related to the film each day. In the latest interview, Deepika Padukone revealed hubby Ranveer Singh's reaction after he watched the movie.

Deepika Padukone while speaking to Indianexpress.com revealed that Gehraiyaan looks like the most intense film she has done since the 2015 release Tamasha that starred Ranbir Kapoor opposite her. This Imtiaz Ali film received a lot of love from the fans and become one of the most loved movies of Ranbir and Deepika. Well, talking about what hubby Ranveer Singh said after watching the film DP revealed that he too felt that this is the most intense film she has done.

Deepika Padukone further added that her character of Alisha Khanna in Gehraiyaan has shades of Shoojit Sircar's Piku and Tara from Tamasha because of the way they have been written. But, she quipped that her character in Gehraiyaan is 'probably the most complex character, which makes this role different and extremely challenging' than whatever she has done.

Talking about Gehraiyaan, the title track of the film



was recently released and fans are pouring in love for it. The Ananya Panday, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Dhairya Karwa and Deepika Padukone movie is all set to release on February 11 on Amazon Prime. *Source: Pinkvilla*

## Salman Khan is 'getting back' in shape before resuming Tiger 3 shoot with Katrina Kaif

Salman Khan is back to the grind. He recently posted a picture of himself as he worked out in the gym. In the photo, Salman is seen flaunting the muscles of his back. Sharing the picture from the gym, Dabangg Khan wrote, "Getting back! @beingstrongglobal."

Salman's chiselled physique found many admirers on social media. Commenting on the picture shared by the actor, one of the Instagram users wrote, "Awesome". Another added, "Real fitness Icon" There were some who called the image "Goal". A few also wrote, "Tiger is Back".

Salman Khan will reportedly resume the shoot of the next film in his Tiger franchise. The actor will be finishing the last schedule of the film in Delhi along with co-actor Katrina Kaif from February 12 and 13.

Recently, Salman congratulated Katrina on her marriage to Vicky Kaushal on the grand finale on Bigg Boss 15. On the show, Salman grooved on Katrina's "Chikni Chameli" with Rakhi Sawant and Rubina Dilaik. As the performance ended, Salman said, "Shaadi mubarak ho, Katrina (Congratulations on your wedding, Katrina)."

Salman Khan and his family were not invited to Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif's wedding that took place on December 9 last year.

Yash Raj Films' Tiger 3 is the next chapter in the spy action-thriller franchise, which will see Salman and Katrina reprise their roles of agents Tiger and Zoya. Helmed by Maneesh Sharma, the film will also star Emraan Hashmi as the antagonist. On his 56th birthday, Salman had said Tiger 3 would release by December 2022.



## Richa Chadha wishes to explore dancing on-screen

Actor Richa Chadha feels it's a loss that she hasn't done any films that made use of her dance skills, and admits she wants to explore that side of herself as an artiste.

"I learnt dance in Delhi for 10 years, starting from the age of six, straight up till I was in high school. Today, I can confidently say that the rhythm that it introduced in my body has made me an able performer," she says, adding, "It is actually quite puzzling and amusing that I haven't done any films that really utilised my dancing potential."

The 35-year-old continues, "Also, I haven't chosen films that consciously have a lot of songs or items and songs. I guess that is one of the reasons as well."

However, she hopes to do "that in the future someday" as dance has helped her appreciate her body and given her a lot of grace.

"It has helped me be agile, and flexible. It has also helped me mentally in appreciating classical forms because Indian classical forms are by far the most evolved dance form anywhere in the world," she admits.





### Tom Holland is grateful for fans' responses to No Way Home

Tom Holland values the enthusiastic fan reactions to Spider-Man: No Way Home more than the film's massive box office gross. Even before its release in December, Spider-Man: No Way Home was building up to be one of the web-most slinger's successful films.

No Way Home, which sees Holland's Peter Parker coping with the multiverse after a spell gone bad, reintroduces various performers from previous Spider-Man films, the most noteworthy of which being Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield. However, the final outcome is the most important to Holland. Holland discussed No Way Home's enormous success in a recent interview with the BBC's Zoe Ball Breakfast Show. He remarked that even during filming, it was evident that something exceptional was happening, but it couldn't compare to how he feels now that the picture is out. Holland said that the fan response has moved him the most.

## Kate Middleton officially takes over two roles previously held by Prince Harry

Kate Middleton has officially taken over two patronages that were previously under Prince Harry's royal duties. Replacing the Duke of Sussex it was confirmed by Buckingham Palace in a statement that the Duchess of Cambridge will be the new patron of the Rugby Football League and the Rugby Football Union. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle had to give up their patronages after their decision to step back as senior royals in March 2020. Before stepping down, Prince Harry had been the Royal Patron of the Rugby Football Union and Rugby Football League since 2016.

As reported by Hello magazine, the statement released by Buckingham Palace stated, "These new patronages, which have been given to The Duchess by Her Majesty The Queen, closely align with Her Royal Highness' longstanding passion for sport and the lifelong benefits it can provide, both within our communities and on an individual level."

It has been well-known that the Duchess of Cambridge is a sports enthusiast. Kate is also a patron of the Lawn Tennis Association. It was previously hinted in August last year that Middleton could be taking over Prince Harry's roles. An insider had informed The Sun, that considering the Duchess of Cambridge's commitment in handling her royal duties, she would be the "perfect choice."

After taking on the new role as the patron of the game, it has been reported



that Kate will now visit Twickenham Stadium which is the home of England Rugby, on Wednesday. Her visit will consist of a meet with England players, coaches and referees and joining a training session.

### Ending Things: Priyanka Chopra cast alongside Anthony Mackie for upcoming True Lies style action film

After Matrix Resurrections, Priyanka Chopra has now bagged another major film. As reported by Deadline, Chopra Jonas has been cast alongside Anthony Mackie in the upcoming action flick titled Ending Things. The film has been described as a "True Lies-esque" action thriller which will be helmed by Kevin Sullivan who will also serve as a writer.

According to Deadline, the plot of the film will revolve around a hit-woman who wants out of the assassin business and tells her "business" partner that she's putting an end to their personal relationship as well. Although soon she comes to realise how she doesn't want to end that part of their bond. The plot will further see the duo come together for their last job for one last night out post-breakup.

The storyline certainly sounds intriguing and we bet Priyanka and Anthony will be perfect for these roles. This is not the first time that Chopra Jonas will be working on an action project since she made her international debut with the series Quantico which showed her pulling off the action genre well.



### Khloe Kardashian hits back at troll accusing her of hiding 'chicken feet' hands in latest photo

Let's give Khloe Kardashian an applause for this epic clapback. The Keeping Up With the Kardashians alum's hands have recently piqued the Internet's interest, with fans often uploading close-up photographs of her long and thin fingers on social media.

So when someone recently mocked Khloe's posing in a Good American commercial, which showed the star's hands tucked behind her head while wearing blue jeans, Khloe resorted to the comments section to shut it down. "Oh lord, she's hiding her hands," the Instagram user wrote, to which Khloe responded, "lol never." She added, "My hands are beautiful baby." As per E! News, This wasn't the first time Khloe has addressed the media's focus on her fingers.

After a stylised picture session for her debut Good American shoe collection made headlines online in February, Khloe assured followers that she had "normal size hands/fingers."

In response to charges that it was all "photoshop," the mogul clarified publicly that her limbs were "elongated" in the shots because of a specialist camera lens. "HA I'm cracking up!" she tweeted, before explaining that some of the promotional images were "shot on a camera lens that creates a stretching effect." Interestingly, Kardashian addressed an Instagram troll who questioned her appearance in an August 2020 Instagram post.



## NZ TO END QUARANTINE, REOPEN TO VACCINATED VISITORS BY MONTH-END

WELLINGTON (TIP): New Zealand's government on February 3 said it would end its quarantine requirements for incoming travellers and reopen its borders, a change welcomed by thousands of citizens abroad.

The border changes mean that vaccinated New Zealanders returning from Australia will no longer need to go into quarantine from the end of this month, and vaccinated citizens returning from the rest of the world can skip quarantine by mid-March. — AP

## PENG SHUAI CASE SHOWS BARRIERS CHINESE WOMEN FACE

BEIJING (TIP): The controversy surrounding Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai's accusations of sexual assault against a former top politician continues to cast a shadow of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games in the run up to their official kickoff on February 4.

Within China, however, her case has drawn little attention amid the crushing force of official censorship. Yet it points also to the barriers Chinese women face when raising such claims, both in the courts and within a male-dominated social and political culture that regards any dissent as a threat to the tightly-controlled, Communist Party-dominated system.

While the #MeToo movement gained some initial traction when it launched in China in 2018, recent cases show those early hopes for a significant change in official attitudes may have been unrealistic.

Paying the price for going public

Coming forward publicly with allegations can expose victims to a host of perils from online abuse to job loss, countersuits from those they accuse and simple disappearance into the judicial system.

In the case that first defined the Chinese #MeToo movement, activist Zhou Xiaoxuan sued state TV host Zhu Jun only after he sued her for defamation first. She accused him of groping her when she was a young intern at CCTV. After initially receiving public support and media coverage, Zhou now gets messages attacking her every day and has been banned from posing on her Weibo account — a Twitter-like platform — for a year. Other cases reflect the perils as well. Huang Xueqin, who publicly supported a woman when she accused a professor of sexual assault, was arrested in September. Wang Jianbing, who helped women report sexual harassment, was detained along with her. Neither has been heard from since. Peng disappeared from public view last year after accusing former Communist Party official Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault. (AP)

# Military response not on cards for Covid protests: Canada PM Justin Trudeau

Ottawa (TIP): Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on February 3 that a military response to the ongoing Ottawa protest against Covid measures is "not on the cards right now".

Ottawa police chief Peter Sloly said this week that all options are on the table, including calling in the military, to end the ongoing demonstration that was being called an "occupation" by some on the city council.

Thousands of protesters railing against vaccine mandates and other Covid restrictions descended on the capital last weekend, deliberately blocking traffic around Parliament Hill. Police estimate about 250 remain.

Trudeau said one must be "very, very cautious" about deploying troops on Canadian soil, adding there has been no such request to the federal government. He said any formal requests for assistance from the City of Ottawa or Ontario would be considered.

Organisers, including one who has espoused white supremacist views, had raised millions for the cross-country "freedom truck convoy" against vaccine mandates and other restrictions.

It has attracted support from former US



President Donald Trump.

Ottawa's mayor, meanwhile, is calling on several opposition Conservative lawmakers to apologise for praising the protesters and posing with them.

A photo posted by one of the lawmakers shows some of them giving the thumbs-up — in front of one of the protest trucks,

which have been barricading roads and honking horns in the city almost non-stop since Saturday.

Mayor Jim Watson responded on Twitter by calling the action an "absolute disgrace," saying residents have been harassed by protesters and businesses have been forced to close. (AP)

# Adulterated cocaine kills 20, sickens 74 in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (TIP): Apparently adulterated cocaine killed 20 people and seriously sickened 74 others in Buenos Aires, health officials said early February 3 as authorities searched frantically for the remainder of the deadly batch to get it off the streets before it is consumed.

Experts were still analysing the drug to determine what was in it that caused the deaths.

Judicial officials said one hypothesis being considered was that the cocaine was intentionally adulterated as part of a settling of scores between traffickers.

Police said the cocaine was sold in the poor neighbourhood "Puerta 8" in San Martín — a suburb to the north of Argentina's capital — and that a dozen people had been arrested.

"This event is absolutely exceptional. We have no precedent," San Martín Attorney General Marcelo Lapargo told cable channel Todo Noticias.

"If the situation has escalated and the nature of trafficking has changed to the point where this becomes commonplace, I hope I never see it again." Argentine authorities initially reported that eight members of the same group had died after buying the drug Tuesday. But as time passed, the number of deaths grew. The



province's health ministry said early Thursday that 20 people had died and 74 more were in the hospital, with 18 of those requiring mechanical respiration.

"The urgency is to remove the poison from the market, to stop it from being sold," Lapargo said.

"There must be a lot of people with a bag in their pocket and the number of people

hospitalised shows that the most important thing is to stop this extremely high risk." Authorities urged anyone who might have bought the deadly drug not to use it.

Sergio Berni, the security minister for Buenos Aires province, called on "those who have bought drugs in the last 24 hours to discard what they bought." AP



# 12 migrants freeze to death near Turkey border after Greece pushback

**ANKARA (TIP):** The bodies of 12 migrants who froze to death were found near Turkey's border with Greece, the Turkish interior minister said February 2, accusing Greek border guards of pushing them back over the frontier.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu tweeted that the 12 were among 22 migrants who were pushed back into Turkey by Greek border guards.

He said they were found near the Ipsala border crossing between Turkey and Greece "without shoes and stripped of their clothes."

The minister didn't provide further details, but shared blurred photographs of eight of the recovered bodies, including three in shorts and T-shirts.

Soyulu accused Greek border units of acting as "thugs" toward migrants while showing sympathy toward members of a network — which Turkey says is behind a 2016 failed military coup — who have escaped to Greece.

He also accused the European Union of being "helpless, weak and inhumane."

The governor's office for Edirne province, near the land border with Greece, said the deceased included a migrant who died in a hospital after being rescued by Turkish authorities.

Turkey frequently accuses neighbouring Greece of illegally pushing



back migrants wanting to make their way into Europe.

Greece denies accusations that it carries out so-called pushbacks that prevent migrants from applying for international protection.

Turkey, which hosts about 3.7 million Syrian refugees, is a major crossing point for migrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa seeking a better life in

European Union countries.

Most try to cross into Greece by either crossing the northeastern land border or cramming into smuggling boats headed for the eastern Aegean Sea islands.

Recently, smuggling gangs have even been piling migrants into yachts heading from Turkey to Italy. Dozens of migrants have died in the central Aegean last month. AP

## 60 PEOPLE KILLED IN MILITIA ATTACK AT DISPLACED PERSONS' CAMP IN CONGO

**BENI, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (TIP):** At least 60 people were killed in a militia attack on February 2 morning at a displaced persons' camp in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the head of a local humanitarian group and a witness said.

Both sources told Reuters the CODECO militia was responsible for the killings, which took place about 0200 GMT at the Savo camp in Ituri province.

CODECO fighters have killed hundreds of civilians in Ituri in recent years and forced thousands to flee their homes, according to the United Nations. Recent attacks have also targeted displaced persons camps.

"I first heard cries when I was still in bed. Then several minutes of gunshots. I fled and I saw torches and people crying for help and I realized it was the CODECO militiamen who had invaded our site," said Lokana Bale Lussa, a camp resident.

"We have counted more than 60 dead and (more) seriously injured," he said.

Charite Banza Bavi, president of the local humanitarian group for the Bahema-North area, put the death toll at 63.

The Savo displacement site was home to about 4,000 people in December, according to the UN migration agency.

CODECO's fighters are drawn mainly from the Lendu farming community, which has long been in conflict with Hema herders.

A government spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment. Reuters

## ISRAELI POLICE ADMIT SPYWARE USE RAISES LEGAL QUESTIONS

**JERUSALEM (TIP):** Israel's police force, accused by rights groups of improperly using powerful hacking spyware, said on February 1 it had found "anomalies" in its electronic surveillance that meant the legality of some of its information collection was debatable. The attorney-general's office ordered a probe into police surveillance tactics on January 20, citing allegations about the Pegasus spyware produced by surveillance firm NSO Group. At the time, police said all wiretaps were conducted lawfully. But the force's deputy chief of investigations and intelligence, Yoav Telem, told a parliamentary oversight committee that further inquiries uncovered "automatic technological anomalies".

These led to the gathering of materials "over which there is a legal debate - whether they are covered by the world of secret monitoring," a transcript published by the panel quoted him as saying. (Reuters)

## David Attenborough, WHO, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya among nominees for Nobel Peace Prize

**OSLO (TIP):** British nature broadcaster David Attenborough, the World Health Organization and Belarusian dissident Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya are among the nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize after being backed by Norwegian lawmakers who have a track record of picking the winner.

Also among the candidates for the accolade were Greta Thunberg, Pope Francis, the Myanmar National Unity Government formed by opponents of last year's coup and Tuvalu's foreign minister Simon Kofe, last-minute announcements showed.

Thousands of people, from members of parliaments worldwide to former winners, are eligible to propose candidates. Norwegian lawmakers have nominated an eventual Peace laureate every year since 2014—with the exception of 2019—including one of the two laureates last year, Maria Ressa.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which decides who wins the award, does not comment on nominations, keeping secret for 50 years the names of nominators and unsuccessful nominees.

However, some nominators like



Norwegian lawmakers choose to reveal their picks.

### Natural world

Attenborough, 95, is best known for his landmark television series illustrating the natural world, including 'Life on Earth' and 'The Blue Planet'.

He was nominated jointly with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which assesses the state of biodiversity worldwide for policymakers. They were put forward for "their efforts to inform about, and protect, Earth's natural diversity, a prerequisite for sustainable and peaceful societies," said nominator Une Bastholm, the leader of the Norwegian Green Party.

Another Green Party representative nominated Sweden's Greta Thunberg, whose rise from teen activist to global climate leader has made her a frequent Nobel nominee in recent years, along with the Fridays For Future movement she started. Pope Francis was nominated for his efforts to help solve the climate crisis as well as his work towards peace and reconciliation, by Dag Inge Ulstein, a former minister of international development. Tuvalu's foreign minister Simon Kofe was nominated by the leader of Norway's Liberal Party, Guri Melby, for his work in highlighting climate change issues. Kofe filmed a speech to last year's COP26 climate conference standing knee-deep in seawater.

Environmentalists have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past, including Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and former US Vice-President Al Gore. Still, "there is no scientific consensus on climate change as an important driver of violent combat", said Henrik Urdal, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, cautioning against a "too simplistic connection between the two". (Reuters)

# Try these tricks for silky-smooth hands

The skin on our hands take the brunt of every chore—from taking care of the kids to washing dishes to weeding the garden. To make things worse, these tasks mean that you have to wash your hands frequently. All of this daily wear inevitably leads to your hands looking as though they belong to someone older than you are.

The soaps and other cleaning products we use today can cause your hands to look discolored, wrinkly, and rough. Luckily, there's no need to worry. Use these extremely easy home remedies to get back the soft hands you once had!

## Olive oil + sugar scrub

Put one teaspoon of sugar in the palm of your hand and slowly pour a tablespoon of olive oil. With your other palm, rub the two together for about 30 seconds. Wash off with warm water and pat dry. This moisturizes and hydrates skin cells as well as exfoliates, sloughing off rough old, dead cells.

## Lemon + honey mask

Lemon contains citric acid, which gently lightens dark spots and discoloration on the skin. Honey contains antioxidants that slow down aging. And baking soda exfoliates dead skin, revealing new clear skin cells. Make a paste with two teaspoons each of lemon juice, baking soda, and honey, and apply it to your hands. Leave it on for 10 minutes, and wash off with warm water.

## Fresh cream rub

Milk cream is high in fat content, which acts as a perfect moisturizer for rough skin. In addition, the lactic acid present exfoliates the dry skin while maintaining the pH level of the skin. Apply fresh cream



on your palms, fingers, and all over your hands, leave on for 10 minutes and wash off with warm water.

## Avocado mask

Avocado is rich in monounsaturated fats which are good for dry skin. What's more, this fruit also contains high amounts of vitamins A, C, and E. Take the pulp out of a ripe avocado, add honey to it and mix well. Apply the mixture all over your hands, and leave it for 15 minutes before washing it off with warm water.

## Overnight petroleum jelly treatment

After finishing off the day's work, wash your hands with gentle soap and pat dry. Take a dollop of petroleum jelly and massage your hands for 30 seconds. Slip on a pair of old, clean cotton socks and go off to bed. You will wake up the next morning with baby soft hands.

Source: *The Statesman*

# Four things that can break your long-term relationship

It won't be wrong to say that most long-term relationships, not all, end on a bitter note. From women no longer feeling loved to men thinking they are taken for granted, there are several reasons that force people to end their long-term relationships.

However, not all is bad in a long-term relationship. When you are with a person for a long time, you tend to become comfortable with them and start feeling a connection that is beyond replacement.

But a few bad choices can make your long-term relationship bitter and you might even consider breaking it. Here are 4 such things that you should avoid.

## Misunderstandings and suspicion

Every relationship goes through a phase when misunderstandings and suspicion tend to grow between the couple. If handled wisely this phase might pass, however, if not addressed things might turn bitter. This may result in constant fights which may further lead to frustration and stress.

## Lack of love and appreciation

No matter if your relationship is a month-old or years longer, a lack of love and appreciation can cause irreplaceable damage to it. Like aforementioned, most women walk out of a relationship because they no longer feel loved and appreciated. So, just as you would love and appreciate your partner in the initial days of the relationship, do it the same way as your relationship grows older.

## Lost spark



Sometimes a lost spark is mistaken for lost love. So, try and bring the lost spark alive by surprising your partner or going on a vacation. It can also be done via increased intimacy. Walk that extra mile and bring the lost spark alive.

## Lack of dialogue

If the conversation has taken a backseat in your relationship, take the initiative and start a dialogue. Discuss anything under the sun, just keep the conversation going. Meet over a coffee, switch off your mobile phones and discuss life. This will help you bond a little more and better and might even help you get back that lost connection in your long-term relationship.

Source: *Pinkvilla*

## FOOD CORNER



## Champagne Trifle

### Ingredients

Chocolate Cake - 200 gms (readymade) Strawberries - 1/2 cup, chopped Champagne - 3/4 cup (or Sparkling water for a non-alcoholic version) Water - 1/4 cup Eggs - 2 Sugar - 50 gms Corn Flour - 1 1/2 tsp Vanilla Extract - 1/2 tsp

### Method

- Cut the cake into small pieces.
- Combine the champagne, water, eggs, sugar, corn flour and vanilla extract in a bowl.
- Whisk well.
- Heat a pan of water over medium flame.
- Place the bowl over the water, but ensure the bowl does not touch the water.
- Whisk well until thick and remove from flame.
- Allow it to cool.
- Add some of the cake and strawberries to a champagne glass (or any serving bowl).
- Top up with the champagne custard and keep it in the fridge if required.
- Serve.

## Mocha Mousse

### Ingredients

Instant Chocolate - 50 gms Cold Milk - 1/2 cup Strong Coffee - 2 tblsp, chilled Sugar - 1 to 2 tblsp, powdered Vanilla Extract - 1/4 tsp Whipping Cream - 1/2 cup, heavy Choco Chips - 1 tblsp, for garnish

### Method

- Mix the instant chocolate, milk and coffee until thick.
- Beat the cream, sugar and vanilla until soft peaks form. Reserve some for topping.
- Mix the cream mixture into the chocolate mixture and spoon into a dessert glass.
- Keep it in the fridge for 35 to 40 minutes.
- Just before serving, add a little bit of the reserved cream mixture and garnish with the choco chips.
- Serve chill.



# Include these vitamin D-rich foods in your diet for a healthy and strong body

## Mushrooms

Mushrooms are one of the most potent non-animal sources of vitamin D2, D3, and D4. Like humans, mushrooms tend to synthesise vitamin D when they are exposed to the ultraviolet light of the sun. Include mushrooms in your diet at least four times a week to fulfil the body's vitamin D requirement.

## Cow's milk

Pasteurised cow's milk usually contains vitamin D. However, the amount can vary from brand to brand. Most milk manufacturers add the micronutrient during milk processing voluntarily to make the product more nutritious. While milk does not have vitamin D naturally, it is loaded with calcium. Thus, the two nutrients work well together to strengthen bones with better calcium absorption. Drinking a glass of pasteurised milk every day can help prevent bone-related disorders and keep the body healthy.

## Cheese

One of the most relished food items around the world, cheese contains a decent amount of vitamin D. Out of all kinds, ricotta and cheddar are the most rich sources. However, cheese is also packed with fats so make sure to have the food item in small amounts to maintain an optimal balance of nutrients. You can also opt for a reduced-fat version of cheese to reap maximum health benefits.

## Fortified yoghurt

Yoghurt is an easy and convenient snack that is not



only great for gut health but also for the bones. Consuming fortified yoghurt can help to fulfill approximately 10-20% daily requirement of vitamin D. However, many yoghurt varieties contain high amounts of sugar, so check the nutrition label carefully.

## Butter

Butter is not only packed with antioxidants, minerals, fatty acids, and zinc, but also vitamin D. One tablespoon of butter can fulfil approx. 11% of the daily intake of vitamin D. If you suffer from heart disorders, refrain from consuming butter.



## Parental vaccination against Covid-19 protects children as well: Study

Parental vaccination against Covid-19 confers substantial protection to children residing in the same household, according to a study that reinforces the importance of immunisation to curb the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, and protect those who cannot be vaccinated.

A team of researchers from Harvard University, US, Clalit Research Institute and Tel-Aviv University in Israel, analysed one of the world's largest integrated health record databases to examine the indirect protection provided to unvaccinated children.

The study, published in the journal Science on Thursday, shows that not only is a vaccinated parent less likely to experience a documented infection, they are also less likely to transmit the infection to other household members if infected.

"Vaccination not only provides direct protection, it also provides indirect protection to unvaccinated individuals living with the vaccinated individuals in the same household," said Samah Hayek, senior researcher at Clalit Research Institute.

"This study highlights the indirect protection provided by vaccinated parents to their unvaccinated children, irrespective of household size or the child's age, for both the Alpha and the Delta variants," Hayek said.

Between June and October 2021, a wave of infections dominated by the Delta variant swept through Israel.

During this period, the researchers studied 181,307 unvaccinated children from 76,621 distinct households.

They compared parents vaccinated with a third dose of the Pfizer preventive to parents who received only two shots at least five months prior.

The study estimated that a single boosted parent decreased the risk of infection by 20.8 per cent, while two boosted parents decreased the risk of infection by 58.1 per cent.

The researchers also conducted a similar study during an earlier wave from December 2020 through March 2021, in which the Alpha variant was dominant.

During this period, they studied 400,733 unvaccinated children and adolescents from 155,305 distinct households.

Source: PTI

# Study reveals that hepatitis E virus defies alcohol-based hand disinfectants

Hepatitis E is an inflammation of the liver caused by infection with the hepatitis E virus (HEV). HEV is the most common cause of acute virus-mediated hepatitis worldwide. Even though the infection can be prevented through appropriate hygiene measures, a recent study revealed that common hand disinfectants did not inactivate the virus.

The study was published in the 'Journal of Hepatology'.

Scientists from TWINCORE, Centre for Experimental and Clinical Infection Research, the Hannover Medical School (MHH) and the Ruhr Universitat Bochum (RUB), together with partners from industry, investigated the effectiveness of various common hand disinfectants against HEV. They were able to show that most formulations did not completely inactivate the virus.

In Germany and Europe, HEV has its natural reservoir in pigs. The infection can spread from animals to humans, which is called zoonosis. This often happened through incompletely heated or raw meat products such as minced meat. In tropical regions of the world, infections occur via contaminated water, sometimes causing large outbreaks.

"Some of these infections could possibly be prevented with the right hygiene measures," said Dr Patrick Behrendt, physician in the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Endocrinology at the MHH and head of the junior research group "Translational Virology" at TWINCORE. This included, above all, correct hygienic hand disinfection in everyday clinical practice when dealing with hepatitis E patients and infected animals.

Together with the team of Professor Eike Steinmann, head of the Department of Molecular and Medical Virology at RUB, Behrendt investigated whether



common hand disinfectants can render the virus harmless. "We tested the effect of the alcohols ethanol and propanol, both individually and in the mixing ratios recommended by the WHO, and also commercial hand disinfectants," said Steinmann. "However, only one product that contained another component was effective."

Normally, HEV occurs non-enveloped and, like all non-enveloped viruses, is very resistant to chemical influences. However, virus particles circulating in the blood of patients are surrounded by a lipid envelope. "Not all disinfectants are effective against enveloped and non-enveloped viruses at the same time," said Steinmann. "We used both forms of HEV for our tests."

Although some of the disinfectants tested were certified to inactivate both enveloped and non-enveloped viruses, they were not sufficiently effective against HEV.

Source: ANI

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## India seeks tougher action from US tech giants on fake news

Indian officials have held heated discussions with Google, Twitter and Facebook for not proactively removing what they described as fake news on their platforms, sources said in what is the government's latest altercation with the Big Tech.

The officials, from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), strongly criticised the companies and said their inaction on fake news was forcing the Indian government to order content takedowns, which in turn drew international criticism that authorities were suppressing free expression, the sources said.

The sources, who were familiar with the proceedings at the virtual meeting on Monday, described the conversation as tense and heated, signalling a new low in ties between American tech giants and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration. The officials did not issue any ultimatum to the companies at the meeting, the sources said. The government has been tightening tech sector regulations but wants companies to do more on content moderation. *Source: Reuters*

# Hitchhiking in Earth's orbit, asteroid may be with us for 4,000 years

An asteroid that was discovered riding along in Earth's orbit is about three-quarters of a mile wide and might remain as a hitchhiker with our planet for at least 4,000 more years while posing no danger, scientists said on Tuesday.

Using observations from telescopes in Chile, Arizona and the Canary Islands, researchers provided the most comprehensive description yet of the asteroid, named 2020 XL5 and first detected two years ago. They confirmed it is one of only two of what are called Trojan asteroids traveling as a companion with Earth.

Trojan asteroids can be wanderers in the solar system - as appears to be the case with this one - or material left over from their home planet's formation. They become ensnared by the planetary gravitational grip and subsequently orbit the sun along the same path as that planet.

This one looks to be a so-called C-type asteroid - one of the most common kinds in the solar system, according to planetary scientist Toni Santana-Ros of the University of Alicante and the University of Barcelona's Institute of Cosmos Sciences in Spain, lead author of the study published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

These are dark in color and contain a lot of carbon along with rocks and minerals.

"2020 XL5 poses no threat to Earth. We expect it will remain in its current stable orbit for at least the next 4,000 years," said telescope scientist and study co-author Cesar Briceño of the U.S. National Science Foundation's NOIRLab.

Its location varies between about 56 million miles (90 million km) and 168 million miles (270 million km) from Earth.



The asteroid occupies one of five so-called Lagrange points - positions in space where objects tend to stay put. These five locales allow for stable orbits due to the competing gravitational forces of Earth and the sun. This one resides at what is called the L4 point.

The only other Trojan asteroid seen around Earth, discovered 12 years ago, also at the L4 point, and called 2010 TK7, is smaller, with a diameter of about a quarter mile (400 metres).

It, too, is thought to have been captured by Earth's pull while meandering through the solar system.

2020 XL5, first detected in December 2020 using a telescope in Hawaii, may have been captured by Earth's gravitational pull somewhere between 500 to 1,000 years ago, Santana-Ros said. *Source: Reuters*

## Forget metals, chemists use DNA to build the world's tiniest antenna

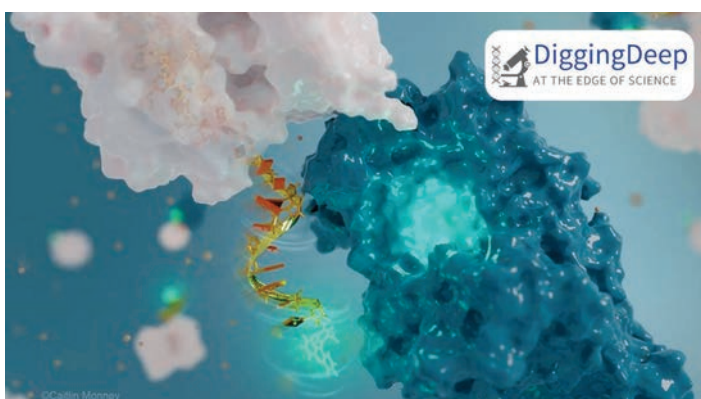
A team of researchers at the University of Montreal have developed a nanoantenna made of DNA (nucleic acid) and polyethylene glycol (PEG) to study changes in the structure of protein molecules.

These fluorescent nanoantenna offer a distinct advantage over the fluorescent dyes that are ubiquitously used in biotechnology. The latter 'display a low affinity for proteins', while these nanoantennae are able to detect even the most minute of changes. The dye in the nanoantenna has an affinity to a specific region of a protein, which is contingent on the structure and chemistry of the protein.

The antenna also performed well when used for examining enzyme kinetics i.e. the speed at which a reaction progresses in the presence of an enzyme. It also remained stable at higher temperatures. The findings were published last month in *Nature Methods*.

The team explained that the nanoantenna works like a two-way radio that can both receive and transmit radio waves. It receives light in one wavelength, and depending on the protein changes it senses, it transmits light in another colour and this can be detected and studied.

"In addition to helping us understand how natural nanomachines function or malfunction, consequently leading to disease, this new method can also help chemists identify promising new drugs as well as guide nano engineers to develop improved nanomachines," Dominic Lauzon, co-author of the study, said in a press release.



One of the main innovations of these nanoantennas is that the receiver part of the antenna (bright green) is also employed to sense the molecular surface of the protein (CAITLIN MONNEY)

## Apple launches support for unlisted App Store apps accessible via link

Tech giant Apple in an update on its developer website has announced that the App Store now supports unlisted apps that are only accessible with a link.

Unlisted app distribution allows developers to release apps that are not meant for public use, reports AppleInsider.

Such apps will not appear in any App Store categories, recommendations charts, search results or listings. Apps can also be accessed through the Apple Business Manager or Apple School Manager, the report said.

Developers will be able to distribute apps to a limited audience, which could include part-time employees, partners, business affiliates or conference attendees.

In addition, apps can be distributed to employee-owned devices that might not be eligible for a mobile device management platform.

Apple said that apps aimed at "specific organisations, special events or research studies, or apps used as employee resources or sales tools" are all good use cases for unlisted app distribution.

The feature is currently available by request only. Developers will need to submit a request to receive a link for an unlisted app.

Apple noted that unlisted apps must be ready for distribution — the company will decline any app in beta or pre-release state.

Developers will be able to create unlisted distribution links for both new and existing apps. If a request is approved, the app's distribution method will change to "Unlisted App" for both current and future versions.

If the app is already listed on the App Store, its primary listing will remain unchanged. *Source: IANS*





## SELL ASSETS OF FUTURE RETAIL TO RECOVER DUES, LENDERS TELL SC

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A consortium of 27 banks on Thursday, Feb 3, told the Supreme Court the money lent to Future Retail Ltd (FRL) belonged to the depositors and to safeguard the "public interest", the entire assets of FRL can be subjected to open bids by Amazon and Reliance with a reserve price of Rs 17,000 crore.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, hearing FRL's plea seeking a direction to the banks that no coercive action be taken against it for a certain time period due to non-payment of debt, did not pass any interim order and adjourned the hearing at the request of the company.

At the outset, senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for FRL, said the hearing be deferred for a week or 10 days so that the company may try to work out some kind of settlement over payment of dues.

The Bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli, took note of the submissions and said the hearing may be deferred as it was FRL's plea only.

Source: PTI

## CRYPTO TAX DOESN'T BESTOW LEGALITY TO TRADE, SAYS I-T DEPT

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Budget announcement of taxing 'virtual digital assets' or crypto currencies will help the Income-Tax Department measure the "depth" of this trade in the country, know the investors and the nature of their investments and it does not "attach any legality" to these transactions, CBDT Chairman JB Mohapatra said.

The head of the I-T department establishment in the country said this is "the right time" for the taxman to enter this arena, about which, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the government was undertaking a stakeholders' consultation to frame a national policy and regulator in the coming days.

Stating that there has been a "phenomenal increase" in transactions in virtual digital assets, Finance Minister announced in the Budget that any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30% along with tax deduction at source.

# Wall Street ends winning run as Facebook forecast halts tech-led recovery

NEW YORK (TIP)

Wall Avenue snapped a four-session successful streak on Thursday, Feb 3, with all three benchmarks ending decrease after Fb-owner Meta Platforms' dour forecast despatched its inventory plummeting and halted a nascent restoration constructed on upbeat earnings from different huge tech.

Meta shares sank 26.4%, wiping round greater than \$200 billion off its market worth, based on Reuters calculations, because it blamed Apple's privateness adjustments and elevated competitors from rivals resembling TikTok for its disappointing outlook.

The decline in market capitalization was the most important ever recorded by a US firm in a single session, eclipsing when Apple Inc shed \$180 billion on September 3, 2020.

In flip, Meta's efficiency eradicated 0.9% of the Nasdaq's worth and minimize the S&P 500's mixed price by 0.6%, based on Reuters calculations. The exchanges, respectively, suffered their worst each day falls since September 2020 and February 2021.

Shares of different social media corporations additionally took a beating. Twitter Inc dropped 5.6%, whereas Pinterest Inc and Snap Inc slumped 10.3% and 23.6% respectively forward of reporting their very own earnings after the bell.

Massive tech shares resembling Alphabet Inc and Microsoft Corp fell greater than 3%, whereas Amazon.com Inc slumped 7.8%, earlier than it was scheduled to launch outcomes.

"As we have gotten numbers in latest days, what we're seeing is the supply of earnings being rewarded or penalized, and in case you proceed to ship robust earnings development, the market will reward that," stated Maxwell Grinacoff, US fairness & derivatives strategist at BNP Paribas.

"In a rising fee setting, as we progress via the yr, we anticipate to see extra divergence between the upper high quality names, such because the megacaps, and decrease high quality names which aren't making any cash."



Monetary expertise corporations noticed a second day of promoting, after PayPal Holdings Inc's disappointing earnings on Tuesday induced buyers to query if these corporations – which benefited considerably from the pandemic advancing the shift to digital funds – would justify steep valuations in 2022.

PayPal dropped 6.2%, whereas friends Block Inc, Affirm Holdings Inc and SoFi Applied sciences slipped between 4.9% and 11%.

Tech shares have loved a dominant interval amid low rates of interest, as buyers sought out excessive development, however with inflation rising and the US Federal Reserve signaling an aggressive rate-hike stance to rein it in, cash managers are having to regulate portfolios accordingly.

"Persons are going to begin rising allocations to worth shares, and to try this they must promote their development shares, even when they're down 15% to 30%," stated Jack Murphy, co-chief funding officer of Easterly Funding Companions.

The Dow Jones Industrial Common fell 518.17 factors, or 1.45%, to 35,111.16, the S&P 500 misplaced 111.94 factors, or 2.44%, to 4,477.44 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 538.73 factors, or 3.74%, to 13,878.82.

Source: Reuters

## All in a day: Zuckerberg loses \$29bn, Bezos set to pocket \$20bn

NEW YORK (TIP)

Mark Zuckerberg lost \$29 billion in net worth on Thursday, Feb 3, as Meta Platforms Inc's stock marked a record one-day plunge, while fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos was set to add \$20 billion to his personal valuation after Amazon's blockbuster earnings.



Mark Zuckerberg



Jeff Bezos

Meta's stock fell 26%, erasing more than \$200 billion in the biggest ever single-day market value wipeout for a US company. That pulled down founder and chief executive officer Zuckerberg's net worth to \$85 billion, according to Forbes.

Zuckerberg owns about 12.8% of the tech behemoth previously often known as Facebook.

Bezos, the founder and chairman of e-commerce retailer Amazon, owns about 9.9% of the corporate, based on Refinitiv knowledge. He's additionally the world's third richest man, based on Forbes.

Amazon's holiday-quarter revenue surged, due to its investments in electrical car firm Rivian; and the corporate mentioned it will hike annual costs of Prime subscriptions in america, sending its shares up 15% in prolonged buying and selling and readying it for its greatest share achieve since October 2009 on Friday.

Bezos' internet price rose 57% to \$177 billion in 2021 from a yr earlier, based on Forbes, largely from Amazon's increase through the pandemic when folks had been extremely depending on on-line procuring.

Source: Reuters

## Google's parent Alphabet seeks more investors in 20-for-1 stock split

Alphabet Inc. announced a 20-for-1 stock split in the form of a one-time special stock dividend, aiming to draw a wider audience for its shares.

"The reason for the split is it makes our shares more accessible," Ruth Porat, Alphabet's chief financial officer,

said in a conference call with television anchors. "We thought it made sense to do."

The new class of retail investors often weigh affordability and brand recognition when deciding which stocks to buy. Alphabet has been at a disadvantage, as its stock is expensive and uses the name of a holding company, rather than the globally recognized brand, Google.

The stock split could lead to Alphabet's listing on the Dow Jones Industrial Average, one of the most commonly quoted indexes that holds 30 blue-chip companies. It could also help the company on its path to cross a \$2 trillion market cap. A prior stock split happened in 2014, after the company's shares topped \$1,000. Porat said the split announced on Tuesday will come at the close of business July 15. Alphabet shares extended gains to 7% at 4:24 p.m. New York time after the stock split was announced.

Source: Bloomberg



Signage at the Google headquarters in Mountain View, California, U.S., on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022. (Bloomberg)

Shree Ganeshaya Namah



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

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

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - FEB 7 TO FEB 13, 2022



**ARIES** : Ganesha says this week, you'll have a "can-do" attitude. Make use of your disposition to your advantage. You will carry out your strategy and make things happen as you intend. This week, you'll disseminate the get-it-done mindset wherever you go. You will motivate your coworkers to dream big and achieve their objectives. Your zeal will land you fantastic chances and clientele. This week, keep your spirits high. Your relationship fronts look very strong this week as your partner will be able to spend a lot of time with you this week. Your health will need some attention this week as you might feel fatigued do too long working hours every day.



**TAURUS** : This week will be all business and no leisure for you. This perspective will aid you in making a favorable view of your bosses. You'll enchant your clientele and form strong bonds with them. In the future, the links will help you with your errand. There will be no disruptions during the critical meeting set for this week. Nobody will be able to stop you from succeeding in your job. This week is a critical week at the workplace for you. This week, you will hardly pay any heed to your romantic life and this will make you feel less contented. In the latter half of the week, energies coming from Venus will affect your 7th house and your connection with your partner will start to shine again. Avoid traveling to distant places this week.



**GEMINI** : You will begin your week on a high note and with optimistic thoughts. Your week will be jam-packed with both excellent learning and anxiety. This week, you'll be more hands-on, and you'll avoid making decisions based on emotions. Your work attitude will improve as a result of your pragmatic and effective perspective. This week, you'll be able to strike a better balance between your business and personal lives. This week, you'll discover out what your life's mission is. Your week will provide answers to some of your job and goal-related questions. This week, you will have to make a visit to your family doctor or a physiotherapist as you will find it difficult to deal with your back pain issues.



**CANCER** : This is the week you invest in a company that you've been dreaming about for a long time. The stars are aligned wonderfully in your favor. Your primary source of nourishment will be your family. You have a tendency to be a bit apprehensive, but you are

going to work marvels. Your well-wishers will assist you in making decisions by providing valuable advice for your new business. You will have no trouble raising funds for your business. Your romantic fronts will see several faces this week. You will find it difficult to make your partner understand your need to have your own little "me time". Things will get better before the end of the week so keep yourself calm.



**LEO** : You have a busy week ahead of you. From the start of your week, you will feel a huge surge of power moving towards you. This week at work, you'll have a lot of meetings, but you'll be able to complete all of your tasks. This week, your mental abilities will be put to good use. As a result, you must take full advantage of any possibilities that come your way. People who are already married will find comfort in their spouses after feeling worn out and tired with all the work they will have to do this week. Single people will feel changes in their feelings for their close friends. Your health will be totally fine this week.



**VIRGO** : How could a week of creation possibly go wrong!! It isn't possible! This week, you will spend the whole week making something. This week, everything you give a shape up or your design will teach you something about life. This week is a good time to reflect and work on yourself. This week, you'll meet a lot of eager folks. This week is going to be a lot of fun and happiness even in your romantic life. Although you will not be able to meet your partner on most of the days of the week, things will eventually get better with a new relationship. Try to stay away from loud noises and tensing people as you might face issues of headache in the first half of the week as the position of the moon will affect you adversely.



**LIBRA** : You'll spend your week admiring and praising whatever you have. You will assist illiterate females in obtaining employment and living on their terms. Your gratification will come from assisting them. This week, you will stop carping about the bad things that are happening in your life and instead focus on the wonderful and better things! Your professional front will stay uptight as your 8th house will stay blessed by Lord Sun throughout the week. There might be some issues on your romantic front or marital life as you will find it difficult to forgive the mistakes your partner has made recently. Your relationship deserves true happiness and hence, be a bigger person here and try to make things better with your

partner. Keep your mental health on a good watch this week.



**SCORPIO** : Your children will get promoted and achieve success in their various fields this week. This week, you will be fulfilled and content. This week, you'll have visitors who will brighten your week even more. This week will be a week of festivities for you. It'll be the week you celebrate. Your entire family will be together in one place to honor you and your children! Marital fronts and romantic fronts will be blessed as Venus will transit to a positive spot from an unfavorable position. A very good bond will start to reconstruct between couples. There will be a lot of improvement in your health issues this week. Hence, do not stay anxious about your fitness.



**SAGITTARIUS** : This week, you'll finish a project that will be beneficial for your company, especially if it involves real estate. Your greatest power is your healthy approach, and you must behave appropriately. Someone close to you will urge you to practice this virtue. You will be able to experience a wide range of emotions as well as spiritual development. You will thrive as a result of new experiences. This week, you'll discover out where you stand in your career. Although you will stay very much occupied with all the big changes, you will find time for making things lively in your romantic life. The latter half of the week will not be favorable for traveling as it might affect your health adversely.



**CAPRICORN** : This week will be particularly memorable for you since your efforts will be recognized. It's a new week, and it's full of possibilities. Your hard effort is going to pay off in the end. This week, you could encounter new people who wish to collaborate with you. Jupiter appears to be on your side, and this week is a favorable week for you to make commercial decisions. You will receive wonderful news from your family in the second half of the week. Marital friends will be blessed this week. People what thinking to propose should wait a little bit as this week will not be favorable to build new connections. Your health will be alright do not worry about it.



**AQUARIUS** : This week, your major goal is to take care of yourself. This week, you will reclaim your charisma in your life. It'll be a pleasant and relaxing week ahead.

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEB 7 TO FEB 13, 2022

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**February 7**

Ganesha says you will notice that you're overly excited today. Your extrovert behavior and your cheerful disposition are highly appreciated in the social circle. Your strong leadership qualities will make you confident enough that you will be able to do all the work very well. Success will come your way if you work really hard. Today will bring in some good fortune as the planets align in your favor.

**February 8**

Ganesha says today your day will be very kind. Today you will be able to complete the remaining task in projects. You may complete your work early, due to which you will be able to enjoy your time with family. You may plan for a trip with your partner. Your business will go great today. Today things will turn out the way you want as you have a lot of luck. One new opportunity will arise which will come immediately today itself and make you a lot of profits. Stars are in your favor which will help you navigate through any problems easily regarding this new opportunity.

**February 9**

Ganesha says you will notice that things are working out for you without much effort. Little good things will

keep happening throughout the day. It is great that everything will work out for you today but do not get lazy and focus on the things you need to get done today. You are very lucky today because you will get what you wish for, make sure you use the luck you have today to benefit yourself and not others because only then it will remain a positive thing for you.

**February 10**

Ganesha says wake up and meditate the first thing in the morning; it will be beneficial for your personal as well as professional life. You will make great profits in your business hence you will have a good day today. You will lean more towards altruism today considering the spiritual awaking in your sign. Ensure that you do not drift away from your dreams & ambitions as you might come across a few distractions today. Ensure that you're ethical both in your personal & professional life.

**February 11**

Ganesha says you will feel a lot of love and care coming towards you from family friends as well as your partner. Your day will be a tough one today but you will feel supported and cared for in all ways, at the end of the day you will feel very satisfied with where you are in your life currently. Your partner's loving and caring nature will make you fall in love with your

partner a lot today. You will experience firsthand how beautiful it is to be loved and cared for by someone you trust and love with all your heart.

**February 12**

Ganesha says your love life has been on a roller coaster, but you will experience stability for today. Try to say what you have been thinking. Expressing your feelings will help you better your love life. Venus will bring love and the moon will bring fortune in your face today. You are entering a new phase that marks the start of a lane named success. Along with your old commitments you will be taking on additional responsibilities today, but it won't seem like hard or tough work as you will enjoy doing it thoroughly.

**February 13**

Ganesha says you are very lucky today because you will get what you wish for; make sure you use the luck you have today to benefit yourself and not others because only then it will remain a positive thing for you. You will tend to focus more on your financial issues hence your love life will be on a back seat. Immense support from your partner might surprise you a little bit. Try to have patience and understanding. You are extremely close to finding that person that will support you in everything, do not annoy that person.

CONTD FROM PAGE 30

Your good attitude will benefit the business as a whole as well as all of its personnel. You'll have a solid week ahead of you.

This week, you'll get closer to the universe. This week, your planets are in an excellent position. The position of Venus in your 7th house will lead to a bigger development on your romantic fronts. Although you and your partner will not be able to spend much time with each other, you will stay very much emotionally connected. Minor back pain might bother you in the latter half of the week therefore avoid doing heavy physical activities.

**PISCES** : Your new moon will travel to a location this week that will increase your inner resilience. You will be able to make an important decision about your family's future. Your chosen career will have a positive impact on your judgment. Your planetary placements will aid you in taking a strategic approach to a scenario.

Your coworkers will back you up this week when you take on your boss. You've got a lot of important decisions to make this week. This week will present you with a slew of fantastic possibilities.

This week, your partner will plan out something very special for you as they will not be available to attend you in a few upcoming days. You will get a little nostalgic while having meaningful conversations with your spouse/partner. Your health will be totally alright this week.



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**The Indian Panorama brings you Monthly Horoscope by NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

**We know February Month as a romantic month because of Valentine's Day and week. Also, there are some astrological changes this month like there will be a full moon in Leo. Ganesha says this month there will be cherished changes that you will face in your zodiac sign. We will list all the good and bad things that you can expect in this second month of 2022. For February month its structure and days are different compared to other months. And also, this month holds something really special in it love-wise. We will give you complete knowledge about this new month based on your zodiac sign. Each sign has its changes in the planets and stars systems. There will be some new transits we will see this month. And how it will affect your zodiac sign and life. If it is good, then fine but there are some bad times then how to overcome them. All this will be answered by Ganesha.**



**ARIES** : Ganesha says that Aries natives have the perfect time to bond in a relationship. Whether it is personal life or professional, make a team or friends in this month. You will have a great time this month and you will be in the spotlight of life. There will be many new things which will attract you. It is advised that you learn about it. Because there is a chance it will bring great benefits in your life. After that, there will be a reduction in your issues in life for the rest of the year. And you will enjoy the most gala time of your life.



**TAURUS** : Ganesha says to Taurus natives that this month is the ambitious month for you. The month will give you good opportunities to explore in the life direction which you always wanted. But there will also be some major obstacles and issues you will face in this journey. Work hard on your dreams and you will definitely achieve the goal without any worries this month. After that, for the rest of the year, there will be fewer worries and issues in your life. And everything will fall into place as you always wanted it.



**GEMINI** : Ganesha says that Gemini natives will hear some good news in their job this month. If you own a business, you will make new contacts and earn great profits. This month you will be fully beneficial and of complete growth in life. There will be zero obstacles in your professional life this month. Everything will fall in place as you always wanted it in life. February is the month of profit for you. So, grab this opportunity and work hard on it. To make the rest of the year easy-going and peaceful.



**CANCER** : Ganesha says the Cancer natives will pass through some tests this month. The start of the month will be favourable and stable for you. But after that, you will face some shaky phases in your career, personal life, and family matters. But deal with this patiently and you will find the perfect solutions regarding it. And get the rest of the month or year back on track. February is the month of tests for you to pass it with flying colours and get yourself a good time in life with fewer worries and issues. So that you can enjoy the rest of the year.



**LEO** : Ganesha indicates that Leo natives need to push forward to make things work. You have to be courageous and hard working for every goal. There will be great support from family and spouses in your life. This will keep you going happily in life without any worries. There will be just good times in life after some time and effort given by you. After the hard work, the results will be completely amazing and worthwhile in your life. Make sure to use this February month as your month in life.



**VIRGO** : Ganesha says that Virgo natives need to be careful of the people surrounding them this month. Most importantly you don't need to trust anyone desperately and blindly. This will cause you to harm in life. It is advised to choose your people wisely and trust them carefully. Otherwise, if you are planning something big this month will not fall in place and you will have a hard time in life. Make sure to deal with this carefully this month. Then you will be relaxed for the rest of the year and face good times in a year with fewer worries and the removal of unwanted people.



**LIBRA** : Ganesha says that this upcoming February Month is the most auspicious month for Libra. You will have a good income and constant wealth source. With that, there will be a supportive family and great love life. The things will be hopelessly romantic and full of joy in your life. Just be careful not to get carried away in this. Other than that, this will be one of the happiest months for Libra natives. If you successfully deal with this month and prepared yourself for the rest of the year. Then you will have good times this year with lesser worries and problems in life.



**SCORPIO** : Ganesha says that the role and responsibility of the Scorpio natives will increase this month. Whether it is in personal life or professional life you will see a rise in you. There will be good times you will have this month but it will come with certain responsibilities which you need to fulfil completely. If you did that successfully then nothing can stop you in your personal and professional

life. And for the rest of the year, many things will be sorted out for you. There will be just a happy and peaceful year laid ahead of you in 2022.



**SAGITTARIUS** : Ganesha says that Sagittarius natives can face some ups and downs in professional life. You might have a hard time in your professional life. Where there will be tension, conflict, or not getting the results you expected. But apart from all of these, there will be great support from family and happy times in love life. This will keep you going this month. And help you to overcome professional life problems in minimum time. After that, you will be less worried about every aspect of life for the rest of the year.



**CAPRICORN** : Ganesha says that for the Capricorn natives this New Year is very driven and passionate. You will have many things planned in your life and have a certain idea to execute in your career. This month is perfect for you to work on it because it will give you direct openness in this month. Alongside that, you will have support from family and your spouse which will help you greatly and having said that there will also be a good income source. This month is perfect for you to work passionately on your desired things in life with fewer worries and problems.



**AQUARIUS** : Ganesha says this month is one of the most advantageous months of this year for the natives. There will be new openings, guidance, path, and direction in your life. This will help you and lead towards new things in your life. In your professional life, new doors can be opened for you. So, choose the door wisely, and for your personal life, you will be intrigued and fall in love with your partner more. This will definitely bring good times to your life. Make this month of February a worthy month for you.



**PISCES** : Ganesha says this month for the Pisces natives is a struggling month where you will need to really work hard on new things. And take some major decisions in career life. By doing this you will face temporary problems in life but this is really beneficial for the long-term life. Apart from that, your personal life will be happy, stable, and peaceful for you. This will work as a great support system for you in life with no worries and issues. And you will have a good time after some tough decisions and times in life.

**To Sum Up**

Every month there is a new type of change astrologically. And this affects every zodiac sign. For the month of February, there will be some transit and the Moon enters Leo. But most importantly how it will affect your sign and how you can overcome the tough time or enjoy a good time in this month is all needed as guidance and solutions.



# Vasant Panchami

Vasant Panchami day is dedicated to Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, science and technology. Goddess Saraswati is worshipped on Vasant Panchami day. Vasant Panchami is also known as Shri Panchami and Saraswati Panchami.

This year, Vasant Panchami falls on Saturday, February 5, 2022.

Vasant Panchami Muhurat - 06:39 AM to 12:12 PM

Duration - 05 Hours 33 Mins

Vasant Panchami Madhyahna Moment - 12:12 PM

Panchami Tithi Begins - 03:47 AM on Feb 05, 2022

Panchami Tithi Ends - 03:46 AM on Feb 06, 2022

People worship Goddess Saraswati to get enlighten with knowledge and to get rid of lethargy, sluggishness and ignorance. This ritual of initiating education to children is known as Akshar-Abhyasam or Vidya-Arambham/Praasana which is one of the famous rituals of Vasant Panchami. Schools and colleges arrange pujas in the morning to seek blessing of the Goddess.

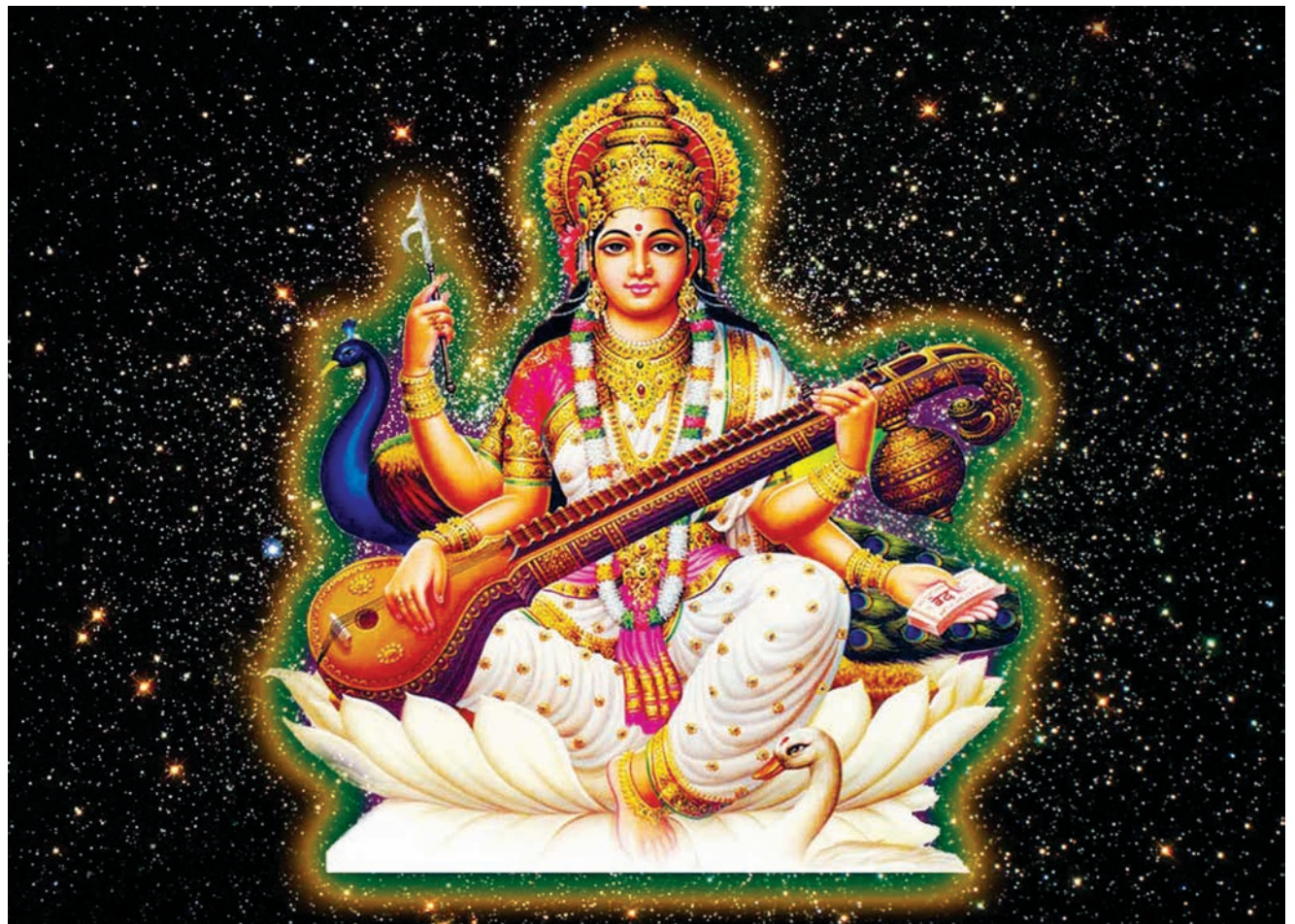
Being an important festival, all Hindus celebrate this day with much enthusiasm and religious activities. Also known as Saraswati Puja, it is considered to be the birthday of goddess Saraswati. She is the deity of wisdom and learning. Along with goddess Parvati and Laxmi, she is one of the three most important deities in Hindu culture. She represents all kinds of knowledge including science, arts, crafts and other skills. Known for her calmness and serenity, she is often shown seated on a white lotus with four hands and wearing a pure silk white sari.

The four hands of the deity symbolize the different sides of human personality in learning. When seated on a peacock, she signifies that wisdom suppresses ego. On this day people observe various kinds of religious activities and large numbers of Hindus visit temples. Goddess Saraswati is dressed in yellow garments, yellow being the symbol of spiritual knowledge. People also dress up in yellow clothes and offer yellow flowers to deities in the temples. At homes people prepare yellow sweets and dishes such as Kesar Halwa and distribute among relatives and friends. Being an auspicious occasion, children are taught their first words, hence, marking the beginning of their learning period. Schools and colleges organize special pujas to worship goddess Saraswati. Students place their books at the deity's feet and seek her blessing for better learning. Other religious activities of the day include feeding Brahmans and performing the traditional ritual of ancestral worshipping known as Pitr-Tarpan. On this day, people also perform pujas to worship the God of Love, Kamadeva. Children fly kites on this day and a famous kite festival is observed in Ferozepur, Punjab. Basant Panchami symbolizes the beginning of spring, denoted by flowering and blooming of trees and crops. Signs of new and fresh life on trees and crops indicate the end of winter and beginning of happiness and joy.

The festival of Basant Panchami is a widely celebrated festival which marks the end of the winter season and the beginning of spring. Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of arts and knowledge, is the presiding deity of the festival. The festival falls on the fifth day of the Indian month of Magh and in the months of January-February according to the Gregorian calendar. The color which denotes the celebration of this festival is yellow and during the entire season, the whole atmosphere is filled with this vibrant color. People wear yellow clothes and prepare yellow sweets which are distributed among their loved ones. The goddess of knowledge is worshipped especially by students and academicians. Though it is celebrated primarily by the Hindus, Jains and Buddhists worship her too as she is the benefactor of all written and performed arts.

## Rituals & Tradition

The festival is celebrated with great pomp and show in all parts of India. On this auspicious day, the Hindus get up early in the morning and worship the Sun God after taking bath, if possible, in the sacred river Ganges. Then they clad themselves in yellow, as it



signifies spirituality and prosperity. The color yellow also signifies the color of the ripened spring crop. Festive sweets are prepared at home using saffron, as it helps in deriving the color yellow. The goddess is dressed in yellow and the deity is worshipped by the worshippers who are dressed in yellow too. Later, swings are tied to the trees and women have fun singing traditional folk songs to greet the beautiful season of spring. After these rituals, sweets are distributed among the loved ones. The traditional sweet which goes along with the spirit of the festival is 'Kesar Halwa' and 'Sweet Rice' which are prepared with saffron to add yellow color to the preparation.

Schools and other teaching institutions organize cultural programs on this day, including the worshipping of goddess Saraswati. Along with these rituals, another important part of this festival is introducing children to the world of knowledge, hence marking a beginning to their learning phase. Floral designs are made in front porch of houses to signify the arrival of spring. Colorful kites are arranged by children and the sky gets filled with numerous kites on this auspicious day.

## Kite Festival

The festival of Vasant Panchami is celebrated to welcome the season of spring, a season when the earth replenishes itself. Spring also denotes pleasant weather, during which calm wind whistles in your ear and caresses your face with its light cool touch. It is the season when the weather is neither hot nor cold, when the wind has a cooling effect but not the kind to chill your bones. This kind of weather reminds you of a number of things including Basant Panchami, the primary festival of this season. It is one of the most colorful and wonderful festivals of this effervescent nation. The festival brings in a number of colors in the form of colorful attires. Being the color of spring, yellow gets into vogue as it also denotes prosperity, happiness, intellect and energy.

Flying kites is a sport much popular in India. In a clear and pleasant weather, you will see plenty of kites in the sky. Being a part of Vasant Panchami, kite flying competitions take place during this festival. Fighter kites were designed in India and Pakistan for decades. Ferozepur, a small town in Punjab, is famous for this sport and a number of children including both girls and boys purchase kites and fly them. Popular among adults

too, they get on to their building's terrace along with the children, play songs at high volume and dance with the rhythm while flying kites.

The event of kite flying is filled with a lot of enthusiasm and thrill. Both skilled and unskilled participants bring in their fancy colorful kites and the joy they receive when they cut their opponent's kite is a sight to cherish. With pomp and show the kites are flown and interesting kite fights take place thereafter. Children learn to fly kites from their elders, who themselves like flying them a lot. Kite fighting being the main attraction, people from around the world come to this place to experience the fun involved with this colorful festival. The kites are flown with the help of a string called 'Manjha'. There are a number of such competitions which are organized during the festival. The competition is always there to rule the sky and one has to keep his kite flying till the end to be the winner. There are judges too, some of whom decide which is the most beautiful kite is while others decide which is the biggest. The festival brings with it colors in form of greenery and colorful kites.

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# Kolkata – The city of joy

**K**olkata is not only the capital of West Bengal but the heritage and cultural hub of India. This city is a beautiful blend of the vintage and the modern. A flourishing metropolis, it has preserved its essence in the form of music, dance and literature. The presence of beautiful buildings, museums, eateries, markets, temples, churches, fort, and theatres makes Kolkata a place where a visitor would always feel that they are short of time.

Travellers come to Kolkata from all parts of the world to soak in this city's heritage into their soul. Kolkata, West Bengal located on the East Bank of Hooghly river has many wonderful attractions that are just situated in the middle of the city.

The history of Calcutta goes back to two millennia when Kolkata was only a small fishing village. The remains of the old villages and settlements are still found all around the banks of Hooghly River. The city's recorded history started in the year 1690 when East India Company arrived and started operating from here. Before them, Calcutta State was a subsidiary of the Mughals. The presence of Hooghly river provided an easy commute for inland water transport and during this time, Kolkata was nothing but a collection of three villages that used the river as a source of their livelihood.

Kolkata served as Capital of India before the Independence. Formally known as Calcutta, the city began the era of cultural renaissance in India. Many great laureates like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekanand, Subhas Chandra Bose, Nabakrishna Deb, Kaji Najrul Islam, among the few were from Kolkata and are still credited for literal revolution in India.

## Best Places To Visit In Kolkata

### Howrah Bridge

Howrah Bridge is the sixth largest bridge in the world and an important landmark in tourist monuments of India. This bridge is an engineering marvel that hides an entire world inside its massive plates. Close to Howrah Station, this legendary bridge provides commute option to millions of people on a daily basis. A visit to Howrah Bridge is a journey into the vintage side of Kolkata. Many markets located here are paradise for explorers and photographers

### Victoria Memorial

Spread across 57 acres of land, Victoria Memorial is one of the stunning iconic landmarks of the city that offers a glimpse into its splendid past. For a travelling soul, Victoria Memorial presents one with a number of delightful sections including over 24000 artefacts to gaze upon, 21 lush green gardens to wander and click photos, and more than 3500 paintings that are 200 years old. Among all the tourist places in Kolkata, Victoria Memorial is considered to be the most beautiful.

Travel tip: Hire a Kolkata tourist guide to learn interesting stories about the building and the artefacts.

### Park Street

Park Street is a paradise for shoppers and food lovers. Located in South Kolkata



area, Park Street is one of those places where visitors can find the most legendary eateries, street side shops and small cafes that are as old as the time when Kolkata came into existence. Some of the must try food items around Park Street are Jhalmuri, Egg Rolls, Chinese,

journey back in the past when the city started coming to life. Fort William also housed a ghastly jail that was filled with many prisoners kept under inhumane circumstances. A visit to Fort William is a must for history enthusiasts and the admirers of colonial architecture.

### Jorasanko Thakurbari

The birthplace of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore is highly revered among Kolkata's Bengali population. His work took Indian literature to new heights and brought the various communities of the city together to celebrate and appreciate their art and culture. Visitors can witness here artefacts from the life of Rabindranath Tagore's childhood and observe the lifestyle of his family. Many letters, clothes and paintings are displayed here that evoke a desire to have had the opportunity to meet Mr. Tagore.

### Marble Palace

Among the many highlights of Kolkata tourist map, Marble Palace is one of the most fascinating. The nineteenth century palatial mansion is one of the most beautiful royal family palaces that exudes splendour. Many brilliant artistic statues, elegant glassware, and wonderful pieces of artworks are showcased at the palace. Adore the beauty of this place and keep some extra time to explore the tiniest of item in great detail.

### Indian Museum

The grandeur and magnificence that Indian Museum carries in its premises and inside the galleries is impossible to find anywhere else. Indian museum is the oldest and the largest in the country. It was established in the early 19th century and today boasts of many rare items that are kept on display. The museum has one of the original Egyptian Mummy along with many rare paintings and artefacts from the bygone era. Visitors of all age find something to do here as there is something interesting for the young and the old.

### Festivals Of Kolkata

Kolkata and Durga Puja are synonymous to each other. The city celebrates this festival with great fervour and enthusiasm. Durga Puja is dedicated to the goddess of power and wisdom, Durga who is known as the annihilator of all forces of evil. Calcutta's Bengali folks wait for Maa's arrival for months and start preparing to welcome the mother goddess in different ways. On 9 nights of the festival the city is bedecked with beautiful pandals hosting the statue of the Goddess showcasing her war with demon king Mahishasura. Durga Puja is one of the most unique aspects about Kolkata and tourist flock to the city in large numbers to witness the grand celebration. Kolkata has a huge community of Anglo Indians who stayed here after the Independence and celebrate Christmas in Kolkata. The city is decorated with lights and many bakeries prepare Christmas special delicacies. Kolkata tourism also encourages visitors to come to the city during this time as they organize many festivals and fairs in different areas where travellers can join in and be a part of the celebration. *Source: Thomascook*

and various varieties of fish.

### Fort William

Fort William is the part of the heritage that makes Calcutta tourism so important in the entire country. This building from the colonial era is a



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# History This Week Feb 4 to Feb 10

**"HISTORY IS NOT A BURDEN ON THE MEMORY BUT AN ILLUMINATION OF THE SOUL." - JOHN DALBERG-ACTON**

### February 4



Apache Chief Cochise

February 4, 1861 - Apache Chief Cochise was arrested in Arizona by the U.S. Army for raiding a ranch. Cochise then escaped and declared war, beginning the period known as the Apache Wars, which lasted 25 years.

February 4, 1985 - Twenty countries in the United Nations signed a document entitled "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment."

Birthdays - Thaddeus Kosciusko (1746-1817) was born in Poland. He served in the American Revolution, building the first fortifications at West Point. He then returned to Poland and fought against a Russian invasion.



Charles Lindbergh

Birthdays - Aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) was born in Detroit, Michigan. He made the first non-stop solo flight from New York to Paris, May 20-21, 1927.

### February 5

February 5, 1917 - The new constitution of Mexico, allowing for sweeping social changes, was adopted.

### February 6

February 6, 1788 - Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the new U.S. Constitution, by a vote of 187 to 168.

February 6, 1933 - The 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted. It set the date for the Presidential Inauguration as January 20th, instead of the old date of March 4th. It also sets January 3rd as the official opening date of Congress.

February 6, 1952 - King George VI of England died. Upon his death, his daughter Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland. Her actual coronation took place on June 2, 1953.

Birthdays - Aaron Burr (1756-1836) was born in Newark, New Jersey. In 1804, Vice President Burr challenged Alexander Hamilton to a duel over Hamilton's negative remarks and mortally wounded him. Burr was later tried for treason over allegations he was planning to invade Mexico as part of a scheme to establish his own empire in the Southwest, but was acquitted.



George Herman "Babe" Ruth

Birthdays - Legendary baseball player George Herman "Babe" Ruth (1895-1948) was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Ruth held or shared 60 Major League records, including pitching 29 consecutive scoreless innings and hitting 714 home runs.



Ronald Reagan

Birthdays - Ronald Reagan, (1911-2004) the 40th U.S. President, was born in Tampico, Illinois. Reagan spent 30 years as an entertainer in radio, film, and television before becoming governor of California in 1966. Elected to the White House in 1980, he survived an assassination attempt and became the most popular president since Franklin Roosevelt.

### February 7

February 7, 1795 - The 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, limiting the powers of the Federal Judiciary over the states by prohibiting Federal lawsuits against individual states.

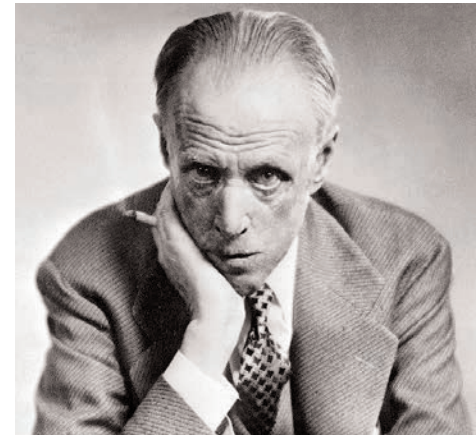
Birthdays - Thomas More (1478-1535) was born in London, England. He was a lawyer, scholar, and held the title Lord Chancellor of England. As a devout Catholic, he refused to acknowledge the

divorce of King Henry VIII from Queen Catherine, thereby refusing to acknowledge the King's religious supremacy. He was charged with treason, found guilty and beheaded in 1535, with his head then displayed from Tower Bridge. Four hundred years later, in 1935, he was canonized by Pope Pius XI.



Charles Dickens

Birthdays - British novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was born in Portsmouth, England. He examined social inequalities through his works including; David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, and Nicholas Nickleby. In 1843, he wrote A Christmas Carol in just a few weeks, an enormously popular work even today.



Sinclair Lewis

Birthdays - American social critic and novelist Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951) was born in Sauk Center, Minnesota. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930. His works include; Main Street, Babbit, and It Can't Happen Here.

### February 8

February 8, 1587 - Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was beheaded at Fotheringhay, England, after 19 years as a prisoner of Queen Elizabeth I. She became entangled in the complex political events surrounding the Protestant Reformation in England and was charged with complicity in a plot to assassinate Elizabeth.

February 8, 1910 - The Boy Scouts of America was founded by William Boyce in Washington, D.C., modeled after the British Boy Scouts.

Birthdays - Union Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891)

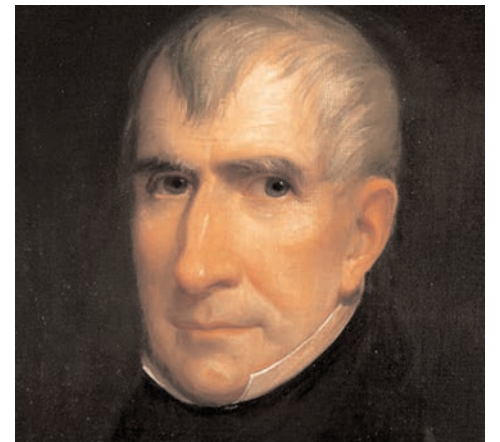


Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots

was born in Lancaster, Ohio.

### February 9

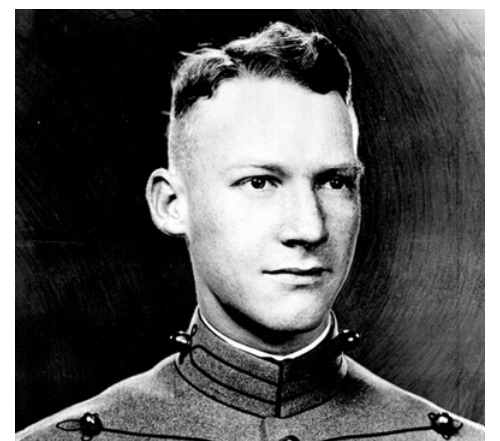
February 9, 1943 - During World War II in the Pacific, U.S. troops captured Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after six months of battle, with 9,000 Japanese and 2,000 Americans killed.



William Henry Harrison

- William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) the 9th U.S. President was born in Berkeley, Virginia. He took office on March 4, 1841 and died only 32 days later after developing pneumonia from the cold weather during his inaugural ceremonies.

### February 10



Alexander Nininger

February 10, 1942 - The first Medal of Honor during World War II was awarded to 2nd Lt. Alexander Nininger (posthumously) for heroism during the Battle of Bataan.

February 10, 1967 - The 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, clarifying the procedures for presidential succession in the event of the disability of a sitting president.

contd from page 1

**TWO INDIAS-ONE FOR THE RICH...**

Gandhi said one India is for extremely rich people and those who have immense wealth and power, while the other side has those who are being pushed into poverty. "The poor of India have no jobs. The Presidential address had not a word on unemployment," he said. "About 3 crore jobs were lost in 2021. The SME and MSME enterprises have had no support rather have been attacked by the Government."

He listed demonetization, the wrong implementation of GST, and lack of support during coronavirus as causes of the "attack". "The UPA uplifted 27 crore people from poverty and you have pushed 23 crore people into poverty," he said.

He claimed monopolies were being created in the formal sector and accused 'Adani and Ambani' of cornering ports, airports, petrochemicals, power transmission, green energy, telecom and e-commerce. "There can be no 'Make in India' until SMEs and MSMEs are doing better. Manufacturing has been reduced by 46 percent," he said. "You have focused only on 5 or 10 big industries."

"I am not against the big industry," he qualified. Taking on the BJP and Modi, he said it is Union of India, "a partnership and not a Kingdom".

"The only way India has been ruled is by conversation and negotiation. You people are confused. You think you can suppress people. You have no idea of history." "There is a vision that India can be ruled by a stick from the center. Every time it has been done that stick has been broken," said Gandhi and said he was not afraid to speak about the Emergency when it was pointed out by the ruling party.

Gandhi cited the example of farmers saying they stood in protest for one year. "But it did not matter, the King does not agree. You don't listen to anyone", he added, accusing the BJP and the Prime Minister of functioning like a King.

The confused understanding of the country is playing havoc, he said. Pegasus, the judiciary, and control over the Election Commission are all acts of destroying the country.

"The PM personally goes to Israel and authorizes use of Pegasus," he said. "My great-grandfather (Jawaharlal Nehru) spent 15 years in jail, my grandmother (Indira Gandhi) took 32 bullets, and my father (Rajiv Gandhi) was blown away with pieces, I know history," he said.

"Please stop. If you don't stop you will create problems. What you are doing is dangerous and demonstrates a lack of understanding of history", said Gandhi. "Go back and look at empires that have ruled in India. It is always a union of states." He accused the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the BJP of weakening the foundation of the country.

Rahul Gandhi also criticized the country's foreign policy, saying that India currently stood isolated in her own neighborhood. "The Chinese have a clear vision about what they want to do. The single biggest strategic goal of India's foreign policy was to keep China and Pakistan separate, you have brought them together," Gandhi said. "China acts in Doklam and Ladakh are the foundation of serious threat."

Gandhi's remarks about unemployment in the country came a few days after unrest among candidates of the Railway Recruitment Board's NTPC exam. Protests over the exam's shortlisting process turned violent in Bihar earlier this week. (With input from agencies)

**INDIA-BORN DEVIKA IS...**

toxicity and foster care legal implementation in the US. She did her undergraduate degree from Columbia University, MD from Harvard Medical School and general pediatrics residency from the Johns Hopkins Hospital Bloomberg Children's Center. Earlier, she served on Stanford's faculty as a Clinical Instructor in the General Pediatrics division.

**TMC MP MAHUA MOITRA TAKES...**

Report downgraded India's status from "free" to "partly free" and that India has fallen 17 spots to 111th position out of 160 countries in the Human Freedom Index. She also mentioned that India is at an abysmal 142nd position out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, adding that the country "remains one of the most dangerous places for journalists today."

Her speech was peppered with references to the farmers' agitation, the 'Bulli Deals' app in which Muslim women were auctioned and the Pegasus spyware controversy. Ms Mahua said: "The way the masters of the republic mistrust the present is most accurately illustrated by the Pegasus mess. The government stands accused of having spent taxpayers' money to buy technology to spy for years on its own citizens. To paraphrase a leading journalist, the New York Times is lying, The Wire is lying, Amnesty is lying, the French government is lying, the German government is lying, the US government is lying, WhatsApp and Apple - who have sued NSO are lying. Only this government is in splendid isolation with the truth on Pegasus. One minister calls it Supari media, another stands up in this house and lies to us blatantly. The government has misled even the Supreme Court."

She continued with references to raids on opposition leaders ahead of elections, targeting of Muslims by Hindu fundamentalists and recent attacks on Christians by the same groups in 19 Indian towns. She lashed out at the Union government's attempts to alter IAS cadre rules and said that the tweaking of rules was a heavy-handed move by the Union government to "bully" bureaucrats in the states. "You mistrust the Jats, Sikhs and anyone who stands up to you. But as elections are around the corner, you shamelessly put on a pagdi," she said in an apparent reference to the prime minister who had donned a Sikh turban during the NCC Republic Day camp.

"You (the government) want to get inside our homes, what we eat, what we wear," Moitra said. Moitra claimed that the mention of freedom fighters in the president's address was mere "lip service". Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who Kovind referred to in the speech, held the view that the government of India should have an absolutely neutral and impartial attitude towards all religions. Stating this, she asked, "Would Netaji have approved of a Haridwar Dharma Sansad that issues blood-curdling calls for Muslim genocide?"

Moitra also accused the government of being in fear of an India which was "comfortable in its own skin". "Ours is a living constitution, it breathes as long as we are willing to breathe life into it. Otherwise, it is just a piece of paper, black and white, that can be smudged into shades of grey by any majoritarian government," she said. The TMC MP also accused the Modi government of seeking to "alter history" and said, "They are fearful of the future and they mistrust the present." She added that "this battle of 80% vs 20% that this government has started risks destroying our republic." She appealed to all opposition parties to come together and defeat the BJP. "Woh Subah hum hi se aayegi (That dawn will come from us). Enough of sahanshilta (tolerance), daya (sympathy), Kshama (forgiveness), it is time now to become Tipu's (Sultan) springing tiger." (With inputs collected by Dave Makkar)

**'INDIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE'...**

Israel and cleared by the then Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in 2017. Describing the NSO procedure for Pegasus, which is a high-grade cyberweapon on Israel's export control list, The New York Time's Tel Aviv-based correspondent Ronen Bergman said the Israeli Ministry of Defense had cleared the contract, and that NSO engineers would have had to travel to India to install the system themselves and Israeli intelligence agency Mossad liaised with them. However, neither the NYT nor Mr. Bergman specified whether they meant the IB or the

R&AW or any other agency reporting to the NSCS under NSA Ajit Doval.

Mr. Bergman also said that the entity that signed the Pegasus purchase agreement would have had to give three guarantees to the Israeli Ministry of Defense: that it would use it only by itself, that it would get prior written permission to share it with any other entity, and that it would use it Pegasus surveillance against terrorism and organized crime. "While the ongoing technical maintenance is done by NSO vis-a-vis, in this case, Indian intelligence service, which was the entity that purchased Pegasus - the overall connection is also with the involvement of the agency in Israel that is in charge of running secret intelligence and political relationships, which is the Mossad," Mr. Bergman said in an interview to Indian news portal The Wire, which had taken part in the global investigation by several agencies that found thousands of phones belonging to civilians, including politicians, judges, journalists, activists with no criminal record had been hacked using the Pegasus software. Journalists belonging to The Wire, The Hindu and other Indian agencies were also on the list.

The Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs declined to comment on the New York Times story and the latest interview. Last July, in Parliament, IT and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, whose phone was also on the list of Pegasus-hacked devices, said the news reports were "sensational" and "had no factual basis and were categorically denied by all parties including in the Supreme Court," referring to an ongoing case in the apex court, which subsequently ordered its own enquiry committee to investigate the allegations against the government. Separately, the Ministry of Defense had said it had "not had any transactions" with the NSO group.

Significantly, the NSCS had for the first time seen a 10-fold increase in budgetary allocation in 2017-18, when its allocation shot up to ₹333 crore and it was further increased to ₹841.73 crore in 2018-19 but was revised to ₹140.92 crore in 2019-20, and officials did not respond to The Hindu report requesting explanations for the sudden surge in outlay. The functioning of the NSCS, IB and the R&AW are exempted from the provisions of the RTI Act and also from Parliament scrutiny. The organizations cannot be financially audited by the CAG also. In the interview, Mr. Bergman offered no evidence of the NYT's claims, but detailed the workings of NSO and procedure involved by each of the countries, including India, Mexico, Hungary, Morocco, KSA etc., who had purchased the Pegasus program. He said he couldn't divulge his sources, but The New York Times had conducted an extensive multi-country investigation based on documents that he was privy to.

"Some of the details that are specified, this comes from a very sensitive, a long-time dealing with sources, and, therefore, I'll be a little bit cagey in some of the details... we have been working for a year in 12 different countries, speaking with intelligence officials, with leaders of law enforcement agencies, politicians, leaders, cyber experts, human rights activists, etc. and I think we got as close as possible to the full picture - if not the whole picture," Mr. Bergman stated. As the programme is on a controlled export list, NSO officials have said all their contracts are cleared by the Israeli government. The NYT story had linked the Pegasus purchase in each of the countries to relations between their leaders and Mr. Netanyahu and claimed that those governments had changed their foreign policy, and votes at the United Nations as a result of the relationship.

"[In] India, [there is] the relationship, a close personal relationship between the leaders of India and Israel that gave birth to, I would say, a new generation of military expenditure as well as a new Indian stand, including international public steps towards Israel," Mr. Bergman said, adding that according to his sources, there was "a specific interest and specific emphasis from the Indian leadership to the Israeli leadership to obtain that specific license" for Pegasus. (The Hindu)



## ENGLAND HEAD COACH CHRIS SILVERWOOD STEPS DOWN AFTER ASHES HUMILIATION

England head coach Chris Silverwood has stepped down following the team's meek surrender in the Ashes series against Australia, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Thursday. Silverwood had come under pressure after England lost the five-test Ashes series 4-0, with former skipper Mike Atherton calling for a complete overhaul of the England management.

The announcement comes a day after Ashley Giles, who appointed Silverwood, left his role as the managing director. "It's been an absolute honour to be England head coach, and I'm extremely proud to have worked alongside our players and staff," Silverwood said. "The last two years have been very demanding but I have really enjoyed my time with the team and working with Rooty (test captain Joe Root) and Morgs (white-ball skipper Eoin Morgan), and I am very proud of this group considering the challenges.

"Former England skipper Andrew Strauss has replaced Giles on an interim basis and will appoint a caretaker coach for the forthcoming tour of West Indies in March." In the coming days Andrew Strauss will appoint a caretaker coach for the tour of the West Indies and will then consider the appropriate coaching structures to help England move forwards," ECB chief executive Tom Harrison said in a statement.

Source: Reuters

## REAL MADRID KNOCKED OUT OF COPA DEL REY BY GIANT KILLERS ATHLETIC

A stunning last-minute strike by substitute Alex Berenguer handed Athletic Bilbao a shock 1-0 win over Real Madrid, eliminating them from the Copa del Rey in the quarter-finals on Thursday, Feb 3.

Athletic, who knocked out Barcelona in the previous round, ended a run of three successive defeats by Real in all competitions over the last two months thanks to Berenguer's last-gasp goal.

The home team dominated the game from start and piled on the pressure on Real until they finally broke the deadlock in the 89th minute, with Berenguer firing into the right corner of the net.

Athletic joined Valencia, Rayo Vallecano and Real Betis in the semi-finals. The draw will take place on Friday with the semi-finals being played over two legs.

Real Madrid were clearly hampered by the absence Karim Benzema, who is still recovering from a leg muscle injury, and a below par performance from Vinicius Jr.

Source: Reuters

# India reach fourth successive U19 cricket World Cup final

ANTIGUA (TIP)

Yash Dhull and his deputy Shaik Rasheed added 204 runs for the third wicket to successfully bat Australia out of the contest, guiding India to their fourth successive Under-19 World Cup final with 96-run victory.

Dhull scored a century in the process while Rasheed fell six short, as India posted 290 for 5 in 50 overs which proved to be far too much for the chasing Australian side. India now face England - another team on a similar unbeaten run - in the summit clash.

Australia began well by taking out the India openers for cheap by the 13th over but that brought the third-wicket pair together. Between them they 18 fours and two sixes and played out 200 deliveries to build the Indian innings up from scratch. Both were cautious to begin with but grew into the innings as Australia tried different bowling option in futility. Dhull got to his half-century first - off 65 balls - and upped his scoring rate a notch since that point on without taking too many risks.

The strong foundation for a late flourish was laid by the pair with 68 runs coming between the 30th and 40th over, taking them from 114 for 2 to 182 for 2. At that stage India were primed to get as close to the 250-run mark as possible, but managed to do far better because of what followed in the next five overs. It began with three successive fours from Rasheed - pulled through midwicket, punched through cover and dabbled to thirdman - to get the ball rolling for the flourish. Dhull, who a few overs before needed treatment to his back, took the cue and took on Cooper Connolly before ruining right-arm quick Tom Whitney's commendable bowling figures up to that point. Whitney made it easy for the Indian captain by repeatedly bowling short and getting punished, as Dhull reached his century in the over which brought India 19 runs. It meant, India rached away to 237 for 2 with five more overs to spare.

The partnership, which swelled past 200, was broken by a bit of ill-luck for India as Dhull was caught out of his ground when a straight drive from Rasheed was ricocheted onto the stumps at the non-striker's end by the bowler Jack Nisbet. A ball later, Rasheed followed his captain - cutting a short ball to Jack Sinfield at backward point. The decision got referred but there wasn't enough conclusive proof for the third umpire to overturn the soft signal that was given in Australia's favour. While Dhull walked back for a run-a-ball 110, Rasheed exited at 94 off 108.

To two new batsmen, William Salzman bowled an incredible 47th over conceding just one run but Nishant Sindhu and Rajvardhan Hangargekar quickly found ways to throw their bat around. Hangargekar took on Nisbet in a 15-



Yash Dhull scored a run-a-ball 110. Photo:Getty

run over before being bowled by a low full toss from Salzman in the following over. Australia were still with a chance of tying down India to a gettable total, but Sindhu and Dinesh Bana smashed two fours and three sixes in the final over from Tom Whitney that earned the batting side 27 runs, taking them to 290 for 5.

India's ruthlessness continued in the second half of the fixture. Australia built a brisk second-wicket partnership with Campbell Kellaway and Corey Miller, only for India's left-arm spin trio of Hangargekar, Sindhu and Vicky Ostwal to step in and derail the chase. Once Hangargekar broke the stand with Miller's wicket, Sindhu and Ostwal ripped into Australia's middle-order.

Australia went from 71 for 1 in the 17th over to 125 for 7, with all the six wickets falling to the spinners. Ostwal finished with 3 for 42 - India's best in the game - taking his World Cup tally to 12 wickets. His and Sindhu's effectiveness through the middle-overs meant Lachlan Shaw's fighting 50 was a mere consolation for Australia as they were bundled out for 194 in the 42nd over.

Source: Cricbuzz

## Winter Olympics: India to boycott Beijing Olympic ceremonies over PLA torchbearer

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India's top diplomat in Beijing will not attend 2022 Winter Olympics ceremonies after Chinese media reported that a People's Liberation Army soldier who took part in deadly clashes on the countries' Himalayan border participated in the torch relay.

The diplomatic boycott by India comes as the U.S. leads a separate one of this year's Olympics over alleged human rights abuses in China's western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, making official attendance by heads of state and diplomats very political.

"It is indeed regrettable that the Chinese side has chosen to politicize an event like the Olympics," India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Arindam Bagchi told reporters. "I wish to inform that our chargé d'affaires of the Embassy



The 2022 Winter Olympics will be held between February 4 and February 22. (Reuters)

of India in Beijing will not be attending the opening nor the closing ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics."

Qi Fabao, a PLA regiment commander who suffered a head injury when Chinese and Indian troops battled in hand-to-hand

combat on the disputed Himalayan frontier in June 2020, acted as one of 1,200 torchbearers in a ceremonial relay this week, the Communist Party-backed Global Times reported.

Chinese media called Qi a hero and former editor-in-chief of Global Times, Hu Xijin, said the decision to include the soldier was a call for border peace. The International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said he was unaware of the details but that in the 2012 London Summer Games, a U.K. army veteran from Afghanistan participated in the torch relay.

The India-China border clash dramatically worsened ties between the world's two most populous nations. It left 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese soldiers dead in the biggest escalation on the disputed frontier in decades.

Source: Bloomberg

## BSF to start Beating Retreat along international border in Rajasthan by March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Tanot Mata Mandir

**JAIPUR (TIP):** On the lines of Wagah-Attari border's Beating Retreat, Border Security Force (BSF) will soon open a border tourism spot in Rajasthan's International Indo-Pak border in Jaisalmer district at Babliyan post to woo tourists, both domestic and international, by March this year.

Besides the stadium for retreat, a museum and cafeteria would also be functional there for tourists' who travel a long way from other parts of India and the

world throughout the year specially from September to March.

"A stadium with a capacity of over 2000 tourist visitors is being built at Babliyan post by the Jaisalmer district administration and will be ready by February end, and BSF would then start Beating Retreat event like the one at Attari border", Pankaj Goomar, IG, BSF (Rajasthan Frontier) told TIP when contacted.

Domestic and international tourists used to throng Jaisalmer to visit forts, sand dunes in Sam, and Tanot Mata Mandir, and many of them seek permission to view the international border guarded by the BSF but did not get easily, Goomar said, adding the Beating Retreat kind of event would give access to them with a new idea and view along the border which would be 2 to 3 kms from the actual fenced border line.

"Its tourist fee and other modalities would be decided later on by the BSF authorities which will monitor everything once it is built by the Jaisalmer administration", he said, adding a museum would also be ready at Babliyan post, which is about 145 kms.

Once Babliyan post gets ready, BSF had a plan to start similar event at Bikaner's Khajuwala and Sanchu border posts.

The border tourism is chosen due to the importance of Tanot Mata temple where thousands of pilgrims and tourists visit every year. It is an incarnation of divine goddess Hingla Mata and it was attacked by the Pakistan Army during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 during which 3,000 bombs were fired towards the temple. However, as per local lore, the bombs either missed their target or did not explode. After the 1965 war, India's BSF took charge of the temple and the responsibility of managing and maintenance. Tanot was attacked again during the Indo-Pak war of 1971, but this time the attacking tanks got bogged down in the sand, allowing the Indian Air Force to destroy them. After the 1971 war, the Indian Army built a Vijay Stambha (Victory tower) inside the temple compound to commemorate the victory in the battle of Longwala.

## Daughters and Sons are Gifts from God

BY DR. JAGDEEP KAUR KAHLON

God gives us both, sons and daughters. Girls and boys are equally intelligent, and both are capable of joining various professions.

Daughters should never be considered a burden and so they must never be married off at a very young age when they have not attained requisite maturity to live a responsible married life.

We should celebrate Lohri for daughters, just like for the sons. Girls must be given equal love and care. They should be given all the required good education, nutrition & proper healthcare. And they must receive from their parents, all the opportunities for progress and growth in life.

When a young girl is nurtured well and gets good education, she can easily blossom into an intelligent and independent woman, who can succeed in her chosen field of work.

Her



interests would, then, lead to generating an adequate income, which results in a good, contented and happy life.

Parents must be made aware of giving all rights to their daughters and not to dominate them and not to discriminate against them. Getting out of the shadow of father, brother, husband and son gifts the girl or woman great self-esteem and confidence. Only then can she provide joy to her family. Once she is working and is happy with her work, she can become the source of inspiring innumerable other young women to follow suit and succeed in their professions.

Such empowerment would become the catalyst for all women to live a joyous and fruitful life. They would be enabled to take equal care of their family life and professional life and shall become an inspirational role-model for all young girls, regarding learning to maintain a good balance. This is a cycle because such role-models would, in turn, become an exemplary motivating factor for other parents, who would encourage their daughters to study, along with learning household work.

Such noble, commendable, worthy, good attitude of parents towards their daughters would give a great boost to the morale of the girls who would be encouraged to follow their heart and soul in studying the subject of their choice and then to go into a profession as per their interest and capability, instead of being rushed and pushed into early marriage.

(The author can be reached at 011-91- 9876584647)

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### PUNJAB ECONOMY, EXPATRIATE PUNJABIS, AND THE ROLE OF PUNJAB GOVERNMENT

So, with such a backdrop, it is to be seen whether NRIs would respond favorably to the fresh invitation. If Punjab government is seriously contemplating a role for the NRIs in revival of the economy, then a comprehensive package needs to be given out as an incentive to make them feel welcomed and encouraged, just akin to such packages which any government would dole out to large industrial houses and to the corporate sector. Other factors which are quintessential pre-requisites include a 24-hour uninterrupted electricity supply, minimal interference of the Inspector Raj, concretized assurances pertaining to security provisions safeguarding NRIs from the trio which is unofficially ruling the State as a parallel government. All such measures could play a crucial role in motivating the NRIs to head towards Punjab with rejuvenated enthusiasm and bold initiatives, ventures and plans for growth of Punjab. Such bold schemes from the government can be easily offered. A

recent example relates to a decision regarding Bathinda where land would be given out to Corporates for a paltry Rupee One, on a 33-year lease for Block Drug Parks, with the provision of an extendable period of lease up to 99 years. Two rupees per unit electric supply and One rupee per 1000 liters water supply would be provided, as per this plan. Punjab Cabinet has given their clearance. The price of the land where the park is envisioned, is to the tune of 3,000 crore rupees. The Centre shall allocate 1876 crore and Punjab State government will chip in 1000 crore.

The NRIs could be inspired to look towards Punjab if their grievances are redressed. They are looking forward to an affectionate, loving, respectful welcome, whereby their endeavors are appreciated with reciprocity of provision of requisite infrastructural facilitation and incentives which safeguard their investments. The NRIs want their offspring and future generations to return to Punjab with honor and pride to be inspired by massive noble, worthy contributions made by their ancestors.

**If the Punjab government is pondering on the lines of exploring serious business, then :**

- 1) Assurances should be forthcoming about various

- 2) institutions like NRI-Sabha, NRI Commission, NRI Police department, NRI Court system
  - 3) Protection must be provided for the land and properties of NRIs.
  - 4) Safety of NRIs (their person and money) must be ensured, during the period of their stay in Punjab.
  - 5) Cases must be withdrawn against Punjabi NRIs who were declared absconders
  - 6) Special NRI-zone must be established at airports in Punjab, to cater to their proper hospitality.
  - 7) The children of NRIs must be welcomed to the State, to let them relish the rich legacy of their ancestors and to taste the vibrancy of Punjabi hospitality culture, language, heritage and history.
- Only then shall NRI Punjabis trust the government and the public of Punjab and would turn again towards Punjab to revive its economy. As of now, the NRIs get a feel that the government, relatives and friends are eager only to empty their pockets.

(The author, Gurmit Singh Palahi, is a retired principal and well-known columnist. He is currently President of Punjabi Columnists Patrakar Manch. He can be reached at gurmitpalahi@yahoo.com

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