



The INDIAN PANORAMA

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Articles and advertisements may please be emailed to salujaindra@gmail.com by April 5, 2022.

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INDIA-US PARTNERSHIP WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PILLAR IN REALIZING A GREENER AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE WORLD: AMBASSADOR SANDHU



The two countries seek to mobilize finance, accelerate clean energy deployment, demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies and build capacities.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): "India's partnership with the United States will be an important pillar in realizing a greener and sustainable future for the world," India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, wrote in an op-ed published by the Newsweek magazine on Monday, March 7.

India is expected to witness the largest increase in energy demand of any country by 2040. To meet growth in electricity demand over the next 20 years, India will need to add a power system the size of the European Union to what it has now.

"In their national and international efforts to advance climate action, India and the US have been working closely at the bilateral, plurilateral and global levels," Sandhu wrote.

"In April 2021, India and the US launched the Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership, with two main tracks-the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership and the Climate

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BJP retains power in 4 States; AAP Tsunami decimates stalwarts in Punjab

UTTARAKHAND VOTES FOR BJP, BUT CM DHAMI LOSES; BJP TO FORM GOVT IN GOA WITH INDEPENDENTS, MGP; ADITYANATH BACK WITH HIGHER VOTE SHARE BUT FEWER SEATS; AAP WINS 92 OF 117 SEATS IN PUNJAB, IN MANIPUR, BJP WINS 32 SEATS IN 60-MEMBER HOUSE



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Center) is being felicitated by senior BJP leaders (L to R): Amit Shah, JP Nadda, Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari, at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi during a ceremony to celebrate party's win in four state assembly elections, on March 10, 2022.

Photo / courtesy BJP headquarters

NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP): The BJP retained power in all the four States that it was governing while the Congress lost Punjab to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The AAP said it has emerged as the "natural, national" alternative to the BJP, even as the Congress declined to a new low of just 18 seats in Punjab, 2 in UP, 18 in Uttarakhand, 12 in Goa, and 5 in Manipur.

The BJP held on to power in Uttar Pradesh, where it won two-thirds of the seats (274), compared to three-fourths in 2017. The Samajwadi Party succeeded in improving upon its 2017 performance by bagging 124 seats. The BJP's vote share though increased in U.P., Goa and Manipur. The party conclusively won Uttarakhand, and won enough seats to

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US VP Harris in Poland calls for probe into war crimes



Kamala Harris with Polish President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw Image / Courtesy Reuters

WARSAW (TIP): There should be an investigation into Russia's conduct in the war in Ukraine, US Vice President Kamala Harris said on Thursday, March 10, during a visit to the Polish capital Warsaw, as she condemned what she said were "atrocities of unimaginable proportions", says an AP report.

There should be an investigation and we should all be watching. The eyes of the world are on this war and what Russia has done in terms of aggression and atrocities. Kamala Harris, US Vice President said.

CONTD ON PAGE 30

Congress Clears \$1.5 Trillion Spending Bill, including 13.6 billion in emergency aid for Ukraine

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Congress cleared the first major federal spending legislation of President Biden's administration on Thursday, March 10, approving a \$1.5 trillion measure with substantial increases for domestic and national security programs, along with \$13.6 billion in emergency aid for Ukraine as it battles Russia's invasion.



Photo / Courtesy Library of Congress

The Senate approved the 2,700-page measure by a vote of 68 to 31 less than two days after it was finalized and pushed through the House, a rapid timetable that reflected strong bipartisan support for assisting Ukraine and a sense of urgency to avert a government shutdown within days. The bill, which funds the government through

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Time to celebrate Indian democracy

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA



Elections to five assemblies in India in 2022 have been remarkable in terms of their enormity. Participation of millions of voters and thousands of candidates, and an imposing machinery to ensure that elections are fair and beyond any question with regard to their integrity made the elections challenging.

Coming to the political parties in the fray, one can easily see that the biggest gainer in these elections is the Aam Aadmi Party which has swept the elections in Punjab in a mighty sweep of their broom, the party symbol .

The party which made its presence in the state of Punjab in the last elections with about 20 seats, on the way, was reduced to half its number because its elected members switched loyalty and joined Congress, the ruling party.

Now the party has won an astounding 92 seats in this state assembly, which has 117 seats. Obviously, it is a record of sorts. I don't recall any single party in Punjab having won that number ever.

Another party which has done very well and that has been doing so well for the last 8 years now, ever since 2014, is the BJP.

BJP came to power in UP in 2017 with a thumping majority. It floored one-time strong parties like the BSP and the Samajwadi Party. People were expecting a change because of anti-incumbency factors but it did not work in the State of Uttar Pradesh where Yogi Adityanath has created a record by becoming a chief Minister for a second term in succession. No Chief Minister in UP has ever been elected twice in succession except Gobind Ballabh Pant a long time ago.

However, BJP did lose a couple of seats and settled for 274 seats in a house of 403 seats. The BJP's loss was the gain of the Samajwadi Party which managed to double its strength from 2017 by registering 124 wins.

The exit polls have been indicating that BJP and Congress will be close contestants in the States of Uttarakhand and Goa, but they were proved wrong because BJP made clean sweep in both the states.

Coming to the losers, one can clearly see that the Congress has been the biggest loser. Its streak of losing elections has been continuing and the greatest loss has been the state of Punjab where Congress was the ruling party with 70 odd seats and has been mauled badly, wining just 18 seats.

Also, the SAD Badal suffered humiliating defeats when both Parkash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Badal who have been Chief Ministers lost election, besides the party folding up with just 4 seats.

Yet, another party that suffered heavily and has probably almost lost its base is the BSP in Uttar Pradesh. A party which ruled the state on two occasions got just 1 seat.

With the elections over and the results out, there are celebrations in the BJP and AAP quarters while those that got the drubbing are huddling together to take stock of the reasons for their failure.

Come 2024, and we will be watching a much bigger fight when General Elections are due. It will be interesting to see the course which India adopts post 2024 elections. Only time will tell whether India will stay a multi-cultural and multi-religious nation or move towards a theocratic state which is the dream of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar. The recent electoral wins must have come as a shot in the arm of the BJP

For now, let us celebrate Indian democracy.

GUEST COMMENT

A cry for clean governance

WITH JHADU CLEAN-SWEEPING PUNJAB, AAP'S TEST BEGINS

The jhadu has made a clean sweep in Punjab, with the voters impressively consigning even the bigwigs of AAP's rival parties to the bin. A whopping 92 of the 117 Assembly seats going to the AAP, the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections will be remembered for a number of historic firsts. Upsetting the traditional bipolar appletart between the Congress and the Akalis, the surge of the AAP in the run-up to the polls indicated a strong multi-polar fight. But few could gauge the strength of the wind that had begun blowing in the 2017 election when the fledgling AAP was catapulted to the main Opposition rank on its debut as well as the December 2021 MC poll in the state's capital, Chandigarh, when it emerged as the

single largest party. The 2022 decisive verdict establishes that the AAP was fully buoyant to consolidate its twin gains.

No doubt, the landslide mandate is as much a vote for the AAP's manifesto of governance practices as it is a thumbs down to the sitting Congress government, which had romped to power with 77 seats the last time, and a further erosion of the trust in the regional satrap, the SAD. The people have shown their disgust at the party-hopping, scam-ridden and corruption-tainted leaders of both parties and their blatant bids to protect each other when in power. The internal bickering in the Congress and the high command's handling of the

leadership tussle did it in. Riddled with the transport and cable TV scams, the SAD too miserably failed to win back the people's faith.

This mandate, thus, puts an onerous responsibility on the AAP. It is a clear message to and hope from the Arvind Kejriwal-Bhagwant Mann-Raghav Chadha trio of putting Punjab back on the track of prosperity. The vote is a loud cry for clean governance. The AAP is obligated to taking honest steps towards tackling the burning issues of drugs and unemployment and strive for bettering the state of education, healthcare and industry. Only then can it hope to play the national-level game it is now eyeing.

(Tribune, India)

Consul General of India and Norwalk Mayor Rilling exchange Views



Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling in conversation with Indian Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal and GOPIO-CT Delegation at the City Hall



Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling with Indian Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal and GOPIO-CT Delegation at Norwalk City Hall. From l. to r.: Viresh Sharma, Mahesh Jhangiani, Jayashri Chintalapudi, Ashok Nichani, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Mayor Rilling, Consul General Jaiswal, Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph, Srinivas Akarapu, Prasad Chintalapudi, Dr. Sudhir D'Souza and Prachi Narayan

NORWALK CITY, CT (TIP): Consul General of India at New York, Randhir Kumar Jaiswal and Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph had a meeting with Norwalk City Mayor Harry Rilling. They were joined by officials of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin-Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT).

Indian Americans have been settling in the lower Fairfield County which includes Norwalk for the last 3 decades and the flow is still continuing. Most of the community members moving in are in IT industry or healthcare.

Mayor Rilling told Consul General Jaiswal about the City and its friendly environment for business including availability of office space to attract new businesses from India. Indian companies, especially in the IT sector, have been starting outfits in the USA and

hoping that some of them could consider Norwalk as a destination. Consul General Jaiswal also suggested that companies from Norwalk could also consider India as a destination.

The delegation from GOPIO-CT consisted of GOPIO Intl. Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO-CT President and serial investor Ashok Nichani, GOPIO-CT Exec. VP Prasad Chintalapudi who is also Vice President of IT Company Panzer Solutions, Laser Systems President Viresh Sharma, GOPIO-CT Secretary Prachi Narayan, GOPIO-CT Treasurer and IT Consultant Srinivas Akarapu, IT Consultant Mahesh Jhangiani along with his wife Yashasvi Jhangiani and Fr. Sudhir D'Souza who is the pastor of St. Philip Catholic Church in Norwalk.

The delegation also emphasized the need for having a Cricket ground for the

new immigrant groups from South Asian nations, Caribbean, South Africa, Australia, England, Australia, New Zealand and East African countries. Such an initiative will make the city a more welcoming place for immigrant professionals from those countries.

GOPIO-CT has assigned a four-member committee to brainstorm the idea of reaching out Indian companies with the Norwalk City officials and India's commercial attaché in New York. Those assigned with this task are Norwalk residents Srinivas Akarapu, Mahesh Jhangiani, Prachi Narayan and Fr. Sudhir D'Souza.

There was also a suggestion that the Norwalk Community College should be connected to an Indian institution with similar programs. This will be explored further.

Over the last 16 years, GOPIO-CT, a chapter of GOPIO International has become an active and dynamic organization hosting interactive sessions with policy makers and academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, and working with other area organizations to help create a better future. GOPIO-CT - Global Organization of People of Indian Origin - serves as a non-partisan, secular, civic and community service organization - promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs and contributions of the Indian Diaspora through community programs, forums, events and youth activities. It seeks to strengthen partnerships and create an ongoing dialogue with local communities.

(Based on a press release)

Bomb Cyclone Threatens Snow, High Winds this Weekend

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): A looming winter weather system could lob a "bomb cyclone" of heavy rain, possible snow and high winds at New York City, forecasters warn.

Low pressure conditions whipped up by cold air will blow across the East Coast in what Weather Channel meteorologists have dubbed "Winter Storm Quinlan."

The storm's track will bring it to New York City by early Saturday. A more-conservative - for now - forecast by the National Weather Service calls for rain and blustery conditions.

"Winds could gust as high as 33 mph," the forecast states. "Chance of precipitation is 100%. New precipitation amounts between three quarters and one inch possible."

The storm could develop into what's essentially a weather bomb, according to a Weather Channel report. This weekend storm could undergo bombogenesis, the meteorological term for when a low-pressure system drops at least 24 millibars within 24 hours.

Such a drop could bring sudden waves of high winds and snow, meteorologists warn.

Uma Sengupta passes away

NEW YORK (TIP): Long time educationist and committed Democrat Uma Sengupta has passed away. Malini Shah, a longtime friend of Uma informed The Indian Panorama on March 9.

Uma migrated to the U.S. from India about 35 years ago. Having been a teacher in her native land, she decided to continue in the same profession in her adopted country too. After making a success of her kindergarten school, she turned to community service.

Uma was elected Queens Democratic District leader in 2004. She worked hard to strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

Her death has caused a vacuum in the local Democratic party.

On various occasions, asked to introduce herself, she described herself as a mother and grandmother who wanted to work to ensure a good life, quality education and housing for all children.



Uma Sengupta (third from left) is seen with her family, and her friend and mentor Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (to her left).

Indian American Sikhs being discriminated against

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Religious discrimination and hate crime against the Sikh community in the United States has increased in recent years, an eminent human rights expert has told the lawmakers urging the administration and the US Congress to take steps to end this.

"Congress must take action," Amrith Kaur Aakre, legal director of the Sikh Coalition, told members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties during a recent Congressional hearing on Discrimination and Civil Right.

"Workplace discrimination harms Sikhs in a range of public and private sector jobs including transportation, entertainment, health care, the military and law enforcement by allowing for the biased interpretation and application of government policies and laws.

"We've seen Sikhs willing to put their lives on the line in defense of their cities and country, only to be told that uniform and grooming policies prohibit their articles of faith," she said.

"We have seen Sikhs ordered to cut their hair for work-related drug testing even when alternative means are readily available.

"And we've seen Sikh first responders in the fight against COVID-19 pressured to shave their religiously mandated beards instead of being given appropriate, safe personal protective equipment that doesn't interfere with their faith," Aakre said.

Regardless of the details, time and again these policies are interpreted in a way which disproportionately impacts minority communities and our system allows it to keep happening, she said.

"We also receive Sikh travelers' reports of inappropriate demands to remove articles of faith, discriminatory comments by TSA agents and other



Photo for representation only

profiling in our airports," she told the lawmakers.

"This is a humiliating hindrance for Sikhs and other religious and racial minorities, members of the transgender community and others. And additional discriminatory practices like no-fly list and the lingering effects of the previous administration's Muslim ban continue to perpetuate profiling against too many people," she said.

Responding to a question, Aakre said TSA profiling for Sikh Americans and other minority groups has always been a problem.

Bias against travelers is prevalent at every stage of the travelling process and it starts with the fact that the TSA agents do not receive adequate training on TSA policies or cultural competencies, which is evident from the moment many stigmatized groups arrive at the airport and have to go through behavioral detection before

reaching security.

In response to another question from Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, she said Sikh American students experience high rates of bullying and harassment in our nation's public schools and they continue receiving and documenting nationwide reports of school bullying.

"Sikh boys who wear turbans are called terrorists and girls are teased for having long hair. And many of these children are subjected to violence.

"Our research shows that the majority of Sikh children, over 50 per cent, have endured school bullying. Over two-thirds or 67 per cent reported that they were bullied in school and turban Sikh children experienced bullying at more than double the national rate," Jackson Lee said.

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who is the first and only South Asian American woman elected to the House of Representatives, said 9/11 forever changed what it means to be Muslim, Arab, or South Asian American in America.

"In the days and weeks after, I received fearful calls from individuals in the Sikh, Muslim and Arab-American community who were being attacked for wearing turbans or hijabs. I heard from moms and dads who were afraid to send their kids to school, a fear that I shared for my own child," she said.

Jayapal said her resolution, H Res. 629, recognizes the climate of hate that Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, South Asian and Sikh communities have experienced since September 11 and calls for action to address the event's lasting impacts.

"I hope this hearing becomes one step of many to examine and ultimately dismantle 9/11 era policies that have perpetuated and exacerbated discrimination against these communities," she said.

3 INDO-CANADIAN YOUTHS DIE IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN ONTARIO



Gurinderpal Lidhar (31), Mono Town, Ontario, Sunny Khurana (24), Brentford, and Kiranpreet Singh Gill (22) of Barry Town died when their van collided with a trailer. They belonged to Faridkot in Punjab.

TORONTO (TIP): Three youths from Punjab were killed in a car accident near Sarnia in Ontario, Canada.

The deceased have been identified as Gurinderpal Lidhar (31), Mono Town, Ontario, Sunny Khurana (24), Brentford, and Kiranpreet Singh Gill (22) of Barry Town. All three belonged to Faridkot in Punjab. According to the reports, a van collided with a trailer on Arthur's Wellington Road near Highway 6 in the Canadian township of Harther, Ontario, which led to the death of the three youths.

The trailer driver suffered injuries and has been admitted to a hospital. Two youth died on the spot while the third succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

Indian American legal Educator and Scholar Sudha Setty named dean of NYC law school

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian American legal educator and scholar Sudha Setty has been appointed the dean of the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, America's leading public interest law school.

The first person of South Asian descent to lead New York City's only publicly funded law school, Setty's appointment will be effective July 1, according to a university press release.

Setty has been the dean of the Western New England University School of Law since 2018, when she became the first woman of South Asian descent in the US to serve as dean of an American Bar Association-accredited law school.

She previously served as the school's associate dean for faculty development and intellectual life. A member of the school's faculty since 2006, she was named Professor of the Year in 2009, 2016 and 2018.

"Dean Setty boasts a sustained record of accomplishment as an antitrust litigator, pro bono civil rights counsel, scholar of constitutional law and legal education leader, as well as a pioneering administrator and leader," said Chairperson William C.



Legal educator and scholar Sudha Setty has been appointed the dean of the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law

Thompson Jr. "We are thrilled to welcome her to CUNY Law."

"Dean Setty brings to CUNY a demonstrated ability to combine visionary goal-setting with deft governance, and to construct, fund and sustain the programs that realize those goals," said Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. "Her breadth of experience and commitment to use legal education for the advancement of social justice will build upon the Law School's progress as the top public-interest law school in the nation. CUNY is fortunate to have her."

"I am thrilled and honored to serve as the next dean of CUNY School of Law. This law school was founded with the mission of public service, social justice lawyering, inclusiveness and

accessibility," said Setty.

"In this moment, the nation and the world have recognized what CUNY has known all along: that our society needs more lawyers who are educated with these fundamental values to take on the challenges of today and the future," she said.

"I look forward to working with all members of the CUNY community as the law school seeks to make the world a fairer, more just, and better place."

At Western New England University School of Law, Setty's deanship has focused on enhancing the social justice work at the school and its commitment to racial justice and diversity, equity and inclusion, the release said.

She led the creation of its Center for Social Justice in 2019. The Center provides an organizing framework for the faculty and student work in social justice lawyering, engaging in economic justice, racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, immigrant rights, access to justice, and other social justice lawyering work, and drawing support from foundations, alumni, and individual donors.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American community leader praised by First Lady Jill Biden during her Silicon Valley trip

SAN FRANCISCO TIP): US First Lady Dr. Jill Biden has praised the role of an eminent Indian-American tech-entrepreneur and community leader in taking the message of the Biden administration to the public.

The First Lady, during a closed-door meeting with some of the top Democratic Party leaders in Silicon Valley, mentioned the name of an Indian-American entrepreneur from Silicon Valley, Ajay Jain Bhutoria, and his contributions.

During the meeting in Silicon Valley last week, she recollected her visit to Bhutoria's house during the presidential election campaign.

According to those present at the meeting, the First Lady praised Bhutoria for his strong support for President Biden and the Democratic Party.

Bhutoria, a finance committee member of the Democratic Party, said that President Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken and their team are doing great work in leading and keeping the NATO allies together in support of Ukraine.

President Biden has united the world, he said.



The First Lady Jill Biden praised Ajay Jain Bhutoria for his strong support for President Biden and the Democratic Party.

"Russia is quite literally shut off from the global economy now. Major credit cards, including Visa and Mastercard transactions suspended, flights soon to be grounded, most Western airspace restricted, Western businesses pulled out, domestic businesses sanctioned. Russian banks are banned from SWIFT.

"The Russian Ruble and the Stock market continue

to crash. Germany halted certification of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, Russian athletes cannot compete in several sports activities," he said.

"Swiss Bank putting sanctions and asset freeze applying to Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov...are definitely putting immense pressure on the Russian economy in both immediate short term and long term," he added.

Bhutoria said the Ukrainian people are showing the world what it means to fight for freedom.

"Their bravery and heroism are inspiring. Moscow has to pay the price for its unconscionable actions. The attack on Kharkiv is a war crime and now is the time for NATO allies to list Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. This will further shutdown the Russian economy and punish Putin and his team for war on Ukraine," he said.

Jill is a community college educator, a military mother, a grandmother, and a bestselling author. She has also served as Second Lady of the United States from 2009-2017.

USIBC inducts 4 top executives to its India Advisory Council



The U.S. India Business Council (USIBC) has added four top executives to its India Advisory Council.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The US India Business Council (USIBC) has added four top executives to its India Advisory Council, a premier strategic body comprising of a highly influential network of senior India-based executives and thought-leaders committed to growing trade and investment between America and India.

The executives are heads of India operations of 3M, Dell, J&J, and Microsoft.

Ramesh Ramadurai, the managing director of 3M India; Alok Ohrie from J&J, Sarthak Ranade from Dell India and Anant Maheshwari from Microsoft India, according to a statement from USIBC.

"We are very pleased to welcome Ramesh, Alok, Sarthak, and Anant to our India Advisory Council. As the newest members of this group, we expect Ramesh, Alok, Sarthak, and Anant will enable USIBC to raise to new heights its policy leadership in

the life sciences, digital technology, and manufacturing sectors," said Atul Keshap, president of USIBC.

Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson, Salesforce India who has assumed the role of IAC Chair said, the council plays a strategic role in the way business and government engage.

"We are delighted to welcome these industry stalwarts to the India Advisory Council and look forward to an engaging and insightful future of nurturing business relationships," Bhattacharya said.

Formed in 2017, The India Advisory Council serves as a premier strategic body for representatives of Indian companies and Indian affiliates of American companies-including CEOs, presidents, managing directors, and chairpersons-to collaborate on a forward-looking advocacy agenda in India.

Its members help lead USIBC engagements, meet with senior Indian and US government officials to offer advice, and influence USIBC policy and programme direction to ensure the organization remains the cutting-edge platform for advancing the US-India relationship.

Representing all major sectors, the IAC bolsters USIBC's mission to promote bilateral trade and investment between the US and India and spearheads coordinated advocacy for cross-cutting initiatives including global health, supply chain resiliency, and the energy transition, the statement said.

Six Indian Americans among Barron's third Annual list of 100 Most Influential Women in US Finance



Maya Chorengel, Anu Aiyengar, Rupal Bhansali, Sonal Desai, Gunjan Kedia, and Savita Subramanian are the six Indian American women among Barron's third Annual list of 100 Most Influential Women in US Finance

NEW YORK (TIP): Six Indian American women have made it to Barron's third annual list of the 100 Most Influential Women in US Finance honoring women who are helping to shape the modern financial-services industry.

Chosen by a panel of Barron's writers and editors, the list includes executives at major US companies, investment managers and securities analysts, and public servants and policy makers.

"These women, and their colleagues, are shaping the financial industry's future and putting the US economy on a stronger footing-and often bringing more women up through the ranks as part of the process," the leading financial publication said.

This year's US list includes 22 new names,

including Indian American Maya Chorengel, co-managing partner of TPG's Rise Fund.

She has helped bring impact investing into the mainstream by demonstrating that investing capital to tackle social and environmental problems can yield private-equity-like returns.

Chorengel, and the fund, have also established a high and measurable bar regarding what constitutes "impact," Barron's said.

Outreach to women and speaking on behalf of the Asian-American and Pacific Island community, are among the passions of TPG's Chorengel, who champions the idea of building a bench of supporters and advisers in the course of a career, it said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks, no kid hungry recognize this year's "NYC Hunger Heroes"

COOKS, FOOD SERVICE WORKERS, AND AIDES GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO PROVIDE HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS MEALS TO 800,000 STUDENTS EVERY DAY

NEW YORK, NY (TIP): New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor David C. Banks were, on March 8, joined by No Kid Hungry New York to recognize 32 "Hunger Heroes" across every one of the city's school districts. Each Hunger Hero has gone above and beyond in the last year to help provide more kids access to healthy meals, especially during the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hunger Heroes include cooks, aides, and food service workers - those on the front lines of fighting hunger in schools.

With one in four children in New York City facing hunger this year, the people who prepare, serve and plan school meals are some of the most important people confronting this crisis. New York City's food services staff serve more than 800,000 meals every day.

"The real heroes don't wear capes - they wear aprons and gloves," said Mayor Adams. "The school workers who have gone above and beyond to ensure our children don't go hungry have delivered for our children, day after day, because when our children eat right, we can help them live up to their potential, inside and outside the classroom. These Hunger Heroes deserve our respect and gratitude, but we still have a long way to go. That's why we are joining the Mayors' Alliance to End Child Hunger and taking action to provide all of New York's children with healthy food options."

"Our food service employees are all true heroes - they are continuing to show up, even throughout the pandemic, to make sure that our young people are well-fed and taken care of each day. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor," said DOE Chancellor Banks. "I know I speak on behalf of all our New York City families and school communities when I say thank you for all you do every day to be heroes for our young people."

"I am grateful every day for the commitment of the school food workers serving healthy meals to our city's children," said Kate MacKenzie, executive director, Mayor's Office of Food Policy. "These 'Hunger Heroes' - like Mohammed Uddin of District 20, where my two kids attend school - are to be celebrated for the work they do, and I am thrilled to join the mayor and the chancellor in recognizing them today."

"Our Hunger Heroes are too often



Cooks, Food Service Workers, and Aides Go Above and Beyond to Provide Healthy, Nutritious Meals to 800,000 Students Every Day

unsung heroes, but they are some of the most vital professionals in our school communities," said Rachel Sabella, director, No Kid Hungry New York. "No matter what challenges children may face at home, they can count on our Hunger Heroes to go above and beyond to provide good, healthy meals every school day. We are so thankful for their work, and for all the dedicated people working in our schools to keep kids strong and healthy."

"With all the waste that occurs each and every day, no one should go hungry. Food is not a privilege, it's a right, and starving for food is inhumane. I believe the Office of Food & Nutrition Services - the second largest of food distribution besides the Armed Forces - can take the lead," said Shaun D. Francois, president, District Council 37 & Local 372. "It's extremely important for our kids' education because food feeds the mind. School food workers work hard each and every day to provide 800,000 nutritional meals a day to 1.1 million children - now that's heroism to say the least."

This year's Hunger Heroes include people like Treza Ayoub, the cook in charge at Jackson Heights' P.S. 149 since 1998. When a nearby apartment building suffered a fire last April, displacing several students and causing them to miss school, Treza made sure every student still got their breakfast and lunch.

This year's Hunger Heroes are: Manhattan

DISTRICT 1: Pedro Rivas, Senior

School Lunch Helper (P.S. 140 Nathan Straus)

DISTRICT 2: Aretha Garner, Cook (International High School at Union Square)

DISTRICT 3: Brittany Saffold, School Food Service Manager (P.S. 009 Sarah Anderson, West End Secondary School, The Urban Assembly School for Green Careers, P.S. 452)

DISTRICT 4: Sofia Rodriguez, School Lunch Aid/Cook (Central Park East High School)

DISTRICT 5: Snezhana Belja, School Food Service Manager (P.S. 046 Arthur Tappan, P.S. 194 Countee Cullen, Frederick Douglass Academy, Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School)

DISTRICT 6: Consuelo Caballero, School Lunch Assistant/Cook-in-Charge (P.S. 189)

Bronx

DISTRICT 7: Ana Blanco, Cook (Academy of Applied Mathematics and Technology)

DISTRICT 8: Gisell Ramirez, Senior School Lunch Aide/Head Cook (Archimedes Academy for Math, Science and Technology Applications)

DISTRICT 9: Patricia Lightfoot, School Lunch Helper (I.S. 339)

DISTRICT 10: Marixa Lopez, School Lunch Helper/Office Manager (Field Office 10 @ M.S 391)

DISTRICT 11: James Baker, Senior School Lunch Helper (P.S. 108 Philip J. Abinanti)

DISTRICT 12: Marjorie Coates, Senior School Lunch Aide/Cook (P.S. 211)

Brooklyn

DISTRICT 13: Glenys Gonzalez, Sr. SLH (P.S. 008 Robert Fulton)

DISTRICT 14: Allison Anderson, Senior School Lunch/Cook (P.S. 297 Abraham Stockton)

DISTRICT 15: Maria Rivera, Sr. SLH (The Maurice Sendak Community School, Brooklyn School of the Arts)

DISTRICT 16: Cherise Neal, School Food Service Manager (P.S. 005 Dr. Ronald McNair, Boys & Girls H.S., Research and Service High School, Nelson Mandela High School)

DISTRICT 17: Tyrone Joseph, Heavy Duty Person (Pathways in Technology Early College High School)

DISTRICT 18: Lezlie Johnston, School Lunch Aide (P.S. 115 Daniel Mucatel School)

DISTRICT 19: Albert Robinson, School Lunch Aide (W. H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education High School)

DISTRICT 20: Mohammed Uddin, Sr. School Lunch Helper (P.S. 264 Bay Ridge Elementary School for the Arts)

DISTRICT 21: Terencia Hankins, School Lunch Aide (P.S. 288 Shirley Tanyhill)

DISTRICT 22: Sophia Davis, School Lunch Aide/Cook-in-Charge (P.S. 193 Gil Hodges)

DISTRICT 23: Yonnette Welcome, Senior School Lunch Aide (Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School)

DISTRICT 32: Luis Mendoza Jr, Cook (P.S. 376)

Queens

DISTRICT 24: Ruth Quizhpe, School Lunch Assistant/Cook (I.S. 061 Leonardo Da Vinci)

DISTRICT 25: Jessica Floratos, School Lunch Aide (P.S. 079 Francis Lewis)

DISTRICT 26: Lisa Fusco, School Food Service Manager (P.S. 041 Crocheron, M.S. 158 Marie Curie, P.S. 376, P.S. 213 The Carl Ullman School)

DISTRICT 27: Bella Tufano, Sr. School Lunch Aide/Cook-in-Charge (P.S. 100 Glen Morris)

DISTRICT 28: Ophelia Rango, School Lunch Assistant/Cook (Hillcrest High School)

DISTRICT 29: Joel Baptiste, School Lunch Aide (Eagle Academy for Young Men III)

DISTRICT 30: Treza Ayoub, Senior School Lunch Aide/Cook-in-Charge (P.S. 149 Christa McAuliffe)

Staten Island

DISTRICT 31: Saffa Aboelenin, Senior School Lunch Aide (I.S. 007 Elias Bernstein)

International Women's Day celebrated at the Indian Consulate in New York



Consul General of India Randhir Kumar Jaiswal said he was delighted that the Consulate was partnering with the FIA to celebrate the International Women's Day

Dr. Abha Jaiswal congratulated the honorees and spoke about the changing attitude to women

Photo / Jay Mandal -on assignment

Photo / Jay Mandal -on assignment



Honorees with the chief guest Consul General of India Mr. Jaiswal and Dr. Abha Jaiswal

Photo / Jay Mandal -on assignment

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The Consulate General of India and the FIA organized International Women's Day on March 8 at the Indian Consulate.

On the occasion, six eminent women were honored. They included Ms Sejal Lakhani Bhatt, Hon Deepti Vaid Dedhia, JMC, Ms Seema Kumar, Ms Chaya Pamula, Ms Allison Hauser, and Ms. Priyanka Brahmbhatt.

Consul General of India in his remarks spoke about the progress India has been making in various areas. He said the gender equality was an issue which the government of India considered very important.

He congratulated the FIA ladies for organizing the event. Others who addressed the gathering included Dr. Abha Jaiswal, FIA officials and the honorees.

Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph congratulated the honorees and thanked the organizers and the guests.

Earlier, Consul for Culture Mr. Vipul Dev welcomed the gathering.



Organizers and honorees with Mr. Jaiswal and Dr. Abha Jaiswal

Photo / Jay Mandal -on assignment

Home run for BJP in UP

BY RADHIKA
RAMASESHAN



"IN THE END, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE CREDIT FOR THE VICTORY WILL LARGELY BELONG IN UP'S CASE TO ADITYANATH. HIS CHEERLEADERS PROPAGATED THE VIEW OF YOGI'S HARD-BITTEN IMAGE AS A MAN WHO WILL NOT TOLERATE LAW AND ORDER CHALLENGES AND DISSENT ON THE GROUND - EVIDENT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH HE PUT DOWN THE PROTESTS AGAINST THE CITIZENSHIP ACT AMENDMENTS - AND IS INCORRUPTIBLE. IT ALSO PUTS YOGI IN THE RECKONING AS A FUTURE LEADER."

As the BJP rewrote a serial and spectacular comeback for itself in Uttar Pradesh in the assembly elections, it was evident that the party's electioneering went according to a script that coalesced multiple strategies and responses to the drawbacks its government in Lucknow ran into in the past five years. It was as though the BJP anticipated the electorate's positive and negative feedback on the Yogi Adityanath government and switched on its feed-forward correction capabilities



to the best possible extent. It takes a level-head to assess a party's internal weaknesses and accept them as real before rectifying. That's what the Delhi leadership did, sometimes in consultation with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and at times unilaterally. Given its experience with the maverick chief minister, the BJP brass recognized that while it was impossible to dump him like its two incumbents in Uttarakhand and Gujarat, it was not feasible to give him the long rope he desired. The mix-and-match formula the BJP adopted was fraught with uncertainty but the gamble paid off.

The Samajwadi Party (SP), in tandem with the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and other parties, positioned itself as the BJP's principal challenger and converted the contest into a bipolar joust, hoping that the votes that went to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Congress - the other significant players - would pool into its kitty. The SP's calculation was that this tactic alone would help enhance its depleted vote share to a level of parity with the BJP and make the contest fairly even. It didn't happen.

Statistics speak for themselves. The SP, which was the incumbent in 2017, dropped from a high of 224 seats in the 403-member legislature to 47 in the election that year, its vote share plummeting to 21.82 per cent in the 311 seats it contested with the Congress as an ally. UP was awash with the Narendra Modi wave that swamped every party. The BSP picked up just 19 seats with a vote share of 22.23 per cent. The BJP was on top, winning 312 of the 384 seats it fought and posting a vote share of nearly 40 per cent. Its team-mates, the Apna Dal (Soneylal) and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), benefitted immensely from the partnership. The SBSP left the BJP shortly thereafter while the Apna Dal stayed with it. Therefore, the SP had a vast swathe of ground to cover before it hoped to catch up with the BJP.

The SP's role in the Opposition was not inspiring. For instance, during the horrific pandemic strikes when the Adityanath government seemed apathetic to people's plight, the SP was nowhere on the ground to help people. Its defense was that the situation was not conducive for its workers to be mobile. The state government tactically unrolled the Centre's scheme to hand over rations to the less well-off in the villages and stave off hunger, particularly among the migrants returning home. A realistic assessment would have it that the sops would not have recompensed the loss of lives suffered in this phase. But months later, people thought less of the sufferings inflicted by Covid-19 and remembered the "ration-paani" delivered to their doorstep.

The BJP had several problems in the prelude to the elections. Unlike the CMs "anointed" by the "high command", Adityanath was not one to be subservient to Delhi's diktat. From Day 1, the custodian of Gorakhpeeth, North India's wealthiest monastery, fancied himself as a potentate and potentially a PM candidate. Delhi's efforts to have a former Gujarat bureaucrat, Arvind Sharma, a Modi favorite, inducted in the UP cabinet after Sharma was elected a member of the UP legislative council, failed. Adityanath refused to have him. A perception that the CM in saffron was just as cattiest as any UP politician and pandered excessively and overtly to his Rajput community angered the Brahmins, core BJP voters since 1989, and alienated the backward castes and Dalits. The agrarian distress, caused by the state government's obduracy to enhance the state advisory price for sugarcane farmers, and the scaled-up costs of agricultural inputs was too real to be brushed aside.

The Centre stepped into the breach, at times distanced the CM from the damage-control moves and addressed these issues. The repeal of the contentious farm laws that provoked

protests in western UP among the Jat farmers went some way to assuage their anger.

A defeat is invariably followed by the unpleasant aftermath of apportioning blame; a victory means it is time to savor the fruits of hard work. The BJP organization worked as one army on the ground under the stewardship of Amit Shah, the Home Minister, who went on door-to-door visits in seats that seemed tricky. Prime Minister Modi camped for days in Varanasi, his Lok Sabha constituency, after reports of a couple of shaky constituencies came in and campaigned tirelessly.

However, in the end it is apparent that the credit for the victory will largely belong in UP's case to Adityanath. His cheerleaders propagated the view that the Yogi's hard-bitten image as a man who will not tolerate law and order challenges and dissent on the ground-evident in the manner in which he put down the protests against the Citizenship Act amendments-and is "incorruptible". Like Modi, Adityanath is a singleton and, therefore, thought to be a politician who will not lust after wealth and favors for the family. The fact that he didn't attend his father's cremation in Uttarakhand because of his "preoccupation" with managing the pandemic added to the profile of a "singularly committed" leader. The "attribute" was accentuated in the BJP's campaign as a counterpoint against the "dynasts", represented by the SP and RLD leaders, Akhilesh Yadav and Chaudhary Jayant Singh.

What does Adityanath's ascendancy portend for the BJP? It marks the return of UP's pre-eminence in the BJP's political scheme after the Vajpayee years. Although Modi adopted Varanasi as his constituency, he is primarily identified with Gujarat, his home state. It puts Adityanath high in the reckoning as a future leader.

(The author is a senior journalist)

Kejriwal as contender

PUNJAB'S TIDAL WAVE OF ANTI-INCUMBENCY IS AGAINST THE ENTIRE PRIVILEGED POLITICAL CLASS

BY RAJESH
RAMACHANDRAN



"THE MOST SHOCKING ASPECT OF THESE RESULTS IS HOW THE MIGHTY BIT THE DUST, A LESSON TAUGHT BY ANGRY VOTERS TO THE FEUDAL, TAINTED AND RENT-SEEKING LEADERSHIP OF PUNJAB. AMONG THE BANYAN TREES OF POLITICAL PRIVILEGE THAT FELL ARE FOUR-TIME FORMER CM AND PUNJAB'S POLITICAL PATRIARCH PARKASH SINGH BADAL, THE "MAHARAJA" OF PATIALA, FORMER CM CAPT AMARINDER SINGH, EX-CM RAJINDER KAUR BHATTAL, SITTING CM CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI, CELEBRITY PUNJAB CONGRESS PRESIDENT NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU, SHIROMANI AKALI DAL PRESIDENT AND FORMER DEPUTY CM SUKHBIR BADAL, HIS CONTROVERSIAL BROTHER-IN-LAW FIGHTING DRUG CASES, BIKRAM SINGH MAJITHIA, AND HIS COUSIN AND CONGRESS' FINANCE MINISTER MANPREET BADAL. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THESE WEIGHTY "LORDS" HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OUT OF THE RING WITH A HUGE THUD BY FIRST-TIMERS - MOBILE PHONE REPAIRMEN, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER NOBODIES."



Kejriwal offers a national alternative as voters can break away from identity silos to get their lives improved. In the background is Bhagwant Mann, the AAP chief minister of Punjab

It is always heartening to talk of hope. The angry, resilient, yet ebullient people of Punjab believe that things can and will change; this, in short, explains the political deluge that has drowned a sitting Chief Minister, three former Chief Ministers, the heads of two parties and the state's most controversial politician. This tsunami of change has to be credited entirely to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's meticulous planning, patience and people-connect. Bhagwant Mann was declared the CM candidate only a few weeks ahead of the polls - till then, there was just Kejriwal representing the Delhi model of governance, seeking a vote for change. The first sign of this campaign's effectiveness was Union Territory of Chandigarh's local body polls in December, which resulted in the AAP emerging as the single largest party, dislodging the BJP.

Kejriwal offers a national alternative as voters can break away from identity silos to get their lives improved.

The most shocking aspect of these results is how the mighty bit the dust, a lesson taught by angry voters to the feudal, tainted and rent-seeking leadership of Punjab. Among the banyan trees of political privilege that fell are four-time former CM and Punjab's political patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, the "Maharaja" of Patiala, former CM Capt Amarinder Singh, ex-CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, sitting CM Charanjit Singh Channi, celebrity Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu, Shiromani Akali Dal president and former deputy CM Sukhbir Badal, his controversial brother-in-law fighting drug cases, Bikram Singh Majithia, and his cousin and Congress' finance minister Manpreet Badal. Most importantly, these weighty "lords" have been knocked out of the ring with a huge thud by first-timers - mobile phone

repairmen, volunteers and other nobodies.

But mere free-floating anger would not have consolidated in favor of one party to cause this landslide of an election result. And this anger was not confined or focused against just the incumbent government. It was a sort of a tidal wave of anti-incumbency against the entire privileged political class. The rushing river of anger that was dammed in 2017 appears to have burst forth in 2022 to submerge the political landscape. Another factor that worked in favor of the AAP was that it became the sole beneficiary of the collective angst against the new farm laws. So, while Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Balbir Singh Rajewal lost his credibility and the polls, the anti-establishment vote that coalesced as a result of farm unions' mobilization went into the AAP's kitty.

The results prove that rural Sikh farmers voted for the AAP in huge numbers, a fact further established by the decimation of the Akalis. From 15, the party's strength has been reduced to three. Similar is the BJP's drubbing. Despite all its dirty tricks - including Kumar Vishwas' last-minute stab in the back - the Hindus of Punjab voted overwhelmingly for the AAP, helping the party sweep the urban seats. So, if in 2017 it was a backlash of the Hindus over unfounded fears of a Khalistani connection that defeated the AAP and made the Congress victorious on 77 seats, Kejriwal worked hard early in the campaign to allay those old apprehensions by launching the Tiranga Yatra to burnish his nationalist credentials. And it worked: the committed Hindu voter turned against the Congress and the BJP to emphatically support the AAP. Or rather, Hindus rose above sectarian interests and minority insecurities and voted along with other communities for hope

and change.

That leaves the famed Dalit voters of Punjab - 32 per cent of the population. The replacement of a lazy Maharaja with an enthusiastic Dalit as CM was thought to be a masterstroke by the Congress leadership. But angry Dalit voters treated the high command's trump card as if it was the joker in the pack. And like Sikhs and Hindus, Dalits voted against the political establishment, proving yet again that anger overrides identity in Indian politics - for there was an attempt to split the Dalit votes in favor of the BJP and the Akalis through the discredited Dera Sacha Sauda. Neither Channi's candidature nor Ram Rahim's furlough seemed to have made any difference to the determined Dalit voter seeking revenge against corrupt tokens taken out of the cupboard at the last minute. The Enforcement Department raid seizing crores in cash from Channi's nephew robbed him of all his "poor Dalit" sheen and Sidhu's daily barbs against the government left Congress with nothing worth defending.

If these elections have thrown up Kejriwal as a national contender for the top post, offering a credible alternative beyond Delhi, it is because voters are breaking away from their identity silos and coalescing to get their lives improved. The same logic applies to Yogi Adityanath's victory, however unseemly his saffron robes may appear to the liberals. The Muslim-Yadav formula, with some non-Yadav OBCs thrown in, did read like a winning combination, but popular sentiment had forgiven Yogi and the BJP for the Delta deaths, floating graves on the Ganga, the farm laws and even the Lakhimpur Kheri killings. The law-and-order situation, free ration, direct benefit transfers and various targeted schemes improving the people's lot seem to have caught the voter's imagination. Yet, the Samajwadi Party's performance only shows that there is simmering anger against the incumbent, which has not yet reached the boiling point. Its leader Akhilesh Yadav may also have to get out of the caste costume to look at the new realities of a changing India, in which the political capital of identity politics may just not be enough to win elections.

The Congress's failure as an alternative to the BJP is writ large over the results in Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. The party is steadily sliding into inconsequence, with its leadership refusing to re-engineer itself. In this context of a crisis of Opposition leadership steps in Kejriwal, with the amalgamation of two contemporaneously disparate political slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Inquilab Zindabad'. The 2024 contest just got hotter with Kejriwal's promise of 'inquilab'.

An unnecessary war and its grave portents

AS OF NOW, UKRAINE HAS BECOME A PAWN BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST. THE WAR OVER UKRAINE IS, FURTHERMORE, A REFLECTION OF THE PREVAILING MYOPIA OF CURRENT LEADERS WHO SEEM DOOMED TO REPEAT PAST FOLLIES.

Russia's attack on Ukraine, which began from the third week of February, shows no sign of ending. It has, in the meantime, led to a humanitarian crisis of gigantic proportions. The number of refugees streaming into countries adjoining Ukraine has revived memories and images of the vast numbers who sought refuge in Europe following the wars in Syria, Iraq and North Africa at the turn of the century. No one would have anticipated that a similar situation would arise just a few years later in Europe. The number of refugees has already approached, and possibly even crossed, the two million mark; and this is apart from the several thousands who have been killed inside Ukraine. It is a vivid demonstration of the callousness of human nature, more so considering the underlying cause of the conflict.

It is most surprising that nothing concrete is being done by powerful nations in Europe and across the world to try and end the conflict through a process of reconciliation and negotiation. What the conflict, though, has exposed is the irrelevance of the United Nations in dealing with situations of this kind - becoming in many ways a modern day variant of the ill-fated League of Nations created at the end of the First World War.

The primary concern of European nations and the United States appears to be the economic impact of the conflict - rather than the human costs involved - consequent on the ongoing war in Ukraine. The International Monetary Fund has already issued a warning of the serious global impact of the war, which includes a surge in energy and commodity prices, and being taken seriously by the U.S., almost all European nations and many countries across the globe. Leading western economists have been pontificating on the economic consequences of the war, and the ways and the means to reduce its impact. Similar concerns about the human costs of this unnecessary war are nowhere to be found. Least of all to be found are suggestions on how best to end the conflict, or at least bring about a truce to reduce the human toll that keeps steadily rising.

It may appear tendentious to think that there are leading elements in the West who believe that by waging a prolonged 'sanctions war' against Russia of the kind currently being pursued - rather than seeking a compromise by which to end the genocide in Ukraine - an option had become available to checkmate Russia,



Kyiv is paying a heavy price and a change of tack is needed, where the cardinal objective is to save lives and Ukraine

which under Russian President Vladimir Putin was posing a threat to the West. Russia deserves to be rightfully condemned for being in violation of the United Nations Charter and invading Ukraine.

There are, however, far more efficacious means to checkmate Russian moves than persisting with a prolonged period of ever widening economic sanctions aimed at crippling Russia's economy. This may be an ideal way to achieve a 'regime change' in Moscow, getting citizens to rise against the regime due to the shortages and other restrictions imposed by a 'sanctions' regimen. It is, however, not the best way to end a conflict in the shortest possible time, and avert a greater human tragedy that a prolonged conflict entails. Sanctions, no doubt, do and will affect Russia and its economy, but it has had little impact on Russia's war effort. Meanwhile, Ukraine, or more particularly the citizens and the residents of Ukraine, are innocent victims of the tussle between the West and Russia.

For the present, each new sanction only strengthens Russia's determination to compel Ukraine to cut its links with the West. No country within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or even those outside it, is at present willing to send forces in support of Ukraine. Waiting for the eventual collapse of the Russian state while leaving Ukraine and its citizens to the not-so-tender mercies of the Russian juggernaut is tantamount to becoming an accessory to genocide. While concerns that the conflict in Ukraine may lead to a nuclear conflict do appear exaggerated, what is taking place is a tragedy of a kind that should not befall any nation.

There are, no doubt, certain special circumstances that make the problem inherently difficult and complicated. Ukraine, for instance, is not just another country as far as Russia is concerned. It was part of the erstwhile Soviet Union till 1991, and even at the time there were inherent tensions in the relationship. Ukraine in turn has long struggled with ethno-linguistic tensions encompassing western and central Ukraine and the Russian-speaking Eastern Ukraine. Western Ukraine is also largely Catholic while the east is largely Russian Orthodox. Even after its split from Russia in 1991, Ukraine has had problems in maintaining a semblance of neutrality between Russia and the West.

Aggravating the situation is the fact that Ukraine was, in a sense, a child of a series of 'Color Revolutions' that shook parts of the Russian Empire in 1991 - when Russian influence was at its lowest ebb after the Second World War. Matters got further aggravated when a pro-Russian President of Ukraine - who was elected in a relatively fair election - was ousted and had to flee the country. Following this, Russia intervened and annexed Crimea and took aggressive measures to reinforce Russian influence in Donetsk and Luhansk, regions of eastern Ukraine which have large Russian populations.

The ties between Russia and Ukraine are thus in a sense both historical and political. The declared ambition of NATO is to deter Soviet expansionism and, hence, any nation becoming a part of NATO is deemed by Russia to be anti-Russia. Russia has, from time to time, made it apparent that under no circumstances would it countenance NATO membership for Ukraine, and that

BY M.K.
NARAYANAN



this would be perceived as a hostile act towards Russia.

As of now, Ukraine has become a pawn between Russia and the West. The war over Ukraine is, furthermore, a reflection of the prevailing myopia of current leaders who seem doomed to repeat past follies. An extension of NATO by the inclusion of Ukraine at this time - a country with a complex history and polyglot composition - was hardly a compelling necessity at this juncture, but badly misreading the situation (for even as far back as 2007 at the Munich Security Conference where I was the Indian delegate, Mr. Putin had made it amply clear that 'NATO extension... represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust'). Since then, Mr. Putin has given no indication whatsoever of any change in his attitude on this issue.

This misreading of Mr. Putin's personality has been a cardinal error, and Ukraine is paying a very heavy price. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, who openly flaunts his pro-West inclination, is hardly a match for President Putin in terms of strategy and tactics.

While Mr. Zelensky employs grandstanding as a strategy, Mr. Putin is a born fighter. Anyone who has had an opportunity to interact closely with Mr. Putin would never have attempted to challenge him in the manner that Mr. Zelensky has been doing these past few weeks. Currently, an unlikely hero to his fellow countrymen, he could well go down in history as someone who has caused the ruin of Ukraine. Had he had played his cards properly, he could have prevented the situation from reaching the present impasse and still maintained Ukraine's independence. To say the least, this is extremely unfortunate for Ukraine, and much of the world as well.

A change of tack is clearly called for. At this time, the cardinal objective should be to save human lives and the existence of Ukraine. Ukraine's ambitions to join NATO, which are in any case a distant dream, need to be put on the back burner. For the present, any extension of NATO further to the east should be given up, and, instead, an effort made to rebuild some of the bridges that existed between Russia and the rest of Europe at the beginning of this century. Alongside this, the West should hit the 'pause button' on initiating 'Color Revolutions' which have led to more conflicts than peace in Europe or elsewhere. More than anything else, leaders of nations and countries need to understand and assimilate the lessons of history, to avoid the kind of critical mistakes that have been evident during the current Russia-Ukraine crisis and war.

(M.K. Narayanan is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)

Peshawar mosque attack 'main handler' among three killed in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (TIP): Pakistani security forces have shot dead the "main handler" of the deadly suicide bombing at a Shia mosque in Peshawar and his two accomplices, who were reportedly also behind the killing of a Sikh medicine practitioner in the northwestern city, according to a media report on March 10.

At least 64 people were killed and nearly 200 others injured in the suicide bombing inside the mosque in Qissa Khwani bazaar in Peshawar during Friday prayers last week, which was claimed by the Islamic State-Khorasan terror group.

Officials said personnel of the Counter-Terrorism Department, police and intelligence agencies raided a house in the Ghu-reza area of Jamrud tehsil on Tuesday night. They said a terrorist present inside the house opened fire on law enforcement personnel.

Muhammad Tariq alias Khalid - the "main handler" of the suicide bombing at the Koocha Risaldar mosque - Abdul Wajid, and Muzaffar Shah were killed in the return fire, Dawn newspaper reported, quoting an official.

"In the exchange of fire, the three terrorists were killed while four others, including two handlers, managed to escape," the official said.

The police said the terrorist group was also involved in the killing of Sikh



hakeem (medicine practitioner) Sardar Satnam Singh in September last year.

Singh was shot dead in his clinic on Charsadda Road in Peshawar.

According to investigative agencies, Ihsanullah alias Abdullah, an Afghan national living in Aabshar Colony of the provincial capital, detonated his explosive vest inside the Shia mosque during Friday congregation. The main handler Muhammad Tariq alias Khalid hailed from Bara tehsil of Khyber district.

A police source said the attacker's family had fraudulently obtained Pakistani documents. His father and a rickshaw driver, who drove him to the

mosque, were also taken into custody.

According to the bomber's father, Ihsanullah came in contact with Wajid and Muzaffar at his school near Garrison Park. He had left for Afghanistan about 18 months ago.

The police said the terrorist group was also involved in other high-profile killings, including that of a peace committee member on the outskirts of Peshawar, two religious scholars -- Sheikh Abdul Hameed and Qari Sheikh Muhammad -- as well as the assassination of Assistant Sub-Inspectors Imtiaz Alam and Mehboobullah.

(PTI)

14 KILLED, 5 INJURED IN BUS ACCIDENT IN NEPAL

KATHMANDU (TIP): At least 14 people, including a child, were killed and five others injured when a passenger bus skidded off a hilly road and fell 300 metres off the road in eastern Nepal on March 10, police said.

The accident happened around 7:30 am when the bus carrying 20 passengers, en route to Damak in Jhapa from Madi, Sankhuwasava, skidded and fell 300 metres down the hilly road after the driver lost control of the vehicle.

"In the accident at least 14 people have been killed. The identities of the deceased are yet to be ascertained," said a senior police officer.

Those killed in the accident include two elderly men and an eight-year-old boy.

All five people who sustained serious injuries have been airlifted to BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Dharan in a Nepal Army chopper for medical treatment, the police said.

"The bus fell down around 300 meters off the hilly road. The police have been carrying out rescue works with the help of local people," police said.

Road accidents are very common in Nepal, especially in the country's mountainous areas.

Last month a passenger vehicle carrying a newly-wed couple and some of the wedding attendants skidded off a hilly road in Western Nepal, killing eight people and injuring five others. (PTI)

SRI LANKA'S FINANCE MINISTER BASIL RAJAPAKSA TO VISIT INDIA THIS MONTH

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa will visit India this month, the Indian High Commission here has announced, amidst an unprecedented financial crisis in the island nation.

This announcement came after Rajapaksa spoke over the telephone with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on March 8.

A tweet from the High Commission said that India had assured Sri Lanka "support in all possible ways".

Rajapaksa's visit has been on hold since late February.

Sri Lanka was to seal a one-billion-dollar loan from India during the Rajapaksa visit. (PTI)

Pakistan PM Imran seeks legal opinion on no-confidence motion

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has met the Attorney General and sought legal opinion on the no-confidence motion submitted by the Opposition parties which have held his government responsible for the uncontrolled inflation.

According to the Dawn newspaper, the government is anxious and making all attempts to foil the Opposition's move to oust the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) regime led by Khan, who has already claimed that the powerful Pakistan Army is backing him.

The no-confidence motion, signed by about 100 lawmakers from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), was submitted with the National Assembly Secretariat on March 8.

Khan, 69, is heading a coalition government and he can be removed if some of the partners decide to switch sides, which is not unusual in parliamentary democracies.

The report said that besides meeting Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, whose removal has been sought by the Prime Minister's (former) closest confidants in the party, Prime Minister Khan also met Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Khalid Javed Khan and sought his legal opinion on the no-confidence motion.

The prime minister is scheduled to meet leaders of the PTI's allies, including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, Grand Democratic Alliance and party leaders in Sindh, it said.

Opposition parties blame Khan's

government for uncontrolled inflation that has broken the back of poor people of the country, while Khan accuses them of trying to remove as he was not willing to condone the alleged corruption by the leading Opposition leaders.

Soon after the Opposition submitted its no-confidence motion in the National Assembly (NA) Secretariat, Khan said that he was going nowhere and that he did not fear the Opposition's move.

"The government will not be ousted, and will emerge stronger," Khan was quoted as saying.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said that the prime minister was quite confident that the Opposition would face disappointment and the government would become stronger after he regained confidence in the NA. (PTI)

American Association of Engineers of India Origin and Northwestern University hosted Engineering Student's event

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Northwestern University's Master of Engineering Management Student Advisory Board (SAB) & American Association of Engineers of India Origin (AAEIO) organized a joint event on "How to Navigate your career in the post digital world".

Prof. Mark Werwath, Northwestern University, along with Mr. Azgar Ali, MEM Student Advisory Board (SAB) President welcomed all guests, AAEIO board members and distinguished panel. They talked about the need for increased collaboration between students, engineering communities and employers.

Mr. Gladson Varghese, Founder AAEIO President, laid out why it is important for young engineers to work together and collaborate with other universities, startups and corporate and get experiential learning. He also asked students to join the mission of bringing all engineers under one umbrella and asked students to join the Engineering Student Chapter. This event was the first event that AAEIO did with a university.

Mr. Amit Kumar, IFS, Consul General of India, Chicago, was the chief guest for the event. He interacted with the students speaking about the need for increased global collaboration and some of the recent innovations that are transforming the world. For example, in India, Aristech is leading a revolution on how food storage can be improved.

Dr. Mohanbir Singh Sawhney, Associate Dean of Digital innovation, Kellogg School of Management was the keynote speaker for the event. Dr. Mohanbir is also an Advisory Board member of the AAEIO. His talk was on "Product Strategy" where he informed the students about the need for product management and its interaction with engineers and how one should think about Product Management, its different career prospects, and how a student can be successful in this field.

Prof. Vinayak P. Dravid, Material



Chapter Inauguration



Hon Amit Kumar, Consul General of India



Dr. Mohanbir Sawhney



Gladson Varghese President

Science and Engineering, talked about how research collaboration has made a difference. He also emphasized the need for more AAEIO kind of partnership.

Mr. Nitin Maheshwari, Vice President, AAEIO, also a Northwestern graduate from Kellogg School of Management and an entrepreneur of Artificial Engineering (AI) based consulting, moderated a highly coveted and diverse panel of distinguished guests on the topic of "How to Navigate your career in post digital world".

Distinguished Panel Guests included Mr. Amit Kumar, IFS, Consul General of India, Chicago; Dr. Mohanbir Sawhney,

Dean Digital, Kellogg School of Management, Prof. Vinayak P. Dravid, Northwestern University, Prof. Mark Werwath, Northwestern University, Mr. Gladson Varghese, AAEIO President, General Electric; Mr. Nag Jaiswal, AAEIO Chair of Membership, Principal Architect, Salesforce & Mr. Rajinder Mago, Ex-Navistar.

Student received advice from the panel on how to navigate career, develop soft skills and develop leadership skills. It was also advised AAEIO is organizing Leadership Excellence Webinar: March 19th, 2022 at 2:00 PM: with Dr. Manu Vohra, Dr. Amit Kumar, Dr. Ajit Pant on

developing leadership & soft skills.

Mr. Amit Kumar, CG Chicago India, along with Northwestern professors, AAEIO board members & Students helped cut a ribbon to announce an increased partnership between AAEIO and Northwestern and work together on some of the common objectives.

Mr. Nag Jaiswal, AAEIO Chair of Membership, requested students to become members and be part of AAEIO to drive innovation. To become a member, please write to membership@aaeioua.org or visit our website www.aaeioua.org.

AAEIO Treasurer, Mr. Abhishek Jain, Director M&A, Schneider gave the vote of thanks especially to all distinguished guests and Prof. Mark Werwath and Mr. Asgar Ali for their warm welcome. He also thanked several volunteers: Ms. Aparajita Mishra, Ms. Neha Maheshwari, Mr. Vishal Parikh, Mr. Bhanu Swargam and Mr. Anay Maheshwari who lead the event logistics.

AAEIO and Northwestern have laid a very strong foundation and look forward to working together. Let the wildcat spirit continue.

(Photographs and Press release /Asian Media USA)



The comedy powerhouse Sugar Sammy

Global Comedy Powerhouse SUGAR SAMMY brings his national tour to The Dallas Comedy Club MARCH 18th & 19th

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExhiaUKFDlw&authuser=0>

DALLAS, TX (TIP): Canadian comedy superstar Sugar Sammy brings his national tour: Sugar Sammy - The Outsider to the Dallas Comedy Club, in Dallas, TX., on March 18th & 19th ready to invade the US with his unfiltered view of where the world is at today. When it comes to heavy hitters in comedy, Sugar Sammy is a powerhouse.

He's conquered the rest of the territories and now he's coming for the US! Sugar Sammy is an international phenomenon, a

TV star in both Canada and France - he stars in the French version of America's Got Talent (La France a un incroyable talent) as the sassy 4th judge, reaching 3.5-4.2 million viewers per week. He's won Comedian of the Year accolades in both France and Canada. And he's a growing force on the internet, with over 1 million followers on his social media platforms. He's a master at interacting with his fans and his Improv Moments, exchanging comments with the audience, are YouTube gold, with 25 million views alone logged on his banter with a group of "Karens" at his show.

As an outsider looking in, Sugar Sammy isn't afraid to offend with his honest assessment of where the US is at on the world stage. Politically incorrect? Maybe. He leaps right into the cultural divide to hit on cultural, social and political themes with a combination of charm and finesse that allows him to push the envelope a little farther than most. Sugar Sammy isn't worried about being canceled, in fact, he's looking to be pre-canceled!

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

AAPI's loyal foot soldier, Dr Satheesh Kathula, is running for Vice President



Dr Satheesh Kathula is currently Secretary of AAPI

DAYTON, OH (TIP): Dr Satheesh Kathula, the eminent doctor of over 25 years' standing in Ohio, admirable community leader and philanthropist with a stellar record of serving in leadership roles in AAPI, is running to be its Vice President in the election this month.

Dr Kathula, hematologist/oncologist, is currently Secretary and past Treasurer of National AAPI. He is well-liked by the rank and file of AAPI as evidenced by the number of endorsements he has received.

He has clearly laid out his vision for AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) on his campaign website:

- Promote AAPI's mission of education, excellence in patient care, research, and professionalism.
- Increase membership of AAPI and enhance membership benefits. Engage the younger generation more.
- Collaborate with major physician organizations in the US.
- Fast-tracking of green cards for Indian doctors on H1 visa.
- Leverage the strength of 100,000 Indian American doctors at the legislative level.

Dr Kathula calls himself humbly a loyal foot soldier of AAPI, but the fact is he has been Member of its Governing body for the past 13 years and has intensive experience of working for it at senior levels, including as Co-Chair - Global Health Summit 2019 and 2022, AAPI's Board of Trustees (2014-17) and as Regional Director (2012-14).

As AAPI Treasurer last year, he is proud to report that he played a key role in raising and distributing over \$5.5 million for Covid relief in India. He is also Chair of Adopt a Village Committee, for a program launched last year to adopt 75 villages in India for free health screening of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, anemia, hypoxemia and malnutrition.

Since Dr Kathula, a suave, affable personality, announced his candidacy for Vice President of AAPI, endorsements for him have been coming fast and



Dr Kathula recognized for his laudable contribution as Treasurer (2020-21) at the AAPI annual convention in Atlanta last year. He is flanked by AAPI President Dr Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, and Sreeni Gangasani, Convention Chair.

furiously. Listing his creditable work for AAPI, his various accomplishments and accolades, Dr Deepak Kumar, Past President Ohio State Medical Association, and Immediate Past chair IMG section of American Medical Association (IMA) writes: "I am voting for him in the upcoming election and urge all of you to join me in voting for him."

Dr Dattatreyudu Nori, a renowned radiation oncologist and Padma Shri awardee, writes, "I have worked with him on several oncology related projects including at Global Health Summit in India, community outreach programs in the US, etc. He is very efficient, knowledgeable, and is an excellent leader. He would make a great Vice President of AAPI."

Past AAPI President Dr Sanku Rao has endorsed him for President. "Please remember, this is not only an election for Vice President but for President of AAPI! Satheesh has an excellent reputation in the organization and all the qualities to become one of the best presidents of AAPI!"

Dr Kathula has excelled in leadership roles in the medical field locally in Ohio as well. He has lived in Dayton for 26 years straight. He serves on the Board of Trustees of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (Dayton chapter) and has raised more than \$200,000 for it thus far. The society conferred on him the Man of the Year award in 2018. He is also President and Founding Member of the Association of Indian Physicians from Ohio.

Active in the Indian community, he was instrumental in raising funds for the construction of the Om Shanti Hindu Cultural Center in Dayton. He has served on several non-profit boards, dedicating half of his career. He is a regular contributor to Veterans Obesity Awareness walks and Ekal Vidyalaya, which is dedicated to children's education in rural India. The India Club of Dayton presented him the Service Award in 2010.

Dr Kathula's love for his motherland has manifested in him setting up humanitarian and medical projects in India. The most important of them is establishing in 2007 a state-of-the-art pharmacy college in Warangal in Telangana, where he grew up. Named Pathfinder Institute of Pharmacy and Educational Research (PIPER), the non-profit with Dr Kathula as Chairman provides quality education and has already graduated



Dr Satheesh Kathula seen with US Surgeon General Dr Vivek Murthy



Dr Kathula with his wife, Prerna, and sons Akshar and Aneesh, both in line to become medical doctors.

about 750 students who are now working in different parts of India and the world.

He also collected funds for one lakh masks and distributed them in India during the Covid pandemic and has organized several medical camps there. He personally donated a clean drinking water plant and defibrillator (that restores normal heartbeat through an electric pulse) to his native village in Telangana. He also donated thousands of sanitary napkins to underprivileged young women in India. He usually raises funds for charitable causes through music concerts and golf tournaments.

A good doctor has to be also an educator to pass on his knowledge, skills and experience to the next generation of physicians, something Dr Kathula is acutely aware of. He is Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine at Wright State University in Dayton. He has been involved in teaching/mentoring medical students, residents and fellows for two decades. He has presented CME (Continuing medical education) lectures at national and international conferences and published articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Dr Kathula came to the US in 1994 after earning his MBBS degree from Siddhartha Medical College in Vijayawada, India. Here he did his residency from Wright State University, Dayton. He is a Partner physician, Dayton Physicians, LLC.

For more details, go to <https://www.drkathula.com/>

BHAGWANT MANN TO TAKE OATH AS PUNJAB CM ON MARCH 16

CHANDIGARH (TIP)

The Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab will take oath on March 16. It was said on Thursday, March 10, that they would take oath at Khatkar Kalan, the native place of martyr Bhagat Singh.

It is learnt that Bhagwant Mann and Punjab affairs in charge Raghav Chadha have already left for Delhi to meet party national convenor Arvind Kejriwal. Among other things to be decided on Friday are the candidates who will be inducted into the Cabinet.

Sources in the party say all 17 ministers may not be inducted immediately; only five to six candidates may be inducted now.

The names of the probable candidates who could be inducted are Aman Arora, Harpal Cheema, Kultar Singh Sandhwan, Harjot Bains and Baljinder Kaur.

ACTIVE COVID CASES IN COUNTRY DIP TO 42,219

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India logged 4,194 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of Covid cases to 4,29,84,261, while the active cases dipped to 42,219, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday, March 11.

The death toll climbed to 5,15,714 with 255 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprise 0.1 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate further improved to 98.7 per cent, the ministry said. A reduction of 2,269 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded as 0.52 per cent and the weekly positivity rate as 0.55 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,24, 26,328 while the case fatality rate was recorded as 1.2 per cent.

SC RESERVES VERDICT ON VIJAY MALLYA SENTENCING

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on the quantum of sentence to be awarded to fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya in a contempt case. Mallya, an accused in a bank loan default case of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his now defunct Kingfisher Airlines, has been in the UK since March 2016. He is on bail on an extradition warrant executed by Scotland Yard in April 2017.

He was held guilty of contempt of court in 2017 and the matter has been getting deferred as the top court wanted to hear him on the punishment to be awarded to him.

Covid distress: Enrolment dips in private, rises in govt schools

CHANDIGARH (TIP)

Student enrolment saw a dip between 2019-20 and 2020-21 in private schools and registered a proportionate rise in government schools, according to district-level government data released on Wednesday, which may indicate the financial distress caused by the pandemic.

A closer look at the latest round of Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) data shows that pre-primary, primary (I-V) and upper classes (VI-VIII) mainly account for the rise and fall in the enrolment of students in government and private schools.

In private schools, enrolment in pre-primary, primary levels registered a drop of 22.28 lakh and 11.6 lakh respectively. On the other hand, government school primary and upper primary grades registered a rise of 18.82 lakh and 9.28 lakh students, respectively.

Across all levels, 39.7 lakh students of government aided, private schools shifted to government schools.

Overall, excluding pre-primary classes, enrolment numbers rose from 25.10 crore in 2019-20 to 25.38 crore. However, at the pre-primary level, there were 1,35,55,892 students in 2019-20, which fell to 1,06,45,526 in 2020-21.

The report notes that the drop in the numbers at the pre-primary level may be an outcome of "postponement of school admission of young children during the pandemic".

"Although the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is cross-cutting, this is particularly noticed in the enrolment of young and vulnerable kids like pre-primary, class 1 and Children With Special Needs (CWSN)...," it states.

Even among girls, all levels, barring pre-primary, registered a jump in enrolment numbers. At the pre-primary level, there were 62.39 lakh girls enrolled in 2019-20, which dropped to 49.42 lakh a year later as the pandemic swept the nation.

The UDISE report points out that the pre-primary figures contained in it do not factor in the enrolment at the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system run by the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare through the Anganwadi Centers and the stand alone pre-primary education centers run by different kindergartens.

"At all the levels above primary, i.e., in upper primary, secondary and higher secondary, school enrolment has



increased, showing an improvement in the ability of the system to retain more and more children in the system of school education over time," states the report.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which denotes the number of students enrolled in a given level of education against the total official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education, has also improved across grades, the report shows.

Level wise GER in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20 are: 92.2% from 89.7% in upper primary, 99.1 % from 97.8% in elementary, 79.8% from 77.9% in secondary and 53.8% from 51.4% in higher secondary, respectively.

Also, the number of teachers was 96.96 lakh in 2020-21, up from 96.87 lakh in 2019-20. However, as in the case of students, the percentage of teachers teaching only primary (36% in 2020-21 from 37% in 2019-20) and only upper primary (22% in 2020-21 from 23% in 2019-20) has reduced. *Source: The Indian Express*

Ukraine crisis: Last batch of Indian students heads back, Putin stays defiant

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Covering hundreds of miles across Ukraine by bus and rail to Poland, the last remaining batch of Indian students from Sumy are on their way home.

India operated three flights on Thursday to bring the batch of about 600 students back with the first flight for first, second and third-year students. The second flight is for fourth and fifth-year students and the third for students with pets, fifth and sixth-year students and for any Indians who may have been left behind. They are expected to reach India in the early hours of Friday. The Indians had to change buses midway and were then offered a free train ride by the Ukrainians for the Poland border.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin remained defiant despite the US



claiming that Moscow was in shock over the weight of sanctions. Putin said the sanctions would rebound against the West and Russia would solve its problems and emerge stronger.

"These sanctions would have been imposed in any case. There are some questions, problems and difficulties, but in the past we have overcome them and we will overcome them now. In the end, this will all lead to an increase in our independence, self-sufficiency and our sovereignty," Putin added.

Source: TNS

India good at managing finances but global energy price rise will hurt it, says IMF MD

WASHINGTON (TIP)

India has been very good at managing its finances but the surge in global energy prices is going to have a negative impact on its economy, said Kristalina Georgieva, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

During a media roundtable on Thursday, March 10, on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its global impact, Gita Gopinath, who is the First Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, observed that the war had posed a challenge to economies around the world, including India.

"India relies heavily on energy imports and the price is going up. That has implications on the purchasing power of Indian households.

"If you're looking at headline inflation numbers, inflation in India is close to around six per cent, which is the upper end of the inflation band for the Reserve Bank of India," Gopinath said.

This has implications on the monetary policy in the country and it is a challenge in many parts of the world, not just India, she said.

Source: PTI

DRUG REGULATOR GRANTS EMERGENCY USE NOD TO COVOVAX FOR 12-17 AGE GROUP

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India's drug regulator has granted restricted emergency use authorisation to Serum Institute of India's COVID-19 vaccine Covovax for the 12-17 years age group subject to certain conditions, official sources said on Wednesday.

It is the fourth vaccine to receive the regulator's nod for use among those below 18 years. The Drugs Controller General Of India's (DCGI) approval comes after the Subject Expert Committee on COVID-19 of the CDSCO last week recommended granting emergency use authorisation (EUA) to Covovax for those aged 12 to 17.

The government has still not taken a decision on vaccinating those aged below 15 years. The health ministry has consistently said that additional need for vaccination and inclusion of population for vaccination are examined constantly.

In the EUA application to DCGI, Prakash Kumar Singh, director (government and regulatory affairs) at SII on February 21 had stated that the data from two studies on about 2707 children aged 12 to 17 years show that Covovax is highly efficacious, immunogenic, safe and well tolerated in this age group of children.

IC-814 hijacker, who slit passenger's throat, shot dead in Karachi

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Mistry Zahoor Ibrahim, deadliest of the five hijackers of the IC-814 Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu to Delhi in 1999, was shot dead in Pakistan's Karachi, government sources said. The Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist, who was living under a false identity "Zahid Akhund" for many years, was shot twice in the head by unidentified gunmen at point-blank range in Karachi's Akhtar Colony on March 1. Mistry, code-named "doctor", was reportedly the one who had stabbed and killed a 25-year-old Indian man who was one of the hostages.

Mistry was the owner of Crescent Furniture located inside Akhtar Colony in Karachi. According to reports, Rauf Asgar had joined the funeral procession of Akhund in Karachi. Rauf is the Jaish-e-Mohammed's operational chief and brother of the terrorist organisation's founder Masood Azhar.

The IC-814 aircraft of Indian Airlines, with 179 passengers and 11 crew mem-



bers on board, was hijacked by five terrorists from Nepal on December 24, 1999. The plane made a long arduous journey to Amritsar, Lahore and Dubai before making a strategic stop at Kandahar in Afghanistan which was then under the Taliban's control.

The hijackers had executed one passenger, 25-year-old Rupin Katyal, and finally

negotiated the release of dreaded Islamist terrorists Masood Azhar Alvi, Syed Omar Sheikh and Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar from Indian jails on December 31, 1999, in exchange for the hostages.

The Kandahar hijacking was one of the most dramatic hostage crises the country has ever seen.

Source: NDTV

Cong's hard work failed to translate into votes, says Priyanka

After it suffered a crushing defeat in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, Congress general secretary in-charge of the state Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday, March 10, said party workers and leaders worked hard but failed to convert their efforts into votes.

She asserted that the party would continue to fulfil its duty as a combative opposition.

"The vote of the people is paramount in a democracy. Our workers and leaders worked hard, established the organisation, fought on the issues of the people. But, we were not able to convert our hard work into votes," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. "The Congress party, for the betterment of Uttar Pradesh and the people, will continue to fulfil the duty of a combative opposition by following a positive agenda," she added.

Despite an aggressive campaign pitch by Gandhi, the Congress managed to win just two constituencies in the 403-seat strong Uttar Pradesh assembly.

10 assembly election debacles in a row, Congress to get in a huddle 'soon'

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Congress has ended up on the losing side in nine of the 10 assembly elections held over the past two years — the only exception being Tamil Nadu where it was a junior partner of the DMK-led alliance that won.

It has lost at least five key young leaders in the recent past and has been reduced to ruling just two states on its own. Its inability to win elections has stoked defiance and dissent within the party hierarchy. The latest drubbing in the state elections comes just months before the Congress is set to elect a new president.

The party now faces two imminent dangers, said four leaders. "Its leadership space in the opposition quarters will come under stiff challenge from a parallel formation led by the TMC (Trinamool Congress) or the AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) and within the party, the G23 (the leaders who wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi in 2019 seeking an overhaul), will grow stronger," said one, asking not to be named.

While the Congress is still grappling with how to take on the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), it has ceded space to AAP in states such as Punjab. Former president Rahul Gandhi said the Congress "humbly accepts the people's verdict" and added that it "will learn from this and keep working for the interests of the people of India". The party also announced that a meeting of its working committee will be called



soon to analyse the results.

This is not the first time the Congress failed to win a state in a series of assembly polls. Last year it lost in four of the five states where elections were held, but joined the ruling dispensation in Tamil Nadu as an ally of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala indicated foul play within party ranks. "All party leaders must seriously introspect and see if fight over positions, difference of opinion was so strong that it is cutting the tree (Congress) itself."

He also blamed the anti-incumbency of four and a half years (Amarinder Singh's tenure in Punjab) and said: "We offered the people of Punjab an alternative in the form of Charanjit Singh Channi, but could not overcome the four-and-a-half-year anti-incumbency sentiment."

Source: HT

Time to reform Congress' organisational leadership: Tharoor

NEW DELHI (TIP)

With the Congress suffering a crushing defeat in the latest round of assembly polls, party MP Shashi Tharoor on Thursday said it is time to reaffirm the idea of India that the Congress has stood for and reform the party's organisational leadership in a manner that will reignite those ideas and inspire the people.

The BJP was headed for a second straight win in politically crucial Uttar Pradesh and dominated the trends chart in Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, while the Aam Aadmi Party readied for a landslide win in Punjab. The Congress was headed for a big defeat in all the five states.

"All of us who believe in @INCIndia are hurting from the results of the recent assembly elections. It is time to reaffirm the idea of India that the Congress has stood for and the positive agenda it offers the nation...And to reform our organisational leadership in a manner that will reignite those ideas and inspire the people," Tharoor said in a tweet.

"One thing is clear -- Change is unavoidable if we need to succeed," the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

Source: PTI



India in history this Week

MARCH 11, 2022, TO MARCH 17, 2022

11 MARCH

1399 Taimur Lung crossed the Indus River in 1399, after committing a rampage in North India including Delhi.



1999 Infosys Company is the first Indian company to appear on the Nasdaq (NASDAQ) International Stock Exchange list in 1999.

2006 The Greek parliament passed a law allowing cremation in 2006 by a majority.

2007 Sunita completed the 2,012 km journey from Kolkata to Wagah in 2007 by driving in reverse gear.

12 MARCH

1913 Yashwantrao Chavan, the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the fifth Deputy Prime Minister of the country was born after the bifurcation of Bombay State in 1913.

1922 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested by the British for the movement against buying goods made from Europe and working with the machines of British rule.



1930 Mahatma Gandhi started the Dandi March from Sabarmati Ashram. The aim was to 'break the salt law' made by the British.

1993 There were 13 bomb blasts in Mumbai in which 257 people were killed and 800 people were injured.



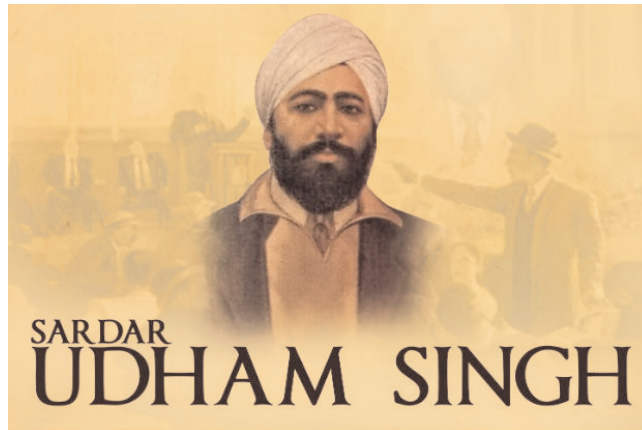
1872 Sher Ali, the assassin of Lord Mayo, the then Viceroy of India, was hanged in 1872.

1954 The Government of India inaugurated the Sahitya Academy in 1954.

1958 In 1958, British Empire Day was named 'Commonwealth Day'.

13 MARCH

1940 Indian revolutionary Udham Singh opened fire on General Dyer in London to avenge the Jallianwala Bagh from the British.



1997 Sister Nirmala was chosen as the leader in 1997 by Mother Teresa at the Indian Missionaries of Charity.

2009 The SAARC Literature Festival began in 2009 in Agra.

1971 Famous Hindi poet Atma Ranjan was born in 1971.

14 MARCH

1931 India's first speaking film 'Alam Ara' was screened.



1998 Sonia Gandhi became the Congress president in 1998.

1983 OPEC, a group of oil producing countries, cut oil prices in 1983 for the first time in 23 years.

15 MARCH

1947 Riots erupted in Punjab in 1947.



2007 The agreement between Vodafone and Essar concluded in 2007.

2008 In 2008, Kiran Bedi, the country's first female IPS officer, was selected for the German honor 'Animation Medicine' for her outstanding contribution to prison reform and human rights defense.

1564 Mughal emperor Akbar removed Jiziya tax in 1564.

16 MARCH

1846 According to the Amritsar Agreement, Kashmir was taken over in 1846 under Gulab Singh, the Hindu king of Jammu.

1942 The V-2 rocket was launched in 1942, but it exploded at the same time.



2012 India's master blaster Sachin Tendulkar became the first player to score 100 centuries in international cricket in 2012.

1693 Born in 1693 to Malharrao Holkar, the promoter of the Holkar dynasty of Indore.

17 MARCH

1527 Rana Sangram Singh of Chittorgarh was defeated by Babur in the battle of Agra.

1782 Salbai's settlement was signed between the East India Company and the Maratha rulers.



1959 The Buddhist religious Dalai Lama arrived in India from Tibet in 1959.

1987 Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar retired from Test cricket in 1987.

1962 Indian American astronaut Kalpana Chawla was born on 17 March 1962 in Karnal district of Haryana.

2000 On this day in 2000, Lalu Prasad Yadav was processed in case of possessing disproportionate assets.

1991 On this day in 1991, India's first automated satellite IRS-IA became a successful test after completing its three years.



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Rishi Kapoor's last film Sharmaji Namkeen to release on Prime Video

Actor Rishi Kapoor's last film Sharmaji Namkeen will stream on Amazon Prime Video. The streaming giant took to social media to make the announcement. The film, starring an ensemble cast — Juhi Chawla, Suhail Nayyar, Taaruk Raina, Satish Kaushik, Sheeba Chaddha, and Isha Talwar, will start streaming on March 31. Rishi Kapoor passed away on April 30, 2020, after a prolonged battle with cancer. He had shot for most of Sharmaji Namkeen with Juhi Chawla at the beginning of 2020. Later, the film's producers roped in actor Paresh Rawal to fill in Kapoor's shoes and complete the film's shoot. Produced by Excel Entertainment and Macguffin Pictures, directed by debutant Hitesh Bhatia, this film is a light-hearted coming-of-age story. The makers describe it as "a relatable and heartwarming story of self-realization and discovery."

Alia Bhatt is set for big Hollywood debut with Gal Gadot

Alia Bhatt is going places and the actress has more than one reasons to celebrate. Firstly, her recently-released film Gangubai Kathiawadi is performing well in theatres and has been praised by the critics. Now, the other big news - she is all set to make her big Hollywood debut in a film titled Heart Of Stone. Wait, it gets better. The film stars Gal Gadot and Jamie Dornan too. The international spy thriller will be directed by Tom Harper and it will be backed by Netflix and Skydance. Isn't that some news? The big news was shared on the official Instagram handle of Netflix India. The caption read: "Starting our day by announcing (and screaming) that Alia Bhatt is going to be in Heart Of Stone."

Meanwhile, Gal Gadot announced her association with the project by sharing a few behind-the-scene pictures and she wrote: "Rachel Stone. Nice to meet you. Heart Of Stone." Besides Alia Bhatt, Bollywood stars like Priyanka Chopra, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, the late Irrfan Khan, Ali Fazal have starred in a couple of Hollywood projects. Deepika Padukone made her Hollywood debut with xXx: Return of Xander Cage. We can't wait to see Alia Bhatt share the screen with Gal Gadot.

In terms of work, Alia Bhatt has a super busy schedule ahead. The actress will next be seen in SS Rajamouli's RRR. She will also star in Darlings, which she is co-producing with Shah Rukh Khan. She will also be seen in Farhan Akhtar's Jee Le Zaraa with Priyanka Chopra and Katrina Kaif and Karan Johar's Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani with Ranveer Singh.

Source: NDTV



Taapsee Pannu shares new poster of Shabaash Mithu

Actor Taapsee Pannu shared a new poster of her upcoming movie Shabaash Mithu on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022. In the new poster, Taapsee was seen wearing a blue jersey with the name Mithali written on it. She had a bat in one hand and a helmet in another.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Taapsee captioned the poster, "She continues to inspire millions like me. To break a few stereotypes to lay down a new path ahead for many to follow. This Women's day I am cheering for the front runners in the fight to #breakthebias #shabaashMithu #ShabaashWomen #shabaashyou."

Earlier, the makers of the film released Taapsee's first look from the film. In the poster, Taapsee is seen wearing a blue jersey with a bat in her hand, aiming to take a shot.

For the unversed, Shabaash Mithu is based on the life of India Women's ODI cricket team captain Mithali Raj. The film chronicles the highs and lows, setbacks and moments of Mithali Raj's life. Vijay Raaz will also be seen in a leading role. The film is directed by Rahul Dholakia and written by Priya Aven.

Taapsee was last seen in the film Loop Lapeta which was released on February 4, 2022. The film was the official Hindi remake of Run Lola Run, the 1998 German experimental thriller. Taapsee also has Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan? in the pipeline.

Source: ANI



Shibani, Farhan Akhtar are at their stylish best in new photos

Actor-host Shibani Dandekar took to Instagram on Tuesday, March 8, to share a new photo of herself and her husband, actor-director Farhan Akhtar. Shibani also shared a few of her solo photos.

In the photo, Shibani is glittering in green and Farhan looks chic in a black outfit. As Shibani shared the photo, fans showered it with compliments. "Beautiful couple," wrote one fan. Another fan wrote, "Such power!" A comment read, "Congrats to sweet couple."

Shibani Dandekar and Farhan Akhtar got married on February 19 in Khandala. The wedding was a close knit affair that was attended by the likes of Hrithik Roshan, Shankar Mahadevan, Ashutosh Gowariker, Rhea Chakraborty among others. The video of Farhan and Hrithik dancing on "Senorita" at the wedding made waves on social media. Shankar sang Dil Chahta Hai's title song at the wedding bash.

In the days after, Shibani and Farhan shared various photos from the wedding and the pre-wedding ceremonies.





DiCaprio donates USD 10 million to support Ukraine

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has donated \$10 million to support Ukraine, which is fighting against Russia. DiCaprio also has a personal motive. The actor's maternal grandmother, Helene Indenbirken, was born in Odessa as Jelena Stepanovna Smirnova. In 1917, she emigrated from there with her parents to Germany, where DiCaprio's mother was born. Raised mainly by his mother, DiCaprio was also very close to his grandmother, who was a supporter of his career from the beginning.

His grandmother, who died in 2008 at the age of 93, almost always appeared with her grandson and daughter at the premieres of his films. DiCaprio allocated as much as USD 10 million to support Ukraine and did not plan to announce it to the whole world. The information was announced by the International Visegrad Fund—a project of the Visegrad Group.

Source: IANS

The Batman goes even higher with \$134 mn debut at US box-office

The Batman, The newest superhero epic, starring Robert Pattinson as an exceptionally moody Caped Crusader, collected \$134 million in North American theatres over the weekend, above Sunday's estimates of \$128.5 million. Those ticket sales rank as the best opening of 2022, as well as only the second pandemic-era movie to cross the \$100 million mark in a single weekend following Spider-Man: No Way Home.

The reason behind the four per cent bump in Monday's final tally is because The Batman had a better-than-expected turnout on Sunday, bringing in a whopping \$34.1 million. That's more than some pandemic-era releases managed to earn in their entire theatrical runs.

The movie pulled in \$57 million on Friday - which includes fan events from Tuesday and Wednesday — and added another \$43.2 million on Saturday.

Meanwhile, The Batman begins with Rs. 26 crores (\$3.45 million) approx playing at 1800+ screens in India during its opening weekend. The seventh movie iteration of the caped crusader headlined by Robert Pattinson took the third-best start for a DC comics movie in India behind Batman v Superman (Rs. 35.80 crores) and Aquaman (Rs. 30.10 crores).

The film performed best in five-six metro cities and a few other major cities like Chandigarh. Even in there, it was the premium format like IMAX that had



the best occupancies, with large screen format making around 20 per cent of the all India collections from just 20 odd sites. It's trending during the weekend was fair with around 30 per cent growth coming on Saturday and remaining flat

on Sunday. The numbers could have been better though as these are the level of collections that was acceptable for a big superhero movie ten years back, today a Batman movie should really open around Rs. 50 crores.

Doctor Strange 2 mid and post-credits scene leaked

The mid-credits and post-credits scenes for Marvel's next big film, Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, have reportedly leaked online. The credits also contain potential major spoilers from the superhero franchise which is due for release on May 6. The leak claims that the clips may contain an introduction to new characters who can change the course of Marvel's Phase 4.



A fan account on Twitter posted a long note detailing the spoilers in the mid and post-credit scenes. As per the tweet, the mid-credit scenes will show Stephen Strange aka Doctor Strange sleeping after the events of the Multiverse of Madness when he has a nightmare. In the dream sequence, he sees himself training as an apprentice in New York City, which has been ruined.

Doctor Strange is accompanied by a dead Wong and Dormammu's sister Umar in the city. Kang the Conqueror, believed to be the next big villain in the new MCU phase, is also spotted in the sequence. Doctor Strange then wakes up with a third eye and hears Clea's voice crying for help. Clea, who is expected to be played by Charlize Theron and will be apparently Strange's love interest in the comics, is heard saying, "Help Me."

Source: HT

Black Widow star Florence Pugh in talks to join Dune sequel

British star Florence Pugh is in negotiations to join the second part of filmmaker Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi epic Dune. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the Black Widow star is being eyed for the role of Princess Irulan Corrino, a key character in author Frank Herbert's classic novel Dune.



If finalised, the sequel would reunite Pugh with actor Timothee Chalamet, who plays the lead role of Paul Atreides in Dune. The two stars had earlier worked together for Greta Gerwig's acclaimed 2019 movie Little Women.

Dune, which was released in October 2021 to universal praise, followed the story of Paul Atreides, a brilliant and gifted young man born into a great destiny beyond his understanding, who must travel to the most dangerous planet in the universe to ensure the future of his family and his people.

Part two of Dune is expected to start production later this year and has a release date of October 20, 2023.

The sequel will also bring back original cast members, including Rebecca Ferguson, Josh Brolin, Stellan Skarsgard, Dave Bautista, Zendaya and Javier Bardem.

Source: PTI

UK LOOKING AT EASING VISA RULES FOR UKRAINIANS

LONDON (TIP): Britain is looking at easing its visa requirements for Ukrainian refugees, a minister said on March 10, after the government faced widespread condemnation for prioritizing bureaucracy over the welfare of those fleeing war.

While households across Europe have taken in Ukrainian families forced to leave their homes, Britain has demanded they secure a visa first, meaning the country has accepted far fewer Ukrainians than the likes of France and Germany, or Ukraine's nearest neighbours.

Armed forces minister James Heappey said he believed the interior ministry, or Home Office, was looking at ways to ease the system, after some refugees in the French port city of Calais were ordered to go to Paris or Brussels to fill out forms.

"Overnight the Home Office have indicated that they are looking at expanding the programme and looking at a number of policy checks that they currently have in place in order to make the process easier," Heappey told BBC TV. (Reuters)

UKRAINE CRISIS: CHERNOBYL SITE KNOCKED OFF POWER GRID

LVIV (TIP): Ukrainian authorities say the decommissioned Chernobyl nuclear plant, site of the world's worst nuclear disaster, has been knocked off the power grid. Emergency generators are now supplying backup power.

The state communications agency says the outage could put systems for cooling nuclear material at risk.

The cause of the damage to the power line serving Chernobyl was not immediately clear, but it comes amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The site has been under control of Russian troops since last week.

Ukrainian grid operator Ukrenerho said that according to the national nuclear regulator, all Chernobyl facilities are without power and the diesel generators have fuel for 48 hours. Without power the "parameters of nuclear and radiation safety" cannot be controlled, it said.

A lion evacuated from an animal shelter at Kyiv in Oudsbergen, Belgium. Reuters

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said the grid supplying electricity was damaged and called for a ceasefire to allow for repairs. (Agencies)

Germans offer up 300,000 private homes for refugees from Ukraine

BERLIN (TIP): Germans have offered up 300,000 private homes to house refugees from Ukraine following Russia's invasion of the country, Germany's interior ministry said on March 10.

The ministry is cooperating with the non-profit gut.org AG and home rental company Airbnb Inc's non-profit arm Airbnb.org to assign refugees to housing offers, it said on March 10.

More than 2.3 million people have fled from Ukraine since the invasion, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Most are women and children, as able-bodied men have been ordered by the Kyiv government to stay home to fight.

As of Wednesday, just over 80,000 Ukrainian refugees had been registered in Germany, with more arriving every day.

Many of them arrive in Berlin by train



or bus, which has prompted the German capital to set up temporary accommodation at its shuttered Tegel airport to house up to 3,000 people.

From there, refugees would be distributed to longer-term homes, in Berlin or elsewhere in Germany.

Reuters

Russia rejects Ukraine charge of genocide as invasion enters third week

LVIV (TIP): Russia's war in Ukraine entered the third week on March 10 with none of its stated objectives reached despite thousands of people killed, more than two million made refugees, and thousands forced to cower in besieged cities under relentless bombardment.

Ukraine said Russia was carrying out "genocide" by bombing a children's hospital in the city of Mariupol. Russia said the reports were "fake news" as the building was a former maternity hospital that had long been taken over by troops.

Moscow's stated objectives of crushing the Ukrainian military and ousting the pro-West elected government of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy remained out of reach, with Zelenskyy unshaken and Western military aid pouring across the Polish and Romanian borders.

The UK Defence Ministry said on Thursday that a large Russian column northwest of Kyiv had made little progress in over a week and was suffering continued losses. It added that as casualties mount, Russian President Vladimir Putin would have to draw from across the armed forces to replace the losses.

Putin has said the advance by his forces in Ukraine was going according to plan and to schedule. Russia calls its



incursion a "special operation" to disarm its neighbour and dislodge leaders it calls "neo-Nazis."

Western-led sanctions designed to cut the Russian economy and government from international financial markets were also beginning to bite, with the Russian share market and rouble plunging and ordinary Russians rushing to hoard cash.

'Hospital bombed'

Zelenskyy accused Russia of carrying out "genocide" after Ukrainian officials said Russian aircraft bombed a children's hospital on Wednesday,

burying patients in rubble despite a ceasefire deal for people to flee Mariupol.

"What kind of country is this, the Russian Federation, which is afraid of hospitals, is afraid of maternity hospitals, and destroys them?" Zelenskyy said in a televised address late on Wednesday.

The attack, which authorities said injured women in labour and left children in the wreckage, underscored U.S. warnings that the biggest assault on a European state since 1945 could become increasingly attritional after Russia's early failures.

(Reuters)

Amid closure of airspace in many European countries, around a dozen Russian aircraft stranded in Switzerland

ZURICH (TIP): Around a dozen Russian aircraft are stranded at Swiss airports by the closure of airspace in many European countries to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine, Switzerland's civil aviation authority estimated on March 9.

"I expect that it will be around a dozen aircraft in Switzerland," a spokesperson for the Federal Office of Civil Aviation said. This included EuroAirport near Basel, which straddles the Swiss-French border.

There were two aircraft in Geneva, including an Aeroflot passenger jet, and none in Zurich, he said, adding that not all airports had responded to his survey.

Swiss broadcaster SRF said its investigation had found private aircraft believed to belong to Russian oligarchs were on the ground at EuroAirport.



It said one of the aircraft was believed to belong to Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich, and had flown to Basel from London at the end of

February. Another was thought to belong to billionaire Viktor Vekselberg, it said.

Neither could be reached for immediate comment on the report. The airport declined comment.

Switzerland adopted European Union sanctions against Russia and closed its airspace to Russian aircraft and airlines on Feb 28. Abramovich and Vekselberg are not personally sanctioned in Switzerland but would still be affected by the airspace closure.

Russia's super-rich oligarchs have been the focus of Western pressure following the invasion of Ukraine, due to their links to the Kremlin.

Moscow says its actions are a "special operation" aimed at disarming Ukraine and removing leaders it casts as dangerous. Reuters

UK PM Johnson invites world leaders to build coalition against Russian President Putin

LONDON (TIP): British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hosts Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Dutch PM Mark Rutte at Downing Street in London on March 7, as the trio visit a Royal Air Force (RAF) base to meet members of the UK armed forces.

Downing Street said it marks the start of a week of "focused engagement" with world leaders to mobilise a global outcry at the "atrocities of Russian aggression" into practical support for Ukraine.

The three prime ministers will convene for separate bilateral meetings and a joint trilateral meeting to discuss the next steps to counter attacks ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Ukrainian cities.

"In the time since Russia's illegal and brutal assault we have seen the world stand up tall in solidarity with the indomitable people of Ukraine," said Johnson.

"UK aid is already reaching those who need it most, delivering essential supplies and medical support. While only Putin can fully end the suffering in Ukraine, today's new funding will continue to help those facing the deteriorating humanitarian situation," he said.

It comes as the UK said it has allocated an additional USD 100 million directly to the Ukrainian government budget to mitigate financial pressures created by Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion.



This grant could be used to support public sector salaries, allowing critical state functions to keep operating, as well as to support social safety nets and pensions for the Ukrainian people. The grant will be provided through the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund, established last week to support the Ukrainian government.

It is said to be on top of the UK training 22,000 soldiers, supplying 2,000 anti-tank missiles, providing 100 million pounds for economic reform and energy independence, and providing 120 million pounds of humanitarian aid including 25 million pounds of match funding to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal.

The move comes as the UK Parliament is for a vote on Monday on the government's amendments to the Economic Crime (Transparency and

Enforcement) Bill, which fast-tracks action against Russian oligarchs close to the Kremlin and with UK assets.

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said that streamlining current legislation will allow the government to move faster and harder when sanctioning billionaires and businesses associated with the Russian government.

"These amendments give us the chance to bring even more crippling sanctions against Putin and his regime," said UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss.

"The UK has already led the way by bringing in the largest and strongest package of sanctions in history in response to illegal and unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine," she said.

The UK has imposed what it brands as the "largest sanctions package in history" on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

Most recently, this included a full asset freeze and travel ban imposed against Alisher Usmanov and Igor Shuvalov, two of Russia's leading oligarchs with significant interests in the UK and close links to the Kremlin.

The sanctions also cover Russian President Putin, Sergey Lavrov and more than 300 individuals and entities at the heart of Putin's regime, and Belarus.

(PTI)

14 KILLED IN COAL MINE ACCIDENT IN CHINA

BEIJING (TIP): Fourteen people trapped in a coal mine that collapsed in southwest China's Guizhou province last month have died, local officials said on March 6.

The workers were trapped after the roof of a shaft at Sanhe Shunxun coal mine in Zhenfeng County, Bouyei-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Qianxinan, collapsed on February 25.

Rescue work finished on Sunday noon as the bodies of the trapped workers were retrieved.

Further investigation into the cause of the accident is underway, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Mining accidents are common in China. However, the number of deaths has reduced in recent years. China is the world's largest producer and consumer of coal.

China's mining industry has long been among the world's deadliest with frequent mine accidents. The safety crackdown was ordered in 2020 after two accidents in mountainous southwestern Chongqing killed 39 miners.

Despite the crackdown, 10 workers were killed at a gold mine in the northern province of Shandong in January last year after a cave-in caused by the improper storage and use of explosives.

(PTI)

How to prevent and reverse premature greying of hair

Blame it on erratic lifestyle habits or hormonal imbalances, premature greying of hair has become increasingly common these days. While many believe that grey hair is permanent and there's nothing one can do about it, that may not really be the case!

By following certain hair care habits and including some herbs in your diet, you can reverse premature greying of hair effectively, according to ayurvedic expert Dr Dixa Bhavsar. She recently talked about three herbs that she suggested one must consume and apply topically for luscious black locks.

Amla

An antidote for a host of illnesses, amla is proven to have great benefits for skin and hair. "Eating one fruit a day during the season is the best practice not only to treat premature greying of hair, but also correct metabolism and eliminate toxin. It is also one of the best rejuvenation medicines," Dr Bhavsar said.

Further, she suggested massaging the scalp with coconut oil processed with fresh amla juice. You can also consume amla in the form of fresh juice daily. "Amla powder is an excellent addition to hair masks," she added.

Curry leaves

The expert shared a simple DIY hair oil using curry leaves. "Take 1-2 cups of coconut oil or any other oil of your choice and a handful of curry leaves. Bring them to a boil until the leaves darken and the oil too. Let it cool down a bit and transfer the mixture into a glass container," she explained.

Apply this oil by sectioning your hair, from the root to the tip, especially on the scalp. Let it sit overnight and shampoo it the next day using a mild shampoo.

Bhringaraj



Also known as the 'king of hair', bhringaraj is one of the best natural remedies for premature grey hair treatment, according to Dr Bhavsar. "It corrects metabolism and starts the process of restoring the natural colour of the hair. It can be added to hair packs to retain colour, reduce hair loss and promote hair growth."

Further, you can also apply bhringaraj paste on the scalp, leave it for half an hour and then wash the hair or massage the scalp with bhringaraj oil before shampooing with herbal shampoo, twice a week, she suggested.

The expert listed a few simple tips to prevent premature greying of hair:

- Oiling your hair is very important. Do it twice a week.
- Consume sweet, bitter and astringent food items. Avoid excessive spicy, salty, fried, fermented, stale, caffeinated drinks and non-vegetarian food items.
- Instil 2 drops of cow's ghee in both nostrils at night before sleep.
- Amla is best for grey hair. Consume it regularly,

especially during the winter season.

- Sleeping early is equally important. The better the quality of your sleep, the better the quality of your hair. Try to be in bed by 10 pm.
- Coconut oil is commonly used for its cooling properties. You may use it along with
- Aloe vera gel – Mix the gel with coconut oil and apply it to hair.
- Amla (Indian gooseberry) powder – Heat 2 tsp of amla powder in 3 tbsp of coconut oil until it becomes black. Apply on your hair after the mix cools down a bit.
- Curry leaves – Heat a handful of curry leaves with coconut oil till it turns black. Cool and apply on the scalp. You may also consume curry leaves as part of your diet. It contains multivitamins and irons that help prevent greying.
- Include curry leaves, sesame seeds, amla, bitter gourd, and cow ghee in your diet.
- Don't wash your hair with hot water.

Source: *The Indian Express*

FOOD



Gujiya

Ingredients

Refined flour - 4 cup, Ghee - 1/2 cup, Cold Water to mix
For the Filling: Khoya - 200gms, Sugar - 1 cup, Green Cardamom - 1 tsp, powdered, Almonds - 1 tsp, finely chopped, Ghee for deep frying

Method

- To make the dough, mix ghee and flour in a bowl. Add water and knead well to a stiff dough. Keep aside for 60 minutes. Saute the khoya till slightly fried and keep aside to cool.
- Add sugar, cardamom and almonds to the cooled khoya and mix well. Make balls of the dough and roll them into thick rounds. Place a tsp of the filling and fold. Seal the edges with wet fingers.
- Heat ghee in a pan over medium flame. Fry the gujyas till golden brown on all sides. Remove and serve.

Thandai

Ingredients

Sugar - 3/4 cup, Full Cream Milk - 1/2 cup, Almonds - 2tsp, Poppy Seeds - 1/4 tbslp, Saunf - 1/4 tbslp, Pistachios - 1 tsp, Watermelon Seeds - 1/2 tbslp, dried, Cardamom Powder - 1/4 tsp, White Peppercorns - 1/2 tsp, Fresh or Dried Rose Petals - 2 tbslp, Saffron Strands - few

Method

- Soak the almonds, poppy seeds, saunf, melon seeds and pistachios in water for a 30 minutes. Grind to a fine paste and keep aside. Boil the milk over medium flame.
- Add the saffron strands and mix well.
- Add the sugar and stir until fully melted.
- Grind the rose petals and peppercorns to a fine powder.
- Add to the milk along with cardamom powder.
- Mix well and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the ground paste and mix well.
- Remove and chill for atleast 2 to 3 hours.
- Just before serving, garnish with chopped almonds and pistachios.
- Serve chilled.

Unwind and pamper your skin after a long day

Ice therapy

Rubbing an ice cube on your skin increases blood circulation, immediately reviving it and giving it a healthy glow. Run a couple of ice cubes all over your face for an instantly fresh look.

Hydrating Sheet masks

Sheet masks have been in the trend for the longest time. Not only do they come in a huge variety, but you can pick a different one every time to target different skin problems. Apart from giving a much-

needed boost to the skin, sheet masks are also very hydrating and can make your skin fresh in an instant.

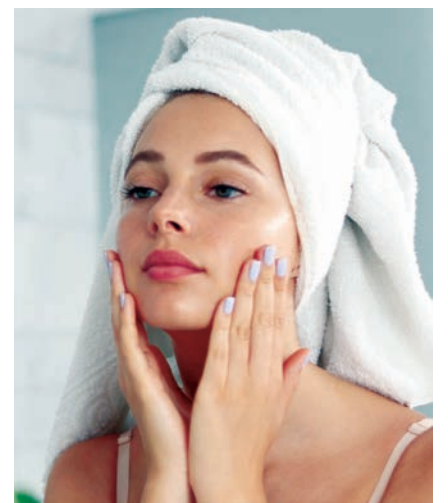
Use day cream

When oxygen levels drop in the skin, it can lead to dullness, uneven skin tone, and dark spots. With its oxygen boost and micro-circulation complex, day cream for oily skin enhances oxygen supply in the skin cells to give it a revived glow. The unique non-oily formulation of the Oxygen Boost Day Cream is developed by leading

dermatologists and helps to rejuvenate skin by removing dullness and pigmentation. It is suitable for all skin types and provides a healthy, radiant glow.

Facial massage

A massage not just relaxes your mind and body, but also does wonders for the skin. Indulging in a facial massage is great as it improves circulation, making the skin look healthy and fresh. A regular facial massage will also make the skin firm while diminishing fine lines and puffiness.



Heart attack plus cardiac arrest survivors at higher risk of early death

The findings of a new study suggest that patients who survive a heart attack together with sudden cardiac arrest are at a higher risk of dying within six years following hospital discharge.

This research was published in the 'Journal of the American Heart Association'.

A heart attack is when blood flow to the heart is blocked, and sudden cardiac arrest is when the heart malfunctions and suddenly stops beating unexpectedly. Cardiac arrest can be fatal if not treated immediately.

Most heart attacks do not lead to sudden cardiac arrest. But when sudden cardiac arrest occurs, heart attack is a common cause.

The study draws on data from 13,444 patients collected between 2010 and 2017.

It shows for the first time that patients who had heart attacks and then a sudden cardiac arrest were at a greater risk of developing further complications. Those who had a cardiac arrest at the time of their heart attack were twice as likely as those suffering heart attack alone to go on to develop abnormal heart rhythms known as ventricular arrhythmia (VA). Those with a cardiac arrest were also 36 per cent more likely to die on average within three years following discharge from hospital. The researchers suggest that this small subgroup of patients may benefit from additional treatments such as an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) - a small device that treats people with abnormal heart rhythms - to see if it improves their long-term health outcomes. This is because in some cases heart attacks can lead to a condition called ventricular arrhythmia (VA) - a type of abnormal heartbeat where the heart begins beating faster before going into a spasm and stops pumping completely - which can cause sudden cardiac arrest. Dr



Fu Siong Ng, senior author of the study and Clinical Senior Lecturer in Cardiac Electrophysiology at Imperial College London, said:

"Most patients who have heart attacks do not experience a cardiac arrest. However, our study has revealed that there are a small group of patients who do, and if they survive the initial cardiac arrest they are at increased of further complications and early death. This study has highlighted that we may need to look at how we treat these types of patients and our current guidelines may need to be updated. There is a case that in addition to the current treatments on offer to heart attack patients these patients may benefit from ICDs. However, we would need to carry out a clinical trial to validate this theory."



Covid mRNA vaccine doesn't affect IVF success rates: Study

Covid-19 mRNA vaccines do not affect the ovarian response or pregnancy rates in IVF (In-vitro fertilisation) treatment, according to a study.

A team of researchers from the Tel Aviv University in Israel found that in patients undergoing IVF treatments, ovarian response and pregnancy rates were similar with those that were vaccinated with the mRNA Covid-19 vaccine prior to IVF treatment, as compared to unvaccinated women.

The study published in the peer-reviewed medical journal 'Fertility and Sterility' included a total of 400 patients, 200 vaccinated women and 200 age-matched unvaccinated women, undergoing IVF during January-April 2021.

The results showed no effect of Covid-19 mRNA vaccine on oocyte yield during hormonal stimulation or on pregnancy rates during IVF treatments.

The study did not support concerns that the vaccine might affect fertility treatment outcomes were not supported, said researchers.

"The theoretical concept of the supposed similarity between the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein and the syncytin protein that is speculated to take part in the fertilisation process and the formation of the placenta, has led to the assumption that the vaccine might induce an immune response which would affect implantation and pregnancy," said researchers, including Alon Kedem from the varsity's Shamir Medical Centre, in the study.

"Our results demonstrate similar oocyte yields and fertilisation rates among vaccinated and unvaccinated women," Kedem added.

The researchers said taking into account the potential harm of the infection itself on fertility, the already proven worse pregnancy outcomes among pregnant women with Covid-19 infection, and the higher risk of infection among unvaccinated pregnant women, it seems reasonable to reduce infection risk through vaccination.

"We recommend considering Covid-19 vaccination prior to commencing IVF treatments in order to reduce the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy," Kedem said.

Preliminary reports on vaccine safety in pregnant women found similar miscarriage rates among vaccinated women as compared to historical data from the literature.

Source: IANS

Just 1 glass of wine a day can age your brain by 2 years, says study

Just a glass of wine or even a pint of beer a day carries significant risk as it can cause changes to the brain equivalent to ageing two years, researchers have found.

It is already known that people who drink heavily have alterations in brain structure and size that are associated with cognitive impairments.

However, a team from the University of Pennsylvania found that even light-to-moderate alcohol consumption was associated with reductions in overall brain volume.

The link grew stronger the greater the level of alcohol consumption, the researchers showed.

Going from two to three alcohol units at the same age was like aging three and a half years. The team reported their findings in the journal Nature Communications.

"There is some evidence that the effect of drinking on the brain is exponential," said co-corresponding author Remi Daviet, who was at Penn during the study, and now at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"So, one additional drink in a day could have more of an impact than any of the previous drinks that day. That means that cutting back on that final drink of the night might have a big effect in terms of brain ageing." In other words, Gideon Nave, Penn's Wharton School: "The people who can benefit the most from drinking less are the people who are already drinking the most." The researchers looked at brain MRIs from more than 36,000 adults.

When the researchers grouped the participants by average-consumption levels, a small but apparent pattern emerged: The gray and white matter volume that might otherwise be predicted by the individual's



other characteristics was reduced.

Going from zero to one alcohol unit didn't make much of a difference in brain volume, but going from one to two or two to three units a day was associated with reductions in both gray and white matter.

Even removing the heavy drinkers from the analyses, the associations remained. The lower brain volume was not localised to any one brain region, the scientists found.

And while the researchers underscore that their study looked only at correlations, they say the findings may prompt drinkers to reconsider how much they imbibe.

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Google tests darker 'dark mode' for its Android app

Tech giant Google is testing a darker dark mode for its Android search app, media reports say. The new shade still is not the same as the one presented in Google's test of a pitch-black dark mode on desktops last month, reports The Verge.

Rather, the one spotted in the mobile app is darker than the usual dark gray but still lighter than pitch black.

The new dark mode in Google's mobile app could be more attractive for devices with OLED displays looking to save battery life, or who just prefer to use dark mode more, the report said.

Android Police said that the new shade is available Google's latest 13.8 beta in the Google Play Store which you can get via APKMirror, an archive that allows Android users to download items not readily available on their device, or go the official route by joining the beta test group.

After Google confirmed that it was testing dark mode on desktops last year, the company confirmed a wide rollout of dark mode for Google Search in February for its desktop users, the report said.

Though users can access the app's new colour shade on their own, a wider release could take months to get to more people officially.

Beefing up its cybersecurity, Google buys Mandiant for \$5.4 billion

Google is fortifying its cloud services with a \$5.4 billion acquisition of the cyber security firm Mandiant, the companies announced on Tuesday, March 8.

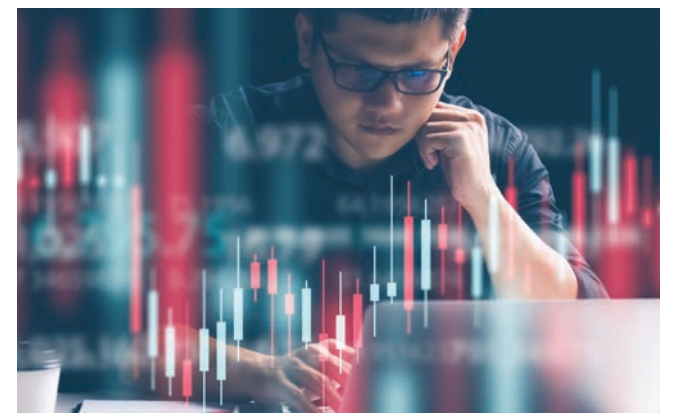
The acquisition is the first of many that analysts foresee in the cyber security sector following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Analysts and government officials have said they expect a wave of cyberattacks from Russia and others as geopolitical tensions rise.

"In a massive growth backdrop for cyber security and further tailwinds seen during this Ukraine invasion from Russia bad actors/nation state attacks, we believe today's deal is the tip of the iceberg to a massive phase of consolidation potentially ahead for the cloud space," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives wrote Tuesday.

Google, a subsidiary of Mountain View, California-based Alphabet Inc., will pay \$23 per Mandiant share in all-cash deal expected to close this year. The price represents a 57% premium on Mandiant's share price in early February, when speculation about a deal between the companies first surfaced.

Mandiant, based in Reston, Virginia, and its 5,300 employees will join Google Cloud as soon as the transaction closes. "The Mandiant brand is synonymous with unmatched insights for organizations seeking to keep themselves secure in a constantly changing environment," said Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian. "This is an opportunity to deliver an end-to-end security operations suite and extend one of the best consulting organizations in the world."

Technology research and advisory firm Gartner estimates that total spending for worldwide information security and risk management reached \$155 billion last year and is forecast to grow another



10% this year, to more than \$170 billion.

Even before the war, stock analysts have been predicting growth of as much as 20% in the cyber security sector.

Russia has long been accused of disrupting other governments and businesses via online attacks and Western officials have warned that Russia could launch more cyberattacks against Ukraine and its allies.

Just one week before last month's invasion, the US blamed Russia for a series of cyberattacks that knocked the websites of the Ukrainian army, the defense ministry and major banks offline.

Anne Neuberger, the Biden administration's deputy national security adviser for cyber and emerging technologies, said there was no intelligence indicating that the U.S. would be targeted by a cyberattack, but that remained a concern, giving that the banking system does not have the "cyber resilience" that it should.

Source: AP

Android 12L coming to Samsung, Lenovo and Microsoft devices, says Google

Google has announced that it will bring the Android 12L operating system to Samsung, Lenovo and Microsoft devices later this year. The new OS brings changes to the home screen, lock screen, notification shade, device set-up screens and settings. The changes are largely designed to give users more information on the screen.

"Today we are introducing 12L, an update to Android 12 with features that will make tablets and foldables simpler and easier to use," said Google's VP of engineering for Android, Andrei Popescu. "We will continue to build more features and functionalities to help you make the most of your larger screen devices in Android 13 and beyond," Popescu added.

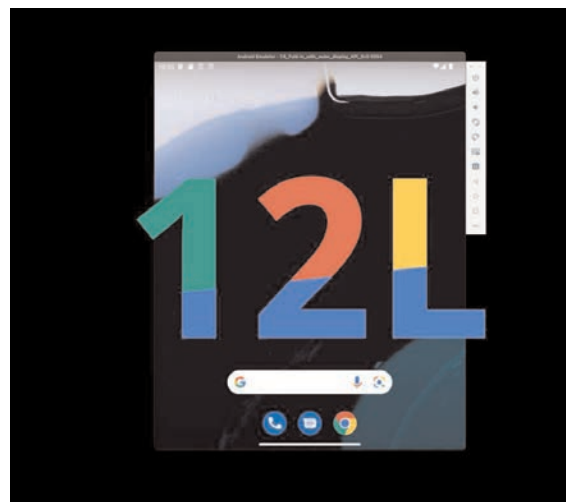
The company recently announced Android 12L, a version of Android 12 optimised for tablets, foldables, and ChromeOS devices.

In addition to Android 12L, Google also announced new features in OS and Play for developers to better support these devices, reports TechCrunch.

These include updates to its Material Design guidance for large-screen devices, but also updates to Jetpack Compose to make it easier to build for these machines and to ensure that apps can more easily adapt to various screen orientations and sizes.

On Android, YouTube Music users can now share songs with Snapchat

Snapchat sharing for YouTube Music was



enabled on iOS in October and now a new report has claimed that it is available on Android.

The first indication that YouTube Music might be able to share songs to Instagram and Snapchat emerged in November of 2020, reports 9To5Google.

When you open the share sheet in YouTube Music for Android and tap Snapchat, you will be able to send whatever you are listening to on Snapchat. The artwork for the album, the artist's name, the app logo, and a link to listen to the music are all included.

Snapchat has also started rolling out a new feature to let users share their real-time location for 15 minutes or a few hours with friends.

NASA studies 50-year-old lunar sample to prepare for return to Moon's surface

Scientists at NASA are tapping into one of the last unopened Apollo-era lunar samples to learn more about the Moon and prepare for a return to its surface.

NASA's Artemis mission aims to bring back cold and sealed samples from near the lunar South Pole.

The sample is being opened at NASA's Johnson Space Center

in Houston and studied by the Apollo Next Generation Sample Analysis Program (ANGSA) -- a science team which aims to learn more about the sample and the lunar surface in advance of the upcoming Artemis missions to the Moon's South Pole.

"Understanding the geologic history and evolution of the Moon samples at the Apollo landing sites will help us prepare for the types of samples that may be encountered during Artemis," Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington, said in a statement.

When Apollo astronauts returned with these samples around 50 years ago, NASA had the foresight to keep some of them unopened and pristine.

The ANGSA 73001 sample is part of an Apollo 17 drive tube sample collected by astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison "Jack" Schmitt in December 1972.

The astronauts hammered a pair of connected 1.5-by-14-inch tubes into the lunar surface to collect segments of rocks and soil from a landslide deposit in the Moon's Taurus-Littrow Valley.

Source: IANS





APPLE UNVEILS 5G VERSIONS OF IPAD AIR, LOW-END IPHONE SE

Apple Inc. introduced 5G versions of its low-end iPhone SE and iPad Air tablet, as well as a redesigned Mac desktop computer and a new processor, kicking off what's likely to be its biggest year yet for new product releases.

Apple unveiled the devices during a virtual event Tuesday that it called "Peek performance." Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook also announced plans to bring Major League Baseball games to the company's TV+ streaming service.

The presentation included a new Apple chip named M1 Ultra that the company called the most powerful personal-computer chip ever. The product is part of Apple's yearslong shift away from using Intel Corp. processors in favor of its own components.

The new desktop computer, called the Mac Studio, features the M1 Ultra chip and is aimed at app developers, photo editors and video creators. Apple also unveiled a separate monitor.

Apple shares gained less than 1% to \$160.50 at 1:32 p.m. in New York. They have fallen about 10% this year, in line with a broader slump.

Source: Bloomberg

UKRAINE WAR TO SULLY CLOTHES SALES FROM LEVI TO RALPH LAUREN

Levi Strauss and Ralph Lauren are among U.S. apparel brands likely to be worst hit by Russia's invasion of Ukraine which is again clogging supply chains in Europe where they derive at least a quarter of sales, Wall Street analysts say.

American clothes firms' European businesses were just recovering from two years of pandemic restrictions. But war-related Western sanctions on Moscow, airspace bans and shipping route changes have put new squeezes on East-West supply chains.

"Cargo checks are now one of the biggest disruptions to shippers, making sure they are not breaking sanctions at ports in the EU (European Union) and the UK," said Jane Hali, CEO of investment research firm Jane Hali & Associates.

"Europe is definitely going to feel the brunt of the economic damage ... which will impact consumer sentiment and consumer wallets," CFRA Research analyst Zachary Warring said on the fallout for apparel retailers. Source: Reuters

UPI123Pay: RBI launches new UPI service for feature phones

MUMBAI (TIP)

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Tuesday, March 8, launched a new service, which will enable over 40 crore feature phone users to undertake digital payments in a secure way.

The service christened UPI (unified payments interface) '123PAY' is a three-step method to initiate and execute services for users which will work on simple phones which do not have an internet connection.

Das said, as of now, the multifaceted features of UPI are mostly available only on smartphones, which excludes people from the lower rung of the society from an economic perspective, especially in the rural areas, from accessing the popular service, even though the smartphone prices are going down.

He said, the UPI volumes have touched to Rs 76 lakh crore in FY22 so far, as against Rs 41 lakh crore in FY21, and added that the day is not far when the overall volumes will touch Rs 100 lakh crore.

There are an estimated 40 crore mobile phone users who possess feature phones.

At present, UPI services are available for such users through the USSD-based services, but the same has been found to be cumbersome and all the mobile operators do not allow such services, Deputy Governor T Rabi Shankar said.

Feature phone users will now be able to undertake a host of transactions based on four technology alternatives. They include calling an IVR (interactive voice response) number, app functionality in feature phones, missed call-based approach and also proximity sound-based payments, the RBI said.



Such users can initiate payments to friends and family, pay utility bills, recharge the FAST Tags of their vehicles, pay mobile bills and also allow users to check account balances, it said, adding customers will also be able to link bank accounts, set or change UPI PINs.

A 24x7 helpline for digital payments was also launched by Das on Tuesday, which has also been set up by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

The helpline christened 'Digisaathi' will assist the callers/users with all their queries on digital payments via website and chatbot.

Services can be accessed via four alternatives:

- An IVR (interactive voice response) system that users can call to make a transaction.
- A mobile phone app (for simpler phones) in which all transactions available on a UPI app on smartphone will be offered, except for the feature to scan and pay.
- Missed call-based approach in which users can send a missed call to initiate transactions.
- Proximity sound-based payments.
- Users can visit www.digisaathi.info or call on 14431 and 1800 891 3333 from their phones for their queries on digital payments and grievances.

India and US to collaborate on building resilient supply chains: USTR report

WASHINGTON (TIP)

As part of its efforts to address the global supply chain crisis, the Joe Biden administration plans "to collaborate with India on building resilient supply chains and promote a transparent rules-based trading system for market economies and democracies," the US Trade Representative has told Congress.

In its 2021 Annual Report to Congress, the US Trade Representative (USTR) said the United States and India share a dynamic and important trade and investment relationship. In 2021, the United States and India re-launched the United States-India Trade Policy Forum (TPF), which had not met since 2017. When the first wave of COVID-19 hit the world, it caught most businesses off-guard as it disrupted supply chains, especially from China, on an unprecedented scale. Countries like the US and India have highlighted the importance of having a resilient supply chain network that is more robust and diverse. In 2022, USTR will look to the TPF to tackle issues that include the relationship between trade, labour, and the environment, it said. In November 2021, the two countries re-launched the United States-India Trade Policy Forum (TPF), which is the principal bilateral forum for discussing trade and investment issues affecting the two countries. During the TPF meeting, the United States and India had exchanged views on a broad range of trade concerns and issued a joint statement that highlighted the resolution of certain specific trade concerns and identified areas for future engagement through the TPF technical-level working groups on agricultural goods, non-agricultural goods, services and investment and intellectual property. Source: PTI

European gas futures surge 30% as Russia threatens to cut flows

European gas futures jumped as much as 32% after Russia threatened to cut natural gas supplies to Europe via the existing Nord Stream pipeline.

In a further deterioration relations between Moscow and the European Union, Russia threatened to halt gas flowing along the pipeline to Germany. The warning is part of Russia's response to international sanctions imposed on the country following its invasion of Ukraine. No decision has been taken yet, according to Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak.

Gas prices surged after climbing as much as 79% on Monday in the most volatile trading conditions markets in Europe have ever seen. Nord Stream, the biggest route for Russia's gas supplies to Europe, shipped 59 billion cubic meters of gas last year -- around 40% of the nation's exports to the continent.

Europe's reliance on Russian energy has been a key factor in efforts by the continent's leaders to agree on how to respond to the invasion of Ukraine. Last month, Berlin shelved the \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, and European Union officials say they're working on a plan that could cut the bloc's import needs from Russia by almost 80% this year.

Novak, who is also in charge of energy affairs, said Russia has information about possible action being planned against the Ukrainian gas transport system, according to Interfax news agency.

Source: 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 - MAR 14 - MAR 20, 2022



Aries

Ganesha says, your week will be devoted to academic activities dear Aries. In terms of your professional prospects, you will have a clear picture of your vision and objective. This week, you will boldly make important changes in your life. Someone will try to modify your ideas for their gain due to Shani's negative effect, and you will be led by the small benefit you see. Make sure you're not being duped. Your partner and you are likely to travel a lot this week. People in long-distance relationships will face minor setbacks as they will have a lot on their plate in terms of family obligations. Your health will not need any special kind of attention this week but, it would be advisable that you keep a safe distance from cold food.



Taurus

This week, you're likely to discover a new and untapped reservoir of power within yourself. You'll realize that you don't need or expect any outside assistance in coping with the troubles you've been having. This week, you'll be concerned about the health of someone you care about. You may also feel a bit bewildered. This week, you'll have to juggle a lot of things at once, but don't worry, you'll be OK. You have been waiting for a long to have a meaningful conversation with someone in front of whom you can empty your heart. With the blessings of Lord Venus in your Zodiac, this week will bring you exactly those moments of happiness. In the latter half of the week, your health might suffer a little bit. If you are already a patient of blood pressure, then you must keep yourself in an easy and safe environment.



Gemini

This week, you'll give someone important to you some sound advice, which will be gratefully received. This week, you're in a very compassionate and friendly disposition. The blessings of Lord Sun will relieve all your troubles this week. You won't be able to create new alliances this week, which will be necessary. Make certain that you don't take anything for granted., you are a very kind and sensitive person but in a few days you have turned into a cold-hearted and hard towards everything. This week, you will be more of yourself as your partner will help you become that sensitive person again. You will heal yourself mentally this week. Your physical health will also stay in good shape.



Cancer

A financial windfall might make you and your family members joyful. Your life will take a favorable turn this week. You'll be able to locate the type of property you're looking for. It's an excellent week to make some changes to the house. Someone will cast an evil eye on your children because of their colorful temperament, which will be observed by a negative individual. You must keep your kids away from social gatherings. Although you have not been expecting a lot on your romantic fronts, your 7th house looks very strong this week. You can expect discussions regarding marriage or engagement. Singles have a good chance of finding the right match. Your health will suffer a step back as you will face stomach-related problems.



Leo

You will be able to take full use of all that is available to you. The judgments you made by believing your intuition will enhance your legal and economic lives. Possibilities will undoubtedly present themselves in the second half of the week. Your kind nature will win the heart of someone and this will become the first step towards your new relationship. This week, things will turn out very adventurous in terms of love. You will sink in very good health for sure.



Virgo

This week, your dilemma untangling skills will improve. A visit from close relatives or acquaintances will brighten your week. Your self-confidence will be increased, allowing you to take on new initiatives at work. This week, your tension may present itself in irritation, which may have an impact on your interactions with others. Your love life was a little bit messy for a long but your partner has been keeping you in their prayers. As a negative effect of Rahu will diminish from your Zodiac, your love life will take positive turns. Your health will also improve overall this week. Avoid oily and spicy food throughout the week.



Libra

You will get the acknowledgments that were previously deferred this week. You'll be gifted with a burst of creative energy. This week, you will feel centered for the first time in a long time, so concentrate on key tasks. Even if you try to share positive in the first part of the week, many will not embrace guidance. Don't let this get the best of you.

Also, the temporary joys you have this week will cost you a lot in the long run, so be cautious. This week, your relationship will suffer a little. Due to Rahu's passage through your zodiac, your marriage will face difficulties. You'll be alright in terms of health.



Scorpio

You'll be preoccupied with individual and career responsibilities. You'll get compliments on this as well. People will think of you as someone who can deal with a lot of pressure and stress. Your words and deeds will be out of sync, giving the impression that you are unable to be the man of your words. Make sure you're in charge of your words. You'll be able to ensure that your emotions are in order. This week, love will grow in your life as well. If your marriage has been in trouble, your partner will give it another opportunity this week. You'll be alright in terms of health.



Sagittarius

This week will be packed with fresh and interesting encounters for you. You'll discover things you've always wanted to know. This week, you'll consider shifting your job path, which will benefit you in the long term. This week, you will succumb to peer temptation, which will stymie your development. Even your closest friends should not have an undue impact on you. Venus will transition into a malevolent position in the latter half of the week, so you and your companion are likely to have a minor spat. This week, the back discomfort you've had for a long time will go away, and your health will strengthen.



Capricorn

This week, your days will offer you rapid progress. You will be able to make significant advancements. The second half of the week will ensure that the promises individuals made to you are kept. You're probably going to make the error of jumping to conclusions based on erroneous assumptions. Make sure you don't do it during the week's second half. You're probably going to become involved with someone you have known for a long. you will create space for someone in their heart. your health will be a matter of concern for you as you might suffer from periodic headaches.

CONTD ON PAGE 27

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MAR 14 - MAR 20, 2022

March 14

Ganesha says positive energies will support you more and more as the day goes by today. Today is kind of an easy breezy day for you and you will relax well today. You might feel vulnerable in a negative way at the beginning of the day as you meet a lot of people today but you'll soon realize that this was for the best as your social life has been stuck at the same stage for a while now and it will move forward today.

March 15

Ganesha says this is a good day. An old friend may pay a surprise visit and make you feel happy and sentimental. You will spend your day with your family today. You may meet a new person in the office, who may inspire you to work in new techniques. You may get gifts or a pleasant surprise from unexpected people. You may get blessings from the elders for your great work today as well.

March 16

Ganesha says this is a wonderful day and you will achieve a lot on a professional and personal front. You are going to be in an easy-going mood

today. Some family members may get together, so be ready to enjoy the day with your friends and family today. You will also be appreciated by your boss. You will be able to finish your work early today. Your partner may surprise you with lots of gifts.

March 17

Ganesha says you will be on the correct path in terms of your career today and your love life today. You will work very hard to impress the decision-makers at work as well as your partner today by bringing in gifts and being very diligent and caring. Great financial security is in your cards today which will keep you satisfied and happy throughout the day. You need to be more analytical about making investments now as managing the funds that you receive today will make a significant difference in your life.

March 18

Ganesha says today will be an exciting day for you. Your partner will be very content and happy with your behavior today. The possibility of taking the next step in your relationship is quite high today. Your partner is most likely to plan the

proposal considering how happy and content they are with you today. Taking time to relax and relish will prove beneficial.

March 19

Ganesha says your energies will be height today, which is rare for your sign. It is a good day for you to relax, reflect and enjoy. If you're single you'll come across many new love interests. If you're in a relationship you will feel blessed to have your partner today. As they will be your biggest support system through all thick and thin.

March 20

Ganesha says you need to make sure your love, care, time and attention is directed towards your friends and family today. A lot of success in terms of finances and fame and great health is on your way today. You will need to let your partner breakthrough your emotional barriers for you to reciprocate your partner's feelings, today are a great day for you to do that. Your genuineness will make your partner fall head over heels in love with you.

CONTD FROM PAGE 26



Aquarius

This week, you'll get a perfect 10 in your field of employment. This week, you'll need to be adaptable since you'll be dealing with diverse views. You'll be able to stick to the schedule you've set for this week. Being impulsive will have a detrimental impact on your life. In the first part of this week, don't react too hastily and let individuals learn their lessons the hard way. If you're married, you can find yourself in hot water if you're too impetuous with your partner. This week, your health will be OK; nevertheless, prevent traveling on Thursday and Friday.



Pisces

Greetings Pisces! You'll be in the inclination to reconcile old alliances this week, which will provide somewhat peace into your life. It's a lucky week for you to be receiving new assets. Above this week, you may find yourself squandering your valuable energies on less vital matters. Make sure you're just making reasonable judgments. This week, your connection will blossom. You will be able to rely on your spouse for assistance, and their encouragement will enable you to succeed. This week, your health will be OK. In the second half of the week, your children may need to be extra cautious about their health.

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Amalaki Ekadashi

Phalguna Shukla Paksha Ekadashi is known as Amalaki Ekadashi. Amalaki Ekadashi falls between Maha Shivaratri and Holi. Currently it is observed in month of February or March in English calendar.

Parana means breaking the fast. Ekadashi Parana is done after sunrise on next day of Ekadashi fast. It is necessary to do Parana within Dwadashi Tithi unless Dwadashi is over before sunrise. Not doing Parana within Dwadashi is similar to an offence.

This year, Amalaki Ekadashi falls on March 14 Monday.

Parana should not be done during Hari Vasara. One should wait for Hari Vasara to get over before breaking the fast. Hari Vasara is first one fourth duration of Dwadashi Tithi. The most preferred time to break the fast is Pratahkal. One should avoid breaking the fast during Madhyahna. If due to some reasons one is not able to break the fast during Pratahkal then one should do it after Madhyahna.

At times Ekadashi fasting is suggested on two consecutive days. It is advised that Smartha with family should observe fasting on first day only. The alternate Ekadashi fasting, which is the second one, is suggested for Sanyasis, widows and for those who want Moksha. When alternate Ekadashi fasting is suggested for Smartha it coincides with Vaishnava Ekadashi fasting day.

Ekadashi fasting on both days is suggested for staunch devotees who seek for love and affection of Lord Vishnu.

Significance of Amalaki Ekadashi

Amalaki Ekadashi is a sacred fasting day for Hindus. It is believed that by observing this Ekadashi, the person reaches to the abode of Lord Vishnu, 'Vaikunth'. The rituals and significance of Amalaki ekadashi is mentioned in the 'Brahmanda Purana' and was also narrated by Saint 'Valmiki'. There are innumerable stories and folk tales in the Hindu Puranas that speak of the greatness of the Amalaki Ekadashi fast. This day is known to be very auspicious and is marked with special ritual and prayers. Even the day after Amalaki Ekadashi, recognized as 'Govinda Dwadashi' is believed to be highly fortunate.

The day of Amalaki Ekadashi is considered more significant owing to its relation to other Hindu festivals. This ekadashi falls between Maha Shivratri and Holi. The worshipping of amla tree on this day is a symbolic representation of the elaborate Hinduism practice. During this occasion, Goddess Lakshmi is also worshipped as She is known to be an omnipresent deity. It is also a widespread belief that Lord Krishna with His consort, Goddess Radha also resides near the tree. Devotees worship amla tree to gain good health and wealth.

Legend

According to one of the inscriptions, King Chitraserana along with his followers had observed the fast on Amlaki Ekadashi. During one of his hunting experiences, the king got captured by a group of demons. However, they were successfully destroyed after a divine power emerged from the body of King Chitraserana. After getting back the consciousness, the king learned that it was because of the Amalaki Ekadashi Vrat that he got protected.



Celebration and Rituals

After bathing in the river, devotees visit the temple of Lord Vishnu. They offer a pot filled with water, as well as a fine canopy, sandalwood, roli, flowers, diyas and aromatic incense to Amla tree. Brahmins are served with meals beneath the Amalaki tree. Most devotees observe a fast on this day and also perform all-night vigil, fasting, and worship Lord Vishnu. Some devotees observe a partial fast, abstaining from food made of rice and grains.

- On the day of Amalaki Ekadashi, the devotees wake up at sunrise and get over with their morning rituals. They then worship Lord Vishnu and the sacred amla tree. A 'sankalp' is taken with sesame seeds and coins with the motive to attain moksha after death. After worshipping Lord Vishnu, the devotees pray to the Amalaka tree. They offer water, sandalwood, roli, chawal, flowers and incense sticks to the sacred tree. Following this the devotees offer food to a Brahmin, underneath the Amalaki tree. If the amla tree is unavailable, then the sacred Tulsi tree can be worshipped.
- On this day, the devotees observe a strict fast all day long and only food made from amla can be eaten. Some devotees also observe partial fast by simply avoiding food made from grains and rice. The observer of this vrat should also listen to the Amalaki Ekadashi vrat katha after finishing the puja rituals.

- The devotees stay awake all night on the day of Amalaki Ekadashi and chant the bhajans and rhymes in the name of Lord Vishnu.

Know why the Amla tree is worshipped

- Devotees of Lord Vishnu who observe Ekadashi fast believe that Amla tree is sacred. According to legends, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Damodara or Krishna and Radha are said to reside near the tree.
- The berries of the Amla tree are known for their great medicinal value and is widely used in Ayurvedic preparations. Amla tops the list of superfoods today as it is rich in Vitamin C, which boosts immunity. People who worship the Amala tree also prepare food items out of Amla on this day.
- People who observe Amalaki Ekadashi usually wake up early and take a bath before sunrise. Devotees of Lord Vishnu fast on Ekadashi to seek his blessings. A strict fast is an important part of Ekadashi and people eat the next day only after sunrise. Grains and cereals are not allowed during Ekadashi fast but many who are working have fruits and juices in the afternoon.
- People read the Ekadashi Vrat Katha around an Amla tree and offer coconut and flowers. After the puja, Ekadashi aarti is performed.



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"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"
 "If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"
 "Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."

contd from page 1

BJP retains power in 4 States; AAP...

retain power in Manipur and Goa - three States where its main rival was the Congress. "This is a seal of approval by the people for the BJP's pro-poor, proactive governance," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the party headquarters on Thursday, March 10 evening. "We will learn from this," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi posted on Twitter.

In U.P., the Samajwadi Party doubled its 2017 tally but fell far short of a majority, in the second consecutive Assembly election defeat under the leadership of Akhilesh Yadav, who did not comment on the results. His call for a coalition of Ambedkarites and Samajwadis - a euphemism for Dalits and Other Backward Classes - had takers as the increase in SP's vote share shows, but nowhere enough to dislodge the BJP. Bolstered by Hindutva, welfarism, and expansive accommodation of OBCs and Dalits, the BJP stayed ahead of the SP across all regions of the State.

Swami Prasad Maurya, an OBC leader who switched from the BJP to the SP on the eve of the elections lost his own seat; in west U.P., the SP's alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal dented the BJP but only marginally. "This is a victory of nationalism and good governance," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath told an ecstatic crowd at the party office in Lucknow, concluding his speech with calls of "Jai Shriram".

In Punjab, the AAP harnessed the resentment against the Congress and the Akali Dal that have been alternating in power, to build a decisive momentum that won it 92 of the 117 seats in the State. The Congress won 18 and the BJP two, which is as many as what the Congress won in U.P. AAP with 92 seats has created history as never before has a single party in Punjab won as many seats. The highest number of 93 seats was once won by the coalition of SAD and BJP.

"This is a revolution," AAP founder and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said. "First this revolution happened in Delhi, then in Punjab and it will now happen all over country," he said.

Party leader Raghav Chadha said Mr. Kejriwal would become the Prime Minister of the country one day. The AAP will have two Chief Ministers now- one in Delhi and another in Punjab which is as many as what the Congress has.

The Congress's last minute efforts to rescue its fortunes in Punjab, which elected one-fifths of its Lok Sabha members, through a leadership change that brought Charanjit Singh Channi at the helm did not bear fruit. The party's halfhearted attempt to profit from his Dalit identity appears to have alienated dominant social groups such as Jatt Sikhs. Mr. Channi lost both seats that he contested.

The father-son duo that helms the SAD - Sukhbir Singh Badal and Prakash Singh Badal - both former CMs, lost their seats, even as the party finished with just four seats in its second consecutive rout. Mr. Modi said the voters have punished dynastic parties, referring to the setbacks to the SP, RLD, SAD and the Congress, all controlled by particular families for generations. (With inputs from agencies)

US VP Harris in Poland calls for probe...

Speaking alongside Polish President Andrzej Duda at a press conference in Warsaw, where she is demonstrating US support for NATO's eastern flank allies, Harris expressed outrage over the bombing Wednesday, March 9, of the maternity hospital and scenes of bloodied pregnant women being evacuated, as well as other attacks on civilians. She stopped short of directly accusing Russia of having committed war

crimes.

"Absolutely there should be an investigation and we should all be watching, and I have no question that the eyes of the world are on this war and what Russia has done in terms of this aggression and these atrocities," she told a news conference. Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a special military operation to disarm its neighbor. (With input from agencies)

India-US partnership will be an...

Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue," he said. Through these measures, the two countries seek to mobilize finance and accelerate clean energy deployment, demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies and build capacities, he added.

As India transitions to gas-based fuels, it is now the fifth largest market for US LNG, he said, adding that through the India-US Low Emissions Gas Task Force, industries of both countries have forged commercial partnerships.

"India and the US are exploring collaboration in advanced high-efficiency coal technologies with low-to-zero emissions through carbon capture, utilization and storage. Research and development cooperation for solar cell manufacturing and storage is in progress," he said.

Sandhu wrote that the US financial institutions have announced credit guarantees for India's small and medium enterprise (SME) sector to deploy rooftop solar capacity.

"The two countries have also launched the India-US Hydrogen Task Force looking at issues ranging from sustainable production of hydrogen to its safe deployment. Use of artificial intelligence models in integrating renewable energy and stabilizing power grids offers yet another avenue for cooperation," he wrote.

Over the past few years, green growth and combating climate change has emerged as one of the core pillars of the India-US relationship.

India has set for itself ambitious clean and renewable energy goals. In terms of installed capacity, India is the 4th largest in renewable energy; 4th largest in wind power; and 5th largest in solar power.

It has taken lead at international level in the crusade against climate change through its contribution in setting up the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

During his tenure here, Sandhu has made it one of the five pillars of India US engagement. Among the top few he has held meetings on this issue, including CEOs of First Solar, Vinmar international and ExxonMobil India.

He has held separate meetings with top officials of the Biden administration including Under Secretary of Energy Geraldine Richmond; Under Secretary of State for Energy Jose Fernandez; and Deputy Secretary of Energy David Turk. Some Congress members with whom clean energy was a key point of discussion during his meeting include Scott Peters, Ted Deutch, Pramila Jayapal, Ted Lieu, Andy Kim, and Grace Meng. (Source: PTI)

Congress Clears \$1.5 Trillion...

September, includes generous spending on domestic programs long prioritized by Democrats and military investments championed by Republicans.

Mr. Biden was expected to quickly sign the measure, which marked the first time since he took office and

Democrats won unified control of Congress that they have been able to enact a spending bill that reflects their priorities, including investing in climate resilience, public assistance programs and unlocking aid for projects contained in the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure law.

In remarks on the Senate floor, Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the majority leader, called it "the strongest, boldest and most significant government funding package we've seen in a very long time."

But to clear the way for passage, Democrats had to drop some priorities, most notably a White House request for more pandemic aid. Republicans objected to spending any new federal money on the coronavirus response, prompting Democrats first to whittle down the size of that package, and then to claw back funding from existing aid programs, including money for state governments, to pay for it.

But that strategy infuriated rank-and-file Democrats and governors in both parties, who balked at yanking promised state assistance, and leaders were forced to strip the aid from the package. They vowed to try again to pass it in the coming days, but Republican support was unclear, leaving in doubt the fate of the administration's new pandemic plan.

Republicans claimed credit for prodding Democrats to accept a \$42 billion increase in military spending, bringing the total this year to \$782 billion.

The negotiations, said Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the minority leader, "put us Republicans in the surreal position of having to push a commander in chief's party into giving his own commanders the funding they need." "But over many Democrats' objections, Republicans made sure this deal gets the job done for our armed forces," he said.

Democrats hailed the \$46 billion increase they secured for domestic programs, calling the \$730 billion total the largest investment in four years.

"This bill invests in future prosperity, in our health, and reduces everyday costs for millions of Americans, such as childcare, a college education, and heating and cooling costs," said Senator Patrick J. Leahy, the Vermont Democrat who leads the Appropriations Committee.

The last-minute scuffles reflected the arduous negotiations over the package, which dragged out more than five months past the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year that it is supposed to fund. To secure Republican support, Democrats agreed to go above the administration's request for Pentagon spending and maintain a series of longstanding restrictions on federal money that they had hoped to remove, including the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal funding for most abortions.

The package provides \$145 billion to invest in new aircraft, ships and other vehicles, including 13 new Navy vessels, a dozen F/A-18 Super Hornets and 85 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. It also provides a 2.7 percent pay raise for all 2.1 million uniformed service members as well as the approximately 750,000 civilian employees in the Defense Department.

Even without the emergency aid package, Democrats secured additional funds for pandemic preparedness. That includes \$745 million, an increase of \$148 million, for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, and \$845 million, an increase of \$140 million, for the Strategic National Stockpile, an emergency medical reserve intended to guard against infectious disease and bioterrorism threats.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Unexplored North Bengal destinations

For most, when it comes to West Bengal, Kolkata and Darjeeling are the two obvious and sometimes the only destinations. And while Kolkata's rich heritage, history in every corner, thriving culture, and lip-smacking street food, and Darjeeling's impeccable views of the Kanchenjunga and the inimitable thukpa deserve to be explored, so do its other parts. In the north of Bengal itself, there's a cornucopia of little hidden gems of architecture, culture, nature, wildlife, tribal villages, and much more.

Here's drawing some much-needed attention to these unexplored North Bengal travel destinations:

Bindu

The last hamlet of West Bengal located 127 km from Siliguri, Bindu lies in the lap of India and Bhutan's mountains, perched atop 2000 ft. The journey to Bindu, known locally for its cardamom production, will warm you up for the lush greenery and the beauty of the nearby meandering river Jaldhaka. The surrounding forests are perfect for trekking and hiking. You can also visit the tribal village of Godak, 1 km before which is the cardamom curing facility said to produce some of the best in the country.

Located in the Dooars region of North Bengal, Raimatang is a forest village located amid the Buxa Tiger Reserve and surrounded by tea plantations and hills. Raimatang is a favourite among wildlife lovers who can not only take the jungle safari at the tiger reserve but also watch the many bird species that visit this village. You can explore gentle hiking in the surrounding hills.

Rangaroon Tea Estate

Just 16 km from the Darjeeling town is a quaint, sleepy hamlet of Rangaroon which is home to the Rangaroon Tea Estate. There is only one homestay in this village that commands stunning views of Darjeeling and the Kanchenjunga range in case you want to skip Darjeeling's rush but not the majestic views.



Tabakoshi

Eastern Himalayas are all about spending time in laze, seeping in the surrounding beauty of the towering mountain ranges, the waterfalls, rivers, and of course, the tea plantations. One such place is Tabakoshi in Mirik which is one of the more popular destinations for tourists in Darjeeling. But just 8 km from the Gopaldhara tea estate, you can find solitude and serenity at Tabakoshi. Enjoy the produce of the plantation, camp by the river, and socialise with the locals and enjoy their warm hospitality.

Jhalong

Jhalong is situated on the Indo-Bhutan border, along the Jaldhaka river. About

99 km from Siliguri, Jhalong is apt for those who long spend time in solitude, close to nature, uninterrupted by the fast pace of life. The Jaldhaka dam near Jhalong invites many bird species like Crested Kingfisher, Brown Dipper, Salty-backed Forktail, Little Forktail, and more.

Odlabari

About 38 km from New Jalpaiguri is a village nestled between the Leesh and Chel Odlabari rivers, just 4 km from the foothills of the Himalayas. While Odlabari itself is slow-paced and mundane, the surrounding Kathambari forest and Patharjhora tea estate show a lot of promise. Baikunthapur, 5 km from

Odlabari, is where Lord Krishna is said to have hidden with Queen Rukmani.

Suntalekhola

Located on south-eastern fringe of the Neora Valley National park is Suntalekhola, also referred to as the 'land of oranges'. It is one of the least explored but most promising North Bengal destinations. The national park has an abundance of trekking trails for adventure enthusiasts, especially Mouchuki, 6 km from Suntalekhola. The astounding landscape that reveals itself on the way to and in Suntalekhola is unparalleled with the Murti river and Eastern Himalayas' rich greenery.

Source: *The Indian Express*



History This Week Mar 11 to Mar 17

March 11

March 11, 1918 - The 'Spanish' influenza first reached America as 107 soldiers become sick at Fort Riley, Kansas. One quarter of the U.S. population eventually became ill from the deadly virus, resulting in 500,000 deaths. The death toll worldwide approached 22 million by the end of 1920.

March 11, 1941 - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S. troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland. "We must be the great arsenal of democracy," President Roosevelt declared concerning the fight against Hitler's Germany. The initial appropriation was \$7 Billion, but by 1946 the figure reached \$50 Billion in aid from the U.S. to its Allies.



Harold Wilson

Birthdays - British prime minister and statesman Harold Wilson (1916-1995) was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. As a young boy he once posed for a photo in front of 10 Downing Street, the residence he occupied 40 years later as head of the Labor government.

March 12

March 12, 1609 - The island of Bermuda was colonized by the British after a ship on its way to Virginia was wrecked on the reefs.

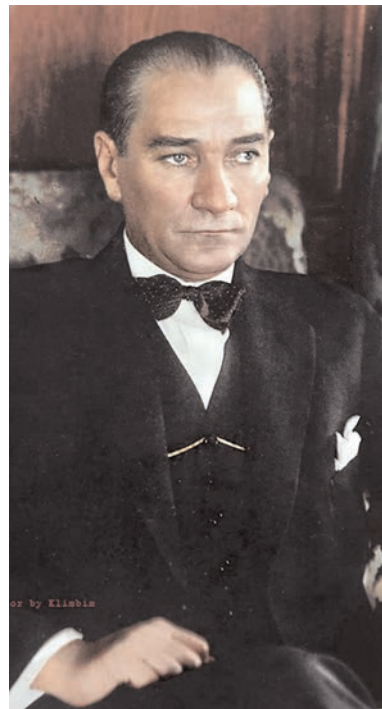
March 12, 1888 - The Great Blizzard of '88 struck the northeastern U.S. The storm lasted 36 hours with snowfall totaling over 40 inches in New York City where over 400 persons died from the surprise storm.

March 12, 1938 - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.

March 12, 1994 - The Church of

England ordained 32 women as its first female priests. In protest, 700 male clergy members and thousands of church members left the church and joined the Roman Catholic Church which does not allow women priests.

March 12, 1999 - Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic became full-fledged members of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) less than ten years after exchanging communist rule for democracy and ending their Cold War military alliances with Soviet Russia.

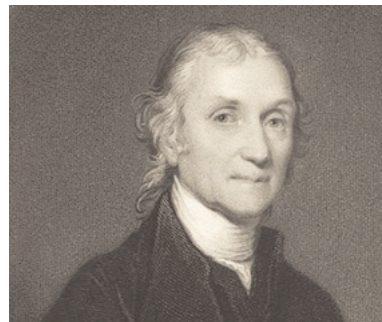


Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

Birthdays - The founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) was born in Salonika, Greece. Following World War I, he led the Turkish revolution and became Turkey's first president.

March 13

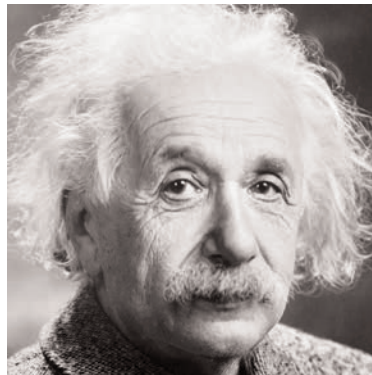
March 13, 1943 - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.



Joseph Priestly

Birthdays - Scientist and clergyman Joseph Priestly (1733-1804) was born in Yorkshire, England. He discovered oxygen and advanced the religious theory of Unitarianism.

March 14



Albert Einstein

Birthdays - Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was born in Ulm, Germany. His theory of relativity led to new ways of thinking about time, space, matter and energy. He received a Nobel Prize in 1921 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1933 where he was an outspoken critic of Nazi Germany. Believing the Nazis might develop an atomic bomb, he warned President Roosevelt and urged the development of the U.S. Atomic bomb.



Lucy Hobbs

Birthdays - The first female dentist, Lucy Hobbs (1833-1910) was born in New York state. She received her degree in 1866 from the Ohio College of Dental Surgery and was a women's rights advocate.

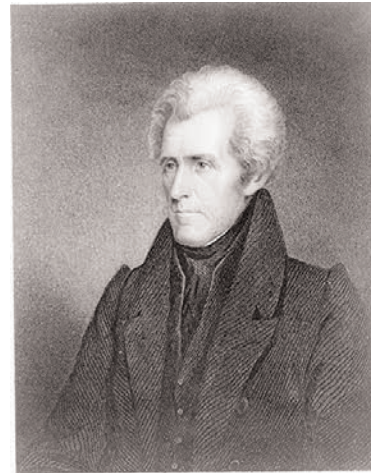
March 15



Julius Caesar

March 15, 44 B.C. - Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate chamber in Rome by Brutus and fellow conspirators. After first trying to defend himself against the murderous onslaught, Caesar saw Brutus with a knife and asked "Et tu, Brute?" (You too, Brutus?) Caesar then gave up the struggle and was stabbed to death.

Birthdays - Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) the 7th U.S. President was born in a log cabin in



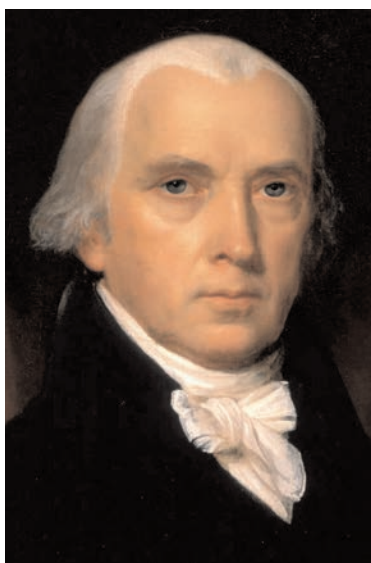
Andrew Jackson

Waxhaw, South Carolina. As a boy he volunteered to serve in the American Revolution. Captured by the British, he refused an order to clean an officer's boots and was slashed by his sword. Jackson later gained fame as a hero during the War of 1812. In politics he helped form the new Democratic Party and became the first man from an impoverished background to be elected President, serving from 1829 to 1837.<

March 16

March 16, 1968 - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.

March 16, 1968 - New York Senator Robert Kennedy announced his intention to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.



James Madison

Birthdays - James Madison (1751-1836) the 4th U.S. President was born in Port Conway, Virginia. He played an

important role in the formation of the new U.S. Constitution following the American Revolutionary War. During the War of 1812, President Madison was forced to flee Washington, D.C. while the British attacked and burned the White House and other important public buildings.

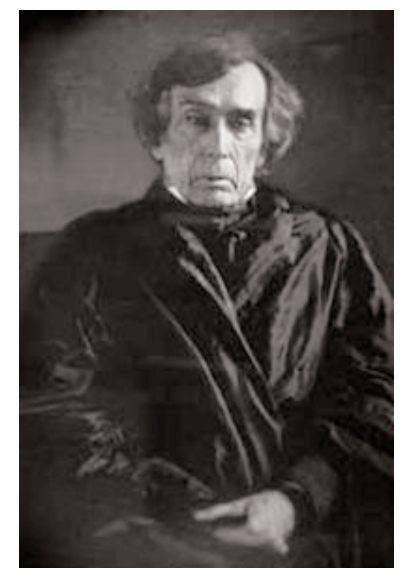
March 17



Saint Patrick

March 17th - Celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day commemorating the patron saint of Ireland.

March 17, 1776 - Early in the American Revolutionary War the British completed their evacuation of Boston following a successful siege conducted by Patriots. The event is still commemorated in Boston as Evacuation Day.



Roger B. Taney

Birthdays - U.S. Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney (1777-1864) was born in Calvert County, Maryland. He became the 5th Chief Justice in 1836, best known for the Dred Scott decision.



SHANE WARNE'S BODY ARRIVES IN MELBOURNE

Late Australian spin legend Shane Warne's body arrived at his home city Melbourne from Bangkok in a private jet on Thursday, March 10, almost a week after his shock death due to a suspected heart attack.

Warne's body was flown to Melbourne in a coffin wrapped in the Australian flag. The private jet landed at around 8:30pm local time. He will be given a state funeral on March 30 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"A private jet carrying the Australian cricket legend's body touched down at Essendon Fields Airport in Melbourne at around 8.30pm on Thursday night. The charter flight was moved into a private hangar," new.com.au' reported.

"Fans and friends, including Warne's personal assistant Helen Nolan, were at the airport to greet the private plane," the report added.

Warne, who is credited with reviving the art of leg-spin bowling by taking 708 wickets in 145 Tests in an illustrious career spanning 15 years, died at the age of 52 in Koh Samui, Thailand on March 4. The news of his death sent shock waves across the cricket fraternity.

Following his demise, Warne's body had been taken to the mainland city of Surat Thani and then to the capital city of Bangkok. An autopsy confirmed he died of natural causes following a suspected heart attack and there was no foul play involved. His family will hold a private funeral before the public service, which is expected to have an attendance of over one lakh people. Source: PTI

SINDHU, SAINA CRASH OUT OF GERMAN OPEN

World championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the men's singles quarterfinals but PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal crashed out of the women's competition following second-round losses in the German Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Thursday. Srikanth, a former world no 1 and seeded eighth here, prevailed 21-16 21-23 21-18 over China's Lu Guang Zu in a second round match.

He will next face Olympic champion and top seed Viktor Axelsen of Denmark, who beat France's Toma Junior Popov 21-17 21-10 in another match.

The seventh seeded Sindhu, a 2019 World Champion, however, suffered a shock 14-21 21-15 14-21 loss against China's Zhang Yi Man in 55 minutes in the women's singles second round.

Saina, who has been struggling with fitness issues, also proved no match against eighth seeded Thai Ratchanon Intanon, going down 10-21 15-21 in a lopsided contest.

Ravindra Jadeja is No. 1 Test all-rounder in world

DUBAI (TIP)

India's Ravindra Jadeja climbed to the top spot in the ICC Test rankings for all-rounders today after his match-winning performance against Sri Lanka in the opening Test in Mohali.

"Ravindra Jadeja's performance at India's recent Test win against Sri Lanka in Mohali has catapulted him to the No. 1 position in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's Test Player Rankings," the ICC said in a statement.

His unbeaten 175 lifted him up to 17 places from 54th to 37th with the bat and he added nine wickets to move up to 17th with the ball.

His all-round contribution was enough for him to regain the top all-rounder spot from Jason Holder, who had held the position since February 2021.

Jadeja's only previous time on top was in August 2017, when he spent a week at No. 1.

Jadeja was named the Player of the Match for his show against Sri Lanka in Mohali, where India triumphed under three days by an innings and 222 runs.

In the same list, Ravichandran Ashwin dropped a rung to third while Axar Patel was the next best Indian at 14th, after going down two positions. Patel did not play the Mohali Test due to an injury.

Among the batters, Virat Kohli rose two spots to be fifth, followed by skipper Rohit Sharma.

Rishabh Pant, who impressed with an explosive 96-run knock, entered the top-10 at 10th after gaining one spot.

Australian Marnus Labuschagne occupied the top spot.

In the bowlers' chart, Ashwin was static at second, while Jasprit Bumrah remained at 10th. Pat Cummins led the pack, continuing his reign at the top.

Source: PTI



Ravindra Jadeja's unbeaten 175 lifted him up to 17 places from 54th to 37th with the bat and he added nine wickets to move up to 17th with the ball.

'Mankading' moved to 'run out' from 'unfair play', use of saliva on ball banned

LONDON (TIP): Custodian of cricket laws, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), has decided to move the law relating to run-outs at non-striker's end from its "unfair play" section besides completely banning the use of saliva to shine the ball in amendments to its 2022 code that will come into effect in October.

Run-outs at non-striker's end when batters back up too far have often triggered heated debates on the spirit of the game and several players like India's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin have advocated for it as a fair mode of dismissal.

"Law 41.16 – running out the non-

striker – has been moved from Law 41 (Unfair play) to Law 38 (Run out). The wording of the Law remains the same," the MCC said in a media statement late on Tuesday.

It was in 1948 when the dismissal first came to be known.

Indian legend Vinoo Mankad ran out Australian wicketkeeper Bill Brown at the non-striker's end after duly warning him for backing up too far.

The Australian media dubbed it as 'Mankading', a name that stuck in popular parlance but was vehemently opposed by legends like Sunil Gavaskar for being "disrespectful" towards Mankad.

The MCC also said that using saliva to shine the ball would be treated as an unfair practice.

Premier League: Focused Chelsea battle to 3-1 win at lowly Norwich

Chelsea put their off-pitch worries to one side as they beat a plucky Norwich City side 3-1 to consolidate third place in the Premier League at Carrow Road on Thursday, March 10.

The players at Chelsea, whose Russian owner Roman Abramovich has been placed under sanctions by the British government, did not appear to let the controversy affect them as they swept aside struggling Norwich who look headed for relegation.

Chelsea took the lead after three minutes with a Trevoh Chalobah header and soon doubled the advantage when Mason Mount fired home before Kai Havertz wrapped up the win near the end. Norwich had pulled a goal back with a Teemu Pukki penalty.

Chelsea, whose fans sang Abramovich's name throughout the match, are on 56 points from 27 games and moved eight points clear of Arsenal, who are fourth but have two games in hand. Norwich stayed bottom on 17 points.



Chelsea future uncertain after sanctions against owner Roman Abramovich

European champions Chelsea are now effectively under the control of the British government after Russian owner Roman Abramovich was placed under sanctions on Thursday. Abramovich, who had been under scrutiny following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, had announced he was selling the Premier

League club last week. Yet that process is now on hold, leaving the club, ranked by Forbes as the seventh most valuable in world soccer at \$3.2 billion, in a state of limbo. The Russian bought the West London team in 2003 for a reported 140 million pounds (\$184 million) and his investment contributed hugely to the most successful era in the team's history as they won five Premier League titles, five FA Cups and the Champions League twice. His purchase of the club helped transform the landscape of English football with Chelsea breaking the stranglehold of Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool.

Abramovich had funded Chelsea via 1.5 billion pounds in total loans through Fordstam Limited, the entity through which he owns the club. In their most recent accounts in December, Chelsea who reported losses of 145.6 million pounds, said they were "reliant on Fordstam Limited for its continued financial support".

Mayor Adams announces significant quality-of-life improvements, new affordable homeownership opportunities in Southeast Queens

SOUTH JAMAICA, NY -- New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced milestones in two major projects that will improve infrastructure and quality of life, while tackling the affordable housing crisis in Southeast Queens. Mayor Adams and New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams - both of whom grew up in the area - celebrated the completion of a \$50 million project delivering more than six miles of new sewers and water mains to alleviate flooding of homes and streets in Rochdale under budget. They also kicked off construction of "Habitat Net Zero," a project that will turn 13 dilapidated homes previously owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) into 16 green homes for affordable homeownership.

"This community represented the promise of a better life for my family, and I am going to keep that promise for generations of New Yorkers," said Mayor Adams. "Government has ignored this community for too long, denying them their fair share of investments and services - that ends in my administration. These projects will make life better for the residents of Southeast Queens today and those who will be able to move here in the future, and I'm proud to say that this is just the beginning."

"For too long, Southeast Queens has endured systemic disinvestment and neglect, resulting in widening disparities that persist today," said Council Speaker Adams. "With the completion of the \$49.3 million water infrastructure project in Rochdale and the start of construction for Habitat Net Zero - a project to deliver new affordable homeownership opportunities - our communities are seeing the investments and improvements that we have always deserved. I thank Mayor Adams, Habitat NYC, Interboro CLT, and all of the city agencies involved in making these projects possible."

"Ever since the residential development of Southeast Queens more than 50 years ago, neighbors have worried

about any threat of rain in the forecast, because there were no catch basins or sewers built to drain the roadways, resulting in chronic flooding and property damage," said Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi. "With a commitment of \$2.5 billion for a comprehensive drainage system, we are now correcting that past failure block by block, and I thank our teams at DEP, DDC, and DOT for completing this particular project under-budget."

"Today, we are strengthening our promise to provide families not just homes they can afford but homes they can be proud of," said Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. "By using every tool available and leaning on great partners - including Habitat for Humanity, which will change the lives of 16 families through their work here - once again, Queens and New York City will be a place where you can raise your family, regardless of income."

SEWER AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE



Prior to construction, stormwater would collect on 160th Street between 132nd Avenue and 134th Avenue for days (left). Since new streets and storm sewers were installed, the same location has remained clear (right).

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) have reached

substantial completion on a \$49.3 million project, bringing more than six miles of new sewers and water mains to Rochdale - improving street conditions, alleviating flooding, and upgrading infrastructure, while staying \$5.7 million under budget. Work began in March 2018 and took place on 78 individual blocks.

More than one mile (5,535 feet) of new storm sewers was added to the neighborhood, and an additional 2,265 feet of existing storm sewers were replaced. To better capture stormwater and direct it to the new storm sewers, 55 new catch basins were installed, and 53 old ones were replaced. The holding capacity of the local sewers was increased with the installation of three new underground chambers and replacement of an old one. During construction, 9,235 feet of sanitary sewers were replaced, and 595 feet of new sewers was installed. More than three miles (16,160 feet) of water mains were replaced to improve water infrastructure reliability.

As part of the final street restoration, 490,240 square feet of asphalt were laid down over a new concrete base. Throughout the project area, 65,840 square feet of sidewalk and 19,370 feet of curbs were reconstructed, and 890 square feet of new sidewalk and 995 feet of new curbs were added. The new curbs and sidewalks were graded to help guide stormwater to the area's new catch basins and ensure adequate street drainage during storms. Fire protection was enhanced with the installation of six new fire hydrants and the replacement of 33 existing ones. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act was improved with the installation of four new pedestrian ramps and the replacement of 158 existing ones.

The project is part of the ongoing \$2.5 billion Southeast Queens Initiative, in which the city will build a comprehensive drainage system, improve street conditions, and alleviate flooding in neighborhoods throughout Southeast Queens.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

IRS hiring more than 5,000 positions in Austin, Kansas City, Ogden



WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): To help serve taxpayers during this challenging tax season, the Internal Revenue Service, on March 10, announced that it is hiring more than 5,000 positions in its service processing centers located in Austin, Texas; Kansas City, Missouri; and Ogden, Utah.

These positions fall under a special hiring condition called direct-hire authority. New hires may expect to begin work within 30-45 days of their job offer.

"It's an exciting time to work for the Internal Revenue Service," said IRS Taxpayer Experience Officer and Wage and Investment Commissioner Ken Corbin. "Those who wish to work with customer service as their focus are encouraged to apply. This is gratifying work - as these newly hired individuals will process tax

returns and deliver refunds to the nation's taxpayers."

Available positions include temporary, term and permanent jobs. Many are entry-level clerk and tax examiner positions in the Wage and Investment Division. No prior tax experience is required.

"The IRS has opportunities for almost every profession, starting with these entry level positions. Starting here today can guide you to your future career, like it has done for me starting in high school," said Corbin.

The IRS offers competitive pay and benefits, on-the-job training, and opportunities for advancement. The pay range for these positions is from GS-02 to GS-09.

Virtual hiring events

The agency is hosting virtual direct hiring events on March 16, 23 and 30, where the IRS will review resumes and extend job offers to eligible applicants on the spot.

In-person events:

These events are open to the public. Interested job seekers are encouraged to bring their resumé and two forms of identification (i.e., state driver's license and/or state Identification card, birth certificate, U.S.

Passport, Military ID card or Social Security card). Qualified applicants may receive job offers at the in-person events.

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Location	Date and time
Kansas City IRS Campus 333 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108	March 18th, 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM (CT) March 19th, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM (CT)
Austin IRS Campus 1821 Directors Blvd Austin, TX 78744	March 24th, 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM (CT) March 25th, 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM (CT)
Ogden IRS Campus 1973 North Rulon White Blvd Ogden, UT 84404-5402	March 31st, 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM (MT) April 1st, 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM (MT)

Preregistration and social-distancing are required to attend the in-person job fairs. Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, mask wear is optional for these job fair sites. For complete details on the virtual events and to register to attend one of the in-person events, visit: jobs.irs.gov/events.

The IRS is an equal opportunity employer. All employees must be U.S. citizens, pass an FBI fingerprint check and tax compliance verification, and meet the mandatory education, training and experience qualification requirements.

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Message from Peter J. McDonnell, M.D. Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University, USA on the occasion of laying the foundation stone on December 10, 2020



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To know more about the work of Eye Foundation of America or to donate, visit www.eyefoundationofamerica.org

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