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WE WISH
READERS A
**HAPPY
VAISAKHI**

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Vaisakhi Celebrated at the Indian Consulate, New York

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The Indian Panorama organized a Vaisakhi celebration at the Indian consulate in New York on April 2. Incidentally, the day happened to be the first Navaratri - the sacred nine-day festival of the Hindus, and the first day of the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting for the Muslims. Vaisakhi is the day of creation of the Khalsa, popularly known as the Sikhs. It was on the day of Vaisakhi in 1699 when the Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh created a new order and called it Khalsa to which he gave a distinct identity.

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Bhangra is the manifestation of the Vaisakhi spirit

Photo / Jay Mandal-on assignment

President Biden approves \$800 million in new military assistance for Ukraine



"The steady supply of weapons the United States and its allies and partners have provided to Ukraine has been critical in sustaining its fight against the Russian invasion," says Joe Biden

File photo

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): In anticipation of a new Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine, President Joe Biden has approved an \$800 million package of military assistance, including additional helicopters and the first provision of American artillery, according to an Associated Press report.

The Ukrainians also will receive

armored personnel carriers, armored Humvees, naval drone vessels used in coastal defense, and gear and equipment used to protect soldiers in chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological attacks.

"This new package of assistance will contain many of the highly effective weapons systems we have already provided and new capabilities tailored to the wider assault we expect Russia to launch in eastern Ukraine," Mr. Biden said in a statement on April 13.

"The steady supply of weapons the United States and its allies and partners have provided to Ukraine has been critical in sustaining its fight against the Russian invasion," Mr. Biden added.

"It has helped ensure that [Russia President Vladimir] Putin failed in his initial war aims to conquer and control Ukraine. We cannot rest now."

Mr. Biden announced the aid after a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

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Ed Mangano sentenced to 12 years in prison; wife Linda gets 15 months in jail

CENTRAL ISLIP, NY (TIP): U.S. District Judge Joan Azrack on Thursday, April 14, sentenced former Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano to 12 years in prison in a bribery case that stretched several years and turned a once-popular Republican leader into a disbarred attorney and felon.

The Judge told the defendant: "Your crimes were motivated by greed....You have shown no remorse for your actions in the slightest."

"You were the Nassau County Executive and had tremendous political clout," she said. "You were the Nassau County Executive and you led by your corrupt example."

Citing recent threats to democracy, she said "democracy is a precious thing and crimes such as yours strike at the heart."

Mangano, 61, gave a lengthy defense of his actions and pleaded for leniency for his wife, Linda. He told the judge: "My life has been destroyed," adding that he was mentally "a wreck" and in "massive debt."

He called it a "sad and very difficult



Ex-Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano and wife Linda

File photo

day, horrific decade."

"I truly wish I had hindsight vision," he said. "I was so focused on running the county and dealing with NIFA..."

"We're not takers," he said, "I would not allow my office to be infiltrated by that."

CONTD ON PAGE 60

PM GREETES SIKHS ON KHALSA SAJNA DIVAS



The Khalsa Panth motivates countless people across the world, Modi tweeted. File photo

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, April 14, greeted people, particularly Sikhs, on the occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas, which marks the anniversary of the beginning of Khalsa Panth. The Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Shri Guru Gobind Singh had created Khalsa on the day of Vaisakhi in 1669 and given his followers a distinct identity. Modi tweeted, "Greetings to everyone, especially the Sikhs on the special occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas. The Khalsa Panth motivates countless people across the world. Inspired by it, Sikhs have distinguished themselves globally in diverse fields." (With inputs from PTI)



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COMMENT

Vaisakhi is a day to dedicate ourselves to the Mission of Guru Gobind Singh

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA



Here's a Day to Celebrate. Rarely is found a person in the history of mankind who has left such a deep imprint on the life and character of people within a brief span of 42 years. More than three hundred years later he still continues to move millions of men and women not only in India, the great subcontinent of Asia but the entire world.

From the five beloveds he baptized in 1699 today he has a following of close to 30 million and growing with the religion he gave enjoying fifth position among the world's most favored religions.

Guru Gobind Singh, the man I am referring to, was a unique person. The image of God he portrayed is exactly the same as painted by Guru Nanak Dev, the First Master of the Sikhs. The Mool Mantra of Jaap Sahib (a poetic work of Guru Gobind Singh) provides an interesting study from this point of view. The Almighty of Guru Gobind

Singh is the "True Lord of All, has neither distinguishing signs nor marks, no one can discern him, and beyond limitations and is manifested as the Light of the Spirit, the Lord God of a myriad Indras and is proclaimed the King of Kings, the Master of the three worlds- of gods, men and demons.

Guru Gobind Singh gave the message of equality and fraternity i.e., Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. He said, some are Hindus, some Turks, some are of Shia persuasion and some of Imam Shafai; mankind is all of one race.

Eminent historian Cunningham states that though the last apostle of the Sikhs did not see his own ends accomplished, he effectively raised the dormant energy of a vanquished people and filled them with the lofty, although fitful, longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the true adjunct of that purity of worship which had been preached by Guru Nanak.

Guru Gobind Singh not only patronized the Sikh institution of sacrifice, he actually sacrificed his whole family. Guru Gobind Singh is an ideal and should be an idol for the young generation of today. All pessimism will vanish and instead a robust optimism

will fill our youth should they imbibe the ideals and values of the Guru. Let them give up their weakness for intoxicants and have faith in their innate energy to countenance any challenge and overcome any obstacle. Let them follow the Guru's progressive humanism empowered with spirituality and sacrifice. Let them derive strength and courage from the Tenth Guru who expressed all optimism and positive attitude for the victory of the forces of righteousness over evil and repression.

Sikh culture and religion is a rich heritage to be protected and glorified. The mission of Guru Nanak / Guru Gobind Singh is cosmic. May the Almighty bestow His blessings on all human beings, particularly young generation of the Sikhs and fill them with tremendous strength and will to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. May the Lord Almighty rid the Sikh leaders of arrogance and drunkenness of power! May they learn to be meek, humble, caring, loving and giving, following the dictates of our Gurus!

Vaisakhi is a day to thank the Tenth Master for all His gifts to His Panth and also a day to dedicate ourselves to His mission. It is a day to celebrate the birth of Khalsa.

GUEST COMMENT

INDIA-US DIALOGUE: BOTH NATIONS MAINTAIN FOCUS ON STRATEGIC COOPERATION

The India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, held amid the Russia-Ukraine war, has ticked all the bilateral boxes, with both nations reaffirming their commitment to enhancing defense and strategic cooperation in various domains, including relatively new ones such as space, artificial intelligence and cyberspace. It's laudable that the US delegation, led by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, and the Indian side, represented by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, did not let the two countries' differences over engagement with Russia cast a shadow on their talks.

The US has reiterated its support for

India's permanent membership in a reformed UN Security Council and New Delhi's induction into the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG). India is keen to join the elite club whose members are entitled to hassle-free procurement of supplies from international markets for building and operating nuclear reactors, but China has been playing spoilsport in league with Pakistan. As of now, India's N-push is powered by initiatives under the India-US Civil Nuclear Energy Working Group. Timely transfer of technology holds the key to a mutually beneficial strategic partnership, particularly in defense and energy sectors. India and the US need to redouble efforts to get the best results on this front.

Both countries are on the same page when it comes to envisioning a free, open

and inclusive Indo-Pacific and turning Quad into a formidable force that can make a lasting impact beyond its multilateral framework. With a new government set to take charge in Pakistan, it is significant that the troubled and troublesome country finds a mention in the joint statement. The ministers have called on Pakistan to take 'immediate, sustained, and irreversible action to ensure that no territory under its control is used for terrorist attacks'. A similarly strong message has been conveyed to Afghanistan's rulers, the Taliban. All in all, the dialogue makes it clear that India and the US will continue to give precedence to their common strategic interests, irrespective of geopolitical upheaval anywhere in the world.

(The Hindu)

Khalsa ੴ 1699



Ranju Batra
Chair



Indian American Association of physicians elect new leaders

NEW YORK (TIP): The new leadership team of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), headed by President-elect Dr. Ravi Kolli, is set to take over during its 40th annual convention in San Antonio, Texas in June.

Dr. Kolli did not have to contest the election this year as he has been serving as the President-elect during the past year. Dr. Anjana Sammadar, AAPI Vice President, also automatically becomes the President-Elect of AAPI for 2022-23.

Nine new office bearers were announced Sunday after elections for the year 2022-23 for AAPI leadership positions by Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, current President of AAPI, and Dr. Sajani Shah, AAPI's Chief Election Officer, according to an AAPI press release.

They are:

- Dr. Satheesh Kathula as Vice President
- Dr. Meherbala Medavaram as Secretary
- Dr. Sumul Raval as Treasurer
- Dr. Kavita Gupta, Dr. Sunil Kaza, and Dr. Malti Mehta as members of AAPI's Board of Trustees for a three-month year term.
- Dr. Pooja Kinkhabwala as President, AAPI Young Physicians Section (YPS)
- Dr. Ammu Susheela as President of AAPI- Medical Student/Residents & Fellows Section (MSRF).



The new leadership of AAPI

- Dr. V. Ranga will serve as the Chair, AAPI Board of Trustees for the year, 2022-23 and Dr. Gotimukula will continue to guide AAPI as the Immediate past President of AAPI.

"I want to thank AAPI members who enthusiastically participated in the AAPI's electronic voting process that was held over a period of nearly a month and have elected a new and dynamic team to lead AAPI, the largest ethnic medical organization in the United States in the coming

year and beyond," Dr. Gotimukula said.

"As the incoming President of AAPI, I would like to congratulate my incoming new team for the fiscal year 2022-23," said Kolli.

"I'm very honored and consider myself fortunate to be bestowed with the responsibility of leading the four decades old strong organization with the cooperation and collaboration of an excellent team of dedicated, hardworking, and loyal officers and executive committee members who are with me to take AAPI to newer heights," he added.

"I am looking forward to working towards strengthening the goals and mission of AAPI and to help make AAPI a healthcare leader in US and globally and work in the best interests of our Physicians and our community here in the US and serve our motherland, India," Kolli said.

Vice President-elect Dr. Satheesh Kathula said, "We will work together to promote our values of professionalism, collegiality, and excellence in patient care and enhance AAPI's reputation as a premier professional organization offering educational programs and advocacy."

"Since its inception in 1982, AAPI has been in the forefront, representing a conglomeration of more than 100,000 practicing physicians in the United States, seeking to be the united voice for the physicians of Indian origin," said Dr. Gotimukula.

INDIAN-ORIGIN DR. SANJAY RAI WINS PRESIDENT'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Dr. Sanjay Rai, has been honored with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for "lifelong commitment to building a stronger nation through volunteer service."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Dr. Sanjay Rai, a noted Indian American educationist, has been honored with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for "lifelong commitment to building a stronger nation through volunteer service."

The award honors those who complete more than 4,000 hours of service over the course of their lifetime through AmeriCorps, an independent US government agency that engages more than five million Americans in service.

"I am very fortunate to have opportunities as a first-generation immigrant to contribute to the success of this nation," said Dr. Rai, senior vice president for academic affairs at Montgomery College, Maryland, who came to the US as an international student 32 years ago.

"The myriad institutions where I have worked and communities where I have lived with my family - all have embraced us with open arms," he said. "Being part of these communities and helping them build a stronger foundation made me feel even more deeply that America is an extraordinary place for opportunity, acceptance and growth."

"This recognition from President (Joe) Biden for 'those who combine an optimism about what can be with the resilience to turn that vision into reality.... who are willing to step up and volunteer in service of community and country are essential to the ongoing work of forming our more perfect union' is something that I would have never dreamt 32 years ago when I came to this country as an international student with hopes and dreams for better opportunities," Rai said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

INDIAN-ORIGIN MP TANMANJEET SINGH DHESI HONORED FOR RAISING FARMERS' ISSUE IN BRITISH PARLIAMENT



Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, MP from Slough, UK was honored by Farmers groups at an event in Mauli village, Phagwara, on Friday, April 8, for raising the farmers' issue vociferously on the floor of the British Parliament

PHAGWARA, INDIA (TIP): Various farmers unions honored Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, MP from Slough, UK, at an event in Mauli village, Phagwara, on Friday, April 8, for raising the farmers' issue vociferously on the floor of the British Parliament during debates and questions during 'Kisan Andolan'.

At this special programme organized by Bharatiya Kisan Union (Doaba), farmer leaders and supporters of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha gathered in large numbers to show their appreciation for those who had shown solidarity during the largest protest on the planet. Dhesi spoke at length on the NRI support for the Indian farmers and the daily information updates he had received from many, especially his uncle Paramjit Singh Raipur, member SGPC, from Adampur.

Dhesi said he had organized an initiative by drafting a letter which was signed by 36 MPs to the UK Foreign Minister so as to raise the human rights issue of the peacefully protesting farmers with the Indian Foreign Minister, which he duly did.

Interacting with farmer leaders, he said he had penned another letter to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, signed by over 100 British MPs, to ensure that farmers were not mistreated by the authorities, when footage of the tear gas and lathicharge became viral.

In his address, Dhesi raised various NRI issues, such as the need to have more direct flights from the UK to Amritsar and Chandigarh. UK MP also highlighted other ongoing work that he was leading on, involving constructing a memorial in central London for Sikh soldiers who served during the World Wars and promoting the marital art gatka by holding annual UK Gatka Championships for seven years.

INDIAN-ORIGIN STUDENT KARTIK VASUDEV SHOT IN CANADA; EAM EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES



Kartik Vasudev was shot by an unidentified man at the entrance of the Sherbourne subway station in Canada's Toronto while he was on his way to work, according to the police.

TORONTO (TIP): A 21-year-old Indian-origin student, Kartik Vasudev, has been shot by an unidentified man at the entrance of the Sherbourne subway station in Canada's Toronto while he was on his way to work, according to the police.

Kartik's cousin Gaurav Vasudev has tweeted, "My cousin was shot yesterday. We still don't know what happened."

We want the truth behind the gruesome murder to come out at the earliest so we can know what happened and why our child was shot. Jitesh Vasudev, victim's father

According to information, Kartik, who hails from Ghaziabad, was pursuing global management from Toronto-based Seneca University and was in his first year. He had shifted to Canada in January and was staying at an apartment he shared with his cousin. Shortly after joining the college, he found a job at a restaurant in Downtown area. Every day, Kartik would take the same route using the subway and bus to reach his workplace.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



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Tips for Seeing Well As You Age

It is no secret that your eyes become worse with age but there are ways to slow down the aging process. Here are a few simple tips that are often forgotten:

1. Do not smoke as it is not just bad for the body but also increases the risk of age-related macular degeneration
2. Eat a well balanced diet. Lots of fruits and vegetables keep your eyes healthy and disease free
3. Wear sunglasses to protect from the sun's UV rays

2 more Indian American Sikh men attacked, robbed in New York

INDIAN CONSULATE TWEETED "DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE ASSAULT ON THE ELDERLY SIKH GENTLEMAN"

NEW YORK (TIP): In the second such assault in less than 10 days, two Sikh men were attacked and robbed in Queens here, the same neighborhood in the city where an elderly Sikh man was assaulted early this month.

The Consulate General of India in New York said in a tweet that the "assault on two Sikh gentlemen in Richmond Hills, New York" is deplorable.

"We have approached the local authorities and New York City Police Department in the matter," the Consulate said.

It added that it notes that a police complaint has been filed in the incident and one person has been arrested. The Consulate said that it is in touch with the community members and "ready to offer all assistance to the victims."

Community-based civil and human rights organization The Sikh Coalition said that the two Sikh individuals were attacked and robbed in Richmond Hill, Queens on Tuesday.

The attack happened "very close" to the area where septuagenarian Nirmal Singh was punched in an unprovoked assault on April 3.

Commenting on the latest attack, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards said that it is "another difficult day" in the Richmond Hill area, "as we learn of a second attack on a Sikh neighbor - days after Singh's assault." He said his office has been in contact with police authorities "to ensure that justice is served here. Queens' Sikh community deserve nothing less."

New York City Council Member Shahana Hanif, who represents Brooklyn, tweeted that "Our thoughts with the entire City this morning. From the senseless shooting in Sunset Park to the horrifying attack against



Two elderly Sikh men named Sajjan Singh, and Gulzar Singh were assaulted in Richmond Hill

our Sikh neighbors in Richmond Hill, our communities are hurting. Please look out for each other today-we keep one another safe."

The Sikh Coalition said that out of respect for their privacy, it was not sharing the names or images of the two Sikh individuals, who are responsive and getting medical care.

However, video footage shared on social media showed the two individuals surrounded by and being attended to by locals and police personnel. One of the injured is seen sitting on the side of the road, while another is standing next to him, covering his injury near his eye with a cloth. In the video, the two Sikh men are seen without turbans on their head.

The Sikh Coalition said it is in direct touch with the New York Police Department Hate Crimes Task Force, who has shared that one suspect is in custody while the search is on for another attacker.

"Law enforcement believes both men were targeted for being Sikh, and the attacks are being investigated as

anti-Sikh hate crimes," the Sikh Coalition said.

"We also remind everyone that no one community is deserving of-or responsible for-hate crimes. In these difficult moments, anti-Black racism is directly harmful to our shared efforts to stop the hate violence that endangers us all."

NY State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar said that as the first Punjabi American ever elected to New York State Office, she in "unequivocal terms" stresses that there is zero tolerance for hate crimes against the Sikh American community in New York State.

She said that she had spoken to the NYPD after both the attack incidents and is calling "for both incidents to be investigated as hate crimes" and the perpetrators brought to justice.

She noted that there has been an alarming 200% rise in hate crimes against the Sikh community in recent years. She passed a historic resolution whereby New York State recognizes April as Punjabi month.

"We will educate all on Sikh culture so that everyone knows as I do, the generosity and kindness embedded in the Sikh American community, and together with my partners in Congress and the Mayor, we will give law enforcement the tools they need to fully investigate and prosecute these crimes of bias."

The Consulate had said in a tweet that it was "deeply disturbed by the assault on the elderly Sikh gentleman" in Richmond Hill, Queens. "We condemn the violent attack and are in touch" with the New York Police Department (NYPD) and local authorities who are investigating the matter, it said. "We are also in touch with local community organizations for the well-being of the victim."

Dunkin Donuts has a New Address on Long Island

GOBIND BATHIJA ADDS TO HIS 13 EXISTING VENTURES



LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): Long Island businessman Gobind Bathija has recently launched a new venture-his 14th by way of a drive through Dunkin' Donuts at 1669 Montauk Highway, Bellport, NY. The Grand Opening of the 2000 sq ft free standing building took place on April 7, 2022.

The store distributed free coffee coupons for one year to first 100 customers.

The formidable guest list at the Grand Opening included Legislator Jim Mazzarella, Legislator Domminick Thorne, Carol A Seitz-Cusack, President of Bluepoint COC, Alexis

Weik, NYS Senator 3rd Senatorial District, Joseph DeStefano, NYS Assemblyman 3rd Assembly District, Edward P. Romaine, Supervisor Town of Brookhaven, Michael A Loguercio, Town of Brookhaven Town Councilman, Gregory C Miglino, Chief of south Country Ambulance, David M Kennedy, President of Patchogue COC, Nilda Menica, Community Relation Bellport, James B Conklin, Past District Giverner Suffolk County, Councilman Dan Panaco, Sam Gonzalez Suffolk County Legislator, Stephen Hudson, Director DD franchise operation, Theresa Codispoti DD operation manager, Sonia Bathija and Tanya Bathija.

RAVISHANKAR BHOOPLAPUR REFLECTS ON 14 YEARS AS PRESIDENT OF XAVIER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Fourteen years ago this week, I became the President of Xavier University School of Medicine. I began my tenure with one goal - to cultivate a quality and affordable medical education. It has been my great pleasure to work with the faculty and staff to prepare successful doctors to serve the



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

world. A big 'thank you' to the Board of Trustees, who have supported our continued progress and played an important role in our achievements. During this time, we reached multiple significant milestones, such as unconditional accreditation by the A.C.C.M (recognized by the E.C.F.M.G. and N.C.F.M.E.A. under the U.S. Department of Education, Washington DC), approval from the New York State Education Department, 84% residency match rate this year, over 95% first-time pass rate in U.S.M.L.E. Step 1 and U.S.M.L.E. Step 2 C.K., opening a new residential campus in Aruba, commenced building a new academic campus (set to open in 2023), and being named a Top 10 Caribbean Medical School. We have provided opportunity to a countless number of students during my fourteen years, and we look forward to continuing to provide opportunities to students to fulfill their dreams of becoming a doctor."

Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin arrested

NEW YORK (TIP): Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin has joined the ranks of New York politicians arrested for alleged corruption, creating a big headache for Gov. Kathy Hochul as she and Benjamin run for full terms this year.

Prosecutors say Benjamin, while still serving as a state senator representing Harlem, was involved in a bribery conspiracy that involved using state money to indirectly benefit his unsuccessful 2021 campaign for New York City comptroller. The New York Times reported Tuesday, April 12 morning. Benjamin has surrendered to authorities after being indicted on a federal charge. A spokesperson for the lieutenant governor, who was appointed to his position last August, could not be reached for immediate contact Tuesday.

"Brian Benjamin, the defendant, and others acting at his direction or on his behalf, also engaged in a series of lies



and deceptions to cover up his scheme, including by falsifying campaign donor forms, misleading municipal regulators, and providing false information in vetting forms Benjamin submitted while under consideration to be appointed the next lieutenant governor of New York state," reads an indictment from the Southern District of New York, which

oversees federal prosecutions in Manhattan. A noon press conference has also been scheduled.

The federal charge represents a turning point for Benjamin, who has been accused of numerous ethical misdeeds over the years - none of which involved a criminal charge up to today. The City first reported on shady

donations allegedly involved in that scheme last year. A real estate developer who backed Benjamin's 2021 bid for New York City comptroller had already been arrested in relation to the alleged scheme.

Hochul recently expressed confidence in her nominal number two following revelations, first reported by the Daily News, that the lieutenant governor had not informed her of subpoenas from Manhattan prosecutors prior to his appointment as lieutenant governor. A spokesperson for Hochul could not immediately be reached for comment.

Immediately, Republicans began piling on criticism of Hochul over the arrest for her choice of second in command. "Proof that Kathy Hochul picked a dirty politician as her running mate," state GOP Chair Nick Langworthy said in a tweet about the arrest.

Nominations Invited for Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2023

Last date of submission: April 20, 2022



Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

Photo for representation

NEW YORK (TIP): The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) is the honor conferred on overseas Indians.

PBSA is conferred by the President of India as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions on a Non-Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin or an organization or institution established and run by the Non-Resident Indians or Persons of Indian Origin, who has made significant contribution in any one of the following fields :

For Achievements Abroad

- Better understanding abroad of India.
- Support to India's causes and concerns in a tangible way.
- Building closer links between India, the overseas Indian community and their country of residence.

- Social and humanitarian causes in India or abroad.
- Welfare of the local Indian community.
- Philanthropic and charitable work.
- Eminence in one's field or outstanding work, which has enhanced India's prestige in the country of residence; or
- Eminence in skills which has enhanced India's prestige in that country (for non-professional workers).

For Achievements within India

- (a) Philanthropic investments and charitable work in India.

- (b) For contribution made towards India's development.

Self-nomination has also been allowed for PBSA-2023. Nomination forms and enclosures (Gazette Notification and Summary Form) may be sent to dcg.newyork@mea.gov.in by April 20, 2022. Original may be sent by post to the office of Deputy Consul General, 3 East, 64th street, New York, NY 10065.

Forms can be downloaded from below:

- Nomination form 2023
- PBSA Award Gazette Notification
- Format for Summary of PBSA Nominee

BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED AT THE INDIAN CONSULATE

EAM JAISHANKAR PAID RICH TRIBUTE TO THE ARCHITECT OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Rich tributes were paid to Babasaheb Ambedkar on his 131st birth anniversary at a special function at the Indian Consulate. India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recalled the stellar contribution of Dr. BR Ambedkar.

Consul General Randhir Kumar

Jaiswal also addressed the gathering.

Born on 14 April 1891, Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who campaigned against social discrimination and supported the rights of women and workers. He died on 6 December 1956.

In 1990, Ambedkar was conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.



Union Minister for External Affairs, S. Jaishankar pays floral tribute to Baba Ambedkar on his 131st Birth Anniversary at the Indian Consulate in New York. Photo / Jay Mandal- On Assignment

Whipping up a frenzy

GOVERNANCE HAS BECOME IRRELEVANT TO WIN A POPULAR MANDATE

BY RADHIKA
RAMASESHAN



"THE EXPANSE OF THE VIOLENCE, FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST AND THE NORTH, CONFIRMED THREE PERCEPTIONS: IT WAS PRE-PLANNED, BECAUSE IN EACH CASE, THE TRAJECTORY PURSUED THE SAME PATH. RSS-ALIGNED HINDU ACTIVISTS WENT ON SHOBHA YATRAS THAT WOUND THROUGH MUSLIM LOCALITIES, GOT UNCONTROLLABLE WHEN THEY PASSED A MOSQUE OR SIGHTED A GATHERING AND SEEMED TO HAVE PROVOKED A REACTION FROM MUSLIMS (STONE-PELTING WAS REPORTED ALMOST EVERYWHERE). REPORTS SUGGEST IN PLACES IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TELL WHO CAST THE FIRST STONE. THE POLICE, THOUGH PRESENT, WERE SAID TO BE PASSIVE. THE MP POLICE, THOUGH, CAME DOWN STRONG ON MUSLIMS WHO ALLEGEDLY INSTIGATED CLASHES AND FLATTENED OUT THEIR PROPERTIES WITH BULLDOZERS, BORROWED FROM UP'S MANUAL."

Henceforward every Hindu festival might be anticipated with dread and not joyousness if the trail of violence, death and destruction left behind by the processions to 'celebrate' Ram Navami, and earlier Nav Samvatsar (the Hindu New Year) is a portent.

Ram Navami is one among the myriad festivals dotting the Hindu calendar. It is generally observed in the quietude of a puja room in a home following a nine-day Navratri, a period of fasting and praying in North India. It is a reflection on Hinduism's plurality that Navratri has a different connotation in southern India. It coincides with Dasehra and is signified by nine days of uninterrupted festivity intended to engage and entertain children. There is no one New Year in Hinduism; in fact, there are a dozen across the regions, depending on whether the solar or lunar calendar is followed. The New Year ushered in on April 2 is known as Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra and Goa and Ugadi in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

However, Rajasthan - which triggered the latest cycle of violence - observes its New Year on Diwali. This didn't deter members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal (BD) and Vidya Bharti, the RSS's education wing - sweepingly classified as the 'Hindu fringe' - from launching a Nav Samvatsar shobha yatra on motorbikes at Karauli. From all accounts, the yatra acquired the color and shape of a carnival rather than a religious occasion. The participants, young men sporting the VHP's emblematic saffron 'bandana', danced to songs played at full blast when they passed a



Nuisance value: The Hindu fringe in the shobha yatra comprised unemployed men, who had all the time in the world to wreak havoc. Yatras are meant to empower workers through a simulated sense of bravado. What better way of deflecting attention from inflation and an inability to create jobs?
Photo / PTI

mosque. According to a report in Scroll.in, some numbers were singing VHP anthems, dating back to the Ayodhya era, with the refrain, 'khaula khoon mera' (my blood boils), denoting that the day this happened, you (meaning Muslims) will be put in your place and the sword will speak instead of a Hindu's words. The tropes that figured in the songs were a topi or skullcap and 'Hindu awakening'. The report quoted young Hindus (unemployed or engaged in semi-skilled work) saying the VHP's ditties were as inspiring as 'Vande Mataram' and caused goosebumps because of lines like 'those who wear the topi will have to bend and say Jai Shri Ram'.

It no longer matters which party rules a state. Rajasthan has a Congress government, rickety from day one. This round of rampage also scorched non-BJP states like Jharkhand and West Bengal and raised a question on whether the local intelligence failed to foresee the mayhem or deliberately kept quiet. Among the BJP-ruled states, Madhya Pradesh was the worst hit.

Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra's infamy precedes him. He is known to give incendiary speeches that polarize communities as he did before the 2020 Delhi violence. He was in MP's Khargone, the center of the trouble, a day before it erupted. He shared a photo captioned, 'Neither Musa nor Burhan, only Jai Jai Shri Ram'. The names were those of Burhan Wani and Zakir Musa, Kashmir's militants, who were eliminated by security forces.

The expanse of the violence, from the east to the west and the north, confirmed three perceptions: it was pre-planned, because in each case, the trajectory pursued the same path. RSS-aligned Hindu activists went on shobha yatra that wound through Muslim localities, got uncontrollable when they passed a mosque or sighted a gathering and seemed to have provoked a reaction from Muslims (stone-pelting was reported almost everywhere). Reports suggest in places it was difficult to tell who cast the first stone. The police, though present, were said to be passive. The MP Police, though, came down strong on Muslims who allegedly instigated clashes and flattened out their properties with bulldozers, borrowed from UP's manual.

The yatras were armed with swords and sticks.

Smaller towns, like Himmatnagar and Khambhat (Gujarat), Lohardaga (Jharkhand), Bankura (West Bengal) and Vasco (Goa) were targeted, instead of more vulnerable cities like Ahmedabad and Ranchi to disseminate the Sangh's message. The participants were young men, mostly unemployed, who seemed to have all the time in the world to wreak havoc.

Karnataka pushed the Hindutva agenda in different ways: from the hijab to halal meat. The latter has caught popular imagination to such a degree that on Ram Navami day, ABVP activists bore down on the JNU canteen which normally serves meat on a Sunday and assaulted students who challenged them.

How does the disorder help the Centre? Indeed, the situation in Karnataka got excessive even for a senior state minister, JC Madhuswamy, who warned the 'fringe' groups to back off as CM Basavaraj Bommai remained mum. Reports claimed that the BJP's central brass advised Bommai to focus on implementing his budgetary proposals and infrastructure projects but out of electoral and not humanitarian considerations; hijab and halal could only win 'some' votes.

The affected states stare at polls this year and the next. In Karnataka's case, there are apprehensions that its unicorn companies and IT majors could relocate to the relatively peaceful neighboring states. Elections and the threat of economic instability do not compose a larger picture. The answers lie elsewhere.

The mandates the BJP has swung in states, bucking anti-incumbency, established that governance was not the criterion. Governance as it is understood in a fundamental sense: delivering on the basics required for a decent quality of life, based on equity, justice and welfare. Welfare there was in spades but in the most rudimentary sense, boiling down to 'ration-paani'.

The BJP's success came down to purveying Hindutva through a running organization of 'karyakartas'. These yatra and such-like programs are meant to keep the workers on the ground and empower them through a simulated sense of bravado. What better way of deflecting people's attention from inflation and an inability to create jobs?

(The author is a senior journalist)

Russia-Ukraine war: Three ways this war could escalate and drag NATO in

BY FRANK GARDNER



"BUT WHILE WESTERN NATIONS HAVE DISPLAYED A RARE DEGREE OF UNITY IN THE STRENGTH OF THEIR REACTION TO RUSSIA'S INVASION, THERE ARE SUGGESTIONS THAT THEY ARE BEING MERELY REACTIVE AND NOT THINKING THROUGH WHAT THE ENDGAME SHOULD BE. 'THE BIGGER STRATEGIC QUESTION,' SAYS ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST EXPERIENCED MILITARY OFFICERS WHO ASKS NOT TO BE NAMED, 'IS WHETHER OUR GOVERNMENT IS ENGAGED IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT OR ACTUAL STRATEGY.' THAT WOULD REQUIRE THINKING THIS THROUGH TO THE FINISH, HE ADDS. 'WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE HERE IS TO GIVE UKRAINE EVERY BIT OF HELP WE CAN, SHORT OF WORLD WAR THREE. THE PROBLEM IS, PUTIN IS A BETTER POKER PLAYER THAN WE ARE.'"

NATO ministers have been meeting in Brussels this past week to discuss how far they should go in providing military equipment to Ukraine.

The challenge for NATO throughout this war has been how to give its ally Ukraine enough military support to defend itself without getting drawn into the conflict and finding itself at war with Russia.

The Ukrainian government has been explicit in its calls for help.

If it is to have any chance of fending off the coming Russian assault on the Donbas region in the east of the country, it says, then it urgently needs a resupply of the West's Javelin, NLAW (next-generation light anti-tank weapon), Stinger and Starstreak anti-tank and



The risk of Russia resorting to using tactical (i.e., short range) nuclear weapons or of the conflict spreading beyond Ukraine's borders into a wider European war is constantly in the backs of western leaders' minds and here the stakes are dangerously high. Photo / Courtesy Sky news

anti-aircraft missiles that its forces have already been using to such effect in this war.

That much is coming. But Ukraine wants more.

It wants tanks, warplanes, drones and advanced missile air defense systems to counter Russia's increasing use of air strikes and long-range missiles that are steadily depleting Ukraine's strategic stores of fuel and other essentials.

So, what exactly, many people may ask, is holding NATO back?

The answer is escalation.

The risk of Russia resorting to using tactical (i.e., short range) nuclear weapons or of the conflict spreading beyond Ukraine's borders into a wider European war is constantly in the backs of western leaders' minds and here the stakes are dangerously high.

What West has given so far

- over 30 countries have provided military aid to Ukraine including 1bn (£800m) from EU and \$1.7bn (£1.3bn) from US supplies so far limited to arms, ammunition, and defensive equipment like anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile systems they include Javelins which are shoulder-held anti-tank weapons that shoot heat-seeking rockets and Stingers which are man-portable anti-aircraft weapons most famously used in Afghanistan against Soviet aircraft the Starstreak is a UK-made portable air defense system

NATO members fear supplying heavier offensive equipment like tanks and fighter jets could lead to direct open conflict with Russia

That hasn't prevented the Czechs from giving T72 tanks.

President Putin reminded the world early on in this war that Russia is a nuclear weapons power and that he was moving its strategic nuclear deterrent up

to a higher degree of readiness.

The US did not follow suit as it detected no movement of Russian nuclear warheads out of their secure storage bunkers. But Putin's point was made. He was effectively saying: "Russia has a massive nuclear arsenal so don't think you can push us around."

Russian military doctrine allows for the early use of low-yield, tactical nuclear warheads on the battlefield, knowing that the West has an abhorrence for nuclear weapons that have not been used in anger for 77 years.

NATO strategic planners worry that once the nuclear taboo is broken, even if the damage is limited to a localized target on the Ukrainian battlefield, then the risk of escalation to a catastrophic nuclear exchange between Russia and the West inevitably goes up a notch.

The US is sending Ukraine: \$800m in new military assistance, including 800 Stinger anti-aircraft systems that can shoot down planes, 2,000 Javelins, shoulder-held anti-tank weapons that shoot heat-seeking rockets, 6,000 AT-4 anti-armor systems, a Swedish-produced, single-use, unguided anti-tank weapon.

And yet, with every atrocity apparently committed by Russian soldiers, NATO's resolve stiffens and its inhibitions melt away. The Czech Republic has already sent tanks, admittedly outdated Soviet-era T72s, but they are the first NATO country to do so. Slovakia is sending its S300 air defense missile systems. Both such moves would have seemed improbably risky when this war began.

Tobias Ellwood MP, who chairs Parliament's Defense Committee, is one of those who believes Putin is bluffing when he raises the specter of nuclear weapons and that NATO should be doing more.

"We have been over-cautious in the weapons systems we have been willing to

provide," he says. "We need a more robust attitude. We're giving the Ukrainians enough to survive but not to win and that must change."

So how exactly could this Russia-Ukraine war escalate into a wider pan-European conflict that drags in NATO?

There are a number of potential scenarios which will doubtless be occupying minds in Western defense ministries.

Here are just three of them:

1. A NATO-supplied anti-ship missile fired by Ukrainian forces in Odesa hits and sinks a Russian warship offshore in the Black Sea with the loss of nearly 100 sailors and dozens of marines. A death toll of this magnitude in a single strike would be unprecedented and Putin would be under pressure to respond in some form.
2. A Russian strategic missile strike targets a supply convoy of military hardware crossing from a NATO country, like Poland or Slovakia, into Ukraine. If casualties were sustained on NATO's side of the border that could potentially trigger Article 5 of NATO's constitution, bringing the entire alliance to the defense of the country attacked.
3. Amidst fierce fighting in the Donbas an explosion occurs at an industrial facility resulting in the release of toxic chemical gases. While this has already occurred, there were no deaths reported. But were it to result in the sort of mass casualties seen in Syria's use of poison gas at Ghouta and if it were found to have been deliberately caused by Russian forces, then NATO would be obliged to respond.

It is perfectly possible that none of these scenarios will materialize.

But while Western nations have displayed a rare degree of unity in the strength of their reaction to Russia's invasion, there are suggestions that they are being merely reactive and not thinking through what the endgame should be.

"The bigger strategic question," says one of Britain's most experienced military officers who asks not to be named, "is whether our government is engaged in crisis management or actual strategy." That would require thinking this through to the finish, he adds.

"What we are trying to achieve here is to give Ukraine every bit of help we can, short of World War Three. The problem is, Putin is a better poker player than we are."

Tobias Ellwood MP agrees.

"Russia does this [the threat of escalation] very effectively. And we are spooked. We have lost the ability to control the escalatory ladder."

(The author is a British journalist. He is currently the BBC's Security Correspondent)

(Source: BBC)

Remembering Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

BY PRABHJOT SINGH



The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on 13 April 1919 in which British troops fired on a large crowd of unarmed Indians, killing several hundred people and wounding many hundreds more.

- Was Jallianwala Bagh, a conspiracy or planned massacre?
- Did it give birth to the concept of state terrorism?
- Was it handiwork of General Dwyer alone?
- Has the country done justice to martyrs and their families?
- Is it time to look beyond rituals?
- Bagh's epoch and media
- Punjab's tryst with Censorship

In a liberal democracy, the media has a vital role to play. Though acknowledged as the fourth Estate, freedom of Press has become a mere bogey as was during the Jallianwala Bagh epoch.

Not many would know that it was the Jallianwala Bagh epoch that saw the British using the draconian law to curb the freedom of the Press. They resorted to Censorship, not once, but twice to gag the media. Still not satisfied, the then Editor of The Tribune, Mr Kalinath Ray, was taken in custody for opposing the Empire.

A section of media, including The Tribune, served its readers as a fearless voice of the people of Punjab. When one looks back at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, one cannot overlook the role the media played.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a gruesome episode that changed the narrative of the freedom struggle. It not only symbolized the brute power that the British used to contain growing demand of the populace for freedom, liberty and equality but also exposed the desperation of the rulers in suppressing the growing revolt. This epochal event not only gave a new direction to the war for independence but also changed the course of the sub-continental history. It paved the way for Mohan Dass Karam Chand Gandhi to become Mahatma.

Before the Vaisakhi 1919 massacre, Jallianwala Bagh was a dumping ground of no political significance. But things witnessed a massive change afterwards. It provided the much needed launch pad that guided the destiny of the nation. Interestingly, many in the crowd had come to Amritsar to join Vaisakhi celebrations at Golden Temple and some others were there for the annual cattle fair. To kill time, they headed for Jallianwala Bagh without realizing what was in store for them. That day there was no leader in the Bagh that could control or keep the gathering together. Historian VN Dutta believed that it was Hans Raj, chief organizer of the rally. It was he who prevented people from dispersing. Rather, he asked everyone to sit down as the Government would not resort to feared fire.

"After a while, he waved his handkerchief signaling to Dwyer and his Indian soldiers to open fire. Hans Raj had already left. He was an agent provocateur. He was later moved away to Mesopotamia and his house in Amritsar was burnt," VN. Dutta said in an interview. General Dwyer refused to believe that the crowd that had assembled at Jallianwala Bagh was innocent but hostile and had come prepared to defy authority.

Has the nation given Jallianwala Bagh and its martyrs their due? The Bagh may have been renovated and given a facelift in recent years. But does that mitigate the anguish of the people who lost their near and dear ones or the countrymen who wanted freedom from the British empire. The British Government is still not ready to apologize for its action 103 years ago. It should have taken a lesson from the Canadian government that offered an unconditional apology for its comparatively lesser grave action in the Komagata Maru episode.

Three years ago, rituals were gone through meticulously as the events unfolded for observing the centenary of the epochal event. The country's Vice-President came, laid a wreath, joined a ceremonial salute to the unknown martyrs, released a coin and a set of postage stamps to

In 1919, a section of media, including The Tribune, served its readers as a fearless voice of the people of Punjab. When one looks back at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, one cannot overlook the role the media played.



mark the historic event. Unfortunately, after 103 years, no one knows how many freedom seekers laid down their lives in a most controversial barbaric action that in the present day would have put to shame the infamous 9/11 terrorist attack on twin towers in New York.

At that time there were no human right activists and not many would know what terrorism, including state terrorism, was all about.

Even after more than a century, the majority belief that the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was the result of a conspiracy that has not been satisfactorily counter argued. Was it a unilateral action on the part of the then Lieutenant Governor Sir Michael O. Dwyer? Or was it the culmination of incidents, including the widespread violence following the arrest of some Punjab leaders, including Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satya Pal, besides the murder of five Europeans and assault on missionary Miss Sherwood? Or was it because of infamous Rowlatt Bills?

Whatever be the background or provocation, it was one of the single largest instances of brutal misuse of state power against innocent, armless, and peaceful protestors. Was the punishment given to the victims proportionate to the violation of law committed by them wittingly or unwittingly? Not many references were made those days about terrorism, what to talk of State terrorism. Now when the world has redefined terrorism and state terrorism, social scientists in general and those studying armed conflicts will have little or no hesitation to identify Jallianwala Bagh massacre as probably the beginning of State terrorism of suppressing or silencing the voice of dissent with brute fire power. It was the worst or blatant violation of human rights.

While the demand for apology from the British for this unprecedented massacre has been growing louder year after year, many still see it as a major aberration or act of rashness on the part of General O Dwyer. Provoked by the Punjab rebellion especially after incidents of April 10, 11 and 12, O Dwyer became furious and aggressive. With 25 Gurkhas and an equal number of Baluchis, he reached Jallianwala Bagh on the fateful day. The troops fired about 1650 bullets. Number of people actually killed in firing and those who jumped into the well could not be authenticated even after 100 years. Even today no one has authentic number of those who attained martyrdom that day. Many injured died due to lack of medical attention.

The figures of 359 or 379 killed in firing were not working figures. Local newspapers, however, put the figure of those killed at over 1,000. Historian VN Dutta held that

as many as 700 were killed in the firing. All O Dwyer wanted was to send a strong message that Amritsar in Punjab could become a storm center of rebellion against the British Empire and the evil had to be nipped in the bud.

Realizing that Vaisakhi was a big event and there could be massive turnouts for protests against Rowlatt Bills, the British ordered prohibitory orders on April 12 and 13 that banned public rallies, taking out of processions or gathering of groups of people at a place. Without any warning to the crowd, he ordered fire. Havoc ensued. The gathering, terrorized by the firing, broke up. People ran for shelter and the narrow passageways were all crammed. Some jumped into the well for safety. Those who tried to climb the walls were caught.

Killing armless innocent people in cold blood in Jallianwala Bagh probably gave birth to ruthless State Terrorism. For Punjab it was nothing new except that magnitude this time was enormous.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was also a litmus test for the media which at that time was in its infancy and limited to a few newspapers. One of the newspapers that the British tried to dismiss as a small local newspaper was The Tribune.

Media coverage of the events became a subject of considerable comment and criticism. The State used law not only to prevent publication of what was called "objectionable material", the publishers of a number of newspapers, including those who were opposed to the British Empire, were accused of "secessionist propaganda". But it did not deter upright media. Punjab was the center point of growing turbulence. Intriguingly, the laws British framed to curb freedom struggle, have subsequently been used by Independent India. Not many would forget the days after the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi tried to curb freedom of Press during the draconian emergency days. Subsequently, Punjab, too, suffered its repeated doses of censorship both during and after Operation Bluestar.

In a liberal democracy, the media has a vital role to play. Though acknowledged as the fourth Estate, freedom of Press has become a mere bogey as was during the Jallianwala Bagh epoch. The concept of the notorious "Gaudi Media" has of late come to stay. The coverage of the farmers agitation in 2020 and 2021 has been the example. Not many would know that it was the Jallianwala Bagh epoch that saw the

British using the draconian law to curb the freedom of the Press. They resorted to Censorship, not once, but twice to gag the media. Still not satisfied, the then Editor of The Tribune, Mr Kalinath Ray, was taken in custody for opposing the Empire.

In 1919, a section of media, including The Tribune, served its readers as a fearless voice of the people of Punjab. When one looks back at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, one cannot overlook the role the media played.

It was repeated during the 1977 emergency when again Editor of The Tribune, Madhavan Nair, and senior journalists like Shyam Khosla and Makhan Lal Kak had to face the wrath of the black laws, including detention under draconian National Security Act and Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). In 1984 again, these draconian laws were frequently used by the State to gag Indian media in general and that of Punjab and Chandigarh in particular.

(Prabhjot Singh is a veteran journalist with over three decades of experience covering a wide spectrum of subjects and stories. He has covered Punjab and Sikh affairs for more than three decades besides covering seven Olympics and several major sporting events and hosting TV shows. For more in-depth analysis please visit probingeye.com or follow him on [Twitter.com/probingeye](https://twitter.com/probingeye). He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)



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"You can sit in the room, take your visa and go to India" - Consul General of India Randhir Kumar Jaiswal

INTERVIEWED BY
PROF. INDRAJIT SALUJA
CHIEF EDITOR,
THE INDIAN PANORAMA



Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal speaks with The Indian Panorama Chief Editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja

Ambassador Randhir Jaiswal is a career diplomat. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1998. In his over two decades of diplomatic career so far, he has served in Portugal, Cuba, South Africa and at the Permanent

Mission of India in New York. In between his overseas assignments, he served in New Delhi at the Ministry of External Affairs, first as Deputy

Secretary looking after India's relations with the United States of America, and then as Joint Secretary managing India's relations with West European countries. In the middle of 2017, he was deputed to serve the President of India as Joint Secretary managing his international relations portfolio.

Randhir Jaiswal is passionate about sports, environment, culture, monuments, old cities and cuisines. He is deeply interested in strategic, sustainable development and public policy issues. He has been part of India's delegation at various Climate Change Conferences and was the lead negotiator for the G-77 countries at the

RIO+20 Conference held in Brazil in 2012.

He holds a Master's degree in History from Delhi University, India. He speaks Hindi, English, Portuguese and Spanish and is conversant with several dialects of Bihar, India, the State he comes from.

He is married to Dr. Abha Jaiswal, a public health expert. The couple has two daughters.

AMBASSADOR JAISWAL WAS KIND ENOUGH TO ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO SIT FOR AN INTERVIEW WHICH WAS CONDUCTED IN HIS OFFICE ON MARCH 24, 2022.

TIP: Good morning! Thank you for giving The Indian Panorama your valuable time to speak with us. It has been more than one and a half year since your last interview to The Indian Panorama. I am keen to get your valuable views and comments on certain issue.

CONSUL GENERAL: Thank you very much your gracious invitation. It is

always a pleasure to speak to the Indian Panorama and through you to the larger Indian American community and the diaspora in the United States. It is a privilege I would say, to serve India, to fly the flag of India and serve the larger Indian American family that we have here. In spite of COVID We have tried our best to stay connected, tried our best to keep our service delivery on a smooth and inefficient track. And I would say that on that account, I'm very grateful to the team here. By my own judgment we have done a decent work and hopefully others in the community would also think so.

You know, we have been, in spite of COVID, open since May of 2020. Not many consulates or other government establishments here in New York and some other cities can talk of that. But we have done it. We have 70 people here who have been coming every day since May of 2020. And that has allowed us to keep us doing our best for the community and maintain the connect with India. We have done, I think a decent job in staying connected with the community and we received excellent

support. And in spite of the limitations, let me tell you I have been able to go and meet them, give my regards to them, pay my respects to them, and to learn from them and to share our joys and happiness with them.

TIP: Thank you so much. Community has always been a priority with you. You have always tried to see to it that there are conditions created in the consulate to make people happy with the services. There may have been conflicts here and there, and despite the fact that there are sometimes very unpleasant people or unpleasant circumstances, but then by and large what I have heard from people is that they have been getting good service, and I think, you deserve to be complimented on that. But then there are so many areas you know where may think that there is something more to be done. Do you think you are aware of the areas where some more work is needed for better functioning of the Consulate?

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CONTD FROM PAGE 12

CONSUL GENERAL: There are several aspects to functioning. We have to maintain healthy community relations. We have to have an efficient delivery of consular services. We have to have greater engagement or deeper engagement with the economic stakeholders so that we can strengthen the India US economic technology and trade connect. And also, you know, in general, support India's friendship through conversations with other stakeholders that are there. So, there are several aspects to our work here. Because of COVID, yes, there have been limitations in terms of meetings. We had to do with a virtual engagement even as we would have liked to do more physical engagements. We wanted to do more work on that account but because of COVID we have not been able to do so. But now that the COVID is going into the background, we look forward to doing more of that. Also, because of COVID, we had to stop people from coming into the consulate for health reasons. Now we have resumed walk-in services. So, hopefully many of the challenges that people encountered earlier will not be there. There is a range of stakeholders who come into play once you put your documents into the mail. With walk-in they can get the services and go back home. We also have now opened ourselves for open house so people who have issues to discuss they can come on a particular day announced by the Consulate and discuss the issues. So, it will help us. We are now going back to the normal duty that we had as far as consular services are concerned. We have now restored long term 10-year visa. People will not have a problem anymore. So is the case with E visa now.

All that has been restored. So hopefully all that, you know, will help in better services or better engagement of the diaspora and the community with the consulate and with India in general.

TIP: Would you like to elaborate for our readers this reopening of various visas now?

CONSUL GENERAL: We had the long term 10-year visa which was issued to a large number of people here for the United States. We had, and several other countries you know, had put restrictions on the long-term visa because we wanted to know exactly and have some predictability in the number of people coming into India because of COVID concerns. Now we have restored them. So, 10-year visas that were issued to people are good enough. They don't have to reapply. That was one of the fears in the minds of the people.

So, 10-year visa, if you had, say, in 2017 it was valid till 2027. You're good to go. We are also some time back started one year tourist visa which is free of cost -first half a million tourist visas free of cost. It is free of cost one year tourist visa to be utilized in 120 days, which is four months. We also have a tourist visa for one year and a



Consulate@Your Doorstep: 600+ applicants availed OCI and other Consular Services at the Consular Camp held at Burlington, MA on April 9, 2022. Applicants thanked Consulate for saving their trip to New York otherwise. The camp was held in association with IAGB

tourist visa five years. All the visa regulations that we had, prior to March of 2020, which were suspended because we were in COVID, they all have been restored.

TIP: How about the OCI Card? What are the latest rules? How long does it take to get an OCI Card?

CONSUL GENERAL: From the day the application comes to the consulate, on the 22nd day we are in a position to issue the OCI card.

TIP: There is a one that is one particular situation that has been described to me by many people. There are people who left India, say 20 years ago 15 years ago, somewhere on the way they lost their passport. A police report is required in the case of a lost passport. But then there is nobody living now at the India address given in the Indian passport. How can the police report from India be obtained?

CONSUL GENERAL: In that case we will ask from him for more details. If he's able to provide the information, we'll see how to reverse that situation. In certain cases what happens is that people have been staying here for long. So, we have in our system, automatic trigger, that verification is sought from

your hometown or the place of residence that you've inquired and then you've entered. If we get a report back that a person is not there, then we see how best to deal with it. So, we are able to deal with the situation and find a solution to help our people. So, it's not a problem.

TIP: We have a large student population in your consular jurisdiction. I've been watching there is not the kind of connection between the consulate and those students. And I think when last we met, I did ask you a question about these students. Have you been able to apply your mind to how best you can, you involve them with the rest of the Indian diaspora or how best you can utilize their services for the nation?

CONSUL GENERAL: It's a very valid question. So, one, I would like to tell you is that in spite of limitations of the COVID whichever function we have here students have been involved. There are 50,000 to 60,000, could be more students in the 10 States under New York Consular jurisdiction. The second thing we want all students and Indian nationals to register with the embassy, with the consulate in our jurisdiction. We have put a registration link on our website. It is

important for cases of emergency that we are able to reach out to student community and we urge all of them to come and register so that we can stay connected. We have consular camps, consulate at your doorstep every month. And it is our idea at least, to try to do two every month. So, we are reaching out to all the 10 states.

And also a lot of our services now, especially in the visa site are available. Nobody needs to come to the consulate physically. You can sit in the room, take your visa and go to India. So, a lot of it is because of digitization, a lot of services and we will move in that direction more and more, as we move forward in the digital age. We have a large diaspora and a growing diaspora. So, in the days to come possibly we'll have more consulates here. But it's a work in progress.

TIP: Now coming to 75 years of independence, which is, of course a landmark event for this year, all over the world preparations are being made. What are the preparations being considered here?

CONSUL GENERAL: We launched India at 75 in New York last year with a remembrance of the sacrifice of all our freedom fighters. And since then we've had a series of events, cultural programs, talk shows, virtual programs. We have a long list of those programs and many people have actually participated in them. We had a conversation on Gandhara art at the Met Museum on March 19th.

TIP: Talking about all those challenges may require probably a book. But I will request you to at least identify one biggest challenge that you faced ever since you came to New York less than two years ago.

CONSUL GENERAL: So, you know, the responsibility here is large because we're dealing with a large population size in 10 states. So, I would say COVID itself has been a challenge, a major challenge that physically you're separated. There are several limitations which come into our way.

You know, one of the biggest complaints we received was that I have sent you have received, but from your side we have not received after the service has been delivered. Now, every time we had to explain to people that we have dispatched it, but people would say, each time the delay was on the part of the service provider, it was put on our account. We did try to get in touch with the FedEx or UPS or whoever to please try and see if they can barcode it but they have their own system. The person who picks it up from here is not the person who just has to barcode it. People should also understand that this is a situation which we encounter. You know, the world is still going through the pandemic. It happened once in 100 years. The last big pandemic that happened was in 2018. So, it was a very unusual situation and time zone challenge. But, again, we are almost back to normal, difficulties, inconveniences, challenges notwithstanding.

The Invincible Spirit of Optimism - 'Charhdi Kala'



By Amarjit Singh Anand

There are various hues of the Spirit of Optimism ('Charrhdi-kala') which were inculcated in the Sikhs, right from the time of Guru Nanak Rai Sahib Ji (1469-1539)-the Divine Preceptor of ONENESS of humanity. It continued to be instilled amongst the Sikhs, during the lifetime of his nine successor Gurus.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Divine-Leader on the Spiritual Throne of Guru Nanak Sahib Ji, says: "When I empower sparrows to fight the hawks, when I transform the weak and the meek into fearless lions, when I make the castigated ones feel exalted, when I enable one Sikh face an army of one hundred and twenty-five thousand; and so I am recognized as Gobind Singh". He says, "in egotism, one is assailed by fear, he passes his life totally troubled by fear."

Innumerable hues and connotations of Optimism

There are various colors and shades of the Spirit of 'Charrhdi-kala', whether it is sacrificing oneself on the battlefield or maintaining peace on the home front, inside the nation or within the local community; be it attaining success in a diplomatic breakthrough like the re-opening of Kartarpur Sahib Corridor between India & Pakistan after over seven decades of the bloodshed and partition that accompanied India's independence from the yoke of the British colonial, imperial monarchic occupation of India; or serving food, medications, vaccines, ventilators and oxygen concentrators during Corona pandemic; saving people during natural calamities as floods, earthquakes and hurricanes; or achieving resounding success which the farming-community of Punjab led from the front to unite nationwide workers and farmers to force the Indian establishment to revoke 'the 3 Black farming Laws'; or successfully enhancing awareness about Sikhs, in the wake of rising hate-crimes in the post-9/ 11 scenario when many Sikhs were murdered and many more suffered near-fatal injuries, as a retaliatory measure whereby the mistaken-identity syndrome was rampant.

The Spirit of Charrhdi-kala is all about rising to the occasion, whenever standing up and speaking out becomes quintessential, whether for one's own rights or to protect another who is being subjugated, oppressed, tormented and annihilated. It also refers to wielding the sword, as the last resort, after all avenues have been explored and exhausted. It is

“ The Spirit of Charhdi-kala is all about rising to the occasion, whenever standing up and speaking out becomes quintessential, whether for one's own rights or to protect another who is being subjugated, oppressed, tormented and annihilated. It also refers to wielding the sword, as the last resort, after all avenues have been explored and exhausted. It is optimism to the extent of intoxication with the Divine thought of "I (the soul) am fearless as my Parent (The Almighty Majesty) and so I must not buckle down". Now, in such a state-of-mind, the very thought of being outnumbered 1 to 125,000 enemy-ranks, does not occur at all, and so the mind becomes absolutely fearless and invincible, just indomitable. It is not about winning or losing the battle, per se but it is only about being on the right side, ethically. ”



A Sikh Day Parade in New York. File photo

optimism to the extent of intoxication with the Divine thought of "I (the soul) am fearless as my Parent (The Almighty Majesty) and so I must not buckle down". Now, in such a state-of-mind, the very thought of being outnumbered 1 to 125,000 enemy-ranks, does not occur at all, and so the mind becomes absolutely fearless and invincible, just indomitable. It is not about winning or losing the battle, per se but it is only about being on the right side, ethically.

Sree Guru Nanak Sahib Ji says : *"There is One Light of Our Creator pervading in the entire Creation and in all Creatures".*

Guru Nanak Ji was the pioneer, enunciating the cause of Inter-Religious Peace and Harmony. His tenets emphasize upon truthful living, humility, liberty, equality, justice, compassion, honest earning, serving the needy selflessly and protecting the weak and the meek. All this, he said would be tantamount to a Divine Life and real, true, actual worship and attainment of God and fulfillment of the purpose of human-birth. Guru Nanak was on a Divine Mission. He was a Spiritual Maestro, a Renaissance-Man, a Crusader for Interreligious Amity, an extraordinary social-reformist much ahead his era and yet he utters the absolute TRUTH that "he is, what he is, ONLY because of the Gracious Mercy of The Almighty and he is nothing without GOD". In other words, Divine Guru is teaching humanity to embrace humility, by refraining from self aggrandizement.

The Golden Chain: The foundation of Sikhism was laid by Guru Nanak who infused his own consciousness into a disciple, then became Guru, subsequently passing the light on to the next, and so on. The word "Guru" is derived from the root words "Gu", which means darkness or ignorance, and "Ru", which means light or knowledge. The Guru is the experience of Truth (God).

For over a thousand years, India was invaded by a small bunch of horse-riders, from Mongolia, Persia, Afghanistan, and other regions. Taimur, Ghazni, Ghor, Nadir Shah, Abdali, Durrani, Babar, Sher Shah Suri are only a few of those invaders, who plundered Hindu Temples, looted gold, took women and children as slaves, killed all and sundry who crossed their path.

And then, in 1469, appeared a man on earth, the likes of whom are seen, once in a millennium. God sent GURU NANAK, The Divine Preceptor of ONENESS of humanity and the epitome of humility to HEAL humanity. He was blessed by The Creator, to win the hearts of all, and to bring about massive transformation, wherever he went. The Divine Preceptor traversed various continents, 27000 miles in 25 years of his 70-year sojourn on this planet, fostering Goodwill amongst races, cultures, religions.

Two of the ten Gurus had to take up arms, to protect the masses from the extreme persecution and tyranny of the ruling elite. The sixth Guru Hargobind Sahibji and the tenth Guru Gobind Singhji,

with their disciples were the Saint Warriors. The fifth Guru Arjan Sahibji and the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahibji embraced martyrdom, for refusing to follow the diktat of the barbaric regime. Such events forced the sixth and tenth Gurus to raise a martial force, the army named The Khalsa.

Guru Arjan Sahib and Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib attained martyrdom for the cause of Freedom of Religion and Interfaith acceptance and harmonious coexistence.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, tenth Spiritual Master, sacrificed his entire family including four sons, all under 18, fighting the tyrannical regimes, bent upon annihilating the Freedom of Religion, Culture and Traditions.

During these five centuries, hundreds of thousands of Sikhs have performed the supreme sacrifice of life, for the protection of their motherland.

They have been in the forefront against marauding invaders and the oppressive British regime. The maximum number of those exiled from India or those executed by the British, after fake trials, were Sikhs.

Illustrious Martyrs include Bhagat Singh, who instilled courage in the masses by kissing the gallows, as a reward for serving the cause of India's freedom. Udham Singh avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre perpetrated by the British, after twenty-one years, and was also hanged. Kartar Singh Sarabha was the leading figure who played a predominant role, in the propagation of Ghadar Movement. He tried to dismantle the military structure established by the British who were fanning communal disharmony in the country.

Amongst the heroic Sikh soldiers Air Marshall Arjan Singh of the Indian Air Force and Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora are the shining stars. Hardit Singh Malik was an expert pilot of various jets in the World War theatre. Known as The Flying Sikh of Biggin Hill, Hardit Singh Malik was the first Indian pilot of the First World War and would go on to become a distinguished diplomat and Indian Ambassador to France.

Sikh regiments and battalions have served the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, worldwide, whether in war-torn countries or civil-wars, and in regions ravaged by natural calamities as famines, floods, droughts or earthquakes.

Fighting in the World Wars, as part of the British Indian Army, the highest number of "exceptional gallantry" Awards from the British Empire were bestowed upon the Sikhs. The epic saga of twenty-one Sikhs attaining martyrdom facing ten thousand Tribal Afghans is unparalleled in world history.

The role of the Sikhs in the Liberation of France is well recognized. Today, the Sikhs reside in several countries and have made a mark for themselves, in various spheres of endeavor.

The Sikhs, whether in India or while living as law-abiding citizens and contributing significantly to the economic growth of their adopted nations of abode,

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have maintained strong connections with their land of origin. The foreign exchange remittances to India, from the Sikhs are enormous and contribute to rejuvenating the Indian economy.

Whether the armed forces or politics, science and technology, business or various professions, the arts or sports, Sikhs have excelled un-proportionately, in correlation to their very negligible percentage of the world populace.

Revered Saint Bhagat Puran Singhji, personally, served the residents in a leprosy-home which he established. Being an epitome of humility and selfless service, he refused to be nominated for the Nobel Prize.

There are several Sikh parliamentarians in various countries. Gurbax Singh Malhi, elected to the Canadian Parliament in 1992, created history, when laws had to be amended, to accommodate a turban-wearing member to sit in the Parliament.

In the scenario of the post 9/ 11 tragedy, several Sikhs were murdered and bore the brunt of hate crimes, due to the mistaken-identity syndrome, but succeeded through relentless endeavors, to enhance awareness about the Sikhs.

During the current global pandemic, the Divine Guru's teachings of compassionate sharing, came to the fore, when millions of people were served with edibles, medicines, clothing, shelter and all essential services.

During the unprecedented lockdown, several governments officially requested the Sikhs to prepare food in Gurdwaras, to be served to individuals, as well as to be sent to hospitals and other institutions for the old and the infirm, orphans, and economically weaker sections.

Wherever the Sikhs reside, they assimilate extraordinarily well, in the mainstream life of any nation, culturally, politically, socially, economically, lending a spiritual and ethically sublime touch to all that they are involved in or are called upon to do. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib ji says "Acknowledge Entire Humanity as One Race"

Myriad connotations of Freedom

Freedom cannot be awarded and attained by mere rhetoric of sloganeering or by guarantees in written constitutions of nations.

Besides political freedom, each and every human has the natural right to their aspirations and expressions. Only then would everyone be empowered to enjoy the bliss of a healthy and productive lifestyle, whose components are emotional, mental, psychological health. Freedom to practice the religion, faith, belief, tradition, custom, rituals of their liking is equally paramount.

Freedom of thought and expression is the natural birthright of all. The practices of amnesty and of diplomatic immunity are really very abhorrent, as these undermine the very premise and concept of human rights.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib ji was the multi-dimensional Prophet, the Beacon-of-Light, who strictly proclaimed an injunction upon his followers thus: "I am an insignificant slave of the Primordial-Being. Those who worship me as GOD shall have to endure hell".

Guru Gobind Singh ji was born on December 22, 1666 at Takht Shri Patna Sahib in Bihar. He was anointed Gurur when he was merely 9 by his predecessor and father, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, when the latter marched towards Delhi to voluntarily court arrest,



Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa on the day of Vaisakhi at Anandpur Sahib in 1699.

in support of the Kashmiri Pundits who were being forced by the Mughal emperor, to give up their religion or to face death.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was, then, martyred by being beheaded, after witnessing the torturous martyrdom of his three disciples, Bhai Mati Das Ji, Bhai Sati Das Ji and Bhai Dayal Das Ji. This was a turning point in Indian history, which led to another historic event. On the day of Vaisakhi in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji formalized the martial institution of 'The Order of The Khalsa', the valiant force, making it mandatory for all Sikhs to wear a turban and to retain unshorn hair and beard.

The creation of the Martial Force, 'The Order of the Khalsa' on the day of Vaisakhi in 1699 proved to be a harbinger in the history of Hindustan (India). In a dramatic fashion, Guru Gobind Singh Ji tested the fearlessness of his followers by asking for their head as offering to their Guru. After an eerie silence, five Sikhs came forward and they were anointed as the Five Chosen Devoted Disciples (5 Piaare of the Guru),

Such was this Spirit instilled in the Sikhs that all four sons (all under the age of 18) of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, also attained martyrdom, just like adult warriors. Two older ones martyred in the Battle of Chamkaur Sahib were Sahibzaada Ajit Singh Ji (17) and Sahibzaada Jujhar Singh Ji (14). The two younger sons, bricked alive at Sirhind, were Sahibzaada Zorawar Singh Ji (9) and Sahibzaada Fateh Singh Ji (6-year lad).

In our contemporary world, the Khalsapanth (Pathway) or 'The Way of Life' is what The Guru gave to the Sikh community, which constitutes a large part of the global diaspora where several Sikhs are the influencers, being in positions of authority, as Parliamentarians and officials in government, in U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore amongst other nations. In numbers, Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world, with some 28 million adherents.

The Sacred Utterances of the Tenth-Divine-Sovereign include the poetic Zafar-Nama (The Epistle of Victory) as a voluminous letter to the tyrant Aurangzeb, who felt such immense remorse upon reading it, that he died, soon thereafter. This communication clearly said that the Mughal Emperor did not behave as behoves a Sovereign ruler.

The Guru wrote: "The Lord is One and His Word is True. The Victory is of the Lord. Aurangzeb, you've been pretending to be a devout and pious Muslim, whilst in reality, you are a liar who committed a blasphemous act by

swearing on the Oath of Holy Quran, which oath was falsified by your treacherous and devious actions like attacking my forces, who were promised safe passage, if we vacated the Fort of Anandpur Sahib. Furthermore, you ought to be castigated for the execution of my two minor sons, who were bricked alive in Sirhind".

Guru Gobind Singh Sahibji authored the 'Resplendent-Drama' or Play (Bachitar or Vichitra Naatak) a poetic-autobiography about the time on the Hemkunt range of mountains, where he was immersed in meditation, merged in Communion with The Divine. Thence, he was Commanded by The Almighty Majesty to assume the human-frame, in the form of the 10th Embodiment on The Spiritual Throne of The Divine Preceptor, Guru Nanak Sahibji, in order to thwart the nefarious designs of tyrannical forces. Bachitar-Natak is part of the 'Dasam Granth', the Sacred Texts written by the 10th Guru. One stanza reads thus: "I have come into this mortal-world for this purpose. The Supreme Lord has sent me for the propagation of Righteousness, everywhere, and to seize and destroy the sinful and the wicked. I have taken birth for this purpose, let all holy men understand this. I have come to disseminate Divine Religion. I am committed towards the protection of saints; and for annihilating all the tyrants".

Shri Daulat Rai Ji, a prominent figure in the Arya-Samaj sect of Hinduism, wrote a book 'Sahib-E-Kamaal' Guru Gobind Singh, the Spiritual-Master par excellence. It is dedicated to Guru Gobind Singh's life, his noble thought and his mission so that the populace at large could have a just view of the Guru's greatness."

Mai Bhaago, the brave lady-soldier inspired the 40 deserters to return to the Guru and fight alongside of him against the Mughal forces, at the battle of Muksar Sahib, he was rejoined by his 40 Sikhs, who had earlier deserted him. They were inspired by a brave lady Mai Bhaago Ji to return to the battlefield. Travelling through Gwalior, The Guru was headed towards The Deccan area, at the invitation of Aurangzeb who wanted to apologize. The Guru was forgiving and went ahead, considering that the Mughal Emperor was almost double his age. En-route, The Guru got news that Aurangzeb had died.

Finally, Guru Gobind Singh Ji decided to terminate human-Guruship and so he passed on the mantle to The Scripture, at Nanded, where Gurdwara Takht Hazoor Sahib attracts devotees and pilgrims, from all over the world. Now, The Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib was anointed as the Eternal-Guru in 1708, when Guru Gobind

Singh Ji realized his mission was accomplished and it was time to shed the mortal-frame. As a mark of humility, he did not include his Sacred Verses in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, as he opined, he was not evolved up to the level of 6 Gurus and 35 Hindu & Sufi Muslim Saints, whose compositions are enshrined therein.

Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchal Nagar Sahib, Nanded, India was the final resting place of Guru Gobind Singh who left for heavenly abode on October 7, 1708.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji was a Visionary, Saint, Scholar, Poet, Philosopher, Warrior, Connoisseur & Patron of artistes and skilled warrior. He sacrificed his parents, spouse and 4 minor sons, at the altar of upholding human dignity and Freedom of Faith/Religion & Right to Expression.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji mastered many languages including Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi, Braj, Gurmukhi and Persian. He also learned martial arts to become adept in combat. In his 42-year sojourn on this planet, he authored several poetic compositions like 'Akaal-Ustat' (Pristine-Praise of the Timeless One). The Great Guru accomplished all of this while remaining mindful of his Divine Assignment of steadfastly being the Defender of Human Rights of the populace. Hence, he did not shirk his duty, when he was pulled into fighting 16 battles against the overpowering might of the Mughal Emperor of India, who was equipped with a massive army and large arsenals. Although he braved several acts of betrayal, treachery, deception, jealousy from various quarters, yet his utmost trust in ONENESS of humanity brought him loyalty from both sides, all of the Divine-conscious and conscientious Muslims and Hindus, when they sacrificed their life, fighting against tyrannical oppressive forces of darkness.

The five virtues recognized in Sikhism are Sat (Truth), Santokh (Contentment), Daya (Compassion), Nimrata (Humility) and Pyaar (Love). For the Sikhs, the final goal of life is to reunite or merge with God (Mukti). The Sikh Gurus taught that to achieve this goal it was important to work hard at developing positive human qualities which lead the soul closer to God. The Gurus taught that all human beings have the qualities they need to reunite with God but they must train their minds to make the most of these qualities. In order to reach the final goal of life, Sikhs believe that they must constantly develop their love for God by developing compassion for all God's creation. The mind of someone who is gurmukh (literally, 'Guru facing'), is constantly focused on God at all times; while the mind of Manmukh (literally, 'mind facing' or "mind centered") is full of desire, attractions, doubts, greed, etc and he or she will be full of sorrow and pain.

'The Spirit of Optimism and Oneness' transcends race and religion. Amongst the faithful devotees of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, several notable loyal Hindus and Muslims are respected by all Sikhs. All these noble ones have gained immortality and have become a part of Sikh history.

Bhai Nand Lal Ji (c. 1633-1713) was an eminent poet laureate in the Guru's Darbaar. He fled from Aurangzeb's persecution.

Hakim Allah Yaar Khan Jogi, an unbiased Muslim poet/writer wrote two poems almost a century ago, one on Chamkaur, under the title Ganj-a-Shaheedan and the other on Sirhind, entitled Shaheedan -a-Wafa, in homage to the 4 minor sons of The Guru.

Pir Bhikan Shah saw the Divine Light emanating from the birthplace of The

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Guru and started bowing in Islamic Prayer, towards the East instead of towards Mecca in the West. He visited the newly born Guru, tested him by presenting two bowls (representing Muslims & Hindus). The Guru placed his hands on both. The Pir further said that he was immensely impressed and pleased with this act of the Holy child. The Pir, his disciples and servants then returned to his home and remained a steadfast supporter of the Guru for his entire life.

Pir Buddhu Shah was a Muslim-Divine whose real name was Badr ud Din, who was an admirer and ally of Guru Gobind Singh. He brought many hundreds of his followers and his family members to assist the Guru's force. However, the Mughals executed him, after the battle, for supporting the Guru.

Diwan Todar Mal Ji was a wealthy Hindu merchant of Sirhind, performed the cremation of the three martyrs: the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Gujri aged 9, Fateh Singh aged 6 and their grandmother, Mata Gujari Ji. The two children were bricked alive, for refusing to renounce their faith. Their grandmother at the news of the sudden and despicable execution of the innocent youngsters. This wealthy merchant had to cover the required ground for cremation with an estimated 7,800 gold coins.

Baba Moti Ram Mehra Ji served edibles and milk to the two little Sahibzadas and Mata Gujari Ji. He did not conceal his act and boldly told the Nawab that it was his pious duty to serve edibles to the imprisoned innocent children and their grandmother. Hence, Baba Moti Ram Mehra, along with his family, were sentenced to death by being squeezed in a Kohlu (oil press). The Guru blessed the brother-duo,

Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan with a 'Hukamnama': a letter of commendation stating that both of them were the "Sons of Guru Gobind Singh".

Guru Gobind Singh Ji blessed Nawab Sher Khan, Ruler of Malerkotla, for vociferously protesting against the inhuman act of bricking-alive two minor sons of The Guru. Muslim-dominated Malerkotla is the only Muslim majority city in Punjab with 68.5% residents being Muslim and the rest being Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and Buddhists. Not a single one was harmed here, during the riots erupted during the partition of India.

The Guru was an empathetic humanist to the core, a brave commanding general as well as a soldier, leading from the front. The Divine Guru Gobind Singh Ji gifted his disciples, a practical 'Way of Life', after sacrificing his entire family for Human-Rights. His unflinching resolve to stand up and to fight for Equality, Justice, Liberty, Peace and Harmonious Co-Existence which are as relevant, today, as they were over three centuries ago.

"For this purpose was I born, let all virtuous people understand. I was born to advance righteousness, to emancipate the good, and to destroy all evil-doers root and branch." -Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji blessed Bhai Kanhaiya Ji, who served water and administered first-aid to wounded soldiers of both warring sides. This supreme selfless service became the precursor to the founding of The International Committee of Red Cross.

Bhai Joga Singh stood up, in the midst of 'Anand-Kaaraj' (his wedding ceremony) when Guru Gobind Singh Ji tested his loyalty and devotion, by sending his followers. to inform Joga Singh that the



The Living Guru Sree Guru Granth Sahib at a Gurdwara in France

Guru required his presence soon.

Before the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was severed in Delhi, his disciples who were martyred included the two brothers Bhai Mati Das, who was sawed alive and Bhai Sati Das Ji, who was wrapped in cotton and burnt alive. Another follower, Bhai Dayal Das Ji was boiled alive in a cauldron.

The epoch-making epic battle of Fort Saragarhi witnessed 21 young Sikhs face the onslaught of the ferocious Pathan tribals in 1897. They did not surrender. Some of them were so young that they didn't have a beard and moustache.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (16 October, 1670 - 9 June, 1716) aka Lachhman Dev alias Madho Dass Bairagi, originally from the Jammu region, is revered as one of the greatest Sikh warriors as well as one of the most hallowed martyrs of the Khalsa Army. The Khalsa were engaged in a prolonged fight against the cruel Mughals, who were practising their tyranny and terrorism. His confrontation with the Mughal administration in Northern India, though brief, was strong and vigorous enough to shake the foundations of this evil empire. The agrarian uprising that he led in the Punjab was the underpinning on which the Dal Khalsa, the Sikh Misls and Maharaja Ranjit Singh built the edifice which finally culminated with Ranjit Singh capturing Lahore in 1799 and establishing the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab. This resulted in the end of a dark period in the history of India.

The valiant one Nawab Kapur Singh. When Zakariya Khan, who became the governor of Lahore in 1726, adopted rigorous measures against the Sikhs, Nawab Kapur Singh organized a band of warriors, who, with a view to paralyzing the administration and obtaining food for their companions forced to seek shelter in remote hills and forests, attacked government treasuries and caravans moving from one place to another. Such was the effect of these depredations that the Delhi government, in 1733, at the instance of Zakariya Khan, decided to lift the quarantine forced upon the Sikhs and made an offer of a grant to them. Subeg Singh, a Sikh resident of Jambar, near Lahore, who was a police-inspector of the city under Mughal authority, was entrusted with the task of negotiating peace with the Khalsa.

General Hari Singh Uppal 'Nalwa' conquered regions as far away in Afghanistan. He was held in immense awe by the ferocious Afghan Pathaan tribals, whom he vanquished but ruled with

equality and respect.

The Conquest of Delhi was effected in 1783 by Generals Baba Baghel Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, when they captured Shah Alam, the Emperor of India, and hoisted the Khalsa Insignia called the 'Nishaan-Sahib', atop the Red Fort in Delhi. The famed Peacock Throne of Mughal Dynasty was uprooted from the concrete ground and was tied with iron chains, to be pulled by elephants and taken to Punjab. It is placed as a Souvenir or trophy, in the Ramgarhia Museum.

Sardar Sham Singh Attari (Circa 1785-1846), a Sikh general in the Sikh army of Lahore Darbar, belonged to a Jatt family of Sidhu Clan. was the only son of Sardar Nihal Singh Attari (d. 1817), and grandson of Sardar Gaur Singh Attari (d. 1763). The first in line to Convert to Sikhism in the early days of Sikh political ascendancy and joined the Jatha or band of Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh of Roranvala. He soon established his, protection over an area around Attari, a village he had founded some 16 miles west from the holy city of Amritsar. His son, Nihal Singh Attari, was known for his martial prowess and for his personal loyalty to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Nihal Singh's son, Sham Singh Attari, entered the service of the Maharaja in 1817 and, in 1818, took part in the military campaigns of Peshawar, Attock and Multan. He also fought in Kashmir in 1819. He led Sikh forces against Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly who had during the years 1826-31 carried on in the trans-Indus region a relentless crusade against the Sikhs. Sayyid Ahmad was overcome and killed on 6 May 1831, along with his chief lieutenant, Muhammad Ismail.

Emperor (Maharaja) Ranjit Singh, the 19th century ruler of the Sikh Empire in India, was voted as the best administrator in world history. He overcame competition from around the world, to be named the "Greatest Leader of All Time" in a poll conducted by 'BBC World Histories Magazine'. He was instrumental for the Unification of Sikh Martial Groups (Misals) into a strong Confederation. The title of Divine Kingship can well be used while discussing Sikh Emperor Ranjit Singh, who stands out amongst the Greatest rulers, who treated their subjects with fair play, equality, justice, respect and benevolence. Wisdom, bravery, strategy and tolerance for all religions were his hallmarks. He donated tones of gold to Hindu, Muslim and Christian shrines just as to Sikh Gurdwaras. His ministers, advisors, generals and functionaries

hailed from all religions, and some were of other races from other nations.

In the first half of the 18th century, state terrorism against the Sikhs was on the steady increase and was intensified by Mir Mannu. In 1748, the Mughals appointed Mir Mannu as Governor (Subedar) of Lahore and also as a Nawab of Multan (1748-1753).

Sikhs were offered a choice : "conversion or death."

In order to pacify Hindus, Mir Mannu appointed a Khatri Hindu of Lahore named Kaura Mall as his diwan or minister. He then ordered 30,000+ army of mughals at Lahore to finish the Sikhs. The mughal army swept the countryside and killed many of the Sikhs they found. By now, the faith of the common people in Sikhi and the strength of the Khalsa had increased tremendously. Despite Mannu's extreme torture and reign of terror, nothing could deter the Sikhs. A Panjabi folk song of that period goes like this in English:

The motto/slogan of the Sikhs was: "We are the plants and Mannu is a sickle; The more he cuts us, the more we grow."

This is the time when the army of Mir Mannu was going from house to house searching for Sikhs. Many of the Sikhs took shelter in jungles but some Sikhs who were living with their families in the cities and could not just leave right away or join any jathas. They were captured by the army and all were being sent to Lahore. Most of the prisoners were Sikh women and children. Many of the old women were killed on the way because they were weak and could not walk for a long time. All of the Singhni's and their children were put in Lahore jail. At that time Sikh population was very negligible. A decade earlier, a governor had decided to kill all Sikhs. At that point people thought that all Sikhs were finished, but Bhai Gharjha Singh and Bhai Bota Singh came out of hiding and fought with Mughals, just to show them that Sikhs were far from finished.

Everyday Muslims would come and taunt them by saying "where is your Khalsa now? They can't even come to rescue you. All of them have been killed by the army. So it is better for you to accept Islam and live a rich happy life." Singhni's never ever thought of leaving Sikhi.

The sacrifice of the Khalsa women that was so great that it became a part of the daily prayer. They kept reciting "Waheguru, Hail the Guru".

Sikh Women in Mir Mannu's Death Camps

Mir Mannu started deploying terror tactics. First of all, he ordered that all Sikh women be imprisoned.

Every woman was given forty pounds of grain to grind daily. A very heavy stone was placed on the chest of those who could not grind. They were given just a bowl of water and a quarter of a piece of bread to eat in a single day. The tyrants then started killing the innocent children by throwing them up in the air and landing them on sharp spears. One soldier would throw a child up in the air and another soldier would spear the child before the child hit the ground. The dead bodies of these children were cut into pieces and the ladies were garlanded with those pieces. Pieces of flesh of the children were thrust into the mouths of their mothers. But the faith of Sikh women was unshakable.

Such is the invincible spirit of optimism of the Sikhs.

(The author is a thinker and a scholar on Sikhism. He can be reached at asa1ny@yahoo.com)

The Creation of Khalsa

Following the death of Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the most important of all the Gurus with the exception of Guru Nanak, assumed leadership of the Sikhs.

Gobind Rai, whose name was altered to Gobind Singh possibly at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, was born in Patna, the only child of Guru Teg Bahadur. At the age of five he was brought to Anandpur and educated in Sanskrit and Persian and in the arts of poetry and warfare. His father's execution in Delhi by Aurangzeb must have made a deep impression on the child. For several years after his succession as Guru, he continued his education in the Shiwalik Hills. He grew to manhood as the ruler of a small Shiwalik state, participating in various wars against other Shiwalik chieftains and demonstrating a particular delight in the sport of hunting.

According to Sikh tradition, on Baisakhi Day late in the 17th century (1699), a fair was held at Anandpur, and all Sikhs were ordered to attend. The Guru remained concealed until the celebrations were at their height, when he suddenly appeared from a tent carrying a drawn sword and demanding the head of one of his loyal followers.

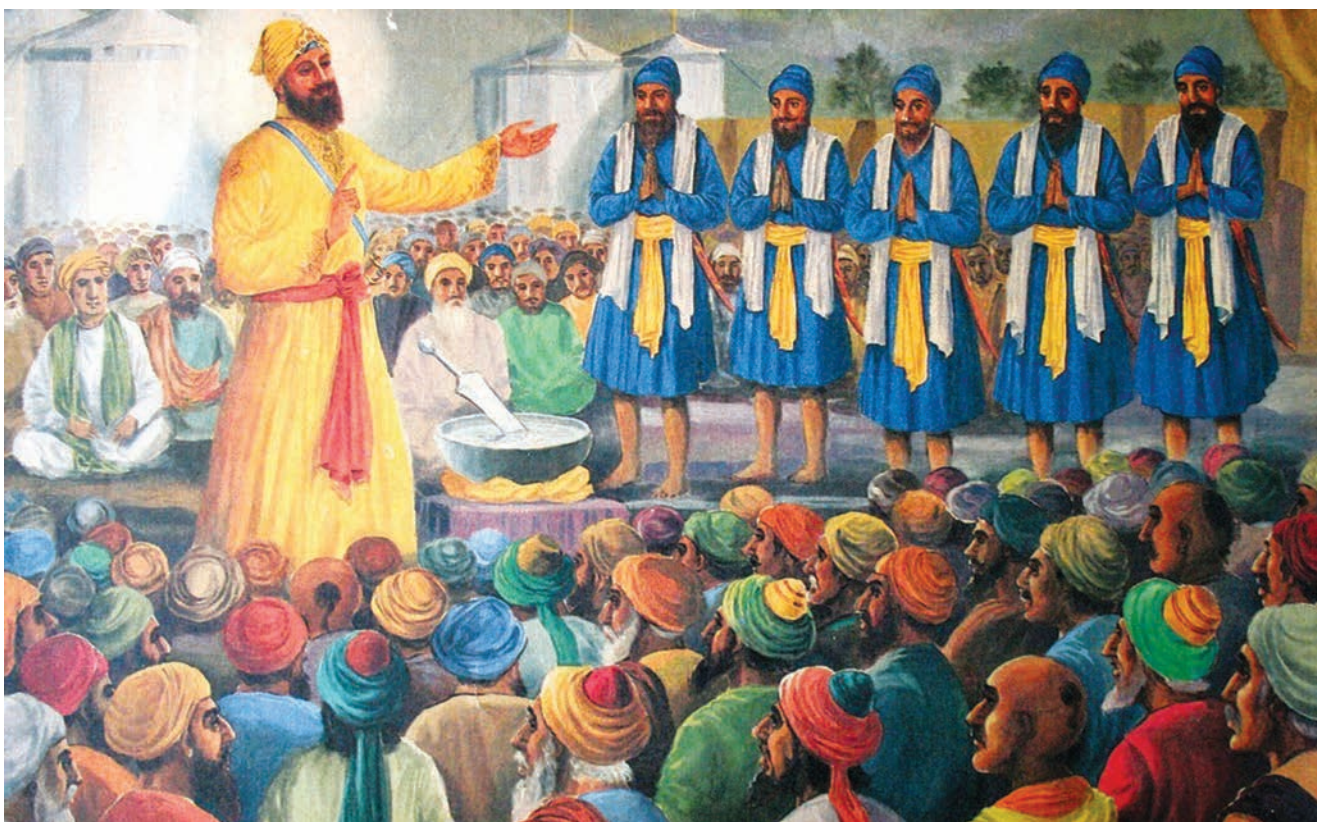
At once the crowd became silent, wondering what had happened. The Guru repeated the command, and eventually Daya Singh volunteered and was taken behind a screen to be dispatched. Gobind Singh then reappeared, his sword dripping blood, and demanded a second victim. He too was escorted behind the screen, and again the sound of the sword could be heard. In this manner five loyal Sikhs agreed to die for their master. When he had apparently dispatched the fifth, the screen was removed, and all five were seen to be very much alive. At their feet lay five slaughtered goats. The five volunteers became the Panj Piare, the "Cherished Five," who had proved that their loyalty was beyond question.

Guru Gobind Singh explained that he desired the Panj Piare to be the beginning of a new order, the Khalsa ("the Pure," from the Persian khalisah, also meaning "pure"). The masands (many of whom had become quarrelsome or corrupt) would be eliminated, and all Sikhs, through their initiation into the Khalsa, would owe allegiance directly to the Guru. Gobind Singh then commenced the amrit sanskar ("nectar ceremony"), the service of initiation for the Panj Piare. When the rite was concluded, the Guru himself was initiated by the Panj Piare. The order was then opened to anyone wishing to join, and Sikh tradition reports that enormous crowds responded.

It should be noted that, contrary to the belief of many Sikhs, some central features of the present-day Khalsa did not exist in Gobind Singh's time. For example, although the Guru required that those initiated into the Khalsa carry arms and never cut their hair (so that at least the men would never be able to deny their identity as Khalsa Sikhs), the wearing of the "Five Ks"—kes or kesh (uncut hair), kangha (comb), kachha (short trousers), kara (steel bracelet), and kirpan (ceremonial sword)—did not become an obligation of all Sikhs until the establishment of the Singh Sabha, a religious and educational reform movement of the late 19th and the early 20th century.

The Sikh wedding ceremony, in which the bride and groom walk around the Guru Granth Sahib, is also a modern development, having replaced the essentially Hindu rite, in which the bride and groom walk around a sacred fire, by the Anand Marriage Act of 1909. The names Singh ("Lion") for Sikh males and Kaur ("Princess") for Sikh females, formerly adopted upon initiation into the Khalsa, are now bestowed to all Sikhs in a birth and naming ceremony (see below Rites and festivals). All of these changes have been incorporated into the Rahit, the Sikh code of belief and conduct, which reached nearly its final form in the early 20th century.

Guru Gobind Singh believed that the forces of good and evil in the world sometimes fall out of balance. When the forces of evil become too great, Akal Purakh intervenes in human history to correct the balance, using particular human individuals as his agents. In Gobind Singh's time the forces of evil, represented by



the Mughals under Aurangzeb, had gained the ascendancy, and it was Gobind Singh's task, he believed, to right the balance. In the service of this mission, the Sikhs were justified in drawing the sword. He expressed this conviction in Zafar-nama ("Epistle of Victory"), a letter that he addressed late in life to Aurangzeb. Soon after the creation of the Khalsa, the Guru was attacked by other Shiwalik chieftains in league with the Mughal governor of the town of Sirhind. In 1704 he was compelled to withdraw from Anandpur, losing two of his four sons in the battle that followed. The two remaining sons were taken prisoner and delivered to the governor of Sirhind, who cruelly

executed them by bricking them up alive. The fate of these two children has remained an agonizing tale for Sikhs ever since. From Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh escaped to southern Punjab, where he inflicted a defeat on his pursuers at Muktsar. He then moved on to Damdama, remaining there until 1706 and, according to tradition, occupying himself with the final revision of the Adi Granth. When Aurangzeb died in 1707, Gobind Singh agreed to accompany Aurangzeb's successor, Bahadur Shah, to southern India. Arriving at Nanded on the banks of the Godavari River in 1708, he was assassinated by agents of the governor of Sirhind.

Source: Britannica.com

Significance of creation of Khalsa

The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh was the greatest achievements of his genius. It gave birth to a movement which had far reaching effects. It brought a new belief into being and released a new dynamic force into the arena of Indian History.

The Khalsa produced men of uncommon bravery, sacrifice

By the creation of the Khalsa, the Great Guru laid the foundation of a brotherhood, which produced in the fullness of time, men of uncommon bravery, unique and devotion and rare spirit of sacrifice.

Men like Banda Bahadur, Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Deep Singh, Bhai Taru Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia were among them which the Khalsa produced within only fifty years after its inception.

He converted the Sikhs into a race of saint-soldiers

The Khalsa created brotherhood who though worshipped the supreme Being at heart, was ever ready to take up arms against injustice and oppression.

Guru Gobind Singh "withdrew his followers from the undivided attention which their father had given them to regard the sword as their principal stay in their world".

It brought a tremendous change in the character and psychology of the Hindus

Before the creation of the Khalsa, the bulk of the Hindus were cowardly, disunited and ill-organized. They were prey to mutual jealousies. They had no love for religion, race or country. Centuries of suppression had reduced them to mere dregs of humanity were changed as it by magic into something rich and strange. The sweepers, the barbers, the washermen and the confectioners who had for generations lived as crawling slaves, became doughty warriors who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at their bidding of their Guru. It has been aptly remarked that the tenth Guru transformed "Jackals into lions and sparrows into hawks." Guru Gobind Singh effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy."

The Khalsa was purified of superstitions and blind faith

The creation of the Khalsa freed the Sikhs from superstitions and unnecessary ritual practices. They had no faith in idol worship and life of ostentations. They were enjoined upon to believe in one True Lord. Gobind Singh took away from his followers their ancient solace of superstitions.

It gave new life to depressed and down trodden communities

The creation of the Khalsa had a miraculous effect in uplifting the depressed and down trodden communities. The members of the low castes who were regarded as unclean and polluted in the Hindu society became leaders among men of high birth. They came forward as Sikhs and fought side by side with the Kshatriyas and Brahmans for the cause of Dharma. The members of the low castes proved to be the backbone of the Khalsa and proved to be real patriots and doughty warriors who made sacrifices for their country and faith.

It made the Sikhs a unified community

The creation of the Khalsa made all the Sikhs equal. They considered themselves as blood relations having acquired common heritage from their common Gurus. The external marks of Sikhism ie, the five K's gave them a sense of brotherhood, equality and religious unity. Their eating in the common kitchen, sitting together, gave a death-blow to the caste system. The status of one Sikh was in no way superior to that of the other. This principle of equality led to unity and cohesion amongst the followers of the Gurus.

It led to wars between the Guru and the hilly Rajas



One of the immediate results of the foundation of the Khalsa was that it excited the jealousy of hilly chiefs and brought Guru Gobind Singh into conflict with them. They saw in the democratic teachings and the military zeal of the Guru a threat to their influence and power. Besides, they thought that they would be the first victims of Guru's ambition. Consequently, the hilly chiefs felt much concerned and lost no time in initiating hostilities against the Guru. Thus was started the long drawn warfare between the two parties.

It made Sikhism distinct from Hinduism

The distinguished marks of the Khalsa namely the five K's, the appellation of Singh, the new mode of salutation and total abstention from smoking- the essential tenets of the Khalsa made Sikhism more distinct from Hinduism. Thereafter, the possibilities of the Sikhism being absorbed by the Hinduism became very remote.

The Khalsa saved Hinduism from annihilation

The creation of the Khalsa saved Hinduism from annihilation. Aurangzeb had started a program of wholesale conversion of the Hindus. His officers followed a policy of religious persecution of Hindus,



demolished their temples and subjected them to unheard cruelties. At such a juncture, the creation of the Khalsa gave a new lease of life to the Hindus religion. By their military valor, sacrifice and services, they saved them from the tyranny of the Mughal Government. Even after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa continued its struggle against injustice and oppression and did not rest till it had completely overpowered the enemy.

It gradually made the Khalsa political power in the Punjab

The great legacy of the creation of the Khalsa was the "Sikh struggle for independence" in the Punjab. The Khalsa first thought against the Mughals and then against the Afghans and did not rest till it had achieved the goal after a long and determined struggle for almost a century the Punjab under Ranjit Singh became a sovereign state.

Guru Gobind Singh in no way gave up the essentials of Guru Nanak's teachings. Like his predecessors, Guru Gobind Singh insisted on the worship of the One True Lord, with the same ideal, devotion and humility and for the same glorification of the Name. He did not want his followers to forget their Lord in the worldly pursuits.

Source: Abhipedia

Vaisakhi: The harvest festival

Vaisakhi, also known as Baisakhi, is a harvest festival celebrated in India and in parts of the world largely by the Sikh community. The day holds great significance and is celebrated as Sikh New Year, based on the solar calendar.

This year, it will be celebrated on April 14, a Thursday.

History and significance

For the Sikh community, Baisakhi is not only a harvest festival, but also a religious one. On March 30, 1699, on Vaisakhi, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, which is the 'pure' Sikh community. On this day, the Guru asked people to sacrifice their life for the Lord.

Five people volunteered and they later came to be known as 'panj piaras'. Sikhs visit gurdwaras on the day of Baisakhi, and in Punjab, specifically, langars are organised at various places. Traditionally, kada prasad (wheat halwa) is served. People wear new, colourful clothes and in the evenings, perform bhangra (Punjabi folk dance). Processions of nagar kirtans are also carried out, which involve singing and chanting from the holy book, Guru Granth Sahib. Other than Punjab, the festival is also celebrated in other states, like in Haryana, where a Baisakhi Fair is organised.

Celebrations

People of Punjab celebrate the festival of Baisakhi with exuberance and devotion. As the festival has tremendous importance in Sikh religion, major activities of the day are organized in Gurdwaras. People wake up early to prepare for the day. Many also take bath in the holy river to mark the auspicious occasion. After getting ready people pay a visit to their neighbourhood gurdwara and take part in the special prayer meeting organized for the day. At the end of the Baisakhi ardass, congregates receive specially prepared Kara prasad or sweetened semolina. This is followed by a guru ka langar or community lunch. Later, during the day people of Sikh faith take out a Baisakhi procession under the leadership of Panj piaras. The procession moves through the major localities of the city amidst the rendition of devotional songs by the participating men, women and children. Mock duels, bhangra and gidda performances make the procession joyous and colorful.

Celebrations by Farmers

For the large farming community of Punjab and Haryana, Baisakhi marks a New Year's time as it is time to harvest rabi crop. On Baisakhi, farmers thank god for the bountiful crop and pray for good times ahead. People buy new clothes and make merry by singing, dancing and enjoying the best of festive food. Cries of "Jatta aai Baisakhi", rent the skies as gaily men and women break into the bhangra and gidda dance to express their joy. Everyday farming scenes of sowing, harvesting, winnowing and gathering of crops are expressed through zestful movements of the body to the accompaniment of ballads and dhol music. In several villages of Punjab Baisakhi Fairs are organized where besides other recreational activities, wrestling bouts are also held.

History

Baisakhi or Vaisakhi Festival is celebrated as the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Khalsa Panth. History of Baisakhi traces its origin from the Baisakhi Day celebrations of 1699 organized by the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh to form Khalsa – Brotherhood of Saint Soldiers to fight against tyranny and oppression.

Story of Baisakhi

The story of Baisakhi Festival began with the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru who was publicly beheaded by the Aurungzeb, the Mughal ruler. Aurungzeb wanted to spread Islam in India and Guru Tegh Bahadur stood up for the rights of Hindus and Sikhs and the Mughals therefore saw him as a threat. After the death of Guru Teg Bahadur, his son, Guru Gobind Singh became the next Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh wished to instill courage and strength to sacrifice among his fellow men. To fulfil his dream, Guru Gobind Singh called on the historic Baisakhi Day congregation of Sikhs at Keshgarh Sahib near Anandpur on March 30, 1699. When thousands of people assembled for Guru's blessing, Guru Gobind Singh



came out of the tent carrying an unsheathed sword. He gave a powerful speech to infuse courage amongst fellowmen. At the end of the speech he said that every great deed was preceded by equally great sacrifice and demanded that anyone prepared to give his life come forward. On the Guru's third call, a young man offered himself. The Guru took the man inside a tent and reappeared alone with a bloodied sword. Guru Gobind Singh asked for another volunteer. This was repeated another four times until a total of five Sikhs had gone into the tent with the Guru. Everyone present was worried and thought that Guru Gobind Singh has killed five Sikhs. At this point Guru presented all the five men before the people. Every one present was surprised to see all five men alive and wearing turbans and saffron-coloured garments. These five men were called Panj Piara or 'Beloved Five' by the Guru. The Guru blessed them with a Pahul ceremony. In an iron vessel, the Guru stirred with a sword called Khanda Sahib, the batasha that his wife, Mata Sundari Ji had put into water.

The congregation recited verses from scriptures as the Guru performed the sacred ceremony. The water was now considered the sacred nectar of immortality called amrit. It was first given to the five volunteers, then drunk by the guru and later distributed amongst the crowd. With this ceremony, all those present, irrespective of caste or creed, became members of the Khalsa Pantha (the Order of the Pure Ones). The Guru regarded the Panch Piaras as the first members of the Khalsa and the embodiment of the Guru himself. With the constitution of the Panj Pyare the high and low castes were amalgamated into one as among the

original Panj Pyare, there was one Khatri, shopkeeper; one Jat, farmer; one Chhimba, calico printer; one Ghumar, water-carrier; and one Nai, a barber. The Guru gave the surname of Singh (Lion) to every Sikh and also took the name for himself. From Guru Gobind Rai he became Guru Gobind Singh. This was seen as a great step in national integration because society at that time was divided on the basis of religion, caste and social status. Guru Gobind Singh also bestowed on Khalsa, the unique Sikh identity. He directed Sikhs to wear five K's: Kesh or long hair; Kangha or comb, Kripan or dagger; Kachha or shorts and a Kara or bracelet. Guru Gobind Singh also discontinued the tradition of Gurus and asked all Sikhs to accept the Grantha Sahib as their eternal guide. He urged them to come to him with their hair and beard unshorn to get baptized by the sword.

What Rituals Are Performed

In the morning, Sikhs visit the gurdwara (temple) to attend special payers. Most Sikhs strive to visit the revered Golden Temple in Amritsar or Anandpur Sahib, where the Khalsa was pronounced. The Granth Sahib, or Holy Scripture, is bathed with milk and water, placed on a throne, and read. Karah prasad (sacred pudding made from butter, sugar and flour) is distributed.

In the afternoon, the Granth Sahib is taken out during a procession, accompanied by music, singing, chanting, and performances. Sikhs also offer also kar seva by helping in the daily chores of the gurdwaras. This is a traditional symbol of humanity for all Sikhs.

Vaisakhi Celebrated at the Indian Consulate, New York

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The 90-minute celebrations started with singing of Gurbani by Prachi Makkar and Surya Makkar who played Tabla, too.

A display of the Sikh martial art-Gatka- thrilled everyone. The young boys from Akal Gatka Academy founded by Mr. Daler Singh left all spellbound with their great performance.

A well-known community leader Raghbir Singh Subhanpur, an ex-President of Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana recited a Punjabi poem exhorting Sikhs to follow the path of righteousness.

The young Riya Dadheech gave a stellar Punjabi dance performance.

A 21-minute documentary on Vaisakhi screened on the occasion received the praise of the guests who described it as very informative. The documentary named A Journey in Time traced the history of Punjab and the history and contribution of the Sikhs. The documentary is produced and directed by Prof. Indrajit Saluja.

To cap the celebrations was the worldwide popular -Bhangra. The Soormay group of performers gave a thrilling performance inviting rounds of applause from the gathering.

The 120 strong gathering in the ornate room of the Consulate had not only the Sikhs celebrating Vaisakhi but people from all faiths and from all geographical areas of India and from various parts of the US. Among the guests were community leaders, elected representatives and officials. Dozens of Gurdwaras and community organizations were represented.

The Consul General of India Randhir Kumar Jaiswal was the chief guest. In his address Mr. Jaiswal spoke about the rich diversity of India. "Here what you see is the culture of Punjab in the form of dances and songs. The bravery and vigor of the Sikhs is so well known", he said. He also spoke about his having a personal experience of visiting the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh in Patna and then the place of his resting in Nanded which he visited while he was studying in that part of the country. Welcoming the guests, he said that the doors of the consulate are open to all people and invited them to get more involved in the various programs that the consulate organizes throughout the year.

Earlier, Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Chief Editor of The Indian Panorama welcomed and introduced Mr. Jaiswal and guests. He thanked the Consul General and the Consulate staff for their cooperation and hoped that the tradition of holding cultural festivals as also various other activities to involve the Indian Americans will not only continue but will get speeded up.

Dr. VK Raju, an eminent ophthalmologist and President of the



Prachi Makkar (on Harmonium) and Surya Makkar (on Tabla) sing a "shabad" (hymn) -"Deh Shiva er mohe ihe, shubh karmen te kabahun na taron" Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Consul General Randhir Jaiswal delivering his remarks

Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja welcomes guests. Master of Ceremonies Sangeet Sharma is seen to his right Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



A Gatka performance by students of Akal Gatka Academy of Mr. Daler Singh

Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Mr. Raghbir Singh Subhanpur recites his poem Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Another Gatka performance

Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Ria Dadheech gave a great performance of a Punjabi dance. She was felicitated by Senator John Liu (left) and Consul General Randhir Jaiswal Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Viraj Singh, Madhu Singh and Ashishpal Saluja present a bouquet to the Chief Guest Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal

Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment



Gatka group with the Consul General, Prof. Saluja and guests

Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment

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Attorney Ravi Batra giving his remarks
Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment



Dr. VK Raju is being honored by the Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal. Seen in the picture, from L to R: Senator John Liu, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Dr. VK Raju, Ravi Batra, Prof. Indrajit Saluja
Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment



Senator John Liu is felicitated by the Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal. Prof. Saluja is seen on the extreme right
Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment



Consul, Culture Mr. Vipul Dev gives a vote of thanks.
Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment



A view of the gathering

Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment



Bhangra boys with the Chief Guest, guests and organizers.

Photo // Jay Mandal- on assignment

Eye Foundation of America who had traveled all the way from West Virginia to attend the event was the guest of Honor. Dr. Raju was given a standing ovation for the great humanitarian work he was doing of preventing blindness among children the world over, in particular in India where he runs a hospital to serve the underprivileged people, particularly in the rural areas. Speaking of the importance of eyes, Dr. Raju said 80% of the learning comes through the eyes, and a child with no eyesight becomes a burden on himself, his family and the society. Therefore, he considers it very important to be working for a world without childhood blindness.

New York State Senator John Liu, a great friend of the Indian American community, also graced the occasion with his presence. In his brief address he congratulated the Sikh community on the occasion of their birthday.

Rokeya Akhter, Community Relations officer with the Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz represented her boss.

Among other guests were Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Attorney Ravi Batra and Diwali Stamp Foundation Chair Ranju Batra.

Ravi Batra who admires Guru Gobind Singh recalled his anguish when Sikhs in a Gurdwara in Wisconsin were shot. He was the one who got community members together in New York and organized a protest meeting.

Consul, Culture Mr. Vipul Dev thanked the guests, performers, sponsors and the organizers.

It was left to the Master of Ceremonies Sangeet Sharma who very ably conducted the entire program to finally thank all on behalf of the organizers.

The celebrations were hosted jointly by the Consulate General of India and The Indian Panorama, a leading English Weekly on the East Coast.

Sikhs Sue Marine Corps Over Restrictions on Beards

THE MARINE CORPS SAYS IT NEEDS UNIFORMITY, ESPECIALLY DURING BOOT CAMP, AND THAT BEARDS POSE RISKS. SIKHS SAY THE RULES ARE ARBITRARY AND NEEDLESSLY BURDEN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A Marine artillery captain named Sukhbir Singh Toor has been on a mission over the past year to become the first Sikh in the United States Marine Corps allowed to openly practice his religion while in uniform.

During that time he has won a string of victories against the strict dress standards of the Marine Corps, and he can now wear the beard, long hair and turban required of a faithful Sikh while on duty. But recently, the Marine Corps dug in, refusing to allow him or any other Sikh to wear a beard on a combat deployment or during boot camp, saying that beards would hinder the corps's ability to function and put lives at risk.

On Monday, Captain Toor and three other Sikhs sued the Marine Corps in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, saying the corps's refusal to grant a religious waiver is arbitrary and discriminatory, and violates the constitutional right to free exercise of their religion.

"I just want to move on, so I can do my job," Captain Toor, 27, said in an interview from his base in Twentynine Palms, Calif., before the suit was filed. "There is no reason I should have to sacrifice my faith in order to serve my country."

Joining him in the lawsuit are three prospective Marine recruits who have been told they must shave their beards and cut their hair for boot camp, where all Marines receive basic training, and only afterward would be able to apply for a religious exemption.

The lawsuit is emblematic of the larger struggle the tradition-bound military faces in trying to attract personnel in an increasingly diverse nation, while preserving practices that took root when its ranks were almost entirely white, male and Christian.

At issue is the long-simmering tension between constitutional guarantees of individual rights and the military's need to maintain an effective fighting force that at times must impinge on those rights. The back and forth over religion has been evolving since at least 1981, when an Orthodox rabbi serving in the Air Force sued the service over the right to wear a skullcap. Current law requires that the military not restrict individual exercise of religion except when a "compelling government interest" is at stake, and in those cases, to use the "least restrictive means" possible.

What counts as a compelling government interest, or as the least restrictive means, is at the center of the case.

The Marine Corps declined to comment on the lawsuit. In prior administrative decisions concerning Sikh turbans and beards, Marine leaders have cited two interests it said were compelling. One is uniform appearance in the ranks, which the corps argues is crucial to good order and discipline.

"Uniformity is more than the mere outward expression of unity with the team; it is a tool that



Capt. Sukhbir Singh Toor and three other Sikhs sued the Marine Corps on Monday, April 11

constantly reminds each Marine of the team to which they are committed and a signal to other Marines of the depth of that commitment," the Marine Corps said in response to Captain Toor's first request for an accommodation in June. Tampering with that commitment, it warned, could cost lives.

Second, the Marine Corps has said, beards might hinder Marines' physical ability to do their duties by keeping them from safely wearing gas masks.

That is why Captain Toor and other Sikhs currently cannot wear beards when deployed in any of 39 countries that are considered potentially hostile, including Algeria, Israel, Turkey, Uganda and Cuba.

Col. Kelly Frushour, a Marine spokeswoman, said the risks in foreign deployments could change rapidly. "Accordingly, Marines in a combat zone must be prepared to don a gas mask at any time with little or no notice," she said.

In their suit, the Sikhs counter that the Marine Corps routinely deploys men to combat zones who have permission to wear beards because of medical conditions or because they are part of Special Operations units. And the corps's beard rules would require the Sikhs to shave even in countries where the risk of chemical attack is so low that Marines deployed there are not equipped with gas masks.

The Army made similar safety arguments against a Sikh soldier in 2015 but relented in 2016 after the soldier sued. About 100 Sikhs currently serve in the Army and Air Force wearing full beards and turbans, and many have been deployed to combat zones. In interviews, they have reported no issues.

The American military now grants more religious exemptions to uniform and grooming standards than ever before, allowing hijabs for Muslim women, long hair for a small Christian sect, and beards for a few practicing Norse Heathens. But the Marine Corps has for generations fought changes after other branches embraced them. It was the last service branch to allow

Black men to enlist, and it balked at a 2015 mandate to allow women to serve in combat.

In the case of the Sikhs, the Marine Corps has dug in over more than just practical considerations. It also says beards and turbans are a potential threat to a more abstract concept of unity.

The 13 weeks of boot camp are the crucible where ordinary citizens are turned into Marines, taking away nearly all individual identity - phones, personal clothes, hair styles and even the word "I": Drill instructors force recruits to refer to themselves only as "this recruit."

"This transformative period sets the foundation for further service by breaking down individuality and training recruits to think of their team first," the Marine Corps wrote in February when it denied an accommodation for one of the prospective Sikh recruits, Aekash Singh. "Uniformity is a key component of this process. Consequently, limiting exceptions during this transformative process constitutes the least restrictive means to further the government's compelling interests."

Mr. Singh and two other prospective recruits, Jaskirat Singh and Milaap Singh Chahal, declined to be interviewed. In a statement, they said: "We remain ready to meet the high mental and physical standards of the Marine Corps because we want to serve our country alongside the best. We cannot, however, give up our right to our religious faith while doing so."

In the suit filed on Monday, their lawyers argued that the Marine Corps routinely allows other recruits into boot camp who do not fit homogeneous appearance standards. Women are allowed to keep their long hair during training, and the corps recently loosened restrictions on tattoos, allowing recruits to have ink covering everything but their hands, head and neck.

The corps said the change in the tattoo policy was meant "to balance the individual desires of Marines with the need to maintain the disciplined appearance expected of our profession." The Sikhs say in their lawsuit that "it is perverse to claim that respecting 'the individual desires of Marines' to have full-body tattoos is consistent with mission accomplishment, but that respecting Marines' desires to be faithful to God is somehow risky."

Giselle Klapper, a civil rights attorney with an advocacy group, the Sikh Coalition, who is one of the lawyers representing the plaintiffs, said that the coalition tried for more than a year to negotiate a solution with Marine Corps leaders, but that the corps had been unreceptive.

She predicted that her clients would prevail, as Sikhs have in the other service branches, but said she was disappointed that they had to take the issue to court.

"We feel we have run out of other options," she said. "People's lives have been put on hold. How long do they have to wait?"



President Joe Biden on Thursday, April 14 greeted people on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti.

Biden greets people on Mahavir Jayanti

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): "This is a day to strive for peace, happiness, and the success of all," Biden said in a tweet, wishing the devotees on behalf of himself and First Lady Jill Biden.

"May we each pursue the values Mahavir Swami embodied: to seek truth, turn from violence, and live in harmony with each other," he said.

Welcoming Biden's message, Ajay Bhutoria, the President's advisor on Asian American Pacific Islander and native Hawaiian commission, said the world is in need of the teachings of Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, that urged the people to follow the path of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence).

Battle within US panel on religious freedom on putting India on Red List

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Behind the exchange of words on the state of human rights in each other's countries between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is a more intense battle being fought in the corridors of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as it prepares a report to be submitted to the US State Department on April 25.

Twice in past successive years, the USCIRF wanted the US State Department to treat India as a 'Country of Particular Concern (CPC)' which would bracket it with egregious human rights abusers such as China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. And, both times two different US administrations have rejected its recommendation and kept India a rung below the Red List.

This time, the battle within USCIRF on the India chapter is more intense than in the past amidst insider accounts that one Commissioner has "been turned" and is understood to be insisting



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington
Photo / PTI

on several changes in the draft under preparation.

In a letter to USCIRF, several US-based civil rights and faith groups have asked it to withstand the pressure. "It is clear that those seeking to obfuscate the reality of India's persecution of its

religious minorities are now using intense lobbying and combative communication with the goal of preventing USCIRF from recommending India's designation as a CPC for the third straight year," said the letter.

"We have also learned that such

pressure includes attempts to influence USCIRF Commissioners and officials to exclude even a mention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," it added.

On Wednesday, April 13, Jaishankar held a press conference in Washington to rebut Blinken's comments a day earlier. Nationalist Congress Party has criticized the Government for the two Indian Ministers present at the press conference - Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh - not giving an on-the-spot rebuttal.

Stating that human rights issue was not a topic of discussion during the India-US 2+2 ministerial meeting, Jaishankar said people are entitled to have views about India but "we also take our views on other people's human rights situation, including that of the US".

Blinken had said a day earlier that the US is monitoring some recent "concerning developments" in India, including a rise in human rights abuses by some government, police and prison officials.

US congratulates new Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif, says values relationship with Islamabad

WASHINGTON (TIP): The United States has congratulated Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and said it values the relationship between the two countries and is looking forward to continuing the long-standing cooperation, signaling Washington's intent to improve ties with Islamabad under the new regime.

Pakistan's relations with the US have been lukewarm, especially under the Biden administration. The ties touched a new low after former prime minister Imran Khan, who was ousted last week

through a Parliament vote, accused the US of conspiring to dislodge his government. The US government has bluntly denied the allegations multiple times.

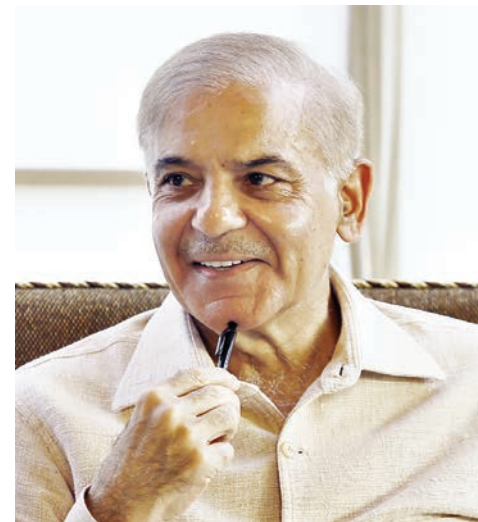
"Pakistan has been an important partner on wide-ranging mutual interests for nearly 75 years and we value our relationship," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The United States congratulates newly-elected Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and we look forward to

continuing our long-standing cooperation with Pakistan's government," he said.

Blinken said the US views a strong, prosperous and democratic Pakistan as essential for the interests of both the countries.

However, President Joe Biden is yet to make a customary call to Prime Minister Sharif, 70, since his appointment on Monday. Biden had not made any such call to former premier Khan also till his last day in office on Sunday.



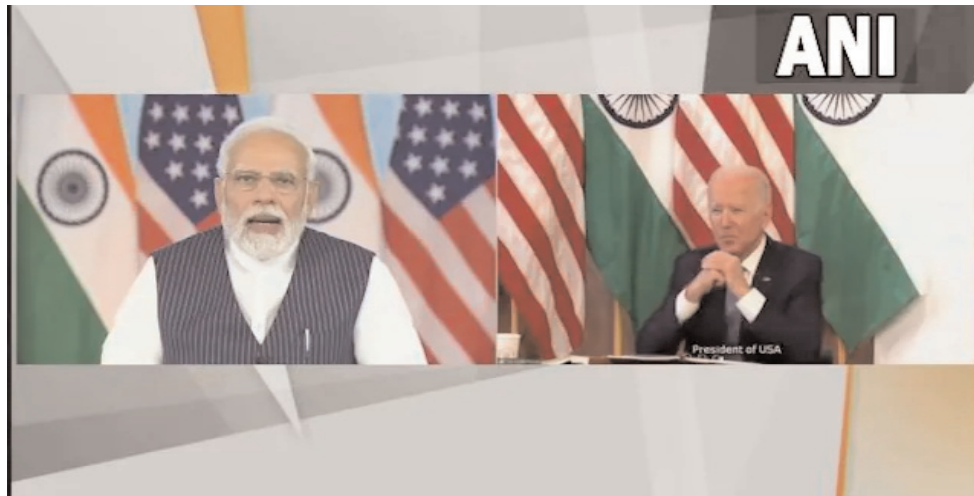
Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif
Photo / PTI

Modi-Biden virtual meeting 'very helpful' for 2+2 dialogue, says Jaishankar

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The virtual meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden was "very helpful" for the India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Wednesday, April 13 noting that there is no change in the format of the engagement between the two countries.

"Is this (virtual meeting) elevation of the 2+2? I think it was very helpful for us to have interaction even as we sat there ourselves, between the Prime Minister and the President, Jaishankar told reporters as he concluded his trip here.

Jaishankar was here to attend the 2+2 ministerial along with Defense Minister Rajnath Singh. The US delegation was led by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd



Jaishankar said there was discussion on India's security environment and its security challenges

Austin. The 2+2 ministerial was preceded by a virtual meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Biden.

"In some ways, they laid out the directions and the contours of what was expected of the 2+2 in sharper terms. Obviously, it was of help to us. But I will say that 2+2 is still the 2+2. It's not a 2+2 plus one," he said in response to a question.

Responding to another question, Jaishankar said Americans distinguish and differentiate between China and India. "Obviously, they do," he said.

Referring to his recent meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in New Delhi, he said the two shared their respective analysis of what is happening.

"I mean, clearly, they had their view of it, we had our view of it. But, what we did agree on and I think we still agree on is that the way out is dialogue and diplomacy and that cessation of hostilities would be a very necessary first step in that regard, he said, referring to the Ladakh standoff.

CONTD ON PAGE 60

India in history this Week

APRIL 15, 2022, TO APRIL 21, 2022

15 APRIL

1469 Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469.



1976 India announces sending its envoy to Beijing for the first time in 15 years.

1980 Six non-government banks were nationalized. Earlier also some banks were nationalized in the same way.

2010 Launch of the first cryogenic rocket GSLV-D3 built in India failed.

1948 The state of Himachal Pradesh was established.

1994 Acceptance of 'Get' agreement in 1994 by 109 countries including India.

2004 LTTE militant V. Muralitharan, linked to the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, was killed in 2004 in Colombo.

16 APRIL

1853 In India, the first train ran from Mumbai to Thane in 1853.

1919 Gandhiji declared a fast on this day in 1919 to pay tribute to those who died in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

2008 The statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in 2008 in London.



2004 India defeated Pakistan 2-1 in the series by winning the Rawalpindi Test.

17 APRIL

1952 The first Lok Sabha of the country was formed on this day in 1952.



1977 On this day in 1977, the Independence Party merged with the Janata Party and emerged as a big party.

1996 On this day in 1996, the Indian Railways had interrupted AIDS patients from traveling.

1983 India launched the SLV-3 rocket in 1983.

2003 The Indo-British Parliamentary Forum was formed in 2003 after 55 years.

2008 Four important agreements were signed between India and Brazil in 2008.



1975 India's first Vice President and second President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan died on 17 April 1975.

18 APRIL

1612 Shah Jahan marries Mumtaz.

1859 Taty Tope, who had created a reputation for independence in the country, was hanged for playing a decisive role in the first revolution of independence of 1857.

1917 Gandhiji selected Champaran in Bihar to start his Satyagraha movement.



1950 Vinoba Bhave started the Bhoodan movement with 80 acres of land in Panchampalli village in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh.

1971 India's first jumbo jet Boeing 747 arrives in Bombay. It was named Emperor Ashoka.



1978 Sobha Singh, who built modern New Delhi, died.

1991 Kerala was declared the first fully literate state in the country.

1991 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee lost the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha by one vote.

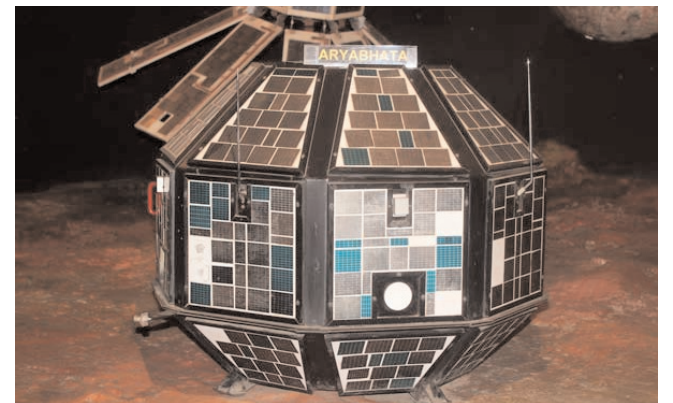
2001 16 soldiers of India martyred due to the firing of Bangladesh army into Indian border.

2008 India and Mexico enter into new agreements in the field of civil aviation and energy.

19 APRIL

1451 Bahlol Lodi captured Delhi.

1950 Shyama Prasad Mukherjee becomes the first Minister to resign from the Union Cabinet.



1975 India enters the space age by launching its first satellite Aryabhata. It was the first scientific satellite of India.

1882 Start of first maternity hospital in Calcutta.

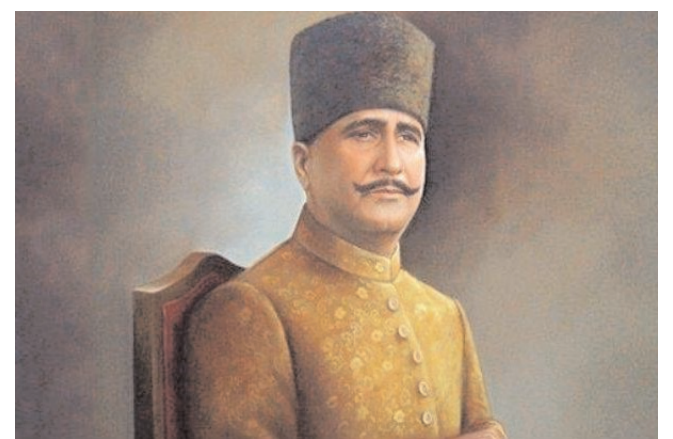
1971 India defeated the West Indies and won the Test cricket series.

20 APRIL

1997 Indra Kumar Gujral became the 2nd Prime Minister of the country.

21 APRIL

1451 Bahlol Khan Lodi, the founder of the Lodi dynasty, became the ruler of Delhi in 1451.



1938 The famous poet Mohammad Iqbal, author of Saare Jahan Se Achcha Hindostan Hamara..., died in Lahore, Pakistan.

1996 Sanjay Thapar of the Indian Air Force was landed on the Northern Dhruv by parachute.

1526 Ibrahim Lodi was killed in the first battle of Panipat in 1526 between Babar and Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of the Mughal Empire.

1720 Baji Rao I succeeded Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in 1720.

2001 India lodged a strong protest over the brutal killing of Indian soldiers in Bangladesh.

1924 Birth of India's first shooter Karni Singh in 1924, honored with the 1961 'Arjuna Award'.



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AKHAND BHARAT WILL BE REALITY IN NEXT 15 YEARS, SAYS RSS CHIEF MOHAN BHAGWAT

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat has said that 'Akhand Bharat' -- Unified India, the dream of Swami Vivekananda and Maharishi Arvind, will be a reality in 10-15 years if common people also put a little effort. Bhagwat made this statement during Prana Pratishtha ceremony in Haridwar.

The RSS chief said that the speed with which the country was moving on the path of upliftment, it will take 20-25 years to become Akhand Bharat. He further said that the time would be half if upliftment picks up pace.

Bhagwat said, "We will talk about non-violence but also keep a stick in our hands because the world believes in power."

Reacting to Bhagwat's comments, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi asked why 'Akhand Bharat' was not achieved in the last 8 years. Why Mohan Bhagwat is talking about making 'Akhand Bharat' in the next 15 years and on what basis the RSS chief is talking about the creation of 'Akhand Bharat'.

Bhagwat's remarks also faced a retort from Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut who challenged the RSS chief to achieve the dream of Akhand Bharat in 15 days and not in 15 years.

BORIS SET TO VISIT INDIA NEXT WEEK, FOCUS ON TRADE PACT

A bilateral free trade agreement, cooperation in areas ranging from security to education and the Ukraine crisis are expected to be on the agenda for UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's visit to India next week.

With the free trade agreement dominating recent engagements between the two sides, Johnson and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will review the discussions held so far and issue guidelines for the officials involved in the negotiations, people familiar with the matter said on Thursday. India will host the third round of negotiations for the trade pact in a hybrid format in New Delhi in the last week of this month. A team of British officials is set to visit India for these discussions. The UK has been keen on forging new trade pacts with leading economies since its exit from the European Union and the British government is focused on the speedy conclusion of a deal with India.

India, too, has views on human rights situation in US: External Affairs Minister Jaishankar

NEW DELHI (TIP)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that the human rights issue was not a topic of discussion during the India-US 2+2 ministerial meeting this week. However, EAM Jaishankar asserted that whenever there is a discussion, New Delhi will not be reticent about speaking out. Taking a strong stand, EAM Jaishankar said that people are entitled to have views about India, adding, "We also take our views on other people's human rights situation, including that of the United States."

Earlier, Secretary of State Antony Blinken had said that the US is monitoring some recent "concerning developments" in India, including a rise in human rights abuses by some government, police, and prison officials. The joint news conference after the 2+2 dialogue was addressed by Blinken, Jaishankar, Singh and US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Responding to a question, EAM Jaishankar said while the issue of human rights was not discussed during the current meeting, it has come up in the past.

EAM Jaishankar stated, "On the human rights issue; no, we did not discuss human rights during this meeting. This meeting was primarily focused on political-military affairs."

"It is a subject which has come up in the past. It came up when Secretary Blinken came to India. I think if you recall the press briefings after that I was very open about the fact that we had discussed it and said what I had to say," S Jaishankar said.

Pushing back at the US criticism of human rights in India, EAM Jaishankar stated that people are entitled to have views about India, adding that lobbies and the vote banks drive such criticism.

"Look, people are entitled to have views about us. But we are also equally entitled to have views about their views and about the interests, and the lobbies and the vote banks which drive that. So, whenever there is a discussion, I can tell you that we will not be reticent about speaking out," he said.

"I would tell you that we also take our views on other people's human rights



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and EAM S Jaishankar.

situation, including that of the United States. So, we take up a human rights issues when they arise in this country, especially when they pertain to our community. And in fact, we had a case yesterday that's really where we stand on that," he said.

ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

India and China agree that dialogue is the only way out of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, foreign minister S Jaishankar said, adding that Americans "obviously" distinguish and differentiate between India and China when it comes to the stands taken by the two countries on Russia amid a raging war.

"If you're asking me how we look at the unfolding developments in Ukraine, I had Minister Wang Yi come to India last month. We shared our respective analyses. But we agreed and still agree that the way out is dialogue and cessation of hostilities will be a necessary first step," the foreign minister told news agency ANI.

"You're asking me, do the Americans distinguish and differentiate between India and China (over their respective stands on Russia amid the Ukraine crisis). Obviously, they do," S Jaishankar told the news agency when asked if the US clearly understands the reasons behind China's and India's respective stands on Russia.

The minister, who is in Washington for the Biden administration's maiden India-US 2+2 dialogues, held a series of high-level meetings and said that a lot of time was invested in discussing the Ukraine crisis.

India presented its perspective clearly and "the two countries discussed the energy crisis, food security and humanitarian assistance to Kyiv", he said.

"Obviously, a lot of our time went to discussions on Ukraine. There was discussion on US perspectives, their analysis, their sense, what they think is likely to happen. The conflict and diplomacy involved in it, peace talks, and progress were one set of issues that came up," he said.

"We spoke about the humanitarian situation (in Ukraine) and what different countries are doing. We gave 90 tonnes of relief material in the month of March. But right now, the focus is more on the supply of medicines," Jaishankar told reporters on the sidelines of the dialogues. "Other than Ukraine, we spent a fair amount of time on the Indo-Pacific region, reviewing the progress so far. We are preparing for the next Quad summit," Jaishankar said.

He was joined by Indian ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu at the press conference.

Source: India Today and Agencies

Few takers for paid booster, can't be complacent: AIIMS

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Amid a sluggish start to the booster-for-all-adults drive, AIIMS-Delhi Director Randeep Guleria on Thursday, April 14, urged eligible beneficiaries to take the precaution dose and regain immunity to Sars-Cov2 virus.

The booster numbers have been woefully low since the drive began this Sunday. While 16,352 paid precaution doses were administered to adults (18 to 59-year-olds) on Wednesday, 62,683 paid booster doses have been administered to the eligible since Sunday, making it a very low acceptance rate.

Experts are concerned about the slow start to the booster drive as daily new cases remained above 1,000 for the second consecutive day today and several states reported a slight rise in infections and positivity rate.

Nationally, the active cases have also increased to 11,058 after remaining below 10,000 for several days.

Guleria blamed booster hesitancy to complacency and general Covid fatigue. "Unlike in the past when Covid-19 invoked fear and anxiety, it is no longer such a dreaded disease now. People are less afraid due to the declining infections

and have become complacent," said Guleria.

He warned beneficiaries against booster hesitancy saying available scientific data suggested that immunity waned with the passage of time and people with comorbid conditions had lower immunity after a period of time, which was why precaution doses were important. "Covid-19 has not ended. New variants can surface any time. We know that with time immunity reduces and those with comorbidities become vulnerable," said Guleria.

Source: TNS



AMBEDKAR JAYANTI: PEOPLE ACROSS NATION, PARTY LINES PAY HOMAGE TO BABASAHEB

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday (April 13) paid rich tributes to BR Ambedkar on his 131st birth anniversary, stating that it is a day to "reiterate our commitment to fulfilling his dreams".

"Tributes to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar on his Jayanti. He has made indelible contributions to India's progress. This is a day to reiterate our commitment to fulfilling his dreams for our nation," PM Modi tweeted.

Meanwhile, President Ram Nath Kovind also paid tributes to B R Ambedkar on the occasion and said that he being the architect of the Constitution laid the foundation of modern India.

Born on 14 April 1891, Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who campaigned against social discrimination and supported the rights of women and workers.

He died on 6 December 1956. In 1990, Ambedkar was conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.

CBSE TO RETURN TO ONE BOARD EXAM PATTERN

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has decided to switch to its previous practice of conducting board exams for classes 10 and 12 only once a year from the academic year 2022-23 onwards, according to people familiar with the matter.

The board last year announced two sets of board exams for students currently in classes 10 and 12 in order to prepare for any "unprecedented situation" that could have arisen because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The first set of exams were held in an objective multiple-choice format between November and December 2021, and the second set of exams are scheduled from April 26, 2022 as subjective or long-answer papers.

There was speculations that the board would continue the two-term exam practice in future as well since the move was recommended in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

However, a senior official at CBSE, who asked not to be named, said, "The board decided to conduct two term exams for the session 2021-22 in order to avert any unprecedented situation caused by the pandemic. Even as the NEP 2020 favours two-term exams, it has been decided to switch to the previous practice for now and conduct one set of board exams at the end of the academic year. The stakeholders also suggested one exam policy."

Militant released during IC-814 hijacking declared a terrorist under UAPA

NEW DELHI (TIP)

After designating relatives of Lashkar-i-Toiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as terrorists under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the Centre has now designated Kashmir resident Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar as a terrorist under the act.

Hailing from Srinagar, Zargar, 52, was among the three terrorists released by India in exchange for the hostages in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight 814 in 1999.

"Zargar is a threat to peace, not only to India, but across the world, with his contacts and proximity to radical terrorist groups like the Al-Qaeda and Jaish-e-Mohammed... The Central Government believes that Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar alias Latram is involved in terrorism and the said Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar is to be notified as a terrorist under the said Act," said a gazette notification issued Wednesday by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

According to the notification, Zargar is the founder and chief commander of Al-Umar-Mujahideen, a proscribed organisation under the UAPA, and was affiliated with the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front earlier. He had gone to Pakistan for obtaining illegal arms and ammunition training. "Zargar has been running an incessant campaign from Pakistan to fuel terrorism in Jammu and



Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar

Kashmir," the notification has said.

The notification also said Zargar has been involved in various terror crimes including murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, planning and execution of terrorist attacks, and terror funding.

In the past week, MHA has designated three top terror operatives as terrorists under UAPA. These include Hafiz Saeed's son Talha, Masood Azhar's brother and 2019 Pulwama attack planner Ammar Alvi, and Pathankot attack handler Ali Lashif Jan.

The Centre had amended the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, in August 2019, to include the provision of designating an individual as a terrorist. Prior to this amendment, only organizations could be designated as terrorist organisations.

In the first orders under the new Act, in September 2019, the government had declared LeT's Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-

Rehman Lakhvi, JeM's Masood Azhar, and underworld don Dawood Ibrahim as terrorists.

Designation as a terrorist helps the government freeze finances and crack down on networks created by the individual terrorist. Clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35 of the UAPA empowers the Centre to notify the name of an individual in the Fourth Schedule to the said Act, if it believes that he is involved in terrorism.

Who is Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar?

Born in Nowhatta area of Srinagar in the Kashmir Valley, Zargar was among the first batch of young Kashmiris who crossed over to Pakistan for terrorist training, and came back to wage war against the Indian state.

In 1988, Zargar joined the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and was considered to be close to its then chief Ashfaq Majeed Wani. In August that year, he crossed over to Pakistan through Trehgam with the help of Zahoor Sheikh, an Anantnag-based activist of the secessionist People's League, and received training at a camp organised by the JKLF.

He went back to Pakistan for a second round of training during May 1989, and returned through Uri.

After Wani's death, Zargar fell out with JKLF's new chief Yasin Malik, and floated his own outfit, the Al Umar Mujahideen (AuM).

Source: The Indian Express

Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalay: Modi Inaugurates Hi-Tech Museum

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Thursday, April 14, the 'Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya' (prime ministers' museum), which is a tribute to every prime minister since Independence, irrespective of their ideology or tenure.

The Prime Minister became the first official visitor of the museum as he purchased the first ticket before the inauguration. PM Modi paid for the ticket via digital mode.

Built and opened during the celebration of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', the museum tells the story of India after independence through the lives and contributions of its prime ministers.

"Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to honour the contribution of all the Prime Ministers of India towards nation-building, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya is a tribute to every Prime Minister of India since independence, irrespective of their ideology or tenure in office," the PMO said.

The museum is aimed at sensitizing and inspiring the younger generation about the leadership, vision, and achievements of all our prime ministers.

Located in the national capital's Teen



PM Modi at the inauguration of the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, in New Delhi on April 14, 2022.

Murti complex, the museum's inauguration date collides with the birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar - the architect of the Indian Constitution.

Representing a seamless blend of the old and the new, the museum integrates the erstwhile Teen Murti Bhawan designated as Block I with the newly constructed building designated as Block II. The total area of the two blocks is over 15,600 square metres, the PMO said.

The design of the museum building is

inspired by the story of rising India, shaped and moulded by the hands of its leaders.

The design incorporates sustainable and energy conservation practices. The Prime Minister's office also said that during the construction of the museum no tree was felled or transplanted during the course of work on the project. The logo of the museum represents the hands of the people of India holding the Dharma Chakra symbolizing the nation and democracy, it said.

Good Friday is one of the most significant festivals for Christians as it commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. It is one of the seven days of the holy week where Christians recall the events that lead to the death of Jesus and his resurrection, which is observed as Easter. This year, the week will be observed from April 10 to April 16.

Each day of the holy week has its own significance and represents a different event. The week starts with the Palm Sunday followed by Holy Monday and culminates on the seventh day with Holy Saturday, which falls a day before Easter Sunday.

Palm Sunday

The week begins with the Palm Sunday when Christians commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. As per tradition, it is believed that Jesus was welcomed by people who waved palm branches and laid the leaves in his path.

Holy Monday

Holy Monday marks the day when Jesus first cleaned the temple. The cleaning is believed to be done for teaching and admonishing. Also, on this day Jesus had spotted a fig tree that had leaves but no fruits on it. Jesus cursed the tree for not bearing fruits following which it weathered the next day.

Holy Tuesday

On this day, Jesus condemned the religious authorities and claimed his deity. The Pharisees and the Herodians joined hands to conspire against Jesus and tried to get him convicted.

Holy Wednesday

This day is also called Spy Wednesday when Judas met Jewish leaders and got paid 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus. Also, it was on Holy Wednesday when Jesus sat down at the supper table at the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany with his disciples.

Holy Thursday

Holy Thursday commemorates the day when Jesus had his last supper. In Roman Catholicism, the pope washes the feet of 12 poor or humble persons as an imitation of Jesus' selfless love for people of all traditions.

Good Friday

Holy Friday is the darkest day of all in the Holy Week. It marks Jesus' death and suffering on the cross. People mourn Jesus on this day by fasting and attending church services and also holding processions to re-enact the crucifixion.

Holy Saturday/Easter Vigil

This day commemorates the day Jesus was buried in a tomb. A day after this, he was resurrected.

Historical Significance of Good Friday

The celebration of Good Friday dates back to the 4th century by Egeria. This ancient practice denotes time of self-punishment and fasting on the death anniversary of the Christ. Nomenclature of "Good Friday" is derived from "God's Friday," although the correct reason for this kind of name is still not known.

Arrest of Jesus

As per the documents in the Gospels,

Good Friday

Good Friday is a solemn occasion observed by Christians across the world. This year, the occasion falls on April 15. It is the Friday before Easter and is a day of sorrow for followers of Jesus Christ.



the Temple Guards were protected by the Jesus' disciple Judas Iscariot; in the Garden of Gethsemane he then arrests Jesus. In exchange, Judas was rewarded with money, 30 pieces of silver was his reward to betray Jesus. After the arrest, Jesus was forcibly brought to the house of Annas, (the father-in-law of the high priest, Caiaphas), who then interrogated Christ but could not get satisfactory answers. He was then taken into captivity by Caiaphas, who was the high priest where the Sanhedrin had gathered.

Jesus – The Son of God

There were many conflicting testimonies against Jesus along with many witnesses, and Jesus remained numb to all this. Then, the high priests made Jesus undertake the solemn oath, saying "I adjure you, by the Living God, to tell us, are you the Anointed One, the Son of God?" Jesus accepted the witness obscurely, "You have said it, and in time you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty, coming on the clouds of Heaven." That day the Sanhedrin brought upon the sentence of death as the high priest condemned Jesus for sacrilege. Peter also did not stand as a well-wisher and also denied Jesus three times to onlookers. The interrogations went on just like Jesus had predicted.

Pilate's Judgement

enraged and demanded Pilate to get Jesus be sentenced to death only "because he claimed to be God's son." Pilate got puzzled and also afraid; he brought in Jesus into his palace and asked him from where he belonged.

The Death Sentence

On knowing the answer, Pilate again faced the crowd and confirmed that Jesus was innocent and washed his own hands in water to prove that he was not involved in this criticism. However, Pilate handed over Jesus to the crowd to get crucified as he feared that a riot would start up anytime. Jesus has his cross with him to the site of execution and was accompanied by Simon of Cyrene. The sentence mentioned "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" and the execution site was said to be the "place of the Skull", or "Golgotha". He was crucified there along with two criminals.

The Lord Let Go His Soul

Jesus suffered on the cross for long six hours and during his last three hours on the Cross, he had seen darkness fell over the entire land. His last words were "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus gave up his spirit with a loud cry, followed by natural disasters like earthquake, curtains in the temple tore off, and the tombs broke open. The centurion who was on guard at the site of crucifixion said in himself, "Truly this was God's Son!" Joseph of Arimathea, who was a member of the Sanhedrin and revered Jesus, requested Pilate for his body. Nicodemus, another follower of Jesus helped wrap the body of Jesus. Pilate wanted to confirm if Jesus was dead and a soldier pierced the side of Jesus showing that blood was oozing out and thus Jesus was dead. This is the sad history of Good Friday; after the Jewish burial customs Shabbat began at the sunset. On the third day from this day Easter Sunday (or Pascha) is celebrated and the followers believe that on this day, Jesus rose from the dead.

Significance

Good Friday, also called Holy Friday and Black Friday, is a day of mourning. The day is observed worldwide by Christians. It is believed that Jesus suffered and died for the sins of humans. This day is, therefore, observed to ask for forgiveness for one's sins.

People pray that they may be liberated from pain, suffering and agony in their lives. According to Christian beliefs, Jesus' death also signifies the end of all sins. It shows that after all the sins are eliminated, there's a possibility of a new beginning, which is signified by Jesus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

How it is observed

Many people fast and attend religious services on Good Friday. Churches hold special rituals to commemorate Jesus Christ's suffering and muffle their bells as a sign of mourning.

Good Friday is preceded by Maudy Thursday and followed by Holy Saturday. On this day, the service for the Three Hours Agony is held.

Christians also drape a black cloth over all crosses, photographs, and statues to symbolise Jesus Christ's death.

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SIKH FOUNDATION

Shehbaz Sharif takes oath as new PM of Pakistan

Calls Imran Khan's 'foreign conspiracy' claims as 'drama'

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Shehbaz Sharif was sworn-in as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan on April 11, bringing to an end the political uncertainty that had gripped the country since a no-confidence motion was introduced against his predecessor Imran Khan on March 8.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani administered oath of office to 70-year-old Shehbaz in President Arif Alvi's absence, who went on 'sick' leave ahead of the PML-N leader's inauguration.

Earlier, Sharif was elected unopposed as the Prime Minister by Parliament after rival candidate Shah Mahmood Qureshi announced that his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party will boycott the voting and staged a walkout.

Shehbaz Sharif said he wants good relations with India, but it can't be achieved without resolution of Kashmir issue.

The newly-elected Prime Minister termed ousted premier Imran Khan's 'foreign conspiracy' claims as "drama", saying he will resign and go home if it is proved.

Addressing Parliament after his



election as the country's 23rd Prime Minister, Shehbaz said that good has prevailed over evil.

"Pakistan's National Security Committee would be briefed on a controversial letter related to the so-called foreign conspiracy," he said, terming Khan's 'foreign conspiracy' claims as "drama".

Khan had alleged that the US was involved in a conspiracy to topple his government.

"I will resign and go home if conspiracy is proved in letter controversy," Shehbaz said.

Shehbaz, 70, was elected unopposed as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan by Parliament after rival candidate Shah

Mahmood Qureshi announced that his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party will boycott the voting and staged a walkout.

Shehbaz, the younger brother of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, received 174 votes — two more than the simple majority of 172.

He has served as chief minister of the country's most populous and politically crucial Punjab province thrice.

Former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chair Asif Ali Zardari had proposed Shehbaz's name for prime minister's position in a joint opposition's meeting to replace Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion.

The process of electing the new leader of the House began on Sunday after prime minister Imran Khan was removed from office through the no-confidence vote, becoming the first premier in the country's history to be sent home after losing the trust of the House.

Pakistan has struggled with political instability since its formation in 1947 with multiple regime changes and military coups. No prime minister has ever completed a full five-year term. PTI

Shehbaz Sharif: A hardcore realist who makes no bones while performing onerous tasks

The 70-year-old younger brother of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, has served as chief minister of the most populous and politically crucial Punjab province thrice

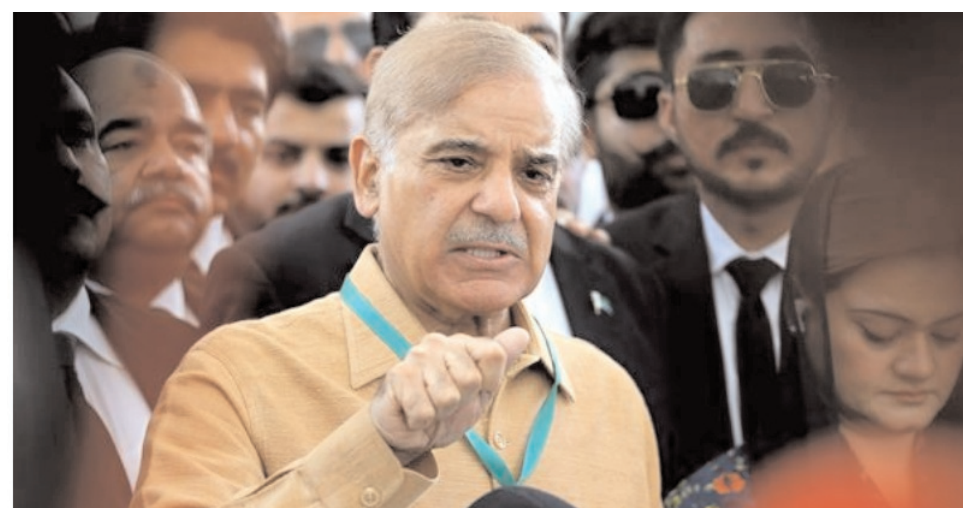
LAHORE/ISLAMABAD (TIP): Shehbaz Sharif, who became Pakistan's new prime minister after the unceremonious ouster of Imran Khan, is a hardcore realist and over the years has earned the reputation of a matter-of-fact person as well as a good administrator.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz, the 70-year-old younger brother of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, has served as chief minister of the most populous and politically crucial Punjab province thrice.

Former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chair Asif Ali Zardari had proposed Shehbaz's name for prime minister's position in a joint opposition's meeting to replace Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion.

His party PML-N -- especially its supremo Nawaz Sharif -- agreed on his name for the post of the prime minister.

The new prime minister would have to face not only the unruly opposition taking to the streets but a brittle economy that needs a very careful handling. There are a lot of expectations of the masses from the new leadership to control inflation, which is a tough task.



Shehbaz's PML-N has only 86 seats and the rest of numerical support has come from the coalition partners who apparently has nothing in common except their rivalry for Imran Khan, and it will be a big challenge for him to keep them calm and satisfied.

Foreign policy challenges are also no less daunting, especially after the allegations of former prime minister Khan against the US in the context of "conspiracy" to remove him.

Similarly, Pakistan's ties with India

will also be a crucial test for the new leader of the country.

In his inaugural speech on Monday, Shehbaz raised the issue of abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and said Pakistan will provide them with "diplomatic and moral support" besides raising the matter at every international fora.

He said he wanted good relations with India, but it cannot be achieved without the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Born in September 1951 in Punjabi-speaking Kashmiri family in Lahore,

Shehbaz entered politics along with his elder brother Nawaz in mid 1980s. He first got elected as a member of Punjab Assembly in 1988 when Nawaz became chief minister of Punjab.

Shehbaz first became chief minister of Punjab in 1997 when his brother was prime minister at the Centre.

Following General Pervez Musharraf's coup in 1999 toppling the Nawaz Sharif government, Shehbaz along with the family spent eight years in exile in Saudi Arabia before returning to Pakistan in 2007.

He wore the hat of Punjab chief minister for the second term in 2008 and he grabbed the same slot for third time in 2013.

Shehbaz has claimed that Gen Musharraf had offered him prime ministership provided he abandons his elder brother Nawaz which he said he had refused straight away.

After prime minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from holding office in 2017 in the Panama Papers case, the PML-N appointed Shehbaz as the party president. Subsequently, after the 2018 elections he became the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly. (PTI)

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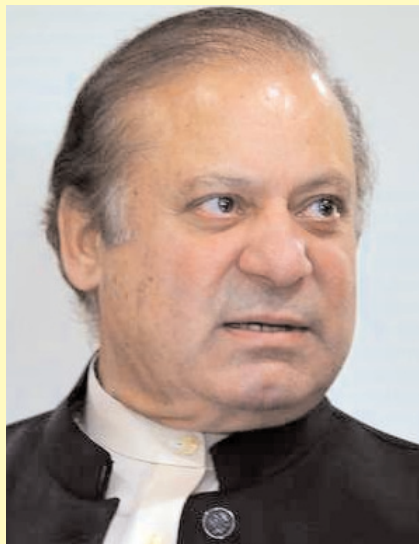
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NAWAZ SHARIF TO RETURN TO PAKISTAN AFTER EID: PML-N LEADER

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Deposed Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif is expected to return from London next month after Eid, a senior PML-N leader has said, amid a whirlwind of political developments that have embroiled the country following Imran Khan's ignominious ouster from power.

Mian Javed Latif said a decision on PML-N supremo and the three-time prime minister Sharif's anticipated return will be discussed with the coalition partners.

All decisions would be first brought up with constituent parties of the coalition, The Express Tribune newspaper quoted him as saying.

Eid will be celebrated in the first week of May.

Several corruption cases have been launched by the government of prime minister Khan against the 72-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz since his ouster from the office by the Supreme Court in July 2017 in the Panama Papers case.

Sharif in November 2019 left for London after the Lahore High Court granted him a four-week permission allowing him to go abroad for his treatment.

He had given an undertaking to the Lahore High Court to return to Pakistan, citing his record to face the process of law and justice within four weeks or as soon as he is declared healthy and fit to travel by doctors.

Sharif was also given bail in the Al-Azizia Mills corruption case in which he was serving seven-year imprisonment in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail.

Commenting on the political uncertainty in the country, Latif said the coalition government will not last longer than six months and the only solution to the prevailing woes was to hold fresh elections.

"However, there was this task of election reforms that had to be done prior to elections," he said. (PTI)

Sri Lanka crisis:

PM Mahinda Rajapaksa offers to hold talks with protesting youths

COLOMBO (TIP): Amid rising protests in Sri Lanka over the unprecedented economic crisis, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Wednesday offered to hold talks with the agitators who are demanding resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and all members of his family from the government.

The protests entered its fifth day on April 13 and since it began on Saturday, it was carried out round the clock by youths demanding a total transformation of the "corrupt political culture", which they claim has been prevailing in the island nation since it gained independence from Britain in 1948.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Rajapaksa is willing to hold discussions with the protesting youths who are camping at Galle Face esplanade located near President Gotabaya's secretariat.

The Prime Minister has said if the protesters are ready for talks, he would extend an invitation for their representatives to meet for discussions, the statement noted.

The youths are demanding that President Gotabaya and his entire family—who are all part of the government—should quit, while their alleged ill-gotten wealth be brought back to the country to pay the debt.

Prime Minister Mahinda is the elder brother of President Gotabaya. Basil, the youngest, was holding the finance portfolio till he was sacked earlier this month by the president amidst the economic crisis. The eldest brother,



Chamal, controls the agriculture ministry and nephew Namal is the sports minister.

The protest campaign has been running on social media, urging youths to gather at Galle Face. Besides, there have been continuing protests across the island, blaming the government for its mishandling of the forex crisis which led to severe shortages of essentials.

President Gotabaya who got his ministers to resign as a response to public dissatisfaction failed to win support for his call on the Opposition parties to join a unity Cabinet.

The main Opposition, meanwhile, announced that its leader Sajith Premadasa has signed three motions which would soon be tabled in Parliament—a motion of no trust, an impeachment motion against President Gotabaya and a motion to repeal 20 amendments which had given him absolute power as president in 2020.

Maithripala Sirisena, the former president and a member of the ruling partner Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), told reporters Tuesday night that they would no longer attend political talks with the government.

They had proposed an 11-point plan, including the formation of an all-party interim government, to overcome the current political impasse.

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from the UK in 1948. People have been protesting for weeks over lengthy power cuts and shortage of fuel, food and other daily essentials.

President Gotabaya has defended his government's actions, saying the foreign exchange crisis was not his making and the economic downturn was largely pandemic driven by the island nation's tourism revenue and inward remittances waning.

(PTI)

Imran Khan 'forcing' PTI lawmakers to resign from Pakistan's National Assembly: PML-N leader

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan was forcing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers to resign from the country's National Assembly, senior PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq alleged on April 13.

After losing the no-confidence motion against the PTI supremo and the election of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shehbaz Sharif as the prime minister, Khan's party had boycotted the National Assembly session and announced en mass resignation from the lower house of Parliament.

Sadiq, a former Speaker of the National Assembly, at a press-conference said that Khan was forcefully asking lawmakers to resign and was submitting their resignations to Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri, GEO TV reported.

"In line with the law, every member should appear in person and submit their resignation to the speaker [...] there

are some conditions and questions that are noted before the acceptance of the resignation," Sadiq said, claiming that the PTI lawmakers were pressured into signing cyclostyled documents, which included their names and constituency.

"The deputy speaker is violating the laws [...] Suri had said that he identified the members based on their signatures, but according to the rules, every member should be present in person for submitting their resignations," Rehman said. According to Rehman, several PTI lawmakers have been contacting the opposition parties to express their reservations over Khan's policy of taking resignations forcefully.

Lashing out at the PTI for not following the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court's orders, the PPP lawmaker also urged the Election Commission of Pakistan to take cognisance of the matter. (PTI)

5 policemen killed, 3 injured in terror attack in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (TIP): At least five policemen were killed and three more injured when terrorists fired a rocket on a police mobile van in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on April 12.

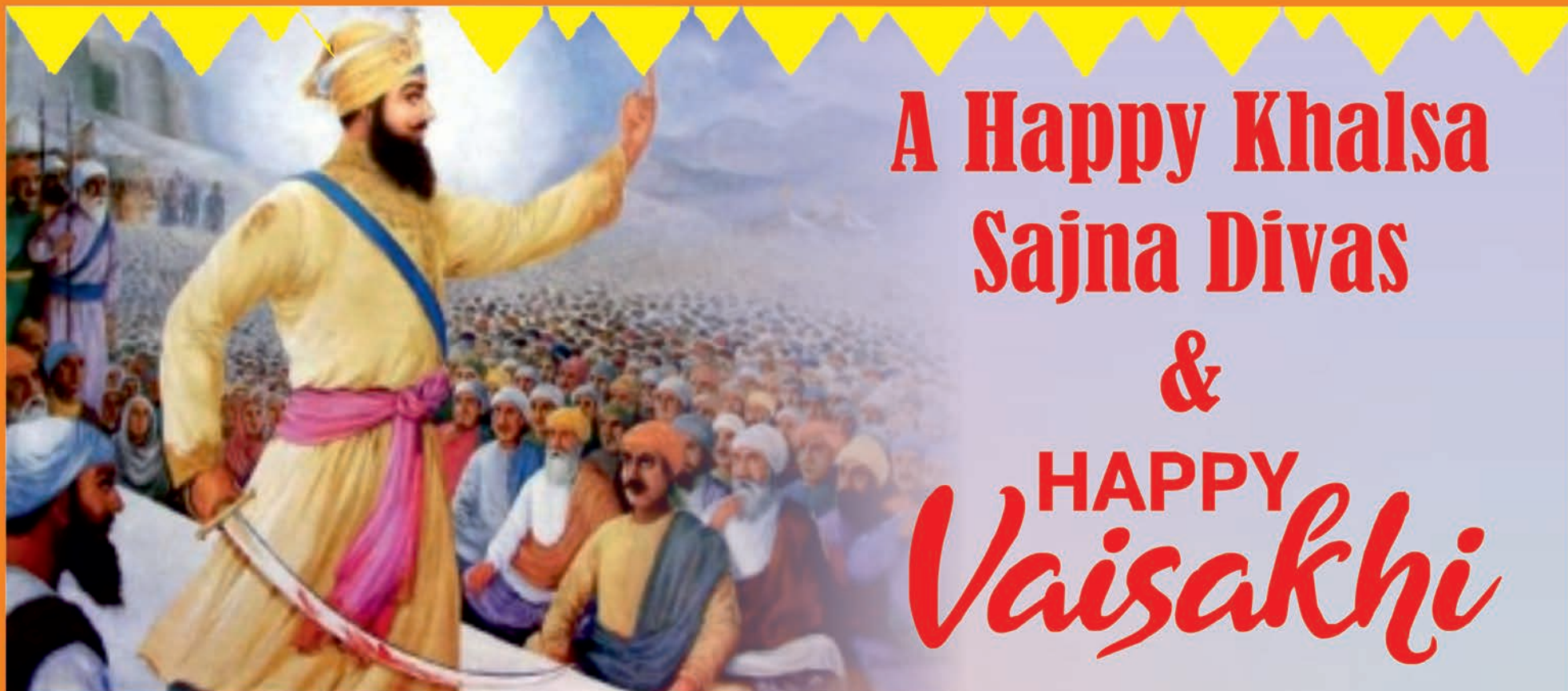
The unidentified terrorists attacked the police van during a routine patrolling operation in Kulachi tehsil of Dikhan district late on Monday, the police said.

It said the rocket attack was followed by heavy firing that left five policemen dead and three, including DSP Fazle Subhan, injured.

The injured were moved to a nearby hospital, it said.

The police said the terrorists managed to flee from the scene after the attack that left their patrolling van totally smashed.

The area was cordoned off and a search operation was launched to arrest the terrorists, it added. (PTI)



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IFFLA CELEBRATES 20

BY MABEL PAIS

The Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) celebrates the 20th annual edition of its internationally acclaimed film festival, April 28-May 1. This marks a return to in-person screenings and events this year. Screenings will take place at the Regal LA Live (1000 W. Olympic Blvd.), Harmony Gold (7655 Sunset Blvd.), and UCLA's James Bridges Theater (235 Charles E Young Dr. E).

The Festival presents 26 films (10 Features, 16 shorts). As part of IFFLA's 20th Anniversary celebration, the festival will showcase a hybrid presentation of 20 short films representing its diverse programming over the past two decades.

The landmark 20th Anniversary edition of IFFLA will:

- Inaugurate a Spotlight on South Asia section
- Feature a 20th Anniversary Shorts special program celebrating the festival's history, with a pre-festival screening of IFFLA alumni shorts highlighting films representing each year of the festival's history with an in-theater co-presentation with NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA)
- Present a live script read previewing an IFFLA alumnus' next feature project, and
- Include the announcement of a filmmaker mentorship initiative to further support emerging South Asian filmmakers.

IFFLA Executive Director Christina Marouda, said, "Reflecting on IFFLA's 20 years, we find ourselves overjoyed by the range of incredible talent we have discovered and celebrated, introducing numerous emerging and established voices to Los Angeles. We are also incredibly proud of the sense of family and community we have accomplished over the last 20 years. We are now ramping up our efforts to support the careers of filmmakers by adding to the programs IFFLA has become known for over the past two decades, not just as a touchstone for our filmmakers, but also as a bridge to their next films."

TICKETS

To purchase Tickets & Passes, visit indianfilmfestival.org or connect with the Festival on Facebook ([/indianfilmfestival](https://www.facebook.com/indianfilmfestival)), Instagram ([@indianfilmfestival](https://www.instagram.com/indianfilmfestival)) and Twitter ([@iffila](https://twitter.com/iffila)).

2022 IFFLA's Lineup

GALA SELECTION

Last Film Show

Dir: Pan Nalin | India/France | Gujarati | 1h 51m

NARRATIVE FEATURES

Dug

Dir: Ritwik Pareek | India | Hindi | 1h 47m

Jaggi

Dir: Anmol Sidhu | India | Punjabi | 1h 59m | World Premiere

Once Upon a Time in Calcutta

Dir: Aditya Vikram Sengupta | India | Bengali | 1h 73m

Paka (River of Blood)

Dir: Nithin Lukose | India | Malayalam | 1h 41m

Pedro

Dir: Natesh Hegde | India | Kannada | 1h 49m | North American Premiere

Shankar's Fairies

Dir: Irfana Majumdar | India | Hindi | 1h 33m

Shoebbox

Dir: Faraz Ali | India | Hindi, Bengali, English | 1h 34m | North American Premiere

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Invisible Demons

Dir: Rahul Jain | Finland/Germany/India | English, Hindi | 1h 10m

SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTH ASIA



PEDRO



SHOEBOX



REHANA

Photos / IFFLA 2022

Rehana

Dir: Abdullah Mohammad Saad | Bangladesh/Singapore/Qatar | Bengali | 1h 47m

1978

Dir: Hamza Bangash | Pakistan | Urdu, English | 17 m

Bad Omen

Dir: Salar Pashtooniyar | Afghanistan/Canada | Dari | 19 m

Baghthan

Dir: Sunil Pandey | Nepal | Nepalese | 20 m | North American Premiere

Moshari

Dir: Nuhash Humayun | Bangladesh | Bengali | 21 m

Sandstorm (Mulaqat)

Dir: Seemab Gul | Pakistan | Urdu | 20 m

SHORT FILMS (MAIN LINEUP)

7 Star Dinosaur Entertainment

Dir: Vaishali Naik | India | Hindi | 20 m | North American Premiere

Adventures of Faisal Rehman

Dir: Mir Ijlal Shaani | India | Hindi, Urdu | 9 m | World Premiere

Close Ties To Home Country

Director: Akanksha Cruczynski | United States | English, Hindi | 15 m

Holy Cowboys

Dir: Varun Chopra | India/USA | Hindi, Gujarati | 24 m | World Premiere

I Don't Feel Like Knowing You (Ancora Non Lo So) North American Premiere

Dir: Maaria Sayed | India/Italy | Italian, Urdu | 15 m | North American Premiere

Kalsubai

Dir: Yudhajit Basu | India | Marathi | 20 m

Lalanna's Song

Dir: Megha Ramaswamy | India | Malayalam, Hindi |

34 m | World Premiere

The Return

Dir: Hena Ashraf | USA/India | English, Urdu | 18 m | North American Premiere

Succulent

Dir: Amrita Bagchi | India | Hindi, English | 30 m | North American Premiere

Tomorrow My Love

Dir: Gitanjali Rao | India | 4 min | North American Premiere

Under the Waters

Dir: Ambiecka Pandit | India | Marathi | 18 m

20TH ANNIVERSARY SHORTS - VIRTUAL SHOWCASE

(Films marked with an * will be screened physically as a part of NFMLA's

InFocus: Asian Cinema Program on April 23)

Aaba (Grandfather)

Director: Amar Kaushik

Bebaak

Director: Shazia Iqbal

*Coffee Shop Names

Director: Deepak Sethi

An Essay of the Rain

Director: Nagraj Manjule

The Fly (Makkhi)

Director: Umesh Vinayak Kulkarni

Fly, Bird

Director: Pranjal Dua

*Kunjo

Director: Terrie Samundra

Little Terrorist

Director: Ashvin Kumar

Letter from your Far-Off Country

Director: Suneil Sanzgiri

*Lucky

Director: Avie Luthra

A Mango Tree in the Front Yard

Director: Pradeepan Raveendran

The Manliest Man

Director: Anuj Gulati

Midnight Lost & Found

Director: Atul Sabharwal

Monsoon

Director: Shyam Balse

Noise (Shor)

Director: Neeraj Ghaywan

*The Queen of My Dreams

Directors: Fawzia Mirza & Ryan Logan

*Poshak (Facade)

Director: Iram Parveen Bilal

*Tomorrow My Love

Director: Gitanjali Rao

THE INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF LOS ANGELES (IFFLA)

The Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) brings to Los Angeles audiences the most innovative independent films coming out of India and the Indian diaspora, in a vibrant program comprising features and shorts, including narrative, documentary and animated works.

In addition to film screenings, the festival offers stimulating discussions between filmmakers and audiences, as well as panel conversations and industry sessions. IFFLA also hosts original special programs, such as retrospectives, spotlights and masterclasses, and lively networking and social events, all aimed at fostering a greater appreciation of Indian cinema and culture and promoting the diverse perspectives of the Indian and larger South Asian diaspora.

Since its inception in 2002, IFFLA has grown into the premiere US venue for discovering the best of Indian cinema, as well as a vital hub which fosters an important dialogue among the most original independent storytellers from India and its diaspora, the greater South Asian diasporic community and the international film industry at large. To learn more, visit indianfilmfestival.org

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



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EARTHX VOICES; EARTH'S CHALLENGES

BY MABEL PAIS

EarthX celebrates its 12th Annual Earth Day event, April 20-24, at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas, Texas. It comprises Keynote and Featured Speakers which includes an Expo and Congress of Conferences. Earthx2022 addresses some of the environment's most pressing challenges.

"At Earthx2022 we will bring together diverse voices to map an inspirational, ambitious and accomplishable path to protect and preserve our planet and those who live here," said EarthX Founder Trammell S. Crow. "This is a truly international event, with three high-level summits that have roots with UN agencies - the first time these globally recognized convenings will happen at the same time. We are proud to welcome individuals from Ukraine, Armenia, Mexico and other Central and South American countries and across-the-aisle representing a cross-section of leading environmental conservationists, governmental officials, corporations, nonprofit organizations and government agencies."

Watch a short video from EarthX Founder - youtu.be/tdhMN9-mEUg

"The acclaimed thought leaders and featured speakers at the Congress of Conferences exemplify why Earthx2022 is an essential destination for those interested in learning more about the exciting things happening around sustainability," said EarthX CEO Michael Fletcher. "Our guests will cover a wide range of environmental topics including the current status of our islands, wildlife conservation efforts along the Gulf Coast, the regeneration of America's rural landscape, amplifying youth voices and environmental investment, to name just a few of the many important conversations we will be having."

Featured speakers announced include conservationist Theodore Roosevelt IV, former NASCAR driver and current team owner Richard Childress, United Nations Secretary General Youth Advisor (North America) Sophia Kianni, Sint Maarten Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs, Mexican singer Emmanuel and Founder of Sea Shepherd Paul Watson, and more.

Guests also include U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-North Dakota), U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Michigan), U.S. Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Arkansas), U.S. Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas), EPA General Counsel Jeffrey Prieto, External Civil Rights Compliance Office, EPA Office of General Counsel Director Lillian Dorka, and U.N. Global Campaigns Director (UNDP) Boaz Paldi, and President of Global Partnerships Forum and Co-Founder of Blockchain Commission (Family Offices for Sustainable Development) Amir Dossal, and more.

The Congress of Conferences is organized into 12 programming tracks presented in a variety of session

formats. Earthx2022 is the exclusive host of three special events focused on the United Nations' 2030 Global Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) including: the SDG Media Summit, the Global Youth Summit and Family Offices for Sustainable Development Summit, as announced at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

**** Please note, some events are invitation only. To register or request an invitation, visit earthx.org.**

EARTHx2022 CONGRESS OF CONFERENCES

- Law
- Energy
- Farm, Ranch & Forest
- Wildlife Conservation
- Islands
- United Nations Family Offices
- Latin America
- United Nations Global Youth Summit
- Environmental Justice Summit
- E-Capital Summit
- Corporate Impact Summit
- In This Together

**** Please note: some events are invitation only. To register or request an invitation, visit our registration site.**

Law

- Perspectives from Federal Government Leaders (U.S. EPA & Others)
- Perspectives for State Government Leaders
- Corporate Business & Environmental Insights
- Environmental Justice
- Environmental Social Governance
- Sustainability

Energy

- Discussions on Diverse Energy Supplies, Including Renewable, Hydrogen, Fossil Fuels, Nuclear & More
- Future of Energy
- Resiliency
- Innovation
- Policy

Farm, Ranch & Forest

- Sustainability & Regeneration of America's Rural Landscape
- Land & Resource Conservation
- Carbon Markets & Opportunities for Farmers & Ranchers
- Global & Local Forest Issues

Wildlife Conservation

- Wildlife Conservation in the 21st Century - The Road Ahead
- International Partnerships to Conserve Common and Not-So-Common Species in Africa, Mexico, Canada and the U.S.
- Landscape-Scale Habitat Restoration That Benefits Landowners, Hunters, Anglers, Hikers, Kayakers &

Conservationists

- Innovative Ways to Leverage Funding for Greater Impact
- Gulf Coast Restoration in the Aftermath of Deepwater Horizon
- Conservation Science & Policy
- Outdoor Recreation

Islands

- Resiliency
- Current status of our oceans
- Lessons Learned at COP26 - United Nations Climate Change Conference
- Looking forward to COP27 - United Nations Climate Change Conference
- Public-Private Partnerships - United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17
- Saint Maarten's National Energy Transition
- Kingdom of Tonga's National Energy Transition

United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Invitation Only)

- United Nations Family Offices for Sustainable Development (UNFOSD) Summit
- One-day event to help align environmental investment to the global agenda across North America, South America and the Caribbean
- Facilitates new engagements and opportunities for collaboration
- Advances achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Managed by PVBLIC Foundation and the United Nations Office for Partnerships
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) Media Summit
- Will highlight the power of media to drive social change
- Speakers include media, marketing, advertising, and telecommunications leaders and social media influencers who champion causes that protect the planet.
- UNFCCC Global Youth Summit
- Convenes youth climate leaders who are spearheading transformative change from within the United Nations as well as building grassroots movements in communities around the world.
- Co-hosted by YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and March For Science.

Environmental Justice Summit

- Local, national and global leaders explore infrastructure through the lens of the environmental justice movement.
- Sharing solutions based on the lived experiences of frontline residents.
- City of Dallas civic leaders will be on hand.
- Co-hosted by Paul Quinn College, D Magazine and Coalition For A New Dallas

Latin America



EarthX 2019

Photo / EarthX.org.

- Border Town Sustainability Issues - United States and Mexico
- Sustainable Cities in Mexico
- International Conservation Caucus Foundation
- Wildlife Conservation and Hunting in Mexico
- Conservation of the Mexican Jaguar
- Clean Energy in Latin America

E-Capital Summit (Invitation Only)

- Environmental Investment Forum
- Environmental Venture Capital
- Environmental Private Equity
- Environmental Innovator Commercialization Showcase
- Climate Tech Prizes

Corporate Impact Summit (Invitation Only)

- Environmental & Social Justice
- Corporate Political Responsibility
- Elevating Management of ESG-Related Shareholder Inquiries
- Behind the Curtain: Understanding Corporate, Campaigner, Investor & Philanthropic Theories of Change

In This Together (Invitation Only)

- Launched on July 4, 2020, In This Together is a campaign to help save the environment and repair our democracy by growing a diverse bipartisan community of America's silenced majority, common sense problem-solvers who have been marginalized by the politics of fear, anger and division.

ABOUT EARTHX

EarthX, a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, convenes the world's largest environmental green gathering and expo, conference, film festival, and TV channel. Founded in 2011 as Earth Day Dallas by environmentalist and businessman Trammell S. Crow, the Texas-based nonprofit organization promotes environmental awareness and impact through conscious business, nonpartisan collaboration, and community-driven sustainable solutions.

To learn more, visit EarthX.org or follow the organization @earthxorg on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

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



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CHINESE SPACE ASSETS DOUBLE IN FOUR YEARS

BEIJING (TIP): China has doubled its space assets for intelligence gathering and surveillance over the past four years. It can now track and target forces of other countries worldwide, especially in the Indo-Pacific.

This has been stated by the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in its report "Challenges to Security in Space, 2022". "As of January 2022, China's ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) satellite fleet contained over 250 systems—a number second only to the US, and nearly doubling China's in-orbit systems since 2018," the report said.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) owns and operates about half of the world's

ISR systems, most of which could support monitoring, tracking and targeting of the US and allied forces worldwide, especially throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

These satellites also allow the PLA to monitor potential regional flashpoints, including the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan, Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, said the report that focuses on the growing space capabilities of China and Russia.

On China, it says recent improvements in space-based ISR capabilities emphasise the development, procurement and use of increasingly capable satellites. "Space capabilities will probably enhance potential PLA military operations farther from the Chinese coast," it added.

China owns and operates over 60 communications satellites, at least four of which are dedicated to military use. Future data relay satellites could convey targeting data to Chinese military.

The PLA considers electronic warfare (EW) capabilities to be critical for modern warfare, and its doctrine emphasises using EW to suppress or deceive enemy. PLA routinely incorporates in its exercises jamming and anti-jamming techniques that are probably intended to deny multiple space-based communication, radar systems and GPS navigation support to military movement and precision-guided munitions employment. China is probably developing jammers that could interfere with satellites by denying imagery.

The DIA's report details Chinese and Russian efforts to establish space forces and expand space weapon capabilities. These factors are contributing to increased militarisation of the space domain.

The loss of space-based communication and navigation services for any military could have a devastating impact during a conflict. (TNS)

Israel successfully tests new laser missile defense system

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israel's new laser missile defense system has successfully intercepted mortars, rockets and anti-tank missiles in recent tests, Defense Minister Benny Gantz said April 14.

The Israeli-made laser system, designed to complement a series of aerial defense systems such as the costly Iron Dome deployed by Israel, will be operational "as soon as possible," Gantz said.

The goal is to deploy the laser systems around Israel's borders over the next decade, Gantz added.

The tests took place last month in the Negev Desert.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in February that Israel would begin using the system within a year, sending a message to archenemy Iran.

Gantz said the laser system would be part of "an efficient, inexpensive, and innovative protection umbrella." Israel has already developed or deployed a series of systems meant to intercept everything from long-range missiles to rockets launched from just a few kilometers (miles) away.

It has also outfitted its tanks with a missile-defense system.

Little is known about the laser system's effectiveness, but it is expected to be deployed on land, in the air and at



sea.

The announcement came near the anniversary of the 11-day Israel-Gaza war, in which Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group fired more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel.

Israel said its Iron Dome defense system has been a great success, with a 90 per cent interception rate against incoming rocket fire.

But officials say the system is expensive to deploy, and the new laser defense will be much more cost-effective.

The Defense Ministry released a short video showing what it said were successful interceptions of rockets,

mortars and an unmanned aerial vehicle. The video, which was highly edited and includes music, appeared to show a laser beam coming out of a ground station, hitting the targets and smashing them into small pieces.

Thursday's announcement came as talks on restoring Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers have stalled.

Israel opposes the deal, saying it does not do enough to curb Iran's nuclear programme or its military activities across the region, and Israeli officials have said they will unilaterally do what's necessary to protect the country. AP

British PM and finance minister to be fined over lockdown parties

LONDON (TIP): Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his finance minister Rishi Sunak are to receive fines for breaching strict coronavirus lockdown rules, the government said on April 12, prompting calls for them both to resign.

Police have been investigating 12 gatherings at Johnson's Downing Street office and the Cabinet Office after a damning internal inquiry found his staff had enjoyed alcohol-fuelled parties that should not have been allowed.

Johnson said he had attended a few of the events, but has always denied knowingly committing any wrongdoing.

"The prime minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have today received notification that the Metropolitan Police intend to issue them with fixed penalty notices," a government spokesperson said.

"We have no further details, but we will update you again when we do."

A spokesperson for Johnson's wife Carrie said she would also be fined.

Some of the gatherings took place when people could not attend funerals or say farewell to loved ones dying in hospital because they were following rules set by Johnson's government.

After the events were first reported in late 2021, Johnson said there were no



parties and that all rules were followed.

He later apologised to parliament for attending one event, which he said he thought was work-related and also said sorry to Queen Elizabeth for another at which staff partied on the eve of her husband's funeral.

The Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK group said it was "still unbelievably painful" that Johnson had broken his own rules when they were unable to be with loved ones as they died.

"The fact that @BorisJohnson and @RishiSunak then lied about it, and would have continued to do so if the police hadn't intervened, is truly shameful," the group said on Twitter.

"There is simply no way either the Prime Minister or Chancellor can continue. Their dishonesty has caused untold hurt to the bereaved."

Opponents also called for Johnson and

Sunak to quit, saying they had misled parliament about their actions.

"Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak have broken the law and repeatedly lied to the British public. They must both resign," said Keir Starmer, leader of the main opposition Labour Party.

The Liberal Democrats called for parliament to be recalled immediately from its Easter holiday and for there to be a vote of no-confidence in Johnson.

However, the prime minister's immediate future will be determined by lawmakers in his own Conservative Party, who can trigger a leadership challenge if 54 of the 360 who sit in parliament demand a confidence vote.

Earlier this year a number of Conservatives called for him to quit as public trust plummeted over the "partygate" affair and support for the government shrank. (Reuters)

HAPPY KHALSA SAJNA DIVAS & A HAPPY VAISAKHI



Vaisakhi is the day when, in 1699, the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the pure, popularly known as the Sikhs to challenge the tyranny of the Mughal rulers and to seek equality and justice for all.

”

Vaisakhi is also the day when farmers in Punjab celebrate the arrival of the new crop with a lot of fanfare. A time to rejoice, farmers dressed in their best sing and dance to the traditional musical instruments which include Dhol (drum) and pipes of various kinds, among others.



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PUTIN VOWS RUSSIA WILL PRESS UKRAINE INVASION TILL GOALS MET

KYIV (TIP) : President Vladimir Putin vowed on April 12 that Russia's bloody offensive in Ukraine would continue until its goals are fulfilled, and insisted the campaign was going as planned, despite a major withdrawal in the face of stiff Ukrainian opposition and significant losses.

Russian troops, thwarted in their push toward Ukraine's capital, are now focusing on the eastern Donbas region, where Ukraine said Tuesday it was investigating a claim that a poisonous substance had been dropped on its troops. It was not clear what the substance might be, but Western officials warned that any use of chemical weapons by Russia would be a serious escalation of the already devastating war.

Russia invaded on February 24, with the goal, according to Western officials, of taking Kyiv, toppling the government and installing a Moscow-friendly one.

In the six weeks since, Russia's ground campaign stalled, its forces suffered losses that may number in the thousands and it stands accused of killing civilians and other atrocities.

Putin insisted Tuesday that his military action aimed to protect people in areas in eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed rebels and to "ensure Russia's own security."

He said Russia "had no other choice" but to launch what he calls a "special military operation," and vowed it would "continue until its full completion and the fulfillment of the tasks that have been set."

For now, Putin's forces are gearing up for a major offensive in the Donbas, which has been torn by fighting between Russian-allied separatists and Ukrainian forces since 2014, and where Russia has recognized the separatists' claims of independence.

Military strategists say Russian leaders appear to hope local support, logistics and terrain in the region favor Russia's larger and better-armed military, potentially allowing its troops to finally turn the tide in their favour.

In Mariupol, a strategic port city in the Donbas, a Ukrainian regiment defending a steel mill claimed a drone had dropped a poisonous substance on the city.

It indicated there were no serious injuries. The assertion by the Azov Regiment, a far-right group now part of the Ukrainian military, could not be independently verified.

It came after a Russia-allied separatist official appeared to urge the use of chemical weapons, telling Russian state TV on Monday that separatist forces should seize the plant by first blocking all the exits.

"And then we'll use chemical troops to smoke them out of there," the official, Eduard Basurin, said. (AP)

Russia warns of nuclear deployment if Sweden and Finland join NATO

LONDON (TIP): One of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest allies warned NATO on April 14 that if Sweden and Finland joined the U.S.-led military alliance then Russia would have to bolster its defences in the region, including by deploying nuclear weapons.

Finland, which shares a 1,300-km (810-mile) border with Russia, and Sweden are considering joining the NATO alliance.

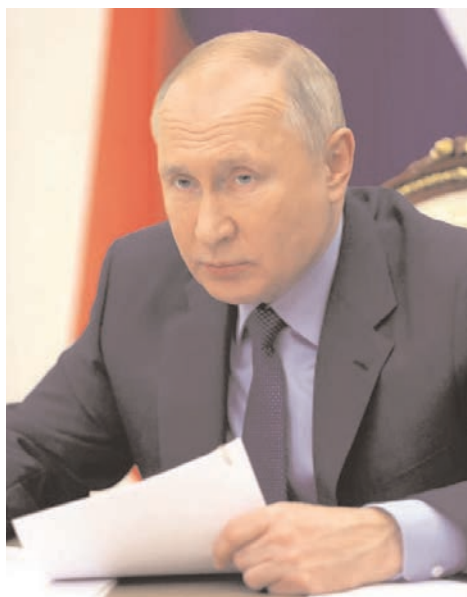
Finland will make a decision in the next few weeks, Prime Minister Sanna Marin said on Wednesday.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said that should Sweden and Finland join NATO then Russia would have to strengthen its land, naval and air forces in the Baltic Sea.

Medvedev also explicitly raised the nuclear threat by saying that there could be no more talk of a "nuclear free" Baltic - where Russia has its Kaliningrad exclave sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania.

"There can be no more talk of any nuclear-free status for the Baltic - the balance must be restored," said Medvedev, who was president from 2008 to 2012.

"Until today, Russia has not taken such measures and was not going to," Medvedev said. "If our hand is forced well... take note it wasn't us who proposed this," he added.



Lithuania said Russia's threats were nothing new and that Moscow had deployed nuclear weapons to Kaliningrad long before the war in Ukraine.

The possible accession of Finland and Sweden into NATO - founded in 1949 to provide collective Western security against the Soviet Union - would be one of the biggest European strategic consequences of the war in Ukraine.

Finland gained independence from Russia in 1917 and fought two wars against it during World War Two during which it lost some territory to Moscow. On Thursday, Finland announced a

military exercise in Western Finland with the participation of forces from Britain, the United States, Latvia and Estonia.

Sweden has not fought a war for 200 years and post-war foreign policy has focused on supporting democracy internationally, multilateral dialogue and nuclear disarmament.

Kaliningrad is of particular importance in the northern European theatre. Formerly the Prussian port of Koenigsberg, capital of East Prussia, it lies less than 1400 km from London and Paris and 500 km from Berlin.

Russia said in 2018 it had deployed Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, which was captured by the Red Army in April 1945 and ceded to the Soviet Union at the Potsdam conference.

The Iskander, known as SS-26 Stone by NATO, is a short-range tactical ballistic missile system that can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads.

Its official range is 500 km but some Western military sources suspect its range may be much greater.

"No sane person wants higher prices and higher taxes, increased tensions along borders, Iskanders, hypersonics and ships with nuclear weapons literally at arm's length from their own home," Medvedev said.

"Let's hope that the common sense of our northern neighbors will win," said Medvedev. (Reuters)



AUSTRALIAN PM SCOTT MORRISON CALLS ELECTION FOR MAY 21

CANBERRA (TIP): Australia's PM Scott Morrison has called for a May 21 election that will be fought on issues, including Chinese economic coercion, climate change and the Covid pandemic.

Morrison on April 12 advised Governor-General David Hurley as representative of Australia's head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, to set the election date.

Morrison's conservative coalition is seeking a fourth three-year term. The date is the latest available to him. He urged voters to stick with a government that delivered one of the lowest pandemic death tolls of any advanced economy rather than risk the opposition Labor Party. — AP

SPAIN PROBES MUSEUM WITH 1,000 STUFFED ANIMALS

MADRID (TIP): Spain's Civil Guard on April 12 said it was investigating a businessman in the eastern Valencia region who owned a private taxidermy collection with more than 1,000 stuffed animals, including just over 400 from protected species and at least one specimen of a North African oryx, already extinct. The collection would fetch 29 million euros (\$31.5 million) on the black market, a Civil Guard statement said. AP

BECKHAM'S SON MARRIES ACTOR NICOLA PELTZ

LONDON (TIP): Model-chef Brooklyn Beckham and actor Nicola Peltz tied the knot in a ceremony in Miami on April 12. Brooklyn, the eldest son of former footballer David Beckham and fashion designer-former Spice Girl Victoria Beckham, announced engagement with the "Transformers: Age of Extinction" actor on July 11, 2020. (AP)



RUSSIA DESTROYS 4 S-300 MISSILE LAUNCHERS IN UKRAINE, SAYS DEFENCE MINISTRY

KEIV (TIP): Russia has destroyed S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems which had been supplied to Ukraine by a European country, Russia's defence ministry said on April 12.

The ministry said that Russian sea-launched Kalibr missiles on Sunday destroyed four S-300 launchers which were concealed in a hangar on the outskirts of the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

Russia said 25 Ukrainian troops were hit in the attack. It did not say which European country had supplied the S-300 systems. (Reuters)



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History This Week

April 15 to April 21

"HISTORY HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE MOST NOTABLE WINNERS USUALLY ENCOUNTERED HEARTBREAKING OBSTACLES BEFORE THEY TRIUMPHED. THEY WON BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO BECOME DISCOURAGED BY THEIR DEFEATS." - B. C. FORBES

April 15

April 15, 1817 - The first American school for the deaf was founded by Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc in Hartford, Connecticut.



Titanic
Engraving by Willy Stöwer

April 15, 1912 - In the icy waters off Newfoundland, the luxury liner Titanic with 2,224 persons on board sank at 2:27 a.m. after striking an iceberg just before midnight. Over 1,500 persons drowned while 700 were rescued by the liner Carpathia which arrived about two hours after Titanic went down.

April 16

April 16, 1862 - Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia and appropriated \$1 million to compensate owners of freed slaves.

April 16, 1995 - Iqbal Masih, a young boy from Pakistan who spoke out against child labor, was shot to death. At age four, he had been sold into servitude as a carpet weaver and spent the next six years shackled to a loom. At age ten, he escaped and began speaking out, attracting worldwide attention as a featured speaker during an international labor conference in Sweden.



Wilbur Wright

Birthday - American aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) was born in Millville, Indiana. On December 17, 1903,

along with his brother Orville, the Wright brothers made the first successful flight of a motor driven aircraft. It flew for 12 seconds and traveled 120 feet. By 1905, they had built a plane that could stay airborne for half an hour, performing figure eights and other aerial maneuvers. Wilbur died of Typhoid fever in May 1912.



Charlie Chaplin

Birthday - Film comedian Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) was born in London. He began in vaudeville and was discovered by American film producer Mack Sennett. He then went to Hollywood to make silent movies, developing the funny 'Little Tramp' film character. Chaplin's classics include The Kid, The Gold Rush, City Lights and Modern Times. In 1940, he made The Great Dictator poking fun at Adolf Hitler, who bore a resemblance to Chaplin. In his later years, Chaplin had a falling out with Americans, but returned in 1972 to receive a special Academy Award. In 1975, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

April 17

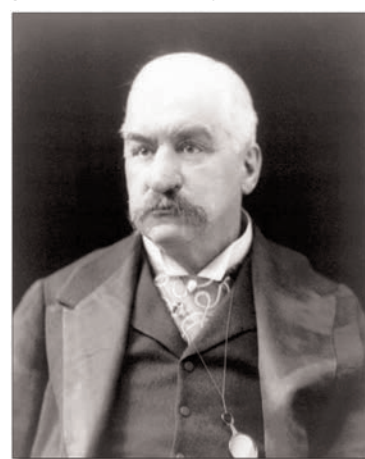


Fidel Castro

April 17, 1961 - A U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba failed disastrously in what became known as the Bay of Pigs fiasco. About 1,400 anti-Castro exiles invaded the island's southern coast along the Bay of Pigs but were overrun by 20,000 Cuban soldiers and jailed. Trained and guided by the U.S., the exiles had expected support from U.S. military aircraft and help from anti-Castro insurgents on the island. Instead, due to a series of mishaps, they had fended for themselves with no support. The failed invasion heightened Cold War tensions between

Cuba's political ally, Soviet Russia, and the fledgling administration of President John F. Kennedy. The following year, the Russians brazenly installed nuclear missiles in Cuba resulting in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

April 17, 1889 - The Polish labor union Solidarity was granted legal status after nearly a decade of struggle, paving the way for the downfall of the Polish Communist Party. In the elections that followed, Solidarity candidates won 99 out of 100 parliamentary seats and eventually forced the acceptance of a Solidarity government led by Lech Walesa.



John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan

Birthday - American financier John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan (1837-1913) was born in Hartford, Connecticut. He displayed extraordinary management skills, reorganizing and consolidating a number of failing companies to make them profitable. His extensive interests included banking, steel, railroads and art collecting. In 1895, he aided the failing U.S. Treasury by carrying out a private bond sale among fellow financiers to replenish the treasury.

April 18

April 18, 1775 - The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere and William Dawes occurred as the two men rode out of Boston about 10 p.m. to warn patriots at Lexington and Concord of the approaching British.

April 18, 1906 - The San Francisco Earthquake struck at 5:13 a.m., followed by a massive fire from overturned wood stoves and broken gas pipes. The fire raged uncontrollably for three days resulting in the destruction of over 10,000 acres of property and 4,000 lives lost.

April 18, 1942 - The first air

raid on mainland Japan during World War II occurred as General James Doolittle led a squadron of B-25 bombers taking off from the carrier Hornet to bomb Tokyo and three other cities. Damage was minimal, but the raid boosted Allied morale following years of unchecked Japanese military advances.



Queen Elizabeth II

April 18, 1982 - Queen Elizabeth II of England signed the Canada Constitution Act of 1982 replacing the British North America Act of 1867, providing Canada with a new set of fundamental laws and civil rights.



Clarence Darrow

Birthday - American attorney Clarence Darrow (1857-1938) was born in Kinsman, Ohio. He championed unpopular causes, and is best known for the Scopes 'monkey trial' in which he defended a teacher who taught the theory of evolution.

April 19

April 19, 1989 - Forty-seven U.S. sailors were killed by an explosion in a gun turret on the USS Iowa during gunnery exercises in the waters off Puerto Rico.

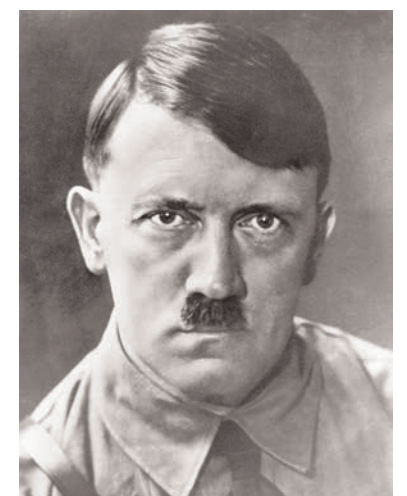
April 19, 1993 - At Waco, Texas, the compound of the Branch Davidian religious cult burned to the ground with 82 persons inside, including 17 children.

The fire erupted after federal agents battered buildings in the compound with armored vehicles following a 51-day standoff.

April 19, 1995 - At 9:02 a.m., a massive car-bomb explosion destroyed the entire side of a nine-story federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 persons, including 19 children inside a day care center. A decorated Gulf War veteran was later convicted for the attack.

April 20

April 20, 1999 - The deadliest school shooting in U.S. history occurred in Littleton, Colorado, as two students armed with guns and explosives stormed into Columbine High School at lunch time then killed 12 classmates and a teacher and wounded more than 20 other persons before killing themselves.



Adolf Hitler

Birthday - Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria. As leader of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945, he waged a war of expansion in Europe, precipitating the deaths of an estimated 50 million persons through military conflict and through the Holocaust in which the Nazis attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

April 21

April 21, 1836 - The Battle of San Jacinto between Texans led by Sam Houston and Mexican forces led by Santa Anna took place near present day Houston. The Texans decisively defeated the Mexican forces thereby achieving independence.

(Read full article at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

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'Jersey' release pushed further to April 22

The release date of the Shahid Kapoor and Mrunal Thakur-starrer sports drama, 'Jersey' has been pushed yet again. The makers of the film shared that the film which was earlier supposed to debut in theatres on April 14, will now release on April 22. Sharing the news, the film's producer, Aman Gill said, "As a team, we have put our blood sweat and tears into 'Jersey' and would like our beloved film to reach all of you in the widest possible way. 'Jersey' will now release on 22nd April." The film, presented by Allu Arvind, produced by Dil Raju, S. Naga Vamsi and Aman Gill, has been directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri, and it also stars Shahid's father Pankaj Kapoor.

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt tie the knot

Bollywood A-listers Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor got married on Thursday, April 14, not in a big fat Indian wedding spangled with tinsel as many would have imagined but at their Bandra apartment with just family and close friends in attendance.

Bhatt, 29, posted a series of loved-up pictures with Ranbir, 39, on Instagram post the wedding to announce that they had tied the knot in their balcony after dating for five years.

"Today, surrounded by our family and friends, at home... in our favourite spot – the balcony we've spent the last 5 years of our relationship – we got married. With so much already behind us, we can't wait to build more memories together... memories that are full of love, laughter, comfortable silences, movie nights, silly fights, wine delights and Chinese bites.

"Thank you for all the love and light during this very momentous time in our lives. It has made this moment all the more special," the caption by Ranbir and Alia, read.

Alia and Ranbir matched the colour of their wedding outfits in ivory and gold: lehenga and matching kundan jewellery for the bride and sherwani for the groom from Bollywood's go-to wedding designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee.

After keeping the media personnel and fans stationed outside 'Vastu' waiting, the couple arrived for the much promised photo op at around 7.40 pm.

The couple arrived walking hand-in-hand to the beats of drums and greeted the media and waiting fans with folded hands. As they posed for pictures, Ranbir lifted Alia in his arms and walked back to



the building as fans broke into a cheerful applause. The wedding festivities were a tight-knit affair with the media stationed outside getting morsels of information about what was going inside till Alia finally shared the pictures from the wedding on her social media pages.

Ranbir does not have an official social media account. Media and those waiting outside were treated to 'laddoos' and sweets post the wedding earlier in the evening. 'Dholaks' were heard too,

perhaps the only concession to the otherwise understated affair.

Boxes of snacks were also distributed among the media personnel, who had been keeping vigil outside.

Given that both Ranbir, Raj Kapoor's grandson and a scion of the first family of Bollywood, and Alia, daughter of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, are from Bollywood families, the star presence was a given, and kept the cameras whirring.

Source: PTI

Ranveer Singh: Like to convince people that I can transform myself into anyone

Bollywood's livewire star Ranveer Singh, who is gearing up for the release of his next 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar', says for him, the best thing about being an actor is that one can live many lives.

Ranveer says: "For me, the best thing about being an actor is that you can live so many lives and experience so much because each character that I choose to play are remarkably different from one another.

"When people saw 'Band Baaja Baaraat', they felt for the longest time that I was a boy who was born and brought up in Delhi.

"This has happened many times during the course of my 11-year career and that to me is the biggest compliment because I like to convince people that I can transform myself into anyone."

The actor is clear that he doesn't want to get typecast in the industry and among audiences. He, thus, picks his projects with care to wow audiences.

Ranveer said: "I have a personal ambition to never be typecast and it's a tough one but I choose my scripts quite cleverly. 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' presented me with a huge opportunity to play a character with no reference point all over again. I think I really manifest these roles into my life."

The Yash Raj Films' 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar', also starring Arjun Reddy fame Shalini Pandey, is releasing on May 13.

Source: IANS

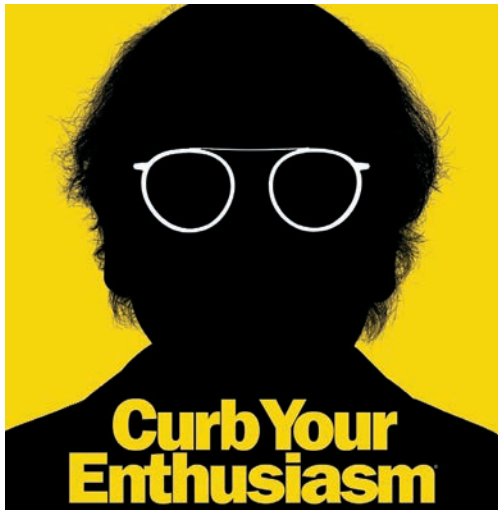


Kangana Ranaut sports seven looks for 'Dhaakad'!

Actress Kangana Ranaut has sported seven strong and intense looks for her upcoming film 'Dhaakad', whose trailer is all set to drop on Tuesday. As Agent Agni, the actress will stun audiences with her seven different looks and multiple combat scenes which have been designed and choreographed by international technicians. Kangana Ranaut will be seen in unique hairdos and in combat attire showcasing her warrior avatar. Along with the trailer, the actress will surprise the audience with an action-packed first look on the big screen as it will be attached to 'KGF: Chapter 2'. Director Razneesh Ghai adds, "A new action star is on the rise, with Dhaakad, Kangana truly becomes the master of disguises.

Each look is unique and we've never seen Kangana do action like this before" The film also stars Divya Dutta and Arjun Rampal as the antagonists. 'Dhaakad' will see Arjun and Kangana battling each other and their duels are clearly to be relished on the big screen. It is no less than the clash of the titans and the combat sequences have a never seen before quality to them. 'Dhaakad' is designed as an international level spy thriller, directed by Razneesh Razy Ghai and produced by Deepak Mukut and Sohel Maklai. It is presented by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt Ltd in association with Kamal Mukut, Sohel Maklai Productions and Asylum films.





*Larry David confirms
'Curb Your Enthusiasm'
to return with Season 12*

Multi-hyphenate artiste and the creator of American sitcom 'Curb Your Enthusiasm', Larry David has confirmed that the show will be renewed for its Season 12, reports 'Variety'.

The show creator shared the news at an Emmys event at the DGA presented by HBO Max.

As per 'Variety', the event included a screening of Season 11 episode 'The Watermelon' as well as a live panel discussion hosted by Rich Eisen and featuring David, executive producer Jeff Schaffer, Jeff Garlin, Susie Essman, J.B. Smoove, Cheryl Hines and Richard Lewis.

Eisen wrote on Twitter, "So, I was honored to emcee an (Emmys) panel for 'Curb Your Enthusiasm' tonight here in LA with most of the cast and asked Larry David the ultimate question: Will there be another season of Curb? He said yes."

The news is special because the show is put into operations only when David feels inspired to write more of it. The gravity of this can be gauged from the fact that the show has 11 seasons spread out over 21 years. It took a major hiatus between 2011 and 2017. But as Smoove told Variety ahead of the Season 11 premiere, "I think Larry can see more seasons, more episodes, more storylines, based on what he has at his disposal. The more the world changes, the more toys he has to play with."

Rihanna redefines what pregnant women can wear in cover shoot

Pregnant Barbadian singer-actress Rihanna has sent the Internet into a frenzy by appearing with her fully grown baby bump on the cover of 'Vogue' magazine. The "Love The Way You Lie" singer took to her social media and shared the adorable picture.

She wrote in the caption, "Our lil fashion killa on da cover of VOGUE!" For the cover shoot, she wore a red strapless jumpsuit with laces from the house of Alaia, the brand name of the Tunisian couturier Azzedine Alaia, which she paired with matching gloves.

For footwear, she tied her outfit together with a pair of red and transparent pointed-toe stilettos, also from Alaia, and rounded her look with Chopard earrings.

As she explores motherhood, the singer shared that it had given her the opportunity to try clothing that she would have never sported otherwise.

Rihanna said in an interview with 'Vogue': "When I found out I was pregnant, I thought to myself, 'There's no way I'm going to go shopping in no maternity aisle.' I'm sorry -- it's too much fun to get dressed up. I'm not going to let that part disappear just because my body is changing."

She added: "I'm hoping we are able to redefine what's considered 'decent' for pregnant women. My body is doing incredible things right now, and I'm not going to be ashamed of that. This time should feel celebratory. Because why should you be hiding your pregnancy?"

Source: IANS



Selena Gomez warns body shamers

Singer-actress Selena Gomez has warned body-shamers on a social media post not to "b***h about" her weight.

Making use of her TikTok Story, the 29-year-old singer/actress shared a clip of her saying, "So I be trying to stay skinny, but I went to Jack in the Box and I got four tacos, three egg rolls, onion rings and a spicy chicken sandwich."

She added that she doesn't judge herself for what she eats and wishes other people wouldn't either, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"But honestly, I don't care about my weight because people b***h about it anyway," Selena said.

"You're too small, 'you're too big,' 'that doesn't fit.' 'Meh meh meh meh', " she continued, before slamming the trolls, "B***h, I am perfect the way I am."

This wasn't the first time Selena talked about hateful comments she received over her body.

During an interview with Cosmopolitan in 2020, the 'Bad Liar' singer revealed that her weight often fluctuates due to the medications she took to help her combat Lupus.

"I've gotten insecure. I also have lupus so I fluctuate

in my weight a lot," she had confessed.

However, the singer-actress shared that she's learned how to deal with the insensitive remarks after being body-shamed in 2019.

In 2019, Selena was heavily body-shamed as her health issues resulted in weight fluctuations. She even decided to quit social media because of it. During an appearance on the 'Giving Back Generation' podcast in November that year, she said, "I experienced (body shaming) with my weight fluctuation for the first time."

"I have lupus and deal with kidney issues and high blood pressure, so I deal with a lot of health issues, and for me that's when I really started noticing more of the body image stuff," she explained. "So for me, I really started to notice when people started attacking me for that."

The 'Lose You to Love Me' songstress elaborated further, "In reality, that's just my truth. I fluctuate. It depends on what's happening in my life." All of the negativity took a toll on her mental health as well.

"That got to me big time. I think for me, that really messed me up for a bit," she admitted. Source: IANS



Be wary of catfishing

The world of online dating offers many wonderful opportunities to meet compatible people. But it also makes you vulnerable to catfishing. The term refers to individuals who create elaborate false identities and attract unsuspecting victims to fraudulent online relationships. And yes, being catfished can really hamper one's emotional health.

It is heartbreaking and alarming to think that the wonderful guy or girl you are talking to may be nothing more than a mirage projected by someone. Here's what you need to know about how to averting this.

Monitor plausibility

Some catfishers are using their false online identity to do something akin to living out their dream lives. As a result, it's good to look out for ridiculous life stories that don't seem realistic. You should accept the fact that not everyone you meet online is who they claim to be. Are you talking to a supermodel, a powerful government member, or an individual with a 100 page CV of personal tragedies? If so, strongly consider the possibility that you are being duped.

Look for mysterious attitudes

Be very wary if you notice that someone is unwilling to provide more than just a few photos of themselves or is constantly evading any attempt to meet in person. Even if you are not being catfished, someone who tries to avoid a personal meeting will almost definitely have something else to hide (often a spouse). Be mindful, choose your mental and emotional health and set clear boundaries.

Do your research

Listen to your intuition. Always ask for their full name, do an internet search to see if this person's alleged identity seems legitimate. For example, you should find a departmental profile of someone who claims to be a college professor. It's also worth browsing through the images that come up when you enter the person's name and location. While nothing is foolproof, it is particularly useful if your contact will happily connect with you using Instagram or another social networking site where you can see them regularly interact with a large number of people who appear to verify their story. Keep a check on someone's credentials.



iStock

Ask for a proof

Given the growing awareness of catfishing, you should be able to ask people on online dating sites to prove their identity without hurting their feelings. You can explain that you have heard bizarre stories and are very cautious about meeting people without objective proof of honesty. For example, it might be a good idea to ask the person to send you a picture of them holding a piece of paper indicating their name and the current date. If you don't want to be explicit about your testing needs, ask for a video session with audio and video. While this can only verify their true appearance, it does help weed out some catfish. If they are unwilling to give you proof, seriously reconsider your association.

Virtual dating

Genuine people are willing to have conversations without any ulterior motive. If you want to make sure that the person you are talking to is the person you are talking to, you need to see it via multiple virtual dates. After talking to someone for a while, the video chat is normal and expected. Again, if someone actively prevents you from seeing him, they are not what they say they are. Virtual dating has become acceptable since the global pandemic, so make use of this opportunity to get to know your romantic interest better.

Source: Healthshots

FOOD

Tawa Chicken Fry

A delicious lip-smacking dish, the Tawa Chicken Fry is easy to make and can be served as a starter or as an appetizer to a meal.

Ingredients

Chicken - 500 gms
Gram Flour - small handful
Juice of 1 Lemon
Ginger Garlic Paste - 2 tblsp
Turmeric Powder - 1/3 tsp
Coriander Powder - 1/3 tsp
Curry Leaves - few
Red Chilli Paste - 3 tsp
Saunf - 1/2 tsp
Cumin Seeds - 1/2 tsp
Salt as per taste
Oil as required

Method

- Clean, wash and dice the chicken into bite-sized pieces.
- Combine the gram flour, lemon juice, ginger garlic paste, turmeric powder, coriander powder, curry leaves, red chilli paste, saunf, cumin seeds and salt in a bowl.
- Mix well with a little water.
- Add the chicken pieces and mix until evenly coated.
- Keep aside for 45 to 75 minutes.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Fry the chicken pieces until golden brown and cooked.
- Remove and drain excess oil.
- Serve with mint chutney.



Remedies for dark circles

Tired of dark circles and want to get rid of them. Avoid chemically induced serums and gels, by using these interesting remedies, which can be prepared easily at home, to reduce dark circles naturally. Just be careful and avoid getting them into the eyes when applying it.

Rose water

Soak two cotton balls in rose water and place them over the eyelids. Keep them for 10 minutes and then remove them.

Cucumber

It is a known fact that cucumber has skin-lightening properties and acts as a great astringent. Take a fresh green cucumber and cut it into thick slices. Chill them in the refrigerator. After half an hour, take them out and put them over closed eyes for 10 - 15 minutes. Wash off with

normal water.

Tomato

Tomato too acts as a great skin lightening agent. Take one teaspoon of fresh tomato juice mix it with one teaspoon of lemon juice. Gently apply the mixture around your eyes on the dark circles. After keeping it for around 10 minutes, wash it off with cold water.

Potato slices

Peel and cut potato into thin slices. Immediately put them over closed eyes for 15-20 minutes. Wash off with normal water. Almond oil - Before going to bed every night, gently massage almond oil into the skin around your eyes.

Mint

Crush six to seven fresh mint leaves and apply them around the eye. Keep it for around 10 - 15 minutes and

then wash it off with cold water.

Silver spoon

Silver teaspoon is not only a beautiful and elegant kitchen accessory, you can also use it to get rid of dark circles under your eyes. Put a silver spoon in your fridge for 3 minutes and then, gently touch your under eye area with it (yes, only a gentle touch, no squeezing or pressing). Cold spoon will tone the skin under your eyes and the silver metal will help to get rid of under eye circles.

Ice cubes

Our next trick on how to get rid of dark circles under eyes is to use ice cubes. Ideally, it's better to prepare ice cubes yourself using green or camomile tea, for example. Camomile has calming properties, and the ice will tone your skin and reduce under eye dark circles and puffiness.



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Know the new XE Omicron variant and its severity

With new coronavirus variants emerging every four months on average, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has cautioned that the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over as large outbreaks are spreading in Asia.

Guterres also called for governments and pharma companies to work together to deliver vaccines to every person, everywhere.

In a video message "One World Protected - Break Covid Now" to the GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment Summit 2022, Guterres said Friday that the gathering is a critical reminder that the "Covid-19 pandemic is far from over."

"We're seeing 1.5 million new cases each day. Large outbreaks are spreading in Asia. A new wave is sweeping across Europe," he said, adding that some countries are reporting their highest death rates since the start of the pandemic.

He said the Omicron variant of the coronavirus is a "startling reminder" of how quickly Covid-19 can mutate and spread — especially in the absence of high vaccination coverage.

While some high-income countries are preparing for their second booster doses, one-third of humanity remains unvaccinated, he rued.

"This is a brutal indictment of our deeply unequal world. It's also a prime breeding ground for new variants... more deaths... and increased human and economic misery," he said.

Guterres said the next variant is not a question of "if" but of "when." "We are far from our target of every country reaching 70 per cent vaccination coverage by the middle of this year. And with new variants emerging every four months on average, time is of the essence," he said.

He added that governments and pharmaceutical companies need to work together to deliver vaccines to



every person, everywhere — not just in wealthy countries.

A new strain of the Covid-19 Omicron variant, first detected in the United Kingdom, appears to be more transmissible than previous strains of the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) had said.

WHO said last week that the XE recombinant (BA.1-BA.2), was first detected in the United Kingdom on January 19 and more than 600 sequences have been reported and confirmed since.

"Early-day estimates indicate a community growth rate advantage of 10 per cent as compared to BA.2. However, this finding requires further confirmation," WHO had said.

It added that XE belongs to the Omicron variant until significant differences in transmission and disease characteristics, including severity, may be reported.

Source: PTI



Covaxin booster enhances antibody response against Covid variants including Omicron: Study

A booster dose of Covaxin administered six months after the two dose primary vaccination has shown elevated immune responses against SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern including Omicron and protection from severe disease, a study by ICMR and Bharat Biotech has found.

The emergence of Omicron with at least 30 mutations within most vaccines' target region -- the spike protein -- raised an alarm about its immune escape from vaccine-induced neutralising antibodies, thereby leading to increased transmissibility and causing breakthrough and reinfection, senior scientist at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, Dr Pragya Yadav, told PTI.

Additionally, reports of waning of antibody responses against the emerging variants of concern (VoCs) of virus for other approved vaccines have raised concern globally, she said.

As a part of the study the antibody responses in sera of 51 participants who received two doses of Covaxin collected six months post second dose and 28 days after receiving a third (booster) dose (given on day 215th post second dose) and its impact against the Omicron VoC was evaluated.

The study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Covaxin manufacturer Bharat Biotech was conducted in January and the findings were published in the Journal of Travel Medicine on March 24.

"The antibody response was higher for participants administered with booster doses for B.1 and the VoCs -- Delta, Beta and Omicron variants," Dr Gajanan Sakpal, another senior scientist at the NIV, said.

This indicates that the booster dose of Covaxin robustly triggered neutralising antibody responses and efficiently neutralised the multiple variants of SARS-CoV-2, Sakpal said.

"We conclude that the neutralising antibody responses were significantly elevated after third dose of BBV152/Covaxin against the homologous B.1 (19.11 fold) and other heterologous strains (16.51 fold), Beta (14.70 fold) and Omicron (18.53 fold) VoCs, providing assurance of a protective immune response of booster in recipients," the study stated.

Source: PTI

After cosmetics and blood, now scientists detect microplastics in lungs

A team of scientists have for the first time discovered microplastics in live human lungs, a finding that indicates we are inhaling the dangerous substances without knowledge that can have a major impact on our respiratory health.

Micro-plastic pollution is one of the most crucial environmental issues in recent times. The latest finding comes after two major studies, published last month, showed the presence of microplastics in cosmetic products and in human bloodstream in detectable levels.

While synthetic fibres have previously been found in lung tissue, there are limited studies confirming the presence of microplastics, and none as robust as this.

The research led by a team from the University of Hull and Hull York Medical School found 39 microplastics in 11 of the 13 lung tissue samples tested, considerably higher than any previous laboratory tests.

The study showed 11 microplastics were found in the upper part of the lung, seven in the mid part, and 21 in the lower part of the lung, which was an unexpected finding.

"Microplastics have previously been found in human cadaver autopsy samples, this is the first robust study to show microplastics in lungs from live people," said Laura Sadofsky, lead author on the paper published in the journal Science of the Total Environment.

"We did not expect to find the highest number of particles in the lower regions of the lungs, or particles of the sizes we found. This is surprising as the airways are smaller in the lower parts of the lungs and we would have expected particles of these sizes to be filtered out or trapped before getting this deep into the lungs," she added.

Lung tissue was collected from surgical procedures



carried out on patients who were still alive, as part of their routine medical care. It was then filtered to see what was present.

Of the microplastics detected, there were 12 types, which have many uses and are commonly found in packaging, bottles, clothing, rope/twine, and many manufacturing processes. There were also considerably higher levels of microplastics in male patients compared to females.

"The characterisation of types and levels of microplastics we have found can now inform realistic conditions for laboratory exposure experiments with the aim of determining health impacts," Sadofsky said.

Source: IANS

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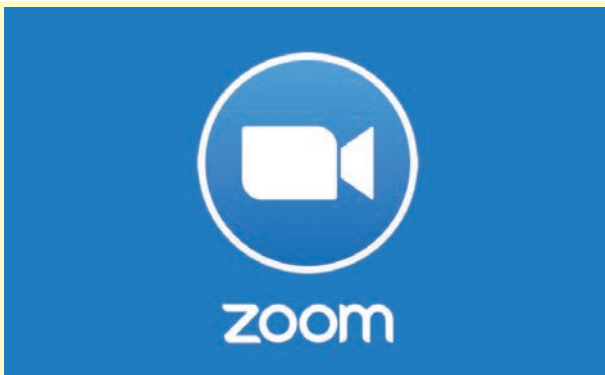


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TIRLOK MALIK

New York Emmy Nominated Filmmaker
Creator of Ayurveda cafe in Manhattan, NY
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Zoom announces new features aimed at educators, students

Zoom has announced a host of new features aimed at educators and students. These features include enhancements to the Breakout Rooms feature, “Anywhere Polls”, and newly added support for virtual background and blur on Chromebooks. According to the company, it added virtual backgrounds and blur features on Zoom for Chrome after requests from education customers since Chromebooks are popular among students and teachers. “Virtual background and blur for Chromebooks is extremely beneficial to our students and teachers. Many students were reluctant to turn their cameras on before this feature enhancement,” Rod Smith, Chief Technology Officer, Clayton County Public Schools said in a press statement. Clayton County Public Schools is one of the customers that requested the feature.

The Breakout Rooms feature on Zoom allows conference hosts to split attendees into separate breakout rooms for group activities. It is a popular feature among education users. The new Program Audio feature will allow meeting hosts to share content with audio to breakout rooms, adding the ability to share videos with audio.

The forecast on planet Neptune is chilly and getting colder

Frigid and far-flung Neptune, our solar system's outermost planet, is adding to its reputation as an enigmatic world, with astronomers puzzled by a surprising drop in its atmospheric temperatures during the past two decades.

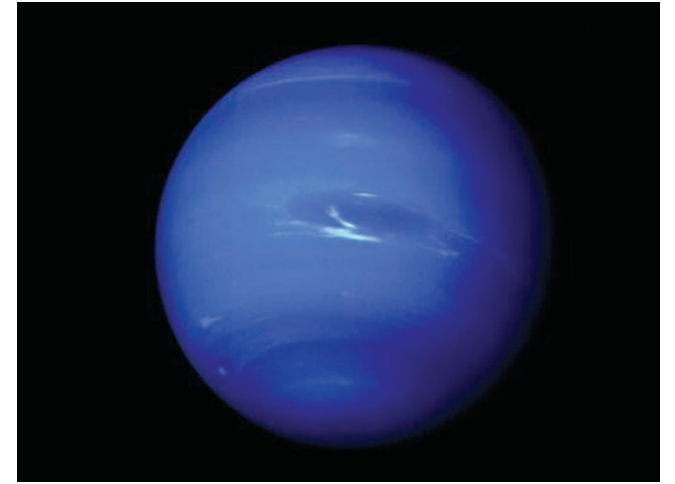
Focusing upon Neptune's stratosphere - the atmosphere's relatively stable region above the turbulent weather layer - the researchers had expected to find rising temperatures in the part of the planet visible from Earth with the onset of its southern hemisphere summer, a season lasting four decades. Instead, they found temperatures declining significantly.

The study was based on more than 95 thermal-infrared images - every one ever taken - spanning 2003 to 2020 using ground-based telescopes in Hawaii and Chile, mostly the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope. It is the most comprehensive assessment to date of Neptune's atmospheric temperatures.

“The atmosphere appears more complicated than we had naively assumed, which, unsurprisingly, seems to be a general lesson that nature teaches scientists again and again,” said Michael Roman, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Leicester in England and lead author of the study published on Monday in the Planetary Science Journal.

Neptune's stratosphere temperature fell as much as 14 degrees Fahrenheit (8 degrees Celsius) to minus 179 F (minus 117 C) over the 17 years studied. In contrast, temperatures in Neptune's troposphere - the even-colder weather layer - showed no significant variability while reaching as low as minus 370 F (minus 223 C).

Neptune is among the least explored of the solar system's eight planets, with its great distance making it



difficult to study from Earth. NASA's Voyager 2 is the only spacecraft to have made a close-up visit, flying past Neptune in 1989.

“I think Neptune is very intriguing to many of us because we still know so little about it,” Roman said.

Its temperature changes were unevenly distributed, with regional variations. The southern tropics cooled, then warmed, then cooled again. Mid-latitudes temperatures initially remained constant before falling gradually. South pole temperatures initially dropped only slightly before warming dramatically between 2018 and 2020.

“I suspect the overall temperature drop may most likely be due to changes in the atmospheric chemistry, which responds to changing seasonal sunlight and, in turn, alters how effectively the atmosphere cools,” Roman said.

Source: Reuters

Ozone heating Earth more than previously thought: Study

The ozone layer may be heating the Earth's atmosphere more than previously thought by weakening one of our planet's most important cooling mechanisms, according to a study.

The researchers found that changes to ozone levels in the upper and lower atmosphere were responsible for almost a third of the warming seen in ocean waters bordering Antarctica in the second half of the twentieth century.

The deep and rapid warming in the Southern Ocean affects its role as one of the main regions for soaking up excess heat as the planet warms, they said.

The study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, found that the majority of this warming was the result of ozone increases in the lower atmosphere.

Ozone—one of the main components of smog—is already hazardous as a pollutant, but the latest research shows it may also play a significant role in driving climate change in the coming years.

“Ozone close to Earth's surface is harmful to people and the environment, but this study reveals it also has a big impact on the ocean's ability to absorb excess heat from the atmosphere,” said Michaela Hegglin, an associate professor at University of Reading in the UK.

“These findings are an eye-opener and hammer home the importance of regulating air pollution to prevent increased ozone levels and global temperatures rising further still,” Hegglin, one of the study's authors, said.

The team led by researchers at the University of California Riverside, US, used models to simulate changes in ozone levels in the upper and lower atmosphere between 1955 and 2000.

These simulations showed that a decrease in ozone in the upper atmosphere and increase in the lower atmosphere both contributed to warming seen in the upper two kilometres (km) of the ocean waters in the high latitudes by overall greenhouse gas increases.

Source: PTI



Meta to start testing money-making tools for its metaverse

Facebook owner Meta Platforms is beginning to test tools for selling digital assets and experiences within its virtual reality platform Horizon Worlds, a key part of its plan for creating a metaverse, it said.

The tools will be available initially to a handpicked set of users who are creating virtual classes, games and fashion accessories within the company's immersive platform, which is accessible via VR headsets, Meta said in a statement.

Using one tool, those select users will be able to sell their accessories or offer paid access to specialised digital spaces they have built, the company said. The social media giant is also testing out a “creator bonus” program for a small set of Horizon Worlds users in the United States, through which it will pay participants each month for using new features the company launches.

“We want there to just be tons of awesome worlds, and in order for that to happen there needs to be a lot of creators who can support themselves and make this their job,” Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said in a conversation with early adopters, held inside Horizon Worlds using avatars.

The Facebook parent company, which changed its name to Meta last year, has invested heavily in virtual and augmented reality to reflect its new bet on the metaverse, a futuristic idea of a network of virtual environments accessed via different devices where users can work, socialize and play.

Source: Reuters



Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas & Happy Vaisakhi



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ELON MUSK OFFERS TO BUY TWITTER FOR \$41 BILLION

Billionaire Elon Musk has offered to buy Twitter for about \$41 billion, just days after rejecting a seat on the social media company's board.

Musk's offer price of \$54.20 per share, which was disclosed in a regulatory filing on Thursday, represents a 38% premium to Twitter's April 1 close, the last trading day before the Tesla CEO's more than 9% stake in the company was made public. Twitter's shares jumped 12% in premarket trading.

"Since making my investment I now realize the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form. Twitter needs to be transformed as a private company," Musk said in a letter to Twitter Chairman Bret Taylor. "I invested in Twitter as I believe in its potential to be the platform for free speech around the globe, and I believe free speech is a societal imperative for a functioning democracy," Musk says in the filing. "However, since making my investment I now realize the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form. Twitter needs to be transformed as a private company." The buyout offer from Musk is just the latest development in his relationship with Twitter. The billionaire revealed in regulatory filings over recent weeks that he'd been buying shares in almost daily batches starting Jan. 31. Only Vanguard Group's suite of mutual funds and ETFs controls more Twitter shares.

Source: Reuters

SRI LANKA DEFAULTS ON ENTIRE \$51 BILLION EXTERNAL DEBT

Crisis-stricken Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$51 billion external debt on Tuesday, calling the move a "last resort" after running out of foreign exchange to import desperately needed goods. The island nation is grappling with its worst economic downturn since independence, with regular blackouts and acute shortages of food and fuel. Sri Lanka's finance ministry said in a statement that creditors, including foreign governments, were free to capitalise any interest payments due to them from Tuesday or opt for payback in Sri Lankan rupees.

"The government is taking the emergency measure only as a last resort in order to prevent further deterioration of the republic's financial position," the statement said. It added that the immediate debt default was to ensure "fair and equitable treatment of all creditors" ahead of an International Monetary Fund assisted recovery programme for the South Asian nation.

Retail inflation soars to 17-month high of 6.95%

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Retail inflation quickened to 6.95% in March, compared to 6.07% in the previous month, driven by a sharp jump in food prices, official data released on Tuesday, April 12, showed.

A range of products have become expensive, driven by rising oil prices and broken supply chains due to the Ukraine war, the data showed.

Shop-end prices, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, breached the Reserve Bank of India's so-called tolerable limit of 6% for the third straight month, as food prices jumped 7.68% in March, against a rise of 5.85% in February.

Overall, retail inflation now stands at a 17-month high. The higher prices have begun to bite into demand. Households are buying less daily-use goods and items, according to market intelligence firm Bizom.

The government collects retail price data from selected 1,114 urban markets and 1,181 villages covering all states to gauge inflation, which has a direct impact on people's income and also economic growth.

A rise in food prices relatively hurts poor households more because low-income people spend a large share of their monthly budget on food.

Oils and fats inflation stood at 18.79% in March, compared to 16.4% in February, while vegetable prices rose 11.64%, compared to a rise of 6.13% in the previous month. Pulses price rose 2.57%, a marginal decline compared to 3.02% in February. The CPI index on clothing and footwear rose 9.40% compared to an 8.86% increase a month ago. In the fuel and light



inflation category, prices rose 7.52%.

On Friday, the Reserve Bank of India announced its new monetary policy, gearing towards inflation control. The central bank revised the country's inflation forecast to 5.7% in FY23 from 4.5% earlier, acknowledging pressures of inflation from crude oil crossing \$100/barrel. High inflation not just erodes the value of money and savings, it can ultimately hurt growth itself.

"The surge in global commodity prices and the disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the supply chain implications of the continued lockdowns in China since March 2022 following the outbreak of a fresh covid-19 wave in the country do not augur well for output of those sectors, including automobiles, that

are dependent on key raw materials provided by Russia, Ukraine or China, in the absence of any other alternatives," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA Ltd. Manufacturing, which accounts for 77% of IIP, saw growth fall to 0.8% in February from 1.31% in January. The capital goods sector grew by 1.1% in February compared to 1.3% in January, indicating weakness in the industrial sector. Consumer durables, which comprises white goods, declined sharply for the fifth straight month in February, reporting an 8.2% contraction compared to a 3.3% decline seen in January. Consumer non-durables, which represent inelastic demand, reported a 5.5% contraction in February compared to a 2.1% growth in January.

WTO lowers global trade volume growth forecast to 3% for 2022

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The world merchandise trade volume is expected to grow by 3 per cent in 2022 against the earlier forecast of 4.7 per cent, mainly due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, the WTO said on Tuesday.

Prospects for the global economy have darkened since the outbreak of war in Ukraine on February 24, prompting WTO economists to reassess their projections for world trade over the next two years, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said in a statement. "The organisation now expects merchandise trade volume growth of 3 per cent in 2022 -- down from its previous forecast of 4.7 per cent -- and 3.4 per cent in 2023, but these estimates are less certain than usual due to the fluid nature of the conflict," it added. The most immediate economic impact of the crisis has been a sharp rise in commodity prices.

Despite their small shares in world trade and output, Russia and Ukraine are key suppliers of essential goods, including food, energy, and fertilisers, supplies of which are now threatened by the war, the statement said.

Grain shipments through Black Sea ports have already been halted, with potentially dire consequences for food security in poor countries, it noted.

Source: PTI

Pharma stock see highest drop in 10 years after Covid pill's birth defect risk

Shionogi & Co. slumped the most in more than a decade after the drugmaker said animal studies showed its experimental Covid drug disturbed fetal development.

The stock fell as much as 16% in Tokyo trading Wednesday, the biggest intraday decline since March 2011. The stock had been down 8.4% this year through April 12.

The drug likely won't be recommended for pregnant women, Kyodo News reported Tuesday, April 12, without giving attribution. The animal data, which showed harm when it was given at high doses, was submitted to Japanese regulators in February when the company sought a review, a Shionogi spokesman said. The pill's chances of success fell to 5% from 50% after the report tying it to birth defects, Stephen Baker, an equities analyst at Jefferies & Co., wrote in a note to clients. He cut his rating on the stock to "underperform" from "buy" on Wednesday after trimming the profit estimates and target price.

Still, rival Covid treatments also carry risks for pregnant women but have been approved for use. Merck & Co.'s Lagevrio has a boxed warning saying it shouldn't be taken by pregnant women after it was linked to fetal harm in animal studies. Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid at high doses led to a decrease in fetal body weight in a rabbit study, though there aren't restrictions on its use during pregnancy.

Source: Bloomberg



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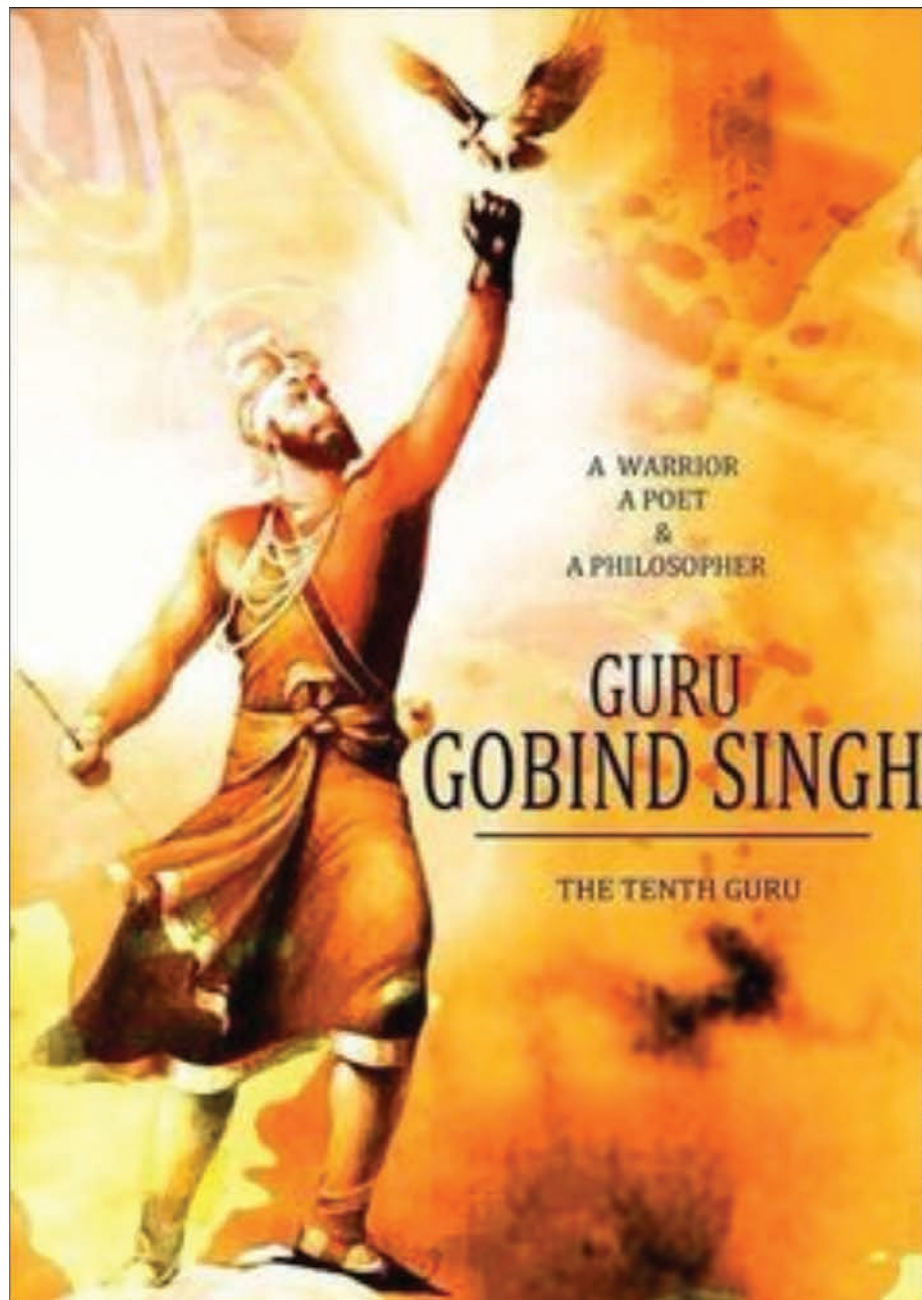
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Hanuman Jayanti

To mark the birth of Lord Hanuman, Hanuman Jayanti is celebrated all over India in the month of Chaitra in Hindu calendar. The great Hanuman is known for its great strength, power and his immortal devotion towards Lord Rama. He is considered to be a greatest follower of Lord Rama and played a crucial role in his life. He is also known as Sankat Mochan who people remember in both good and bad times. He is considered to be as one of the most powerful Hindu gods in India. According to Hindu mythology, as the son of 'Pawan', the God of Winds and 'Anjanee' often referred to as 'Pawanputra,' is blessed with immense physical and mental strength that is greatly inspiring. Lord Hanuman is considered to be the eleventh Rudra manifestation of Lord Shiva. He symbolizes strength and selfless devotion, and his ability and determination to achieve impossible feats has been chronicled in several episodes of the Ramayana. He showed his unconditional love for Lord Ram, who also blessed him and reciprocated his devotion by treating him like a brother.

Hanuman Jayanti is observed on full moon day, which is the 15th day of Shukla Paksha in the Hindu month of Chaitra (April-May). In different parts of India, Hanuman Jayanti is celebrated in different months on account of variation in the dates of Hindu calendar followed by different states.

In North India, Sankat Mochan Temple in Varanasi and Hanuman Garhi at Ayodhya are the venues of great celebration.

How to Celebrate Hanuman Jayanti

Celebrations on Hanuman Jayanti began early in the day with special puja being performed by devotees. Devotees perform holy Puja in temples dedicated to Sree Hanuman or at Home. People in India organize special prayers for Lord Hanuman to get rid of evil spirits. The God is known for its magical powers. Prayers and Hymns are sung all day long in various Hanuman temples dedicated to the lord. Hanuman is considered as a symbol of Power and great strength in Hindu mythology. He is believed to have carried a whole mountain in his shoulder. On auspicious day of Hanuman Jayanti, People apply red Sindur from Lord's feet on their foreheads. This is considering being a ritual for good health and good luck.

Some of the important puja rituals include offering red vermillion with ghee to the idol of Hanuman. Red flowers, rui leaves with areca nut, fruits especially bananas, ladoos are offered and diyas are lit. Devotees recite the Hanuman Chalisa and Bajrang Baan and perform 'arti'. It is believed that Hanuman was born at sunrise, so recitations and poring over religious texts is done at dawn and later 'prasada' distribution ceremony is held.

In Western India, the practice of fasting a day before the Hanuman Jayanti is prevalent, whereas in Northern India, the general practice is to observe fasting on the day Hanuman Jayanti is held. Also, it is far more popular among males, especially wrestlers and bodybuilders. It is believed that chanting the Hanuman Chalisa hundred times for hundred days can help one attain the four tenets of Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

Hanuman Jayanti is an occasion to remember Lord Hanuman's unbridled devotion to Lord Rama and his feats of daring. In their quest to fight against Ravana, Lord Hanuman led a monkey army and built a bridge to Lanka. He also carried a whole mountain of magic herbs on his shoulders to restore the life of Lakshman. Thus, the ubiquitous standing statue of Lord Hanuman with his heart stretched out open is at once a metaphoric as well as literal illustration of his infinite devotion to Lord Ram, his wife Sita and brother Lakshman.

In the epic tale of Ramayana, the extraordinary role of Lord Hanuman, an exemplary devotee of Lord Rama, is very well detailed out in situations requiring strength, will-power and courage. Lord Hanuman's character is lyrically elaborated in 'Tulsidas's 'Hanuman Chalisa'. Also invoked as 'Sankat Mochan', Lord Hanuman can avert any ill-effects posed by the nine planets to one's life as well as save one from the influence of evil spirits. In India, Tuesdays and Saturdays are dedicated to the



Hanuman Jayanti 2022

Saturday, 16 April 2022

Purnima Tithi Begins - 02:25 AM on April 16, 2022

Purnima Tithi Ends - 12:24 AM on April 17, 2022

worship of Lord Hanuman to get his blessings for progress, wisdom and fearlessness.

Significance of Hanuman Jayanti

Lord Hanuman is the embodiment of courage, self-control, highest state of devotion, intellect, sense-control and humility. Hanuman Jayanti is the most auspicious time to worship him to imbibe all his great qualities in our human capacity. It is also said that Lord Hanuman can grant extraordinary powers to a 'sadhak' earnestly seeking his blessings on his spiritual journey. The saffron flag near the Hanuman temples in the highways and the hilly regions is a sign of protection against the possibility of any untoward incident or evil energies. He has the boon of immortality, (he is called 'Chiranjeev' for this reason), and it is believed he still exists.

When Maa Sita was abducted by Ravana, Hanuman could locate the place of captivity of Mata Sita and used his intellect and power to build an army to reach Lanka and save Sita. Some of the most noticeable episodes in the Ramayana include burning of Lanka with his tail, bringing an entire mountain which had 'sanjeevani' or life-saving herbs to save Lakshman's life. Lord Rama reciprocated his love and devotion by treating him as his brother and blessing him. There is a story about the meeting of Bheem and Lord Hanuman in Mahabharat.

There is a popular belief that worshipping Lord Hanuman will help in removing the hardship caused by Lord Shani or Saturn in astrology. When Lord

Hanuman broke the boasting of Lord Shani then he apologized to Hanumanji and promised that he never ever create obstacles in Shri Ram and Hanuman work. To make Hanuman Jayanti, a fruitful day, you can visit Maruti's temple and worship the deity. As a part of the tradition, red tilak (vermillion mark) is applied on the forehead of Lord Hanuman idol and Ladoos (sweet) are offered. Some of the important puja rituals include offering red vermillion with ghee to the idol of Hanuman. People are seen observing fast (Vrat) on this day. Worshipping Rudra (Bajrangbali) with these rituals will bestow you with blessings and glory of Hanuman or Anjaneya on Hanuman Jayanti. Thus, he will always stand by his sincere devotees.

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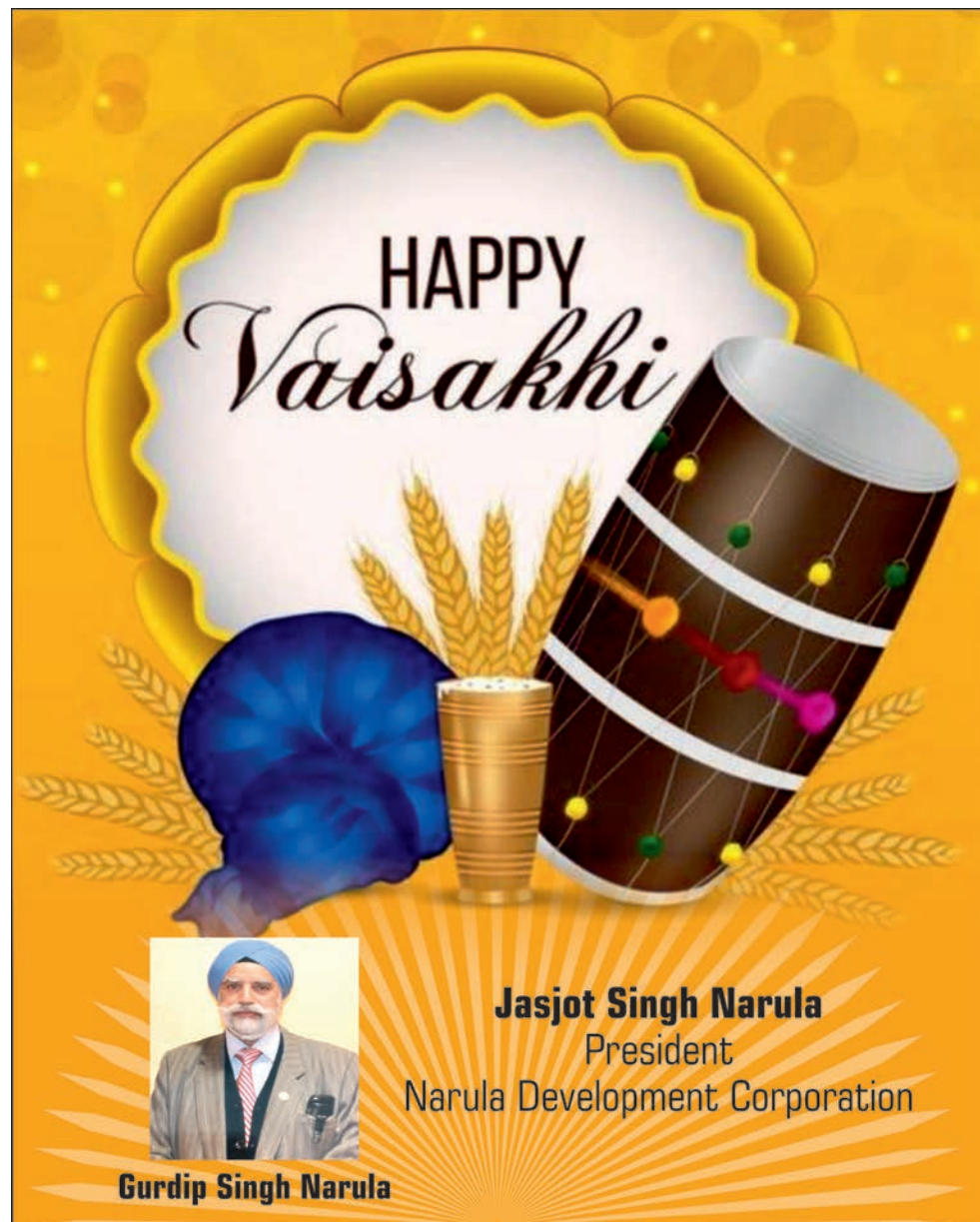
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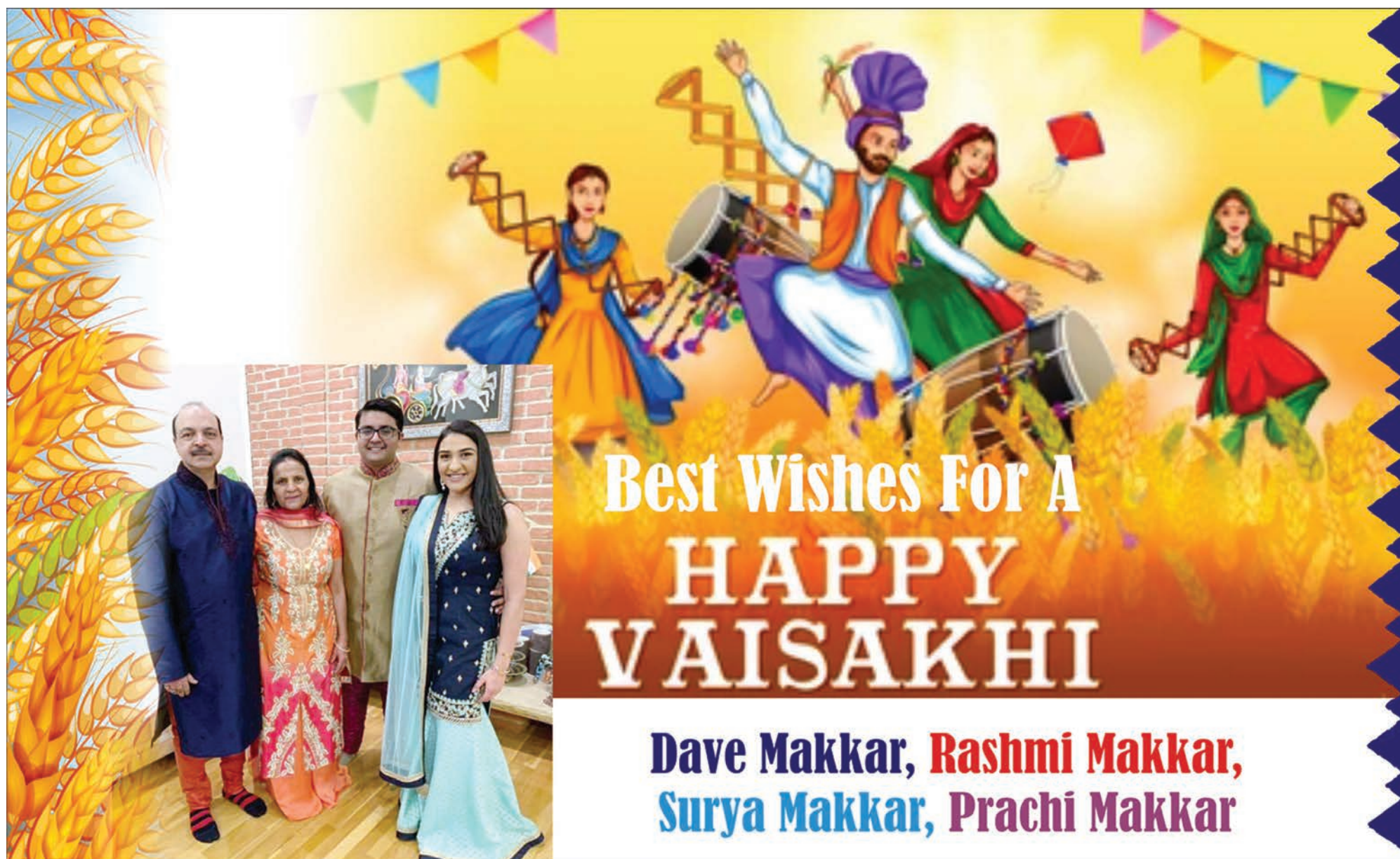
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NAPCON'S NATIONAL ASTHMA RESEARCH AWARD FOR RAJASTHAN'S DR SHITTU



Dr Sheetu Singh has been conferred the National Asthma Research Award for her outstanding medical research in Pulmonary Science

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR (TIP): NAPCON-2021 has conferred the National Asthma Research Award to Rajasthan's young physician Dr Sheetu Singh for her outstanding medical research in Pulmonary Science at its international conference concluded in Varanasi recently.

Dr Sheetu received a cash award of Rs.25,000 and citation for her outstanding research and medical service to the humankind. Her exclusive research focused on the prevalence, risk factors and treatment practices for Asthma in the country. Her research is a contribution towards morbidity and mortality from asthma and chest diseases in the country.

There were about 400 research entries in the award session which aimed to focus on research done in the field of pulmonology. National Conference of Pulmonary Diseases is organized by Indian Chest Society (ICS) and National College of Chest Physician India (NCCP).

Early childhood stroke alarming in India too : World Stroke Organization

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR (TIP) It is now not restricted to North America alone, the early strokes (Lakva in Hindi) in childhood in the age group of 6 months to 18 months is not only rising alarmingly but also drawing the attention of Pediatricians in India too, warns World Stroke Organization (WSO).

Stroke is defined as the sudden occlusion or rupture of cerebral arteries or veins resulting in focal cerebral (brain) damage or neurological deficits in children, and differs in clinical presentation, etiology and neuroimaging from adults.

WSO, in its recent blog in February 2022, says, "Pediatric stroke is rare; recent studies estimate its prevalence to be around 172 in 100,000 a year in North America. To better understand childhood stroke, a group of doctors within the Department of Pediatrics at Sawai Man Singh Medical College in Jaipur, India set out to investigate the profile of childhood stroke at their hospital".

Quoting and recognizing SMS Medical College's child specialists, Dr Dhan Raj Bagri, Dr Antrichsh Kumar, and Dr J N Sharma's research paper appeared in the Journal of Alzheimer Disease and Parkinsonism, WSO said their study evaluated 75 pediatric stroke children between 6 months and 18 years, out of which 65.3 percent (48) were males and 34.7 percent (27) were females suggesting male preponderance (M:F=1.89:1).

SMS specialists team explored patterns in presentation, etiology and neuroimaging in children who presented to their hospital with stroke from June 2019 to December 2019. "Over a 7-months period the hospital admitted 75 children with childhood stroke, and neuroimaging showed

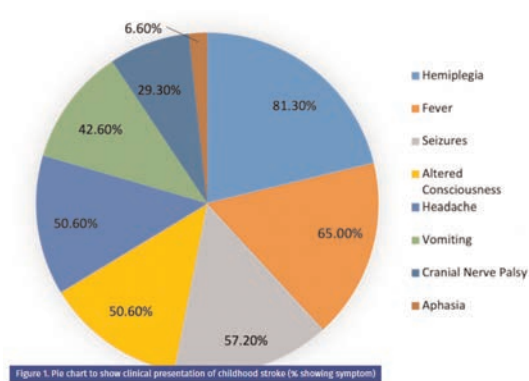


Figure 1. Pie chart to show clinical presentation of childhood stroke (% showing symptom)

that 72.2 percent of cases were acute ischaemic stroke, 5.3 pc were hemorrhagic and cerebral venous thrombosis in 12 pc", Dr Bagri, a team leader and Assistant Professor at the SMS Pediatrics said in the joint research paper.

Patient characteristics showed that age ranged from 6 months and 18 years, with 52 percent of the group aged between 6 months and 5 years, and the majority of cohorts were males, Dr Bagri

pointed out.

The most common clinical presentation of childhood stroke at SMS Medical College was hemiplegia, fever, seizures, headache, and altered consciousness in over half India's population, he said, adding it was noted that 67 percent of cohorts had a comorbidity with Central Nervous System (CNS) infections being the most common, about 53 percent, Bagri said.

Though newer modalities of treatment increased chances of recovery many folds from the past decades, India needs prompt identification and treatment in childhood stroke to prevent long term morbidity and mortality too, Dr Bagri told TIP when asked.

In developed nations, every such patient gets an ambulance and treatment within 60 minutes (golden hour) of reporting to the hospital, whereas in India, the time lost in reaching the hospital and getting a better identification plays very critical role and needs more awareness in public with strengthening medical infrastructure in the very field, he recommended.

WSO anticipates that their research will provide more clinical and etiological information on pediatric stroke, particularly in India.

contd from page 1

President Biden approves \$800 million in new military assistance for Ukraine

It is the latest in a series of U.S. security assistance packages valued at a combined \$2.6 billion that has been committed to Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24. The weaponry and support material has played an important role in Ukraine's successful defense thus far.

Mr. Biden is under pressure from members of both parties in Congress to expand and accelerate U.S. aid.

Robert Gates, a former CIA Director and Defense Secretary, said on Wednesday he believes the administration needs to push hard for weapon donations by NATO members in Eastern Europe, whose arsenals include Soviet-era tanks and other weaponry and equipment that could help Ukraine immediately.

"The United States ought to be acting, 24/7 - how do we mobilize the equipment and how do we get it into Ukraine and into the hands of the Ukrainians," Mr. Gates said in an online forum sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"It's critically important and critically urgent, and we ought to be sort of ransacking the arsenals of those states, and I think they would be cooperative, particularly" if they are given assurances that the Pentagon will provide American replacements for the donated weapons.

The Pentagon said the \$800 million package announced by Mr. Biden includes weapons and equipment that will require some training for a Ukrainian military not fully accustomed to American military technology. U.S. and allied forces had been present inside Ukraine to provide training for eight years before pulling out in advance of the Russia's latest invasion.

The new arms package includes 18 of the U.S. Army's

155mm howitzers and 40,000 artillery rounds, two air surveillance radars, 300 Switchblade "kamikaze" armed drones, and 500 Javelin missiles designed to knock out tanks and other armor. Also included are 10 counter-artillery radars used to track incoming artillery and other projectiles to determine their point of origin for counter attacks.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said delivery of the material will be expedited, but he offered no specific timetable.

"This list came directly out of multiple conversations with Ukrainians in the last few days as we began to see the Russians now start to reprioritize the Donbas fight," he said, referring to Russia's shift from a failed offensive in Ukraine's north aimed at Kyiv, the capital, to a force buildup in the country's eastern Donbas region, where Russian-backed separatists have been fighting since 2014.

Ukrainian military personnel will need training on the radars as well as the howitzers and the Switchblade drones, Mr. Kirby said. He said the training may be done by U.S. soldiers in Europe and the arrangements are being worked out.

"These are not highly complex systems," Mr. Kirby said, and so extensive training will not likely be required.

Among the other items in the package are 11 Soviet-era Mi-17 helicopters that the United States had planned to provide to Afghanistan before Mr. Biden last year decided to fully withdraw from the country. They are transport helicopters that also can function in an attack role. The Pentagon previously had sent five Mi-17s to Ukraine, Mr. Kirby said.

Ed Mangano sentenced to 12 years in prison; wife Linda gets 15 months in jail

Mangano said, "I feel like I'm just taking the fall for

these guys' years of criminal acts."

The judge later in the day sentenced Mangano's wife, Linda Mangano to 15 months in prison for her conviction in the same bribery and obstruction of justice case involving a former restaurateur who was a long-time family friend.

contd from page 23

Modi-Biden virtual meeting 'very helpful' for 2+2 dialogue, says Jaishankar

Jaishankar said there was discussion on India's security environment and its security challenges. But there was no specific focus on reference to the granularity of India-China border, in the part of the meetings he was present. It may or may not have happened during the meeting between the two defense ministers.

"If in 2022, we have a relationship with Russia, with America or China or any other country, these are not relationships that evolve, that appeared instantaneously and are sort of susceptible to immediate solutions or changes. International relations is in many ways there is a trendline there are things which happen over time, those are aggregate which builds up, he said.

"My sense from these discussions, I've had people in the administration, people dealing with policy, they are well informed. In many ways they understand where India is coming from. At the same time, I would quite honestly say the narrative the public narrative sometimes is very, very different. I think today, there is a gap in a way between the policy and the narrative and how do we how do we narrow that," said the minister.

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Horoscope by NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - APRIL 18 TO APRIL 24, 2022



ARIES : Ganesha says this week, you'll focus on finding out what really matters. As your encounters grow, you'll see that you have the necessary potential but were too busy underestimating yourself. From this week forward, everything will be different because of this realization. You're ready to get started. Your partner and you both will make a plan out a weekend trip or a holiday gateway this week. And this will bring you closer to each other. People who are married might not be able to fulfill the matrimonial obligations this week is the position of Ketu will maliciously affect their 7th house. Things will get alright real soon therefore do not worry. For health, you will not need any specific kind of attention but you must avoid eating out this week.



TAURUS : Your confidence in Karma will be strengthened this week. You'll remember the times when God protected you from becoming a victim of the worst. You'll also encounter the generous part of your personality this week, as you'll be in a forgiving mood. This week, a brief travel will also be on the agenda. This week, you'll overlook vital details. You will allow your emotions to take center stage; being passionate will not be a difficult, but you must remain balanced. Your need of keeping everyone happy will hinder your relationship fronts this week. you must try to focus more on your personal intimate tuning with your partner rather than considering everyone else around. Your health will be fine and you do not need to pay much attention to your health this week.



GEMINI : This week, a unique alignment of elements in your zodiac indicates that both your first and fourth houses will be greater than you anticipated. This will result in monetary rewards as well as the development of skills and talents. You'll have an issue this week if you rely entirely on someone. This week, students will have to pay special attention to their studies. You have been getting lots of higher expectations from your partner for a long this is creating problems in your relationship for a long but, this week your partner will help you get through the emotional trauma you have been facing and this will enhance your relationship. Your health will be alright this week.



CANCER : This week, you will not dodge any clashes or disputes since you will be in the mood to face and overcome them. This week, you will embrace accomplishments; these accomplishments will aid your growth process. You'll have to be cautious with your money. This week, you're more inclined to let free. Be on the lookout for forgery and fraud. Your partner and you

both will amend lots of things in your Relationship this week. If you are already married, you might have to do through minor problems with your spouse in order to balance your domestic lives. Your health will need minor attention this week is you might get into problems due to dehydration and immunity disorder.



LEO : This week, you'll have a more positive attitude and a better outlook. With a holistic perspective, you'll be able to forecast your progress. This week is ideal for expressing oneself. This week, manifesting will be beneficial to you. This week, things may look dreary occasionally. You'll have to hang on to your hopes this week if you want to get over these sensations. Your partner and you both will look at the larger picture of your relationship this week. Planning out a future with someone is on the list for you as Venus is showering its blessings on you! Rahu is going to transit in the malicious position in the latter half of the week which might lead to injuries or accidents, therefore take proper care of you.



VIRGO : Listening to your heart this week will prepare the way for you. This week, your aspirations will grow as you begin the process that will lead and sustain your main objective conduct. You will lose two equally essential items this week, which will be difficult for you to accept. Your love life will be all well this week. As your moon will be weaker in the latter half of the week, you might get manipulated by what others have to say about your partner but do not let such things affect your relationship. Your health will need some attention in the latter half of the week as you might suffer from minor abdominal aches. Drink enough water.



LIBRA : This week, your perspectives will be valued. You'll have a more adaptable mindset. This week, your abilities will be revealed. You'll also close the gap between your ideas and their execution. In the second half of this week, you will put unnecessary strain on your money and family. You must realize that problems do not solve themselves. This week will be a terrific one for you in terms of relationships. This week, you'll need to spend some time with your partner to put things right. This week will be fine for your health. Take medicine only when absolutely necessary.



SCORPIO : You will reclaim your own equilibrium and stability, as well as the health of your companion, family, and children. You will be able to make a tangible contribution to the tasks you will be given. This week, Languor will ruin your job. To help your week go more easily, try to generate creative energy inside yourself this week. Expecting less will help you feel better about

your relationships. This week, a married couple will embark on a new path to happiness. This week will be excellent for your health, but you must exercise every day.



SAGITTARIUS : Your interpersonal troubles will be settled favorably this week. You will also find solutions to any real estate or property-related issues you may have. The market will pay attention to your old business. In the middle of this week, your indecisiveness will generate an unwelcome mess. This week, make sure you don't waste any time by hesitating. This week, your lover will be unable to devote much attention to you. Because Venus will be a little weaker this week, you may have to be extra cautious about speaking certain things to them. In the second half of the week, your health will require modest attention.



CAPRICORN : This week, your attentiveness and cognitive efficiency will be at their best. This week, you will repair the previous breaches. You will undoubtedly meet someone who will help you resolve your interpersonal conflicts. This week, you'll be very sensitive to people's predicament. This will suffocate your sanity, resulting in modest setbacks in your romantic relationships. Because their moon will be weaker this week, avoid pressing your children to pursue anything they are denying. This week will be fine for your health. Avoid going out in the heat unless absolutely essential.



AQUARIUS : This week, your positive enthusiasm will help you become a strategy. This week, you'll feel uplifted. The litigation that has been plaguing you for a long time will finally yield positive results. This week, the air in your life will start to clear. Throughout the second part of the week, you'll have to deal with those who aren't on your side and who will obstruct your development. This week, you'll need to pay extra attention to your romantic life. Before making any major decisions, a married couple must exercise caution. Your health will be OK, and you won't have to be concerned about it this week.



PISCES : This week, you'll get the correct spades. Things that have been hidden until now will be revealed, and fortunately, they will be in your favor. You will be able to meet your social and financial demands this week. Your aggression will put you through a lengthy paperwork procedure in the second half of the week. You must manage your temper and be at rest when things may be done easily by being patient. This week, your lover may want a bit more from you, but owing to the weaker Venus, you will be unable to meet their emotional requirements. It will be necessary to look after your health.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : APRIL 18 TO APRIL 24, 2022 BY ASTRO FRIEND CHIRAG - SON OF ASTROLOGER BEJAN DARUWALLA

April 18

Ganesha says your day promises you fame and good fortune. You shall gather knowledge, information and make new long lasting contacts during this period. Your efficiency will increase and you will manage your money much better, bringing you more gains. Chances of businessmen entering the service industry or anything related with computers will be strong and beneficial.

April 19

Ganesha says today your energy will be high and you will feel strong enough to face any challenge. Day seems exceptionally good for those who are looking for a change in their career, as they will receive an excellent job offer. Frequent and fruitful journeys will be undertaken. You will also improve your relationship with important people during this period. Children will win laurels at school and overachieve the expectations of their parents.

April 20

Ganesha says this year you will be extremely receptive to new and progressive methods at work.

Financial gains are certain and you will spend more on things to improve your style and living comforts. Your inability to gather support on your prevailing project will create a sense of dissatisfaction and frustration. Today your day is better for financial dealing, though partnership and joint ventures should be completely avoided.

April 21

Ganesha says your personality and confidence will improve and it will bring major gains in your profession as well. Your employer will appreciate your knowledge and your skills. You will also make additional financial gains through sale of property. This is also a good period to invest in expensive art and ornaments. Good news from distant relatives can be expected later in the year.

April 22

Ganesha says people will like your company because of your ever growing ideas. Always remember that success comes to those who dare to dream and think differently. Thus be confident, believe in yourself and do what you want to do in life, success will definitely be yours. An appropriate

and healthy diet and fitness regime will be high on your agenda. Flow of money may be inconsistent but you will not lack it when you need it the most.

April 23

Ganesha says today your day will be great. Your friend and family may surprise you. Your hard work pays off soon and your boss may get impressed by your work. You may plan to have a trip to a romantic place with your partner soon, which may make your bond strong. Spiritual gains later in the year brings solace and comfort. Students' day may start with lots of happiness.

April 24

Ganesha says you may enjoy your day as you may organize some home parties soon. Investments made during this phase will bring in good profits. Matters related to property will bring gains. Distant travel, maybe overseas, brings joy and happiness along with a possible reunion with an old contact. Renovation of the house or construction related activities would also be high on your agenda. Chronic patients definitely need to be more careful about their health.

॥ SHREE GANESHAY NAMA ॥



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Goa's wild side

Goa is much more than just beaches, parties, and hippie culture. This happening destination is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna that bring a large number of the world's wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers here every year. Set in the Western Ghats, Goa's thick jungles, expansive marshes, alluring hills, glistening lakes, and meandering rivers provide shelter to an overwhelming range of plant, animal, and bird species that are sure to blow your mind. So, when you visit again, make sure you venture into these national parks in Goa that will make you fall in love with a side of Goa you never knew existed.

Explore these fascinating wildlife sanctuaries and national parks of Goa that will bring you face to face with its wild side.

Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhagwan Mahavir National Park in Goa is the most famous national park and nature reserve in Goa. spread over a whopping 240 sq. km of area, this is a protected reserve located in the lush Western Ghats. Home to the famous Dudhsagar Waterfalls, this area is known for its unspoiled vegetation that constitutes tropical evergreen, semi-green, and moist deciduous forests with a few sparkling streams meandering through them.

Other than this elegant waterfall, this forested area is also home to the Dhangar nomadic buffalo herders who live in harmony with the flora and fauna of this beautiful sanctuary. The core area of this wildlife sanctuary park takes up an area of about 107 sq. km and was declared a protected national park in 1978. Now known as the Mollem National Park in Goa, it's an adventurous hub with jungle safaris, night safaris, bird watching, and various forest trails for hiking.

Fauna: Gaur, Panther, Spotted Deer, Sambar Deer, Mouse Deer, Barking Deer, Wild Boar, Porcupine, Wild Dog, Leopard Cat, Bonnet Macaque, Common Langur, Jungle Cat, Civet, Flying Squirrel, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Pangolin, Slender Loris, Tigers (occasionally), King Cobras, Python, Krait, Viper. The avifauna includes Indian Black Woodpecker, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Paradise Fly Catcher, Fairy Blue Bird, Wagtails, Barbets, Great Indian Horn Bill, Kingfishers, Shrikes, Emerald Dove, Grey Jungle Fowl, Blue Mormon, Common Jezebel, Common Mormon.

Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary

This is amongst the smallest wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in Goa and is spread over an area of only 8 sq. km. It's the favorite spot of all nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts who visit Goa owing to the fact that it is home to over 150 species of birds and a large variety of animals and plant species.

Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary is an excellent spot for a family outing with young children who wish to see animals at close range in their natural habitat, and also because the park offers various fun avenues like a zoological park, a huge deer park, and a botanical and rose garden in its premises. Lying in the foothills of the lush Western Ghats, the Bondla reserve is located just 50 km from the city of Panjim in Goa.

Fauna: Leopard, Panther, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer, Hog Deer, Barking Deer, Mouse Deer, Wild Boar, Porcupines, Scaly Ant Eater, Malabar Giant Squirrel,



Indian Bison, Indian Peafowl, Pythons, Vipers. The avifauna includes Common Grey Hornbill, Golden Backed Woodpecker, and many more.

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary

Located in Sanguem Taluka of eastern Goa, this pristine wildlife reservation covers an area of about 211 sq. km and boasts of an enormous range of flora and fauna, luring in wildlife enthusiasts from around the world. It draws its name from the Netravali tributary of the Zuari River that flows through this forest and makes up for an extremely important source of freshwater in this region.

It's one of the most photogenic national parks in Goa owing to some really enchanting and dreamy foliage constituting of deciduous, semi-evergreen, and evergreen forest types as well as a massive variety of butterflies like Black Rajah, Gaudy Baron, and Malabar Tree Nymph! You can easily get here via a taxi or hired vehicle from the nearest airport in Dabolim.

Fauna: Black Panthers, King Cobras, Giant Squirrels, Slender Loris, Malabar Tree Toad. The avifauna includes Great Pied Hornbill, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Grey Headed Bulbul.

Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary

The forest cover of Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary located in the Canacona area of South Goa is so thick that sunlight rarely ever reaches the ground. It's among the most fascinating national parks in Goa with tall trees and some rare species of plants. A prominent name in the list of national parks in Goa, Cotigao reserve attracts a huge number of nature lovers and botany enthusiasts owing to its vast and diverse range of flora.

It attracts adventure enthusiasts with its eight nature trails ranging from 500 meters to 5 km. It's one of the most peaceful and untouched wildlife sanctuaries in the region and is just 12



km away from Palolem Beach. You can even stay at the forest department's rest house here once you've obtained the required permit from the Deputy Conservator Of Forests in Panaji.

Fauna: Monkey, Wild Boar, Gaur, Flying Lizard, Golden-Back Gliding Snake. The main avifauna includes Malabar Trogon, White-Bellied Woodpecker, and Velvet-Fronted Nuthatch.

Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

Charming waterfalls like the Vazra Sakla Waterfalls and the Viridi Falls are a prominent feature of the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary. It's a well-known biodiversity hotspot that has been tagged as an area of high endemism by Conservation International. It was recently declared a tiger reserve after a number of tigers were sighted in the area over a considerable period of time. In fact, it has been proposed to make Mhadei a part

of the Project Tiger Reserves.

In terms of flora, the Mhadei sanctuary is also home to over a thousand species of flowering plants as well as a huge variety of endemic orchids. It's one of the best national parks in Goa for birdwatchers, bird photographers, ornithologists and has been awarded the title of an International Bird Area. The park has more than 250 resident and migratory bird species here other than over a hundred species of butterflies.

Fauna: Tigers, Indian Gaur, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer, Ruddy Mongoose, Asian Palm Civet, Black-Faced Langur, Leopard, Sloth Bear, Black Panther, Dhole, Mouse Deer, Jungle Cat, Indian Pangolin, Slender Loris. The avifauna includes White-bellied Blue-flycatcher, Malabar Parakeet, Nilgiri Wood-pigeon, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Rufous Babbler, Grey-headed Bulbul, Crimson-backed Sunbird. *Source: -Traveltriangle.com*



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IPL 2022

Gujarat Titans thrash Rajasthan to go top of table

MUMBAI (TIP)

Skipper Hardik Pandya enhanced his reputation as a No. 4 batter with an unbeaten 87 off 52 balls as Gujarat Titans trounced Rajasthan Royals by 37 runs in the Indian Premier League.

Pandya, whose strike rate and approach has been questioned at his new position, played responsibly when it was needed before displaying the power he is known for to lead Titans to 192/4 after being sent in to bat.

The in-form Jos Buttler (54 off 24) provided another flying start to Royals but the rest of the batting unit did not deliver as the innings ended at 155/9. Young left-arm pacer Yash Dayal (3/40) impressed on IPL debut while Lockie Ferguson (3/23) got the important wicket of Buttler, who was deceived by the New Zealander's slow yorker after a series of quick deliveries.

Ferguson also dismissed Ravichandran Ashwin in the same over after the senior India spinner was promoted to bat at No. 3.

The other notable contribution to Royals' innings came from Shimron Hetmyer (29 off 17). From 56/1, Royals slipped to 90/5 and could not recover from there on.

Pandya, who has been bowling regularly this season, also picked up a wicket. He also ran out the dangerous Sanju Samson as the Royals skipper tried to steal a quick single.

With their fourth win in five games, Titans displaced Royals from the top of the points table. It was Royals' second loss in five games.

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma fined Rs 24 lakh for team's slow over-rate

PUNE: Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma and other members of the playing eleven were fined for



maintaining a slow over-rate during their IPL game against Punjab Kings here.

Punjab Kings won the match by 12 runs on Wednesday night.

"The Mumbai Indians have been fined after they maintained a slow over-rate during their IPL match against Punjab Kings at the MCA Stadium, Pune on April 13," the IPL stated in a media statement.

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians continued their losing streak and suffered their fifth loss on the trot after

going down to Punjab Kings.

"This was the team's second offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences.

"Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma was fined Rs 24 lakh and the rest of the members in the playing eleven were fined Rs 6 lakh or 25 per cent of their match fee, whichever is lower," it added. Earlier, Rohit was fined Rs 12 lakh for his team maintaining a slow over-rate in its game against Delhi Capitals.

Source: PTI



LIVERPOOL IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIS, QUADRUPLE DREAMS ALIVE

A place in the Champions League semifinals secured. The dream of an unprecedented quadruple of trophies still intact. Key players rested amid a hectic schedule.

Liverpool is in a good place entering the home straight of what could turn out to be the club's greatest ever season.

Even conceding two late goals to draw 3-3 at home to Benfica couldn't take the smile of Jurgen Klopp's face.

"The day we qualify for the semifinals of the Champions League and I'm not happy, please come here and knock me out," the Liverpool manager said Wednesday, April 13, after seeing his team advance from the quarterfinals 6-4 on aggregate.

With Liverpool inflicting significant damage by winning the first leg 3-1 in Lisbon last week, Klopp was confident enough to rest stars like Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold for a return match against Benfica that turned into a wild, end-to-end contest at Anfield.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC FALLS TO FOKINA IN MONTE CARLO

World number one Novak Djokovic slumped to defeat in only his fourth match of the season, losing 6-3 6-7(5) 6-1 to unseeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the Monte Carlo Masters second round on Tuesday, April 12.

The 20-times Grand Slam champion endured a tough start to the year as he was unable to defend his Australian Open title in January after being deported from the country for being unvaccinated against COVID-19.

Djokovic, who only played three matches in Dubai ahead of the Masters 1000 event in Monaco, struggled to find his range early in the contest as Spaniard Davidovich Fokina raced to a 4-1 lead before taking the opening set on Court Rainier III.

The world number 46 grabbed an early break in the second set to go up 3-0 but Djokovic battled back before overcoming issues with a wobbly serve to level the contest in a tight tiebreak.

Fokina then raised his game in the decider, preying on mistakes made by a tiring Djokovic and completed the victory as the Serb found the net.

"This win is so special to me because I grew up watching Nole (Djokovic) and I'm a big fan of his," Davidovich Fokina, 22, said in his post-match interview.

Djokovic was broken nine times and made 51 unforced errors and Davidovich Fokina said rustiness could have played a part.

FIH Pro League: Harmanpreet's double hands India 3-0 win over young Germany

BHUBANESWAR (TIP)

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh continued his goal-scoring spree with a brace as the Indian men's hockey team defeated an inexperienced Germany 3-0 in the first match of their two-leg tie to extend its lead in the FIH Pro League standings here on April 14. Harmanpreet converted two penalty corners in the 18th and 27th minutes, while Abhishek deflected in another Harmanpreet drag-flick in the 45th minute.

With 12 players of Germany's 22-member squad making their senior debut in the tie, the vast gap between the two sides was evidently visible.

By virtue of this win, India consolidated their position at the top of the table with 24 points from 11 games. Germany are placed second with 17 points from nine matches.



Both the teams will lock horns again in the second match of the tie tomorrow.

The Indians started on a bright note and secured a penalty corner early in the first quarter but Jugraj Singh's effort was kept out by the German defence and Nilkanata Sharma shot wide from the rebound. India enjoyed a lot of possession in the first quarter but the forward-line wasn't clinical enough to bury the chances.

India continued in the same vein in the

second quarter and took the lead in the 18th minute. Harmanpreet's low and accurate drag-flick crashed into the sideboard past the post defender. India earned another penalty corner soon but this time German goalkeeper Alexander Stadler denied Harmanpreet.

But Harmanpreet doubled India's lead three minutes from half-time. He pulled his body from right to left and wrong-footed Stadler with a drag-flick into the bottom left corner.

The Indians kept up the pressure after the change of ends and created plenty of scoring opportunities but the young German defence stood firm. They were, however, guilty of conceding a lot of penalty corners. And from another penalty corner, pusher Abhishek, who was named the Player of the Match, deflected in Harmanpreet's variation to hand India a comfortable 3-0 lead.



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Miss Teen Gujarat USA
MRS Gujarat USA
Mrs Legend Gujarat USA
MR Gujarat USA
Mr Legend USA

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HARRY SINGH

President
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We celebrate the **golden festival of Vaisakhi**
and the **birthday of Khalsa**.

We extend our heartiest greetings to the
community on the festive occasion.



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