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Highlighting good governance, zero tolerance towards crime, corruption, Uttar Pradesh government invites global investors

DECEMBER 16, 2022

NEW YORK (TIP): Highlighting its policies focused on good governance, zero tolerance towards crime and corruption and ease of doing business, the Uttar Pradesh government is inviting global investors and diaspora to invest in a plethora of sectors across the state such as agro and food processing, defense, aerospace and IT.

A high-level delegation led by Finance Minister of Uttar Pradesh Suresh Khanna interacted with members of the Indian diaspora, including those hailing from the state, during an event held at the Consulate General of India in New York Monday, December 12.

The delegation comprised leaders and senior bureaucrats including Advisor to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Awanish Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary and Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner

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The UP delegation led by UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna at the Indian Consulate in New York. L to R: Additional Chief Secretary and Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner Arvind Kumar, Former Minister and MLA Sidhartha Nath Singh, Consul General of India in New York Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, Secretary to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Amit Singh
Photo/ Jay Mandal-on assignment

India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar labels Pakistan the "contemporary epicenter of terrorism"



External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar (right), UN Secretary-General António Guterres and India's Permanent Representative Amb. Ruchira Kamboj at the UN Security Council. India holds the Presidency of the council for the month of December.

Photo / Jay Mandal-on assignment

DECEMBER 15, 2022

UNITED NATIONS

(TIP): Without mincing words, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called out Pakistan and China in his address to the UN Security Council, saying the "contemporary epicenter of terrorism" remains very much active and "evidence-backed proposals" to blacklist terrorists under sanctions regimes are put on hold without

assigning adequate reason. "We cannot forget that old habits and established networks are still alive, especially in South Asia. The contemporary epicenter of terrorism remains very much active, whatever gloss may be applied to minimize unpleasant realities," Jaishankar said in his address to the UN Security Council briefing on

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PM Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin talk energy, trade

DECEMBER 16, 2022

NEW DELHI (TIP):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called up Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday and said dialogue and diplomacy were the only solution to the conflict in Ukraine. They also touched on other areas of practical interaction such as mutual investment, energy, agriculture, transport and logistics.



PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin - File photo

At the request of PM Modi, Putin gave fundamental assessments of Russia's line on the Ukrainian direction, said the Russian readout of the conversation. In the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the Prime Minister reiterated his call for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way forward, said the Indian side.

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Tanya Indrani Bathija

Tanya Indrani Bathija dies at 32: Funeral on Sunday, December 18

I.S. SALUJA
DECEMBER 16, 2022

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): A young lady of 32 and her dog perished in a fire that broke out in a Dix Hills home, December 14.

The local authorities said the cause of the fire was not known at this stage. Around 60 fire tenders were at the site.

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GUEST COMMENT

Countering terror: On action against groups targeting civilians

ALL NATIONS MUST COME TOGETHER AGAINST GROUPS TARGETING CIVILIANS

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's listing of four hurdles to better counterterrorism cooperation, i.e., state support for financing terror; multilateral mechanisms that are opaque and agenda driven; double standards and politicization of countering terrorism according to where terror groups belong, and the "next frontier" (the use of emerging technologies such as drones and virtual currency by terrorists), needs attention. The focus of the UNSC special briefing on Thursday, 'Global Counterterrorism Approach', that was convened by India, is well-timed given that the "Global War on Terrorism" and the sanctions regimes launched after 9/11 are in disarray. In their haste to exit Afghanistan in 2021, for example, the UNSC's permanent members, the U.S. and the U.K. struck the biggest blow to the sanctions regime by holding talks with the Taliban, easing their path to power in Kabul and letting

their handlers in Pakistan off the hook. Second, as Mr. Jaishankar has pointed out, a P-5 country (China) continues to block the designations of Pakistan-based terrorists, including five named this year, from the LeT and the JeM. Finally, instead of uniting to accept India's proposal, of 1996, of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terror to institute global practices on countering terror, the P-5 countries are hopelessly polarized, and irrevocably so, over Russia's war in Ukraine. Given the scenario, New Delhi's attempt at highlighting the issues during the last few weeks of its two-year UNSC tenure was apt, as it built up to the briefing with conferences in India including a UN Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting, the No Money For Terror conference, and an Interpol conference.

It is unfortunate, however, that the briefing appears to have been overshadowed by heated words outside the Council between Mr. Jaishankar and

his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In response to Mr. Jaishankar's comments on Pakistan being the "epicenter of terrorism", Mr. Bhutto chose to launch a personal tirade against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the 2002 Gujarat riots. That Pakistan's "dossier" on what it claims is an Indian hand behind a blast in Lahore essentially pertains to an attack on the 26/11 terrorist strikes mastermind and LeT chief Hafiz Saeed is equally telling about the Pakistan government's regard for him, as well as its desire to muddy the global narrative on terrorism. The Government would be better served by not taking the bait, and focusing instead on the task at hand: "re-energizing" the global agenda and counter-terrorism architecture by emphasizing the need for unity on the issue, and for all countries to provide resources to the battle against those driven by a radical ideology who continue to threaten civilian populations worldwide. (The Hindu)

Medical inflation

BILL FOR REGULATORY PANEL NEEDS SERIOUS DISCUSSION

A private member's Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha seeks setting up of a national commission to control medical inflation, an issue of immense public interest. CPI's P Santhosh Kumar has put the spotlight on the dire need to regulate and standardize the rising costs of medicines, diagnostic tests and pathological examinations. The Bill flags the annual increase in expenses related to healthcare, the inexplicable divergence in rates and the devastating blow that healthcare costs can cause. It claims that last year, India witnessed the highest medical inflation rate of 14 per cent among Asian countries.

Data suggests that almost 60 per cent of all hospitalizations and 70 per cent of

out-patient services in the country are catered to by the private sector. Nearly 63 per cent of healthcare expenditure is out of pocket. A study has come out with startling figures that 7 per cent of India's population is pushed into poverty every year because of healthcare costs. The Centre's efforts on universal health coverage are noteworthy, but a sizeable number of people who are eligible are still not insured. Even those covered under government schemes are not safe from unexpected health emergencies. There are private facilities that provide assistance to poor patients, but the number is minuscule. Most hospitals follow market-based pricing for tests and allied services. The patients and attendants have little choice but to shell

out the fee charged, no questions asked. The Bill wants a cap on the rate charged for every procedure and test, standardization of medical expenses and a quality assurance framework. The demands are a reflection of the everyday realities of crores of Indians. Healthcare is a public good. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure affordable and equitable access. To that end, the list of essential drugs with a price ceiling keeps growing. Availability is a problem, and so is lack of awareness. Pharma companies claim that lower profit margins narrow the window to innovate, invest in research and can be a factor in exiting the category under regulation. A serious, informed discussion in the House would be in order. (Tribune, India)

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Highlighting good governance, zero tolerance towards crime, corruption, Uttar Pradesh government invites global investors

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Arvind Kumar, Secretary to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Amit Singh and former cabinet minister and MLA Sidharth Nath Singh. The delegation's visit to the US comes two months before the Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit (UPGIS) 2023, which is scheduled to be held in Lucknow from February 10-12 next year.

The delegation invited investors and diaspora to visit and invest in the state as well as participate in the global summit, the flagship investment summit of the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

In a video message played at the event, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Uttar Pradesh, with its abundant natural resources, good governance, zero tolerance policy towards crime and corruption, largest consumer market, single window portal 'Nivesh Mitra', online incentive management system and 25 investment-friendly industrial policies, is a leading state in 'Ease of Doing Business.'

He said that over the past five years, including the time when the world was facing economic challenges due to the COVID19 pandemic, investment projects worth four lakh crore rupees were launched in the state, "which is a mark of trust that the investors have placed in the new Uttar Pradesh."

Yogi Adityanath invited all to come and be a part of "new India's growth engine" and invest in Uttar Pradesh. "Welcome to new India's new Uttar Pradesh."



UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna invited the diaspora and investors to come and invest in Uttar Pradesh, highlighting that the state today has a stable government under the Chief Ministership of Yogi Adityanath, with focus on policy-based governance, rule of law, easy availability of land, zero tolerance towards crime and corruption and guarantee of safety and security

In his special address, Khanna invited the diaspora and investors to come and invest in Uttar Pradesh, highlighting that the state today has a stable government under the Chief Ministership of Yogi Adityanath, with focus on policy-based governance, rule of law, easy availability of land, zero tolerance towards crime and corruption and guarantee of safety and security.

"We have come to invite you so that investments in Uttar Pradesh increase manifold and for that it has been ensured

that a congenial atmosphere is provided," Khanna said adding that the state has a conducive environment for business and investments and it is ensured that all facilitation are available to prospective investors.

Khanna underlined that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given equal prominence and importance to both urbanization as well as development of rural areas. "Today, the Yogi model is popular and is talked about all across the country," he said.

Khanna said that in Yogi Adityanath, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave Uttar Pradesh a Chief Minister who is like him, who has no personal agenda. He has only one focus and agenda - that of improving the conditions of the common man in the state and that Uttar Pradesh is known as a developed, progressive and prosperous state.



Consul General of India in New York Randhir Kumar Jaiswal exhorted the gathering to invest in UP as the State offered the required investment climate

Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, earlier, welcoming the delegation, exhorted investors and the diaspora to invest in the State of UP which offered the required climate for investment. Sidharth Nath Singh underlined that "there is an economic model for Uttar Pradesh, which has been adopted by our Chief Minister and I call it the 'Monk with the economic model'."

"What we are seeking is certainly that you come and make an investment and become our partner in the growth of Uttar Pradesh, the growth of India. India can only grow if Uttar Pradesh grows because we are the backbone," he said.



A view of the gathering

Stressing the importance of showcasing the heritage of India and Uttar Pradesh to the younger generation in the diaspora, Awasthi said that "UP nahin dekha, toh India nahin dekha" (If you haven't seen Uttar Pradesh, then you haven't seen India).

He also said that there is tremendous scope and avenues to grow and support the state's education, health and nutrition sectors as well.

Kumar gave a detailed presentation on the business environment and investment opportunities in Uttar Pradesh, highlighting the rapid infrastructure development in the state including construction and completion of expressways, the country's largest rail network, international airports and India's first inland waterway. He said that during the 2023 global investor summit, the state is targeting an investment commitment of 140 billion dollars. Amit Singh also highlighted the various investment opportunities and advantages of investing in Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Association of North America Founder and Chairman Rakesh Agarwal highlighted the cultural power of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The delegation highlighted sectors such as food processing, dairy, handloom and textile, IT, startups, tourism, defense and aerospace, pharma, micro, small and medium enterprises, film and renewable energy among others are key areas of investment opportunities.

Rakesh Agarwal, founder and trustee of the Uttar Pradesh Association of North America rallied support for global investment & job creation in Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Agarwal stated that "the Uttar Pradesh Government has created a business-friendly environment". The state now ranks #2 among the best states for investment in India.. He met with CM Yogi Ji in June of 2022 and the U.P. Government is offering incentives and tax breaks for companies to expand/start operations in Uttar Pradesh. By working together, we can create jobs & make Uttar Pradesh a better place for everybody, he said.

If you have any plans to start or expand your business in India, please contact Mr. Rakesh Agarwal at ra@cparakesh.com

The three-day long Investors Summit brought together policy makers, corporate leaders, business delegations, academia, think-tanks and Political and Government leadership from across the globe, to collectively explore business opportunities and forge partnerships. (PTI)



Rakesh Agarwal, founder and trustee of the Uttar Pradesh Association of North America rallied support for global investment & job creation in Uttar Pradesh

Tanya Indrani Bathija dies at 32: Funeral on Sunday, December 18

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

According to Newsday which first reported the incident, Tanya Indrani Bathija died, along with her dog, in a predawn fire in a Dix Hills cottage on Wednesday, December 14. Despite the efforts of her parents and three Suffolk police officers, she could not be saved from the engulfing fire.

Tanya Bathija lived in a cottage behind her parents' home on Carlls Straight Path, said Suffolk Police Det. Lt. Kevin Beyrer, head of the department's homicide squad.

Tanya's father, Gobind (Ben) Bathija, a

businessman and a community leader, woke up early to exercise before work and when he looked out of the window, he noticed the cottage on fire, Beyrer said.

"He alerted his wife at the same time as he called 911. They ran outside to the cottage and tried to get her out but it was fully engulfed," Beyrer said.

More than 60 firefighters and rescue workers launched "an aggressive attack on the blaze," which was reported at 2:54 a.m., Dix Hills Fire Department spokesman Steve Silverman said by email.

Two Suffolk County patrol officers and a sergeant "attempted to enter the cottage but were repelled by fire," police said.

They were taken to Stony Brook University Hospital for smoke inhalation. Beyrer said their injuries are not considered serious. Four firefighters were also treated at

the site for minor injuries, Silverman said.

Bathija and her family own at least eight Dunkin' Donuts stores across Suffolk, including in Patchogue, Blue Point and their latest location on Montauk Highway in Bellport.

Tanya Bathija received an undergraduate degree in international business and fashion design from the Fashion Institute of Technology and an MBA in accounting and finance from Baruch College.

A funeral will take place on Sunday, December 18 at 10 A.M. at Maloney's Lake Funeral Home and Cremation Center in Lake Ronkonkoma. A prayer service will be held the same day at 4 p.m. at the Asamai Hindu Temple in Hicksville.

The bereaved family can be reached at (212) 470-3331, (516) 423-1705, (631) 355-0473 and (631) 482-0441.



Tanya with Dad Gobind Bathija who, it is learnt, had big business plans for her

INDIAN-ORIGIN DR KAMAL BAWA RECEIVES GLOBAL LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD



The Balipara Foundation has honored noted conservation biologist Dr Kamaljit Singh Bawa, a Distinguished Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, with the Global Lifetime Service Award.

DECEMBER 14, 2022

BOSTON (TIP): The Balipara Foundation has honored noted, Indian born, conservation biologist Dr Kamaljit Singh Bawa, with the Global Lifetime Service Award.

A Distinguished Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, Bawa is the founder president of the Bengaluru, India-based Ashoka Trust for Research and Ecology and Environment (ATREE).

The award recognizes Dr Bawa's work in setting up ATREE's Eastern Himalaya Program and his contribution to conserving the critical and biodiversity-rich landscape.

It was presented at the tenth Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum in Bangladesh on Nov 11, 2022, according to an ATREE press release.

Dr Bawa is renowned for his pioneering work on tropical forest trees, extending his field of research from population biology to sustainable use of forest resources, conserving large tropical landscapes and climate change.

His research on climate change in the Eastern Himalayas is focused on modelling climate change, the impact of climate change and biodiversity and agriculture and the development of adaptive strategies that assign a central role to local knowledge. Research on the sustainable use of ecosystem services constitutes an important element of the overall global change program.

Dr Bawa founded ATREE in 1996. He is an elected fellow of the US National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London. He is also on the Executive Committee of the National Geographic Society. Dr Bawa is the editor-in-chief of the journal Conservation and Society and has over 200 publications.

Since 2013, the Balipara Foundation, headquartered in Assam, has highlighted and invested in the efforts of societal entrepreneurs working tirelessly to create social, economic, and environmental impacts in protecting essential natural resources and restoring the diversity of the Eastern Himalayas.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Four Punjabi-origin youth killed in two weeks in Canada

DECEMBER 12, 2022

BRAMPTON (TIP): In a worrisome trend, four killings of Punjabis have been reported in separate incidents in Canada in just two weeks. These developments have led to panic amongst the parents whose kids are studying in Canada.

On November 24, it was reported that an 18-year-old Punjabi-origin teenager, Mehakpreet Sethi, was stabbed to death in a high school parking lot by another teenager in Canada's British Columbia province.

On the night of December 3, Pawanpreet Kaur, a resident of Brampton, died after being shot multiple times outside a Petro Canada gas station in Mississauga.

Pawanpreet's mother Jasvir Kaur said, "We regret sending her to Canada. We should have kept her here with us."

Another incident was reported on December 3, in which a 24-year-old youth, Sanraj Singh, was shot dead in Edmonton.

At around 8:40 pm, the police were called to the area of 51st Street and 13th Avenue near Sakav, from where they received information about the firing. As soon as the police reached the spot, they



4 Punjabi youth have been killed in just two weeks in Canada

found Sanraj injured. When he was taken to a hospital, he was declared brought dead.

On December 10, 40-year-old Harpreet Kaur died in Canada after being stabbed multiple times at her home in Surrey in British Columbia.

Apart from these incidents, 28-year-old Satwinder Singh was injured in a shooting rampage in Ontario on September 12, who later succumbed to injuries.

Besides, a Punjabi radio host based in Brampton, Joti Singh Mann, was attacked by three persons in August.

In July, Canada-based businessman Ripudaman Singh Malik was shot dead in Surrey in British Columbia province.

The incident took place near the Payal Business Centre in Surrey, where Malik had a business office.

In March, Harmandeep Kaur, a 25-year-old girl from Kapurthala, died in March after being attacked by a Canadian national.

In February, mediaperson Deepak Punj was attacked in the Greater Toronto Area by three persons.

In September this year, the Indian government had even issued an advisory over "sharp rise in hate crimes, sectarian violence and anti-India activities" in Canada. The Centre had warned its citizens in the North American nation and students flying to it to remain vigilant.

Indo-Canadian Punjabi diaspora dedicates calendar to Desmond Tutu in Canada's Surrey



Punjabi-origin diaspora came together in Surrey in Canada to release a calendar featuring Desmond Tutu, the towering leader of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

DECEMBER 12, 2022

SURREY, BC (TIP): Punjabi-origin diaspora came together in Surrey in Canada to release a calendar featuring the towering leader of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

Desmond Tutu had passed away at the age of 90, leaving behind a rich legacy of struggles for social justice.

Close to his first death anniversary, Radical Desi, an online magazine in partnership with People's Voice, Spice Radio, Mehak Punjab Di TV and Channel Punjabi decided to dedicate its

calendar for 2023 to him.

The event was held on Saturday at the art gallery of Surrey-based painter Jarnail Singh, who made the portrait of Tutu for the calendar that bears important dates related to the history of resistance against racism and colonialism, especially in north America.

Apart from Singh, others who participated in the unveiling ceremony included British Columbia Education Minister Rachna Singh.

SEVEN BRITISH-INDIANS WIN 2022 YOUNG DENTIST AWARD IN UK



Seven British-Indians have received the Young Dentist Award in recognition of their excellence in dentistry across the whole of the UK. Photo for representation only

DECEMBER 16, 2022

LONDON (TIP): Seven British-Indians have received the Young Dentist Award in recognition of their excellence in dentistry across the whole of the UK.

The 2022 Dentistry Awards, feted as 'dentistry's biggest party', took place late last month at The Athena in Leicester.

While Kiran Shankla and Rohit Keshav Sunil Patel won from the Southeast, Sorabh Patel and Vishal Patel won from London.

Viraj Patel and Paavan Chouhan from the Northwest and Chetan Sharma from Midlands won along with 20 others who were honored in the Young Dentist award category.

There was a total of 13 categories in the award, including Dental Laboratory of the Year, Therapist of the Year, Young Dentist, Hygienist of the Year, Dental Nurse of the Year, and more.

To be considered for the award, the young dentists had to give 750-word answers to a list of questions, provide supporting evidence of their work and their participation in the local community.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American doctor dies in Houston car crash



Mini Vettical, a prominent Indian American doctor, dancer, and a mother of five children, who died in a tragic car crash in Houston

DECEMBER 13, 2022

HOUSTON (TIP): Family and friends are mourning the loss of Mini Vettical, a prominent Indian American doctor, dancer, and a mother of five children, who died in a tragic car crash in Houston, Texas last week. An "angel," "selfless" and "humble and kind" are some of the words used to describe what 52-year-old Vettical, a native of Ramamangalam in Kerala, meant to everyone around her.

"She was that kind of a unique individual, and she never expected anything from anybody else, including from family,"

her husband, Celestine, told media.

An avid dancer, painter, blogger, Vettical was seemingly good at everything she did, Celestine said. "It's like, anything she touches, she puts her heart into it." A Baylor faculty member, who worked primarily at Harris Health clinics, Vettical was on her way home from work when she died in a crash in southeast Houston after being hit by a speeding motorcycle, media reported citing police. In addition to medically helping underserved populations throughout Houston, family and friends said Vettical was actively involved in organizations like Pratham Houston and the Houston Area Women's Center. She was also a class volunteer and involved in the church and dancing theatre. No matter how much Vettical had on her plate, her daughter Pooja - the eldest of Vettical's five kids - said she always made time for her most important job of all - being a mom. "She's beautiful on the outside, but surely the most beautiful person on the inside," Pooja said. "I'll always have her as my inspiration. And I know I will never live up to it, but I know that she will always be there as a role model."

"Dr. Vettical was devoted to caring for the underprivileged and underserved in Harris County at multiple health centers. The Baylor Family Medicine community is in shock and disbelief," Baylor stated.

"Her beloved personality will be tremendously missed by faculty and staff. She leaves a gap that is hard to fill among her colleagues and patients," the report added.

According to her obituary posted on the Dignity Memorial website, Vettical was born in Kuwait in 1970, and received her medical degree from the University of Texas. She specialized in Internal Medicine.

INDIAN AMERICAN NATASHA SARIN HEADING TO YALE LAW SCHOOL AS PROFESSOR



Natasha Sarin is leaving the Treasury Department to join Yale Law and Management School as professor

DECEMBER 14, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):

Natasha Sarin, Indian American counselor to the assistant secretary for tax policy and implementation, is leaving the Treasury Department, to join Yale Law and Management School as professor, according to a media report. Sarin, a protegee of former treasury secretary and current Harvard professor Larry Summers, led efforts to get more funding for the IRS and stayed to help oversee implementation of the tax elements of the Inflation Reduction Act, media reported.

Before joining the Treasury Department in March 2021, Sarin was an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and an Assistant Professor of Finance at the Wharton School of Business. Her research and teaching interests lie in the areas of public finance and financial regulation. In recent years, Sarin has published numerous papers on tax policy, with particular focus on how improving tax compliance will raise substantial revenue and create a more equitable tax system, according to her official profile.

Her other work spans multiple aspects of finance, including household finance, insurance, and macroprudential risk management. Sarin's research has been published in top economics and legal journals, and she regularly contributes to economic policy debates through work with the Hamilton Project, the Brookings Institution, and popular commentary in outlets such as The Washington Post and The New York Times.

She received a Bachelor of Arts from Yale University, a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, and a PhD in economics from Harvard University.

Sarin teamed up with Summers after completing her PhD "on a project studying the tax gap and looked into ways those funds could be recouped," according to a 2021 media profile on Sarin. The daughter of a finance professor, Sarin grew up in Northern California, and was captain of her varsity basketball team, as a Yale undergraduate, she landed a summer internship in 2010 at the White House National Economic Council, where she met Summers, who was the director. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Nihar Malaviya named interim CEO of Penguin Random House



Nihar Malaviya, currently president and chief operating officer of Penguin Random House's American division, has been named interim chief executive officer of the publishing house.

house announced.

"Nihar Malaviya to take over leadership of Penguin Random House as interim CEO - he is an outstanding leader and an entrepreneurial publishing professional who knows Penguin Random House inside out," Bertelsmann group CEO Thomas Rabe tweeted. "I look forward to working even more closely with him."

Malaviya, who assumed his current position in 2019 will report to Rabe. He will also join Bertelsmann's Group Management Committee (GMC), as well as continue to be a member of the Penguin Random House Global Executive Committee.

As interim CEO, Malaviya will "lead the creation of new competitive advantages that position the global company for future growth," the publishing house said.

He began his career at Bertelsmann in 2011 as a participant in the Bertelsmann Entrepreneurs Program. In 2003, he moved within the group to Random House, taking over several positions including president and chief operating officer in 2014.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Two Indian Americans in Money magazine's top 50 changemakers

DECEMBER 12, 2022

NEW YORK

(TIP): Two Indian Americans are among Money magazine's 50 influential figures from entertainment, media, business, investing, politics, etc., who are shaping Americans' finances.

Rohit Chopra, head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Gaurav Sharma of New York-based fintech firm Capitalize, have been recognized for offering "unique perspective on the gaps within our financial systems - and how they're working to improve the future for everyday consumers".

As the director of the government's CFPB, Chopra, 40, is tasked with protecting families from deceptive and abusive financial practices.

Appointed by US President Joe Biden in 2021, "Chopra has already made an outsized impact on the wallets of Americans by helping overhaul how medical debt affects our credit, reduce 'junk fees' charged by banks, and more," says Money.

As Director, Chopra is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

"As far as financial regulators go, 40-year-old Chopra is young, though he's certainly not inexperienced. In fact, he's a bit of a financial Forrest Gump," the Money said.

During his tenure at the Federal Trade Commission starting 2018, Chopra successfully worked to strengthen sanctions against repeat offenders, to reverse the agency's reliance on no-money, no-fault settlements in fraud cases, and to halt abuses of small businesses.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Rohit Chopra, head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Gaurav Sharma of New York-based fintech firm Capitalize are among Money magazine's 50 influential figures from entertainment, media, business, investing, politics, etc., who are shaping Americans' finances.

KAREN LIN INDUCTION CEREMONY TO TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 20



Karen Lin is the first East Asian-American woman elected to the Queens Civil Court

DECEMBER 16, 2022

QUEENS, NY (TIP): Karen Lin will be sworn in as the first East Asian-American woman elected to the Queens Civil Court. Karen won this past November 8th election with more than 240,000 votes.

Karen Lin, joined by elected officials, community leaders, friends and family, will be sworn in on Tuesday, December 20 at 4 P.M. Queens County Civil Court, Courtroom 101, 89-17 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11435

Karen Lin has been elected to be the next Judge of the Civil Court in Queens. A dedicated public servant, Karen currently serves as court attorney-referee in Kings County Surrogate's Court. A former Committee Co-Chair for the Pro Bono and Community Service Committee of the Asian American Bar Association of New York, she led the creation of the Queens Pro Bono Clinic in 2020 and subsequently the Remote Legal Clinic. For more information about Karen, please visit www.karenlin2022.com and @karenlinforqueens on Instagram and Facebook.

Historic BJP Victory Celebrations in New Jersey



"People of Gujarat have voted sensibly. They have voted for Development, Development, Development", said Jagdish Sewhani, President of The American India Public Affairs Committee. L to R: Shobhana Patel, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Jagdish Sewhani, Dr Vithal Dhaduk, Dr. Sudha Parikh

DECEMBER 14, 2022

EDISON, NJ (TIP): Addressing a huge gathering at Royal Albert Palace New Jersey, the first celebrations outside India Jagdish Sewhani, President of The American India Public Affairs Committee said that this is a historic win for BJP, seventh consecutive win for BJP that shows people of Gujarat have full faith in BJP and Leadership of Shri Narendrabhai Modi ji.

This is a vote for development and Performance. People of Gujarat are smart. They totally rejected Revdi Culture -the culture of freebies. They



A view of the gathering at the victory celebrations

firmly believe if the country has to prosper every individual has do their bit that's Sabh Ka Prayas .

Mr Sewhani further said that normally in elections people vote for anti-incumbency, but this is the first time that people of Gujarat have voted for pro incumbency and reelected BJP Government for the seventh consecutive time- a record in the history of Indian Elections.

This is because people have faith in Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi who campaigned tirelessly and addressed 31 rallies and held three Roadshows, including the 50 Km Road show in Ahmedabad.

Mr Sewhani Thanked people of Gujarat for bringing back BJP to power for the seventh consecutive time.

As we are entering Amrit Kal, India will be among top three economies in the world in the year 2047 when India will be celebrating its 100th year of

Independence, said Mr Sewhani, the foundation of which is laid by our dynamic Visionary Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi.

Mr Sewhani said that this is the beginning of celebrations and many more events will be organized and held around the United States.

Every town in United States should celebrate this historic victory, he said.

Dr Vithal Dhaduk said that Prime Minister Modiji is a dedicated, hardworking leader and thanked the people of Gujarat for bringing back BJP to Power and reinstalling Bhupendrabhai Patel as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Dr Sudhir Parikh called it a historic moment and congratulated Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and asked them to let's know what we can do for Mother India.

Shobhna Patel, Albert Jassani, Pramod Bhagat, Mukesh Kashiwala also spoke at the grand celebrations.

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS CELEBRATES ITS PEER ACADEMY'S FIRST YEAR

The Peer Academy trains peer counselors, who use their lived experience with substance use or mental health conditions to engage patients NYC Health + Hospitals has the largest hospital-based peer workforce in the city

DECEMBER 15, 2022

NEW YORK, NY (TIP): NYC Health + Hospitals announced, on December 15, a successful first year of its Peer Academy, a training program for people who have lived experience with mental health or substance use conditions to become peer counselors. In the first class this spring, students ranged in age from their 20s to their 60s, with an average age of 43. Twelve of the 18 graduates in the first class have been hired as peer counselors at NYC Health + Hospitals. Twenty additional students graduate from the program today. NYC Health + Hospitals currently has 83 peers on staff across the system, the largest hospital-based peer workforce in the city. In addition to the classroom hours required for State certification, the program includes a 2-month, full-time hospital-based internship with rotations in the inpatient mental health unit, emergency department, and street outreach teams. Peer Academy staff work with interns to help them find employment for up to six months after graduation.

"Peers have an extraordinary ability to connect with patients and help them pursue treatment," said Charles Barron, MD, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Office of Behavioral Health, NYC Health + Hospitals. "That's essential in a hospital, where we serve patients with the highest needs for mental health and substance use care. NYC Health + Hospitals is proud to invest in this critical



The second graduating class of the Peer Academy

workforce to deliver compassionate and effective care for our patients."

"The Peer Academy gave me this incredible opportunity to inspire and support others who are suffering from addiction, so they don't have to go through it alone," said Jack Chudasama, a student in the first cohort of the Peer Academy who is now a Peer Counselor at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst. "For 30 years, I battled addiction, so being a peer counselor is good for my own recovery, too. It grounds me and gives me a strong sense of purpose."

"For years, I saw a psychiatrist and a therapist, but when I started working with a peer counselor and going to a peer support group, I had a breakthrough," said Brian Pelzer, who receives services at NYC Health +

Hospitals/Woodhull. "You're with other people who have similar problems, and you realize there's nothing to be ashamed of. I reconnected with my family, and I learned techniques that help me in my day-to-day life. Now I go to my peer group every week, and it's a part of my recovery."

The Peer Academy includes the hours needed for the State certifications to become a Certified Peer Specialist for mental health and a Certified Recovery Peer Advocate for substance use. It includes over 20 hours of online workshops, 177 hours of classroom training, and 126 hours at a hospital-based internship.

ABOUT NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS : NYC Health + Hospitals is the largest municipal health care system in the nation. We are a network of 11 hospitals, trauma centers, neighborhood health centers, nursing homes, and post-acute care centers. We are a home care agency and a health plan, MetroPlus. Our health system provides essential services to more than one million New Yorkers every year in more than 70 locations across the city's five boroughs. Our diverse workforce of more than 43,000 employees is uniquely focused on empowering New Yorkers, without exception, to live the healthiest life possible. Visit us at www.nychealthandhospitals.org and stay connected on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NYHealthSystem> or Twitter at @NYHealthSystem.

Senator Liu, Champions Martial Arts Intl, operation child rescue, Fo Guang Shan NY Temple, and PS 242q, present toy donations to military families of the U.S. Army's 77th sustainment Brigade at Fort Totten



Sen. Liu, Champions Martial Arts International and Operation Child Rescue



RoseAnne DiPiano Technology Teacher of PS242, Lisa DellAquila Chief of Staff for Sen. Liu



Sen. Liu, Fo Guang Shan New York Temple

DECEMBER 16, 2022

BAYSIDE, NY (TIP): Senator John Liu, on December 16, concluded his 2022 Holiday Toy Drive with thousands of toy donations for families of soldiers at the 77th Sustainment Brigade in Fort Totten, Queens. Toy donations were collected throughout the month of December at the office of Senator Liu in Bayside, Champions Martial Arts schools, PS 242Q, IBPS(International Buddhist Progress Society) and by Operation Child Rescue.

Senator John Liu stated, "The holiday season is the perfect time to give back and show our appreciation to the families of our local hometown heroes at Fort Totten, many of whom are stationed around the world

and unable to spend time with their families. Donations came pouring in over the last month from individuals and groups looking to help make the holidays a little brighter this year. We are so grateful for this incredible outpouring of support!"

Chan Hoon Ro, headmaster of Flushing Champions Martial Arts, said, "We are so happy to have been a part of Senator Liu's Toy Drive. Last month, we announced this event to our Champions Martial Arts students and everyone was so happy to donate toys. Champions Martial Arts helped donate 943 toys! It's always good to educate our children about helping people in need and it's a great feeling when they contribute for a good cause like this."

Venerable Chueh Lin, Abbess of Fo Guang Shan New York Temple, said, "In this festive season, we do not forget to give gifts and blessings to military family, so that children can feel the care and warmth of the community. We're happy to be a part of this wonderful event where we can show our appreciation to soldiers who serve on the front line. Thanks to Senator Liu for hosting this event every year."

Toy donations will benefit hundreds of military families stationed out of the 77th Sustainment Brigade at Fort Totten in Bayside, Queens. The majority of soldiers will be deployed this holiday season.

Legislator Arnold W. Drucker Commemorates Hanukkah in Nassau County at "Latkes and Lights" Event



Legislator Drucker said: "It was truly humbling to take part in this wonderful annual celebration".

Photo / Office of Legislator Arnold W. Drucker

Sunday, Dec. 18.

"We live in a very challenging world, and the only thing we can use to overcome hatred, intolerance, prejudice and antisemitism is light - because light overcomes darkness and hatred," Legislator Drucker said. "It was truly humbling to take part in this wonderful annual celebration, and from the bottom of my heart and from my family to yours, I wish you a very happy, peaceful and healthy Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. May 2023 be the best year yet for all of us!"

In June 2021, Legislator Drucker filed legislation to spearhead the creation of the Task Force; his proposal was adopted unanimously later that summer. The Task Force began its work this past May.

DECEMBER 16, 2022

MINEOLA, NY (TIP): Nassau County Legislator Arnold W. Drucker (D - Plainview) joined with his colleagues in government, community leaders and members of Nassau County's Task Force to Combat Antisemitism on Thursday, Dec. 15 for "Latkes and Lights" - an annual celebration of this joyous holiday season. During the event hosted by Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, the dome of the Theodore Roosevelt Executive & Legislative Building was illuminated in blue and guests enjoyed latkes and donuts outside the Legislative Building's Ceremonial Chamber.

Hanukkah begins at sundown on

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Who will take on Modi?

KEJRIWAL NOWHERE NEAR GOAL OF OFFERING ALTERNATIVE, WHILE RAHUL YET TO PROVE METTLE



BY
JULIO RIBEIRO

"RAHUL GANDHI'S BHARAT JODO YATRA HAS BEEN MAKING A SERIOUS FLUTTER. THE PICTURE PAINTED OF RAHUL AS A SPOILT, LITTLE 'BABA' IS BEING SLOWLY OBLITERATED WITH EVERY SURE STEP HE TAKES ON HIS MARATHON JOURNEY. DURING THE ELECTION FEVER, HE WAS OFF THE AIR, BUT EVEN AFTER THE RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED AND NEW CMS APPOINTED, THE CHANNELS HAVE NOT BROUGHT HIM BACK INTO FOCUS. 'IF HE IS TO BE THE CONGRESS' CANDIDATE TO FACE MODI IN 2024, HE WILL NOT ONLY HAVE TO JOIN DISPARATE FORCES IN THE OPPOSITION SPACE, BUT ALSO PROVE HIS CLOUT WITH THE VOTING PUBLIC TO CONVINCE KEJRIWAL, MAMATA BANERJEE, CHANDRASHEKAR RAO AND NITISH KUMAR THAT HE MEANS BUSINESS, IS READY, AND, ABOVE ALL, CAPABLE OF LEADING. IF HE CANNOT DO THIS, FIVE DIFFERENT PMS-IN-WAITING WILL EMERGE!"

The results of the Assembly elections held in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and the municipal elections in Delhi panned out as predicted. The Modi-Shah regime could not afford any loss of face in Gujarat. They suffered embarrassment last time because of the demand for reservation for the Patel community which dominates the political space in the state.

Rahul Gandhi will have to show he means business, is ready, and, above all, capable of leading. If he cannot do this, five different Opposition candidates will emerge!

Both the young men who led that agitation, Hardik Patel and another young man with influence among the OBCs, have crossed over to the BJP, strengthening the hands of the party. This alone made a massive difference in the support base of the BJP and the Congress. The Congress share in the total votes cast fell from 40% plus in 2017 to 26% in this election. The new player in the power struggle, Arvind Kejriwal's AAP, cornered 13%, which gave it only five seats in the legislature but a big toehold in the state.

The AAP is far removed from its dream of forming a government in Gujarat. It will take two decades or more to come to that level. In Gujarat, despite AAP's massive propaganda blitz, it came nowhere even near the Congress, which remains the principal opposition party there. The way the Congress is going about its business, it may lose even that status next time round.

Kejriwal, personally, is nowhere near his goal of offering an alternative to Modi, even if he postpones his challenge to 2029. In 2024, he does not have a chance. At present, Modi is the king of all he surveys. I have no doubt that he will ride the popularity wave in 2024.

Persons of goodwill were disappointed when BJP leaders in the state and the Centre remitted the



At present, Modi is the king of all he surveys

Photo / PTI

sentences of life imprisonment awarded to rapists and killers of women and children in the Bilkis Bano case. One would have thought that there would have been public outcry against such a perverse use of constitutional powers. At least, there should have been a severe condemnation of the reception accorded to the released convicts. Perhaps, the leadership had gauged the mood of its electorate. The release of the convicts and the welcome accorded to them was a recipe to gain electoral victories.

The people of Gujarat have their own distinct collective personality. A gentle, nonviolent people at most times, with their heads buried in books of accounts, they have a cerebral fear of those who struggle for their next meal, but do not hesitate to use their fists, even knives - and now guns - to settle scores. The Gujaratis used to rely on uniformed men of the Army and the police to protect them from physical harm, but now they have begun to support militant Hindutva and its front-line troops, led by the VHP and the Bajrang Dal.

Home Minister Amit Shah had proclaimed in an election speech that the government (or is it the party? Perhaps both, since the police follow the ruling party's dictat) had taught the mischief-makers a lesson in 2002. There has been no communal violence since then he proclaimed! This sums up the thinking of the ordinary Gujarati today. A reminder of that 'truth' before elections is sufficient to move voters to the polling booths.

Himachal Pradesh has a very small percentage of Muslim voters. Their votes are inconsequential to the final outcome. The voters continue to vote in the pattern they were accustomed to, replacing an incumbent party by its opponent every five years. There is the usual quest for leadership and the consequent infighting in every party. Since power was vested in the BJP before these elections, it had more than its fair share of infighting. Now that the Congress has replaced it in Shimla, it should expect the same fate in 2027, if it can hold out that long. Till 2027, its problem will be to

keep its flock together.

The Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, an ally of the BJP, has hit upon a unique method of keeping its MLAs pleased. It has withdrawn the vehicles supplied to police stations under the Nirbhaya scheme - vehicles meant to protect women from lust - and transferred them to each legislator to guard them from bodily harm! Each Shinde-faction MLA now has round-the-clock protection of five policemen. Protecting them from possible attacks from what? No one knows! There are 40-odd legislators belonging to this faction. Each will insist on his full quota of five trained policemen to bolster his ego and make him feel so much more important. Five men each for 40 legislators totals to 200. Since there is no sanction for such a huge deployment, the police stations will be denuded. The men will be taken off normal patrols and deputed to keep the MLAs happy. The cost to the exchequer and the travails of a depleted police station are of no consequence, or so it seems.

Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra has been making a serious flutter. The picture painted of Rahul as a spoilt, little 'baba' is being slowly obliterated with every sure step he takes on his marathon journey. During the election fever, he was off the air, but even after the results were announced and new CMs appointed, the channels have not brought him back into focus.

Rahul had said his yatra was not connected to the polls. He campaigned in Gujarat for just one day as the yatra's ultimate purpose was more important for him. But the results may force him to rethink.

If he is to be the Congress' candidate to face Modi in 2024, he will not only have to join disparate forces in the Opposition space, but also prove his clout with the voting public to convince Kejriwal, Mamata Banerjee, Chandrashekar Rao and Nitish Kumar that he means business, is ready, and, above all, capable of leading. If he cannot do this, five different PMs-in-waiting will emerge!

(The author is a retired IPS officer and a former governor)

The attack on the last bastion - the judiciary



BY
AJIT PRAKASH SHAH

"For better or for worse, the collegium system is currently the law of the land, which everyone, including the executive, must adhere to. Instead, we see a defiant government refusing to cooperate, let alone consult, with the Supreme Court. Names proposed by the collegium are left pending for years, only to be eventually returned unceremoniously. The Government would also do well to think about its own culpability in allowing the problem of pendency and vacancies to fester. Pendency is caused majorly by poor judicial infrastructure, including an abysmally low number of judges. Court funding is at the mercy of the government, which is either particularly frugal or deliberately parsimonious in the matter. Similarly, vacancies in the higher judiciary are directly due to the Government's frequent refusal to accept names of persons who are out of favor, or who have not toed the Government's line."

Recent comments by the Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankar, and the Law Minister, Kiren Rijiju, can be read as a concerted attack on the collegium system, the Supreme Court of India, and even the basic structure doctrine (conveniently forgetting that it is this doctrine that has kept the Indian Constitution intact). Clearly, the present government continues to try and undermine judicial independence, which it has been doing since it first came to power in 2014. As a long-standing critic of the collegium system, I might have joined a chorus that called out the problems with judicial appointments. But this onslaught from the Government has been particularly disturbing and wholly unwarranted.

An 'elected autocracy'

The Supreme Court, conceived as the custodian of the Constitution and the final arbiter of the law, has had an inconsistent history. The ghosts of ADM Jabalpur continue to haunt to this day. While the government under Indira Gandhi intended to destroy the judiciary during the Emergency, the entire Court, barring Justice H.R. Khanna, was also complicit in the erosion of citizens' rights that took place then.

Over the decades, after much reflection and repair, from both within and outside the judiciary, those dark days have been seemingly left behind. But what worried us then has now re-emerged to torment us again.

The present move - of attempting to undermine and discredit the judiciary, as seen in the comments - is part of the larger mission to make the executive the most powerful entity. Today, executive accountability is a thing of memory, for no one raises any questions about its

ISSUES OF PENDENCY AND INFRASTRUCTURE OUGHT TO BE BROACHED IN APPROPRIATE FORUMS AND IN HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS TO QUELL THE GROWING ACRIMONY BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND THE HIGHER JUDICIARY

actions. Since 2014, the Government has undertaken a well-crafted, deliberate takedown of various institutions and mechanisms that could hold the executive accountable. Its efforts may not be as brazen as the Indira Gandhi-led government, but the same ends are being achieved: the state is rendered practically comatose, and the executive, most often, has the upper hand.

Parallels can be drawn with 'elected autocracies', where elected governments use the very institutions integral to democracy to kill democracy itself and destroy civil liberties. We have heard nothing of the Lokpal since. The National Human Rights Commission has been made dormant. Investigation agencies are misused at the slightest opportunity, with action against activists, journalists, students, political opponents, or anyone who protests against the government. The Election Commission of India appears to have been clearly compromised. The Information Commission is almost non-functional. The list is long and disturbing. Others who can hold the executive accountable - academia, the press, and civil society - have also been systematically emasculated. Universities are under attack. An unbiased mainstream fourth estate in India no longer exists, and the media operates mostly as a propaganda machine. Civil society, too, is being slowly but surely strangled.

And a resurgent judiciary

Since the Supreme Court's decision in 2015 on the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, arguably, from the Court under the Chief Justices of India (CJI) Dipak Misra onwards, through the tenures of notably Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S.A. Bobde, the judiciary has remained passive, even submissive, to the executive. Consequently, not even a whisper emerged against the collegium. However, with the last three CJIs, i.e., Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice U.U. Lalit, and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, the Court is being more assertive and speaking in a non-aligned and confident voice. The executive seems to have recognized that the judiciary is the last bastion and final protector of civil liberties which it must overcome to claim its position as the most powerful entity in India.

History tells us that in the early years of modern India, decisions on judicial appointments were usually made on the advice of the CJI. Even if concurrence was not contemplated, for our founding fathers, an independent judiciary was non-negotiable. B.R. Ambedkar was unambiguous that appointments should have no political pressure and considerations, but that 'consultation with persons who are well-qualified ... to give proper advice' would be appropriate. This was followed through the Nehru-era.

Both the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi governments attempted to manipulate the process. The collegium was created as a historical response to contemporaneous challenges, and succeeded in preventing the executive from hijacking judicial appointments. However, I maintain that 'judges appointing judges' is never a good idea, and a formal, structured appointments commission, with rules and accountability mechanisms, is the ideal way forward.

The NJAC law could have fixed this problem but it had many flaws, structured to undermine judicial independence, including giving a veto to so-called 'eminent persons'. The Court could have read down these flaws and at least set up a body that could incrementally improve with every selection round. But the Government refused to accede to any change or modification in the



The Supreme Court of India

Photo / Courtesy Wikipedia

law. Eventually, the Court was forced to strike down the law completely, leaving us, once again, with the collegium system.

Fixing the system of appointments

For better or for worse, the collegium system is currently the law of the land, which everyone, including the executive, must adhere to. Instead, we see a defiant government refusing to cooperate, let alone consult, with the Supreme Court. Names proposed by the collegium are left pending for years, only to be eventually returned unceremoniously. The Government would also do well to think about its own culpability in allowing the problem of pendency and vacancies to fester. Pendency is caused majorly by poor judicial infrastructure, including an abysmally low number of judges. Court funding is at the mercy of the government, which is either particularly frugal or deliberately parsimonious in the matter. Similarly, vacancies in the higher judiciary are directly due to the Government's frequent refusal to accept names of persons who are out of favor, or who have not toed the Government's line.

All this points to the same thing repeatedly, i.e., the appointments system must be fixed. Pending a clear, rule-based system, even the existing collegium system can be improved, e.g., through well-defined criteria for appointments, transparency and accountability in selection, better methods of assessing candidates for elevation, and improved ways of ensuring diversity and representation. CJI Chandrachud, with two years in office, has a wonderful opportunity to make these changes, even as, in the long term, we strive for a well-structured and balanced legislation on a judicial commission that brings in transparency without compromising judicial independence.

Until then, issues of pendency and infrastructure should be broached in appropriate forums, such as the Chief Justices Conference, or meetings between the Prime Minister and the CJI. Press interviews or parliamentary addresses are not fit stages for this, and only serve to incite acrimony and reinforce the view that the Government does not have a cooperative spirit.

We can rest assured that the leadership at the Supreme Court appears to be in good hands now and is resisting the pressure and attacks in a dignified and restrained way. If the Government continues to stonewall, perhaps the judiciary should find ways to persuade or even compel the Government to follow the law of the land. This is the best that the Supreme Court can do to protect democracy, and for the sake of Indian citizens.

(The author is former Chief Justice, Delhi High Court and Madras High Court, and former Chairperson, Law Commission of India)

No let-up in conflict

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE SHOULD ADOPT REALISTIC POLICY TO DEAL WITH GROWING CHALLENGES



BY
G PARTHASARATHY

“HUNDRED THOUSAND RUSSIAN TROOPS KILLED OR WOUNDED, WITH SIMILAR FIGURES ON THE UKRAINIAN SIDE. HE ALSO STATED THAT ABOUT 40,000 UKRAINIAN CIVILIANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL HAD BEEN KILLED AND 15 TO 30 MILLION UKRAINIANS DISPLACED FROM THEIR HOMES. THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN UNSPARING IN THEIR RESPONSE TO UKRAINIAN ATTACKS, WITH THEIR MISSILES TARGETING ELECTRICITY SUPPLY LINES AND DESTROYING POWER SUPPLIES AND COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS UKRAINE. A LARGE NUMBER OF UKRAINIANS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SHIFT TO NEW LOCATIONS. RUSSIAN OIL AND GAS SUPPLIES TO EU COUNTRIES, LIKE GERMANY, ALSO STAND CUT OFF.”

While most former Soviet republics have maintained good relations with Russia, Ukraine has, in recent years, believed that it has the political resilience and economic clout to seek substantial changes in its ties with Russia. It has done so under the leadership of its young and charismatic President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has received significant support from the US. Russia's strong concerns about moves by the Zelenskyy government to hinder Russian access to the strategic port in Crimea and about the welfare of Russians living in southern Ukraine led to Russian military intervention in Ukraine.

The demand for natural gas is growing across Europe. Public anger will inevitably grow in Europe as freezing winter continues across EU countries and eastern Europe.

The Ukraine-Russia conflict has led to horrendous casualties on both sides. According to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Military, Gen



Endless destruction and human suffering and sorrow. The Ukraine-Russia conflict has led to horrendous casualties on both sides. Photo / Courtesy IANS

Mark A Milley, the conflict has resulted in an estimated

Hundred thousand Russian troops killed or wounded, with similar figures on the Ukrainian side. He also stated that about 40,000 Ukrainian civilians and military personnel had been killed and 15 to 30 million Ukrainians displaced from their homes. The Russians have been unsparing in their response to Ukrainian attacks, with their missiles targeting electricity supply lines and destroying power supplies and communications across Ukraine. A large number of Ukrainians have been forced to shift to new locations. Russian oil and gas supplies to EU countries, like Germany, also stand cut off.

Russia has two crucial interests in its relations with Ukraine. The first is its uninterrupted access to the sea through Ukraine. Secondly, Russia has a natural interest in the safety and security of Russians living in southern Ukraine. Equipped with some of the most modern weaponry supplied by the US and its NATO allies, Ukraine had initially started pushing out Russian forces in southern Ukraine. This has been followed by devastating missile attacks by Russia, which have destroyed the infrastructure for transmission of electricity and gas. The consequences of continuing attacks are going to be devastating for the people of Ukraine.

The conflict has raised passions across Europe, with considerable sympathy for Ukraine. Developments in Ukraine now are the constant focus of international media attention. Initially, India had preferred to remain on the sidelines. PM Modi, however, became the focus of global attention at the Shanghai

Cooperation Organisation summit, when he proclaimed in the presence of leaders across Asia, including Putin and Xi Jinping: 'Today's era is not of war and I have spoken to you about it on the call. Today, we will get an opportunity to talk about how we can progress on the path to peace.' While most of US NATO partners, including Germany and the UK, have joined the US in military assistance to Ukraine, French President Macron appears to be leaning towards facilitating a meaningful dialogue for restoring peace in Ukraine. This broadly coincides with the position that both India and China have taken. Modi's call for peace was endorsed by the recent G20 summit in Indonesia.

The demand for natural gas is growing across Europe. Public anger will inevitably grow in Europe as freezing winter continues across EU countries and eastern Europe. While Putin would eventually welcome a dialogue with Ukraine, his primary focus will remain on Russian access to Crimea, and possibly to the Port of Odessa in southern Ukraine. Odessa has been the center of trade of the erstwhile Soviet Union, with countries across the world, including India. The world is also set to face a strong effort by the US and its NATO allies to restrict prices of Russian oil exports to \$60 per barrel. It remains to be seen how this issue is handled.

While western countries predictably resorted to strong criticism of Moscow at the G20 summit, China and India are convinced that such criticism is not going to affect Russia's determination. It is essential that Russia and Ukraine should meet and adopt a realistic policy to deal with the growing challenges.

Pakistan has surprised many in the world by its policies during the Ukraine crisis. Developing countries have been circumspect in dealing with both Russia and the US, though many countries have expressed disapproval of the Russian military action. Pakistan, however, initially chose to be discreet by not passing any judgement on Russia's actions. India, China and some other countries in Asia were also circumspect and avoided being judgmental on developments in the raging conflict. The world, at large, was surprised when Pakistan provided facilities to aircraft of the British Royal Air Force to transport large amounts of Pakistani military equipment, including ammunition, to the Ukraine military - obviously, with US support. This accompanied a US declaration of supplying military equipment valued at \$450 million to Pakistan.

The entire air operation was evidently supervised by Pakistan's then army chief General Bajwa, who was, thereafter, feted during his visits to Washington and London. Astonishingly, this was followed by a visit by Pakistan's minister of state for petroleum Musadik Malik to Moscow, where he asked his hosts for a 30%-40% discount on prices of Russian crude, and indicated that the Russians had agreed to his request. However, the Pakistan media disclosed that the minister's talks in Moscow 'had ended with no cogent conclusion'. The Russian side, however, reportedly agreed to consider the demand of Pakistan, and to 'share its mind later on through diplomatic channels'.

(The author is Chancellor, Jammu Central University & a former High Commissioner to Pakistan)

Pakistan court to hear petition seeking Imran Khan's disqualification for concealing his alleged daughter's name

DECEMBER 15

ISLAMABAD (TIP): A top court in Pakistan will take up a petition on December 20 seeking the disqualification of former Prime Minister Imran Khan for "concealing" his alleged daughter's name in the nomination papers.

The Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq will hear the petition on December 20 filed by a citizen named Mohammad Sajid who claimed that Khan disclosed the names of his two sons -- Qasim Khan and Sulaiman Khan -- in the nomination papers and "omitted the name of his alleged daughter Tyrian White."

Sajid has sought the former premier's disqualification under Article 62 (i) (f), according to The Nation newspaper.

He was referring to an affidavit filed by Khan from nine constituencies in the National Assembly for the bypolls in August 2022.

"The respondent no. 1 [Imran Khan] has deliberately and willfully failed to declare his daughter Tyrian White in the relevant columns of the nomination papers and the affidavit appended therewith, hence he is not sagacious, righteous, honest and a man of good character in terms of Article 62 of the Constitution," the Dawn newspaper reported, providing details of the petition.

Sulaiman, 26, and Qasim, 23, are the two sons born to Khan from his marriage with Jemima Goldsmith in 1995.

Tyrian was allegedly born out of



wedlock with Khan's former lover Sita White, who took legal action against the former premier in the US.

In 1997, a court in California passed a default judgement declaring Tyrian as Khan's daughter after he refused to take a DNA test.

The former cricketer-turned-politician has failed to acknowledge Tyrian as his daughter.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan has also informed the Islamabad High Court that it has initiated proceedings to remove Khan from the post of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party following his disqualification in the Toshakhana case.

Khan, 70, is in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive

Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit.

He was later disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under Article 63 (i) (p) for making "false statements and incorrect declaration." Khan was ousted from power in April after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China, and Afghanistan.

The PTI chief, who came to power in 2018, is the only Pakistani Prime Minister to be ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament. (PTI)

NAVY CHIEF IN LANKA, DISCUSSES DEFENCE TIES

DECEMBER 15

COLOMBO (TIP): Indian Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar has held discussions with senior political and defence leadership of Sri Lanka, including President Ranil Wickremesinghe, on furthering defence cooperation between the two nations.

Kumar, who arrived here on December 14 on a four-day visit, called on President Wickremesinghe on Wednesday.

"Discussions focused on furthering defence cooperation between India and Sri Lanka towards strengthening bilateral ties. Sri Lanka's role in steering Colombo Security Conclave towards ensuring peace and security in the region was acknowledged," the Indian High Commission here tweeted.

He also called on Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

"Discussed the importance of strong defence ties between and means to further strengthen existing linkages between the armed forces of the two countries," the mission tweeted.

Kumar also met Premitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence of Sri Lanka.

"The CNS (Chief of Naval Staff) conveyed India's commitment towards strengthening bilateral defence cooperation, including opportunities for greater defence industry collaboration," Indian Navy tweeted on Thursday.

He also met with Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne, Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy.

"Fruitful discussions on maritime security, matters of common interest and prospects for further enhancing cooperation in the maritime domain," the Indian Navy tweeted. High Commissioner Gopal Baglay, along with the Navy Chief, hosted a reception on board the INS Sahayadri. (PTI)

IS GROUP CLAIMS HAND IN KABUL HOTEL ATTACK

DECEMBER 13

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The militant Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for a coordinated attack on a Chinese-owned hotel in Afghanistan's capital that left three assailants dead and at least two of the hotel guests injured as they tried to escape by jumping out from a window.

Beijing on December 14 advised its citizens in Afghanistan to leave the country "as soon as possible", following the attack.

The militant strike on the Kabul Longan Hotel on Monday afternoon sent plumes of smoke rising from the 10-storey structure building in the heart of the city, according to images posted on social media. — AP

SL Prez holds all-party meet on autonomy demand by Tamils

DECEMBER 14

COLOMBO (TIP): An all-party meeting convened by President Ranil Wickremesinghe has discussed the 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's constitution as mooted by India to resolve the long-standing demand for political autonomy for the minority Tamils in the island nation, political leaders said on December 15.

The Tamil parties which participated in the meeting on Tuesday urged the government to hold the northern provincial council election.

"The 13A is already a part of the constitution and it is a point that most parties agreed to," Tamil Progressive Alliance (TNA) leader Mano Ganesan said. Ganesan, who represents mostly the Western province-based Tamils of Indian origin, said President Wickremesinghe has asked him to forward proposals on the 13A issue on behalf of the hill country Tamil community or the Tamils of Indian



origin.

Ganesan said President Wickremesinghe, main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa were all in agreement with implementing the 13A.

He urged the government to hold provincial council elections in the northern and eastern provinces so as to

give people an idea of self-governance with the full implementation of 13A.

CV Wigneswaran, former chief minister of the Northern province, said ensuring the councils to have already defined powers which have been denied to the provinces was discussed in the all-party meeting.

"We raised the issue of land grabbing by the state. They are taking over lands under government departments. This must stop and the land rights must be given to the provincial councils," Wigneswaran said.

He said other issues concerning the Tamil minority and the release of political prisoners held under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) were also discussed in the meeting.

President Wickremesinghe had called Tuesday's All Party Conference in a bid to arrive at a consensus on the Tamil minority's demand for political autonomy. (AP)

INDIA IN DANGER OF BECOMING HINDU NATIONALIST STATE: US CONGRESSMAN



Congressman Andy Levin fears India is facing the danger of becoming a Hindu nationalist State

DECEMBER 16, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): India is facing the danger of becoming a Hindu nationalist State, an outgoing Democratic Congressman known for his anti-India tirade said on Thursday, December 15.

Describing himself as a "lifelong human rights advocate" Congressman Andy Levin (62) in his last speech on the floor of the US House of Representatives said the US has had more success in human rights, although the situation was dire in many parts of the world.

"I have been a vocal advocate for human rights in places like India, which is in the danger of becoming a Hindu nationalist State rather than a secular democracy, the world's largest democracy," alleged Levin, who represented the ninth Congressional District from Michigan. In the next Congress, it will be represented by Lisa McClain of the Republican Party.

"I am a lover of Hinduism, a lover of Jainism, Buddhism and other religions that were born in India, but we need to protect the rights of all people there. Whether they're Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Jains," Levin, said.

The Congressman also highlighted some other countries, including Egypt where he said thousands of political prisoners were languishing in jail.

"Let me mention just a few highlights. The House passed my bipartisan resolution condemning the coup in Burma (Myanmar) and we have continued oversight of the very troubling human rights situation there as well as the inspiring efforts of the Burmese people to resist repression," he said.

"Indeed, my first foreign trip as a congressman was to Bangladesh to visit Rohingya refugees just over the border from Burma there," Levin said.

As a lawmaker, Levin was known for making frequent statements against India, including those on Kashmir.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

US Senator writes to Blinken, wants 'robust discussion' with India on religious freedom

DECEMBER 16, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A Republican US Senator has urged Secretary of State Antony Blinken to hold a robust discussion with India on the issue of religious freedom of minorities.

Senator James Lankford sent a letter to Blinken after the State Department in its annual release of Countries of Particular Concern, Special Watch List, and Entities of Particular Concern designations did not follow the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's recommendations, specific to India, Nigeria, and Afghanistan.

In its report early this year, the USCIRF had urged the Department of State to designate India as a country of particular concern on religious freedom issues.

The Biden administration did not agree with the recommendations of the USCIRF.

Lankford is asking for the State Department's legally required explanation to Congress on its designations, a media release said.

"India was not formally designated despite overt and repeated severe



Senator James Lankford has urged Secretary of State Antony Blinken to hold a robust discussion with India on the issue of religious freedom of minorities.

violations of religious freedom. India is an important security partner for the United States and a key counterweight against China in the Indo-Pacific region," he wrote.

"In the context of that partnership, the United States must have a robust discussion about the deteriorating religious freedom conditions for religious minorities in India," Lankford said.

The purpose of any designation is to

shine a light on the most egregious religious freedom violators and promote continued engagement on the value of religious liberty at all levels of government, he said.

"Formally designating countries under the IRFA (International Religious Freedom Act) can be an effective diplomatic tool to encourage and secure changes in behavior. I welcome the Department's explanation for why, in its view, a formal designation would not enhance our efforts to promote human rights in partner countries, such as India," Lankford said.

In a statement, the Indian American Muslim Council commended Lankford for his letter to Blinken.

India has previously rejected the USCIRF's observations, terming them as "biased and inaccurate".

The Indian government has asserted that India has well-established democratic practices and robust institutions to safeguard the rights of all.

The government has emphasized that the Indian Constitution provides for adequate safeguards under various statutes for ensuring the protection of human rights.

US Tech Layoffs Cruel for Indians on H-1B Visas

THE TECH INDUSTRY HAS LONG RELIED ON SKILLED FOREIGN WORKERS TO FILL IT AND ENGINEERING JOBS. THE MAJORITY ARE EMPLOYED THROUGH THE H-1B VISA PROGRAMS

DECEMBER 14, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A wave of layoffs at US technology companies has forced scores of skilled immigrants on temporary visas to find new jobs within 60 days or leave the country. Their predicament underscores how a flawed system is jeopardizing America's ability to attract and retain the foreign-born talent it needs.

The tech industry has long relied on skilled foreign workers to fill IT and engineering jobs. The majority are employed through the H-1B visa program, which brings 85,000 workers to the US each year. The visas last a maximum of six years, during which time workers can apply for legal permanent residence, if sponsored by their employer. Of the estimated 580,000 current H-1B holders, more than half have had an employer petition for them to get a green card. Due to the system's arbitrariness and inefficiency, however, the process for actually obtaining one lasts years; many immigrants from India - which contributes the largest share of applicants - can expect to wait for



Photo for representation only

decades.

This backlog leaves H-1B holders vulnerable to corporate downsizing - as tens of thousands have recently learned the hard way, including those at Twitter Inc. and Meta Platforms Inc. Under rules put in place during President Barack Obama's administration, workers who lose their jobs have 60 days to find a new employer to sponsor them or they will have their visas cancelled. At Meta and Twitter alone, at least 350 laid-off visa holders are now racing to secure new jobs before the grace period expires. Even those who do find work may have to relocate their families, sell their homes or settle for less desirable work just to stay in the country.

Over the long term, broader reform is required to bring in more skilled workers

Forcing skilled immigrants to endure such upheaval is not only cruel but self-defeating. Among America's greatest strengths is its ability to lure and assimilate such talent, thereby boosting growth, entrepreneurship and innovation. H-1B workers also create opportunities for US citizens, by enabling companies to invest in domestic operations instead of sending jobs overseas.

Yet rather than expanding the pipeline for skilled foreign workers, the US's onerous policies are increasingly pushing them away, with pro-immigration countries like Canada and Australia becoming more attractive destinations for global talent. The number of US noncitizen residents moving to Canada annually has increased 128% from 2017 to 2019, due partly to a program there that expedites employment visas and allows some skilled workers to obtain permanent residence within six months.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

AAPI Share the Warmth Program Brings Comfort to the Needy across the USA

DECEMBER 10, 2022

CHICAGO, IL (TIP) "As the wintry weather is upon us, we at AAPI want to continue the tradition of providing comfort and warmth to those that need the help most during this holiday season," said Dr. Ravi Kolli, President of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI). "Therefore, we are renewing the tradition under the 'Share the Warmth AAPI 2022 Blanket Drive' and request your support to make this initiative a success and impactful."

For several years, AAPI at the national level and various local chapters at the state level have been jointly leading efforts to bring warmth and cheer into the lives of the needy across the United States. This program was started in 2019 and it has now become an annual tradition of giving by AAPI to local communities. AAPI's "Share the Warmth" project has donated thousands of blankets to the poor and the needy in several homeless shelters across the nation.

"I am very happy to inform you that AAPI with local chapters Share a Blanket program going extremely well and I am proud to say that more than 30 Chapters have come ahead to join the program, said Dr. Raghu Lolabhattu, Vice Chair AAPI Board of Trustees and Chair, Share A Blanket program.

"The goal of the program is for AAPI to work with as many local chapters throughout the nation and function as one entity which is working very well. I request every one of you to make a generous donation to this fund and your contribution would surely give great comfort to the needy and bring a big smile to their faces. Anything would help. Every dollar you donate would make a difference for someone."

"We at AAPI are extremely grateful for the opportunities we have been blessed



AAPI launched the "Share-A-Blanket" project during the holiday season in 2019

with to serve the communities we live in and work in," said Dr. V. Ranga, Chair of APPI BOT. "As a token of our appreciation and gratitude, we believe we need to give back and serve the less fortunate in our society in times of their need. Please contribute generously of any amount and each \$15 dollars you donate can provide a blanket to the person in need."

Dr. Kolli, while expressing gratitude and appreciation to the numerous AAPI chapters for organizing the blanket drives around the nation said, "Realizing how this initiative benefits several needy in the community, gives us the motivation to organize many such events and give back to the local community. We strongly feel that we can accomplish much more with support and participation from all our generous AAPI physicians. So, please click this link <https://aapiusa.org/blanket-program/> to donate and your contributions are being matched up to the first \$10,000 by the generous sponsor ATG Tours"

AAPI launched the "Share-A-Blanket" project during the holiday season in 2019 during the presidency of Dr. Suresh Reddy to bring warmth to the needy and Dr. Binod Sinha, founder President of NJ AAPI in New Jersey organized and conducted it successfully that year and since then it has been held annually by AAPI and local patron chapters of AAPI.

American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), founded in 1982 is the largest ethnic medical organization in the United States, representing the interests of over 120,000 physicians of Indian origin. In addition to several programs in India, AAPI and has been advocating for the interests of the medical fraternity and organizes regular CME programs, health & wellness events, and financial workshops for its members and outreach, public health education, and advocacy activities for the community both locally and internationally. For more details and to join the Share-A-Blanket Drive in your state/community, please visit: www.aapiusa.org

Eric Garcetti well-qualified to serve as US Ambassador to India: White House

DECEMBER 16, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti is well-qualified to serve as the US Ambassador to India, the White House said Thursday, December 15



Former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti

The statement comes days after influential senator Chuck Grassley

File photo

opposed Garcetti's nomination as he faces an allegation of sexual harassment by one of his staff members.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, however, told reporters at her daily news conference that a diplomat in India is a priority.

"As you know, this is a priority and continues to be a priority for us. Mayor Garcetti is well-qualified to serve in this vital role," she said.

"I would like to express my strong opposition to the nomination of Eric Garcetti to be ambassador to India. I'm compelled to vote against Garcetti due to the serious allegations about sexual harassment and racism to run rampant in the Los Angeles Mayor's office," Grassley said.

His remarks on the Senate floor came amidst the White House intensifying its efforts to push Garcetti in the position which has remained vacant for nearly two years. India currently chairs G20, resulting in scores of diplomatic activities between the two countries, and the Biden administration wants to have its envoy in New Delhi at the earliest.

Garcetti, who served as the 42nd mayor of Los Angeles from July 2013 until December 2022, is a close aide of President Joe Biden.

U.S. OFFERS FREE AT-HOME COVID TESTS AS PART OF WINTER PLAN

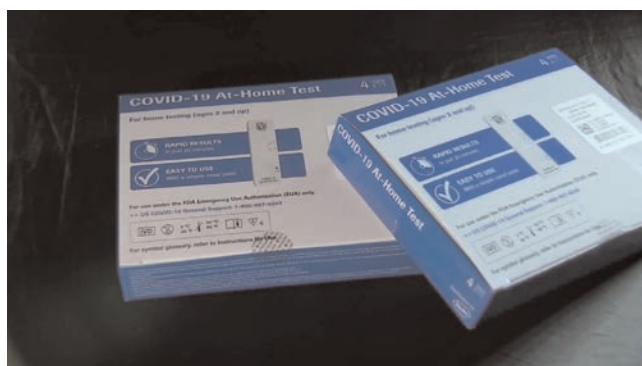
With cases on the rise, the Biden administration restarted a program that has provided hundreds of millions of tests through the Postal Service.

DECEMBER 16, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The Biden administration restarted a program on Thursday, December 15 that provides free coronavirus tests to American households through the Postal Service, part of a new push by the government to head off rises in virus cases and hospitalizations during the holiday season.

Federal health officials are staring down a resurgence of the virus as well as worrisome outbreaks of the flu and respiratory syncytial virus, or R.S.V., amounting to what some experts have termed a "triple-demic."

Dr. Ashish K. Jha, the White House's Covid-19 response coordinator, said at a news briefing that while R.S.V. cases appeared to be on the decline, the nation was contending with the worst flu outbreak in a decade



The Biden administration restarted a program on Thursday, December 15 that provides free coronavirus tests to American households through the Postal Service, in view of virus cases and hospitalizations rising during the holiday season.

alongside another coronavirus surge. He again urged Americans, particularly older and more vulnerable ones, to seek out vaccines and booster shots.

"We don't want this winter to look like last winter or the winter before, and it doesn't have to," Dr. Jha told reporters at the White House. "We need people to get that vaccine."

Over 600 million tests were distributed through the mail before the administration paused the program in September, citing a lack of funding. The program is being revived after federal officials dipped into what the White House described as "limited existing funding" from the \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief bill that was enacted early in President Biden's term. Households are now able to order four tests at covidtests.gov, with shipments beginning next week.

(Source: New York Times)

3 fresh FIRs filed against Mehul Choksi in over Rs 6,700-crore fraud case: CBI

Three fresh FIRs have been filed by the CBI against absconding diamantaire Mehul Choksi on the basis of a complaint from the Punjab National Bank (PNB), bringing to light an additional loss of Rs 6,746 crore incurred by it and other banks of a consortium, officials said.

Four years after Choksi's dramatic escape and the failure of the state-run PNB to detect the scam between 2010 and 2018, the bank submitted three complaints to the CBI on March 21, reporting the additional loss caused by the diamantaire and his firm Gitanjali Gems Limited, Nakshatra Brands Limited and Gili India Limited.

The PNB and the other members of the consortium had extended credit facilities to these companies.

Choksi's counsel Vijay Aggarwal told PTI that it was a "witch hunt".

"When one FIR has been lodged and a chargesheet filed for the total loss to the banks, how can there be a separate FIR now for every small transaction?" he asked.

"Going by that logic, if they claim a total loss of Rs 13,000 crore, they should lodge an FIR each for every single rupee," Aggarwal said, wondering whether there could be one FIR each for every brick laid for the illegal construction of a wall.

"This is why prosecution cases fail. Many mountains were made out of mole hills earlier. The case is like dead for years. It has not moved an inch in the trial court. So the truth will never come out," he said.

Source: PTI

'No case is too small': CJI after Rijiju's 'frivolous PILs' remarks

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on Friday, December 16, said that no case is too small for the Supreme Court and that the lack of intervention in matters related to personal liberty can lead to "serious miscarriage of justice". His comments came two days after Union law minister Kiren Rijiju's statement in the Rajya Sabha where he suggested the top court to avoid hearing bail pleas and "frivolous PILs" to tackle with the large pendency of cases.

"No case is too small for the Supreme Court and no case is too big because we have to answer the call of conscience and the cry of liberty of our citizens. That is why we are here and these are not one-off cases. If we do not act in matters of personal liberty and grant relief, then what are we doing here?" the CJI observed while heading a bench comprising Justice PS Narasimha which was hearing a case related to a man from Uttar Pradesh, Iqram, sentenced to two years in jail for theft of electricity.

On Wednesday, Rijiju told the Parliament that the apex court should only hear constitutional matters instead of bail applications to avoid high pendency of cases. He has also been at odds with the top court over the appointment of judges and favoured the National Judicial Appointment Commission, a proposed government body that would have replaced the collegium system of judges' recruitments. It was struck down by the apex court in 2015 terming it unconstitutional.

The Union minister also made a remark on court availing long vacations that prove inconvenient to justice-seekers. "There is a feeling among people of India that the long vacation which the courts obtain is not very convenient for justice-seekers," he said.

Supreme Court forms vacation benches to hear cases during its summer breaks, however, such benches are not availed during winter breaks.

Likewise, the CJI announced that the court will not have vacation benches during this year's winter break between December 19, 2022, and January 2, 2023.

CJI Chandrachud further said that a case like theft of electricity cannot be elevated to that of murder. The court would be failing in its duty under Article 136 of the Constitution if it doesn't intervene whenever there is a miscarriage of justice, he added.

"The intervention by this court to protect the liberty of the citizens is founded on sound constitutional principles embodied in Article 136 of the Constitution. The right to personal liberty is a precious and inalienable right recognised by the Constitution," he said.



Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud.

Article 136 permits the Supreme Court to take up any appeal against judgments passes by any court or tribunal in the country.

Opposition leaders lashed out at the comment of Union law minister and MP Kiren Rijiju as he said the apex court should not be hearing bail pleas and frivolous PILs at a time when the pendency of cases is so high. Rijiju said this in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on a bill to rename the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre as the India International Arbitration Centre which was passed on Wednesday by the Rajya Sabha.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal questioned: "Does he even know the meaning of liberty?"

Congress leader Salman Khurshid tweeted, "Forget NJAC, Govt wants to micromanage judiciary: cut vacations, no priority to bail, et al. What next?"

On Thursday, Rijiju said in Parliament the issue of high judicial vacancies will keep coming up until the procedure of the appointment of judges changes.

Trinamool's Saket Gokhale said this comment is a direct assault on the independence of the Judiciary. "Law Minister @KirenRijiju is basically saying that vacancies for judges won't be filled up unless Modi govt is allowed to appoint its own people as judges. Beyond brazen & another attempt to capture institutions," he said.

Source: HT

'New low, even for Pakistan': MEA on Bilawal Bhutto's remarks on Modi

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A day after Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi in response to India's earlier comment on the country harbouring 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, New Delhi Friday, December 16, termed the former's remarks as "uncivilised" and a "new low, even for Pakistan".

In an official statement, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the Pakistan foreign minister has "obviously forgotten this day in 1971, which was a direct result of the genocide unleashed by Pakistani rulers against ethnic Bengalis and Hindus".

He said Pakistan does not seem to have changed much in the treatment of its minorities and that it "lacks credentials to cast aspersions at India, the Mother of Democracy".

Bhutto, who was in New York to participate in the UN meetings, had said, "(I want to tell India) that Osama bin Laden is dead, but the butcher of Gujarat lives and he is the Prime Minister of India."

He went on to say that PM Modi was banned from entering this country until he became the Prime



Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi and Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. (File)

Minister. "This is the Prime Minister of the RSS and the Foreign Minister of the RSS. What is the RSS? The RSS takes inspiration from Hitler's 'SS'," he said.

The statements came after India targeted Pakistan at the UN Security Council Wednesday by asserting that a country that hosted slain al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and attacked a neighbouring Parliament does not

have the credentials to "sermonise" in the powerful UN organ.

The remark by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had come after Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto raised the Kashmir issue while speaking in the Council debate on reformed multilateralism.

The MEA spokesperson, in the statement on Friday, said Pakistan's "indisputable role in sponsoring, harbouring and financing terrorist organisations remains under the scanner", and added that Bhutto's "uncivilised outburst seems to be a result of Pakistan's increasing inability to use terrorists and their proxies".

He further said that Pakistan is a country that "glorifies Osama bin Laden as a martyr and shelters terrorists like Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azar and Dawood Ibrahim." He added that no other country can boast about having 126 UN-designated terrorists and 27 UN-designated terrorist entities.

Earlier on Thursday, presiding over the 'UNSC Briefing: Global Counterterrorism Approach: Challenges and Way Forward' External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had launched a veiled attack on Pakistan saying "contemporary epicentre of terrorism remains very much alive and active." Source: The Indian Express

Death toll rises to 70 in Bihar's Chhapra hooch tragedy

The death toll in Bihar's Chhapra due to the consumption of spurious liquor has mounted to 70. The incident was initially reported on Wednesday, December 14. The sale and consumption of alcohol was banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government in April 2016.

As the death toll is feared to increase, Lok Janshakti Party (R) supremo and MP Chirag Paswan demanded the registering of an FIR against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the Chhapra hooch tragedy.

Chirag Paswan said that he did not consider that the people who have lost their lives in the hooch tragedy had simply died, adding that it is a case of murder for which he held the Bihar CM responsible. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar lost his cool inside the Assembly when BJP MLAs tried to target him over the Chhapra hooch tragedy in which 66 people have died till now. Bihar imposed a complete prohibition of the sale and consumption of alcohol in the state in April 2016, a move that won a significant number of women voters often seen to be victims of domestic violence at the hands of drunk men.

Delhi acid attack: Centre issues notice to Flipkart

The Union consumer affairs ministry on Friday, December 16, issued a notice to e-commerce giant Flipkart following the Delhi acid attack, wherein a teen was attacked with acid purchased from Flipkart.

Meanwhile, the Central Consumer Protection Authority, or CCPA, has asked Flipkart to submit a detained response along with necessary documents addressing the concern over the availability of acids on e-commerce platforms. The report has to be submitted within the next seven days. The CCPA, a department part of the consumer affairs ministry, has sent notices to Flipkart for "gross violations" relating to the sale of acid reported on their platform.

This comes days after an acid attack on a 17-year-old girl in Delhi using acid sold on an e-commerce site.

The CCPA, being the watchdog of consumer interests in India, has come across the sale of highly corrosive acids on these e-commerce platforms. The availability of hazardous acids in such an accessible manner can be dangerous and unsafe for consumers and the public at large.

The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an advisory on "measures to be taken to prevent acid attacks on people and for treatment and rehabilitation of survivors" on August 30, 2013, wherein all the states and UTs were advised to take immediate steps to implement the measures mentioned therein for reduction of acid attacks and treatment and rehabilitation of acid attack survivors, as well as any other measure as may be deemed fit.

China continues to amass forces, build military infra on border with India: Pentagon

WASHINGTON (TIP)

The US Pentagon has said that China continues to amass forces and build military infrastructure across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India.

Addressing a briefing, Brigadier General Pat Ryder, Press Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD), said the DoD continues to closely watch developments along the line of actual control at the India-China border.

"We have seen the PRC continue to amass forces and build military infrastructure along the so-called LAC. But I would defer you to India in terms of their views.

"It does reflect though, and it's important to point out, the growing trend by the PRC to assert itself and to be provocative in areas directed towards US allies and our partners in the Indo Pacific. "And we will continue to remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring the security of our partners. And we fully support India's ongoing efforts to de-escalate this situation," he added.

Ryder's remarks came as a response to a series of queries on the recent clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. The clashes were the first in nearly two years.

Face off at Arunachal LAC

Indian and Chinese troops clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9, the Indian Army said in a statement. Both Indian and Chinese soldiers suffered 'minor injuries' due to the face-off, the Army said.

Over 200 Chinese soldiers carrying spiked clubs and sticks clashed with Indian soldiers in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector, a source told news agency PTI. The injuries on the Chinese side could be higher. However, no official confirmation on the same is awaited. The clash near Yangtse along the LAC took place last Friday amid the over 30-month border standoff between the two sides in eastern Ladakh. -On December 9, Indian and Chinese soldiers were locked in a face-off in the tense Yangtse area near Tawang, resulting in 'minor injuries' on both sides. Six Indian soldiers were injured in the face-off. They were airlifted to the 151 base hospital in Guwahati's Basistha for treatment.

"PLA troops contacted the LAC in Tawang Sector, which was contested by own (Indian) troops in a firm and resolute manner. This face-off led to minor injuries to few personnel from both sides," the Army said in a statement.

"Both sides immediately disengaged from the area. As a follow



up to the incident, own Commander in the area held a Flag Meeting with his counterpart to discuss the issue in accordance with structured mechanisms to restore peace and tranquillity," the government said. "In certain areas along the LAC in the Tawang Sector, there are areas of differing perceptions, wherein both sides patrol the area up to their claim lines. This has been the trend since 2006," it further said. It is the first major clash between the Indian and Chinese troops since August 2020 near Rinchen La in eastern Ladakh. In October last year, Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a brief face-off near Yangtse. The issue was resolved after talks between local commanders of the two sides were held as per established protocols, PTI reported.

CONGRESS HITS OUT AT BJP

The Congress has targeted the BJP-led government over the clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers that broke along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. It has accused the Modi government of suppressing the border issue due to which China was acting with increasing audacity. AICC general secretary of communications Jairam Ramesh said the Congress has been trying to "wake up" the government on the Chinese actions on the border but it is silent in order to "protect its political image".

"We are proud of the bravery of the armed forces. China's actions on the border are completely unacceptable. For the last two years, we have been repeatedly trying to wake up the government, but the Modi government is trying to suppress the matter only to save its political image. The audacity of China is growing because of this," the Congress leader said in a tweet.

Source: Agencies

AIIMS cyber attack: No ransom was demanded, most data restored, govt states in Parliament

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The government on Friday, December 16, informed Parliament that no ransom was demanded in the AIIMS cyber attack and most of the functions disrupted due to the attack had been restored two weeks after the attack.

Replying to a question on whether patient, hospital or clinical data had been compromised during the attack and if any ransom was sought, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar today said, "Five physical servers of AIIMS, New Delhi on which e-Hospital application of NIC was hosted, were affected. No specific amount of ransom was demanded by the hackers though a message was discovered on the server suggesting that it was a cyber-attack. All the data for eHospital has been retrieved from a backup server which was unaffected and restored on new servers. Most of the functions of e-Hospital applications like patient registration, appointment, admission, discharge have been restored after two weeks of the cyber-attack."

The minister said a First Information Report was registered by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences with the Special Cell of Delhi Police under relevant sections of the law,

regarding the incident of cyber-attack.

The government also said that the National Nodal Agency for response to cyber security incidents -- the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) had its Empanelled Information Security Auditing Organizations for auditing including vulnerability assessment and penetration testing of the computer systems, networks and applications involving public service delivery including Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).

"Immediate measures were taken by AIIMS, Delhi to enhance the security like endpoint hardening, string firewall policies and network segmentation to secure all the data of the Institute," Pawar said.

She said that to reduce the patient load on AIIMS, Delhi, setting up of 22 new AIIMS and 75 projects of upgradation of existing Government medical colleges and institutions by way of setting up of superspeciality blocks and trauma centres had been approved under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) and are at various stages of offering inpatient and outpatient services to the needy.

Source: TNS

India in history this Week

DECEMBER 16, 2022, TO DECEMBER 22, 2022

16 DECEMBER

1985 The country's first fast breeder nuclear reactor started functioning in Kalpakkam.

1971 Bangladesh separated from Pakistan and became an independent nation after agreeing to a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

1993 'Education for all' conference starts in New Delhi.

2004 Doordarshan's free to air DTH service 'DD Direct +; Was launched by the Prime Minister.



1903 The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai was opened for guests.

2012 In New Delhi, a woman was gang-raped in a bus, leading to public protests against the Government of India and the Government of Delhi.

1937 Hawa Singh, one of the best boxers in India, was born.

17 DECEMBER

1645 Nur Jahan Begum, wife of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, died.

2002 Turkey supported India on Kashmir issue.

1715 Banda Bahadur Bairagi, the chief of the Sikhs, surrendered to the Mughals at Gurdaspur.

1929 The great revolutionaries Bhagat Singh and Rajguru shot English police officer John Saunders.



1933 India's legendary cricketer Lala Amarnath played an excellent innings of 118 runs in his debut Test match.

1940 Mahatma Gandhi postponed the individual Satyagraha movement.

1971 The third war between India and Pakistan ended after Bangladesh came into existence as a result of the partition of Pakistan.

1996 National Football League was launched.

18 DECEMBER

1897 Bhojpuri artist, musician and social worker Bhikhari Thakur was born.

1271 The Mongol emperor Kublai Khan named his empire as Yuan. With this began the Yuan dynasty.

1960 The National Museum was inaugurated in the

capital Delhi.

1398 Timur captured Delhi by defeating Sultan Nusrat Shah.

1989 Sachin played his first ODI against Pakistan.

1995 Unidentified aircraft dropped weapons in Purulia, West Bengal.

1997 The Washington Treaty concluded for cooperation in space research between India and the United States.

2008 The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully tested.



2017 India won 29 gold out of 30 at Commonwealth Wrestling Championships.

2017 The heaviest rocket GSLV Mark-3 was successfully launched.

19 DECEMBER

1927 The great freedom fighters Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaq Ulla Khan and Roshan Singh were hanged by the British.

1961 Goa got independence from Portugal's slavery. Indian troops entered the border of Goa under Operation Vijay.

1945 The institute in Mumbai was relocated to the Kenilworth bungalow on Pedder Marg. It was inaugurated by the then Governor of Mumbai, Sir John Colville.



1998 Amartya Sen was awarded honorary citizenship by Bangladesh, Sheel Kumar (India) as the best player in world disabled skiing held in Denver (USA).

1860 Lord Dalhousie, who was the Governor General of India from 1848 to 1856, died in Britain.

1937 India's 12th President Pratibha Patil was born in Jalgaon, Maharashtra.

1927 India's famous freedom fighter Ashfaq Ulla Khan died.

20 DECEMBER

1875 The ICRM renamed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

1876 The great poet Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed the national song 'Vande Mataram'.

1955 Indian Golf Association was formed.

1985 In the Tirupati Balaji temple, Lord Venkateswara was offered a diamond studded crown valued at Rs 5.2 crore.

1990 India and Pakistan agreed not to attack each other nuclear.

1988 The United Nations Convention against Non-Government Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which controls international crime against the trade of illegal drugs, was signed in Vienna.

1993 A cooperation agreement was signed between India and the European Union in Brussels.

21 DECEMBER

2011 The country's famous nuclear physicist PK Iyengar died.

1911 The first indigenous bank, Central Bank of India, was founded by Sorabji Pochkhanwala.



2008 Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan were included in the list of 50 powerful people of the world by US magazine News Bik.

2009 The first meeting of the Finance Committee and Executive Board (BoG) of Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi was held.

1974 INS Satavahana, the country's first vessel to offer submarine training, was inducted into the ship fleet at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

22 DECEMBER

1851 The first freight train in our country ran from Roorkee to Piran.

1953 Sharada Devi, the wife of Guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa and spiritual companion was born.



1887 Mathematician Srinivasan Ramanujan was born.

1940 Manvendra Nath Rai announced the establishment of the Radical Democratic Party.

2011 The well-known nuclear physicist P.K. Iyengar died.

1843 Rabindranath Tagore's father Devendranath Tagore joined the Brahmo Samaj.

1966 Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi was established by the Indian Parliament under the 'JNU Act'.

2006 India and Pakistan set up a joint task force for mutual cooperation in the field of local bodies.

Rishi Rajpopat, Indian PhD student at Cambridge University, solves 2,500-year-old Sanskrit puzzle



Algorithm decoded by Rajpopat makes it possible, for the first time, to accurately use Panini's so-called 'language machine'

Photo: cam.ac.uk

DECEMBER 15, 2022

LONDON (TIP): A grammatical problem which has defeated Sanskrit scholars since the 5th Century BC has finally been solved by an Indian PhD student at the University of Cambridge, it emerged as his thesis was published on Thursday.

Rishi Rajpopat made the breakthrough by decoding a rule taught by Panini, known as the father of linguistics, and is now encapsulated in his thesis entitled 'In Panini, We Trust: Discovering the Algorithm for Rule Conflict Resolution in the Astadhyayi'.

According to the university, leading

Sanskrit experts have described Rajpopat's discovery as "revolutionary" and it could now mean that Panini's grammar can also be taught to computers for the first time.

"I had a eureka moment in Cambridge," recalls Rajpopat.

"After nine months trying to crack this problem, I was almost ready to quit, I was getting nowhere. So, I closed the books for a month and just enjoyed the summer, swimming, cycling, cooking, praying and meditating. Then, begrudgingly I went back to work, and, within minutes, as I turned the pages, these patterns started emerging, and it all started to make sense. There was a lot more work to do but I'd found the biggest part of the puzzle," said the 27-year-old scholar.

Over the next few weeks, he was so excited that he couldn't sleep and would spend hours in the library, including in the middle of the night, to check what he'd found and solve related problems. It would take another two and half years before he would get to the finish line.

"Panini had an extraordinary mind and he built a machine unrivalled in human history. He didn't expect us to add new ideas to his rules. The more we fiddle with Panini's grammar, the more it eludes us," says Rajpopat.

The 2,500-year-old algorithm decoded by him makes it possible, for the first time, to accurately use Panini's so-called

"language machine".

Rajpopat's discovery makes it possible to "derive" any Sanskrit word, to construct millions of grammatically correct words, using Panini's revered language machine, which is widely considered to be one of the greatest intellectual achievements in history.

Panini's system - 4,000 rules detailed in his renowned work, the Astadhyayi, which is thought to have been written around 500 BC - is meant to work like a machine.

Feed in the base and suffix of a word and it should turn them into grammatically correct words and sentences through a step-by-step process.

Until now, however, there has been a big problem. Often, two or more of Panini's rules are simultaneously applicable at the same step leaving scholars to agonize over which one to choose. Solving so-called "rule conflicts", which affect millions of Sanskrit words including certain forms of "mantra" and "guru", requires an algorithm. Rajpopat's research shows that Panini's so-called language machine is also self-sufficient.

"My student Rishi has cracked it - he has found an extraordinarily elegant solution to a problem which has perplexed scholars for centuries. This discovery will revolutionize the study of Sanskrit at a time when interest in the language is on the rise," said Professor Vincenzo Vergiani, Sanskrit professor

and Rajpopat's PhD supervisor.

Six months before Rajpopat made his discovery, Professor Vergiani gave him some prescient advice: "If the solution is complicated, you are probably wrong." A major implication of Rajpopat's discovery is that now there is the algorithm that runs Panini's grammar, it could potentially teach this grammar to computers.

"Computer scientists working on Natural Language Processing gave up on rule-based approaches over 50 years ago. So, teaching computers how to combine the speaker's intention with Panini's rule-based grammar to produce human speech would be a major milestone in the history of human interaction with machines, as well as in India's intellectual history," said Rajpopat.

Sanskrit is an ancient and classical Indo-European language from South Asia. While only spoken in India by an estimated 25,000 people today, it has influenced many other languages and cultures around the world.

"Some of the most ancient wisdom of India has been produced in Sanskrit and we still don't fully understand what our ancestors achieved. We've often been led to believe that we're not important, that we haven't brought enough to the table. I hope this discovery will infuse students in India with confidence, pride, and hope that they too can achieve great things," added Rajpopat. (Source: PTI)

No proposal under consideration to allow proxy voting to NRIs: Government of India



Photo caption: In 2020, the Election Commission had proposed to the Law Ministry to extend the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) facility, so far available only to service voters, to eligible overseas Indian voters as well.

Photo for representational purposes only/ Courtesy LeraBlog

DECEMBER 16, 2022

NEW DELHI (TIP): No proposal is under consideration of the government to provide proxy voting facility to NRIs, the Lok Sabha was informed on Friday, December 16.

"...no such proposal is under consideration," said Law Minister Kiren Rijju in a written reply while responding to a question on whether the government is considering to provide the facility of proxy voting to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

In August 2018, the previous Lok Sabha had passed a Bill to allow proxy voting rights to eligible overseas Indians. But the Bill could not be brought in the Rajya Sabha.

In 2020, the Election Commission had proposed to the Law Ministry to extend the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) facility, so far available only to service voters, to eligible overseas Indian voters as well.

It would require changes in the election rules. But the government has so far not taken a call on the issue.

The EC had told the government that it has been receiving several representations from the Indian diaspora residing abroad to facilitate voting through postal ballots since such overseas electors are not in a position to be present in their polling area as travelling to India for this purpose is a costly affair, and they cannot leave the country of their residence owing to specific compulsions of employment, education or other engagements.

As of now, overseas Indians have to register as voter, come to India, go to their constituency with the original passport issued to them when they had gone abroad and cast their votes.

(Source: PTI)

Indian American 16-year-old teenager jumps off Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and dies

DECEMBER 15, 2022

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): An Indian American teenager is believed to have jumped off the famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and died, according to his parents and officials of the US Coastal Guards.

The 16-year-old boy's bicycle, phone and bag were found on the bridge. The twelfth grader is believed to have jumped off the bridge at around 4.58 pm on Tuesday, December 13, they said.

The coastal guards said they immediately carried out a two-hour search and rescue operation after they confirmed they saw "a human" jumping from the bridge.

They said there is little reason to believe that the boy is alive.

Community leader Ajay Jain Bhutoria said this is fourth incident involving an Indian American jumping off the Golden Bridge in an apparent suicide attempt.

According to Bridge Rail Foundation, a non-profit organization that works towards ending suicides on the Golden



An Indian American teenager jumped off the famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and died.

Photo for representation only

Gate Bridge, 25 people ended their lives here last year and nearly 2,000 suicide cases have been reported since the bridge opened in 1937.

The state government is working to create a 20-foot-wide iron mesh on both sides of the 1.7-mile bridge. However, the project that was scheduled to be completed by January this year is running behind schedule and its construction cost has jumped from 137.26 million to nearly 386.64 million. Work on this project started in 2018.

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Martyrdom of Sahibzadas

The martyrdom of the four "Sahibzaade" (Sons) is an important and integral part of the Sikh history and the occasion of their martyrdom is remembered, and commemorated both with great vigour and very acute sadness, by the Sikh community every year in the month of December, also known to be the month of "Poh".

Chaar Sahibzaade, ('Chaar' means four and 'Sahibzaade' refers to the sons or scions, young men of genteel birth) is a term endearingly used for the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th guru of the Sikhs.

The incidents that took place on the 21st and 27th of December 1704 AD are the days that hold very dear memories for the Sikhs around the world.

Guru's family separated after treachery

After the Guru, his family and a few hundred Sikhs vacated the fort and gone a few miles towards Kiratpur Sahib, they were treacherously attacked from behind. Guru planned for defense and assigned fifty Singhs with Bhai Udhay Singh and a hundred Singhs with Bhai Bachittar Singh to hold Mughal attack. Bhai Uday Singh killed Rustam Khan, the commander of the Mughal army thus halting the onslaught. On reaching river Sirsa, which was in flood, Guru Gobind Singh was separated from his mother and two younger sons Baba Zorawar Singh (eight years) and Baba Fateh Singh (six years). The Guru with forty Sikhs, five beloved ones and both elder Sahibzaade Baba Ajit Singh and Baba Jujhar Singh crossed the Sirsa river and moved towards village of Kotla Nihang Khan. The Khan had great respect for the Guru.

After few days they moved towards village Chamkaur and occupied a mud fortress (Garhi). The Mughal forces of lakhs surrounded the fortress. Each time, five Sikhs would come out and gave a very tough fight. The Mughal army lost thousands of lives. The Guru lost both his eldest sons, three beloved ones (Sahib Singh, Himmat Singh and Mohkam Singh), Kirpal Singh Kashmeeree, three sons of Bhai Mani Singh and other Sikhs also attained martyrdom. The Guru obeyed the directive of the Sangat. It was decided that Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Ram Singh and Man Singh would also accompany him. The Guru transferred his Kalghi to the forehead of Bhai Sangat Singh who had strong resemblance to the Guru. At around 2 a.m. the Guru moved out of the fortress. After walking about 200 yards from the fortress (Garhi), the Guru repeatedly clapped declaring loudly that he was going, so as to make the enemy aware and to challenge them.

After crossing Sirsa, Mata Gujri ji and youngest Sahibzaade spent night in the hut of Kumma Maashki (boatman). Mata ji had one mule carrying some important articles and ornaments. The Sikh accompanying them became separated due to the floods and bad weather during the darkness at night. A man called Kumma Maashki, also known as Keema Mallah, used to be a Hindu and was known by the name Karma Jhevar.



Kumma Maashki was forcibly converted as muslim. But still used to worship as per Hindu rituals. Mata Gujri stayed in his hut for two days. A Brahmin lady by the name of Laxhmi looked after them, serving food and providing shelter. During that time Gangu Brahmin met them. Gangu used to serve in the Guru's kitchen as a cook.

The brahmin thief and traitor

Guru's mother entrusted herself and the two grandsons, who accompanied her, to Gangu, a Brahmin. Gangu took them to his house and convinced them to put their faith in him. Gangu's true intentions were made known when the Guru's mother went to sleep, he stole her money, which she carried in a saddlebag and buried it.

The next day, Gangu came up with a plan to avoid suspicion of the theft. He mentioned to Mata Gujri that there were several thieves prowling about the neighbourhood, and she must be careful with her valuables. Gangu said he was giving her this information so that she should not suspect him of anything. He almost immediately informed her that her saddlebag was missing. As no one had entered the house overnight except for Gangu, Mata Gujri questioned Gangu about the theft.

Gangu pretended to be furious at the suspicion directed against him. Gangu tried to distract Mata Gujri by saying they were taking advantage of his hospitality by accusing him of being a thief when they were the ones that were outlaws. Worried at the turn of events, Gangu decided to turn Mata Gujri and the two young Sahibzadey over to the authorities, almost certainly knowing they would meet their death, thereby hiding his crime.

Arrest of Children

By saying that he could not trust her and her children, he ordered them to leave his house. The Brahmin with loud cries proceeded to the Chaudhri or chief civil official of Kheri and informed him that Guru's mother and sons had just come to his house and both he and Chaudhri would obtain a large reward for delivering them to the imperial authorities.

Accompanied by the village chief, he went to the police station at Morinda town and informed the station incharge about the presence of Guru Gobind Singh's mother and his two younger sons in his house and requested him to bestow him prize money for helping the authorities in the arrest of fugitives.

The police officer was immensely pleased at this important information provided by Gangu. He accompanied him to his village and arrested Mata Gujri along with her two grandsons and handed them over to Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind. Nawab Wazir Khan who had to return empty handed from Anandpur Sahib without being successful in arresting Guru Gobind Singh or his associates, was too glad to find Guru's mother and two sons in his prison.

The Court of a treacherous Muslim

Mata Ji along with her two grandsons was imprisoned in the cold tower at Sirhind. The Nawab ordered them to be produced in his court the next morning. Sitting on the floor of the cold tower on a very cold December night, Mata Gujri tried to provide comfort and warmth of her body to her grandsons putting them on her lap.

She woke them up early the next morning and readying them for the ensuing test they were going to be put to at the court of Wazir Khan, the tyrant ruler of Sirhind. She thus said to them, "O sons of great Guru Gobind Singh!

you are going to be offered all the comforts of a luxurious life if you agree to say goodbye to your religion and adopt Islam as your new religion. If you refuse to accept such an attractive offer they will threaten you with painful deaths. I have full confidence that though you are young children, you will neither be fooled by the attractive offers nor be seduced by their threats. Be brave like your Guru father who has put everything including his life at stake to prepare people to uproot the rule of tyrant rulers. Keep up the honour of your father at all costs."

While the grandmother was still advising her grandsons, the soldiers of Wazir Khan arrived to take the two saintly children of Guru Gobind Singh to the court. Mata Gujri wished her grandsons well and sent them with the soldiers praying for their success and to uphold their principles at the court.

Imagine the atmosphere, the children were presented to a full Muslim court, on their own, without representation. Many a senior officers and advisors of Nawab Wazir Khan were seated in the court along with him in addition to prominent public personalities. On entering the court Sahibzada Jorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh loudly uttered, "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh" to the utter astonishment and amazement of Wazir Khan and his courtiers.

One of the prominent courtier Sucha Nand told the courageous sons of Guru Gobind Singh to bow before the ruler Wazir Khan and salute like the Muslims do. The children, aged 6 & 8 years respectively, told him that like other Sikhs, they bow before no one except their Guru.

Nawab Wazir Khan now took over and said, "O small children! Your father along with your two elder brothers has

From P18

been killed in the battlefield. Luckily you have arrived in my court alive. Be quick and agree to be converted to Islam. As Muslim children you will be provided best comforts of life like princes. You will be living in palaces, wearing silk clothes, eating a variety of foods and playing with other Muslim princes with many servants at your beck and call, day and night. We are going to ban Sikhism and no Sikh will be left alive. If you do not heed my advice to become Muslim, you will be put to the death in a most merciless manner. You will be cut to pieces so that no one dare become a Sikh in future."

The brave and smart children of the tenth master while smiling initially at the foolishness of this hot headed Muslim ruler were angered at the threats of Wazir Khan and became more determined than before in their resolve to keep up the honor of their father Guru Gobind Singh.

In reply to Wazir Khan's lecture the brave children said, "Sikhism is dearer to us than our lives. Nothing in this illusory world can induce us to shed our religion. We are children of the lion Guru Gobind Singh who is determined to infuse courage into the people of all religions to rise against the cruel and tyrant rulers to gain freedom. Our grandfather, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life to defend the right of religious freedom for the sake of oppressed Hindu community being decimated by tyrant Aurangzeb. Our great great grandfather, Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji submitted gladly to the will of God while facing torturous death under the orders of Emperor Jahangir. He chose death and refused to become a muslim. We will never bring bad name to the predecessor martyrs of our faith even if we have to face death."

Those present in the court of Wazir Khan were greatly impressed by the brave reaction offered to Wazir Khan by 6 yrs old Baba Fateh Singh and 8 yrs old Baba Zorawar Singh.

In order to offer some respite and encouragement to the dazed Wazir Khan, Sucha Nand courtier commented, "if these children, at such an adolescent age, can have courage to shun all inducements and threats to their lives, they could pose a grave danger to the Mughal rulers when they grow up. Like their father they would encourage other Sikhs to rise in revolt against the Kingdom. It will be proper to deal with them firmly now, no mercy should be shown to them just because they are small children.

Nawab Wazir Khan, though impressed by the moral support provided and suggestions made by Sucha Nand, was more inclined towards converting the children to Islam. Rather than punish them with death penalty Wazir Khan wanted to provide an opportunity for the historians to write that the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh preferred Islam to Sikhism. He, therefore controlled his anger and allowed the lads to go back to consult their grandmother who might advise them to accept Islam to save their lives. Saying this Wazir Khan hurriedly left the court there by adjourning it for the day and thus denying the lads an opportunity to give a reply to his latest suggestion.

Grandmother's advice

Mata Gujri Ji was immensely pleased to see her grandsons back in high spirits



heaving a sigh of relief. She took them hurriedly from the soldiers into her bosom and kissed profusely their bright and smiling faces gave indications of their winning the battle for the day. Thereafter, she asked and they told her about what happened in the court of Wazir Khan. They made a special mention about the wicked advice provided to the ruler of Sirhind by Sucha Nand Courtier.

Mata Gujri congratulated her grandsons on the bravery and courage shown by them in the court in the face of hostile attitude of Wazir Khan and his courtier Sucha Nand. She warned them of greater inducements and threats of torture when they went to the court next day. She advised them to remember Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Dass and Bhai Dayala Ji, who did not flinch in their faith and faced torturous deaths. Thus providing encouragement to her grandsons Mata Gujri went to sleep, keeping the brave young children pressed to her body.

The next day more inducements and threats were held out to the young Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh but none of these could deter them from their firm resolve to stick to their grandmothers advice.

When on the third day the young Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh left for the court escorted by Wazir Khan's soldiers, She could visualise that her grandsons would not come back in the evening and that the rulers will carry out their threats held out to the children earlier. She was, however, confident that her brave grandsons would die happily for their faith. She took them in her bosom, kissed their faces and stroked their backs providing them lot of love and encouragement. She kept staring at them till they disappeared from her view.

Back in her prison cell, the cold tower, she went into meditation and prayed to the Guru and God to provide strength and unshakable determination to the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh and wished them success in the face of heavy odds they were to face at the court that day, which could in all probability

be their final and last day at the court.

At the court, seeing no let up in the firm resolve of the brave sons of great Guru, the Nawab asked them as to what would they do in case he freed them. The young boys said in reply, "We would organise Sikhs and fight to finish against the tyrant rulers to provide freedom to the oppressed. We will stick to our Sikh faith under all circumstances and you or others like you will never succeed in deflecting us from our faith."

Torture and execution

Nawab Wazir Khan failed in his mission to convert the two Sahibzadas into Islam. He felt dejected and humiliated. He asked his court Kazi to suggest appropriate punishment for the children. The Kazi promptly suggested bricking the children alive and then hacking them to death with sword blows as per muslim law, as understood by him.

Shaken by this inhumane punishment for the young innocent children suggested by Kazi, Nawab Sher Khan of Malerkotla protested and said, "Islam does not specify punishment to the children for the guilt of their father. They are innocent and should be freed." The Kazi lost his temper and told Sher Khan that he (Kazi) was much more conversant with Muslim law than him. Sucha Nand added fuel to fire by suggesting that Cobra's off springs should be killed promptly lest they create trouble when they are fully grown up.

On this, Wazir Khan approved the punishment, suggested by Kazi, to brick the children alive. The Nawab of Malerkotla protested loudly at this decision and walked out of the court.

When no one came forward to carry out the punishment pronounced for the young children, two Pathans of Ghilaza Tribe (known for their barbarism) were successfully persuaded to do the job. Onlookers saw this act, and many were disgusted at how clearly innocent children could be killed like this. First the shins and feet of the Sahibzadey were pierced using pincers, so that they would bleed slowly and suffer tremendously. The wall was then built

around the young boys, entombing them within. The executioners made sure the wall was straight and when the knee caps of the young singhs obstructed it, they were hacked off. Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh started reciting hymns of Guru Ji (Gurbani) and meditating on the name of God, they remained composed and in high spirits.

The wall went up higher and higher until it reached their chests. The Nawab and Qazi approached them and said to them in an affectionate tone, "There is still time for you to save your lives, just recite the Kalma and the wall will be pulled down immediately."

The Sahibzadas shouted loudly, "We shall not give up our faith death does not frighten us."

Both the Nawab and Qazi were amazed at their steadfast determination. Tears flowed from the eyes of onlookers, as they observed, "Blessed be their mother who gave birth to such children."

The wall went up still higher and it was shoulder high. Sahibzada Zorawar Singh said to his younger brother, "They are putting us to test. They do not know that the Sikhs of Guru Nanak are fearless. Our Fifth Guru Arjan Sahib faced martyrdom cheerfully on burning iron pans. Whereas he guided humanity to the path of a truthful and noble life, he also set an example of facing death boldly and with full faith in God." The younger brother Sahibzada Fateh Singh remarked, "The martyrdom of our revered grandfather, Guru Tegh Bahadur was also unique. We shall soon join him. He is waiting us." Later both the Sahibzadas became unconscious. The executioners became nervous and consulted each other. "They are now nearing their end. There is no need to raise the wall further. Why not cut short their agony by beheading them? It is already getting dark." Just as they were going to pull the wall down, a strong gale came and blew down the wall. They brought the unconscious Sahibzadas out, laid them flat on the ground and, in an instant, martyred them. This was performed by holding them down with the executioners placing their knees on the Sahibzadas chests, and then slowly beheading them. People in the crowd were shocked at this ghastly act.

Mata Gujri was thrown to death from the cold tower by the soldiers after being informed of the fate of her grandsons.

Young Martyrs

Thus the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh, aged 6 & 8 years respectively, became the youngest martyrs at the hands of barbarous rulers. Their brave deeds will provide inspiration to the Sikhs and their young children to emulate the brave acts of young Sahibzadas of the tenth master whom no amount of worldly attractions and threat could deter from their resolve to stick to their faith and fight against the unjust and cruel rulers. Mata Gujri Ji also provided a shining example to all mothers and grandmothers as to how they should imbibe good qualities of religion, sacrifice, faith, in the young minds of their sons and grandsons at tender age, and prepare their minds and bodies to face challenges they are likely to face as they grow up. The example of Mata Gujri Ji is worth emulating by all mothers and grandmothers.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES RETURN TO NJ ARTS CENTERS

BY MABEL PAIS

NJB WITH NJS PRESENTS HOLIDAY FAVORITE 'NUTCRACKER'



Nutcracker

Photo / MPAC

New Jersey Ballet's presentation of the holiday favorite 'Nutcracker' comes to Mayo Performing Arts Center (mayoarts.org or MPAC), Morristown, NJ for 11 performances December 16-22, 2022. New Jersey Symphony will provide live orchestral accompaniment.

'Nutcracker' brings together three of the state's leading cultural institutions - New Jersey Ballet, New Jersey Symphony and MPAC - to present a 'Nutcracker' that is firmly established as New Jersey's favorite holiday tradition. The 'Nutcracker' will feature the New Jersey Symphony under the baton of John Yaffé. Daniel Ulbricht, New York City Ballet Principal Dancer, will perform as a special guest dancer for the December 16 and December 22 performances as Cavalier.

This year marks the 51st anniversary of New Jersey Ballet's 'Nutcracker,' making it the longest-running original professional production in the state. The production debuted in Millburn in 1971 with international star of New York City Ballet Edward Villella as the Cavalier. Since then, the company has given approximately 900 performances in theaters throughout New Jersey, with more than 5,000 dancers and children, and over a million viewers. Many in the audience who saw the production as children now bring their own children and grandchildren to see this cherished holiday tradition.

When the curtain rises, audiences in Morristown can expect the eye-popping special effects, brilliant dancing, glorious costumes and the magic and pantomime that

has inspired critics to call it "A spectacle that never seems to age...magic that should go on and on," and "One of the best...as good as it gets."

PROGRAM

John Yaffé conductor
New Jersey Ballet
New Jersey Symphony

TCHAIKOVSKY THE NUTCRACKER

Based on The Nutcracker and the Mouse King by E.T.A. Hoffman

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

Friday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 pm (limited tickets)
Saturday, Dec. 17 at 1 pm (limited tickets)
Saturday, Dec. 17 at 6 pm (limited tickets)
Sunday, Dec. 18 at 1 pm (limited tickets)
Sunday, Dec. 18 at 6 pm (limited tickets)
Thursday, Dec. 22 at 7:30 pm (Livestream also available)
Friday, Dec. 23 at 1 pm
Saturday, Dec. 24 at 1 pm
Monday, Dec. 26 at 1 pm
Monday, Dec. 26 at 6 pm
Tuesday, Dec. 27 at 1 pm

SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMER: DANIEL ULBRICHT, NEW YORK CITY BALLET: DEC. 16 & DEC. 22

A livestream of the Thursday, December 22 production is available for the 2nd year for those unable to attend in person.

TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased at mayoarts.org or the Mayo Performing Arts Center box office at 973.539.8008.

Livestream of the Thursday, December 22 performance is available for those unable to attend in person.

DANIEL ULBRICHT

Daniel Ulbricht, who began his dance training at 11, attended the School of American Ballet at age 15. He has danced featured roles in Balanchine, Robbins, Martins, Peck, Ratmansky, Wheeldon and Tharp ballets. Ulbricht is currently the Director of Programming at Manhattan

Youth Ballet and Artistic Director of the New York State Summer School of the Arts' (NYSSSA). He is the founder and director of Stars of American Ballet and on the faculty of Yale University. He is also the co-founder and co-producer of 'Dance Against Cancer' and on the board of the National Dance Institute (NDI).

NEW JERSEY BALLET

New Jersey Ballet is the resident ballet company at MPAC.

This season, New Jersey Ballet marks its 56th year as New Jersey's premier classical ballet company. It performs in 9 venues from Bergen to Cape May, and has performed internationally with tours to Russia, Taiwan, Bermuda, Italy, and India. Its programs have introduced countless children and adults to the magic of dance theatre and inspired in many a lifelong love of the arts.

New Jersey Ballet has been designated a Major Arts Institution by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for "artistic excellence, substantial programming, and broad public service," and is a 3-time winner of the title New Jersey's Favorite Dance Company. For more information, visit njballet.org.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY (NJS)

To learn more about The New Jersey Symphony, visit njsymphony.org.

THE MAYO ARTS CENTER (MPAC)

The Mayo Performing Arts Center presents a wide range of programs that entertain, enrich, and educate the diverse population of the region and enhance the economic vitality of Northern New Jersey. MPAC was named 2016 Outstanding Historic Theatre by the League of Historic American Theatres, and is ranked in the top 50 mid-sized performing arts centers by Pollstar Magazine. Learn more at mayoarts.org.

CONNECT WITH MPAC ONLINE:

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NJS BRINGS BACK HOLIDAY TRADITION

BY MABEL PAIS



Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Photo / NJS

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY (NJS)

Join NJS as your Symphony triumphantly brings back this great holiday tradition! Music Director Xian Zhang will conduct Handel's incomparable classic 'Messiah.' Joining Xian and the musicians will be the talented singers of Montclair State University, who will delight audiences as they sing the glorious "Hallelujah Chorus."

HANDEL'S 'MESSIAH'

Friday, December 16 @ 8:00 pm

Richardson Auditorium in Princeton
61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542

HOLIDAY SINGALONG

Friday, December 16 at 7 pm
Enjoy a festive singalong of holiday songs and carols - including a quick rehearsal of the "Hallelujah Chorus" - with the Montclair State University Singers and Heather J. Buchanan.
Sunday, December 18 @ 7:00 pm
Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark
89 Ridge Street, Newark, NJ 07104

PROGRAM

Handel's Messiah
New Jersey Symphony Holiday Tradition
PART I, PART II, PART III
Xian Zhang conductor
Ellie Dehn soprano
Maya Lahyani mezzo-soprano
Miles Mykkanen tenor
Nicholas Newton bass-baritone
Montclair State University Singers | Heather J. Buchanan, director

For more information on Program Notes, visit njsymphony.org.

TICKETS

For tickets to either of the performances, visit njsymphony.org.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY (NJS)

The New Jersey Symphony will redefine what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century.

As NJS celebrates its centennial, it is renewing its deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be new; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of the organization - all to better reflect and serve its vibrant communities.

Its expansive educational offerings-including the youth orchestras, masterclasses, and virtual learning opportunities - will build the next generation of listeners and musicians and help students grow, both musically and personally. Across genres and venues, for audiences of all walks of life, it strives to bring music that's meaningful to you, to you.

INDIAN ARTIST CAPTURES "WATER IS OURS... FOR ALL OF US"



Opening of 'Aquarius Art Tunnel.'

Photo / Courtesy jingomedia.com

BY MABEL PAIS

In Houston, Texas, at the George Bush International Airport, the 240-foot-long Aquarius Art Tunnel connecting two terminals is the brainchild of Indian American contemporary artist Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee.

Four years in the making, the art is an audio-visual treat for travelers en-route to exotic destinations, the brightly colored murals in vivid reds, blues, greens, and yellows fill the walls from floor to ceiling, evoking a sense of hope and optimism towards nature, the oceans, and abundant underwater life. The tunnel showcases species of fish, coral, sharks, dolphins, barracudas, lobsters, manta rays, and, even, oil rigs, among many other creatures that call the oceans their home. The floor of the tunnel is a coral carpet, inspired by the artist's deep-sea dives at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary off the Texas coast, and the accompanying sounds are a combination of classical music and the artist's own meditative, underwater breath, created by Andrew Karnavas.

"This tunnel is a simple act of kindness to the environment," said Mahimtura Folmsbee at the official unveiling of the project. "We can all work together to invest in our environment, and here in our city, through small acts of kindness, let us protect our waterways, as

they are interconnected to our planet through each and every one of us. Water is OURS - for ALL of us!"

Last week, The United Nations Decades of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UNESCO) endorsed the Aquarius Art Tunnel as a site for its scientific and educational importance towards ocean conservation through artistic outreach as an immersive art installation; it has also been endorsed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Sanctuary in Galveston. The project was commissioned by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, on behalf of the Houston Airport System, through the city's Civic Art Program and the Houston Arts Alliance.

"The power of Janavi's work will be experienced by passengers because they will feel uplifted and ready to battle their journey ahead, while taking a piece of our Texas coast with them...and a greater sense of responsibility of being custodians of the earth," said Theresa Escobedo, Civic Art Program Manager for the City of Houston, and part of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs.

"Facilitating this type of passenger experience from an international artist like Janavi is both a personal and professional pleasure," said Alton DuLaney, Curator of Public Art for the Houston Airports. "And the fact that the inspiration material for this work is quietly located



Artist, Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee.

Photo / Courtesy jingomedia.com

right off the coast of Texas increases the identity and sense of place for the airport which we strive to deliver through our passenger engagement initiatives.

The Consul General of India in Houston, The Honorable Aseem R. Mahajan, pointed out the commonalities in culture and values between India and the U.S. and how Texas is now home to the second largest Indian community in the country. "Janavi's work is very vibrant, and as people walk through the tunnel, it will be a shining symbol of the India-U.S. partnership," he said.

The tunnel also has a special significance for Mahimtura Folmsbee; it is where she, and countless others, take the flight home to India. "I hope to create a bridge between science and art," she said. "I want to shine a light on an essential natural resource, marine life, that is in dire need of our help, now more than ever."

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

CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE WOWS AUDIENCES AT NJPAC

BY MABEL PAIS



Performers.

Photo / NJPAC

NJPAC

Monday, December 26, 2022, 7pm @ Prudential Hall 'Cirque Dreams Holidayze' lights up the 2022 holiday season with its popular and electrifying stage spectacular!

(Photo H 3 here)

Broadway director Neil Goldberg has searched the world to assemble the most unique cast of incomparable cirque artists and theatrical talent to wow audiences nationwide. This critically acclaimed

extravaganza is a Broadway musical and new cirque adventure wrapped into the ultimate holiday gift for the entire family.

The New York Daily News proclaims a "delicious confection of charm, sparkle and talent by the sleigh load and so full of energy it could end our dependence on oil." The Boston Globe hails, "Entrancing ... Las Vegas meets family entertainment." Experience this unique, multimillion-dollar live stage production, which dazzled at the Kennedy Center, sparkled at the Grand Ole Opry House, and BroadwayWorld calls "The Perfect Holiday Gift ... a show that everyone will enjoy."

Over 300 imaginative costumes, 20 world-class astonishing acts, the finest singers, original music and seasonal favorites celebrate Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas and New Year's in a two-hour, breathtaking spectacle. Audiences of all ages will marvel at soaring acrobatics, gravity-defying feats and extravagant theatrical production numbers.

TICKETS

For Tickets, visit njpac.org/event/cirque-dreams-holidayze.

THE NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

Learn more at www.njpac.org.

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Facebook: facebook.com/NJPAC
YouTube: NJPACTv

FOLLOW NJPAC'S STANDING IN SOLIDARITY SERIES ONLINE:

Website: njpac.org/takeastand
Hashtag: #NJPACTakeAStand
Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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



Stars who charge Rs 100 crore are harming films: Nawazuddin

Nawazuddin Siddiqui has taken a dig at Bollywood stars who charge a huge fee per film. In a recent interview, the actor has said that the huge fees charged by actors drive up the budgets of these films, which end up hurting their profits. Nawazuddin said that such a model was not viable and actors should not worry about box office.

Nawazuddin spoke about the battle between art and commerce in the field of cinema in a recent interaction. There, he spoke about how the high fee charged by some actors makes film's budget unviable and causes them to 'flop'. While actors' fees in Bollywood are not public, several reports have claimed that top actors like the three Khans charge over Rs 100 crore per film. This figure usually includes distribution rights and profit share.

Deepika Padukone's costumes in 'Besharam Rang' sparks row

Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's new song 'Besharam Rang' from their upcoming film 'Pathaan' has brewed a fresh controversy.

The first track from the film, which has been the talk of the town ever since it was released, is trending, and this time, not for the right reasons!

Taking to his Twitter account, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra has made his objections to the song clear.

Sharing a video of himself speaking to local media the minister tweeted saying that he is not sure if the film will be allowed to be released in Madhya Pradesh.

He has objected to the choice of outfits in the song and the colour saffron of the costumes donned by Deepika in some of the song sequences.

Narottam Mishra tweeted in Hindi, "The costumes in the song at first glance are objectionable. Actress Deepika Padukone who supports 'Tukde Tukde gang' is in the song of the film #Pathaan. The costumes are highly objectionable and the song has been shot with a dirty mindset. The scenes and costumes of the songs should be corrected, otherwise, we will consider whether or not to allow the film to be released in Madhya Pradesh."

Composed by Vishal-Sheykhar with lyrics by Kumaar, the peppy track showcases the sizzling chemistry between Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone.

Deepika's sizzling moves and SRK's hot look, undoubtedly, won many hearts however, now that trouble has knocked on their doors, it remains to be seen how the makers respond to it. 'Pathaan' is scheduled to hit theatres on January 25, 2023.

Source: ANI



Ranbir Kapoor, Shraddha give quirky twist to Raj Kapoor, Nargis' Barsaat pose on Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar poster

The title as well as the official poster of Ranbir Kapoor's next with Shraddha Kapoor has been released and it seems like the poster shares an uncanny resemblance with an iconic film that has a connection with Ranbir. Many have noted that the way Ranbir holds Shraddha in the poster is similar to the iconic Barsaat poster from 1949.

The Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar poster sees Shraddha dangling on the arm of Ranbir, and the same pose can be seen in the 1949 film Barsaat, that starred Ranbir's late grandfather Raj Kapoor and Nargis. Barsaat was directed by Raj Kapoor himself and produced under his banner RK Studios. Barsaat would go on to become the highest-grossing movie in Indian cinema at the time of its release. Not only this, the same pose would also go on to inspire the logo of RK Studios as well. The original movie poster was illustrated by artist S. M. Pandit.

Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar seems to have taken inspiration from the film poster and recreated the same pose albeit with a modern twist. In the Luv Ranjan directed film, both Ranbir and Shraddha give a quirky, almost



infuriated expression as if they are trying to make-believe their relationship. Even though the expression looks a bit odd with the pose, it seems to be deliberately kept that way. If the teaser gives us any clue, where both Ranbir and Shraddha walk towards each other in Gurugram's Cyberhub, they seem to be a little too much in love. Given the title of the film it is suggested that they might just be pretending it. Now,



the resemblance with the poster of Ranbir's grandfather's film only adds to the added interest for the film that is eyeing a March release next year, coinciding with the Holi festivities. Shraddha was last seen in a special appearance in Varun Dhawan's Bhediya. Ranbir's last release was Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra. He starred with Alia Bhatt in the movie, which emerged as the biggest hit of the year.

Source: HT

Karan Johar on potluck parties with Malaika Arora

Director-producer Karan Johar will be seen in one of the episodes of Malaika's new reality show, Moving In With Malaika. The two have been friends for a long time now. KJo shared how the two used to have potluck parties everyday back then, during the lunch time of reality show shoots! Karan shared, "Malaika and I have had the best time when we hosted any reality show. I think that's when we truly connected and bonded to become really close friends."

He continued, "I have seen her go through many ups and downs emotionally. I remember watching her joyous when she wasn't. Our teams became so close, we used to hang out every day at lunch and made it like a potluck party every day. I miss doing shows with Malaika because I know when we do very soon, which I know will happen, we will have the same energy all over again." Moving In With Malaika is available on Disney+ Hotstar on weekdays.



Kate Hudson to release debut album next year

During an appearance on a chat show with Jimmy Fallon, Hudson said that during the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, she was determined to live her life with no regrets. "I had this [epiphany during] COVID-19, every time when you're doing interviews, people ask, 'Do you have any regrets?' I say, 'I'm in my early 40s, so not yet.' But during the pandemic, I was [wondering], 'What am I doing?'"

Hudson explained that she has been a songwriter since she was 19, but "never shared" her work. "I just thought that would be one of my greatest regrets. I have no expectations," said the star, and added, "I want to put a record out, and I'm proud of it." Asked when her music will be available, Hudson confirmed that it will be released "next year."

Amber Heard role in 'Aquaman 2' not reduced despite rumours: Source

Johnny Depp fans left shocked after new reports claimed his ex-wife Amber Heard's role in the Aquaman 2 has not cut short despite rumours.

The Rum Diary star screen time is unchanged even though several media outlets reported that her role will be reduced in the Jason Momoa starrer.

A DC insider made the revelations on Twitter after a screen test of the movie was conducted in November.

"#AquamanAndTheLostKingdom had a test screening last night," the source wrote on his Twitter handle The DC Syndicate. "Mera is still in the movie & her scenes remain unchanged."

"Ben Affleck's #Batman is not in the movie, he added. "Willem Dafoe's Vulko is also not in the movie."

However, the insider also issued a warning for Heard fans to not get their hopes up because the test screening results are "not final product."

Earlier, Heard had said during her libel trial against Depp that she had to fight to stay in Aquaman 2 and that her role has been cut short.

"They released me from my contract. I fought to stay in it and they kept me in it," she told the court, "I don't know if I will even be in the final cut or how much I will be."



Will Avatar The Way of Water break Avenger Endgame's box office record?

The sequel to Avatar is finally here! Thirteen years after Avatar conquered the theatres in 2009, its second part, Avatar: The Way of Water is all set to hit the Indian screens on December 16. James Cameron's Avatar was the highest-grossing release of all time with \$2.9 billion worldwide. Avatar: The Way of Water, the sequel to this triple-Oscar-winning 3D sci-fi movie is expected to do even better, trade experts predict. Ahead of the film's release, IndiaToday.in got in touch with trade analysts to get an understanding of how Avatar 2 will fare at the box office in India.



Trade analyst Akshaye Rathi predicts that Avatar 2 will open in India with a whopping Rs 40 crore. He told IndiaToday.in, "Avatar 2 is going to be a historic opening without an iota of doubt. It will be the biggest opener of the year when it comes to Hollywood films in India or worldwide. I wouldn't be surprised if the movie goes beyond Rs 40 crore on Day 1 itself in different formats in India. This is all languages - North and South - as well as formats like IMAX, 3D, 2D, etc put together. It is highly possible Avatar 2 will cross Rs 40 crore in total or even more."

Source: India Today

Henry Cavill shares note as DC cancels Superman's return after Wonder Woman 3

Henry Cavill has shared a note after his return as Superman has been cancelled by the new regime at DC. In it, he said that during a meeting with filmmakers James Gunn and Peter Safran, he was told that he will not be wearing the red cape again.

Sharing the note he wrote, "I have just had a meeting with James Gunn and Peter Safran and it's sad news, everyone. I will, after all, not be returning as Superman. After being told by the studio to announce my return back in October, prior to their hire, this news isn't the easiest, but that's life. The changing of the guard is something that happens. I respect that. James and Peter have a universe to build. I wish them and all involved with the new universe the best of luck, and the happiest of fortunes."

He added, "For those who have been by my side through the years we can mourn for a bit, but then we must remember... Superman is still around. Everything he stands for still exists, and the examples he sets for us are still there! My turn to wear the cape has passed, but what Superman stands for never will. It's been a fun ride with you all, onwards and upwards."



Henry was last seen as Superman in DC's latest release, Dwayne Johnson-starrer Black Adam. He featured in a post credit scene for the movie, leaving fans excited for more Superman appearances in the future. Dwayne had also said in a tweet recently that the studio "inexplicably and inexcusably" did not want to bring back Henry but he was not going to take no for an answer and his team got to work.

Source: HT

The American Tradition of Happy Holidays

Holiday Season or Happy Holiday is a North American term that refers to the period of time from Thanksgiving until the New Year. This covers many of the most important holidays in American culture, when most people in the USA and Canada are likely to travel back to their home town or take time off to spend time with their family.

It is defined as incorporating at least Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and sometimes various other holidays and festivals. It also is associated with a period of shopping which comprises a peak season for the retail sector (the "Christmas (or holiday) shopping season") and a period of sales at the end of the season (the "January sales").

Christmas window displays and Christmas tree lighting ceremonies when trees decorated with ornaments and light bulbs are illuminated are traditions in many areas.

In the denominations of Western Christianity, the term "Christmas season" is considered synonymous with Christmastide, which runs from December 25 (Christmas Day) to January 5 (Twelfth Night or Epiphany Eve), popularly known as the 12 Days of Christmas, or in the Catholic Church, until the Baptism of the Lord, a Christmas season which can last for more or fewer than twelve days.

Happy Holidays compared to Christmas

While "Merry Christmas" has been a largely common greeting during the holiday season, many have begun to transition to a new phrase, "Happy Holidays." There are many different holidays that fall during the month of December such as: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Years and Christmas. The adjustment to "Happy Holidays" has been done out of respect for those celebrating holidays besides Christmas. The term "Happy Holidays" has become more popular in use to promote a more inclusive culture, although the transition has caused friction and added to the "War on Christmas" debate. "The idea of a "War on Christmas" has turned things like holiday greetings and decorations into potentially divisive political statements. People who believe Christmas is under attack point to inclusive phrases like "Happy Holidays" as (liberal) insults to Christianity," according to The New York Times.

Each holiday celebrated during the month of December has its own traditions, celebrations and principles. There are over 320 million people in the U.S. that celebrate different holidays and partake in different traditions.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish celebration beginning this year the evening of Dec. 22 and ending Dec. 30. The holiday celebrates the overthrow of the Syrian Greeks, as well as the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem. After the overthrow of the Syrian Greeks, the Jewish citizens attempted to relight the menorah. In every home, on each night of the eight nights of Hanukkah, a new candle is lit on a menorah. It is celebrated with holiday songs, games, gift-giving and food.

A popular game played during the celebration is dreidel, which involves the spinning of a four-sided dreidel, winning and losing pennies, raisins, chocolate pieces, or whatever is chosen to be put in the "pot". The food prepared during the holiday consists of fried food, another reminder of the lasting oil. Fried potato latkes and sufganiyot are popular items commonly seen in Jewish households during the holiday.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a holiday that is reflective of African cultures and begins on Dec. 26 and lasts until Jan. 1. The holiday is a celebration of family, community, and culture. Kwanzaa was created by Doctor Maulana Karenga in 1966, after the Watts riots in Los Angeles as



an attempt to unite African American communities. Each night of the seven celebratory days, a candle is lit on the Kinara (candleholder). After the candle is lit, the family gathers to discuss one of the seven principles Kwanzaa is based around.

Each household celebrates Kwanzaa in their own way, usually involving songs, dances, storytelling, poetry reading and a large feast on the sixth day.

Chinese New Year

Another holiday celebrated during the winter is Chinese New Year. Chinese New Year is celebrated in January and is known as the most important Chinese holiday. The holiday goes by many names including Lunar New Year or Spring Festival. Jan. 25 is the first day of the first month on a traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar. This calendar is different than the Gregorian Calendar because it uses both the phase of the moon and the solar calendar. In order to "catch up" with the solar calendar, an extra month is added every few years. This makes the Chinese New Year fall on a different day every year.

Typical celebrations are done beginning on New Year's Eve and last around 15 days. The celebrations include: decorations, dinners with family, fireworks, and public ceremonies with dragon dances and imperial performances. Red is the main color for the festival because it is said to bring good luck. It can be seen on every building and decoration. The New Year's "reunion dinner" is said to be the most important meal of the day celebrated with family. The common foods that are considered good luck and eaten during the meal include fish, dumplings, and rice cakes.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated on Dec. 25, to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The holiday is celebrated by exchanging gifts, putting Christmas trees in the home, decorating with lights, caroling and hanging stockings. Modern traditions for Christmas also include, visiting and receiving gifts from Santa Claus, hanging of the Mistletoe and ringing bells.

The reasoning behind the evergreen tree was introduced by Martin Luther, explaining they were a

symbol of eternal life. Candles during the holiday season represent a picture of Christ being the light of the world. Holly is another symbol used around Christmas time, showing the thorns in Jesus's crown. The color red is a large staple in Christmas traditions as well, representing Christ's blood and death.

With all the different holidays celebrated during the month, "happy holidays" is an all-encompassing greeting that covers holidays celebrated throughout many different cultures.

History of Holidays

We root traditions and customs associated with winter solstice celebrations in the United States in Yule's historical origins. The Pagan observed the Yule festival around the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere Yule's (below the equator, the winter solstice occurs around June 21). In the sky above us, something unique happens.

At its most significant distance from the equatorial plane, the sun reaches the tilt of the earth's axis in the Northern Hemisphere. Many cultures around the world often see winter festivals as light celebrations. Besides Christmas, there are many other holidays, including Hanukkah with its glowing menorahs, Kwanzaa & many others.

Since they celebrated Yule celebrations with candles, bonfires & other forms of light, light is essential for the festival.

Why Do People Continue to Celebrate the Holidays?

In the U.S., the winter holiday season (from November to January) is for Americans to gather with families and friends and express their gratitude for life. Americans prepare & serve traditional Thanksgiving dishes at churches and community centers from coast to coast, mindful of their good fortune.

Some people donate to food banks and charities that feed the hungry. Even the non-religious get inspiration to give to others with the approach of Christmas celebrated on December 25. As the holidays approach, millions of Americans share their time and money to help the less fortunate.



Christmas, Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus. The English term Christmas (“mass on Christ’s day”) is of fairly recent origin. The earlier term Yule may have derived from the Germanic *jol* or the Anglo-Saxon *geol*, which referred to the feast of the winter solstice. The corresponding terms in other languages—Navidad in Spanish, Natale in Italian, Noël in French—all probably denote nativity. The German word *Weihnachten* denotes “hallowed night.” Since the early 20th century, Christmas has also been a secular family holiday, observed by Christians and non-Christians alike, devoid of Christian elements, and marked by an increasingly elaborate exchange of gifts. In this secular Christmas celebration, a mythical figure named Santa Claus plays the pivotal role. Christmas is celebrated on Sunday, December 25, 2022.

Origin

The early Christian community distinguished between the identification of the date of Jesus’ birth and the liturgical celebration of that event. The actual observance of the day of Jesus’ birth was long in coming. In particular, during the first two centuries of Christianity there was strong opposition to recognizing birthdays of martyrs or, for that matter, of Jesus. Numerous Church Fathers offered sarcastic comments about the pagan custom of celebrating birthdays when, in fact, saints and martyrs should be honoured on the days of their martyrdom—their true “birthdays,” from the church’s perspective.

The precise origin of assigning December 25 as the birth date of Jesus is unclear. The New Testament provides no clues in this regard. December 25 was first identified as the date of Jesus’ birth by Sextus Julius Africanus in 221 and later became the universally accepted date. One widespread explanation of the origin of this date is that December 25 was the Christianizing of the *dies solis invicti nati* (“day of the birth of the unconquered sun”), a popular holiday in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice as a symbol of the resurgence of the sun, the casting away of winter and the heralding of the rebirth of spring and summer. Indeed, after December 25 had become widely accepted as the date of Jesus’ birth, Christian writers frequently made the connection between the rebirth of the sun and the birth of the Son. One of the difficulties with this view is that it suggests a nonchalant willingness on the part of the Christian church to appropriate a pagan festival when the early church was so intent on distinguishing itself categorically from



pagan beliefs and practices.

A second view suggests that December 25 became the date of Jesus’ birth by a priori reasoning that identified the spring equinox as the date of the creation of the world and the fourth day of creation, when the light was created, as the day of Jesus’ conception (i.e., March 25). December 25, nine months later, then became the date of Jesus’ birth. For a long time the celebration of Jesus’ birth was observed in conjunction with his baptism, celebrated January 6.

Christmas began to be widely celebrated with a specific liturgy in the 9th century but did not attain the liturgical importance of either Good Friday or Easter, the other two major

Christian holidays. Roman Catholic churches celebrate the first Christmas mass at midnight, and Protestant churches have increasingly held Christmas candlelight services late on the evening of December 24. A special service of “lessons and carols” intertwines Christmas carols with Scripture readings narrating salvation history from the Fall in the Garden of Eden to the coming of Christ. The service, inaugurated by E.W. Benson and adopted at the University of Cambridge, has become widely popular.

Christmas tree

Christmas tree, an evergreen tree, often a pine, spruce, or fir, decorated



with lights and ornaments as a part of Christmas festivities. Christmas trees can be fresh-cut, potted, or artificial and are used as both indoor and outdoor decorations. While the trees are traditionally associated with Christian symbolism, their modern use is largely secular. Many families place presents around an indoor Christmas tree to be opened on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The use of evergreen trees, wreaths, and garlands to symbolize eternal life was a custom of the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Hebrews. Tree worship was common among the pagan Europeans and survived their conversion to Christianity in the Scandinavian customs of decorating the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the Devil and of setting up a tree for the birds during Christmastime. It survived further in the custom, also observed in Germany, of placing a Yule tree at an entrance or inside the house during the midwinter holidays.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus, legendary figure who is the traditional patron of Christmas in the United States and other countries, bringing gifts to children. His popular image is based on traditions associated with Saint Nicholas, a 4th-century Christian saint. Father Christmas fills the role in many European countries.

The Dutch are credited with transporting the legend of Saint Nicholas (*Sinterklaas*) to New Amsterdam (now New York City), along with the custom of giving gifts and sweets to children on his feast day, December 6. The current depiction of Santa Claus is based on images drawn by cartoonist Thomas Nast for Harper’s Weekly beginning in 1863. Nast’s Santa owed much to the description given in the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas” (also known as “’Twas the Night Before Christmas”), first published in 1823. The image was further defined by the popular Santa Claus advertisements created for the Coca-Cola Company from 1931 by illustrator Haddon Sundblum. Sundblum’s Santa was a portly white-bearded gentleman dressed in a red suit with a black belt and white fur trim, black boots, and a soft red cap.

Santa Claus is said to live at the North Pole with his wife, where he spends the year making toys with the help of his elves. There he receives letters from children asking for Christmas gifts. On Christmas Eve he loads his sleigh with toys and flies around the world, drawn by eight reindeer, stopping at each child’s house; he slides down the chimney and leaves the gifts, refreshing himself with the milk and cookies left for him by the household’s children.

JAPAN UNVEILS BIGGEST MILITARY BUILD-UP SINCE WORLD WAR II

DECEMBER 16

TOKYO (TIP): In a major break from its strictly self-defence-only postwar principle, Japan adopted a national security strategy on December 16 declaring plans to possess preemptive strike capability and cruise missiles within years to give itself more offensive footing against threats from neighbouring China and North Korea.

A squadron of Chinese navy ships sailed through straits near Japan into the Western Pacific this week, while Beijing on Friday blasted Tokyo's adoption of a new national security strategy.

The destroyers Lhasa and Kaifeng, and a replenishment ship, sailed through the Osumi Strait in southern Japan, while a Dongdiao-class surveillance ship with the hull number 796 sailed through the Miyako Strait south of Okinawa, all arriving in the Western Pacific by Thursday.

With China, North Korea and Russia directly to its west and north, Japan "faces the severest and most complicated national security environment since the end of the war," the strategy said, referring to World War II. It named China as "the biggest strategic challenge" — before North Korea and Russia — to Japan's effort toward ensuring the peace, safety and stability for itself and the international society.

Possession of the strike-back capability is "indispensable" as deterrence to discourage enemy attacks, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told a news conference Friday, calling it "a major change to Japan's postwar security policy." "When threats become reality, can the Self-Defence Force fully protect our country? Frankly speaking, the current (SDF capability) is insufficient," Kishida said.

Under the strategy, Japan's defence spending through 2027 will increase to about 2% of Japan's GDP to total some 43 trillion yen (\$320 billion), 1.6-times that of the current five-year total.

Kishida said the new target sets the NATO standard for defence spending, a budget increase that has been his policy priority since taking office in October 2021.

Japan says its exclusive self-defence policy is unchanged, but "long-range cruise missiles represent a threshold capability that will fundamentally change Japan's approach to deterrence," said Christopher Johnstone, a senior advisor and Japan chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said. — Agencies

Russia launches 60 missiles across Ukraine; shot down 37, says Kyiv

DECEMBER 16

KYIV (TIP): Russian forces launched at least 60 missiles across Ukraine on December 16, officials said, reporting explosions in at least four cities, including Kyiv. At least two people were killed by a strike on a residential building in central Ukraine, where a hunt was on for survivors.

Electricity and water services were interrupted in the capital and Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv. Thousands of people sought shelter in subway stations deep underground during the bombardment.

The Kyiv city administration said Ukraine's capital had withstood "one of the biggest rocket attacks" launched by Russian forces since they invaded Ukraine nearly 10 months ago.

The administration said Ukrainian air defence forces shot down 37 of "about 40" that entered the city's airspace. One person was injured, it said.

Thudding blasts and gunfire from air-defence systems echoed across the



country as authorities on social media reported explosions and missile strikes in the city and southern Kryvyi Rih, southeastern Zaporizhzhia, and northeastern Kharkiv.

Air raid alarms sounded across the

country, warning of a new barrage of the Russian strikes that have occurred intermittently since mid-October.

Ukrainian Air Force spokesman Yurii Inhat said more than 60 missiles had been fired. — AP

Huge Berlin aquarium bursts; housed 1,500 tropical fish



DECEMBER 16

BERLIN (TIP): A huge aquarium in the centre of Berlin burst on December 16, causing a wave of devastation in and around the Sea Life tourist attraction, German police said Friday.

Glass and other debris were swept out of the building, which also contains a hotel and cafes, as 1 million litres of water poured out of the 25-metre (82-foot)-high aquarium shortly before 6 am (0500GMT).

Visitors use the lift inside the AquaDom at Berlins Dom Aquaree complex. Reuters File

Berlin's fire service said two people were lightly injured and rescue dogs were being prepared to search the building for anyone who might be trapped under debris.

There was speculation that freezing

temperatures of down to minus 10 degrees Celsius (14 Fahrenheit) overnight had caused a crack in the tank, which then exploded under the weight of the water. Police said the cause of the incident was still being investigated but there was no evidence that it was the result of an attack.

Witness Gwendolin Szyszkowitz told German news channel n-tv that she heard a loud bang and initially feared a bomb had exploded.

Operators say the aquarium has the biggest cylindrical tank in the world and contained 1,500 tropical fish of 80 different species before the incident. The aquarium, which was last modernized in 2020, is a major tourist magnet in Berlin.

The 10-minute elevator ride through the tank was one of the highlights of the attraction. (AP)

AT LEAST 100 PEOPLE KILLED BY FLOODS IN CAPITAL OF CONGO

DECEMBER 13

KINSHASA (TIP): At least 100 people have been killed and dozens injured on December 13 by widespread floods and landslides caused by heavy rains in Congo's capital, Kinshasa.

Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde said officials were still searching for more bodies.

"We came to assess the damage and the primary damage we see is human," Lukonde said on state television Tuesday.

Some 12 million people live in the 24 neighbourhoods of Kinshasa hit by the floods, according to three local officials who told The Associated Press that people were killed, houses submerged and roads ruined.

In the Ngaliema area more than three dozen people died and bodies are still being counted, said the area's mayor, Alid'or Tshibanda. In another part of town five members from one family were killed, some by electrocution.

"It is a just calamity," said Pierrot Mantuela. The 30-year-old lost his mother, nine-year-old daughter and three brothers. "It's sad to lose all the members of my family," he said. He was spared because he was working Monday night when the rains began, he said.

"They have no documents. They are chased away but they always come back," said Dieumerici Mayibazilwanga, the mayor of Mont-Ngafula, of people building unauthorised houses.

In 2019, flooding and landslides killed at least 32 in and around Kinshasa. AP

UK airports to soon relax security rules for liquids, laptops

DECEMBER 15

LONDON (TIP): All major airports across the United Kingdom have been set a June 2024 deadline to install new security technology to allow liquids and laptops in the hand luggage to be scanned through, the British government announced as part of a rules shake-up on December 15.

Under current requirements, travellers in the UK are allowed to only carry liquids only up to 100 millilitres and scan them through in a clear plastic bag. Laptops and other electronic devices are also scanned separately, causing long security check queues at airports.

The current liquids rules, introduced in 2006 following a terrorist threat, are designed to stop those with hostile intent carrying liquid explosives onto planes.

The Department for Transport (DfT) said the new legislation being tabled in the UK Parliament this week is aimed at streamlining the processes using the latest advancements in screening technology to further improve the security standards at airports.

"The tiny toiletry has become a staple of airport security checkpoints, but that is all set to change. I am streamlining cabin bag rules at airports while enhancing security," said UK Transport Secretary Mark Harper.

"By 2024, major airports across the UK will have the latest security tech installed, reducing queuing times, improving the passenger experience, and most importantly, detecting potential threats. Of course, this would not happen straight away – this is going to take two years to be fully implemented. Until then, passengers must continue following the existing rules and check before travelling," he said.



Over the next two years, most major UK airports are expected to introduce cutting-edge systems into their security checkpoints, ushering in what the DfT describes as a new era of improved security and passenger experience when going through departures.

Not only will it mean greater convenience for travellers – as people will no longer need to spend time taking items out of their bags – but it will also enhance passenger safety, as security staff will have more detailed images of what people are carrying, the DfT said.

As the rule change comes in, the 100ml liquid container limit requirement will be lifted over time and extended to 2 litres. However, until the changes come into force, the original rules will remain in force.

"This investment in next-generation security by the UK's airport operators will provide a great step forward for UK air travel, matching the best in class

around the world," said Christopher Snelling, Policy Director at the Airport Operators Association (AOA).

"It will make the journey through the UK's airports easier and air travel itself more pleasant," he added.

The new deadline follows several trials conducted at some airports since 2018, which have demonstrated the effectiveness of this new screening equipment – which uses CT X-ray technology to essentially provide a 3D image of what is in passengers' bags, as well as deploying highly advanced threat detection algorithms.

Similar technology is employed in many countries globally, with airports such as Schiphol in Amsterdam and the United States now also using the technology.

DfT says the changes will further enhance UK airports' ability to detect prohibited items but with greater convenience to passengers. (PTI)

LONDON CONCERT STAMPEDE LEAVES 4 CRITICALLY HURT

DECEMBER 16

LONDON (TIP): Four people were hospitalised in critical condition on December 16 after hundreds of people forced their way into a London concert venue during a performance by Nigerian Afrobeats star Asake. Police said eight people were taken to hospitals after being caught in a crowd of people trying to get into the O2 Brixton Academy. — AP

FIVE KIDS AMONG 10 DEAD IN APARTMENT BLAZE IN FRANCE

DECEMBER 16

VAULX-EN-VELIN (TIP): Ten people, including five children died after a nighttime fire ravaged an eight-storey apartment building on December 16 in one of the city of Lyon's poorest suburbs, French authorities said.

Fourteen people were injured in the tragedy in the small suburban town of Vaulx-en-Velin, four of them seriously, according to the prefecture. — AP

DOZENS FEARED BURIED AFTER LANDSLIDE HITS MALAYSIAN CAMPSITE

DECEMBER 16

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Around 50 people are feared buried after a landslide hit a campsite outside Kuala Lumpur early on December 16, a Malaysian fire department official said.

Local media cited police as saying initial information indicated that some 100 people may have been at the campsite in Batang Kali, around 40 km north of Kuala Lumpur, when the incident occurred.

A fire department official said rescuers are searching for an estimated 50 missing people. He provided no further details. (AP)

10 DEAD, INCLUDING 5 CHILDREN, BY FIRE AT BUILDING NEAR FRENCH CITY OF LYON

DECEMBER 16

PARIS (TIP): Ten people, including five children, were killed - according to a provisional death toll - after a fire broke out on December 16 morning at a residential building in Vaulx-en-Velin, near the French city of Lyon, said the local authority.

The local authority for the Lyon/Rhone region said the cause of the fire was not known at this stage. Around 170 firefighters were at the site. Reuters

Kremlin says Christmas ceasefire not on the agenda in Ukraine

DECEMBER 14

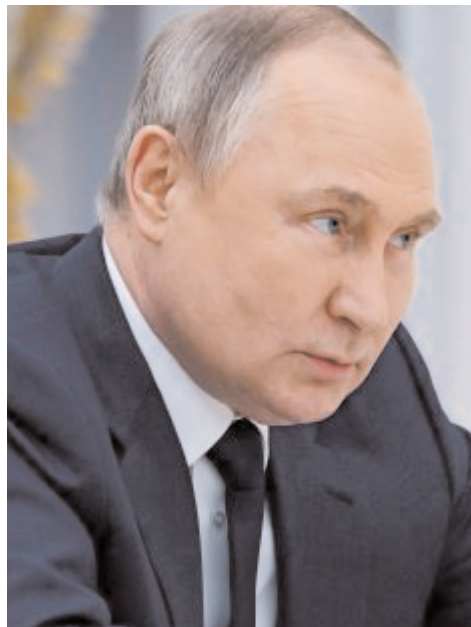
MOSCOW (TIP): Russia said on December 14 it had not received any proposals about a "Christmas ceasefire" in Ukraine, as fighting looks set to drag on through the winter.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Russia this week to start withdrawing its troops by Christmas as the first step towards a peace deal after nearly 10 months of war.

Asked on Wednesday whether Moscow had seen proposals for a "Christmas ceasefire," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "No, no such offers have been received from anybody.

This topic is not on the agenda."

After a series of lightning Ukrainian counteroffensives which has seen Kyiv



regain control over around half of the territory Moscow captured in the first weeks of the war, neither side has made significant territorial gains in the past month.

Military analysts say a winter deadlock could set in, even as fierce fighting continues especially in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk, where Russian forces are pushing to capture the town of Bakhmut.

Peskov said on Tuesday there would be no peace with Kyiv until Zelenskyy accepted the "realities" on the ground - namely, Russian control over four Ukrainian regions it annexed in September following "referendums" decried as coercive and illegal by Kyiv, the West and a majority of states at the United Nations. Reuters

Sikh History This Week

DECEMBER 16, 2022, TO DECEMBER 22, 2022

16th December

- 1634 Battle of Lahara Gaga between Moghals and Sikhs.
- 1665 Guru Tegh Bahadur released from Aurangzeb's detention.



- 1705 Guru Gobind Singh reached Rai Kot.
- 1971 Pakistani soldiers surrendered to General Jagjit Singh Arora.
- 1987 Israel Condemns Atrocities against Sikhs in the UNO.

17th December

- 1846 Treaty of Bhairowal signed between the British and Maharaja Dalip Singh.



18th December

- 1661 Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji left for Delhi to safeguard the rights of Brahmins.
- 1845 Battle of Mudki between Sikhs and British Forces.
- 1960 Fateh Singh started fast unto death for Punjabi Suba.



19th December

- 1924 Babbar Sada Singh PinDori accepted shahadat in Jail.



- 1967 Punjabi Bill passed by the Punjab Assembly.

20th December

- 1520 Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited Baghdad, Iraq.



- 1704 Guru Gobind Singh Ji evacuated Anadpur Sahib.
- 1920 Gurudwara Panja Sahib management came under the Panthic controls.

21st December

- 1704 Sikhs blocked the advances of the joint Hindu-Moghul army near Sirsa (Ropar district) so that Guru Gobind Singh Ji could reach some safer zone.
- 1838 Ranjit Singh suffered a stroke and severe attack of paralysis. Remained critical for several days. Speech and sight virtually gone.
- 1845 The fierce and bloody battle of Ferozepur City.
- 1849 Maharaja Dalip Singh exiled from Punjab and sent Farakhabad in UP.
- 1997 Justice Kuldip Singh chosen President of World Sikh Council.

22nd December

- 1666 PRAKASH UTSAV, Patshahi Tenth, Guru Gobind Singh Ji.
- 1704 SHAHEEDHI, Wadhane Sahibjadhae, Sakka Chamkaur.
- 1899 Birthday of Sardar Udam Singh.
- 1932 Third round table Conference.



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Home remedies to get rid of blackheads

Blackheads are small bumps that appear due to pores becoming clogged with oil and dead skin but cinnamon and honey can help in combating this because of anti-bacterial qualities, says an expert.

Baking soda

Baking soda isn't just for baking or keeping your refrigerator smelling fresh. The antiseptic quality of it makes it a wonderful product for your skin. It works as an exfoliant to scrub away dead skin cells leaving skin soft and smooth. Baking soda also helps to neutralize the skin's pH, it encourages the skin to produce less oil which means that after regular use, you may be able to say goodbye to those blackheads for good.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is an anti-bacterial spice that can be used to make an aromatic face mask that offers all sorts of benefits to the skin, including the removal of blackheads. It also helps to eliminate flaky skin as well as acne, and it can be used as a body scrub for a smoother, more glowing complexion.

Honey

Honey is both antibacterial and antiseptic, properties that help remove blackheads by destroying germs or impurities that clog pores, making it another great choice for those with acne related blackheads. Honey also acts as a natural antibiotic, helping to pull dirt from the pores of the skin to clear blackheads as well as tightening and hydrating the pores for a clearer complexion.

Epsom salts

Epsom salts are not only great for easing sore muscles, they can also help to remove blackheads. While most of the treatments on this list dissolve the dead skin and oil, the Epsom salt mixture actually pulls the plug out of each clogged pore so they simply wash away.

Egg whites

Egg whites offer numerous benefits to the skin.



They're rich in protein which offers skin toning properties and helps to promote wrinkle free skin. Due to their ability to tighten skin and minimize pores, using egg whites is especially good for oily skin and reduces the chances of future blackheads while removing current blackheads at the same time. This method draws out sebum and pulls out any deep within the pores.

Green tea

Instead of spending endless hours attempting to pop, rub or concentrate clogged pores from your face, have a go at utilising an all common cure, green tea, which is high on antioxidants. It not only diminishes oil and irritation on the skin, but serves to secure it from future harm. So next time you discover small dark obstructed pores covering your face, just brew up green tea to help ostracize the zits for good. If you want to apply this solution you will need some items like one saucepan, drinking glass, soft towel, gentle face wash, cotton ball and two bags of green tea.

FOOD

Chilli Paneer

INGREDIENTS

250 gm cubed paneer
2 chopped, de seeded Capsicum (Green Pepper), 4 cloves chopped garlic, 1 tablespoon tomato ketchup, 1 teaspoon white vinegar, 1 cup Veg stock, 2 chopped into cubes Onion, 8 chopped Green Chilli, 2 tablespoon light soya sauce, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 2 cup Refined oil, 3 tablespoon Corn starch.

Method

Cut paneer into 1 inch cubes and sprinkle 2 tablespoon cornstarch over it. Toss the paneer lightly to coat the corn starch. Take care not to break the paneer.

Heat sufficient oil in a kadai, when oil is medium hot, add the paneer pieces and deep fry on medium heat until the edges start to turn brown. Take care to fry in batches. Drain on absorbent paper and set aside.

Cut the onion into 8 pieces and remove the smaller inner pieces from it. Then cut each capsicum into 8 pieces and deseed them. And cut the green chillies into slices. Set them all aside. Blend remaining corn starch (nearly a tablespoon) along with tomato ketchup and white vinegar in the vegetable stock. Let it rest and keep aside. Heat two tablespoons of oil in a sauce pan, add crushed garlic to fairly hot oil and saute for about 10 seconds or till light golden in colour. Stir-fry for a minute.

Add sliced green chillies, onions and green capsicum to the wok and fry on high flame for 30 seconds. Add the remaining capsicum and toss well for another minute. The vegetables should be cooked but crisp. Saute for a couple of minutes.

Add the corn slurry over high heat, stirring till the sauce is thick enough to coat the paneer and the vegetables. Serve it hot immediately.



Essential winter skin care tips that you should follow

To keep a warm heart in winter is the real victory, they say. But to keep healthy skin in winter is the real challenge. If you are struggling to maintain your skin during winter, we have a few winter face care tips that help you maintain your skin's moisture. Your skin loses the natural moisture, resulting in itchy and dry skin.

Dehydration

If your skin looks patchy and fine lines have started appearing, it is definitely dehydrated and dry. The moisture level of your skin is decreasing because of reduced sebum. Opt for a white tea skin treatment as it has antioxidant properties that nourish your skin and restore its vital moisture content.

Sensitivity

Redness and inflammation are usually of sensitivity that occur due to changes in the weather conditions. Choose your products very carefully and moisturise you skin regularly to combat sensitivity.

Lifeless and sallow skin

Your skin might lose its lustre and look lifeless. The skin's acid mantle is affected and hence the skin's moisture and oil balance is disturbed. Massage your skin with a nourishing oil like Argan oil before sleeping. It will maintain the necessary levels of collagen in your skin.



Cracked feet

A common problem faced during winter is cracked feet. These superficial or deep fissures on the heels make your feet very rough. It is vital to avoid remaining bare foot and to moisturise your feet regularly. During winter, apply a thick moisturiser or a special cracked feet cream and wear socks while sleeping.

Protect Your Skin

You need to protect your skin from the cold wind or snow or rain if you are stepping out in winter. So, wear gloves and caps and do not forget your sunscreen lotion. The warm sun rays feel pleasant, but the UV rays can still damage your skin a lot. Choose a sunscreen that has titanium dioxide or zinc oxide.

Do Not Exfoliate Your Skin A Lot

Exfoliating the skin helps in getting rid of dead cells. You have to be careful during winters because your skin barrier is already compromised due to the dry and cold weather. Exfoliating your skin once a week is fine – this helps in boosting skin regeneration and better product absorption. Also, you should exfoliate depending on your skin type. If you have very dry skin, exfoliate your skin lightly. If you have combination and oily skin, once a week is fine.

How your sleep position affects your health

You turn off the lights and get yourself ready to snooze. Are you on your back, side, or stomach? Though there is no strong science connecting your sleep position to things like back pain, snoring, personality, and how often you wake up during the night, here are some interesting associations that have been noted.

On Your Belly

Are you a tummy sleeper? If so, do you have problems sleeping? Your slumber pose may not be helping. You're more likely to be restless and toss and turn to get comfortable when you sleep on your belly. It can strain your neck and your lower back, too. If this is how you like to sleep, you may want to use a very soft pillow or none at all to keep your neck comfortable.

Belly Position: Freefall

About 7% of the population sleeps this way. You lie on your belly with your arms around a pillow and your head turned sideways. If this is your favorite sleep position, some research suggests you may be more likely to speak your mind and be sociable and outgoing. You also may not be very open to criticism.

Back Sleeping

This position can cause low back pain for some people. And if you already have that, it can make it worse. If you snore or have sleep apnea, it can make those bigger problems, too. If you have one of these issues and can't get comfortable another way, talk to your doctor about what might help.

Back Position: Soldier

This position is favored by about 8% of the population. You sleep with your arms down and close to your body. Some research suggests you may be more likely to be quiet and keep to yourself. You also may expect a lot from yourself and from others.

Back Position: Starfish

Only about 5% of people sleep this way. You lie on your



back with your arms up near your head. According to some studies, you may be more likely to be a good listener and not want to be the center of attention.

Side Sleeping

There are many ways to sleep on your side, but the most comfortable is with your knees bent slightly toward your chest -- the fetal position.

Side Position: Fetal

More than 40% of people sleep in this curled-up side-sleeping position. It's the most common position for women -- they're twice as likely as men to sleep like this. Some research suggests you may be more likely to be warm, friendly, and sensitive, but you also may have a protective shell around you.

Side Position: Log

This is when you sleep on your side with both arms down. About 15% of people "sleep like a log." Some research says you may tend to be social, easygoing, and trusting. *Source: Webmd.com*



Exercise, mindfulness don't boost cognitive function in older people: Study

An extensive study that looked at whether mindfulness training and exercise could improve cognitive performance in older persons showed no such improvement after either intervention.

Researchers from the University of California, San Diego and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis examined the cognitive benefits of exercise, mindfulness practise, or both in older adults who reported age-related memory changes but had not yet been identified as having dementia for up to 18 months.

The findings are published in JAMA. "We know beyond any doubt that exercise is good for older adults, that it can lower risk for cardiac problems, strengthen bones, improve mood and have other beneficial effects -- and there has been some thought that it also might improve cognitive function," said the study's first author, Eric J. Lenze, MD, the Wallace and Lucille Renard Professor and head of the Department of Psychiatry at Washington University. "Likewise, mindfulness training is beneficial because it reduces stress, and stress can be bad for your brain. Therefore, we hypothesized that if older adults exercised regularly, practiced mindfulness or did both there might be cognitive benefits -- but that's not what we found." Lenze and his colleagues still want to see whether there may be some cognitive effects over a longer time period, so they plan to continue studying this group of older adults to learn whether exercise and mindfulness might help prevent future cognitive declines. In this study, however, the practices did not boost cognitive function.

"So many older adults are concerned about memory," said senior author Julie Wetherell, PhD, a professor of psychiatry at UC San Diego. "It's important for studies like ours to develop and test behavioral interventions to try to provide them with neuroprotection and stress reduction as well as general health benefits." *Source: ANI*

Superfoods for faster muscle recovery

Spinach

There's a reason why Popeye the Sailor was obsessed with this superfood. Spinach contains approximately of 5 grams protein in a cup-sized quantity. It is also packed with anti-inflammatory vitamins like A, B and C. Making it a must-have post-workout food. And there's a variety of ways in which you can consume spinach. From pesto pasta to good old sabzi, you can also include this superfood in vegetable smoothies for easy digestion.



Watermelon

Watermelon is one of the favourite post-workout food that countless fitness experts swear by. When you work out, if you're doing it right, you will sweat, which is why you need to rehydrate later on. And, Watermelon with its 92% water composition, makes for the perfect post-workout snack or drink as it is great for hydration. It also contains vitamin which helps with inflammation as well as other essential vitamins and minerals which aid muscle recovery.

Bananas

Bananas are anyway one of the favourites among fitness freaks as it is packed with iron, and contain fibre, potassium, folate, and antioxidants, such as vitamin C. It's no secret that they have long been known to promote muscle recovery. They not only contain carbs, which help replenish glycogen levels but also, potassium which is an electrolyte that your body loses when it sweats and it's crucial for your heart health.

Fish

One of the best muscle recovery foods. Fish contains high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids. Consuming fish regularly is exceptionally good for healing inflammation, and it serves as a great source of protein. Some of the best fish varieties that you can include in your diet to promote muscle recovery are fatty fish like Rohu, Hilsa, Bangda, and Paplet.

Citrus fruits

Citrus fruits contain massive quantities of Vitamin C, which is known to promote the healing of muscles and reduce inflammation. It also helps to maintain your bone health and integrity. Soft tissues, like that of your throat, are also known to benefit tremendously from Vitamin C. Some of the best citrus fruits you can include in your diet are tomatoes, kiwi, grapefruit, passionfruit, and oranges. *Source: HT*

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YouTube's new feature will warn users against their abusive comments

YouTube has introduced a new feature that will warn users if their comments are found to be abusive. The company says it will send a notification to people whose abusive comments have been removed for violating the platform's rules.

Moreover, if a user continues to leave multiple abusive comments, they may receive a timeout and be temporarily unable to comment for up to 24 hours.

The testing has shown that these warnings/timeouts reduce the likelihood of users leaving violative comments again, as per the company's forum post.

"Our goal is to both protect creators from users trying to negatively impact the community via comments, as well as offer more transparency to users who may have had comments removed to policy violations and hopefully help them understand our Community Guidelines," the company said.

Currently, the abusive comment detection feature is only available for English comments, but the streaming platform aims to include more languages in the future.

The company says that it has been working on improving its automated detection systems and machine learning models to identify and remove spam.

It has removed over 1.1 billion spam comments in the first six months of 2022, the company claimed.

Source: IANS

WhatsApp to bring 'view once' messages feature

After adding the disappearing messages feature in 2020, instant messaging and voice-over-IP service WhatsApp, is now working on an extreme version of that option.

According to Mashable, a tech news and entertainment website, while initially limited to just one option (disappearing after 7 days), WhatsApp later expanded the disappearing messages feature to also allow for messages that disappear after 24 hours or 90 days.

Now, Mashable has reported that WABetaInfo suggests that the extreme version of this option will be a message that can only be viewed once before it disappears, both for the sender and the recipient.

The new feature can be found in the latest WhatsApp beta for Android, version 2.22.25.20. Once a user sends such a message, the recipient cannot share or forward the message.

WhatsApp already has this feature in place for photos and videos. When a user sends a view-once photo or video, the person on the other end cannot take a screenshot of it; presumably, the same functionality will be enabled for view-once messages, too, reported Mashable.

For photos and videos, the view-once functionality is enabled by choosing an image or video to send and then tapping on the circled '1' icon on the right side of the caption prompt.

Source: ANI

US achieves nuclear fusion breakthrough, boosts clean energy hopes

The Department of Energy is planning an announcement Tuesday about a "major scientific breakthrough" at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of several sites worldwide where researchers have been trying to develop the possibility of harnessing energy from nuclear fusion.

It's a technology that has the potential to one day accelerate the planet's shift away from fossil fuels, which are the major contributors to climate change. The technology has long struggled with daunting challenges.

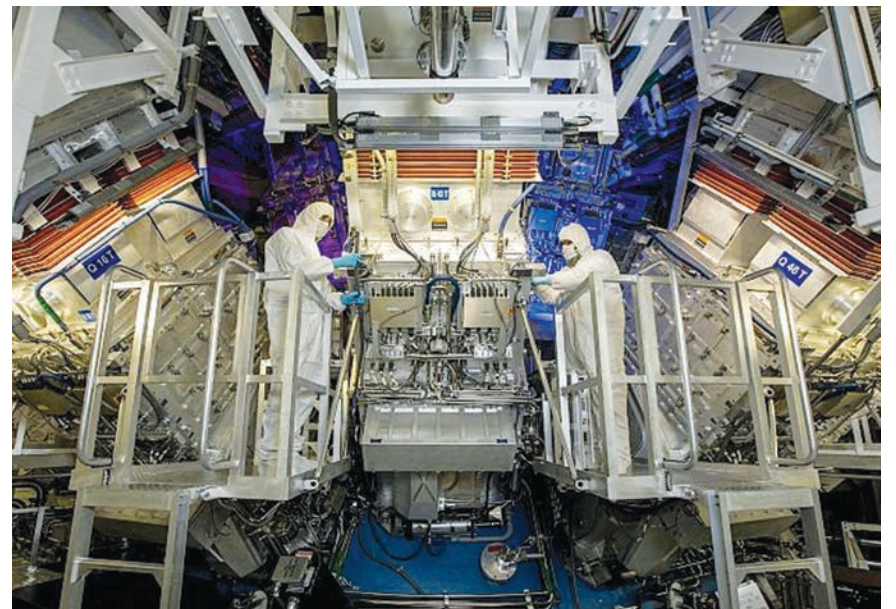
Here's a look at exactly what nuclear fusion is, and some of the difficulties in turning it into the cheap and carbon-free energy source that scientists believe it can be.

WHAT IS NUCLEAR FUSION?

The nuclear fusion reactions happen when two light nuclei merge to form a single heavier nucleus. Because the total mass of that single nucleus is less than the mass of the two original nuclei, the leftover mass is energy that is released in the process, according to the Department of Energy.

In the case of the sun, its intense heat — millions of degrees Celsius — and the pressure exerted by its gravity allow atoms that would otherwise repel each other to fuse.

Scientists have long understood how nuclear fusion has worked and have been trying to duplicate the process on Earth as far back as the 1930s. Current efforts focus on fusing a pair of hydrogen isotopes — deuterium and tritium — according to the Department of Energy, which says that particular



National Ignition Facility (NIF) Target Area operators inspect a final optics assembly (FOA) during a routine maintenance period at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory/Handout via REUTERS

combination releases "much more energy than most fusion reactions" and requires less heat to do so.

HOW VALUABLE WOULD THIS BE?

Daniel Kammen, a professor of energy and society at the University of California at Berkeley, said nuclear fusion offers the possibility of "basically unlimited" fuel if the technology can be made commercially viable. The elements needed are available in seawater.

It's also a process that doesn't produce the radioactive waste of nuclear fission, Kammen said.

One way scientists have tried to recreate nuclear fusion involves what's called a tokamak — a doughnut-shaped vacuum chamber that uses powerful magnets to turn fuel into a superheated plasma

(between 150 million and 300 million degrees Celsius) where fusion may occur.

The Livermore lab uses a different technique, with researchers firing a 192-beam laser at a small capsule filled with deuterium-tritium fuel. The lab reported that an August 2021 test produced 1.35 megajoules of fusion energy — about 70% of the energy fired at the target. The lab said several subsequent experiments showed declining results, but researchers believed they had identified ways to improve the quality of the fuel capsule and the lasers' symmetry. "The most critical feature of moving fusion from theory to commercial reality is getting more energy out than in," Kammen said. Source: AP

Meta introduces new sharing features on Instagram to help users collaborate and connect with friends

Meta has introduced new sharing features on Instagram, including 'Notes', that will help users to feel closer to the people they care about. 'Notes' is a new way for users to share their thoughts and see what their friends are up to, Meta said in a blogpost.

Notes are short posts of up to 60 characters using just text and emojis. This feature has already started rolling out to users.

Meta is also testing new features in Stories which include 'Add Yours nominations' and 'Candid Stories'.

Instagram is expanding its previously launched 'Add Yours in Stories' feature by introducing the



'Add Yours nominations' feature, which will allow users to invite friends to participate by tapping pass it on. 'Candid Stories' is a new way to capture and share what users are doing right now in a story that is only visible to those who also share their own.

"We're testing new features to give people more ways to collaborate and

connect with friends in groups," the company said.

With the new 'Group Profiles' feature, users will soon be able to create and join a new dedicated profile to share posts and stories with friends.

Whenever users share content to a Group Profile, that content will only be shared to group members instead of their followers and will be posted on the Group Profile instead of their own.

Meta is also testing 'Collaborative Collections' feature that will allow users to connect with friends over their shared interests by saving posts to a collaborative collection in their group or 1:1 DMs. Source: IANS

Elon Musk sells USD 3.58 billion worth of Tesla stock

Elon Musk sold another USD 3.58 billion worth of Tesla stock this week, but it wasn't clear where the proceeds were being spent.

The Tesla CEO, and new owner of Twitter, sold the shares in three days, according to a filing posted by the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Musk has sold nearly USD 23 billion worth of Tesla stock since April, with much of the money likely going to help fund his USD 44 billion acquisition of Twitter.

The sale comes as shares of the electric vehicle and solar panel maker have collapsed, losing over half their value since Musk first disclosed in April that he was buying up Twitter stock.

The falling shares have bumped Musk from his status as the world's wealthiest person, with his net worth falling to USD 174 billion, according to Forbes.

He was passed last week by French fashion and cosmetics magnate Bernard Arnault.

Investors have been punishing Tesla stock of late as Musk has spent much of his time running Twitter, raising fears that he's distracted from the car company.

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said Musk is now a villain in the eyes of Tesla investors. *Source: AP*

US stocks sink as Fed signals it will remain aggressive

WASHINGTON (TIP)

Stocks tumbled on Wall Street and across European markets Thursday, December 15, as investors grew increasingly concerned that the Federal Reserve and other central banks are willing to risk a recession to bring inflation under control.

The S&P 500 fell 2.5%, with more than 90% of stocks in the benchmark index closing in the red. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 2.2% and the Nasdaq composite lost 3.2%. The broad slide erased all the weekly gains for the major indexes.

European stocks fell sharply, with Germany's DAX dropping 3.3%.

The wave of selling came as central banks in Europe raised interest rates a day after the U.S. Federal Reserve hiked its key rate again, emphasizing that interest rates will need to go higher than previously expected in order to tame inflation.

"It's this coordinated central bank tightening — stocks tend to not do well in that environment," said Willie Delwiche, investment strategist at All Star Charts.

In the U.S., the market's losses were widespread, though technology stocks were the biggest weight on the S&P 500. The benchmark index fell 99.57 points to 3,895.75.



The Dow slid 764.13 points to 33,202.22, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq dropped 360.36 points to 10,810.53.

Small company stocks also fell. The Russell 2000 index slid 45.85 points, or 2.5%, to close at 1,774.61.

The Fed raised its short-term interest rate by half a percentage point on Wednesday, its seventh increase this year. Central banks in Europe followed along Thursday, with the European Central Bank, Bank of England and Swiss National Bank each raising their main lending rate by a half-point Thursday.

Although the Fed is slowing the pace of its rate increases, the central bank signaled it expects rates to be higher over the coming few years than it had

previously anticipated. That disappointed investors who hoped recent signs that inflation is easing somewhat would persuade the Fed to take some pressure off the brakes it's applying to the U.S. economy.

The federal funds rate stands at a range of 4.25% to 4.5%, the highest level in 15 years. Fed policymakers forecast that the central bank's rate will reach a range of 5% to 5.25% by the end of 2023. Their forecast doesn't call for a rate cut before 2024.

The yield on the two-year Treasury, which closely tracks expectations for Fed moves, rose to 4.24% from 4.21% late Wednesday. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which influences mortgage rates, slipped to 3.45% from 3.48%.

The three-month Treasury yield slipped to 4.31%, but remains above that of the 10-year Treasury. That's known as an inversion and considered a strong warning that the economy could be headed for a recession.

"The (stock) market's reaction is now factoring in a recession, and rejecting the possibility of the 'soft/softish' landing" that Fed Chair Jerome Powell raised in a speech last month, said Quincy Krosby, chief global strategist for LPL Financial. *Source: AP*

Russia replaces Iraq as top oil supplier to India

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Russia has for the first time emerged as top oil supplier to India replacing Iraq as refiners last month snapped up oil from Moscow fearing a price cap from December 5 could hit supplies and choke payment avenues, data obtained from trade sources showed.

India's oil imports from Russia rose for the fifth straight month, totalling 9,08,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November, up 4% from October, the data showed. The Group of Seven nations, Australia, and the 27 European Union countries have imposed a price cap of \$60 a barrel on Russian seaborne oil from December 5 as the West tries to limit Moscow's ability to finance its war in Ukraine.

The price cap plan calls for G7 countries to deny insurance, finance, brokering, navigation, and other services to oil cargoes priced above the price cap on crude and oil products. Russian oil accounted for about 23% of India's overall import of about 4 million bpd oil in November, the data showed.

India's overall imports in November declined 11% from October on lower purchases by Russia-backed Indian refiner Nayara Energy, which had shut its 400,000 bpd refinery for maintenance during the month, the data showed.

India, which rarely used to buy Russian oil because of costly logistics, has emerged as Russia's second biggest oil client after China as refiners snap up discounted crude shunned by Western nations since the February invasion of Ukraine. Last month India's oil imports from Iraq declined to the lowest since September 2020, while that from Saudi Arabia plunged to a 14-month low, the data showed. Indian refiners that were initially wary of placing orders for Russian crude for loading post December 5, have resumed purchases from Moscow as sanctions allow direct payment for Russian oil, sources said. *Source: Reuters*

Asian Development Bank keeps India's GDP growth unchanged at 7 percent

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has kept its outlook for India's economic growth unchanged at 7 per cent for the current fiscal year while forecasting a weaker-than-previously expected pace for developing Asia.

ADB's 7 per cent growth projection for fiscal 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023), unchanged from its September forecast, compares to 8.7 per cent GDP growth in 2021-22.

For 2023-24, the GDP growth has been kept unchanged at 7.2 per cent.

The Manila-based ADB in a report on Wednesday, December 14, saw Asia expanding 4.2 per cent this year before accelerating to 4.6 per cent in 2023. These projections compare to the previously estimated expansion of 4.3 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively.

"Despite recent global headwinds, the Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.0 per cent, as projected in the Update, supported by a strong domestic base.

"While some recent high-frequency indicators are more favourable than expected—notably consumer confidence, electricity supply and purchasing managers' indexes—others are a little less favourable, in particular exports, largely textiles and iron ore, and the index of industrial production of consumer goods," it said.

The growth forecast for 2023-24 is unchanged at 7.2 per cent, "sustained by positive effects from structural reform and from public investment catalysing private investment".

Inflation in India is still expected to rise to 6.7 per cent in 2022-23 before falling back to 5.8 per cent.

"In India, the economy grew by 6.3 per cent in Q2 (July-September) of the fiscal year 2022-23,



reflecting contraction in public consumption of 4.4 per cent even as exports grew by 11.5 per cent despite the global slowdown," ADB said.

On the supply side, the increase was led by service sector growth at 9.3 per cent, contributing 4.6 percentage points to GDP growth.

Industry, by contrast, suffered a small contraction by 0.8 per cent, dragged down by contraction in manufacturing and mining, ADB added. *Source: PTI*

Shree Ganeshaya Namah



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

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The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope by Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - DECEMBER 19 TO DECEMBER 25



Aries

Ganesha says, this week, you'll have to deal with financial challenges. You will receive assistance from your coworkers and professional contacts. Your company will be the most beneficial once a week. In regards of your business, you might need to offer people pressure on a frequent basis. Your buddy will require emotional support this week. Being tough under pressure comes naturally to you since you are a little callous, but your partner may not feel this way, so try to put yourself in their shoes. Every week, you'll need to exercise additional caution since you can develop a cold or a sneeze. Be careful and only use natural remedies.



Taurus

Ganesha says, you'll have a great week since you'll have a great job prospect. This week, you'll undertake measured risks that will work out well for you. The effect of your eleventh sector will also be advantageous for your career. You most probably travel with your partner this week. You'll communicate all week while having fun in each other's presence. If you're unmarried, you could run into someone fascinating. You'll need to exercise extra caution due to your frequent acid reflux. You could end up in a predicament.



Gemini

Ganesha says, there will be less emphasis on learning and more on generating wealth. You'll give up your old habits of behavior. You must use utmost prudence given the present downward trend in the financial industries. By doing the easy tasks, you may give your partner a feeling of specialness. They treasure the small things you do for them. You'll be liberated of whatever resentment you have for them. Every week, your wellness will be good. The key to great wellness this week, is eating sensibly and on time.



Cancer

Ganesha says, this week will be a challenging week for you in your career. The subject of wealth will be on your mind every week. Even if you may not currently believe that your destiny is secure, you will prevail in the short run. The financial market will also enable you to preserve income this week. You and your partner will argue over the same issues this week. You need to convince your spouse of the importance of your gift. You'll need to set aside some time each week for your healthcare since you must see a physician for your spinal troubles.



Leo

Ganesha says, if you follow a regular schedule, this week will be highly productive for you. You should ask for a raise or an evaluation this week even though your eighth sector will go upwards. You may make your partner aware of your departure once a week by not allowing them sufficient time. They will appreciate your merits rather than will become offended. Every week, your wellness will be OK. The exercise programme you've been doing up until now has been effective.



Virgo

Ganesha says, you will not depend on your companions or colleagues while reaching important judgments. If you're in a partnership, impacted choices won't help you. Your partner will help you manage with difficulties this week. You'll find comfort in their kind words. Engaged individuals will have a common domestic problem this week; try to think together with a resolution as a community. You will feel dizzy and worn out this week. Attempt to consume on schedule, and refrain from drinking.



Libra

Ganesha says, you'll be able to make more income today as a result of your prior efforts. Additionally, you'll exert more energy than usual. You'll observe how things will come together naturally. If you work in commerce, avoid making important decisions every week. This week, you'll feel as though your partner is excessively worried about a minor issue. You will try your hardest to help them understand, but you will fall short. Don't let it become a mess, please. The only factor you should be worried about is your food choices because you will feel fine every week. You might eat too much fast food this week, which might cause issues later.



Scorpio

Ganesha says, you'll be able to manage your money well from this point forward this week. Your connection will expose you to fresh prospects and economic deals if you're in industry. If you're a freelancer, the good news will reach you via the job board where you qualified. Amazingly, you'll run into somebody every week. Because of a previous catastrophe, you're cutting individuals out of your existence, but the individual you'll see every week will be good enough to justify more than simply a possibility. Maintain your emotions open every week. You might not be able to leave the house every week. You'll suffer from agonizing back pain every week. You shouldn't pressure oneself to exercise out every week.



Sagittarius

Ganesha says, you won't be able to generate decisions every week on your professional facets. When undertaking any significant decisions, you must wait for Venus to coincide in your advantage. Be kind; soon, things will be better. This week pleasant events are anticipated while Jupiter transits in a pleasant period. Subjects covered each week include weddings and proposals. Each week, yoga and mindfulness will aid in your recovery. Ensure you get advice before starting your new dietary routine.

Capricorn



Ganesha says, you'll be able to manage the weekly stack of tasks that has amassed above your head. If you're an entrepreneur, your competitive position will get better every week. When it regards to suggestions concerning equities, it will be crucial to use prudence this week. Every week, your partner will show you, their love. As you exchange brief encounters on a regular basis, you'll observe how your connection is strengthened. Just appreciate each other's companionship for the time being and let fate determine the future of your partnership. Your wellness may need monitoring on this week because you could have liver issues.



Aquarius

Ganesha says, this week, you'll have a little more authority. The best results will come from enabling your workers to share their own thoughts. If you purchase in stocks, you will eventually notice that the weekly marketplace is rather upbeat. Your partner will be persuaded to share their plans with you once a week. Your recommendations will arm them with a richness of knowledge. You'll keep them safe from the threats. You must carefully keep hold of any health issues you could have once a week. Ensure that you good attention of oneself by using natural medicines.



Pisces

Ganesha says, your emotions will divert, making it difficult for you to stay concentrated on your work this week, but in the interim, your professional facades will offer additional wonderful tidings. Your rivals will be keeping tabs on your every action this week. Every week, your partner will be your pillow to lean on. Every week through your worst moments, they will be beside you. You'll start considering the destiny of this connection by nightfall. This week, your fitness should be great, but mental tension may prevent you from sleeping. Try to unwind each week by practicing meditation.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : DECEMBER 19 TO DECEMBER 25
BY ASTRO FRIEND CHIRAG - SON OF ASTROLOGER BEJAN DARUWALLA

December 19

Ganesha says the new connections you make today will last a long time. The returns on previous investments would be pretty profitable, and you will get over past emotional issues related to your ageing. You might expect to make money from your passion project today. Minor health issues could be caused by stress and strain. You should approach an influential figure today that has the potential to alter your outlook and personality significantly.

December 20

Ganesha says today, new relationships and coalitions will form. You would be in a good position, and your abilities would present you with better opportunities. You and your partner should plan going on long journeys and have many enjoyable times together soon. A family member's health scare can necessitate routine medical care today. During this time, you would see an increase in your income and make some wise investments. Your main ally would be your husband.

December 21

Ganesha says today is a happy day for you mainly due to the encouragement you get from loved ones and

friends, your confidence is likely to see a significant lift today. Later in the day, some people will get promotions and move places. Stress and anxiety may arise due to your parent's health. To prevent future problems, avoid money transactions with friends and family. You're spending on entertainment and luxuries would increase as your income increased. It is advised to make new investments because previous investments will reap dividends.

December 22

Ganesha says you would utilize your knowledge, experience, and skills in an important presentation today. More than cash benefits, you would be motivated by fame and glory. Your salary would be adequate, though, and you would also make some significant investments. Today's key highlights include new buildings, renovations, and socializing. You might be inclined to start planning your abroad trip.

December 23

Ganesha says you would meet new people today, which would benefit your career. Even when possessive, your partner would be supportive and helpful. Minor health issues, including backaches, stiff necks, and body aches, will frequently cause problems during the

day today so make sure to take some time to rest. Additionally, you would experience unforeseen career advancements. If you go out and join clubs and other social events, you will be quite successful socially.

December 24

Ganesha says your employer would value your confidence and excitement today. Many tasks you had previously thought unattainable would be possible for you to complete. Having new contacts would bring financial advantages for you today. You'll be bothered by minor domestic conflicts and worry. Make sure to take extra care of your health by watching what you eat. It will be enjoyable and intellectually stimulating to go on a picnic or meet up with friends. Friends and family will offer encouragement and support to you today.

December 25

Ganesha says people will be impressed by your charisma and communication skills at work today. Although your salary would increase, it would be very challenging for you to preserve money because of your extensive spending today. If you want to reach your goals, you shouldn't let anything hinder your career aspirations. Family members' elders and kids will need a lot of your attention today.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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contd from page 1

India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar labels Pakistan the "contemporary epicenter of terrorism"

'Global Counterterrorism Approach: Challenges and Way Forward.' held under India's Presidency of the 15-nation Council. "We cannot let another "9/11 of New York" or "26/11 of Mumbai" happen again," he said, asserting that combating terrorism is a battle in which there is no respite. "The world cannot afford attention deficit or tactical compromises.

It is most of all for the Security Council to lead the global response in this regard."

Jaishankar presided over the Council and in a statement made in his national capacity, called out Pakistan and its all-weather ally China, which has been putting holds on proposals by India to blacklist Pakistan-based terrorists and entities under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

"By now, it is well established where and how terrorist organizations operate, and under what kind of protection. Activities like recruitment, financing and motivation are often done in the open. The days when it could be said that we were unaware are now behind us. , assigning responsibility is that much easier. The response of the sponsors of terrorism is not to give up but to conduct and execute their agenda at an arms-length. To do this, they create narratives of limitations and difficulties. We buy such explanations at our own peril. The suggestion that states who are

apparently capable of everything else but are only helpless when it comes to terrorism is ludicrous. Accountability must therefore be the bedrock of counter-terrorism," he said.

Jaishankar added that the working methods of relevant mechanisms are also a subject of legitimate concern and debate.

"At one level, we have seen protections that come close to justification. Then, there are evidence-backed proposals that are put on hold without assigning adequate reason. Conversely, there has even been recourse to anonymity so as to avoid taking ownership of untenable cases," he said, a reference to China.

In the past five months, China, a permanent, veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council has put holds on as many listing proposals made by India and the US to designate Pakistan-based terrorists under the Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee regime.

Since June this year, China, Islamabad's all-weather ally, has put holds on proposals to blacklist Pakistan-based terrorists Hafiz Talah Saeed, Lashkar-e-Taiba leader Shahid Mahmood, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba terrorist Sajid Mir, senior Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) leader Abdul Rauf Azhar and Abdul Rehman Makki under the Al Qaeda Sanctions regime. India and the US had submitted proposals to designate the Pakistan-based terrorists and subject them to asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo but hit stumbling blocks when Beijing placed holds on the proposals.

Highlighting four specific challenges with which the counter-terrorism architecture is currently grappling, Jaishankar pointed to the issue of terror

financing and State culpability, whether by commission or omission. "The world may no longer be willing to buy the justifications and cover ups as in the past. Through bitter experience, we know that terror is terror, whatever the explanation. The question now arises as to the responsibilities of the state from whose soil such actions are planned, supported and perpetrated."

He also stressed the need to addressing double standards in countering terrorism, leading to concerns of politicization. "Uniform criteria are not applied to sanctioning and prosecuting terrorists. It would seem sometimes that the ownership of terrorism is more important than its actual perpetration or its consequences."

He underlined the challenge of ensuring the integrity and accountability of the counter-terror multilateral mechanisms and their working methods. "They are on occasion opaque, sometimes driven by agendas and at times, pushed without evidence."

He began his address by telling the Council that India faced the horrors of cross border terrorism long before the world took serious note of it. "Over the decades, we lost thousands of innocent civilian lives. But we fought terrorism resolutely, bravely and with a zero-tolerance approach."

He cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has declared: "we consider that even a single attack is one too many and even a single life lost is one too many. So, we will not rest till terrorism is uprooted."

He said the briefing is part of India's ongoing efforts in the Security Council to re-invigorate the counter-terrorism agenda. "And that is overdue because the threat of terrorism has actually become even more serious. We have seen the expansion of Al-Qaida, Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al Shabab and their affiliates. At the other end of the spectrum are 'lone wolf' attacks inspired by online radicalization and biases."

Jaishankar said that countering threats from the misuse of new and emerging technologies by terrorists is "likely to be the next frontier of our battle."

He noted that the third challenge is "how do we deal with differential standards, both inside and outside this Council. For too long, some have persisted with the belief that terrorism is just another instrument or stratagem. Those invested in terrorism have used such cynicism to carry on. It is not just plain wrong but could be downright dangerous, even for the very people whose toleration extends this far."

The fourth challenge is the growing potential for the misuse of new and emerging technologies by extremists, radicals and terrorists. "Over the years, they have diversified their funding portfolio and expanded their recruitment toolkit. They exploit the anonymity afforded by new and emerging technologies such as virtual currencies for fundraising and finances. Terrorist groups are taking advantage of openness of democratic societies, spreading false narratives, inciting hatred, and radicalizing ideologies."



He said that taking all these into account, we need to adopt a comprehensive, contemporary and result-oriented approach to this set of challenges.

"No individual state should endeavor to seek political gain from terrorism and none of us collectively should ever put up with such calculations. When it comes to tackling terrorism, we must overcome political differences and manifest a zero-tolerance approach." (Source: PTI)

PM Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin talk energy, trade

The Ministry of External Affairs said the conversation was a follow-up of their Samarkand meeting in September and among other key areas, touched energy cooperation, trade and investments, and defense and security cooperation.

The sixth telephonic conversation of the year between the two leaders took place against the backdrop of PM Modi not holding the annual summit with Putin this year due to "domestic commitments", according to a senior Russian diplomat. The readouts of both countries did not specifically touch on the prospects of an in-person meeting soon, but said they agreed to remain in regular touch. India, like several nations from the Global South, has so far defied western pressure to cut off ties with Russia.

The leaders expressed satisfaction with the high level of bilateral cooperation and underscored the importance of close coordination within the framework of international organizations, including the Indian presidencies of the G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The PM briefed Putin on India's ongoing G20 presidency, highlighting its priority area.

(Source: Tribune)

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#1

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Saphala Ekadashi

Saphala Ekadashi is observed in the honour of Lord Vishnu. Devotees observe a strict fast on this day and offer Tulsi leaves, incense sticks, dhoop batti, flowers, kumkum and sweets to the lord. They light oil and ghee lamps and observe 'Jagran' the whole night. They do aarti, puja, sing bhajans and holy mantras that night. The consumption of rice is absolutely banned on this day since it is believed that anyone who eats rice on any of the Ekadashi would have rice grains as worms in their stomachs owing to Lord Brahma's curse. It is believed that observing Saphala Ekadashi fast brings immense happiness in the devotee's life.

Glories of Ekadashi in Brahma Purana

This Ekadashi happens during the waning moon in the month of November, December or January. The glories of this Ekadashi are described in the Brahma Purana, between the conversation of Lord Krishna and Maharaja Yudhishtir. An excerpt of the conversation is as follows:

Yudhishtir said, "O Krishna! What is the name of the Ekadashi that occurs at the waning moon in December or January and how should one observe it? Please explain this to me in detail."

Krishna replied, "O best of the Bharat dynasty, just as Shesha is best among the snakes, Garuda is best among the birds, Ashwamedha or the horse sacrifice is best among the sacrifices, Ganga is best among the rivers, Lord Vishnu is best among the demi-gods and the Brahmins are best among the human beings. Similarly, among all the vows the day of Ekadashi is best. Anyone who observes Ekadashi is very dear to me. The amount of piety that accumulates by undergoing austerities, five thousand years, is achieved simply by observing Ekadashi."

In the conversation, Lord Krishna specifically mentioned that one should stay awake all night on Saphala Ekadashi. Devotees should offer him fresh fruits, betel nuts, leaves, spices, seeds, nuts, etc.

Saphala Ekadashi Vrat Katha

This Is How It Started

In the city of Champavati, this king, Mahishmati, had 4 sons. Among them, the eldest son, Lumpaka, was very sinful. He used to blaspheme the Brahmanas, Vaishnavas and the demigods. Consequently, his father exiled him. The exiled Lumpaka lived in a jungle but at night would sneak into the kingdom and steal various things including food. Despite him stealing, the citizens would set him free because he was the son of the king. Lumpaka spent his life regularly eating raw meats and fruits.

The Tale of Lumpaka

There was a banyan tree in this forest. It was as worshippable as the demigods. Lumpaka lived underneath this tree for some time. Lumpaka happened to be living this way on the Ekadashi of the waning moon in the month of November-December. Due to fatigue and weakness, Lumpaka became unconscious a day before Ekadashi and regained his consciousness at midday of Ekadashi.

Lumpaka couldn't possibly kill any animal that day since he was so feeble. He was severely afflicted by hunger. He eventually found some fruits but offered them to Lord Vishnu praying for his mercy. He was up for the entire Ekadashi night. He unwittingly observed Saphala Ekadashi as a result of fasting and staying up.

Blessings Of Lord Vishnu For Lumpaka

Lord Vishnu accepted the worship and vows of this Ekadashi offered by the Lumpaka. Lord Vishnu blessed Lumpaka with a return of his kingdom. The next morning a divine horse came and stood by Lumpaka. At that time, a voice from the sky was heard, "Oh Prince, by the mercy of Lord Madhusudana and by the influence of Saphala Ekadashi, you will receive your kingdom and rule without any difficulty. Return to your father and enjoy the kingdom."

In accordance with these instructions, Lumpaka returned to his father and accepted the responsibilities of ruling the kingdom. Thereafter, he got a beautiful



Important information

Saphala Ekadashi, Paush, Krishna Ekadashi

Monday, 19 December 2022

Ekadashi date start: 19 December 2022 at 03:32 AM

Ekadashi date ends: 20 December 2022 at 02:32 AM

wife and good sons.

Saphala Ekadashi Significance

In the Hindu calendar, the Ekadashi that is observed during the month of Paush is Saphala Ekadashi. It is also referred to as Paush Krishna Ekadashi. The word 'Saphala' means to prosper, therefore Saphala Ekadashi is rightfully described as a day when devotees are rewarded with good fortune by ending the miseries.

This day of fasting is considered as a medium to open the doors of abundance, success, prosperity and fortune. While keeping the Saphala Ekadashi fast, devotees must only eat Satvik food and donate essentials to the Brahmanas and needy people. It is believed that the devotees can wash away sins and attain liberation by fasting on this day.

This vrat has the ability to assist a person to accomplish his or her desires and dreams. On this day, by observing Vrat, one can reclaim everything that has been lost. And there's a lot more, like wealth, affection, honour, health, and so on.

Saphala Ekadashi Puja Vidhi

Get up early on the day of Saphala Ekadashi. Perform your routine activities.

Take a vow of fast by wearing clean clothes and offering water to the Sun.

Offer yellow flowers and yellow objects to Vishnu.

Worship the Lord by offering incense, lamp, fruits, coconut, betel nut, amla, pomegranate, clove and Pancharit, etc.

After this, recite Aarti, Chalisa, Mantra and a

thousand names of God.

Chant "Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya" 108 times.

The donation has special significance on this day, donate according to your ability.

Stay awake all night, sing bhajans, kirtans, or hymns in the name of Shri Hari.

End the fast on the day of Dwadashi.

Offer food and other donations to Brahmins and the needy. After this, you can eat too.

Saphala Ekadashi is an extremely auspicious day. One who observes fast on this day bears favourable results in life. It generates a different kind of reverberations into your whole being that takes you towards your betterment. All the fasts and festivals in the Hindu culture were not about religion but about the highest way of living that transforms you into a conscious human being.

Source: Mypanidit.com

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By Murli Menon

The anticipation of travel is almost like falling in love! You choose a destination and an adventure that makes your heart leap and your pulse race. When you arrive, you do not know how it will turn out to be, a casual flirtation, a torrid affair, a long term relationship or if after all the planning and expectation, there is just no chemistry!

Enough of Goa's beaches. Now, it's time to revel in the long history of Portuguese influence in the form of Fontainhas Latin Quarter which stands still in pride with all its glory. It is the centre of attraction of the capital city Panjim. Flanked by Ourem creek in the East and Altinho hills in the west, Fontainhas still exudes Portuguese charm and the radiance of old days does seep through like a newly formed bud kissed by the morning dew. It gets its name from the Fountain of Phoenix, the mountain stream located at the foot of Altinho Hills.

Fontainhas Street is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Panjim city, the capital of Goa. Locals still refer this street as "Little Portugal in Goa". Fontainhas was founded by an aristocratic Portuguese gentleman named António João de Sequeira for the purpose of coconut plantations. But, in the early 1800s, due to the spread of plague in Old Goa, the Portuguese government headquarters was shifted to Panjim. As a result, this area was transformed into the residential area for Portuguese administrative officers and staff. It was recognized by UNESCO in 1984.

The walk through this street transports you to Portugal of the 1800's. Large colourful European styled houses, stand side by side like a European fortress. Bungalows coloured bright yellow to ruby red to cobalt blue jostle with each another for space in this quaint Latin quarter of Panjim which can only be accessed on foot. The streets are narrow and full of European styled bistros, cafes and bakeries. Many heritage homestays, hotels and lodges are scattered around Fontainhas street.

It is indeed, one of the most visited places in Goa. Breathtaking vibes of old cafes and bakeries, colonial charm of Portuguese buildings, art galleries, red brick wishing well and old Portuguese churches and old streets like 18th June Street and Rua 31 De Janeiro Street will transport you back to time of Portuguese influence.

Colonial architecture is one of a kind. Slate tiled roofs, dark wooden doors, white and blue tiled plaques, maroon red and mustard yellow houses are the most fascinating sights to behold at Fontainhas. Your visit to Goa will be incomplete without visiting the old-world charm of this Portuguese heritage. February is the best time to visit, as it is a festive month. The Fountain Festival is held every year in the month of February. Tourists from all over the world visit here during this time to enjoy local Goan culture and art. Locals turn their houses into art galleries and homestays during this festival.

Altinho Hill will give you breathtaking views of Fontainhas Latin Quarter and the tangerine colored Maruti Hindu Temple. Don't forget to go to the Phoenix Fountain, which is another famous landmark at Altinho Hill.



A Portuguese styled house on Fontainhas Street.



Author at Fontainhas Street.

The names of the narrow cobbled streets can also be traced back to the Portuguese time in Goa, for instance, Rua 31 de Janeiro (31st January Road) is named after the day when Portugal got independence from Spain on January 31, 1640; and 18th June Street is named after the day in 1946 that marked the beginning of the end of Portuguese rule in Goa. Marvel at the old Portuguese

houses that date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Painted in hues of green, pale yellow, and blue, along with red-colored tiled roofs, artistic doors, and overhead balconies, you'll instantly fall head over heels with the rows of traditional Portuguese houses and cottages that cover the narrow, winding landscape. One of the intriguing features of the houses and cottages in Fontainhas is that

Fontainhas - Little Portugal in India



Portuguese bread with vegan soup at Laguna Anjuna.

they are painted every year after monsoons; it's a rule which is followed till today. One of the historic houses has a red coloured wishing well with roosters erected on it. The well is no more in use, but you can spend some quiet time here, enjoy the beautiful sights, and soak up the local atmosphere.

How to get there?

By air:

The nearest international airport to reach Goa is at Mumbai. There are several options for Portuguese tourists to get to Goa from Mumbai. Goa domestic Airport at Vasco is about 40 km. away from Panjim. Goa is connected by direct flights from Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore.

Where to stay?:

Laguna Anjuna Resort is an affordable place to stay. They are extremely affordable by Indian standards during May-October which is a low season. A standard double-room costs approximately 45 Euro (inclusive of breakfast). Budget conscious European tourists frequent this eco-friendly resort at this time of the year. The rooms are spacious and can comfortably accommodate a family of four (with extra beds). The bathrooms are comfortable with hot water showers and mini-bathtubs. Advance booking is recommended during February at Laguna Anjuna, which is a 60 minute drive away from Panjim.

Where to eat?:

Several restaurants offering Indian vegetarian cuisine are located in and around Panjim. Several make-shift street-side stalls selling snacks are also found here. Several European style bistros and cafes serving healthy vegetarian fare are found at Fontainhas.

Murli Menon is a travel writer based at Ahmedabad. He is the bestselling author of 25 Travel Guides on Amazon.com titled "ZeNLP Travel Guides". Murli Menon can be reached at ceo@tips4ceos.com

History This Week

DECEMBER 16 TO DECEMBER 22

December 16



Glenn Miller

December 16, 1944 - American big-band leader Glenn Miller disappeared in a small plane over the English Channel and was presumably killed. Best remembered for Moonlight Serenade and In the Mood.

December 16, 1944 - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 65 miles into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.

December 16, 1969 - The British House of Commons voted 343-185 to abolish the death penalty in England.

December 16, 1991 - The United Nations voted to revoke Resolution 3379, originally approved on November 10, 1975, which had equated Zionism (a movement supporting the Jewish national state of Israel) with racism.

Birthday - British novelist Jane Austen (1775-1817) was born in Hampshire, England. She wrote love stories concerning the lives of gentry in rural England. Best known for Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Northanger Abbey, and Emma. In recent years her works have been made into very popular TV mini-series and movies.

Birthday - Philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) was born in Madrid, Spain. As a child he emigrated to the U.S. and eventually became a teacher at Harvard University. Best known for stating, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

December 17



Pope Paul III

December 17, 1538 - Pope Paul III excommunicated King Henry VIII after he had declared himself supreme head of the Church in England.

December 17, 1971 - The war between India and Pakistan over East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) ended as 90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered.

December 17, 1903 - After three years of experimentation, Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved the first powered, controlled airplane flights. They made four flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the longest lasting about a minute.

Birthday - Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) was born in Plympton, Massachusetts. During the American Revolutionary War, she disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the Continental Army under the name Robert Shurtleff. Although she was wounded in battle, she was not discovered until a severe fever unmasked her identity. She was dismissed from the army in 1783. In later life, she lectured professionally on her wartime experiences.

Birthday - Poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts. His books of poetry include Legends of New England and Snowbound.

December 18

December 18, 1916 - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.



Adolf Hitler

December 18, 1940 - Adolf Hitler ordered the German General Staff to begin planning

Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia.

December 18, 1956 - Japan was admitted to the United Nations.

Birthday - West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (1913-1992) was born in Lubeck, Germany (as Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm). During Hitler's regime, he was an anti-Nazi exile. He returned to Germany after World War II, entered politics and was elected chancellor in 1969. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 for his efforts to improve East-West relations during the Cold War.

December 19

December 19, 1946 - War broke out in French Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacked the French seeking to oust them from Vietnam. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year conflict which eventually led to heavy U.S. involvement and ended with a Communist victory in April 1975 after U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam.

December 19, 1998 - The House of Representatives impeached President Bill Clinton, approving two out of four Articles of Impeachment, charging Clinton with lying under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice.



William Parry

Birthday - British explorer William Parry (1790-1855) was born in Bath, England. He conducted Arctic expeditions and made three attempts to find a Northwest Passage.

Birthday - Historian Carter Woodson (1875-1950) was born in New Canton, Virginia. He introduced black studies to American colleges and universities. His works included; The Negro in Our History and The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861.

December 20

December 20, 1956 - The Montgomery bus boycott ended after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling integrating the Montgomery bus system was implemented. The boycott by African Americans had begun

on December 5, 1955, after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white man.

December 20, 1989 - The U.S. invaded Panama attempting to capture Manuel Noriega on charges of narcotics trafficking. Operation Just Cause occurred seven months after Noriega had declared unfavorable election results in his country to be null and void. The invasion toppled the Noriega government and resulted in the installation of Guillermo Endara as president. Noriega temporarily eluded capture, but surrendered a few weeks later to U.S. troops. He was then tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the U.S.



Harvey S. Firestone

Birthday - American industrialist Harvey S. Firestone (1868-1938) was born in Columbiana County, Ohio. He founded Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. and was a close friend of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison.

December 21

December 21st - Winter begins in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere today is the beginning of summer.

December 21, 1846 - Anesthesia was used for the first time in Britain during an operation at University College Hospital in London performed by Robert Liston who amputated the leg of a servant.



General George Patton

December 21, 1945 - World War II General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident. He had been injured on December 9th near Mannheim and was taken to a

hospital in Heidelberg where he died. He was buried in Luxembourg. Nicknamed "Old Blood and Guts," he once stated during the war, "We shall attack and attack until we are exhausted, and then we shall attack again."

December 21, 1972 - East and West Germany established diplomatic ties, ending nearly two decades of Cold War hostility and paving the way for international recognition of East Germany.

December 21, 1988 - Pan American Flight 103 exploded in midair as the result of a terrorist bomb and crashed into Lockerbie, Scotland. All 259 passengers and crew members along with 11 persons on the ground were killed.

December 21, 1993 - The KGB (Soviet Secret Police) organization was abolished by Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Birthday - Soviet Russia leader Josef Stalin (1879-1953) was born in the village of Gori in Georgia, Russia (as Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhughashvili).

December 22

December 22, 1783 - Following a triumphant journey from New York to Annapolis, Maryland, George Washington, victorious Commander-in-Chief of the American Revolutionary Army, appeared before Congress and voluntarily resigned his commission.



Italian composer Giacomo Puccini

Birthday - Italian composer Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) was born in Lucca, Tuscany. Widely considered the greatest Italian opera composer, he is best known for popular works such as Madama Butterfly and La Boheme.

Birthday - "Lady Bird" Johnson (1912-2007) was born in Karnack, Texas (as Claudia Alta Taylor). She was beside her husband Lyndon Johnson on board Air Force One when he was sworn in as the 36th U.S. President following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. She proved to be a gracious First Lady, remembered for her anti-litter campaign, asking citizens to help "Beautify America."

Messi vs Mbappé: A rivalry of past vs present



DOHA (TIP)

France and Argentina will play in the World Cup final on Sunday, December 18, and this matchup has all the storylines you could hope for. Defending champs vs a team out to get their first trophy since the 80s. Europe vs South America. And best of all, two of the best current players in soccer, teammates, going up against each other - a rivalry of past and present.

Messi vs Mbappé

Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé are two of the best players in the world right now. That has shown as they've taken their respective teams to the final and have both been key in doing so. These two have spent the last two years



playing on the same club team with PSG. Together, they are an incredible duo. But against each other, who will come out on top?

Messi, who is 35 years old, will be playing in his last World Cup match of his career. Of all his accolades, the World Cup trophy is the only thing missing. He will look to cement himself as the greatest of all time by the end of the game on Sunday, while bringing Argentina to their first World Cup win since 1986.

Mbappé, at 23 year old, has already become one of the greatest in the world. He will be playing in his second World Cup final with France, after winning it

in 2018. He could become the first player since Pele to win two World Cups by the age of 23.

How do Messi and Mbappé compare?

When you compare these two, it's a pretty even competition. They are both obviously at different stages in their career - Messi, a well-known soccer genius, and Mbappé, the future of the sport. But their numbers are equally impressive.

Messi has played in 853 matches at the club level, with 701 goals and 333 assists. For Argentina, he's played in 171 games with 96 goals and 55 assists. He is on the verge of becoming the first player to ever score in the group stage,

round of 16, quarterfinal, semifinal, and final of the World Cup.

Mbappé is no stranger to the net either. In 297 club matches, he's scored 217 goals and had 109 assists. For France, he's played in 65 games with 33 goals and 23 assists. He may be less experienced than Messi, but he's no less talented. Last season, Mbappé scored 39 goals across all competitions for PSG while scoring 42, 30, and 39 in the previous seasons before that.

How have Messi and Mbappé fared against each other in the past?

Messi and Mbappé have met twice in the Champions League knockout round while Messi was still with Barcelona. The first leg saw Messi score the first goal, but Mbappé scored a hat trick and PSG walked away with a 4-1 lead. Both Messi and Mbappé scored in the second leg as well, but Mbappé got the better of it again, with PSG winning 5-2 on aggregate.

The two have experience playing against each other at the World Cup, too. The last time their countries faced each other, it was in the round of 16 at the 2018 World Cup in Russia. As we all know, France went on to become the World Cup champions. In that game, which France won 4-3, Mbappé scored two goals and Messi scored none.

In the 2022 World Cup, so far, Mbappé has scored five goals for France and has two assists. Messi has also scored five for Argentina and has three assists. Both players will undoubtedly play a big role when France and Argentina face off this Sunday. *Source: En.as.com*

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann welcomes Hockey WC 2023 Trophy in Amritsar

AMRITSAR (TIP)

The Trophy Tour of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar - Rourkela arrived in Amritsar, Punjab from Lucknow on Wednesday, December 14, and was welcomed on Thursday, December 15, by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann at his residence, along with Hockey Punjab President Nitin Kohli and General Secretary Harpreet Singh.

Also, it was traditionally welcomed by Harjesh Kumar, SDM, Nitin Kohli, President Hockey Punjab, Harpreet Singh General Secretary Hockey Punjab, Olympian Baljit Singh Dhillon, Joint Secretary Hockey Punjab and Surinder Singh Sodhi, 1980 Moscow Olympic Gold Medallist at the airport on Wednesday. And later was then received by Sahil Sandhu and Olympian Balwinder Singh Shammi at Spring Dale School, Amritsar from where it was displayed at Shri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar in the presence of Hockey Punjab

members, SGPC Amritsar and Round Glass Academy teams. It was further displayed at the Jallianwala Bagh Amritsar and VR Mall, Amritsar for the general public to click pictures and selfies.

In the lead up to the prestigious FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar - Rourkela which begins on 13th January 2023, the coveted trophy will travel across 13 states and one Union Territory before returning to Odisha on 25 December, thus giving the fans and public a chance to engage with the prestigious trophy before the winning team lifts it on 29th January 2023. The nationwide Trophy Tour was launched in Bhubaneswar on 5th December by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Naveen Patnaik. Following this, the trophy will journey across West Bengal, Manipur, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, New Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh. *Source: ANI*





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