



ONLINE PETITION LAUNCHED TO EXTEND GRACE PERIOD FOR H-1B VISA HOLDERS TO 12 MONTHS



Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies and Global Technology Professionals Association have launched an online petition urging President Joe Biden to extend the grace period of H-1B visas holders from two months to a year.

Photo for representation only

FEBRUARY 09, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Amidst massive layoffs in the American tech sector that have resulted in a large number of Indian professionals being jobless, two Indian-American organizations have launched an online petition urging President Joe Biden to extend the grace period of H-1B visas holders from two months to a year.

This means that once fired from a job, a foreign tech worker on H-1B visas would have one year to find a

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US President Biden touts administration's economic policies in State of the Union address

Asserts his administration is building an economy where no one is left behind

FEBRUARY 08, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): America today is in a much better shape than it was two years ago when its economy was "reeling", President Joe Biden has asserted, touting his administration's economic accomplishments in his State of the Union address as he laid the groundwork for his 2024 White House run.

The economy is coming back, even if there's more to do on inflation, Biden told Americans on Tuesday, February 7, in his primetime address to the nation, his second since assuming the presidency in 2021.

The economy was reeling two years ago, he said, adding that today the unemployment rate is at a 50-year low.

"We've been sent here to finish the job," Biden said, a phrase he used repeatedly as he laid out his agenda for the next two years.

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President Joe Biden delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress at the U.S. Capitol, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, in Washington, as Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy applaud
Photo credit / Jacquelyn Martin, Pool

Over 21,000 dead from quake in Turkey and Syria



Medical treatment being given to the people of earthquake-hit Turkey at the Indian Army's field hospital, at Iskenderun in Hatay province.

Photo credit / PTI

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

ISTANBUL (TIP): More than 21,000 people have died in Turkey and Syria

after earthquakes swept through the region Monday. Rescue workers are now racing against time to pull survivors from the rubble of collapsed buildings in freezing winter conditions.

At least 78,124 people were injured across both countries, according to authorities.

The 7.8 magnitude quake struck 23 kilometers (14.2 miles) east of Nurdagi, in Turkey's Gaziantep province, at a depth of 24.1 kilometers (14.9 miles), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said.

The natural disaster is one of the deadliest earthquakes in two decades.

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ISRO rocket with three satellites lifts off from Sriharikota

FEBRUARY 10, 2023

SRIHARIKOTA (TIP): ISRO's LV D2 carrying EOS-07 satellite and two co-passenger payloads lifted off from the spaceport here on Friday, February 10.

In its second developmental flight, LV D2 carried EOS-07, an earth observation satellite as its main payload and two others -- Janus-1 built by US-based Antaris and Chennai-headquartered Space Kidz India's Azaadi SAT-2. This was ISRO's maiden mission this year.

At the end of a six-and-a-half hour countdown, the 34-metre-tall rocket lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, even as ISRO has pinned hopes on it to lead the space agency to



At the end of a six-and-a-half hour countdown, the 34-metre-tall rocket lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre

Photo for representation only
Photo credit / PTI

success in tapping the small satellite launch vehicle market.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

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GUEST COMMENT

State of affairs: On Joe Biden's second State of the Union address

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN KNOWS HE MUST FOCUS ON BOTH THE U.S. ECONOMY AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

In his second State of the Union address, U.S. President Joe Biden tried to articulate several messages under one big theme - his administration was committed to rebuilding America's economy while standing up to its challenges abroad. Much of the 72-minute speech was on the domestic agenda, particularly his economic optimism. The speech saw self-appreciation, ideas and rhetoric - he took pride in his economic policies, emphasizing the low unemployment rate and easing inflation, repeated the calls for taxing the super rich and bringing down prices of essential drugs, promised not to cut Social Security and Medicare and declared that democracies have become stronger and autocracies weaker.

While there was no major policy shift, the 80-year-old President repeated the phrase "finish the job", indicating that he needed more time to build on what he has already done - seen as a pitch for his

re-election campaign. Mr. Biden also referred to Russia and China as key foreign policy challenges - the Ukraine invasion as "a test for America", and that America "will act to protect our country" if its sovereignty is threatened, an indirect reference to the balloon incident.

If Mr. Biden used the speech to defend his legacy and lay his vision, it also laid bare his administration's critical challenges. To be sure, the unemployment rate fell to the lowest level since 1969 - to 3.4% in January 2023 - and inflation continued to ease in the month. Still, most Americans (58% as in a recent survey), burdened by high energy prices and slow growth in wages, remain unhappy with his handling of the economy. The President may have plans for re-election, but only 37% Democrats back him. Mr. Biden will also face growing resistance to his policies from Congress in a Republican-

controlled House.

On foreign policy, the U.S. has so far stood resolutely behind Ukraine, but, as the war grinds on, there are rising questions about a possible endgame. A bigger challenge for Mr. Biden is how to handle ties with China at a time when the two superpowers compete for global influence. The balloon incident suggests that it is not an easy task. Half of Mr. Biden's first term is over. As the election season is heating up, time is running short and his task is cut out - he has to act more decisively on the economic front if he wants to build a fair order of competition and opportunities, work towards ending the war in Ukraine without compromising on America's standing in Europe, and put in place stronger guardrails in U.S.-China relations to check an escalation in tensions and deterioration in ties.

(The Hindu)

Chinese eye in sky

'SPY BALLOON' UNDERLINES NEED FOR CONSTANT ALERTNESS

Days after a US Air Force fighter jet shot down a Chinese surveillance balloon - which the US claimed was a 'spy balloon' - off the South Carolina coast, it has been reported that China operates a fleet of such balloons and has targeted several countries, including India and Japan, in the past. A US media report, quoting several unnamed defense and intelligence officials, alleged that the spy balloon project has been operating for several years, and 'has collected information on military assets in countries and areas of emerging strategic interest to China including Japan, India, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines'. Senior US officials are reported to have briefed 'nearly 150 foreign diplomats across 40 embassies' in

the US and Beijing, explaining its action of shooting down the balloon, presenting reasons why it was not a 'civilian' weather balloon, as China claimed, but an intelligence-gathering device.

It seems counterintuitive to use an apparently low-tech method such as a balloon for intelligence-gathering when high-resolution satellite images of the earth's surface are easily available, but such debates are best left to techint experts. Also, China keeping a spying eye on its neighbors and adversaries is not a significant point - it's a fact that all countries engage in intelligence-gathering, or spying, even if not one would admit it publicly. What is really remarkable about the Chinese balloon is that if it were indeed spying, it was

doing so in a very brazen manner; and if it indeed was a 'civilian airship' intended for 'meteorological research', China's secretiveness about it is quite inexplicable.

One takeaway for India from this episode is that it must keep its eyes open - it's not quite a new lesson but the reinforcement of one, because China's increased aggressiveness at the borders during the last few years has already underlined the need for India to always keep its guard up. For the countries that are concerned over China's hegemonistic ambitions, it is imperative to share technology and intelligence in order to not be outsmarted and outmaneuvered in geopolitical games.

(Tribune, India)

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INDIAN AMERICAN ARTIST'S CONTRIBUTION BEHIND AMERICA'S FIRST ART TUNNEL



Indian American artist Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee is the brain behind the incredible Aquarius Art Tunnel which is a 240 feet immersive Art tunnel Installation. It comprises two unique 240 by 9 feet fine art murals.

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

HOUSTON (TIP): When traveling between terminals D and E at the George Bush International Airport in Houston, Texas you will be amazed to see an immersive audio-visual treat. Unveiled earlier this year, the Aquarius Art Tunnel is a 240-foot-long art experience. The tunnel showcases species of fish, coral, sharks, dolphins, barracudas, lobsters, manta rays, and, even, oil rigs, among other ocean creatures. The floor of the tunnel is a coral carpet, and the accompanying sounds are a combination of classical music and the artist's own meditative, underwater breath, created by Andrew Karnavas. The brainchild behind the art experience is Indian American artist Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee. As perhaps the first ever project spearheaded by an artist of color that represents contemporary art in America, the Aquarius project is special in many ways.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

FIRST INDIAN-ORIGIN OFFICER OF US' MILWAUKEE POLICE RETIRES AFTER 21 YEARS



Balbir Mahay was honored, and his career was celebrated on Sunday at the Oak Creek gurdwara in Wisconsin

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

MILWAUKI, WI (TIP): The first Indian police officer of Milwaukee city in the United States has retired after serving 21 years in the force, a media report said.

Balbir Mahay was honored, and his career was celebrated on Sunday at the Oak Creek gurdwara in Wisconsin, where a tragic shootout in 2012 killed six people.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Veteran Indian-origin banking executive named Chair of advisory board to Centre for Australia-India Relations

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

CANBERRA (TIP): A veteran Indian-origin senior banking executive, Swati Dave, was on Tuesday, February 7, named the inaugural Chair of the Advisory Board to the Centre for Australia-India Relations, a national platform to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong, announcing Dave's appointment, said that the Centre, to be launched this year, will promote a stronger business and cultural understanding between Australia and India.

"Dave brings valuable strategic, leadership and business experience to the role from her extensive senior executive and non-executive director roles across the public and private sectors," Wong said in a press release.

"I look forward to working with Ms. Dave on this important initiative as we seek to deepen our engagement with India, one of our most important regional partners," she added.

Dave currently serves as Deputy Chair of Asia Society Australia and as a member of the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations Advisory Board.

She has over 30 years of banking and finance experience across several sectors, including infrastructure, energy and utilities, renewable energy and property, according to Asia Mission, a global non-



Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong (left) announcing Swati Dave's appointment, said that the Centre, to be launched this year, will promote a stronger business and cultural understanding between Australia and India. Image Tweeted by @Senator Wong

profit organization dedicated to Asia.

She was most recently Managing Director and CEO of Export Finance Australia and has held senior positions at various banks and investment management companies, including the National Australia Bank, Deutsche Bank, AMP Henderson Global Investors, Bankers Trust and Westpac, the press release said.

The Centre, an AUD 24.1 million national platform, will focus on four critical areas of work; promoting policy dialogue, building Australian business literacy and links, engaging Australia's Indian diaspora communities to support

the Melbourne-Delhi relationship, and deepening cultural connections and understanding between the two countries, a statement by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said.

It will also administer over AUD 20 million in Maitri (friendship) initiatives, including a scholar's program, a grants and fellowship program and a cultural partnership.

In 2020, the Indian-born population became the second-largest group of overseas-born residents in Australia, and three per cent of Australians have Indian heritage, the statement said.

INDIAN-ORIGIN SIKH BOY ASKED TO REMOVE TURBAN DURING FOOTBALL MATCH IN SPAIN



Gurpreet Singh (left)

FEBRUARY 4, 2023

MADRID (TIP): In Spain, a Sikh boy was asked by a referee to remove his turban during a football match. The whole situation was "humiliating" for 15-year-old Gurpreet Singh. The reason given to Gurpreet Singh from Arratia C team was that wearing "a hat" is prohibited as per the game rules. However, in all previous games, referees had allowed him to wear his turban.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

INDIAN-ORIGIN PUNJABI MAN ADMITS TO KILLING GIRLFRIEND IN AUSTRALIA



Tarikjot Singh (left) was accused of abducting Jasmeen Kaur, 21 (right), and killing her, before dumping her body in a shallow grave in Flinders Ranges, 430 km from Adelaide

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

ADELAIDE (TIP): A 21-year-old man has pleaded guilty to the murder of his former girlfriend and a nursing student from India whose body was found in South Australia in March 2021. Tarikjot Singh was accused of abducting Jasmeen Kaur, 21, and killing her, before dumping her body in a shallow grave in Flinders Ranges, 430 km from Adelaide, where she was last seen, media reported. Singh's admission came as a shock as he had earlier pleaded not guilty and was due to stand trial.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian-origin justice Parmjit Kaur 'Bobbie' Cheema-Grubb sentences Scotland Yard ex-officer to 36 life terms for rape



Justice Parmjit Kaur 'Bobbie' Cheema-Grubb sentenced Scotland Yard ex-officer David Carrick to serve a minimum of 30 years behind bars. Photo for representation only

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

LONDON (TIP): In a shocking case that has dominated headlines in the UK, an Indian-origin judge on Tuesday, February 7, handed down 36 life sentences to a serial rapist convicted of violent and brutal sexual offences against a dozen women over a 17-year period as a Scotland Yard police officer.

Justice Parmjit Kaur "Bobbie" Cheema-Grubb, presiding over the sentencing hearing at Southwark Crown Court in London.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian-origin Gurujas Kaur Khalsa wins Grammy Award for her chants in 'Mystic Mirror'



Gurujas Kaur holding GRAMMY award is flanked by Harijiwan Singh (to her right) and Adam Berry (to her left).

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

LOS ANGELES (TIP): Indian-origin Gurujas Kaur Khalsa of the White Sun has won the Grammy Award for her

chants in the album 'Mystic Mirror'.

Khalsa won the Best New Age Album for 'Mystic Mirror' at the Premiere ceremony of the 65th Annual Grammy

Awards in Los Angeles. The album contains shabad from Guru Granth Sahib.

"We just won a GRAMMY for our album 'Mystic Mirror' in the New Age, Ambient or Chant Category. We want to thank the @recordingacademy not only for the beautiful awards ceremony, but also for all the amazing work they do on behalf of music creators," wrote @WhiteSunMusic.

The three artistes -- Adam Berry, Gurujas and Harijiwan -- appeared on the stage at the Grammy awards decked in their signature white outfits.

While on stage, Gurujas said: "Thank you so much to the Academy; I'm going to cry. Thank you to everyone who helped create this album, thank you to our producers. Standing with you guys is such a privilege and honor. With that comes more responsibility to bring love and kindness to Planet Earth."

They had won the New Age Album Grammy award in 2017 for their album 'White Sun II'.

INDIAN AMERICAN APSARA IYER NAMED PRESIDENT OF HARVARD LAW REVIEW



Apsara Iyer is the first Indian American woman to head the Harvard Law Review in its 136-year history.

FEBRUARY 6, 2023

BOSTON (TIP): The Harvard Law Review has elected Apsara Iyer as its 137th president, making her the first Indian American woman to head the prestigious publication in its 136-year history. The 29-year-old Harvard Law School student, who has been investigating art crime and repatriation since 2018, succeeds Priscila Coronado.

"Since joining the Law Review, I have been inspired by her (Priscila's) skillful management, compassion, and capacity to build vibrant, inclusive communities. I am so grateful that we 'Volume 137' inherit her legacy, and I am honored to continue building on this important work over the next year," Iyer said in a statement announcing her appointment.

Iyer graduated from Yale in 2016 with a B.A. in Economics and Math, and Spanish. Her dedication to archaeology and indigenous communities led her to pursue an MPhil at Oxford as a Clarendon Scholar and, in 2018, to join the Manhattan District Attorney's Antiquities Trafficking Unit (ATU), a Harvard Law Review release said.

At the ATU, she investigated art crime, coordinating with international and federal law-enforcement authorities to repatriate more than 1,100 stolen works of art to 15 different countries.

Iyer enrolled at Harvard Law School in the fall of 2020, where she is a student in the International Human Rights Clinic and member of the South Asian Law Students Association.

Committed to fighting illicit antiquities trafficking, Iyer took a leave of absence from Harvard Law School in 2021-22 to return to the DA's Office, where she worked on an international antiquity trafficking investigation and rose to be the deputy of the ATU.

"Apsara has changed the lives of many editors for the better, and I know she will continue to do so. From the start, she has impressed her fellow editors with her remarkable intelligence, thoughtfulness, warmth, and fierce advocacy. The Law Review is extremely lucky to have her lead this institution," Iyer's predecessor, Coronado, said. The Law Review, founded in 1887 by future Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, LLB 1887, is an entirely student-edited journal with the largest circulation of any law journal in the world. Former President Barack Obama was the journal's first Black president.

INDIAN AMERICAN JOHNS HOPKINS STUDENT NAMED AS 'WORLD'S BRIGHTEST' FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR



Natasha Perianayagam was named in the "world's brightest" students' list for the second consecutive year by the US-based Johns Hopkins Centre for Talented Youth, based on the results of above-grade-level tests of over 15,000 students across 76 countries.

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

BALTIMORE, MD (TIP): Indian American schoolgirl Natasha Perianayagam was named in the "world's brightest" students' list for the second consecutive year by the US-based Johns Hopkins Centre for Talented Youth, based on the results of above-grade-level tests of over 15,000 students across 76 countries.

Perianayagam, 13, is a student at Florence M Gaudineer Middle School, in New Jersey. She also took the Johns Hopkins Centre for Talented Youth (CTY) test in Spring 2021, when she was a Grade 5 student. Her results in the verbal and quantitative sections levelled with the 90th percentile of advanced Grade 8 performance, which catapulted her into the honors list that year.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

INDIAN AMERICAN DHIVYA SURYADEVARA STEPPING DOWN AS CFO OF STRIPE



Dhivya Suryadevara, is stepping down as CFO of Stripe, a global technology company building economic infrastructure for the internet, due to family matters.

FEBRUARY 6, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Dhivya Suryadevara, is stepping down as CFO of Stripe, a global technology company building economic infrastructure for the internet, due to family matters.

The Chennai-born Suryadevara joined Stripe in 2020 from General Motors, where she made history as the first female CFO of the multinational automotive manufacturing company.

"Some news: I joined Stripe two and a half years ago to help the company accelerate its growth trajectory and continue its mission to increase the GDP of the internet. I'm incredibly proud of the progress we've made," the Indian American executive announced on LinkedIn.

"That said, I have made the difficult decision to step away from my role at Stripe, as I will be taking some time off to attend to family matters," she wrote.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian American Arvind Raman named dean of Purdue engineering college



A longtime Indian American administrator and faculty member at Purdue University, Arvind Raman has been appointed the new John A. Edwardson Dean of the College of Engineering effective April 1.

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

WEST LAFAYETTE, IN (TIP): Arvind Raman, a longtime Indian American administrator and faculty member at Purdue University has been appointed the new John A. Edwardson Dean of the College of Engineering effective April 1.

An Indian Institute of Technology Delhi graduate, Raman is currently the university's executive associate dean of engineering and the Robert V. Adams Professor in Mechanical Engineering. He succeeds Mark Lundstrom who has served as interim dean of the college since July 1, 2022.

Raman brings an impressive record of academic leadership experience to this new role, said Patrick Wolfe, Purdue provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and diversity, announcing his appointment on Feb 6.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

**OFF-DUTY NYPD COP
ADEED FAYAZ DIES THREE
DAYS AFTER BEING SHOT**

NYPD cop Adeed Fayaz, 26, was shot once in the head while off duty Saturday, February 4
Photo / courtesy NYPD

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): The off-duty NYPD cop and married father of two who was shot and critically wounded during a botched robbery attempt in Brooklyn over the weekend was declared dead on Tuesday, February 7, law enforcement sources said.

Officer Adeed Fayaz, 26, a five-year veteran of the NYPD, had been on life support at Brookdale Hospital since the cowardly attack in East New York on Saturday, February 4 evening.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama)

**2024 H-1B CAP
REGISTRATION PERIOD
OPENS MARCH 1**

Photo caption: The initial registration period for the fiscal year 2023 H-1B cap will open at 12 p.m. EST on March 1 and extend to 12 p.m. EST on March 17, 2023.

istock Photo for representation only

FEBRUARY 09, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that the initial registration period for the fiscal year 2023 H-1B cap will open at 12 p.m. EST on March 1 and extend to 12 p.m. EST on March 17, 2023. During this period, prospective petitioners and representatives will be able to complete and submit their registrations using the USCIS online H-1B registration system.

Prospective H-1B cap-subject petitioners or their representatives are required to use a myUSCIS online account to register each beneficiary for the selection process and pay the associated \$10 H-1B registration fee for each registration.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama)

Meet Mikhael Simmonds, the new Center for Community Media (CCM) Executive Director

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): Mikhael Simmonds has taken over as the new Executive Director of Center for Community Media. Before joining CCM, Simmonds served as the director of new relationships at the Solutions Journalism Network, where he co-led operations, strategy, and execution around how SJN trained journalists, developed teaching products and coached news outlets. As a regional manager, he co-developed and managed solutions journalism projects with news partners in Kenya, Nigeria, and the U.S.

In an interview with CCM, Mikhael Simmonds said he has been working in international affairs and journalism for a decade. One of his earlier jobs was at the Amsterdam News. He later moved on



CCM Executive Director Mikhael Simmonds

to Solutions Journalism [Network]. And there it was very much international, but also based in New York. His interest

in CCM really came from that duality - people who have multiple identities, multiple nationalities, multiple cultures living next to each other and telling relevant news for their audiences - and having conversations with each other, among each other. So, when the opportunity to work with CCM came up, he was like, 'oh, you're speaking my language!'

Simmonds said he is an immigrant (from Trinidad). He went to undergrad at CUNY, grad school at CUNY. His undergrad was international affairs, with a bunch of different immigrants at City College. They all talked about multiple identities, multiple spaces issues. Now there's a job where he can get to work deeply in that.

Welcome, Mr. Simmonds.

Dr Kavitha P Das is a national DentaQuest award Honoree for 2022

RENEE MEHRA

NEW YORK (TIP): Dr. Kavitha P. Das is one of the winners of the national DentaQuest award for 2022. She was selected from a national pool of outstanding candidates to be awarded this prestigious award. She has worked as a health disruptor in the health system for 15 years and focused on interdisciplinary research which can lead to equitable access to care and focused on oral-systemic health connections.

For this award, DentaQuest selected forward-thinking agents of change, and they created the national Health Equity Hero program eight years ago to celebrate individuals and organizations responsible for extraordinary work that champions equitable access to health care (medical, oral health, behavioral health) and optimal overall health outcomes. Health heroes taking action to transform health systems in their communities in an effort to remedy long-standing disparities.

Dr. Das is a dentist who is an interdisciplinary health researcher, academic, and healthcare innovator. She has been working in the space of increasing access to care with diverse communities to improve the health and well-being of residents of diverse urban communities which have a predisposition to a number of chronic diseases that have lifetime consequences. She has worked at Columbia University, NYU, Yale University, and Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai as an academic and in research. She leads a health equity-focused community-based organization to implement programs to have equitable



Left to Right : Dr. Kavitha P. Das, Senior Director of Research, Ms. Bose Akamiokhor from DentaQuest, and Mr. Danilo Parmegiani - Executive Director of Legion of Good Will in the USA and UN/NGO representative

access to care. Her goal is to change the inevitability of chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, oral diseases, and oral cancer) for children and families with a focus on prevention. Das leads unique research projects, public health policy, works with key stakeholders such as academics, school and community leaders, and clergy groups to highlight the opportunity for change, align on what can be done, and create an action plan that builds trust and engagement within the community.

DentaQuest manages dental and vision benefits for 30 million Americans

and provides care directly through a national network of clinics. Their mission is to improve oral health for all Americans, to make it more affordable and easier to have equitable access to care with an emphasis on prevention. They use a multi-pronged approach to revolutionize oral health in ways that make the community healthier. They understand how to align incentives to drive better outcomes and lower costs. They have provided more than \$230 million in funding for research and grant programs to advance oral health in communities across the country.

An Even Deadlier Pandemic Could Soon Be Here



FEBRUARY 9, 2023
NEW YORK (TIP): "As the world is just beginning to recover from the devastation of Covid-19, it is facing the possibility of a pandemic of a far more deadly pathogen", writes Zenep Tufekci, in an opinion column in New York Times, published February 3.

BIRD FLU - known more formally as avian influenza - has long hovered on the horizons of scientists' fears. This pathogen, especially the H5N1 strain, hasn't often infected humans, but when

it has, 56 percent of those known to have contracted it have died. Its inability to spread easily, if at all, from one person to another has kept it from causing a pandemic.

But things are changing. The virus, which has long caused outbreaks among poultry, is infecting more and more migratory birds, allowing it to spread more widely, even to various mammals, raising the risk that a new variant could spread to and among people, Tufekci writes.

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Defend Constitution against predatory politicians



BY PARSA
VENKATESHWAR
RAO JR

"THE ISSUE OF THE 'BASIC STRUCTURE' OF THE CONSTITUTION IS A FIGHT ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS INCLUDED IN PART III OF THE CONSTITUTION. THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE ALSO SHOWS THAT THERE IS NO CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF PART III AND THE DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY OF PART IV, AND THAT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS DO NOT HAVE TO GIVE WAY TO CREATE AN EGALITARIAN POLITY. THE PREAMBLE ELOQUENTLY STATES THE IDEALS OF JUSTICE, LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY. THE LEGAL HAIR-SPLITTING OVER THE STATUS OF THE PREAMBLE, WHETHER IT IS PART OF THE CONSTITUTION OR NOT SEEMS UNNECESSARY. THE CONSTITUTION HAS SERVED AS A TORCHBEARER OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS IN THE LAST 72 YEARS, AND IT IS NECESSARY TO DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION AGAINST PREDATORY POLITICIANS."

Addressing the 83rd Presiding Officers' Conference in Jaipur last month, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said the legislature's autonomy could not be encroached either by the judiciary or the executive. And it is in this context that he questioned the 'basic structure' doctrine that the Supreme Court had expounded in the 1973 Kesavananda Bharati case.

Without offending the constitutional status that he holds as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, it seems that Dhankhar has misunderstood the intent and purport of the Kesavananda Bharati case, which spelt the 'basic structure' of the Constitution principle, and sought to make it into a criterion for reviewing the constitutional amendments passed by Parliament. It is not about the courts coming in the way of

legislature and restricting the scope of the legislatures to enact laws. It is not about Parliament pitted against the judiciary or the other way round. It might sound like a doctrine, but it is not one. It is a thumb rule evolved by the Supreme Court for purposes of judicial review.

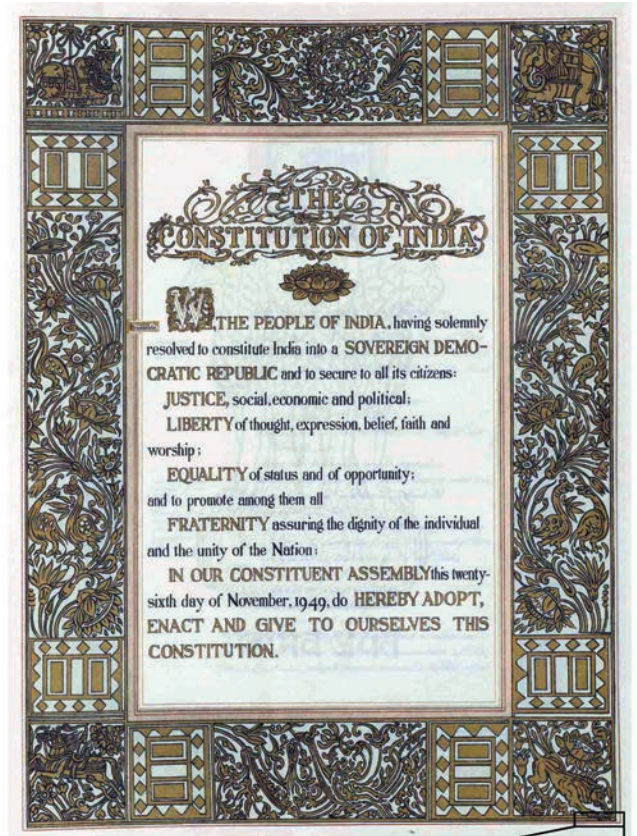
The Kesavananda Bharati case also did not set out a new principle of interpretation. It was following the distinctions made in the earlier pronouncements of the Supreme Court in the cases of Sankari Prasad Deo vs Union of India and State of Bihar (1952), Sajjan Singh vs State of Rajasthan (1965), and the definitive direction laid down in the IC Golaknath vs State of Punjab (1965) case. The issue was whether Parliament can amend the fundamental rights of Part III of the Constitution. There were no unanimous answers from the court. While some of the judges felt that that powers of Parliament to amend the Constitution given in Article 368 were unrestricted, and that Parliament can abridge, and even abrogate, fundamental rights, there were others who felt that the fundamental rights should remain inviolable.

It is necessary to remember that all these cases arose from challenges to the land reforms legislation in different states, and these laws were passed by the state legislatures, and these were protected by the constitutional amendments brought in by Parliament.

Article 31, which was about the right to property, and which was part of Part III or fundamental rights, was removed from the section through the 44th Amendment of the Constitution in 1978, but the questions that came up before the court in the above cases were related to the 'right to property'. The courts discussed it in terms of fundamental rights and not specifically about the right to property.

In the Sajjan Singh case of 1965, then Chief Justice PB Gajendragadkar, who wrote the majority judgment, said: "The power conferred by Article 368 includes the power to take away the fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III...The fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III could not have been intended to be eternal, inviolate and beyond the reach of Article 368 for, even if the powers to amend the fundamental rights were not included in the Article, Parliament can by a suitable amendment of the Article take those powers." It would seem that Gajendragadkar and the court were concerned about the social and economic challenges faced by a government in a developing country, and the view was that necessary social and economic reforms should not be obstructed by taking shelter behind fundamental rights. It was a dangerous position that the Gajendragadkar court had adopted. Fundamental rights were not just about the right to property.

It is in the Golaknath case that the court of Chief Justice Koka Subba Rao took a firm position on the issue of fundamental rights, or was it confined to the issue of the right to property? The majority statement delivered by Subba Rao is crystal clear on the issue: "Our Constitution accepted the theory that the right to property is a fundamental right though perhaps it was an error to do so if socialization was desired. It treated property rights as inviolable except through law for public good and payment of compensation....As there is apprehension that the erosion of right to property may be practiced against other fundamental rights, it is necessary to call a halt. An attempt to abridge or take away fundamental rights by a constituted Parliament even through an amendment of the Constitution can be declared void. The court has the power and the jurisdiction to do so. The opposite view expressed in the Sajjan Singh's case is wrong."



In the Kesavananda Bharati case, Chief Justice Sikri reiterated the essential point of the Golaknath case that fundamental rights are important and though Parliament has extensive powers to amend the Constitution, it cannot encroach upon the fundamental rights of the people. Sikri delivering the majority judgment wrote: "On a careful consideration of the various aspects of the case, we are convinced that Parliament has no power to abrogate or emasculate the basic elements or fundamental features of the Constitution such as the sovereignty of India, the democratic character of our polity, the unity of the country and the essential features of the individual freedoms secured to the citizens. Nor has Parliament the power to revoke the mandate to build a welfare state and egalitarian society. These limitations are only illustrative and not exhaustive."

Between Golaknath and Kesavananda Bharati judgments, it is the Golaknath judgment that underscores fundamental rights as the *raison d'être* of a democratic polity in an unambiguous language. Indians will have to choose between Gajendragadkar who had argued that fundamental rights are not eternal and not inviolable on the one side, and Subba Rao and Sikri on the other who had underlined the importance of democratic rights of people against the potential political tyranny of parliamentary majorities.

The issue of the 'basic structure' of the Constitution is a fight about the fundamental rights included in Part III of the Constitution. The Kesavananda Bharati case also shows that there is no conflict between the fundamental rights of Part III and the directive principles of state policy of Part IV, and that fundamental rights do not have to give way to create an egalitarian polity. The Preamble eloquently states the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The legal hair-splitting over the status of the Preamble, whether it is part of the Constitution or not seems unnecessary. The Constitution has served as a torchbearer of democratic freedoms in the last 72 years, and it is necessary to defend the Constitution against predatory politicians.

(The author is a senior journalist)

China may play spoilsport

INDIA PREPARES TO HOST G20, SCO SUMMITS AMIDST REGIONAL RIVALRIES



BY
G PARTHASARATHY

"THE G20 SUMMIT WILL BE BRINGING TOGETHER LEADERS OF COUNTRIES WHICH CONSTITUTE TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, WHILE PROVIDING 90% OF GLOBAL GDP AND 80% OF GLOBAL TRADE. THE YEAR 2023 IS SET TO BECOME THE MOST COMPLEX AND BUSY PERIOD IN INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC HISTORY. IT IS ALSO GOING TO BE A PERIOD WHEN THE COUNTRY'S LOGISTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS WILL BE TESTED. THE FORTHCOMING SUMMITS WILL TEST OUR ABILITY IN BRINGING COUNTRIES TOGETHER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND HARMONIOUS COOPERATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. THE SUMMITS ARE COMING IN THE WAKE OF TENSIONS ARISING FROM THE MILITARY STANDOFF IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH. THE ISSUE OF SPECIAL INTEREST WILL BE WHETHER XI JINPING WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE FORTHCOMING SUMMITS IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT STATE OF SINO-INDIAN TIES."

India's foreign policy and national security establishments are going to be deeply tied up this year in meetings with members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the G20 grouping. They will have to meticulously prepare for the summit meetings which India will be hosting later this year. The SCO includes eight members, six 'Dialogue Partners', and four 'Observer States'. The G20 Summit will be bringing together leaders of countries which constitute two-thirds of the world's population, while providing 90% of global



The year 2023 is set to become the most complex and busy period in India's diplomatic history.

Photo credit / Tribune

GDP and 80% of global trade. The year 2023 is set to become the most complex and busy period in India's diplomatic history. It is also going to be a period when the country's logistical and organizational strengths will be tested. The forthcoming summits will test our ability in bringing countries together in a constructive and harmonious cooperation at the highest level. The summits are coming in the wake of tensions arising from the military standoff in Arunachal Pradesh.

The issue of special interest will be whether Xi Jinping will participate in the forthcoming summits in the background of the current state of Sino-Indian ties.

There are a few points that New Delhi should bear in mind. It will enjoy unstinted support in the conferences from virtually all members of the G20 and Quad. Both Pakistan and China will be present in the SCO. Pakistan is now engrossed in dealing with its collapsing economy. It also has serious problems with Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, and its own jihadis, the Tehreek-e-Taliban, across its 2,600 km border with Afghanistan and Iran. Given Afghanistan's strategic location abutting Central Asia, China is keen to secure access to its mineral resources and keep in touch with its radical Islamist Taliban regime, especially in the light of its own tensions with its disaffected Uighur Muslims.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has displayed continuing hostility towards India. China is focusing attention on the joint production of its much-touted JF-17 fighter aircraft in Pakistan and in strengthening the Pakistan navy. The Gwadar Port in Balochistan has a growing Chinese presence, but Pakistan has more serious problems to deal with, with its dwindling foreign exchange resources. In the meantime, the IMF is insisting on stringent conditions before international assistance can flow in. Even Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which have always been more than generous in bailing out Pakistan, are now making it

clear that they will open their purse strings only after Pakistan fully meets IMF conditionalities. Across the world, many governments are recognizing that the economic mess that Pakistan is now in flows from its own blunders.

There has, meanwhile, been a growing feeling in India that much of the tensions with China flow from deliberate actions of the Xi Jinping government, despite India having rolled out the red carpet during his India visit. It has been interesting to see a comprehensive assessment of India's policies by Liu Zongyi of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies. Liu is one of China's most prominent experts on South Asian studies. He has visited both India and Pakistan. In a recent article, which has received due attention in academic circles in our eastern neighborhood, he has bluntly spelt out what China thinks about India and its policies. Senior scholars in China do not speak out of turn. They are a convenient medium to convey the thinking of the country's Communist Party and government.

His study, titled 'India's Rising Great Power Strategy', is multifaceted. On India's domestic political issues, it alludes to the ascendancy of 'Hindu nationalism'. On economic issues, he describes the 'Make in India' strategy as an effort to take over China's place in the global supply chain. India's strategy, according to him, will be to target China by building bases in Indian Ocean states, advancing the integration of India's armed forces and improving border infrastructure, including in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It also includes building military bases by India in small Indian Ocean islands.

In his conclusion, he notes: 'Thus, the biggest divide between India and China is no longer related to border issues. In fact, border issues have now been instrumentalized. For the Indians, the biggest issue between India and China is

the battle for the regional and global order. It is a geopolitical conflict, because India is a country that places a lot of emphasis on the idea of spheres of influence.' Regarding India hosting the G20 and Quad summits, he notes: 'Ultimately, the G20 Summit cannot be a success without China's active participation. Even though the West lavishes praise on India, and even though India presents itself as the so-called poster child of developing countries, and the leader of the South, it will most certainly not succeed without China's support.' One cannot think of this as anything but a warning, bordering on threat.

Liu betrays an obsession with the growth of India-US relations. He avers that it is India's strategy to work with the US to undermine and counter China's Belt and Road Initiative to prevent the emergence of a 'China led' regional order. This is accompanied by his strong justification of recent Chinese military intrusions in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. Liu expresses serious concerns about India's relations with the US and its involvement in groupings like Quad and I2U2. He conveniently forgets how China has been deliberately seeking to undermine India's relations with neighbors across South Asia, notably with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives. He even forgets the impact of China's continuing and growing military relations with Rawalpindi, including its transfer of nuclear weapons and missile capabilities to Pakistan.

Under these circumstances, the issue of special interest in the coming months will be whether Xi Jinping will participate in the forthcoming summits in the background of the current state of Sino-Indian relations, and the widespread concerns in India about his assertive policies.

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

Education: Private vs foreign universities and changing concepts of higher education



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

THERE HAS BEEN A PHENOMENAL GROWTH OF EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COUNTRY IN GENERAL AND PUNJAB IN PARTICULAR. THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES, HAVE MULTIPLIED MANY TIMES. THE STATE IS DOTTED WITH MEDICAL, DENTAL, ENGINEERING, EDUCATION AND ENGINEERING COLLEGES.

Education has it all. The simple test for gauging the progress of a state or a nation, is to look at its education standards. From Kindergarten to higher education, it is a single continuous process that changes rapidly while responding to societal and national requirements. From curriculums to methodology, from classroom teaching to use of technology and from textbooks to on training have all been part of the changing face of education. Today, education has become global as regional, territorial or geographical boundaries have become irrelevant in transfer and transmission of learning procedures and technologies.

The concept of tie-ups between local, regional and national institutions on one hand and foreign universities has become the trend of the day. A part of your degree course can be in the educational institution on your home turf while the other half or part of it can be in an overseas institution.

For many, education has grown beyond the sanctity of a sacred profession and become more of a business especially in the domains of providing quality education in sophisticated air-conditioned environs of lavishly built high rise or multistoried modern complexes.

While developing nations are facing a major problem of brain drain, the developed and advanced nations appear to be instant beneficiaries. Last week, the Indian Parliament was told that the number of students going abroad for post-secondary or higher education has been rising rapidly. The number has almost doubled in the last one decade.

There has been a phenomenal growth of education infrastructure in the country in general and Punjab in particular. The number of private universities, including technical universities, have multiplied many times. The State is dotted with medical, dental, engineering, education and engineering colleges.

Intriguingly, a large number of seats in these privately run or managed institutions remain vacant. The disturbing trend is that the number of these vacant seats has been increasing year after year.

Almost all major prestigious Boys Colleges in the State had to shed their "gender" to remain operational. They are now co-educational institutions with more than 50 per cent of their



Dr Jaskiran Kaur, Director of the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) says the Institute has brought new opportunities to the region by setting a new standard in higher education. It offers a variety of programs, including Commerce, Law, and Engineering, with the mission to prepare students to be lifelong learners through thoughtful mentoring, assuring their success.

seats going to girl students. The exclusive girls colleges are doing well though their admissions, too, have come down over the years.

Though existing institutions and established universities are fighting a losing battle, private institutions and universities have shown phenomenal growth. Examples of Lovely Professional University, Chandigarh University or Chitkara University are all before us.

What is wrong with the State sponsored education system? Why is it losing out fast?

The reasons may be many. After a long debate, the Union Government has given its nod for elite foreign universities to set up their Indian campuses. It has met with mixed responses. Some have hailed it while others have gone all out to assail this change in policy as a direct invasion of core educational values of the traditional Indian education system. The debate continues unabated.

Convinced that education is a flourishing business, many States, including Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and even Union Territory of Chandigarh came out with the concept of Education Cities by providing the adequate basic infrastructure.

Besides major private players as

mentioned above, a few others, claiming themselves to have pioneered quality education in the country, too, are spreading their network. Narsee Monjee Institute of Management and Amity University are among them.

Narsee Monjee Institute of Management (NMIMS) has set up its first campus in the country's northern belt. Set up in Chandigarh, the first private deemed university in Chandigarh in 2021, it has been trying to make a name for itself with its state-of-the-art infrastructure, highly qualified staff, and unique pedagogy and curriculum in line with NMIMS.

The campus, says Dr Jaskiran Kaur, its Director, has brought new opportunities to the region by setting a new standard in higher education. It offers a variety of programs, including Commerce, Law, and Engineering, with the mission to prepare students to be lifelong learners through thoughtful mentoring, assuring their success.

NMIMS University's one-of-a-kind approach to education is enhanced by its efficient multi-campus coordination, leading to seamless content delivery to improve students' skills by harnessing their potential. The profound impact of learning at the University leaves such an indelible mark on the students that even after they leave the campus precincts, they

continue to carry the legacy and culture of the institute.

Aligning with the University's philosophy of holistic development, the campus also provides students with clubs and societies to participate in co-curricular activities, furthering their overall development and preparing them for the future.

The fee charged by NMIMS may be on a slightly higher side with an average of Rs 2.1 to Rs 2.5 lakh a year.

Dr Jaskiran Kaur emphasizes the overall development of its students that encompasses physical, intellectual, ethical, and philosophical enhancement. "India has always been at the forefront of quality education. This philosophy has been followed by India since the days of yore. At the Chandigarh campus, we believe in bringing the Indian ethos of teaching by following indigenous teaching methodology ingrained in our DNA," she says.

Dr. Jaskiran Kaur expressed her pride in the rapid progress made by the campus and its standing as a leading higher education institution in Chandigarh. "Since its inception in the academic year 2021-22, it has made rapid progress, with a focus on employability rather than employment. Our faculty members are outstanding scholars in their respective disciplines, and the curriculum is developed through industry and academic integration. We are committed to continuing the more than 41-year-old legacy of NMIMS and its focus on providing quality education and excellence in technological and management research through our ever-evolving pedagogy. We believe in providing our students with the best resources and opportunities to help them succeed and become the leaders of tomorrow."

Established in 1981, the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) is today recognized as a globally reputed university with strong industry linkages. It has duly earned every coveted accreditation and top ranking over the years, making its credibility unshakeable. It offers multiple disciplines across eight campuses that consist of 17 specialized schools, more than 17,000 full-time students, and about 800+ full-time faculty members, including ten faculty members with the Fulbright and Humboldt Scholarships for post-doctoral research.

(The author is a senior journalist)

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US President Biden seeks comprehensive immigration reform in State of the Union address

FEBRUARY 08, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): President Joe Biden has urged the US Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform, a move which would provide a path to citizenship to not only illegal immigrants but also those who entered the country legally, like those on H-1B visas.

In the 118th Congress, where the Opposition Republicans enjoy a majority in the House of Representatives, such an ask might not be an easy one.

Biden acknowledged it indirectly though.

"If you won't pass my comprehensive immigration reform, at least pass my plan to provide the equipment and officers to secure the border," Biden said in his second State of the Union Address before a Joint Session of the US Congress.

"And a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, those on temporary status, farm workers, and essential workers. Here in the people's House, it's our duty to protect all the people's rights and



President Biden delivering his State of the Union address on Feb 7, as Vice President Kamala Harris and Speaker Kevin McCarthy look on.

freedoms," said the president amidst applause from the Democratic lawmakers of the Congress.

Dreamers are undocumented immigrants who enter the US as children with parents.

Millions of illegal immigrants are looking for a pathway to citizenship, and

expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

In his address that lasted for more than 75 minutes, Biden urged Congress to come together on immigration and make immigration a bipartisan issue like it was before.

"We now have a record number of personnel working to secure the border, arresting 8,000 human smugglers and seizing over 23,000 pounds of fentanyl in just the last several months," he said.

"Since we launched our new border plan last month, unlawful migration from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela has come down 97 per cent. But America's border problems won't be fixed until Congress acts," Biden said.

(Source: PTI)

Photo credit / Jacquelyn Martin, Pool
so do a large number of those who entered the country legally with visas like H-1B and are having years waiting for a Green Card.

The H1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical

Tackling Gun Violence in the Chicago Neighborhoods: The Gandhi King Center for Non-Violence NFP Launched at Englewood, IL



Toni Preckwinkle is Cook County Board President cut the ribbon to launch The Gandhi King Center for Non-Violence NFP



Toni Preckwinkle Cook County Board President, Dr Vijay Prabhakar Chairman of GSA and Founder for AMEC Commission & MEATF and Neal Patel, CEO Medstar Laboratories with invited guests.

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Chicago City's impressive overarching skyline and beautiful landscapes have helped it to secure a top spot in the World's Best Cities list, but the local residents also know how their beautiful city struggles with violence and gun related crimes. These shooting incidents are a common occurrence taking place at the South Side of Chicago's Downtown area and if you hear the news, you'll know that the Englewood Community especially has suffered greatly in the past few years marred with similar incidents. And at this sensitive juncture, realizing the need of the hour, and to commemorate the Black History Month, the Gandhi King Center for Non-Violence NFP, a first of its kind institution was launched at Englewood, IL on February

01, 2023.

The Gandhi King Center for Non-Violence NFP was conceptualized and initiated by Dr Vijay Prabhakar, fondly known as Dr VGP is a very highly acclaimed and a proven community leader who has always strived to bring social justice and equality across different ethnic and religious groups and is a big proponent of peace and harmony in the community. He is a Public Health Professional and a Graduate from Madras Medical College, 1982, MBBS, CPH, MPH, DD. He is also Chairman of GSA and Founder for AMEC Commission & MEATF community organizations.

Toni Preckwinkle is Cook County Board President and was the honorary guest at this glorious celebration. She cut the ribbon to open the mobile

community food pantry, which will also provide services like meditation, yoga, music therapy, color therapy, basketball coaching, group therapy, mobile food trailer, mental health services, mediation - crisis intervention and wellness screenings to reduce Violence and Crimes. Additionally focus will be on getting City Vacant lands to be developed, Vocational Skill Development and 24-hour Crisis hotline are part of the Center's mission.

Taking the stage, the Master of the Ceremony, Ambassador, Dr. Twin Green, Founder and President - The Link & Option Center, Inc., South Holland, Chairperson, the Gandhi King Center for Non-Violence, Ambassador for the Citizens Alliance of Behavioral Health, declared that the Englewood community can now breathe! She added, "There have

been so many opportunities, businesses and providers that have come to Englewood with the intent to do very, very well. Then the air will go out and deflate but not the Gandhi King Center for Nonviolence. The resources that are going to come to this community are not going to deflate. We're going to give the people of Englewood the opportunity to stabilize, to be able to receive the civil and economic rights that they deserve to have."

To begin the program, Interfaith Prayers were held, which included, Christian Prayer by Chaplain Ylysses Ruff, Shepherd's Hope; Islamic Prayer by Brother Dion, Community Activist; Hindu Prayer by Councilman Acharya Rohit Joshi, MEATF-7th CD-IL

Read more at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Utah State Senate passes resolution honoring the Sikh community

BEFORE UTAH, 15 OTHER STATES, INCLUDING NEW JERSEY AND PENNSYLVANIA, HAVE RECOGNIZED THE SIKH COMMUNITY FOR THEIR SERVICES

FEBRUARY 6, 2023

SALT LAKE CITY (TIP): The Utah State Senate unanimously passed a resolution highlighting the history and significant contributions of the Sikh community.

The resolution, which was passed last week, appreciated the Sikhs for their humanitarian services, despite receiving hate and facing oppression for their faith worldwide.

"The Senate unanimously passed H.J.R (House Joint Resolution) 4, a resolution highlighting the history and significant contributions of the Sikh community. We were joined by members of Utah's Sikh community as well as those from India and other parts of the world," a tweet from the Utah Senate read.

The resolution was moved by Representative Angela Romero and Senator Luz Escamilla from Salt Lake City.

It noted Sikhism as one of the largest religions in the world focused on "loving



A group of Sikhs witness the historic occasion service to humanity," but has for long faced "oppression and discrimination

throughout the world".

"The state of Utah seeks to further the diversity of its community and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikhs to enforce laws for access to equal opportunity of humans, irrespective of their caste, creed, color, or appearance," the resolution stated.

Before Utah, 15 other states, including New Jersey and Pennsylvania, have recognized the Sikh community for their service.

In December, Utah became the 15th state in the US to include information about Sikhism, Sikh practices, and traditions in their schools' social studies syllabi.

Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world and the community has contributed to American society for over 125 years in the fields of civil rights, politics, agriculture, engineering, and medicine. (Source: IANS)

Indian American Ro Khanna along with Mike Waltz elected co-chairs of House India caucus



Ro Khanna and his Republican House colleague Mike Waltz have been chosen as co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the 118th Congress.

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Indian American Democratic lawmaker Ro Khanna and his Republican House colleague Mike Waltz have been chosen as co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the 118th Congress.

India Caucus is the largest country-specific bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in the House of Representatives that is committed to strengthening the relationship between the two largest democratic countries of the world.

Khanna, 46, is the second Indian American to be elected as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans since it was established in 1993. Congressman Ami Bera served as its co-chair during the 115th Congress (2015-2016).

At that time, he was the only Indian American serving in the Congress. Now

the number has increased to five: DR Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Pramila Jayapal, and Shri Thanedar.

"I am honored to chair the India caucus and will look forward to involving the national Indian American diaspora in helping strengthen the US India relationship," Khanna told media.

The Indian American represents the 17th Congressional District of California. Last November he was elected for the fourth consecutive term. The media reported Congressman Andy Barr and Marc Veasey will serve as vice co-chairs.

Congressman Brad Sherman (CA-32), who formerly served as chair, will serve as chair emeritus, a media release said.

In the new Congress, the members will continue working to strengthen partnerships between policy makers and the Indian American diaspora communities and reduce India's reliance on Russian defense systems.

"A strong relationship with India is critical for our economy and national security. It is an honor to serve alongside my colleague Rep. Waltz as co-chair of the India Caucus," Khanna said.

"Serving in this role is especially meaningful to me as one of the first Indian Americans to lead the caucus as well as the only representative of an Asian American majority district in the continental United States," he said.

Congressman Waltz said that India is the world's largest democracy and an important strategic partner for the United States.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

NEW IRS FEATURES ALLOW TAXPAYERS ELECTRONICALLY FILING AMENDED RETURNS TO CHOOSE DIRECT DEPOSIT TO SPEED REFUNDS

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): In the latest improvement for taxpayers, the Internal Revenue Service announced today, February 9, that people electronically filing their Form 1040-X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, will for the first time be able to select direct deposit for any resulting refund.



Previously, taxpayers who filed Form 1040-X with the IRS had to wait for a paper check for any refund, a step that added time onto the amended return process. Now, anyone who electronically files the Form 1040-X can select direct deposit and enter their banking or financial institution information for quicker delivery of refunds. Taxpayers file a total of approximately 3 million amended returns each year.

"This is a big win for taxpayers and another achievement as we transform the IRS to improve taxpayer experiences," said IRS Acting Commissioner Doug O'Donnell. "This important update will cut refund time and reduce inconvenience for people who file amended returns. We always encourage direct deposit whenever possible. Getting tax refunds into taxpayers' hands quickly without worry of a lost or stolen paper check just makes sense."

The IRS began accepting the Form 1040-X electronically in 2020 but until now did not offer direct deposit as an option for a refund. Following IRS system updates, those filing amended returns can now enjoy the same speed and security of direct deposit as those filing an original Form 1040 tax return. Taxpayers filing an original tax return using tax preparation software can file an electronic Form 1040-X if the software manufacturer offers that service.

This is the latest step the IRS is taking to improve service this tax filing season. As part of funding for the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRS has hired more than 5,000 new telephone assistants and is adding staff to IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs). The IRS also plans special service hours at dozens of TACs across the country on four Saturdays between February and May.

No matter how a taxpayer files the amended return, they can still use the "Where's My Amended Return?" online tool to check the status.

Taxpayers still have the option to submit a paper version of the Form 1040-X and receive a paper check. They should follow the instructions for preparing and submitting the paper form. Direct deposit is not available on amended returns submitted on paper.

Current processing time is more than 20 weeks for both paper and electronically filed amended returns, as processing an amended return remains a manual process even if it's filed electronically. However, filing electronically cuts out the mail time, and including direct deposit information on an electronically submitted form provides a convenient and secure way to receive refunds faster.

India in history this Week

FEBRUARY 10, 2023, TO FEBRUARY 16, 2023

10 FEBRUARY

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



2013 36 people were killed and 39 others were injured in a stampede during the Kumbh Mela ceremony in Allahabad.

1847: Bengali poet writer Navinchandra Sen was born.

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



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

11 FEBRUARY

1901 Indian revolutionary Damodar Swaroop Seth was born.

1856 The East India Company took over Awadh.



1968 Jana Sangh founder, writer, journalist Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay was killed in Mughalsarai.

1933 The publication of Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan Weekly began in 1933.

1966 Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri died in Tashkent in 1966.

1997 Indian Astrophysicist Jayant V Narlikar awarded the 1996 Kalinga Prize in 1996 by UNESCO.

12 FEBRUARY



1502 Vasco-de-Gama sailed from Lisbon for a second trip to India.

1928 Gandhiji declared Satyagraha in Bardoli.



1975 India declared itself as a smallpox-free nation on 12 February 1975.

1999 President's rule in Bihar since 1999.

2009 In 2009, the University of Cambridge announced the conferment of a DeLitt degree to India's renowned economist Amartya Sen.

13 FEBRUARY



1879 Birth of freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu.

1959 Children's favorite Barbie doll begins selling.

1984 Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurates the Mazgaon Dock in Mumbai for the Navy.

14 FEBRUARY

1989 Union Carbide, responsible for Bhopal gas scandal, agreed to give compensation to the government.

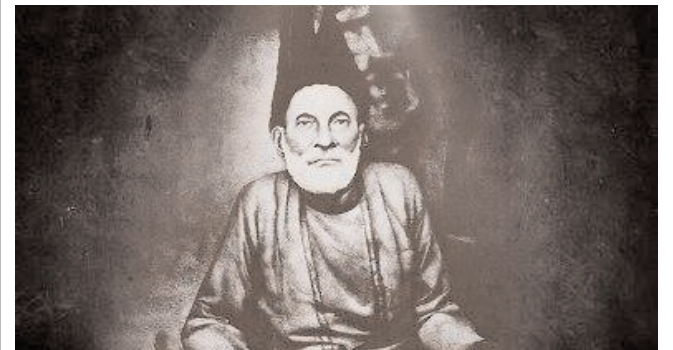
1881 In 1881, Rajendra Lal Dutt and Basu opened the country's first homoeopathic college in Calcutta.

1967 In 1967, the 74th Lok Sabha elections were held.

1999 The fifth National Games were inaugurated in Imphal in 1999.

1970 The ordinance was passed by the President in 1970 about nationality.

15 FEBRUARY



1869 Mirza Ghalib, the famous Urdu poet, died.

2017 On this day ISRO launched 104 satellites simultaneously.

1903 On February 15, 1903, the world's favorite soft toy teddy bear was launched into the market by Morris Miktom.

1967 Elections to the fourth Lok Sabha were held in 1967 in India.

1976 The Central Agricultural Research Institute was established in 1976 in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh.



16 FEBRUARY



1944 Dada Saheb Phalke died.

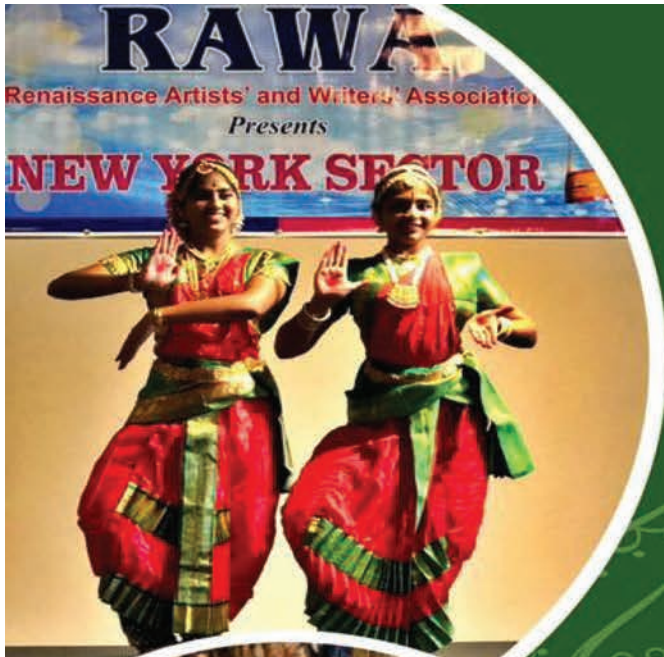
1982 The Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup football tournament was held in Calcutta for the first time in 1982.

1987 A missile with submarine capable of hitting the submarine was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987.

2008 Tata Motors launched a vehicle for the Army on February 16, 2008, called a Light Specialist Vehicle, to allow the Army to show its power through it.

2009 On February 16, 2009, former President Pranab Mukherjee presented the Interim Budget for the year 2009-2010.

2008 On 16 February 2008 in Pakistan's Punjab province, the Mirage plane crashed.



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0 Fox Hill Drive, Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076, USA <https://anandakalpataru.org>

Remarks expunged, Kharge shoots off letter to Dhankhar

Taking exception to the expunction of certain remarks from his speech made in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, February 8, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday, February 9, shot off a letter to Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, saying that it will be an "inversion of the system of governance" if Opposition MPs are to investigate, gather evidence and then raise issues in Parliament.

Dhankhar expunged Kharge's remarks linking Prime Minister Narendra Modi with industrialist Gautam Adani and his charge that the PM remains silent on hate speech by BJP leaders.

Referring to Dhankhar's direction to authenticate the charges with evidence, Kharge said Parliament was a platform to fix the accountability of the Executive and criticism of policies and decisions of the government should not be construed as allegations against any member of the House.

Kharge wrote that criticism of the government was natural in a parliamentary democracy. Arguing that there was no personal charge in any of his remarks, Kharge said an MP was required to authenticate only if any document was laid by the MP on the table of the House.

There was no convention of authentication of points made in a speech in Parliament, Kharge said. Any direction or rule of the House could not subvert the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech laid down for an MP through Article 105. "The member, after due diligence, draws the attention of the House to such issues and it is incumbent upon the government to investigate the matter and take appropriate action in consonance with the law of the land," the Congress MP wrote.

Source: TNS

In Rajya Sabha, Modi thumps chest, says he alone is more than a match for entire Oppn

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a fresh broadside against the opposition on Thursday, February 9, saying their "keechad" (dirt) of allegations will only help the lotus bloom more and asserting he alone outweighs all who had to take turns to shout slogans to oppose him.

Thumping his chest, Modi declared that he lives for the country and wants to do something for the country, which has rattled the opposition parties and they are playing political games just to save themselves.

"Desh dekh raha hai, ek akela kitno ko bhari padh raha hai (the country is watching how one person has outweighed so many)," he said as the opposition members kept shouting "Modi-Adani, bhai-bhai".

Unperturbed by the jeering, Modi finished his 90-minute speech in reply to a debate on a motion thanking the President for her address to a joint sitting of Parliament, and listed various achievements of his government.

With members of the treasury benches chanting "Modi-Modi", he pointed at the opposition MPs who had gathered in the well of the House in a bid to shout him down and said, "Naare bolne ke liye bhi unko badal karna padhta hai (they have to take turns even to shout slogans)."

"Ek conviction ke karan chala hoon, desh ke liye jeeta hoon, desh ke liye kuch karne ke liye nikla hoon (I live for the country and have embarked with the conviction to serve the nation)," he said, adding that his political opponents are playing games as they do not have the courage to take him on.

The opposition, he said, is resorting to this means to save themselves.

Replying to the Congress charge that the Bharatiya Janata Party was ignoring Jawaharlal Nehru's efforts in nation-building after Independence, Modi retorted that if the first prime minister was so great, why have his scions never used his surname.

As he rose to speak, opposition MPs, some holding placards, rushed into the well shouting slogans against the prime minister and seeking a joint parliamentary committee probe into allegations levelled by the US short-seller Hindenburg Research against tycoon Gautam Adani.

Hitting back, Modi said, "Jitna keechad uchaloge, kamal utna hee zyada khilega (the more dirt you fling, the bigger the lotus – also the election symbol of the BJP – will bloom)."

"Keechad unke pass tha, mere pass gulal. Jo jis ke pass tha, usne diya uchhal," Modi quoted Manik Verma's poem in response to the allegations opposition parties levelled on him and his government.

Roughly translated, it means they had dirt and I had gulal, whosoever had whatever they flung in the air.

Opposition parties used the debate on the motion to attack the government for the Adani group's phenomenal rise during the last few years.

In his reply, Modi accused the Congress of adopting only



Prime Minister Narendra Modi replies to debate on the the motion of thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, February 9, 2023.

"tokenism" in solving problems the country faced and said it was bothered only about its political ambitions and not the welfare of the nation.

"We don't believe in tokenism. We have chosen the path of hardwork in taking the country forward," he said, adding technology was being used as an aid in this mission.

He accused the Congress of trampling on the rights of states and regional parties by dismissing elected governments on 90 occasions by "misusing" Article 356 of the Constitution. "Who are the people?" he asked and responded that Indira Gandhi alone had used the article 50 times to dismiss governments.

"This country is not anyone's fiefdom. Our policies reflect national and regional aspirations," he said. "But these people who are now sitting (with the Congress), I want to expose them today."

He then narrated how elected governments of the Left in Kerala, NT Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra and M G Ramachandran in Tamil Nadu were dismissed by the Congress. And today these parties are sitting along with the Congress, he said.

"NT Rama Rao's government was dismissed when he was in the US for medical treatment," he said, adding M G Ramachandran must be turning in his grave seeing his DMK align with the Congress.

He also alleged that the Congress had committed sins in the past and is now trying to mislead the country.

The prime minister warned states against resorting to populist measures for political gains, saying it would be "anarth-niti" (disastrous policy).

With many parties in states promising freebies and reverting to heavy cash outflow schemes like old pension in run-up to elections, he cited examples of near bankruptcy in neighbouring countries to say that they should not play with the financial health and economic policies. "Do not do any such sin which leaves the burden on the next generation." Source: PTI

India to host tourism-related activities under country's SCO presidency

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A number of tourism-related activities will be held in India in the next few months under the country's presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), officials said on Thursday, February 9.

Uzbekistan, in September last year, had handed over the rotating presidency of the eight-member SCO to India in the historic city of Samarkand.

As part of the tourism track activities under India's chairship, the Ministry of Tourism has planned various activities such as SCO Tourism Mart during SATTE (South Asia's Travel and Tourism Exchange) from February 9-11, they said.

An SCO Expert Level Tourism Working Group Meeting and SCO Tourism Minister's Meeting in Varanasi will be held from March 13-17 and SCO Food Festival in Mumbai from April 13-19, they said.

India has conceptualised an SCO Tourism Mart along with SATTE to promote the SCO brand of tourism. This will provide an opportunity to the member countries, observer countries and dialogue partners of SCO Fraternity to showcase their varied tourism products and cultural aspects.

SCO Tourism Mart conceptualises to bring SCO countries to common place for joint awareness of tourism and create



adequate tourism movements within the SCO fraternity, officials said.

Ministry of Tourism has fabricated 390 sqm of space in the SATTE.

During SCO summit held in September 2022 in Uzbekistan, Varanasi was selected as the first "Tourism and Cultural Capital" of the SCO region 2022-23 and the SCO Tourism Ministers' meeting will be culminating at Varanasi.

Launched in Shanghai in June 2001, the SCO has eight full members, including its six founding members, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan joined as full members in 2017.

Source: PTI

India finds 5.9 million tonnes lithium deposits in Jammu and Kashmir

The Union Government on Thursday, February 9, said that 5.9 million tonnes of lithium reserves have been found for the first time in the country in Jammu and Kashmir. Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and is one of the key components in EV batteries.

"Geological Survey of India for the first time established Lithium inferred resources (G3) of 5.9 million tonnes in the Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir," the Ministry of Mines said on Thursday.

It further that 51 mineral blocks including Lithium and Gold were handed over to respective state governments.

"Out of these 51 mineral blocks, 5 blocks pertain to gold and other blocks pertain to commodities like potash, molybdenum, base metals etc. spread across 11 states of Jammu and Kashmir (UT), Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana," the ministry added.

The blocks were prepared based on the work carried out by GSI from field seasons 2018-19 to till date. Apart from these, 17 reports of Coal and Lignite with a total resource of 7897 million tonnes were also handed over to the Ministry of Coal. *Source: ANI*

225,620 Indians gave up citizenship in 2022: Govt tells Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A total of 225,620 Indians renounced their citizenship in 2022, the highest in the past 12 years, and more than 1.66 million people have given up their nationality since 2011, according to figures provided by the government in Rajya Sabha on Thursday, February 9.

The figures were given by external affairs minister S Jaishankar in a written reply to a question from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lawmaker Narain Dass Gupta, who sought the number of Indians who relinquished their citizenship during the last three years.

Jaishankar's reply provided year-wise figures for Indians who had renounced their citizenship since 2011. For the period from 2011 to 2019, the annual figure ranged between 120,000 and 144,000, before falling to 85,256 in 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic broke out and led most countries to restrict the movement of people.

In 2021, the figure almost doubled to 163,370, and continued to rise to 225,620 in 2022, according to the written reply.

Citing information available with the external affairs ministry, Jaishankar said 122,819 Indians renounced their citizenship in 2011, 120,923 in 2012, 131,405 in 2013, 129,328 in 2014, 131,489 in 2015, 141,603 in 2016, 133,049 in 2017, 134,561 in 2018, 144,017 in 2019, 85,256 in 2020, 163,370 in 2021 and 225,620 in 2022.

The written answer also included a list of 135 countries whose citizenship was acquired by Indians. The list, however,



didn't give specific numbers for each country or specify the period during which these nations granted citizenship to Indians. In reply to a specific query from Gupta, Jaishankar said five Indian nationals obtained citizenship of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during the past three years. In a written response to a separate question from Gupta, minister of state for external affairs V Muraleedharan said specific data on the number of businessmen and professionals who have settled abroad during the past four years is not available. "There are no restrictions on Indian nationals regarding travelling to foreign countries for tourism or employment. Some of them settle down

in their country of employment and acquire foreign nationality for personal reasons," the reply said.

Muraleedharan said the government has brought about a "transformational change" in its engagement with the Indian diaspora around the world.

"A successful, prosperous, and influential diaspora is an asset for India. India stands to gain a lot from tapping its diaspora networks and productive utilisation of the soft power that comes from having such a flourishing diaspora," he said. The government's efforts are also aimed at harnessing the diaspora potential, including through the transfer of technology and expertise, he added. *Source: HT*

UK review warns against anti-India rhetoric over Kashmir, pro-Khalistan extremism

LONDON (TIP)

A review into the UK government's scheme set up to prevent terrorism has made recommendations for improvements to tackle Islamist extremism as the "primary threat" to the country and also flagged other areas of growing concern, including the radicalisation of UK Muslims over Kashmir and "potentially toxic" pro-Khalistan extremism.

The review into the government's counter-terrorism early intervention Prevent strategy published this week warned that rhetoric from Pakistan is impacting UK Muslim communities when it comes to "inflaming anti-India sentiment, particularly around the subject of Kashmir".

It also warns against a false narrative being disseminated by a tiny number of pro-Khalistan groups operating in the UK.

"There is an element of crossover between those who seek to impose limits around blasphemy with those who voice incendiary rhetoric on Kashmir.

"I have seen evidence of UK extremist groups, as well as a Pakistani cleric with a UK following, calling for the use of violence in Kashmir. I have also seen evidence demonstrating that flashpoints related to Kashmir lead to a significant surge in interest from UK Islamists," reads the review.

On the issue of pro-Khalistan extremism, the report adds, "Prevent should also be mindful of pro-Khalistan extremism emerging from the UK's Sikh communities. A false narrative is disseminated by the tiny number of pro-Khalistan groups operating in the UK that the government is colluding with its counterpart in India



to persecute Sikhs."

"Such groups' narratives glorify violence carried out by the pro-Khalistan movement in India. While the current threat is low, praise for violence overseas and a simultaneous belief in a state-led campaign of repression domestically is a potentially toxic combination for the future." *Source: PTI*

Russia offers partnership in hi-tech arms

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Russia on February 9 said it was offering new points of cooperation for the joint manufacturing of high-tech products under the "Make in India" programme in compliance with all localisation and technology-transfer requirements.

This was conveyed in a statement by Rosoboronexport, the Russian state-run arms exporting agency, which will be participating in the Aero India air show at Bengaluru from February 13-17. The agency plans to hold substantive meetings and negotiations with representatives of the Ministry of Defence and other security agencies of India and other countries of the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the company expects to work extensively with state-owned and private enterprises of the Indian defence industry to expand the scope of industrial partnership between Russia and India in accordance with the requirements of "Make in India" thrust.

Russia's collective display at Aero India will include 200 samples of advanced armaments and military hardware, including the fifth-generation Sukhoi-57E multifunctional fighter jet, Checkmate light tactical aircraft, IL-76 military transport plane, Sukhoi-35, Sukhoi-30S and MiG-35D fighter jets.

Russia will also feature the Orlan-30 reconnaissance drone for the first time abroad. The Orlan-30 is intended for conducting aerial reconnaissance and detecting objects in the visible or infrared range.

Valentine's Day



Love and romance. Candy and flowers. Cards and gifts. Dinner and dancing. Valentine's Day comes along with a whole host of plans and accoutrements that are meant to all boil down to one thing: Love. And it all comes in the name of one man, St. Valentine, who was an interesting (and perhaps slightly misunderstood) character in history.

But why exactly do we celebrate Valentine's Day and why does it fall on February 14? Well, we've trawled through the history books to find out the real reasons so you don't have to - and the background casts a very different light on the holiday.

How did Valentine's Day start?

Valentine's Day is a fixed day on the calendar that got lumped into a mid-February holiday on the ancient Roman calendar called Lupercalia—which some historians believe is what led to Valentine's Day being all about love. Lupercalia celebrated fertility, and may have included a ritual in which men and women were paired off by choosing names from a jar. In Ancient Greece, people observed a mid-winter celebration for the marriage of the god Zeus and the goddess Hera.

Why is Valentine's Day celebrated on February 14th?

In general, early Christians often opted to celebrate holidays on days that coincide with existing festivals and celebrations (like Christmas and winter solstice), so they placed Valentine's Day on February 14th, while Lupercalia was celebrated on February 15th.

Who was Saint Valentine? (And what does he have to do with chocolate hearts?)

Not much, it turns out. St. Valentine's Day was a feast day in the Catholic religion, added to the liturgical calendar around 500 AD. The day was commemorated for martyred saints named—you guessed it—Valentine. Differing legends celebrate three



different saints called Valentine or Valentinus, but since very little was known about these men and there were conflicting reports of the St. Valentine Day story, the feast day was removed from the Christian liturgical calendar in 1969.

But even though not much is known about the real history of the Saint Valentines on whom the holiday is based, the legend of Saint Valentine has several tellings. One legend says that Saint Valentine refused to convert

to paganism and was executed by Roman Emperor Claudius II. Prior to his execution, he was able to miraculously heal the daughter of his jailer, who then converted to Christianity along with his family. Another legend says a bishop called Saint Valentine of Terni is the true namesake of the holiday; this Saint Valentine was also executed.

But according to others—and this is how Saint Valentine became affiliated with a love-focused holiday—Saint



Valentine was a Roman priest who performed weddings for soldiers forbidden to marry, because of a Roman emperor's edict decreeing married soldiers did not make good warriors and thus young men could not marry. This Saint Valentine wore a ring with a Cupid on it—a symbol of love—that helped soldiers recognize him. And, in a precursor to greeting cards, he handed out paper hearts to remind Christians of their love for God. Because of this legend, Saint Valentine became known as the patron saint of love. The Saint Valentine prayer asks Saint Valentine to connect lovers together, so that two become one, and the couple remembers their devotion to God. While the Saint Valentine story set the groundwork for establishing the day as a holiday for romantic love, what truly solidified the connection between Saint Valentine and love was a poem by medieval author Geoffrey Chaucer in 1375, which historians consider the origin of the "modern" celebration of Valentine's Day, where we celebrate our romantic partnership with one other person.

Why do we celebrate Valentine's Day?

Chaucer lived in the Middle Ages, the era of courtly love, when broad, romantic statements of devotion—poems, songs, paintings—celebrated partnership. By the end of the 15th century, the word "valentine" was being used to describe a lover in poems and songs of the day, and in the 18th century, a book called *The Young Man's Valentine Writer* was published in England. By the mid-19th century, mass-produced paper Valentine's Cards were being created (though DIY Valentine card ideas are still worth trying), and Valentine's Day as we know it was born.

The truth about Valentine's Day history is that the romantic holiday isn't immune to tragedy. During Prohibition in Chicago, seven men were killed by a gang organized by Al Capone on Feb. 14, 1929. The Valentine's Day Massacre became a flashpoint in Prohibition history, with police and lawmakers going after the gangs and



mobs that had formed in cities to control then-illegal substances like alcohol.

What is Galentine's Day, and how is it related to Valentine's Day?

A modern (and fun!) take on Valentine's Day, Galentine's Day seems to have been popularized by Amy Poehler's character Leslie Knope on Parks and Recreation. It's a day to celebrate the friends that you love. It's celebrated on February 13 (leaving you plenty of time to celebrate your mate on official Valentine's Day the following day). Galentine's Day gifts have become a nice way to celebrate the people who mean so much to you.

What is the meaning of Valentine's Day?

Over the years (and centuries), Valentine's Day has been a religious celebration, an ancient ritual day, and a commercial holiday. All that change means the meaning of Valentine's Day is truly whatever you want it to be: You can skip the celebrations completely, buy yourself some chocolate or flowers, or express your love and appreciation for the people in your life, whether they're co-workers, romantic partners, friends, or family members.

How to Celebrate Valentine's Day

Celebrating Valentine's Day comes with all sorts of inherited romantic traditions which can certainly be fun and bring lots of joy! But this is also a great way to get creative with showing people how much they are loved—even if it isn't a romantic relationship.

Try out some of these ideas for celebrating Valentine's Day:

Make a Card or Gift for Someone

Whether it's a romantic partner or just a friend, Valentine's Day is a great day to say "I Love You". Hand made cards and gifts are especially welcome when it comes to showing someone how much they are cared for. January is a dark and quiet month anyway, so there's plenty of time to prepare homemade gifts from a hobby like knitting a scarf, braiding a friendship bracelet, embroidering a towel, painting a picture or simply making a card.

Send Roses for Valentine's Day

With delivery services abounding in almost every town, getting flowers delivered has never been easier! Choose to send red roses that stand for passion; yellow for friendship; pink for sweetness; peach for sincerity or gratefulness; white for purity or loyalty; ivory for perfection; and lavender for a crush (or love at first sight!).

Make Dinner Reservations

It's likely that a last minute idea for going out to dinner will result in ordering takeout to eat at home, because restaurants are basically always full on Valentine's Day. But, think ahead (sometimes months ahead, depending on the popularity of the restaurant) and make a reservation for two at a romantic place.

Enjoy a Story About Love

Head over to a local bookstore or library and browse the selection of novels or biographies that might feature stories about love. Or, it might even be interesting to read a biography about the guys named Valentine!



Valentine's Day thing of past? Indian govt says celebrate 'Cow Hug Day' on Feb 14

The Animal Welfare Board of India has issued a notice appealing cow lovers to celebrate February 14 – a day celebrated across the world as Valentine's Day – as 'Cow Hug Day'. The government advisory body said that hugging a cow will bring "emotional richness" and will increase "individual and collective happiness".

Criticising the "dazzle of western civilisation", the board said that vedic traditions are "almost on the verge of

extinction due to the progress of west culture over time."

"In view of the immense benefit of the cow, hugging with cow will bring emotional richness hence will increase our individual & collective happiness. Therefore, all the cow lovers may also celebrate the February 14 as Cow Hug day keeping in mind the importance of mother cow and make life happy and full of positive energy," the advisory said.

The welfare board called cow the

"backbone of Indian culture and rural economy", adding that the animal represent "cattle wealth and biodiversity."

"It is known as "Kamdhenu" and "Gaumata" because of its nourishing nature like mother, the giver of all providing riches to humanity," it said.

The board said that the advisory was issued on the direction of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying under ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.



INDO-AMERICAN DESIGNS THE ONE-MINUTE SAREE BRAND

BY MABEL PAIS

Calling All "I-Love-Wearing-Saree" Women!

Do you wish to wear the elegance of the Indian saree without the draping hassle?

Indo-American Sasha Revankar has found the answer.

Asia's largest and most prominent



One Minute Saree Credit / oneminutesaree.com



Sasha Revankar Credit / oneminutesaree.com

showcase for young designers, India Beach Fashion Week (IBFW), has selected only ONE Indian American brand for its 2023 runway show on Goa's private Divar Island on February 13 and 14, 2023. 'One Minute Saree,' a direct-to-consumer, online saree brand founded by Indo-American Sasha Revankar (originally from Goa) in early 2022, will unveil its eclectic collection on a fashion ramp for the first time at IBFW on Valentine's Day 2023.

Rooted in tradition but crafted for the

modern woman, 'One Minute Saree' is the fashion revolution for which the next generation of Indophiles has been awaiting. The desire to embody celeb-like grace in stunning sarees at weddings without the fear of tripping over a long pallu or sporting uneven pleats is an all-too-real fear for any millennial. 'One Minute Saree' ends the saree enthusiast's draping woes with custom-stitched, pre-draped sarees that perfectly fit each time and leave wearers feeling as immaculate as they look, all under one minute!

Founded by sheer necessity, Revankar says: "After having been a bit traumatized from the experience of wearing a saree to a wedding while handling two little kids in 2018, I had basically given up on the idea of ever putting one on again. Even though I spent an hour perfecting my drape, the saree repeatedly came loose throughout the evening. It was a bit disheartening because I love the concept of a saree for the tradition and elegance it represents, but it was just too complicated, especially for someone living in the States - and where would I even go to buy a petticoat!"

Enter - ONE MINUTE SAREE! It is not a skirt or dress-type saree; it is still a wraparound cloth that fits adjustable sizes and maintains the flow and drape of the garment. Unlike other options, the goal is to stay true to the authenticity of sarees such as the traditional Nivi

Sarees, Gujarati Sarees, and Kanjivaram Sarees, with inclusive sizes for all body types from extra small to extra-large.

The founders of India Beach Fashion Week had never seen a more practical way to wear a saree, and for this reason, they decided to include the line in their destination-wedding-themed fashion show. "We have always believed in the power of the young and the bold and have created a niche in the fashion segment since 2015. This season, IBFW positions itself as a platform for the daring fashion enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, designers, content creators, artists, fresh graduates, and early innovators who are changing the world with their creative outlook, vision, design aesthetics, and technology on a daily basis. 'One Minute Saree' is exactly the kind of avant-garde game-changer that will excite fashionistas and claim its rightful space in the millennial market," said co-founders Pallav Ojha and Neha Asthana Ojha.

The brand will present 14 looks on the runway on February 14th (Valentine's Day) in Goa, and founder Revankar will also participate in a panel discussion on the Future of Indian Fashion for a Global Marketplace. For more information and to order your own piece from the collection, visit oneminutesaree.com.

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

NIMBUS DANCE MAKES AN OFFER YOU CANNOT REFUSE



Nimbus Dance students (Inset): Samuel Pott

Credit / nimbusdance.org

BY MABEL PAIS

Interested in learning dance that integrates attention to a range of movement styles including contemporary dance, ballet, somatic work and dance theater?

You are invited for a free hybrid contemporary dance class with Samuel Pott, founding artistic director of Nimbus Dance.

Don't miss this special opportunity to learn from one of New Jersey's leading choreographers.

Samuel Pott, founding artistic director of contemporary dance company Nimbus,

teaches two master classes featuring choreography from his company's repertory. Pott will teach two master classes, for beginners and intermediate/advanced dancers, featuring choreography from his company's repertory. Each class integrates Nimbus' principles and approach to movement, which include attention to detail, partnering, self-awareness and technique. During each class, Pott will guide dancers through a floor warm-up, improvisational exercises and choreographed sequences representing a range of movement styles

including contemporary dance, ballet, somatic work and dance theater.

The intermediate/advanced class will be held from 12 - 1:30PM, followed by the beginner class at 2 - 3:30PM, at Nimbus Arts Center in Jersey City. You may also choose to tune in to either class virtually. Don't miss this special opportunity to learn from one of New Jersey's leading choreographers on February 18!

SCHEDULE

Sat, Feb 18 @ 12 & 2PM
Hybrid (In-person and virtual)
Nimbus Arts Center
329 Warren St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

2 CLASSES:

1 INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED CLASS - 12 PM - 1:30 PM

VIRTUAL RSVP:
njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X000008za2wUAA

IN-PERSON RSVP:
njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X000008za2WUAQ

1 BEGINNER CLASS 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

VIRTUAL RSVP:

njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X000008zaUQUAY

IN-PERSON RSVP:

njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X000008zaTSUAY

In person classes will take place at Nimbus Arts Center. To learn more and for directions to Nimbus, visit nimbusdance.org.

SAMUEL POTT

Samuel Pott, founding artistic director of contemporary dance company Nimbus, teaches two master classes featuring choreography from his company's repertory. Each class integrates Nimbus principles and approach to movement, these include attention to detail, partnering, self-awareness and technique. During the one hour and a half class, Pott will guide dancers through a floor warm-up, improvisational exercises and choreographed sequences representing a range of movement styles including contemporary dance, ballet, somatic work and dance theater.

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

NJYC GIVES BACK FOR LOCAL CHARITIES

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Youth Chorus (NJYC) hosts two benefit concerts this month to raise community awareness and funds for local charities Oasis (oasisnj.org - a haven for women and children), on Saturday, February 11, and Matheny (matheny.org - a New Jersey-approved private school for children with disabilities) on Sunday, February 12.



NJYC Heart-to-Heart Concert

Credit / Wharton Arts

The Heart to Heart Benefit Concert, featuring singers from NJYC's Primo Coro and Coro Vivo ensembles, students from the Paterson Music Project, and members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church choir, will take place on February 11 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Church located at 451 Van Houten Street, Paterson. The Middle School Treble Choral Festival Kids for Kids Concert, featuring NJYC's Sola Voce ensemble and area middle school choirs, will take place February 12 at 5:00 p.m. at Mt. Olive Middle School located at 160 Wolfe Road, Budd Lake.

TICKETS

Both concerts are free and open to the public with a free-will offering. For more information, visit WhartonArts.org.

In 2001, during NJYC's 10th Anniversary Season, the youth choir adopted the philanthropic philosophy of "Kids for Kids" to teach choristers the importance of giving back to the community. The annual benefit concert has supported local charities including the Hugs for Brady Foundation, Casa of NJ, Goryeb Children's Hospital, Relay for Life, Matthew Larson Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, Brooke Healey Foundation, Team Campbell Foundation, and Good Grief, and more. In 2014, NJYC produced and distributed a CD entitled 'Stand Together: Music for Hope and Healing,' a project benefiting cancer patients in local hospitals.

Founded in 1992 by Trish Joyce, the New Jersey Youth Chorus is an auditioned choral program for children in grades three through twelve, divided into five performing ensembles. The Chorus, which joined Wharton Arts in July, performs frequently with professional ensembles including the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Canadian Brass, among others.

Past highlights include performing at the White House for "Christmas at the White House, 2019," with Queen Latifah at Super Bowl XLVIII, with six-time Grammy winner The Chieftains in NYC, with Barry Manilow at the Prudential Center, at the New Jersey State Theater's Gala under both Oscar and Grammy

award-winning composer Marvin Hamlisch and Bill Conti, with Ronan Tynan, at the Jimmy V Basketball Classic at Madison Square Garden, and multiple performances at Carnegie Hall. In addition, they have been a featured choir at regional and national music conferences and invited to perform the national anthem for several sports teams.

NJYC has participated in numerous festivals and tours to New Orleans, Hawaii, Canada, England, Italy, Ireland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Budapest, Vienna, and Wales. This summer, members of both high school ensembles, Coriste and Camerata, will tour Italy.

WHARTON ARTS

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities.

Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.

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

PMP WITH TATI HOSTS MUSIC TEACHER TRAINING EXPERIENCE

BY MABEL PAIS



PMP-TATI Students

Credit / Wharton Arts

The Paterson Music Project, New Jersey (PMP) one among five nonprofits across the US, was selected to host a tailored professional development teacher practicum.

The Paterson Music Project (NJ) and Teaching Artists Training Institute (US) collaborate to offer a two-day professional development experience for music Teaching Artists across the Northeast. The Northeast Regional Practicum will be held February 16-17, 2023 in Paterson, NJ, with afternoon visits to Paterson Music Project's after-school program sites.

Chosen as part of a national application process to host a Regional Practicum, the Paterson Music Project will partner with the Teaching Artists Training Institute (TATI) to help Teaching Artists across the Northeast, including CT, NJ, NY, PA, and MD, gain new skills and tools that directly support the continued growth of their teaching practice. "A majority of Teaching Artists working with community music programs have extensive music performance backgrounds, but don't necessarily have experience working with students in classroom settings. Providing foundational training not only increases their confidence and success, but also builds a stronger network of support for their students," shares Anna Barson, Managing Director of TATI.

Designed to be highly interactive, this Regional Practicum will provide hands-on workshops centered in classroom management, culturally responsive teaching, and youth voice and leadership by utilizing group discussions, problem-solving challenges, and peer networking. Practicum attendees will have the opportunity to learn from guest clinician, Alice Tsui, Founding Music Teacher at Brooklyn-based elementary school: 'New Bridges.' Alice is a GRAMMY-nominated music educator focused on "decolonizing, ABAR (anti-bias, anti-racist), abolitionist public music education and empowering the individual and collective voices of youth through music as expression."

In addition, Practicum participants will visit Paterson Music Project's after-school programming to

tour and engage in teaching observations, implementing some of the newly learned classroom strategies, as well as giving and receiving peer feedback on their teaching practices. "I am excited that TATI will be providing high quality teaching artist training that is tailored specifically to the needs of music for social impact programs like PMP. Teaching Artists...often face similar challenges, so having an opportunity for them to come together and work on these challenges in a very practical way is invaluable," says Shanna Lin, Director of the Paterson Music Project.

Registration for the Northeast Regional Practicum is open now through February 1st for any music Teaching Artist working with a community music or El Sistema-inspired program in the Northeast region. For more information, visit tatrainninginstitute.org/northeast-practicum.

About Teaching Artists Training Institute: Founded in 2020 the Teaching Artists Training Institute (TATI) believes that transformational music education starts with transformational training for teachers. For more information, visit tatrainninginstitute.org.

About Paterson Music Project: The Paterson Music Project (PMP) is a program of Wharton Arts that empowers children to achieve their full potential through the joyful pursuit of musical excellence. For more information, visit whartonarts.org/programs/paterson-music-project.

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

RESTORED FILM COMES TO USA

BY MABEL PAIS

IRREVERSIBLE: STRAIGHT CUT

Dir/Writ: Gaspar Noé | 2020 | 1h 26m | French w/Eng Subs

One night. An unforgivable act. A tale told in reverse.

Gaspar Noé's infamous director's re-cut has taken the notorious revenge film and 're-reversed' it so that it now plays in chronological order. A restored version of the original film will play concurrently in

select cities, and makes for an interesting double feature.

Nearly 20 years after the original film's release, Noé world premiered IRREVERSIBLE: STRAIGHT CUT at the Venice Film Festival in 2019, and this release marks the U.S. theatrical premiere of his radically revised director's re-cut.

Now available for the first time theatrically in the U.S., IRREVERSIBLE: STRAIGHT CUT - along with a restored

original version in both digital and a new 35mm print format - provides an opportunity to see Noé's potent account of humanity at its worst from multiple perspectives, and the unshakable understanding that time, indeed, reveals all things.

Not for the faint of heart, easily offended, or anyone with photosensitivity, this is Noé's dark masterpiece, now in reverse and 're-reversed' versions.

Watch the Trailer: vimeo.com/756509485/281f38e5f8

RELEASE: Runs Feb 10-16 at the IFC Center, New York City and Landmark's Nuart Theatre (Los Angeles, CA). Learn more at alteredinnocence.net/irreversible.

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



'It really hurts', says Janhvi on being called 'nepotism ki bachchi'

Janhvi Kapoor, who is basking in the success of her last two films (GoodLuck Jerry and Mili) that were released in 2022, opened up about dealing with criticism. Speaking to Harper's Bazaar, the actress revealed that it's "hurtful" when anonymous people on the Internet call her "nepotism ki bacchi? (nepo-baby)".

Janhvi is the daughter of the late veteran actress Sridevi and film producer Boney Kapoor. Also, she is the sister of Arjun Kapoor. "No matter what you do, somebody will find faults or have something to say, because that makes them feel important. Next thing you know, you've made the headlines...and unfortunately, people feed off of that," Janhvi told Harper's Bazaar.

Revealing how she deals with criticism, Janhvi Kapoor added, "I'm extremely thankful that I've gotten to a point where I can laugh it off. I know my strengths and weaknesses... I'm objective enough to know when I've done a good job, and when I haven't. At the risk of sounding arrogant, I also know when I have made some headway, and have given something my all. And through my last two films, I think, I've at least established that I have something to offer as an actor." *Source: NDTV*

Sidharth Malhotra, Kiara Advani tie the knot in Jaisalmer



Bollywood couple Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra tied the knot at Suryagarh Palace in Jaisalmer on February 7 among family and close friends in a lavish wedding. The varmala and the pheras took place in the courtyard of the hotel. A special 'bavdi' was set up for this purpose.

The wedding festivities started on February 6 with mehendi and sangeet. The wedding day started with the haldi ceremony followed by the wedding.

The mehendi ceremony was attended by Bollywood celebrities like Karan Johar, Juhi Chawla, Shahid Kapoor and his wife Mira Rajput.

Both Sidharth and Kiara set the dance floor on fire during the mehendi ceremony celebrations.

The ceremony started at the Suryagarh Hotel lakeside. The guests were seated in the Sunset Patio Garden by the lake. Mehendi was first applied to Kiara's hands, and it was Siddharth's turn next.

Later, the women of the two families, including the bride's mother, Genevieve, aunt Sumita and maternal grandmother Valerie. Meera Rajput also got mehendi applied to her hands.

When the ceremony was on, DJ Ganesh kept the guests grooving to Bollywood and fusion numbers. The families of both Sidharth and Kiara also put up performances tailored for the occasion.

As the evening descended upon the lakeside, DJ Ganesh



pumped up the pace of the music, and Kiara's rapper brother Mishaal Advani, apart from Punjabi electronic folk artistes Hari and Sukhmani, also belted out peppy numbers to keep the guests grooving through the evening.

More than 100 dishes from 10 countries were reportedly served to the guests at the wedding.

The menu included Italian, Chinese, American, South Indian, Mexican, Rajasthani, Punjabi, and Gujarati cuisines. Jaisalmer's Ghotwan Ladoo was also among the sweets.

Sidharth and Kiara started dating while working together in 'Shershaah'.

Kriti Sanon and Prabhas to get engaged soon?

Kriti Sanon who previously denied dating reports with co-star Prabhas, is now rumoured to get engaged soon. Reacting to the speculations, Prabhas' team has dismissed the claims. Kriti and Prabhas will be starring together in their upcoming film, Adipurush.

It all started when self-proclaimed film critic Umair Sandhu tweeted, "BREAKING NEWS: #KritiSanon & #Prabhas will get engaged next week in Maldives!! So Happy for them." Earlier, dating rumours between Kriti and Prabhas sparked after the release of Adipurush teaser launch. Varun Dhawan who worked with Kriti in Bhediya, further fuelled the fire by hinting at Kriti's relationship. However, he didn't name Prabhas.

While Kriti strongly quashed any such claims back then, now Prabhas' team reacted to reports for engagement. His team told ETimes, "Prabhas and Kriti are just friends. The news about them getting engaged is not true."

Earlier, Varun Dhawan was asked by Karan Johar on a show to name 'eligible single women from the Hindi film industry.' He skipped Kriti from

the list and reasoned, "Kriti ka naam isiliye nahi tha kyunki Kriti ka naam kisi ke dil me hai. Ek aadmi hai jo Mumbai me nahi hai, vo iss waqt shooting kar raha hai Deepika (Padukone) ke saath. (Kriti's name is not here because her name is in someone's heart. That man is not in Mumbai because right now he is shooting with Deepika)."

Later, Kriti clarified on her Instagram Stories, "It's neither pyaar (love), nor PR.. our Bhediya just went a little too wild on a reality show. And his fun banter lead to some Howl-arious rumours (woman facepalming emoji). Before some portal announces my wedding date-let me burst your bubble. The rumours are ABSOLUTELY baseless! (folded hands and shrug emoji)."

Meanwhile, Adipurush is produced by T Series and Retrophiles and directed by Om Raut. It is slated to hit the theatres on June 16, 2023. The film is based on the epic Ramayana. While Prabhas plays Lord Ram, Saif Ali Khan stars as the antagonist Lankesh in the movie. Kriti will be seen as Janaki and Sunny Singh as Lakshman.

Source: HT





Salma Hayek was considered 'too sexy' for comedy genre

Salma Hayek revealed in a recent interview that Hollywood had blocked her from starring in a comedy for nearly 20 years because she was deemed too sexy for the genre.

Although Hayek acted in romantic comedies such as 1997's *Fools Rush In* (opposite Matthew Perry) and *Breaking Up* (opposite Russell Crowe), she said it wasn't until 2010's *Grown-Ups* that she got the chance to star in a traditional comedy movie. Hayek credited Adam Sandler with finally giving her the chance to be funny.

"I was typecast for a long time. My entire life I wanted to do comedy and people wouldn't give me comedies. I couldn't land a role until I met Adam Sandler, who put me in a *Grown Ups*, but I was in my forties then. They said, 'You are sexy, so you're not allowed to have a sense of humour'." *Source: IANS*

Jennifer Lopez posts clip defending Ben Affleck at Grammys after 'snapping'

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez has shared a snap of kissing her husband Ben Affleck backstage at the Grammy Awards following claims that the actor looked "miserable".

Fans were convinced they saw the *Hustlers* star "snapping" at her new hubby while they "didn't know the cameras were rolling" during an awkward exchange at Sunday night's ceremony, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

The 'Jenny from the Block' songstress, 53, and Ben, 50, attended the glitzy bash in Los Angeles on Sunday night. She took to her social media on Tuesday to share a highlight reel of her star-studded night out with her husband and included a picture of her smooching Ben backstage.

"Always the best time with my love, my husband," she captioned the clip.

As per *Mirror.co.uk*, the Instagram reel came after clips shared all over social seemed to show the moment JLo and Ben seemed to be involved in a tense exchange while host Trevor Noah filmed a segment right next to them.

Ben was spotted saying something into Jennifer's ear before she quickly moves away from him, pulling a somewhat uncomfortable face at the star. Her expressions quickly change after clocking that live TV cameras are pointed right in her direction as she sits up straight and laughs at Trevor's jokes.



'Ageism, misogyny' behind criticism of her Grammys look: Madonna



Madonna has written a lengthy social media post saying that "ageism and misogyny" are behind the commentary about her look at the Grammys. Unbowed and far from bloody after being the talk of Twitter for two days, Madonna ended her missive with a command: "Bow down, b****es!" She also borrowed the words of the ceremony's leading winner, Beyonce, writing: "You won't break my soul," reports *Variety*.

The pop superstar said that she believes criticism of her look is rooted far less in her appearance than longstanding historical resistance to her brazen attitude - combined with a desire to push back at women just for refusing to step outside of the limelight as they age.

"A world that refuses to celebrate women past the age of 45 and feels the need to punish her if she continues to be strong-willed, hard-working and adventurous," she wrote. She wrote on Instagram: "It was an honour for me to introduce Kim Petras and Sam Smith at the Grammys. I wanted to give the last award which was Album of the Year, but I thought it was more important that I present the first trans-woman performing at the Grammys - a history-making moment!! And on top of that she won a Grammy!!" "Instead of focusing on what I said in my speech, which was about giving thanks for the fearlessness of artists like Sam and Kim, many people chose to only talk about close-up photos of me taken with a long lens camera by a press photographer that would distort anyone's face!!" "Once again I am caught in the glare of ageism and misogyny that permeates the world we live in."

"A world that refuses to celebrate women past the age of 45 and feels the need to punish her if she continues to be strong-willed, hard-working and adventurous." "I have never apologised for any of the creative choices I have made nor the way that I look or dress and I'm not going to start. I have been degraded by the media since the beginning of my career, but I understand that this is all a test, and I am happy to do the trailblazing so that all the women behind me can have an easier time in the years to come." "In the words of Beyonce, 'You won't break my soul.' I look forward to many more years of subversive behaviour - pushing boundaries, standing up to the patriarchy and most of all, enjoying my life." *Source: IANS*

CHINA SLAMS BIDEN'S 'IRRESPONSIBLE' REMARKS ON XI

BEIJING (TIP): Beijing condemned on February 9 US President Joe Biden's comments that Xi Jinping faced "enormous problems", saying the remarks were "extremely irresponsible".

The latest rhetorical skirmish between the United States and China came after last week's downing of a Chinese balloon that Washington said was part of a spy fleet spanning five continents.

Following a brief warming after a November G20 meeting between Biden and Xi, US-China relations have once again nosedived, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken last week calling off a visit to Beijing over the balloon fracas.

The US has alleged the high-altitude device -- which crossed directly over at least one sensitive US military site -- was intended for espionage.

China has angrily denied the claims, arguing it was a weather observation craft that blew off course.

On Thursday, Beijing confirmed it had refused the offer of a call between the two countries' defence chiefs after Washington shot down the inflatable aircraft.

"This irresponsible and seriously mistaken approach by the US did not create a proper atmosphere for dialogue and exchanges between the two militaries," China's defence ministry said in a statement.

The previous day, Washington said the balloon was part of a "fleet", adding they had been spotted around the world for several years and urged allies to step up vigilance.

In an interview with PBS NewsHour the same day, Biden defended the decision to shoot it down and stressed that the US is not looking for conflict with China.

He also said Xi had "enormous problems", including "an economy that is not functioning very well".

"Can you think of any other world leader who'd trade places with Xi Jinping? I can't think of one," Biden said.

China hit back at the remarks Thursday, with foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning telling a regular briefing that Beijing was "strongly dissatisfied".

"This type of rhetoric from the US is extremely irresponsible and runs counter to basic diplomatic etiquette," Mao said, adding that Beijing "firmly opposed this".

It also doubled down on its position that the balloon shot down last week was for civilian purposes, saying claims it was part of a fleet were part of an "information war" against China.

"The US disregard for China's repeated explanations and communications, excessive reaction, and misuse of force are irresponsible," Mao said.

(AFP)

Ukraine's Zelenskyy makes emotional appeal for EU membership

BRUSSELS (TIP): President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked his Western allies February 9 for more weapons and said "a Ukraine that is winning" its war with Russia should become a member of the European Union, arguing the bloc won't be complete without it.

Zelenskyy made his appeal during an emotional day at EU headquarters in Brussels as he wrapped up a rare, two-day trip outside Ukraine to seek new weaponry from the West to repel the invasion that Moscow has been waging for nearly a year. As he spoke, a new offensive by Russia in eastern Ukraine was underway.

Zelenskyy, who also visited the U.K. and France, received rapturous applause and cheers from the European Parliament and a summit of the 27 EU leaders, insisting in his speech that the fight with Russia was one for the freedom of all of Europe.

"A Ukraine that is winning is going to be a member of the European Union," Zelenskyy said, building his appeal around the common destiny that Ukraine and the bloc face in confronting Russia. "Europe will always be, and remain Europe as long as we ... take care of the European way of life," he said.

EU membership talks should start later this year, Zelenskyy said, an ambitious request given the huge task ahead. Such a move would help motivate Ukrainian soldiers in their defence of the country, he said. "Of course, we need it this year," he said, then looked at European Council head Charles Michel, and insisted, tongue-in-cheek: "When I say this year, I mean this year. Two, zero, 23."

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, however, said "there is no rigid timeline." In practice, membership often has taken decades to complete.



He held up an EU flag after his address and the lawmakers stood in sombre silence as the Ukrainian national anthem and the European anthem "Ode to Joy" were played in succession.

Before his speech, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said allies should consider "quickly, as a next step, providing long-range systems" and fighter jets to Ukraine. The response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine "must be proportional to the threat, and the threat is existential," she said. Metsola also told Zelenskyy that "we have your back. We were with you then, we are with you now, and we will be with you for as long as it takes."

A draft of the summit's conclusions seen by The Associated Press said "the European Union will stand by Ukraine with steadfast support for as long as it takes."

During his time in Brussels, Zelenskyy asked Slovakia's Prime Minister Eduard Heger to give Ukraine its Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets, and he replied: "We will work on" the request. Slovakia grounded its fleet of MiG-29s last year. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the bloc will

send Zelenskyy "this signal of unity and solidarity and can show that we will continue our support for Ukraine in defending its independence and integrity."

Military analysts say Putin is hoping that Europe's support for Ukraine will wane as Russia is believed to be preparing a new offensive. The Kremlin's forces "have regained the initiative in Ukraine and have begun their next major offensive" in the eastern Luhansk region, most of which is occupied by Russia, the Institute for the Study of War, said in its latest assessment. "Russian forces are gradually beginning an offensive, but its success is not inherent or predetermined."

Zelenskyy used the dais of the European Parliament hoping to match Wednesday's speech to Britain's legislature when he thanked the nation for its unrelenting support. That same support has come from the EU. The bloc and its member states have already backed Kyiv with about 50 billion euros (\$53.6 billion) in aid, provided military hardware and imposed nine packages of sanctions on the Kremlin.

(Associated Press)

Australia blocks proposed mine to protect Great Barrier Reef

CANBERRA (TIP): Australia has for the first time rejected a coal mining application based on environmental law. Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek on February 9 blocked the proposed coal mine to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The mine's owner, the controversial Australian billionaire Clive Palmer, has not yet responded to the rejection, BBC reported. Plibersek had recently announced she has rejected plans for the Central Queensland Coal Project because of the risks it posed to the iconic reef, freshwater creeks and groundwater, reports Xinhua news agency. She proposed blocking the site in August 2022 and launched a public consultation process, receiving more than 9,000 submissions -- about 98 per cent of which were in favour of rejecting the project.

"I made this decision after a lot of careful consideration because I decided based on the evidence before me that there was an

unacceptable risk to the Great Barrier Reef, to freshwater creeks and groundwater leading into the reef," she told Sky News on Thursday.

"The freshwater and the groundwater that would be around the mine site -- they were part of my considerations as well."

The planned mining site was about 10 km from the Great Barrier Reef world heritage area. If approved, the open-cut pits would have been constructed on the site to extract up to 10 million tonnes of coal annually for the next 20 years.

Plibersek's decision was welcomed by the state government and environmentalists after an independent regulator found the project posed a risk to the reef.

Jaclyn McCosker, a campaigner from the Australian Conservation Foundation, said the mine would have been a climate and natural disaster, damaging local habitats.

It may be recalled that in Queensland,

Australia, Adani Group has developed the Carmichael open-pit coalmine, a hugely controversial project built on land that some local indigenous groups claimed was obtained without their permission, though they lost their legal bid to block the mine on this basis. According to a report in The Guardian dated December 20, 2022, Adani became the focus of protest in the UK, after the London Science Museum announced that it would be opening an Energy Revolution gallery, focusing on green energy, in 2023, with sponsorship from an Adani subsidiary.

Adani's representatives have long denied allegations of obtaining land through underhand tactics. "As a responsible corporate citizen, the Adani Group has always conducted its operations in total compliance with the laws of the country," a spokesperson for the Adani Group told me via email, The Guardian report said. (IANS)

Kim Jong Un shows off daughter, missiles at N. Korean parade

SEOUL (TIP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his young daughter took center stage at a huge military parade, fueling speculation that she's being primed as a future leader of the isolated country as her father showed off his latest, largest nuclear missiles.

February 8 night's parade in the capital, Pyongyang, featured the newest hardware in Kim's growing nuclear arsenal, including what experts said was possibly a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile he may test in coming months.

That missile was part of around a dozen ICBMs Kim's troops rolled out at the event, an unprecedented number that underscored how he continues to expand his military capabilities despite limited resources in face of deepening tensions with his neighbors and the United States.

The parade was the fifth known public appearance by Kim's daughter, Kim Ju Ae, his second-born child who is believed to be around 10 years old. On Tuesday, Kim Jong Un brought his daughter to visit troops as he lauded the "irresistible might" of his nuclear-armed military.

State media have signaled a lofty role for Kim Ju Ae. She's been called "respected" and "beloved," and a photo released Tuesday showed her sitting in the seat of honor at a banquet, flanked by generals and her parents.

North Korean photos released Wednesday showed Kim, wearing a black coat and fedora, attending the parade with his wife and daughter. Kim smiled



and raised his hand from a balcony as thousands of troops lined up in a brightly illuminated Kim Il Sung Square, which is named after his grandfather, the nation's founder.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said all of the soldiers and spectators at the square raised "stormy cheers of 'hurrah!'" and chanted the name of their ruler, a "great brilliant commander" who is "beefing up the military muscle with his outstanding military strategic ideas."

The parade marked the 75th founding anniversary of North Korea's army and came after weeks of preparations involving huge numbers of troops and civilians mobilized to glorify Kim's rule and his relentless push to cement the North's status as a nuclear power.

Photos released by state media showed

transport and launcher trucks carrying about 10 of the country's Hwasong-17 ICBMs, which demonstrated a flight range that would allow them to reach deep into the U.S. mainland during a flight test last year. Those missiles were followed by another large missile encased in a canister and transported on a 9-axle vehicle.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the missile was a mockup or an actual rocket, but Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said the missile was likely a version of a solid-fuel ICBM the North has been trying to develop for years. He added that the unprecedented number of Hwasong-17s paraded in Wednesday's event suggests progress in efforts to produce those weapons in larger numbers. (AP)

AUSTRALIA TO REMOVE CHINESE-MADE CAMERAS FROM DEFENCE SITES

SYDNEY (TIP): Australia will strip Chinese-made security cameras from some government buildings to ensure they are "completely secure", the country's defence minister said February 9.

It follows similar moves in the United States and Britain, which have both taken measures to stop government departments from installing Chinese-made cameras at sensitive sites.

Britain acted in November last year due to fears that Chinese companies could be forced to share intelligence with Beijing's security services.

The security cameras were installed at more than 200 Australian government buildings -- according to official figures compiled by an opposition politician -- including at least one run by the Department of Defence.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said officials would find and remove all cameras found within the defence department's vast collection of offices and facilities.

"It's a significant thing that's been brought to our attention and we're going to fix it," he told national broadcaster ABC.

"It's important that we go through this exercise and make sure that our facilities are completely secure."

The government-funded national War Memorial -- a sprawling 14-hectare (35 acres) complex in Canberra -- also confirmed it would remove a small number of Chinese-made cameras out of an "abundance of caution".

The cameras were made by companies Hikvision and Dahua, which have both been blacklisted in the United States.

The US banned the importation of surveillance equipment made by Hikvision and Dahua in November last year because it posed "an unacceptable risk to national security".

In Britain, a group of 67 MPs and lords called for the government to ban Hikvision and Dahua in July last year, following reports their equipment had been used to spy on Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

It was a Hikvision camera that caught former health secretary Matt Hancock kissing an aide in violation of Covid rules in June 2021, leading to his resignation.

Hikvision has previously said it was "categorically false" to paint the company as "a threat to national security".

Australia's centre-left government has been trying to repair its relationship with China since coming to power in May last year.

China slapped hefty tariffs on key Australian exports in 2020 at the height of a bitter dispute with the former conservative government. (AFP)

France hit by new strikes, protests over pension reform

PARIS (TIP): Fresh strikes hit trains, schools and refineries in France on February 7 over an unpopular pension reform pushed by President Emmanuel Macron, as opponents took to the streets for a day of protests.

The third day of union-backed demonstrations since January 19 was set to test momentum for the protest movement which has vowed to block Macron's bid to raise the retirement age.

The head of the hardline CGT union, Philippe Martinez, warned that more "numerous, massive and rolling" strikes were coming if the government did not drop the plan.

"If the government keeps on refusing to listen then of course things will have to be ratcheted up," he said, as the demonstration in Paris got underway.

Macron put raising the retirement age and encouraging the French to work more at the heart of his re-election campaign last year, but polls estimate that two-thirds of people are against the changes.

Lawmakers began debating the

reform, which would see the age for a full pension raised from 62 to 64 and the mandatory number of years of work extended for a full pension, during a stormy session in parliament on Monday.

Last week's demonstrations brought out 1.3 million people across the country while a first round on January 19 drew 1.1 million protesters, according to the police. A security source told AFP that between 900,000 and 1.1 million people were expected on Tuesday.

The crowds so far have been the largest anti-government protests since 2010, during pension reform by right-wing former president Nicolas Sarkozy.

There were tensions in the western city of Nantes where protesters clashed with security forces who used tear gas pellets, an AFP photographer said.

Hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon said Macron had to take account of the mobilisation on the streets. "Unless he has become completely authoritarian, you need to be reasonable in a democracy," he said, accusing Macron of trying to start his five-year term with a

"show of force."

'Reform or bankruptcy'

Trains and the Paris metro again faced "severe disruptions", while cancellations at Orly airport south of the capital were expected to total one in five.

The overall level of disruption, including in schools, was estimated to be lower than on the previous two days of action. Around half of the long-distance trains were running, the state railway company said. Another day of action is planned by unions on Saturday although, with train unions calling for protests rather than strikes, disruption may be less severe.

"It's ok, it's manageable," Sylvain Magnan, a 23-year-old told AFP at the main station in the city of Marseille on the Mediterranean. "I just took a later train." Around one in two workers at oil refineries run by energy giant TotalEnergies had stopped work, the company said, but stocks at petrol stations are sufficiently high to handle any temporary pause in deliveries. (AFP)

IN FINAL STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH IMF ON BAILOUT PACKAGE: SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

COLOMBO (TIP): President Ranil Wickremesinghe on February 9 said Sri Lanka was in the final stages of negotiations with the IMF on the much-awaited USD 2.9 billion bailout package that could help the debt-trapped island nation recover from the unprecedented economic crisis.

Wickremesinghe also said that his government was having "direct discussions" with Beijing to restructure the country's debts with China.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September last year approved Sri Lanka the USD 2.9 billion bailout package for over 4 years pending the island nation's ability to restructure its debt with creditors -- both bilateral and sovereign bond holders.

By the end of June 2022, Sri Lanka owed nearly USD 40 billion to bilateral, multilateral and commercial loans, according to the figures released by the Sri Lankan Treasury.

With assurances from creditors, the USD 2.9 billion facility could get the IMF board approval in March, officials said.

The IMF facility would enable Sri Lanka to obtain bridging finance from markets and other lending institutions such as the ADB and the World Bank.

"We are in the final stages of negotiations with the IMF. India has agreed to debt restructuring & extended financial assurance. We are in direct discussions with China. The Paris Club announced its support. The international support is a sign that we are on the right track," Wickremesinghe tweeted on Thursday.

Last month, India's finance ministry issued a letter to the IMF confirming its support to Sri Lanka on the issue of debt restructuring.

Subsequently, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, during his visit to Sri Lanka, also announced India's assurances to Sri Lanka for the bailout package.

Sri Lanka has also completed its debt restructuring talks with Japan, its other big creditor, last month.

Wickremesinghe, who is also Sri Lanka's finance minister, said inflation levels, which was 70 per cent when he took over as the president in July last year, had now been reduced to 54 per cent as of January 2023.

"When I first addressed parliament as President, inflation stood at 70%. It's now down to 54%. Exports have risen to \$13b; imports are down to \$18b; remittances are up to \$4b. Foreign reserves are up to \$500m," he tweeted, a day after making a policy statement in Parliament.

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022, the worst since its independence from Britain in 1948, due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves.

(PTI)

Pakistan's Ex-Prez Musharraf laid to rest; several including military officers attend funeral

KARACHI (TIP): Pakistan's divisive former military ruler Pervez Musharraf was buried on February 7 in a muted funeral that was never officially announced.

The country's serving army chief, the prime minister and the president all stayed away from the event, with media blocked from covering it and local television not airing the service.

Musharraf, who became a key US ally during Washington's "war on terror" after the September 11 attacks, died exiled in Dubai on Sunday aged 79, having suffered a long illness.

In Pakistan, where the military is supremely powerful, Musharraf remains a controversial figure who left many Pakistanis with a deep distaste for direct military rule.

Prayers were held at the grounds of a military compound in Karachi in a funeral ceremony attended by around 10,000 people, mostly retired and serving military officers, an AFP reporter observed.

"He was not given the honour that he deserved... the government has done nothing -- it should have arranged the funeral at the national stadium," Rubina Mazhar, a herbal medicine doctor, told AFP after the prayers.

Wajid Noor, a 71-year-old retired government official, said "thousands of people wanted to participate in the funeral but no details were provided."

The body was later transported to a nearby military graveyard where the coffin, draped in the national flag, was buried as hundreds of people watched



surrounded by tight security. A junior army officer at the site who asked not to be named said a gun salute was given to the former leader.

Economic boom, democratic decline

The four-star general seized power in a 1999 bloodless coup and was acting simultaneously as Pakistan's army chief, chief executive, and president when the 9/11 attacks on the United States took place.

He became Washington's chief regional ally during the invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan, a decision which put him in the crosshairs of Islamist militants, who made several attempts on his life. But it also brought a huge influx of foreign aid, which bolstered the economy and helped modernise Pakistan.

The general twice suspended the constitution and was accused of rigging a referendum shoring up his power as well as rampant rights abuses including

rounding up opponents during his nearly nine-year rule.

In 2007, Musharraf ordered troops to storm a mosque in Islamabad where more than a hundred students calling for the imposition of sharia law were killed, sparking a major militant backlash.

In the same year, he attempted to challenge the independence of the judiciary, leading to widespread protests and was accused of involvement in the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. He became increasingly isolated before ultimately losing power in 2008. In an editorial published by Pakistan's leading English-language newspaper on Monday, Musharraf was described "as something of an enigma as his authoritarian rule was also interspersed with liberal reforms."

"Yet the late general's mistakes were considerable, the biggest and most unforgivable being the derailing of the constitutional order." (AFP)

Peshawar mosque attack: Conspiracy hatched in Afghanistan, says Pakistan's law enforcement officials

PESHAWAR (TIP): The plot to target a highly secure mosque here in the capital of Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was hatched in Afghanistan and funded by their intelligence agency, the country's law enforcement officials probing the suicide attack said on Feb 7.

On January 30, a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during the afternoon prayers in a Peshawar mosque, killing 101 people and injuring more than 200 others.

The bomber disguised himself in a police uniform to sneak into the high-security zone and was riding a motorcycle with a helmet and mask on, a top police official said previously.

The Peshawar mosque suicide attack conspiracy was hatched in Afghanistan and funded by the intelligence agency based in Kabul, investigating officials said. The motorcycle used in the blast was sold twice in Sarki Gate, Peshawar's bustling market, officials said.

Police said they have arrested the sellers

of the motorcycle. Police sources said the security agencies have arrested 17 suspects involved in the devastating blast - the deadliest attack on security personnel in decades in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the Counter Terrorism Department Peshawar has announced a bounty of PKR 10 million for the facilitators of the suicide bomber.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Police Chief Moazzam Jah Ansari said the suicide bomber's identity has been identified through his DNA samples.

The bomber left his helmet at the gate before entering the highly-secured mosque which was captured in the CCTV footage.

"The facilitators behind this heinous attack will be arrested soon," he said.

Pakistan has been hit by a wave of terrorist attacks, mostly in the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, but also in Balochistan and Punjab. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

(PTI)

NEPAL'S RASTRIYA SWATANTRA PARTY QUILTS COALITION GOVERNMENT, THREE MINISTERS RESIGN

KATHMANDU (TIP): The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), the third largest member of the ruling coalition in Nepal, has quit the government led by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' after he denied reinstatement of the party's chairperson Rabi Lamichhane to the post of Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.

Three ministers of the RSP on Sunday resigned after a joint meeting of the party's central members and lawmakers decided to quit the government.

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Dol Prasad Aryal, Minister for Education, Science and Technology Shishir Khanal, and Minister of State for Health and Population Toshima Karki submitted their resignations to the Prime Minister.

(PTI)



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Lose weight without going to the gym

Going to the gym can seem overwhelming and confusing for a beginner. The settings and different pieces of machinery may seem too complicated. Although they are easy to learn, one might prefer working outside the gym. If you wish to lose or maintain weight, it is important to recognise the importance of a proper diet, workout, and lifestyle. In this article, we discuss some easy ways to help you lose or maintain weight without going to the gym.

How to workout?

If you are someone who wants to lose weight without going to the gym. Here are some easy-to-follow activities that can help you lose weight.

Walk

Walking is one of the easiest ways to introduce physical activities to your routine. You can increase the intensity by incorporating jogging and running.

Skipping rope

Skipping rope is a very effective way to lose weight and introduce physical activity in the body while staying at home. You can increase the intensity by increasing the number of sets.

Exercise at home

You can indulge in exercises at home if you wish to not go to the gym. Exercises such as squats, mountain climbers, crunches, jumping jacks, lunges, and so on can be easily practiced at home.

Yoga

Yoga is another effective way to lose weight if you don't like gyms. You can practice it at home and the intensity can be modified as per your convenience.

Take stairs

Making small changes in your



routine can also help you lose weight. Taking stairs instead of elevators is another great way to squeeze in a little workout.

Dance

Dancing is another very fun way to lose weight if you don't like to go to the gyms. Exercising in the gym can be monotonous and boring. Dancing is a great workout when incorporated with the music of your choice. It also helps you burn calories very quickly.

Pick up house chores

Helping cleaning around the house is another great way to add some physical movement to your routine.

What to eat?

- Divide your 3 meals into 6 smaller meals
- Eat metabolism-boosting foods such as green tea, ginger, chilies, etc.
- Eat more protein
- Count and lower your daily calorie intake
- Drink enough water before each meal

- Avoid junk food and highly processed foods completely
- Try intermittent fasting
- Eat without distractions such as the phone, tv, etc.
- Have black coffee before exercising for an energy boost
- Go for low-fat dairy products
- Go for low-calorie alcohol

Other things to keep in mind

Besides your diet and workout routine, there are various other factors that influence your weight. If you wish to lose weight, make sure to avoid habits such as drinking alcohol, smoking, and substance abuse. These habits not only slow down weight loss but also deteriorate the body. You must also make sure you are getting enough sleep daily. Sleep has a great influence on our weight.

In conclusion, you can easily lose weight without having to go to the gym. Although as you lose more and more weight, your body takes longer to burn fat. In this case, you are encouraged to try more extensive workout exercises. All of this can be easily achieved without going to the gym. *Source: NDTV*

FOOD

Pepper Roast Chicken

INGREDIENTS

8 chicken thighs, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon coriander powder, salt as required, 40 curry leaves, 1/2 teaspoon black mustard seeds, 1 teaspoon tamarind extract, 1 tablespoon finely chopped curry leaves, 4 tablespoon coconut oil, 1 teaspoon cumin powder, 1 teaspoon turmeric, 2 cloves, minced garlic, 2 sliced green chilli, 1 medium chopped onion, 1/4 cup chopped coriander leaves

METHOD

- Preheat oven to 420F. Line a baking tray with parchment. In large mixing bowl combine chicken, 2 tsp oil, 1/2 tsp of black pepper, turmeric, cumin and coriander.
- Add salt to taste, half of the garlic, ginger and curry leaves. Mix well, cover and marinate in refrigerator for 1/2 hour.
- To cook chicken, spread it in a single layer on baking tray, scraping up all the marinade over it. Oven roast for 20 min or until lightly browned and crisped.
- Warm remaining oil in deep skillet over medium heat. Add mustard seeds, let splutter 30 sec. Add remaining garlic, ginger, curry leaves, saute for 1 min.
- Add onions, saute for 5-7 min until they are softened and lightly browned. Add remaining turmeric, black pepper, cumin and coriander as well as more salt if necessary. Cook 1 min.
- Mix in the tamarind extract or lemon juice, water and chicken with all it's juices. Reduce heat to low and cook covered for 12 - 15 min, stirring occasionally.
- The sauce should be very thick and clingy at this point. Fold in the fresh coriander, slivered curry leaves and fresh sliced chili, serve.



Soothes inflammation, burns

Aloe vera works wonders on inflamed areas as it has a cooling effect. Says dermatologist Dr Soma Sarkar, "It's a must to have at home as you can use it on burn areas or even for irritation. It soothes the area for the time being. But avoid using it on open cuts. Aloe is also a good moisturising gel. It's also used for post-laser treatments as it can cool down the skin."

Removes tan

With summer coming up, it may be a good idea to keep a tube or jar of aloe handy in your purse as it effectively removes skin tan. Laser expert Dr Apratim Goel says, "Aloe hydrates the epidermal cells and balloons them. Tanning is nothing but the

Why aloe vera is your best beauty bet

redistribution of pigment (melanin) in the skin. When you apply aloe vera on the skin it becomes lighter due to this effect and the epidermal skin starts shedding out. Aloe also contains vitamin A, C and E (vitamin C helps to lighten the skin). I'd advise adding other sources of vitamin C to it, too, like lime juice, to aid brightening and tan removal. Anyone can try this."

Face packs and masks

Says dermatologist Dr Shefali Trasi Nerurkar, "Aloe vera has a calming action and is apt for irritated and dry skin. The gel also helps battle inflamed acne (red coloured pimples). One of

aloe's biggest advantages is that it is accepted by most skin types. When used in face packs, it soothes down the face. It can be used in a variety of preparations, depending on the skin type, like with honey or with fruit pulp or even with yoghurt. But you have to see what suits you best. It can also be used in anti-aging cream as it builds the water content of the skin."

In eye gels

To treat tired and wrinkled skin under the eyes, gently rub aloe gel or cream into the skin area. It reduces puffiness and moisturises the skin, keeping it supple and smooth.



Age-related abdominal fat may lead to less effective muscle function

A recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism links age-related abdominal fat increase to decreased muscle density. Low muscle density means that the muscle is fatter, which may result in less effective athletic activity and, as a result, more falls.

Individuals with the greatest six-year accumulation of visceral adipose tissue (VAT) in the belly had significantly lower muscle density, according to the study. These findings add to the growing dangers of body fat storage, as VAT accumulation is a preventable risk factor for poor musculoskeletal outcomes associated with ageing.

Entitled "Accumulation in Visceral Adipose Tissue Over 6 Years Is Associated With Lower Paraspinal Muscle Density," it is the first large, longitudinal study of the association between changes in VAT and muscle density.

"Most obesity research has focused on metabolic and cardiovascular outcomes such as diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, coronary heart disease, and osteoarthritis. But there is considerably less consensus on the role of obesity on the risk for low muscle mass or muscle density," said Lead Author Ching-Ti Liu, PhD, Professor in the Department of Biostatistics at Boston University School of Public Health, and Senior Author Douglas P. Kiel, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Musculoskeletal Research Center and Senior Scientist, Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research.

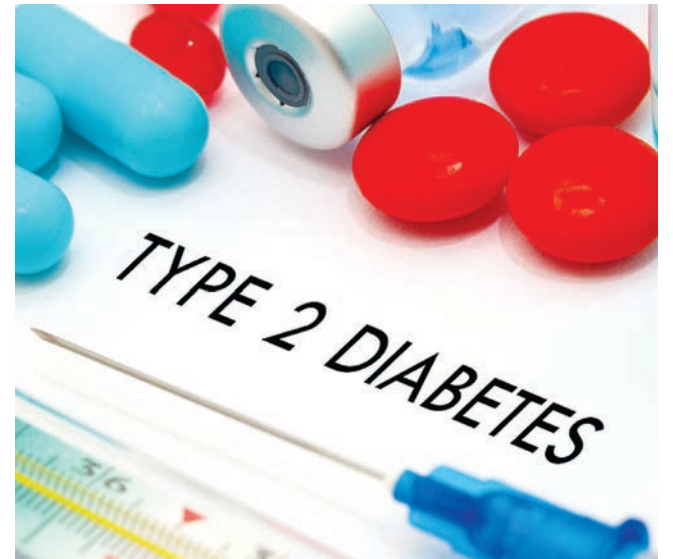
The study found that VAT may represent a modifiable risk factor for poor musculoskeletal outcomes with ageing.

"The study adds important new information to public health efforts to reverse the trend of the growing obesity problem in the United States and worldwide," the authors said. "Fat that accumulates in the abdomen



sometimes referred to as the 'male pattern,' was shown to produce less dense muscle surrounding the spine, resulting in less-effective muscle function."

The other researchers on the study were Timothy Tsai, M.P.H., Research Software Engineer II at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research; Brett T. Allaire, Research Assistant III at the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Studies, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; Mary L. Bouxsein, PhD, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, Center for Advanced Orthopedic Studies, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; Marian T. Hannan, D.Sc., M.P.H., Senior Scientist, Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research; and Thomas G. Travison, Ph.D., Director of Biostatistics and Data Sciences, Co-Director of the Interventional Studies in Aging Center, Senior Scientist, Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research.



Intermittent fasting might reverse type 2 diabetes, reveals study

According to a recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism of the Endocrine Society, patients who underwent an intermittent fasting diet intervention achieved complete diabetes remission, which is defined as a HbA1c (average blood sugar) level of less than 6.5% at least one year after stopping diabetes medication.

Intermittent fasting diets have become popular in recent years as an effective weight loss method. With intermittent fasting, you only eat during a specific window of time. Fasting for a certain number of hours each day or eating just one meal a couple of days a week can help your body burn fat. Research shows intermittent fasting can lower your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

"Type 2 diabetes is not necessarily a permanent, lifelong disease. Diabetes remission is possible if patients lose weight by changing their diet and exercise habits," said Dongbo Liu, Ph.D., of Hunan Agricultural University in Changsha, China. "Our research shows an intermittent fasting, Chinese Medical Nutrition Therapy (CMNT), can lead to diabetes remission in people with type 2 diabetes, and these findings could have a major impact on the over 537 million adults worldwide who suffer from the disease." The researchers conducted a 3-month intermittent fasting diet intervention among 36 people with diabetes and found almost 90% of participants, including those who took blood sugar-lowering agents and insulin, reduced their diabetes medication intake after intermittent fasting. Fifty-five percent of these people experienced diabetes remission, discontinued their diabetes medication and maintained it for at least one year.

The study challenges the conventional view that diabetes remission can only be achieved in those with a shorter diabetes duration (0-6 years). Sixty-five percent of the study participants who achieved diabetes remission had a diabetes duration of more than 6 years (6-11 years).

Everyday tips to keep your gums healthy

Are bleeding gums coming in the way if you brushing your teeth well? Does the sensitivity in your teeth prevent you eating your favourite ice cream? Are you not smiling because you are conscious of your swollen gums?

The one-stop solution to all your problems is to improve the health of your gums! Celebrity dentist Kshama Chandan, founder of House of Tooth in Mumbai shares everyday tips for your gums.

Healthy gums are pink, and firm, do not bleed and fit snugly around your teeth. Your lifestyle can greatly impact your gum health which includes your diet, age, and oral care. How do you know if your gums are healthy? "If your gums are sensitive, swollen, red, or bleeding, these are an indication that your gums are not as healthy as they ideally should be," says Chandan.

Here are some tips

Brush your teeth properly

- Brushing is the key to having a healthy mouth and gums.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day using a medium-soft toothbrush, and use Fluoridated toothpaste.
- Change your toothbrush every few months.
- Change your toothbrush if the bristles start fraying.
- Hold the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums while brushing—Do not scrub your teeth while brushing, instead use short strokes.

Floss daily

Flossing every day helps to loosen the food that gets stuck between your teeth and hence causes gum irritation. It also helps to remove plaque from areas that are hard for the brush to reach. If the food and plaque stay in this area for a long time, this leads to tartar hard build-up of bacteria that cannot be removed by regular



brushing. You can Schedule an appointment with your dentist to get rid of this stubborn layer of tartar.

Quit smoking

Smoking and other tobacco products like paan, gutka, etc. lead to gum disease. Tobacco also limits blood flow which makes it hard for a wound to heal quickly. Making sure you quit Smoking should be your priority if you're suffering from bleeding gums.

Look what you are eating

We all know that whatever food we eat has an impact on our health. Food items that are high in sugar content are more likely to cause cavities in the teeth. Whereas healthy vegetables and proteins are good for your oral health. Adding vitamins and minerals to your diet also helps to improve your oral health.

Regular dental check-ups

Dental check-ups include a cleaning of the mouth. Getting your teeth professionally cleaned is the only way to remove tartar from the teeth. Professional cleaning also helps to remove the plaque which cannot be removed by normal tooth brushing. Source: IANS

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Google introduces AI service 'Bard' to compete with ChatGPT

Google has unveiled its new artificial intelligence (AI) service 'Bard' to compete against OpenAI's ChatGPT, which is now opened up to "trusted testers" before the company makes it "more widely available to the public in the coming weeks".

Bard is an "experimental conversational AI service" which is powered by Language Model for Dialogue Applications (LaMDA), Google CEO Sundar Pichai said in a blogpost on.

The tool aims to combine the depth of the "world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of our large language models".

It uses data from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses.

"Bard can be an outlet for creativity, and a launchpad for curiosity, helping you to explain new discoveries from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope to a 9-year-old, or learn more about the best strikers in football right now, and then get drills to build your skills," Pichai explained.

The tech giant is initially releasing it using LaMDA's lightweight model version.

This much smaller model requires significantly less computing power, allowing the company to scale to more users, resulting in more feedback.

Google will combine the external feedback with its own internal testing to make sure that Bard's responses "meet a high bar for quality, safety and groundedness in real-world information", Pichai mentioned.

Source: IANS

WhatsApp brings 'Voice Status', 'Status Reactions' features

Meta-owned messaging platform WhatsApp on Tuesday announced new features coming to its status, including 'Voice Status', 'Status Reactions' and much more.

The new features have started rolling out to users globally and will be available to everyone in the coming weeks, the company said in a statement.

The 'Voice Status' feature allows users to record and share voice messages for up to 30 seconds on WhatsApp status.

On the other hand, 'Status Reactions' allows users to give a quick and easy way to respond to status updates from their friends and close contacts.

"This was the #1 feature users wanted, following the launch of Reactions last year. You can now quickly reply to any status by swiping up and tapping on one of eight emojis. You can of course still reply to a status with text, voice message, stickers and more," the platform said.

The company also introduced other features including 'Private Audience Selector', 'Status Profile Rings for New Updates' and 'Link Previews on Status'.

With the 'Private Audience Selector', users can update their privacy settings per status so that they can choose who views their status each time they update it.

Moreover, the most recent audience selection will be used as the default for the users' next status.

"With the new status profile ring you'll never miss a status from a loved one. This ring will be present around your contact's profile picture whenever they share a status update. It will be visible in the chat lists, group participant



lists, and contact info," the platform said.

Now when users post a link on their status, they will see a visual preview of the link content, similar to when users send a message, thanks to the 'Link Previews on Status' feature.

"Status is a popular way to share ephemeral updates with friends and close contacts on WhatsApp. They disappear in 24 hours and may include photos, videos, GIFs, text, and more," the company said.

"Just like your personal chats and calls, your WhatsApp status is protected by end-to-end encryption so you can share privately and securely," it added.

WhatsApp rolling out feature to let users share up to 100 media on Android beta

WhatsApp is reportedly rolling out a new feature which will allow users to share up to 100 media within the chats, on Android beta.

With the new feature, beta users

can now select up to 100 media in the media picker within the application, which was earlier limited to only 30, reports WABetaInfo.

This feature is useful as users will finally be able to share entire albums, making it easier to share memories and moments.

Moreover, it will help users to avoid selecting the same photo or video more than once when they have to send a lot of media files.

The ability to share up to 100 media within the chats is available for some beta testers and is expected to roll out to more people over the coming days, the report said.

Last week, it was reported that the messaging platform was rolling out longer group subjects and descriptions on Android beta.

While the characters of the group subject have been increased from 25 to 100 to provide group admins more freedom when naming their groups, the group description increased from 512 characters to 2048 characters.

Source: IANS

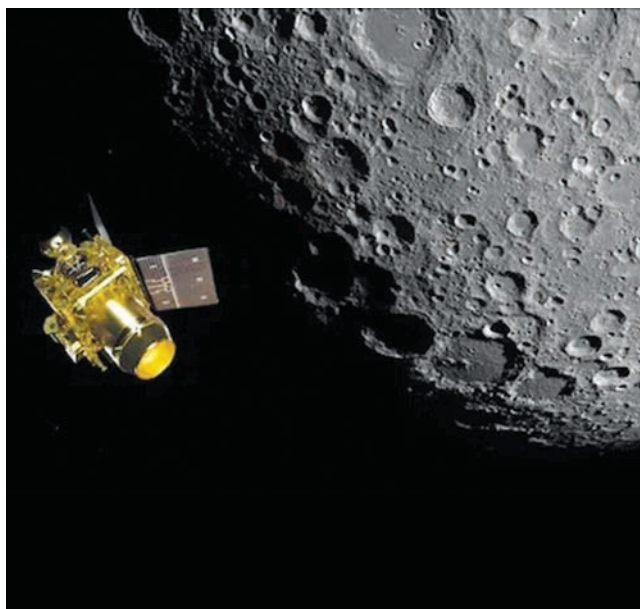
What will Chandrayaan-3 do on the Moon?

As the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) gears up to launch the Chandrayaan-3 mission to the Moon, the world is awaiting the discoveries that it will unravel on the lunar surface. The mission is likely to be launched this year and Isro has learned from the failure of the previous mission.

Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-up to the Chandrayaan-2 mission that will demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface and consists of a lander-rover configuration. The mission will be launched aboard India's most powerful rocket, the LVM-III, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

While the Indian space agency is yet to say anything about the final launch dates, it is likely to be in the second or third quarter of 2023.

The mission is aimed at better understanding the Moon's composition. Isro has laid out three main objectives for the mission, which include demonstrating a safe and soft landing on the lunar surface, demonstrating the rover's roving capabilities



on the moon and performing in-situ scientific observations. Isro said that the mission's Chandra Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE) will measure the thermal conductivity and temperature, while the Instrument for Lunar Seismic Activity (ILSA) will measure the seismicity around the landing site. The Langmuir Probe (LP) will estimate the plasma density and its variations and a passive Laser Retroreflector Array from NASA is accommodated on the mission for lunar laser ranging studies.

"Chandrayaan-3 consists of an indigenous Lander module (LM), Propulsion module (PM), and a Rover with the objective of developing and demonstrating new technologies required for Interplanetary missions. The Lander will have the capability to soft land at a specified lunar site and deploy the Rover which will carry out in-situ chemical analysis of the lunar surface during the course of its mobility. The Lander and the Rover have scientific payloads to carry out experiments on the lunar surface," Isro said in new detail.

Source: India Today

Disney to cut 7,000 jobs in major revamp by CEO Iger

Walt Disney Co on Wednesday announced a sweeping restructuring under recently reinstated CEO Bob Iger, cutting 7,000 jobs as part of an effort to save \$5.5 billion in costs and make its streaming business profitable.

The layoffs represent an estimated 3.6% of Disney's global workforce.

Shares of Disney rose 4.7% to \$117.22 in after-hours trading. The steps, including a promise to reinstate a dividend for shareholders, addressed some of the criticism from activist investor Nelson Peltz that the Mouse House was overspending on streaming.

"We are pleased that Disney is listening," a spokesperson for Peltz's Trian Group said in a statement.

Under a plan to cut costs and return power to creative executives, the company will restructure into three segments: an entertainment unit that encompasses film, television and streaming; a sports-focused ESPN unit; and Disney parks, experiences and products.

"This reorganization will result in a more cost-effective, coordinated approach to our operations," Iger told analysts on a conference call. "We are committed to running efficiently, especially in a challenging environment."

Iger said streaming remained Disney's top priority.

He said the company would "focus even more on our core brands and franchises" and "aggressively curate our general entertainment content."

e-rupee to be piloted by 5 more banks

Five more banks will join the pilot on the central bank digital currency or e-rupee for retail customers and the project will be extended to nine additional cities, the Reserve Bank said on Wednesday, February 8.

The RBI, which began piloting the central bank digital currency or e-rupee for retail customers in early December, stressed it does not want to rush with it but favours a slow and steady adoption.

Govt gets 33.44% stake in Vodafone Idea

Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea (Vi) said its Board has approved the allotment of equity shares worth Rs 16,133 crore to the government, which post-allocation holds a 33.44% stake in the company.

The shares have been allocated to the government in lieu of conversion of interest dues arising from deferment of adjusted gross revenue and spectrum auction payments, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Adani to prepay \$500 million loan as banks balk at refinancing

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Adani Group plans to prepay a \$500 million bridge loan due next month after some banks balked at refinancing the debt following a short seller attack that sent the group's assets tumbling.

Barclays Plc, Standard Chartered Plc and Deutsche Bank AG are among banks that lent Adani \$4.5 billion to finance the purchase of Holcim Ltd. cement assets last year. A portion of that loan is due March 9.

The lenders were in talks to refinance the loan up to a week before the critical report from Hindenburg Research was published, according to people familiar with the matter. Those talks stalled after the report alleging fraud led to a massive selloff, the people said, asking not to be identified discussing a private matter.

An Adani spokesperson said the conglomerate had been in talks with the banks to refinance part of the loan but the group plans to prepay it. The spokesperson said discussions with the banks have not stalled. Representatives for Barclays and Deutsche Bank declined to comment. A representative for Standard Chartered wasn't immediately available.

This marks the second time in a week that the group has taken steps to prepay debt as it fights to regain investor confidence and stem the stock rout. Billionaire Gautam Adani and his family have prepaid \$1.11 billion worth of borrowings backed by shares, the group said.

Adani faced a margin call of more than \$500 million on that loan, prompting the Indian tycoon to repay the whole debt, Financial Times reported Wednesday. The Adani Group said it didn't receive a formal request for a margin call and that the loan was repaid early "per our prepayment planning," the paper reported.

Global banks are ramping up their scrutiny of the group following the Hindenburg report. Citigroup Inc.'s wealth arm has stopped accepting Adani securities as collateral for margin loans, following a similar move by Credit Suisse Group AG.

The corporate empire of Adani, once the world's second-richest person, has been thrown into a tailspin after the Hindenburg report on alleged malpractices. Ten Adani group companies including Adani Total Gas Ltd., Adani Enterprises Ltd. and Adani Transmission Ltd. at one point erased \$117 billion from their combined market value in the selloff.



MFs had doubts over Adani debt: Report

Shares of the Adani Group have been on a rebound for the past two days but the voting pattern of mutual funds in resolution of its listed companies shows their unease over at least three issues that were red-flagged in the Hindenburg Research report.

Mutual funds are large block investors and recent SEBI directions have made them more active participants in governance. One of these directions in 2021 made it compulsory for the MFs to vote on all corporate resolutions. No longer can MF representatives, especially from state-owned companies, afford to not turn up for Board meetings. The disclosures by the MFs about their voting patterns have shown that many of them had reservations on three issues: related party transactions among Adani companies (there were over 6,000 in 21-22 alone), taking on substantial debt and appointment of Adani family members in key positions. Disclosures by mutual funds show many of them had reservations on related party transactions among Adani firms, taking on substantial debt and appointment of Adani family members in key positions.

RBI hikes interest rates, projects moderate inflation, growth in next fiscal

LONDON (TIP)

The Reserve Bank of India hiked the repo rate by 25 per cent to 6.5 per cent and forecast slower economic growth of 6.4 per cent during next fiscal as compared to the estimation of 7 per cent during the current fiscal year.

The Union Budget pegs the actual growth rate for 2023-24 at a marginally higher 6.5 per cent and the Economic Survey estimates the real growth rate to be between 6 and 6.8 per cent.

Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy in Mumbai on Wednesday, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided on a sixth successive hike in the repo rate, or the interest rate at which the Central Bank lends to banks, by a 4:2 split decision.

Faced with finding a balance between hiking interest rates to check inflation and not affecting industry's growth, Das justified the hike on the basis of the RBI's internal surveys which said manufacturing, services and infrastructure sector firms are optimistic of the business outlook.

"Emerging market economies are facing sharp trade-offs between supporting



economic activity and controlling inflation while preserving policy credibility," said Das in this respect. The repo rate at 6.5 per cent still trails the pre-pandemic level and core inflation (manufacturing) remains sticky, he added.

Growth during 2023-24 would, however, be weighed down by geo-political tensions and tightening global financial condition, Das cautioned.

The MPC resolved to keep a close watch on inflation, which will remain above the comfort band of 6 per cent during the current fiscal but moderate to 5.3 per cent

during the next fiscal.

Quarterly inflation rates will decline to 5.7 during the ongoing fourth quarter of 2022-23 and further to 5 per cent, 5.4 per cent, 5.4 per cent and 5.6 per cent during the four quarters of 23-24. Quarterly GDP growth rates are projected at 7.8 per cent, 6.2 per cent, 6 per cent and 5.8 per cent during the four quarters of 2023-24.

After the repo rate hike, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate has been adjusted to 6.25 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.75 per cent.

Das said it is now proposed to permit all inbound travellers to use UPI payments for their merchant payments while they are in India. To begin with, the facility will be extended to travellers from G20 countries arriving at select international airports.

The RBI Governor also announced a new facility, the ability to use UPI at coin-vending machines instead of tendering physical bank notes. "These vending machines will dispense coins against debit to the customer's account using UPI instead of physical tendering of bank notes. This will enhance the ease of accessibility to coins," he said. *Source: TNS*

Shree Ganeshaya Namah

VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
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The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope by Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - FEBRUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 19, 2023

**Aries**

Ganesha says this week will be a bit of a surprise for you. Many things that have been worrying you will be rolled over. It will repair existing connections, but new ones will have little fractures. In terms of your professional life, the contacts you've made in the past will be crucial in propelling your career forward. For you, life will run its course. Investors in the financial system should avoid intraday trading on Thursday and Friday. People who are working will attract the attention of someone who can help them advance in their careers. This week, your partner will be quite an outcast in your relationship. They will mean to conceal information, and will feel very comfortable discussing it. In terms of your health, you're much more likely to miss your appointment owing to something less urgent. Make certain you do not do so. This week, keep an eye on your family's health.

**Taurus**

Ganesha says you will shower with wonderful benefits. This week, your revenue sources will also widen. In terms of your professional life, those seeking for work will find one. Instead of looking for more funds, concentrate on what you can learn. After juggling a lot of tasks, you'll be exhausted at the end of the week, but you'll be back on track as soon as the next week begins. Regarding your money, you will do your best to maintain under control, but little overspending may cause you some concern in the midst of the week. This week will be nicer than ever in terms of romance. People who are dealing with family problems will have their relationship approved by their parents. People who are still seeking for love will find solace in one of their pals. In terms of your health, you could be caught off guard, which will be detrimental to you. Due to your internal temperature, you may not want to eat healthily, but make sure you eat well and correctly.

**Gemini**

Ganesha says this week, you'll have more energy, enabling you to complete whatever task you set your attention to. This week, you'll also make wise objectives. You'll be able to maintain attention and keep entertained this week. You'll be thrilled by the week's conclusion. Do not really expect something amorous to develop this week since your partnership isn't currently in a joyful position for you. You'll value the sage and useful counsel this week on budget-friendly employment and program management. If you've been exercising for a long, this week will bring about some very fantastic results. This week, making an attempt to make up for your lack of vitamin D and vitamin A.

**Cancer**

Ganesha says this week, you'll have psychological ups and downs, which will cause you to behave irrationally. On the other side, this week will be easy for you in terms of setting goals and solving issues. You will benefit from methodical multitasking as you pursue your career goals. Those who are in partnerships will feel safe and at ease in them this week. Your mate's soul will be won over this week by your kindness and affection. Since Venus is sending out fortunate signals this week, it's a great time for job seekers to submit their applications. Businessmen should refrain from making quick economic decisions this week. Although it may be challenging for you to remain busy this week, you will be conscious of your health issues.

**Leo**

Ganesha says you're in the midst of a really good and lucky time. You would have sensed it beforehand as well. You must thank God for this as well. This week, you'll be looking forward to spreading love and happiness to others who are less fortunate. This week, you'll also make an impression at work. Many people will notice your efforts and adaptable conduct. If you work in the production and chemical industry, you're more likely to expand with the help of a well-known associate. This week, your connection will be both flavored. Although there may be a few disagreements and disputes at the start of the week, the last few days of the week will bring you closer around each other. Your relationship will undoubtedly strengthen. In terms of your health, you will have no serious issues. Nonetheless, you should be cautious about being influenced by weather fluctuations.

**Virgo**

Ganesha says there will be a sense of calm this week, even during the busiest times of the week. Notwithstanding the most challenging challenges you'll encounter this week, you'll have the strength to handle anything on your lonesome. You'll learn that this week is the week to just release free in terms of your romantic relationship. You must first concentrate on oneself before integrating someone else into your lifestyle. You'll need to significantly alter your financial routines this week. You'll be concentrating on significant projects this week. Ensure you're using the right medications and doing all the necessary steps to preserve your wellness right this week.

Libra**Libra**

Ganesha says this week; you have the power to alter your life. Being honest and frank with myself is the first step towards understanding that this is the greatest plan of conduct for everybody. Do not delay any longer since you already understand in your spirit what is right. You can violate obligations and be less able to focus on your assignment. Place your work duties aside and spend time with your partner to show them you care. Your dating life can come to a tragic end if you don't reach an agreement. Any experiment you choose to attempt this week should be successful. You'll have access to additional income streams this week. If you trade equities this week, you'll also make a respectable profit. You've gone back to unhealthy habits therefore you must take good care this week.

**Scorpio****Scorpio**

Ganesha says to make things happen this week; you'll have to go against your gut. You'll become more outgoing and outspoken about your thoughts and desires. You might not fit in with certain groups, but you'll like who you've become. In terms of your professional life, a shift in your job attitude will work in your favor. You will complete tasks ahead of schedule. You may not agree with everything your boss says about your job, but remaining calm this week can help. In terms of your connection, if you are in a long-distance relationship, your companion will give you a surprise. This week, you'll find yourself in a solid and stable relationship with someone. People who are married may be anxious about their spouse's health over the last few days of the week, but all will be OK in the end. In terms of your health, use home remedies this week to strengthen your immunity and be safe. Request that your children remain indoors.

**Sagittarius****Sagittarius**

Ganesha says the symbols indicate that you will come across anything you have been ignoring, which will cause you to reevaluate how you interact with everyone surrounding you this week dear Sagittarius. You can be whatever you want to be; don't hold it aside any longer. This week, your Venus is inflecting, which means you ought to be wary of Aries who are beautiful individuals but may not be immediately helpful to you. All of your little disagreements with your partner will be addressed this week. Continuing with what you two think will bind you altogether. Do anything charitable this week. Your doorway will be visited by opportunity. It can be your hard riches or a wonderful person who can assist you.

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEBRUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 19, 2023 BY ASTRO FRIEND CHIRAG - SON OF ASTROLOGER BEJAN DARUWALLA

FEBRUARY 13 : Ganesha says you will attempt to go to whatever length to carry out and achieve your predetermined plans. Even though your family discussions wind up being bitter, only sweetness will fill the void in the end. Before starting any project, you are a dependable source who carefully investigates all the information. Your health conditions could not satisfy you. Through financial assistance that you might receive due to luck, your assistance to the poor and needy will help to dry their sorrows. Your profession may have many twists and turns, so you must exercise great caution.

FEBRUARY 14 : Ganesha says you enjoy leading a self-determined lifestyle. You need to be careful to seize the opportunities that knock on your door. You will become a wonderful person because of your insatiable passion for accomplishing your objectives. Avoiding excessive displays of winning emotions is an urgent need right now. With no expectations or complaints, you will accept life as it is. What you experience in life is a series of ups and downs. In order to prevent resentment from dividing you from your admirers, try to avoid disagreements with them.

FEBRUARY 15 : Ganesha says you adore leading an independent life. Opportunities will knock on your door, so be careful to seize them. You will

become a wonderful person because of your unquenchable desire to achieve your objectives. Avoiding excessive displays of winning emotions is a crucial current need. With no expectations or complaints, you will accept life as it is. Your life will be full of ups and downs. Avoid disputes with your admirers to prevent resentments from dividing you.

FEBRUARY 16 : Ganesha says your original concepts would provide you with the most sought-after abilities. A large crew is relatively simple to manage. You would perform exceedingly well in the upcoming time and get amazing honors and awards. But occasionally, because of your snarky and peculiar behavior, you start to seem mysterious to your friends. On a professional front, you must restrain or conceal your erratic behavior. You will undoubtedly increase your savings but you will also likely indulge in extravagant spending. It would be planned to be brief but exciting for a change.

FEBRUARY 17 : Ganesha says joining the crowd, you keep yourself informed at all times. Your sense of unbelievableness could propel you to fame in the near future. Similar to how honey attracts more flies than vinegar, you are surrounded by kind people. You have good leadership qualities, which will help you succeed as you move up the organizational ladder. To avoid creating fractions,

you should be devoted to your coworkers. Even if your family comes first in your life, you find yourself having less time to spend with them.

FEBRUARY 18 : Ganesha says about your life experiences and their substance, people will be incredibly curious. This romantic relationship is a win-win for you. Your level of intimacy will probably rise, and you might be preoccupied with creating your wedding invitation. You will fulfil all of your requirements through your spouse and receive your desired outcome. It will take time for you to travel through a long passage as the number of people who admire you will continue to grow. Love, sacrifices, provocations, disengagement, and peace are all available to you at this moment. You'll always achieve the outcomes you want by learning from experience.

FEBRUARY 19 : Ganesha says you're more likely to actively explore the notion of your business deal. You always look into anything that comes your way because you really think that "No pain, no gain." Your prowess could occasionally put you into disrepute. Check your toad-like characteristics, which include conservatism and introversion and a preference for staying in one place. You can be concerned if the number of people who support you declines since it could make you feel as though you have no one to encourage you.

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Capricorn



Ganesha says to compile a checklist of everything you want to do this week. You will have a lot of power generation this week, but you won't know how to handle it or how much you must utilize. This week, you'll be capable to complete your tasks on schedule as usual. Though individuals will be preoccupied savoring their independence this week, it will be difficult for wedded individuals to communicate effectively with their spouses. You'll have a great week economically this week. You need to be on the lookout for employment web scams this week. This week, your wellness should be fine, but if you experience any backache, you should consult a physician right away.

Aquarius



Ganesha says one and all things will be in viewpoint this week. This week, you'll focus on your stuff since they'll make you think of what you already since abandoned but didn't realize you had. You'll also try to engage with the surroundings this week. You'll require a lot more space for oneself this week. You and your household will get along well this week. This week, be careful to stay in connection with crucial people. Engaged individuals will feel as like their marriage is in peril; this week, have a genuine conversation with your mate. At employment, this week will be difficult. You will create a sound

financial plan this week. Your psychological wellness will be discussed this week as well.



Pisces

Ganesha says it's in your tendency to be inquisitive about a wide range of topics. This week, you'll enlist the aid of others to

acquire new skills. Your career fronts will be highly advantageous in the first part of the week since your tenth house will be strong, but the second half of the week will be hard for you. People who work on a regular basis must avoid getting into arguments and tumult with co-workers, specifically during the second half of the week. In terms of your romantic life, love will grow in your heart this week for

someone you've just known as an acquaintance or a friend. However, expressing what's on your mind will be tough. When it comes to married individuals, you'll be able to relive some past experiences, which can assist your relationship grow in a positive manner. When it comes to your health, if you already have respiratory problems, you'll need to be especially cautious.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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Sikh History This Week

FEBRUARY 10, 2023, TO FEBRUARY 16, 2023

10th February



1760 Baba Deep Singh having learned of denegration of Harmandir Sahib and Amritsar sarowar at the hands of Jahankhan. performed ardas for his shahadat.

The Khalsa forces fought British forces in the battle of Sabhraon. It is during this battle that the brave Khalsa General, Sardar Sham Singh of Attari, fell fighting and accepted shahadat. During this war, the Khalsa forces suffered heavy losses, mainly due to internal dissension. The Sikh army deprived of ammunition and rations, crossed Sutlej at Sobraon. British made three attacks and were repulsed. Lal Singh and Tej Singh ran away from the battle field as planned with the British. Gulab Singh came and started negotiations with the British to the detriment of Sikh interests. Lal Singh cut off the boat bridge so that Sikh army could neither get any reinforcement nor could retreat back. Under such circumstances the British won and the Sikhs lost. The Sikh army stood defeated and thus came the most inglorious end of a most glorious army of the Khalsa. This was the last battle between the British and the Sikhs.

1923 Bishan Singh Zaildar of Rani Thua killed.

11th February



1393 Birthday of Bhagat Ravidas. A Study of Bhakata Ravidas", by Darshan Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981. concludes that Ravidas lived between 1393-1528.

1713 Farukhsyar became ruler of Delhi. He immediately sent a mammoth army against the Sikhs. The Sikhs resisted for about six months until they ran short of food supplies. In October 1713, the Sikhs retreated to the hills. 1820 Kanwar Naunihal Singh, grand son of Sher-I-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was born.

1861 Maharani Jind Kaur caught with her beloved son, Maharaja Dalip Singh, and met in Calcutta.



12th February



1764 Foundation was laid for a permanent fort at Patiala.

13th February



1870: Baba Darbara Singh of the Nirankari movement, passed away. He was second to Baba Dayal Singh, founder of the Nirankari movement.

1923: A police informer, Diwan, is murdered by the Babbar Akalis.

1987: Feb. 13-15, an Academic Conference on Sikh Scholarship was organized under the auspices of the University of Toronto. This was the first conference of its kind after the assault on Golden Temple. Many renowned scholars from United Kingdom, India, United States, and Canada participated in this conference. Papers were presented on selected topics on Religion and Culture; History and Politics: India; History and

Society; Diaspora; and Comments on recent Events.

14th February

1983: 11 Sikhs killed in a strike observed by the Hindus of Punjab.

15th February



1605 Guru Hargobind married Mata Damodari, daughter of Narian Das, a Julka Khatri of the village of Dall, 6 Kilometers southeast of Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala district of the Punjab. This marriage resulted in a son, Baba Gurditta born in 1613 and a daughter, Bibi Viro born in 1615.

1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali traveled from Sirhind to Lahore with 50 bullock-carts filled with heads of Sikh.

1809 The East India Company established a cantonment in Ludhiana. This cantonment was specifically established to check the advance of Khalsa forces beyond the Sutlej.

1984 Feb. 15-20, the Hindus of Haryana under the guidance of the Chief Minister Bhajan Lal and senior police officials, attacked innocent Sikhs in the cities of Panipat, Rohtak, Kaithal Karnal, Ambala, Jind and other parts of Haryana province and killed 20 Sikhs, burnt six Sikh shrines and looted 200 Sikh houses and shops. The hair and beards of more than 12 Sikhs were shaved off by the Hindus in the presence of heavy contingents of police and Central Reserve Police CRP.

16th February

1892 Prof. Sahib Singh, a renowned scholar of GurSikhism, was born.

1923 Waryam Singh of Dhugga and Dalipa of Dhammian join the Babbar Khalsa.

1986 Foundation stone was laid for the reconstruction of Akal Takhat after Operation Bluestar. Sri Akal Takhat was severely damaged in this operation. Although the Government of India forcibly repaired the building under curfew, through Baba Santa Singh, main leader Budha Dal, this is not accepted by Guru Khalsa Panth. This building repaired by Government of India was torn down and Baba Santa Singh punished for his cooperation with the government in this matter.



Tridevi – Three supreme Goddesses

Tridevi “three goddesses” is a trinity of the supreme deity in Hinduism, combining a trio of distinguished goddesses as either a feminine version of the Trimurti or as consorts of a masculine Trimurti. Typically, Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Parvati, three Hindu goddesses, represent this trinity. These three goddesses are representations of Mula-Prakriti or Adi Parashakti in the Shaktism religion. The Tridevi goddesses serve as consorts and auxiliary deities to the more prominent masculine Trimurti gods in the traditional androcentric Hindu faiths. In Shaktism, the masculine Trimurti gods are demoted to the status of additional deities as agents of the feminine Tridevi. In contrast, the feminine Tridevi goddesses are given the prominent roles of creator (Mahasaraswati), preserver (Mahalakshmi), and destroyer (Mahakali). Here we have talked about Three supreme goddesses in Hindu mythology.

Mahalakshmi – The Goddess of Wealth

The Hindu goddess of wealth, auspiciousness, purity, prosperity, and generosity is known as Sri Mahalakshmi or Lakshmi. She exudes grace, attractiveness, and charm as well. Indian mythology features the strong and well-known Goddess Lakshmi. In actuality, Lakshmi, or Shri, is depicted in Buddhist and Jain monuments as well. Buddhist temples include the first ancient depictions of Devi Shri. The basic form laksa in Sanskrit, which means to see or perceive, is where the term “Lakshmi” originates. This also has the same meaning as “laksa,” which means aim, goal, or objective. Thus, Lakshmi is a Goddess who is revered as a tool for achieving a number of objectives, chief among them being a financial success.

Lakshmi, Sri Maha Vishnu’s consort, also takes on the guises of Sita during Rama’s avatar and Rukmini and Radha during Krishna’s manifestation. As Lakshmi, she is frequently shown as an unbelievably beautiful woman sitting on a fully blossomed lotus, holding pots of gold in her third hand, lotus buds in her other two hands, and benevolently rewarding all people who approach her for help. Elephants stand on either side of her, signifying her royal rank.

Being the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi is also seen wearing luxurious crimson silk and being completely adorned with gold and beautiful stones. The four hands of Lakshmi stand for four spiritual virtues. She is seated on a fully opened lotus, which stands for the throne of Divine Truth. Her joyful radiance represents mental and spiritual harmony. Around her, there is perpetual peace and prosperity. Along with her Consort, Vishnu, Sri Mahalakshmi is also seen lying on the Adishesha (bed of snakes). Lakshmi can be seen pressing Vishnu’s feet as he is in the Ananta Shayan (reclining) stance.

Parvati – The Goddess of Power

The ultimate feminine deity, Shakti, is represented by Parvati Devi in Hindu mythology. Despite being a kind mother goddess, she is renowned for showing all of her strength and power when things are most dire. She is regarded by the Shaktas as the supreme manifestation of Divine Shakti and the source of all cosmological force. The mother of Ganesha (the Elephant-Headed Lord), and Kartikeya is Parvati, the daughter of Himavan, the monarch of the Himalayas, who is an incarnation of Sati, Lord Shiva’s first spouse (Muruga or Skanda).

The Devi is frequently pictured as having two arms and sitting on a lion or tiger. Generally peaceful, this goddess is also reputed to assume more threatening personas like Kali, Durga, Chandi, and Mahavidyas. Despite the fact that Parvati is absent from Vedic literature, Uma-Haimavati, the feminine essence of the Supreme Brahman, is discussed in the Kena Upanishad. The Vedic triad of Agni, Vayu, and Indra learn about Brahman from her. Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana refer to Parvati as Shiva’s consort. The Puranas, which date from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries, and Kalidasa, who lived in the fifth century, both relate the tales of Sati-Parvati and Shiva in great detail. At her father Daksha’s Yagna, Sati, Parvati’s former self, commits suicide (sacrificial



ritual). When Sati visits the Yagna against her husband’s desires, Daksha taunts her in addition to refusing to recognize Shiva as his son-in-law.

When Shiva finds out about Sati’s passing, he gets indignant. He loses interest because of his grief, and isolates himself in the mountains. In the meanwhile Sati again reborn as Parvati (Daughter of Himavat and Mainavati). She frequently goes to the cave where Shiva is doing penance, cleans it up, and does daily puja there. But she is so heartbroken that she chooses to perform a painful penance herself in an effort to appease him when he doesn’t even open his eyes to look at her. She strips off her clothes, denies food and drink, and then begins to perform penance in the arid Himalayan environment. Shiva approves of her love for him and consents to marry her. After there, they continue to live on to Mount Kailas, the home of Shiva.

Saraswati – The Goddess of Learning and Knowledge

The Hindu goddess of education, learning, music and the arts is Saraswati. The Vedic Saraswati River has also been used to symbolize and compare Saraswati. She is Brahma’s spouse, the Hindu creator god. She completes the set of the divine Tridevi (the three goddesses, just as the heavenly Trinity) along with Parvati and Lakshmi. The Vedas are considered to be Saraswati’s progeny in Hinduism. In India, the goddess Saraswati is revered as a means of obtaining learning and understanding. Additionally, Saraswati is an important figure in Mahayana Buddhism. She first appears in a Mahayana Sutra, the Golden Radiance Sutra from the late 4th or early 5th Century.

Devi Saraswati is frequently shown as a stunning, white-skinned woman wearing just white clothing while sitting on a white Nelumbo nucifera lotus. The swan serves as her vahana, or chariot, and represents the fact that she is rooted in the knowledge of the Absolute Truth. She thereby possesses both knowledge and first-hand experience of the Highest Reality. White is the hue most often associated with Saraswati because it represents the purity of real wisdom. She is also sometimes linked to the color yellow, which is the hue of the mustard plant’s blossoms, which bloom during her celebration in the spring. In contrast to the goddess Lakshmi, Saraswati is depicted as wearing very modest clothing, maybe as a representation of her.

Typically, Saraswati is depicted with four limbs, each of which stands for one of the four learning-related facets of human personality: mind, intellect, awareness, and ego. As an alternative, the four arms

could alternatively stand in for the four Vedas, which are the main holy texts for Hindus. The three literary genres are each represented by one of the Vedas: Poetry is represented by the hymns found in the Rigveda; prose is found in the Yajurveda, and music is represented by the Samaveda. The book on the one hand represents prose, the crystal rosary represents poetry, and the veena represents music. The holy water pot stands for purity in all three of them, or their capacity to purify human thought.

Near her feet is frequently a white swan. It is stated that the sacred swan can only drink milk when given a combination of milk and water. Thus, the distinction between the good and the wicked or the eternal and the ephemeral is represented by the swan. Goddess Saraswati is also known as Hamsa-Vahini, which translates to “she who has a swan as her vehicle” due to her connection to the swan. On occasion, a peacock is depicted next to the deity. With a peacock as her horse, the Goddess encourages Hindus to be intelligent in regards to the everlasting truth and to not be concerned with outward appearance, which the peacock symbolizes as arrogance and vanity over its beauty.

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Spiti, a virgin paradise

Long winding roads and valleys that present unforgettable glimpses of cold desert and snow-crowned mountains welcome you when you set foot into Spiti Valley. Bordered on all sides by the Himalayas, Spiti Valley, located in Himachal Pradesh, has an altitude of 12,500 feet above sea level, and gets just around 250 days of sunshine in the year, making it one of the coldest places in the country. With the thick Himalayan snow cutting Spiti off from the rest of the country for around 6 months a year, the summer months are the only time Spiti is directly accessible via motorway.

The term Spiti means 'The Middle Land', as Spiti Valley separates India from Tibet. Scantily populated, Spiti is an adventure lover's paradise, with a number of trekking trails that tourists can choose from. All of these treks start from Kaza (Spiti's capital from where you make your base camp) to various peaks from where you can get panoramic views of the Himalayan mountains. An easy 1.5-kilometre trek along the Spiti River from Dhankar Monastery to Dhankar Lake promises gorgeous views of the villages below. The Dhankar Lake itself is a place where you can sit back and relax amidst the cool mountain air.

How to reach?

Travel by the preferred route from Manali isn't possible in the snowy winters of Spiti due to closure of Rohtang Jot and Kunzum La pass. Flying to Spiti isn't an option because there is no airport in Spiti. A few years ago, people thought of Spiti as a summer destination and very few still dare to venture out in the bone-chilling cold of the winters. The only possible way of arriving in Spiti is by the road route from Shimla through NH-22 via Kinnaur and then to Spiti.

The road from Shimla to Kaza is open throughout the year and it is only in case of a major snowfall when the stretch from Tabo to Kaza is closed from a few hours to a few days. It is also to be noted that this route automatically affords gradual acclimatisation if the journey is broken in parts. Rohtang Jot and Kunzum La are officially closed for the season from October 15th and open around May-June.

Shimla is an Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) and has excellent connectivity to the bus stations of Rampur and Reckong Peo in Kinnaur. SUVs and other vehicles can also be rented from Shimla for the entire duration of the trip. The charges for the same may be a bit higher than in the summer months because the engine needs to be kept warm in the cold nights and extra fuel is burnt thereby. Shared taxis also ply sometimes from Rampur to Kaza.

Places that can and cannot be visited

Some internal roads in Spiti are open in the winter. So it is possible to visit most places in Spiti, even in the stark cold winter. Roads to Demul, Langza, Kibber, Hikkim, Komic, Gue, Pin Valley, Nako and Chango (in Upper Kinnaur), Tabo etc may be open and accessible. It is also possible to visit Lhalung, Dhankar and Losar if the roads are not deemed too dangerous to ply on.



It is important to know that in case of heavy snowfall, there are chances of roads being closed for a day or two or even a week which may hamper your plans. It is better to keep a buffer of a day or two in your plans as snowfall at over 4000 m can cause the road to be shut for vehicular traffic.

The weather is bitterly cold in the high altitude villages of Spiti and the unbearable cold (sometimes -40 degrees Celsius) makes visiting the villages a difficult proposition in the winters.

While travelling, it is advisable to keep the window panes in the vehicle closed so that there is minimal contact with the frigid air.

Remember to always check with locals in Kaza and nearby villages about the prevailing weather and road conditions for the places you are heading to before embarking on a journey in wintry Spiti.

Major attractions in winters

The change in landscape means it is quite possible to think of Spiti as an entirely different land as compared to summers. There are frozen waterfalls, azure blue skies, trees devoid of leaves, pristine freezing rivers in the winter that make Spiti a more beautiful and novel experience.

It is a good idea to first get acclimatised to the bare cold and high altitude of Kaza (3700 m) before exploring the various sites in the region. While coming from the Shimla route, the monastery of Nako coupled with a walk to the frozen or semi-frozen Nako Lake will help in acclimatisation and getting used to the cold. The oldest monastery in India, Tabo Gompa complex can be explored at leisure before making the final run to Kaza.

Apart from these places, there are other noteworthy monasteries in Spiti, including the Sakya Gompa in Kaza, Ki Monastery, Dhankar Monastery and Dhankar Lake, Komic Gompa, Giu



Monastery, Lhalung Gompa and Kungri Monastery, all being amazing experiences in the winter. Keep in mind that, depending on the amount of snow, the roads to these places may or may not be open. If the roads are closed, it is possible to trek to these villages on foot in the snow; it is advised not to trek by yourself and have a local guide or villager around.

Major Spiti Valley attraction in the winters is the possibility of walking on the frozen Spiti and Pin rivers; keep in mind that there have been instances of people drowning in the past and any attempts are off the recommended list. A visit to high altitude Spitian village is another major attraction; you will get to see local life and experience how it goes on in spite of the unbearable freezing temperatures.

Reaching the village of Losar is a big

upcoming attraction in Spitian winters. It is the biggest and farthest of all the Spitian villages and is a cultural delight. Locals celebrate festivals and folk dances by singing traditional Spitian songs. To revive the tradition, winters also see young men learn the art of carving Buddhist prayers on mane stones. In Kaza, locals can be seen playing the favourite Spitian game of 'Cholo'.

The road to Losar is almost unbelievable in the winter and the landscape is covered in a blanket of white. While the poplar trees are bare in Spiti, there may be blossoms of various colours on almond, plum, peach and apricot trees along the route in February/March. Celebrating the festivals of Dechang and Losar is another big attraction in the winters.

Source: Happytrips

contd from page 1

US President Biden touts...

In his 72-minute speech, 80-year-old Biden, the oldest sitting US President, touted areas of bipartisan agreement, telling Republicans that "there's no reason we can't work together" after the Republican Party took control of the House of Representatives in the midterm elections.

His remarks amounted to the opening of a re-election campaign he plans to announce by this spring, The New York Times Newspaper reported.

"Two years ago, our economy was reeling. As I stand here tonight, we have created a record 12 million new jobs, more jobs created in two years than any president has ever created in four years," he said before the joint session of the US Congress.

"Two years ago, COVID had shut down our businesses, closed our schools, and robbed us of so much. Today, COVID no longer controls our lives. And two years ago, our democracy faced its greatest threat since the Civil War. Today, though bruised, our democracy remains unbowed and unbroken," Biden said.

Confronting a divided Congress for the first time since taking office, Biden talked back as Republicans heckled him from the floor of the House of Representatives they now control.

Biden told the lawmakers that as they gather at the US Capitol they are writing the next chapter in the great American story, a story of progress and resilience.

"When world leaders ask me to define America, I define our country in one word: Possibilities. You know, we're often told that Democrats and Republicans can't work together. But over these past two years, we proved the cynics and the naysayers wrong," he said.

"Yes, we disagreed plenty. And yes, there were times when Democrats had to go it alone. But time and again, Democrats and Republicans came together. Came together to defend a stronger and safer Europe," he said.

"Came together to pass a once-in-a-generation infrastructure law, building bridges to connect our nation and people. Came together to pass one of the most significant laws ever, helping veterans exposed to toxic burn pits," he said amidst applause from the Congressmen.

Biden told Congress that the State of the Union is strong.

"As I stand here tonight, I have never been more optimistic about the future of America. We just have to remember who we are," he said.

Biden used the phrase "finish the job" 13 times in his address - calling on Congress to do everything from capping the price of insulin at USD 35 per month to imposing new taxes on the wealthiest Americans to passing a ban on assault weapons.

He said he would not let Republicans "take the economy hostage" over the debt ceiling,

Biden asserted that his administration is building an economy where no one is left behind.

"Jobs are coming back, pride is coming back, because of the choices we made in the last two years. This is a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America and make a real difference in your lives," he said.

Biden asserted that manufacturing has been one of the top priorities of his administration.

"For too many decades, we imported products and exported jobs. Now, thanks to all we've done, we're exporting American products and creating American jobs," he said.

"Inflation has been a global problem because of the pandemic that disrupted supply chains and (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's war (against Ukraine) that disrupted energy and food supplies," Biden said.

But the United States is better positioned than any country on Earth, he insisted.

Acknowledging that his administration has more to do, "but here at home, inflation is coming down", he said.

Gas prices are down USD 1.50 a gallon since their peak. Food inflation is coming down, he said.

Inflation has fallen every month for the last six months while take-home pay has gone up, he added.

Biden said that his administration is making sure the supply chain for America begins in America.

"We've already created 800,000 manufacturing jobs even without this law. With this new law, we will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs across the country," he said.

"That's going to come from companies that have announced more than USD 300 billion in investments in American manufacturing in the last two years," Biden said.

He said that "Made in America" is the top priority of his administration and announced that bridges, roads and highways in the country will be made with American construction materials.

To maintain the strongest economy in the world, the US also needs the best infrastructure in the world.

The US used to be number 1 in the world in infrastructure, but then it fell to number 13th, he said.

"Now we're coming back because we came together to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the largest investment in infrastructure since President Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System," he said.

He said 'Buy American' has been the law of the land since 1933.

"But for too long, past administrations have found ways to get around it. Not anymore," Biden said in his joint address to the US Congress.

"Tonight, I'm also announcing new standards to require all construction materials used in federal infrastructure projects to be made in America. American-made lumber, glass, drywall, fiber optic cables," he said.

He said under his watch, American roads, bridges and highways will be made with American products. (With inputs from PTI)

Online petition launched to extend...

new job instead of the existing duration of 60 days, after which they have to leave the country.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"On behalf of immigrants (from the world, mainly from India and China) as well as naturalized citizens like Indian-Americans, Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies and Global Technology Professionals Association (GITPRO) has submitted an appeal to the President of the United States, the Secretary of DHS (Department of Homeland Security) and the director of USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) to extend the current grace period from 60 days to 1 year (minimum 6 months)," the online petition said.

"We join the appeal and request to sympathetically consider the impact of the families on humanitarian grounds. We believe that this extension will pause this brain drain and ensure that the US will continue to be a world leader in technology and innovation. We also request elected officials to support this extension and if needed introduce a bill in the House of Representatives," said the online petition that has been signed by more than 2,200 people so far.

According to LayoffTracker.com, 91,000 were laid off just in January 2023 and this number may grow in the coming months. This has a huge impact on them, and their families, especially on the H-1B holders who would need to leave the US immediately within 10 days beyond the H-1B grace period, the petition said.

In addition to the impact on them and their families, this is also a long-term impact on the talent that the US has. For example, 70 per cent of startup founders are immigrants. About 50+ CEOs of public companies are of Indian origin. Hence, the exodus of this talent from

the US is harmful for the long-term interests of the US, especially in the modern age of Artificial Intelligence competition, it said.

"The laid-off H-1B holders currently have about 60 days to find another employer to file for the H-1B transfer or leave the country. During the current economic situation, it would be impossible for these hardworking, tax-paying and talented people to get hired till the economy recovers," said the petition.

Meanwhile, a Facebook group of overseas Indians has launched a petition urging the Indian government to hire the laid-off Indian tech workers in the US.

"Considering the ongoing layoff situation, we are requesting you to consider hiring the recently laid-off and returning Indian IT workers as consultants as part of the digitization initiatives undertaken by your ministries," said the letter addressed to Ashwini Vaishnav, the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology. (Source: PTI)

Over 21,000 dead from quake in...

Nations around the world working to get aid to Syria: France on Thursday, February 9, pledged to give 12 million euros (\$12.92 million) to Syrians impacted by the quake, the foreign ministry said. The aid will be channeled through the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations "working directly with affected populations in all of the areas struck by the earthquake," it said. Many Western nations have refused to send aid directly to the Syrian regime, which is under sanctions. The United Kingdom pledged an additional 3 million pounds (\$3.64 million) in funding to the White Helmets to support rescue and emergency relief operations in northwest Syria. Britain has so far given a total of 3.8 million pounds (\$4.62 million) to the White Helmets, a volunteer organization of humanitarian responders. The United States will provide \$85 million for humanitarian assistance in Turkey and Syria.

Indian Army's field hospital has started functioning in quake-ravaged Turkey. India has sent more than 250 personnel, specialized equipment and other relief material amounting to more than 135 tons to Turkey on five C-17 IAF aircraft.

UN working to open more pathways to deliver aid to Syria: A UN aid convoy crossed from Turkey into northwestern Syria on Thursday, February 9, for the first time since the earthquake hit. The six trucks carrying shelter items and Non-Food Items (NFI) drove through the Bab Al Hawa border crossing, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said he is open to the idea of delivering aid via additional border crossings, other than the Bab al-Hawa, which is the only humanitarian aid corridor approved by the United Nations between Turkey and rebel-held areas of northern Syria. (Agencies)

ISRO rocket with three satellites lifts...

The maiden flight of LV on August 7, 2022 was a partial failure due to an orbit anomaly and deviation in the flight path of the rocket. LV caters to the launch of up to 500kg satellites to low earth orbits on 'launch-on-demand' basis. It provides low-cost access to space, offers low turn-around time and flexibility in accommodating multiple satellites, and demands minimal launch infrastructure.

EOS-07 is a 156.3kg satellite which has been designed, developed and realized by ISRO. New experiments include mm-Wave Humidity Sounder and Spectrum Monitoring Payload.

While Janus-1 is a 10.2kg satellite, the 8.7kg AzaadiSAT-2 is a combined effort of about 750 girl students across India guided by Space Kidz India, Chennai.

The mission objective is to inject these satellites in a 450-km circular orbit. (Source: PTI)



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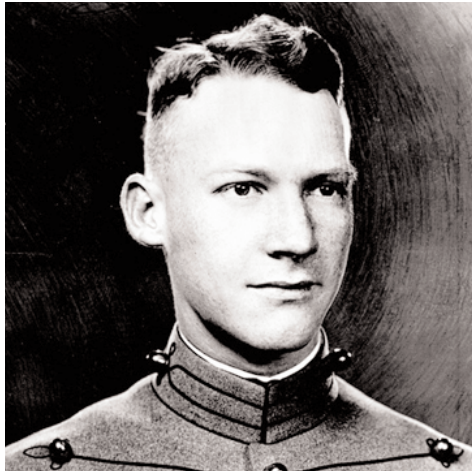
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History This Week

FEBRUARY 10 - 16, 2023

February 10



Lt. Alexander Nininger

February 10, 1942 - The first Medal of Honor during World War II was awarded to 2nd Lt. Alexander Nininger (posthumously) for heroism during the Battle of Bataan.

February 10, 1967 - The 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, clarifying the procedures for presidential succession in the event of the disability of a sitting president.

February 11

February 11th - Celebrated in Japan as the founding date of the Japanese nation, which occurred with the accession to the throne of the first Emperor, Jimmu, in 660 BC.



Italian dictator Benito Mussolini

February 11, 1929 - Italian dictator Benito Mussolini granted political independence to Vatican City and recognized the sovereignty of the Pope (Holy See) over the area, measuring about 110 acres.



Nelson Mandela

February 11, 1990 - In South Africa, Nelson Mandela, at age 71, was released from prison after serving 27 years of a life sentence on charges of attempting to overthrow the apartheid government. In April 1994, he was elected president in the first all-race elections.

February 11, 2011 - In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak resigned amid a massive protest calling for his ouster. Thousands of young Egyptians and others had protested non-stop for 18 days in Cairo, Alexandria and elsewhere. Mubarak had ruled Egypt for nearly 30 years, functioning as a virtual dictator.

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February 12



President Bill Clinton

February 12, 1999 - The impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton in the U.S. Senate ended. With the whole world watching via television, Senators stood up one by one during the final roll call to vote "guilty" or "not guilty." On Article 1 (charging Clinton with perjury) 55 senators, including 10 Republicans and all 45 Democrats voted not guilty. On Article 2 (charging Clinton with obstruction of justice) the Senate split evenly, 50 for and 50 against the President. With the necessary two-thirds majority not having been achieved, President Clinton was thus acquitted on both charges and served out the remainder of his term of office lasting through January 20, 2001.



Abraham Lincoln

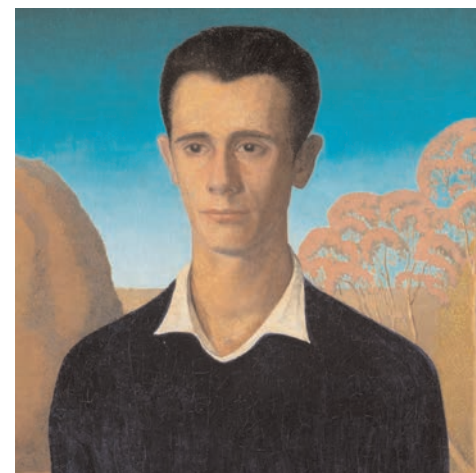
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February 13

February 13, 1635 - Boston Latin School, the first tax-payer supported (public) school in America was established in Boston, Massachusetts.

February 13, 1945 - During World War II in Europe, British and American planes began massive bombing raids on Dresden, Germany. A four-day firestorm erupted that was visible for 200 miles and engulfed the historic old city, killing an estimated 135,000 German civilians.



American artist Grant Wood

February 13, 1945 - During World War II in Europe, British and American planes began massive bombing raids on Dresden, Germany. A four-day firestorm erupted that was visible for 200 miles and engulfed the historic old city, killing an estimated 135,000 German civilians.

February 14

February 14th - Celebrated as (Saint) Valentine's Day around the world, now one of the most widely observed unofficial holidays in which romantic greeting cards and gifts are exchanged.



Photographer Mathew Brady

February 14, 1849 - Photographer Mathew Brady took the first photograph of a U.S. President in office, James Polk.

February 14, 1929 - The St. Valentine's Day massacre occurred in Chicago as

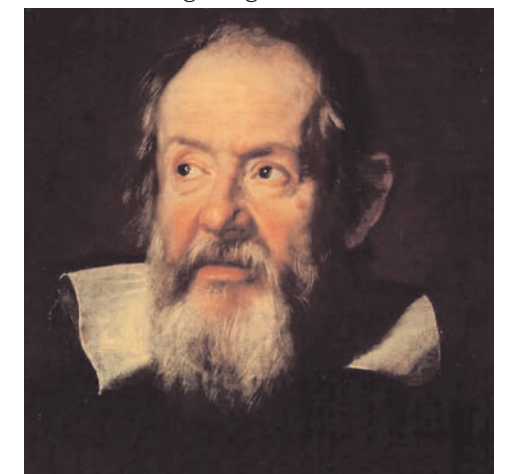
seven members of the Bugs Moran gang were gunned down by five of Al Capone's mobsters posing as police.

February 15

February 15, 1898 - In Havana, the U.S. Battleship Maine was blown up while at anchor and quickly sank with 260 crew members lost. The incident inflamed public opinion in the U.S., resulting in a declaration of war against Spain on April 25, 1898, amid cries of "Remember the Maine!"

February 15, 1933 - An assassination attempt on newly elected U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt occurred in Miami, Florida. A spectator deflected the gunman's aim. As a result, Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak was shot and killed instead.

February 15, 1989 - Soviet Russia completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the civil war between Muslim rebel groups and the Russian-backed Afghan government. Over 15,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in the fighting.



Galileo Galilei

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February 16

February 16, 1849 - Photographer Mathew Brady took the first photograph of a U.S. President in office, James Polk.

February 16, 1929 - The St. Valentine's Day massacre occurred in Chicago as



Real Madrid's Rodrygo celebrates with Dani Ceballos after scoring their third goal, at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat, Morocco, on February 8, 2023. Reuters

Real Madrid beat Al Ahly 4-1 to reach Club World Cup final

Real Madrid reached the Club World Cup final after goals from Vinicius Jr, Federico Valverde, Rodrygo and Sergio Arribas secured a 4-1 win over Egypt's Al Ahly in Morocco on Wednesday.

Playing without several key starters, Real Madrid struggled to break the deadlock against Al Ahly's well organised defence but opened the scoring right on halftime with a close-range strike by Vinicius.

Real extended their lead just after the break when Valverde tapped into an empty net from a rebound.

The Spanish side wasted opportunities to extend the lead and Al Ahly received a lifeline when Eduardo Camavinga tripped Hussein El Shahat inside the area in the 65th minute and defender Ali Maaloul tucked away the penalty.

Real Madrid's Luka Modric missed a penalty three minutes from the end of the game but Rodrygo and substitute Arribas completed a comfortable win in stoppage time.

Real will face Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in the final in Rabat on Saturday after they shocked South American champions Flamengo 3-2 in the first semi-final.

Source: Reuters

INDIA VS AUSTRALIA

Jadeja makes heroic comeback, takes 11th five-wicket haul

NAGPUR (TIP)

India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja on Thursday, February 9, bagged a five-wicket haul in the first innings of the ongoing first Test against Australia in Nagpur. Returning to the team after a long injury lay-off, Jadeja scalped his 11th Test five-for to put India in a commanding position. Jadeja returned figures of five for 42 as Australia were bowled out for a paltry total of 177 in the first innings after opting to bat first at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium. Resuming play at tea on 174/8, Jadeja and Ashwin struck in quick succession as India bowled out Australia for cheap.

Jadeja was the wrecker-in-chief during the second session as he broke the 82-run stand between Steve Smith (37) and Marnus Labuschagne (49) before trapping Matt Renshaw and Todd Murphy.

Jadeja (5/47) then trapped Peter Handscomb (31) in the final session of the day as Australia were bowled out in 63.5 overs.

Alex Carrey scored a 33-ball 36 before veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (3/42), who was the other wicket-taker for India in the second session, ended his stay in the middle.

Earlier, pacers Mohammed Shami (1/18) and Mohammed Siraj (1/30) dealt early blows to the visitors, removing openers Usman Khwaja (1) and David Warner (1) within the first three overs.

Australia, led by Pat Cummins, dropped left-hander Travis Head and gave off-spinner Todd Murphy his international debut.



Ravindra Jadeja is now three shy of 250 wickets in Test cricket. PTI

Rohit Sharma's India handed Test caps to Twenty20 sensation Suryakumar Yadav and wicketkeeper Srikanth Bharat.

India eye a fourth straight Border-Gavaskar Trophy win over Australia. They also eye a place in the World Test Championship (WTC) final.

Jadeja applies 'ointment on sore finger', triggers debate

Ravindra Jadeja drew attention not only for demolishing Australia with his fifer on the opening day of the first Test but also for applying something on his spinning finger, triggering a debate on what it was.

A video made way to social media, showing Jadeja receiving something from his teammate Mohammed Siraj and then applying and rubbing that on his left index finger, something that had Australian media and a former player interested.

When a fan shared the footage with former Australia captain Tim Paine, he replied, "interesting".

However, a BCCI source told PTI that it was an "ointment for pain relief for the sore finger".

David Warner and Steve Smith, who are part of the visiting side, served bans for their role in the ball-tampering scandal in 2018 in South Africa.

Suryakumar Yadav continues to lead ICC T20 batting chart, Shubman Gill achieves career-best position

DUBAI (TIP)

India's Suryakumar Yadav remained static at the top spot, while compatriot Shubman Gill shot up to a career-best 30th position in the batting chart of the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings released on Wednesday, February 8.

Surya continues to lead the batting list with 906 rating points.

Gill achieved a career-best position after smashing a match-winning century against New Zealand in the third and final T20I in Ahmedabad recently.

Gill's 126 not out off 63 balls that contributed to India's huge 168-run victory and helped the home team seal the series 2-1 lifted him an incredible 168 slots.

The 23-year-old, who has now slammed centuries in all three formats of the game, is ranked sixth in ODIs and 62nd in Tests.

Besides, Virat Kohli has dropped a rung to the 15th position among batters,



while KL Rahul slid two places (27th) and skipper Rohit Sharma was further behind in the 29th spot.

Young left-handed wicket-keeper batter Ishan Kishan has also dropped three places to 48th.

No Indian bowler, however, features in the top 10 T20 bowlers' list.

But left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh moved eight slots to reach a career-best 13th position after finishing with two for 16 in Ahmedabad.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar dropped a place to 21st, while Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel are static at 29th and 30th spots, respectively.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who grabbed four for 16 and smashed a 17-ball 30, has progressed in all three lists.

He has moved up from 53rd to 50th among batters, 66th to 46th among bowlers and is in second place among all-rounders, only a couple of rating points behind Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hassan.

Source: PTI



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



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